SIR ROBERT PEEL

FROM HIS PRIVATE PAPERS

EDITED FOR HIS TRUSTEES BY

CHARLES STUART PARKER

SOMETIME M.P. FOR THE COUNTY AND FOR THE CITY OF PERTH
AND LATE FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH A CHAPTER ON HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER
BY HIS GRANDSON, THE HON. GEORGE PEEL



IN THREE VOLS.—VOL. III.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

INDIA, 1843-44.

PAGE

Lord Ellenborough Punishes the Ameers of Scinde—Supported by Wellington, Fitzgerald, Ripon, and Peel—Annexes Scinde—Recalled by the Company—Rewarded by the Crown 1

CHAPTER II.

IRELAND, 1841-1843.

O'Connell and Repeal—The Irish Government—De Grey, Eliot, Sugden—The Law Officers—National Education—Patronage—Chief Secretary and Lord Lieutenant—Repeal Agitation—Poverty of the Tenantry—Payment of the Priests—County Franchise . . . 34

CHAPTER III.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1834-1843.

The Ten Years' Conflict Patronage—'Taking on Trials'—The Call—Veto Act—Collision with Civil Courts—A Policy of Reserve—Spiritual Independence—Demand for Abolition of Patronage—Claim of Right—Convocation of Ministers—Answers from the Crown—Answer from Parliament—Letters to and from the Queen—Secession—Majority or Minority?—Free Church and Old Church 69

CHAPTER IV.

IRELAND, 1844.

Policy for Ireland Discussed—In Cabinet—In Debate—In Letters—Roman Catholic Barristers—A new Lord Lieutenant—Trial by Jury—Working the Press—Federalism Prosecution of O'Connell—Board of Charitable Bequests 101

CHAPTER V.

1844.

PAGE

Bank Charter Act—Prediction of its Working in a Crisis—Disraeli's Party Allegiance—Factory Act—Brunow on Peel's Speech—Budget—Sugar Duties—Sandon and Ashley—Stanley goes to the Lords—Gladstone's Difficulties on Maynooth—Proposed Solution—Royal Visits 134

CHAPTER VI.

1845.

Resignation of Gladstone—Second Free Trade Budget—Protectionist Discontent — Maynooth — Academical Institutions for Ireland—Irish Tenants' Compensation—A Roman Catholic Under Secretary for Ireland—National Defence—Overwork of the Prime Minister—Orange Disturbances—Conciliation and Coercion—Free Trade in Food 163

CHAPTER VII.

NATIONAL DEFENCE, 1844-45.

Defence of Canada—Commission on Naval Defence—Effect of Steam Navigation—Bridges across the Channel—Wellington's Official Protest—Peel's Reply—Choice of Evils—State of Defensive Forces—Increase of the Army—Personal Supervision—Overwork of the Prime Minister 195

CHAPTER VIII.

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 1845.

The Corn Law Question—Changed Opinions—'Gradual Abatement of Protection'—Peel on Free Trade—Howick and Melbourne on Peel—Failure of Potato Crop—Remedies—Proposed Suspension of Corn Laws — Cabinet Meetings — Dissent of Colleagues—Lord Lincoln's Advice — Peel's Criticism — Correspondence with the Queen—Resignation—Lord John Russell undertakes to form a Government—Peel sent for to bid the Queen Farewell 220

CHAPTER IX.

INDIA, 1844-45.

Hardinge Governor-General—His Policy towards the Punjab—Satisfaction of Nesselrode—Ellenborough's Self-vindication — Sikh Government and Army—Home News—Free Trade Budget—Maynooth—Irish Policy—Hardinge on High Tory Defections—Peel on the Dissolution of his Government—Counsels Hardinge to remain 256

CHAPTER X.

1845-46.

PAGE

Lord John Russell fails to form a Government—Peel's Resignation by Command withdrawn—Stanley leaves the Cabinet—Vacancies filled—Third Free Trade Budget 283

CHAPTER XI.

INDIA, 1845-46.

Sikh Invasion—Ferozpore—Sir Hugh Gough—Criticism at Home—Sobraon—Sikh Submission—Terms of Peace—Thanks of Parliament—Rewards 295

CHAPTER XII.

1846.

Moving the Address—Exposition of Policy—Rancour of Cobden—Remonstrance of his Friends—Explanations—Resignations—Letters to old Supporters—Obstruction of Free Trade Bills . . . 322

CHAPTER XIII.

JUNE 1846

Organised Revenge—'Boldness and Dexterity'—Protection of Life in Ireland—Conversion of Lord George Bentinck, Lord John Russell, and their Followers—Advice of Charles Villiers—Of Wellington—Of Brougham—False Charge by Lord George Bentinck—Revived by Disraeli—'Abominable Combination'—Wellington's 'Blood up'—Peel's Forecast—Wellington's Comments—Victory on the Corn and Tariff Bills—Defeat on Ireland—Advice from Cobden and Brougham—Tribute to Cobden—European Opinion—Arthur Stanley—Croker—Carlyle 349

CHAPTER XIV.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN, 1841-46.

Difficulties in Canada—Peel's Counsel—Bagot's Action Wellington's Anger—Questions with the United States—Ashburton Treaty—Palmerston's Criticism—Relations with France—*Entente cordiale*—National Defence—Proposed Resignation of Aberdeen—Prevented by Peel 379

CHAPTER XV.

PATRONAGE, 1841-46.

Exercise of Patronage as Irish Secretary and as Prime Minister—Church Preferment in Ireland, Scotland, England—Peerages—Baronetcies—Pensions and Royal Bounty—Whig Pensions—Wordsworth—Tennyson—Hood—Owen—Bell—Forbes—Murchison—Brown—Hamilton—Faraday—Haydon—Shee . . . 413

CHAPTER XVI.

1846–47.

PAGE

Withdrawal to Drayton—Farewell Letter to the Queen—Messages from the Political World—Hume—Brougham—Graham—Wellington—Aberdeen—Bulwer—Dr. List—Bunsen—Whig Administration in Ireland—Correspondence with Hardinge 451

CHAPTER XVII.

1847–48.

Peel a Spectator—Letters to King Leopold—Famine in Ireland—The Whigs seek Advice—General Election—Tamworth Letter—Peelite Success—Peel declines Presidency of Royal Society—Diplomatic Relations with Rome—Revolutions on the Continent—State of England and Ireland—Records of Cabinet Councils 477

CHAPTER XVIII.

1849.

Whig Overtures to Graham—Repeal of the Navigation Laws—Peel's Aid invoked—Peel on a United Germany—Maiden Speech of Frederick Peel—Latest Counsels of Sir Robert Peel—His Policy for Ireland—'Measures commensurate with the Evils'—Encumbered Estates Act—Advice to Lord Clarendon—National University for Ireland—Reaction against Free Trade, in England, and in Ireland 500

CHAPTER XIX.

1850.

Letter to the Drayton Tenants—Disraeli's Motion on Agricultural Distress—Supported by Gladstone—Defeated by Peel—Efforts to restore Protection—Foreign Policy of Palmerston—Coercion of Greece—Alienation of France and Russia—Censured by the Lords—Supported by the Commons—Peel's last Speech—Diplomacy, its Use and Abuse—Fatal Accident and Death—National Grief—Private Letters 528

A Summary of the Life of Sir Robert Peel 561

Lines on Sir Robert Peel 623

Index 627

ILLUSTRATIONS

New Drayton Hall . . . . . *Title-page*

Lady Peel . . . . . *Frontispiece*

After the picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

Drayton Manor . . . . . *To face p.* 452

Statue of Sir Robert Peel in Westminster Abbey . . *page* 622

SIR ROBERT PEEL.

CHAPTER I.

INDIA, 1843–4.

Lord Ellenborough Punishes the Ameers of Scinde — Supported by Wellington, Fitzgerald, Ripon, and Peel — Annexes Scinde — Recalled by the Company — Rewarded by the Crown.

EARLY in 1843 came tidings of a new campaign of the Governor-General of India and his Army.

In invading Afghanistan, to set up Shah Sooja as a puppet under British control, Lord Auckland had marched an army through the independent country of Scinde, lying on both sides of the Lower Indus, had broken treaty engagements to respect the neutrality of the Ameers of Scinde, and had threatened to seize part of their territory unless they paid to Shah Sooja tribute for which they held his formal release. Such treatment of Oriental potentates led naturally to their hindering at first the progress of the British army, but after a while they had yielded to superior force, and had even been thanked by Lord Auckland for friendly service.

Yet no sooner had Lord Ellenborough time to turn his attention to Scinde than, casting a covetous eye on the Indus, and availing himself of the treaties which Lord Auckland had imposed, he resolved to seize the seaport of Kurrachee, and, near the other extremity of Scinde, the town of Sukkur, as guarantees for tribute from the Ameers, and under the name of 'punishing' intrigues in which some of them had engaged for self-defence; and finding that Outram, then a young political agent, was not

willing to further such a policy, he committed it to the hands of a dashing and most able soldier.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Simla: Nov. 15, 1842.

I have given instructions to Sir Charles Napier which he thinks he can execute without the use of force. I do not. However, they were necessary. The violations of treaty by the Ameers [of Scinde] rendered some punishment unavoidable.

I considered well what we ought to demand, and I do not think I have gone beyond what was expedient and just. You should read all my letters to Sir Charles Napier, and all his. If there should be resistance, I shall exact a severe penalty.

I shall probably pass the spring and summer in Meerut. In the present state of the Punjab, and the unsettled position of affairs in Scinde, I must not be far from this frontier, and I do not like to set the example of living in these hills.

I shall therefore encounter one more hot season in the plains. It will be a severe trial, I dare say. But I came to this country to do my duty, and without any regard to my health. I have hitherto undergone all trials, placing myself wherever I thought I could be of most use. And this I shall continue to do as long as I remain here. And I shall not remain here one hour after the state of my own health, or the want of sufficient support at home, leads me to the conclusion that I can no longer effect great objects.

About this time Lord Fitzgerald, being out of health, and out of patience with the Governor-General, offered to resign.

From Lord Fitzgerald.

[Jan. 11, 1843?]

I do think it as inconvenient as it is unusual for any man on whom powers of government are devolved to close any communication with a threat of withdrawing.

In no instance has the Home Government failed to support Lord Ellenborough. I have been silent when I thought he was wrong.

As little do I understand his saying his mission is accomplished. I was not aware that he went out to recover the Gates of the Temple.

Jan. 12.—It is the greatest satisfaction and comfort to me to receive the assurances which both your notes convey—the only satisfaction I can have under Lord Ellenborough's public insult, addressed to the Secret Committee, and recorded both in India and in England for ever.

Lord Ellenborough has been three times at the India Board. He knows that every line sent out by the Secret Committee is written by the President of the Board of Control.

I see but one course for me to follow. I can enter into no controversy with Lord Ellenborough, nor take any step which would place you in difficulty as to selecting a successor to him. In the present state of India, he knows that he may play great pranks, and threaten resignation every month.

But is it not due to myself, to the interests of Government, to the authority of the office, that I should not acquiesce in what lowers all these interests?

I shall create no inconvenience to you because I consider the sacrifice of office as necessary. You will more easily find a successor for me than for Lord Ellenborough. Indeed, you will have no difficulty in supplying my place by some one far more competent than I have ever been.

The Governor-General forgets altogether that he is the Company's servant, and that it is through me that he receives instructions from the Ministers of the Crown.

The Duke of Wellington may say he is all right. He has done so from the beginning, even when the steps about to be taken were most inconsistent with what the Duke had in the first instance approved.

Sir Robert Peel forbade resignation.

To Lord Fitzgerald.

(*Most private.*) Whitehall: Jan. 12, 1843.

I think your suggestion for solving the difficulties perfectly impracticable. I should feel myself discredited by acting upon it.

Everything you have done has been done with the full sanction and authority of the whole Cabinet. How is it possible that they could acquiesce in such an act of injustice as that you should be made a sacrifice?

Instead of thinking of retiring, maintain your own ground. Inform Lord Ellenborough that he has had every support which it was possible for him to receive, but that you will insist upon your right, and your duty, freely to express your opinion upon every act and every matter of public concern connected with the administration of affairs in India.

The interests and honour of the Government are identical with your own, and both would be equally compromised by any undue concession to Lord Ellenborough, or any evasion of the difficulty by your voluntary retirement from office.

Jan. 13. (*Secret.*)—Depend upon it, the main cause of Lord Ellenborough's ill humour is the knowledge that the Ministers here did not approve of the evacuation of Afghanistan.

Hardinge wrote two letters to Lord Ellenborough, before he knew of the orders in April to withdraw, expressing the most decided opinion that the honour of the British Army required that there should be an advance from Candahar upon Cabul. I enclose the copy of a private letter which Graham wrote to him. I myself wrote at least as strongly. I very much doubt whether the mildest exhortation of all was not that in the despatch.

The following letter to the Governor-General relates to his complaints that he was not well supported from home.

To Lord Ellenborough.

Feb. 6, 1843.

I cannot conceive that more support could have been given to a Governor-General of India than that which you have received.

You speak of parliamentary support as if that had been withheld. The only occasion on which your policy or proceedings were questioned was at the close of last Session.

It had transpired through the Indian newspapers that you had given orders to General Nott to withdraw from Candahar. I was questioned as to the authenticity of those orders. I refused to answer the question, and I positively declined to enter into a discussion with regard to operations in the field then pending. I was speaking at the time with a knowledge that the orders of the 19th of April had been given, and I had certainly every ground for entertaining the presumption that they would in all probability be acted upon. Still it was possible that they might not. I had two courses open to me, either to maintain silence, or to enter into a vindication of the order to withdraw, and to demonstrate, as far as I could, the impossibility or impolicy of an advance upon Cabul. I thought the former course the more advisable on general principles, and the more politic with reference to the particular case, and to the varying circumstances which might justify or require a modification or recall of the order to withdraw.

What has since occurred proves, I think, that I exercised a sound discretion in refusing to engage in premature discussion.

To the Queen.

Feb. 6, 1843.—The decisive declarations of the Duke of Wellington as to the military operations, and the credit due to Lord Ellenborough on account of their complete success, have produced their natural effect, and are leading people to consider whether it would be just to withhold praise on

one account because they differ from Lord Ellenborough's policy on another.

Feb. 10.—Sir Robert Peel made the best defence he could for Lord Ellenborough, founding it rather on his general services than on approbation of the particular act in respect to the transfer of the Gates and the Proclamation.

Lord John Russell censured every act of Lord Ellenborough, and declared that he was censurable not merely for the transfer of the Gates, but for the whole tenor of his civil administration.

Three months later Lord Fitzgerald died, and Lord Ripon was appointed in his stead.

Cabinet Memorandum.

Whitehall: May 13, 1843.

I have recommended to the Queen that Lord Ripon should succeed to the Board of Control, and that Mr. Gladstone should be appointed President of the Board of Trade, with a seat in the Cabinet.

From Lord Ellenborough.

(*Confidential.*) Camp, Delhi: Feb. 17. 1843.

As long as I stay here I shall do whatever I think right. The object of raising the condition of this country as it may be raised by good government is far too great for me to permit any little considerations to interfere with it.

Palace of Agra: March 23.—I am afraid the Somnauth Gates will have given great trouble. I was right, however, in what I did, although I might have been more cautious in what I said. But I must write, as well as act, for India, not for England.

To Lord Ellenborough.

June 6, 1843.

The rapid communication between India and this country is making, and will continue to make, a most important practical change in the treatment of Indian questions

in Parliament. It will provoke constant discussion by the press, and that discussion will increase the tendencies to make Indian subjects the arena for political debate. It is difficult to foresee the effect of this, and of its influence on the Indian press, and the reaction of that press on newspapers and parties at home.

Whether it be for good or evil, we must look forward to the gradual establishment of a system which will subject every act of the Government in India to parliamentary scrutiny. Every mail from India will provoke a series of questions, and motions, if the answers be not satisfactory to parties who will judge of Indian questions with English feelings and on English principles, without any local knowledge or experience of Indian affairs.

The relations of the Government at home with the East India Directors, the Secret Committee, and the local Governments of India, will be greatly disturbed by the increased influence of the House of Commons over Indian administration.

I wish I could say to you with truth that I felt perfectly at ease about the affairs of Scinde. Nothing can be more brilliant and decisive than the military achievements. They are, so far as personal heroism is concerned, almost unparalleled, and in point of military skill, and the triumph of discipline, and mutual confidence between the General in command and his army, have never been surpassed.

But the justice of our proceedings in the case of at least some of the Ameers is not clearly established by the official documents in our possession.

From Lord Ashley.

June 10, 1843.

The late events in Scinde distress the minds of many persons who wish well to your Government, and the honour of the British Empire.

For my own part, I could not do less than join in any vote of condemnation of the policy pursued by the Governor-General. I have been pained in no ordinary degree by the

perusal of various letters and papers illustrative of his whole course in this sad business, bad enough towards any Power, but peculiarly so against that one which, had it in the hour of necessity acted against us, would not only have prevented the recovery of our lost honours, but would also have saved itself from its present overwhelming calamity.

I do indeed lament—I will not disguise it from you—that your own high-minded and statesmanlike principles should be thus kept back or discoloured by those in whom you place confidence.

From Sir James Graham.

Sunday evening, June 11, 1843.

I was well pleased with our Cabinet to-day. Two great questions were fully discussed in the best spirit, and a general concurrence of opinion was formed by a free interchange of thoughts and feelings.

The Duke shone forth to great advantage. With a little management he will not be found impracticable respecting Scinde.

To Lord Ashley.

(*Private.*) June 14, 1843.

I feel obliged by the frank and unreserved communication of your opinions in respect to the transactions in Scinde, and do full justice to the motives which have induced you to make that communication to me.

To Lord Ellenborough.

Aug. 4, 1843.

You will see that we have an extraordinary combination of difficulties to deal with at home—Ireland and Repeal agitation; a terrible schism in the Church of Scotland; civil war in Spain; increasing jealousies of the Church on the part of Dissent, leading to formidable and successful organisation against our Education scheme; trade still depressed, and revenue not flourishing.

We do all we can to inculcate on the Chairs and the Court the necessity of cordial concert and confidence. They are very uneasy about the affairs of Scinde.

To Lord Ripon.

Aug. 17, 1843.

In my opinion directions ought to be given without loss of time to treat the Ameers with every degree of consideration. We have taken their territories, and despoiled them of their private property. Surely we need not inflict further punishment and privations.

Postscript.

Tell the Chairs that it would be infinitely more creditable to the Court to recall Lord Ellenborough, and manfully to take upon themselves the responsibility of a change in the Indian Government, than to paralyse that Government both at home and abroad, by acts demonstrating distrust, and dissensions among the chief authorities who have to conduct the administration.

From Lord Ripon.

Aug. 18, 1843.

Sir Charles Napier was preparing an answer to the memorials [of the Ameers], and he says they are 'a tissue of atrocious falsehoods.'

It is but too probable that there is more truth in the statements than might be inferred from Sir C. Napier's language; nor can it be denied that the history of our dealings with Indian Princes is replete with instances of similar harsh treatment. That shows the different modes of looking at such matters here and in India.

I will communicate with the Chairs in the sense of your postscript, in which I quite concur.

Aug. 31.—I have received from the Chairs the enclosed communication. It has greatly disappointed me.

I doubt the policy of entering into a written controversy with the Court. It would not lead them to rescind their resolution, and might only tend to widen the breach, and to render impossible Ellenborough's continuance in India. But upon this I should be glad to have your opinion.

What shall be said to Ellenborough? Of course I must communicate to him the resolution, and it is not difficult to conceive what his feelings will be. But should we urge him to smother them, and remain? I should be unwilling to have the appearance of recommending him to come away, particularly as the Duke urged him to remain. But I strongly feel that he will come away, unless he has previously determined to act upon our recommendation, to call back to Scinde some at least of the dispossessed Ameers.

(*Enclosure.*)

At a Secret Court of Directors held on Tuesday, August 29, 1843. Resolved by Ballot: That . . . though the papers communicated to the Court are incomplete, yet the mature consideration of them has impressed on this Court the imperative duty of recording their conviction that the proceedings adopted towards the Ameers of Scinde have been unjust and impolitic, and inconsistent with the true interests and honour of the Indian Government.

From Lord Ripon.

Sept. 18, 1843.

Considering that I had pressed upon the Chairs the propriety of the Court exercising their powers of recall, rather than recording their disapprobation, and then leaving it to take its chance, I do not see that I could now object to their taking that course. It certainly seems to be a natural consequence of their resolution. The Chairman so considers it, and I have little doubt that he will act upon that view. It is worth while, however, to consider whether or not to encourage him in his desire to have the matter postponed till after the arrival of the next mail. What do you think of this point?

(*Enclosure.*)

Mr. Cotton (Chairman of the East India Company) to Lord Ripon.

East India House: Sept. 16, 1843.

I send for perusal a note from Mr. Tucker [a Director], showing the course he means to pursue. If he succeeds in his object, I do not think it is possible that the Court can refrain from going further. Indeed, for their own credit, after recording such a strong opinion of the impolicy and injustice of the proceedings, I think they are bound to do so.

My desire will be to induce Mr. Tucker to postpone the motion until after the arrival of the mail next month, when we may possibly hear that Lord Ellenborough has determined to relinquish his government and come home.

Mr. Tucker to Mr. Cotton.

Sept. 14, 1843.

Throughout my long experience in India, I have never known or heard of anything so atrocious as our conduct towards these Princes and their families, and I believe and hope that the case will come before Parliament and the public, although to our shame.

I have myself resolved not to remain an unconcerned spectator of what has passed and is passing, and it is my intention to move the Court that our late resolution and my minutes be placed on the public records, with a view eventually to ulterior proceedings.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 19, 1843.

Old Tucker threatens to propose to the Court the absolute recall of Ellenborough. The feeling on account of the personal treatment of the Ameers—as I foresaw it would be—is becoming very deep and general, as the facts become known.

What unconscionable folly it was, not to treat vanquished foes with every personal consideration. If these Ameers had been—according to Lord Ellenborough's proposal—

shipped off on their way to Mecca, there would have been one universal shout of indignation.

To Lord Ripon.

Sept. 19, 1843.

I think you should omit no opportunity of throwing the whole responsibility of the attempts direct and indirect to effect the removal of Lord Ellenborough upon the Court.

The difficulty of finding a successor; the impolicy of agitating all India with discussions on such a subject as the recall of a Governor-General, of encountering the risk of collision of opinion, as to the justice of such recall, between the civil and military service in India, of making Lord Ellenborough a decided enemy of the Court, with ample power possibly of retaliation—ample means of contrasting his own disinterested exercise of patronage with the system which (as he alleges) he found established—all these are very grave considerations, and should have been well weighed by the Court before they determined either on the recall of Lord Ellenborough or on putting a public slight upon him.

The motion for recall will be, I think, a proof that their late act—the slight without recall—was a shabby and unwise one, and that they feel it to be so.

I would recommend you to make the general tone of your reply to the Chairman as cold as possible, and to infuse into it whatever may mark your determination to hold the Court responsible for their meditated act and its consequences.

From Lord Ripon.

Sept. 20, 1843.

I wrote to the Chairs in the sense suggested by you, and very much in your words, which seemed to fit the case exactly.

They only sent me a civil acknowledgment, but I have since had an opportunity of seeing them here. The Chairman is evidently very sorry to have failed in keeping the Court quiet.

When I told them that the Court had much better have

recalled Lord Ellenborough, they said they had hoped that we should take the next step, and advise him to resign. I told them at once that that was a course we could not adopt. They had no right to expect us to do for them indirectly what they did not choose themselves to do.

I wrote fully to Ellenborough in the manner recommended by you, but I doubt whether he will consent to stay on.

To Lord Ripon.

Oct. 12, 1843.

What communication will you make to Ellenborough by the November mail? It will have a double bearing; one on Ellenborough, the other on the Court.

Suppose you were to write to this effect: 'Your opinions, and the lapse of time—in itself making the revocation of your acts practically impossible—determine us to confirm your views and intentions as to Scinde.' How will the Court act? Will it acquiesce, remonstrate, or recall?

What if the Court ask to see the last despatches from India? If you give them, you must give those to which they are the replies. That amounts to an unreserved disclosure of all that has passed.

On the other hand, it would surely be impossible to permit the Court to proceed to any decisive act, such as recall, when the Board of Control were in possession of information which, if known to the Court, might completely alter their views. You could not let them in Leadenhall Street condemn the policy of the Governor-General, and possibly by the condemnation convulse India, while you at Whitehall are in possession of a despatch vindicating the policy, and at any rate proving, perhaps to their satisfaction, that the departure from it now would be unsafe and unwise.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 12, 1843.

I have read Ellenborough's letter. The tone of the defence is sobered down to good reasoning; the Asiatic style is dropped, and the habit of writing good English is happily

resumed. Some of the best arguments in defence of the policy have been supplied from home. I recognise the Duke in several passages.

The question of justice and of right remains almost untouched. Nothing new is brought forward on this head. Sir Charles Napier's omission to transmit to Lord Ellenborough the notes of Major Outram's conferences with the Ameers is very strange. I wish you would allow me to see Napier's answer to the charges of the Ameers.

Ellenborough's letter is well written, and studiously prepared for popular effect. The passage respecting slavery points to the direction in the House of Lords to which he looks for aid. There is also a spice of Anti-Corn-Law in 'duties oppressive to industry, which extinguish the prosperity of the people.' It is well got up, but it forebodes a rupture with us.

The General [Napier] also can handle a pen, as well as his sword. They will make a good defence, but the simple tale of the Ameers will, I am afraid, confute them, so far as justice and good faith are to be regarded.

It now became necessary for the Government at home to act with decision; either to condemn, as the Company had done, or to confirm the annexation of Scinde. In October, Sir Robert Peel had stopped a despatch of Lord Ripon, couched in terms 'so general as to give an appearance of maintaining a nice balance between opposite courses of action;' and by the advice of the Duke of Wellington nothing was written on the subject to Lord Ellenborough by that mail. At the end of the month there arrived much more information, and an ably reasoned public despatch from the Governor-General defending his policy; and upon the whole the Cabinet resolved to sanction and defend the annexation.

Sir Robert Peel writes privately:

To Lord Ellenborough.

Drayton Manor: Nov. 1, 1843.

Your public letter in vindication of the policy in regard to Scinde is a very able one.

I have reason to think that the Court of Directors, or some of them at least, are ashamed of their proceedings.

I hope you will take care in any event that the Ameers are treated personally with all the consideration and indulgence due to former rank and to misfortune. Pray attend to this.

Lord Ripon's despatch committing the Government to defend Lord Ellenborough's policy was submitted in draft to Sir Robert Peel, and is thus summarised.

From Lord Ripon.

India Board: Nov. 29, 1843.

I was desirous, first, to vindicate our original doubts; secondly, to show in a general way how far we deemed the explanations now given to be a solution and satisfaction of those doubts; and thirdly, to show, in an equally general way, why we were now prepared to acquiesce in the decision to which they have come in India.

Meanwhile the Governor-General had written to complain of the 'delay' at home as having weakened his hands.

Lord Ellenborough to Lord Ripon.

Calcutta: Oct. 20, 1843.

I very much regret that you did not think you were in a position to announce the opinion of Government with respect to what has been done in Scinde. We have done all we can to lead to the belief that the conquest was to be retained, in the conviction that a contrary impression would tend to encourage hostile inroads, and to discourage active aid to us on the part of the inhabitants. The long-continued doubt whether the Governor-General is to be supported or not necessarily weakens the Government.

The Directors do all they can to weaken my hands. The press does the same, and both for the same reason, because I will neither serve nor court either, but do whatever I think my duty. I know I can answer all my enemies when I return to England, and tread them down.

Lord Ellenborough to the Queen.

Oct. 20, 1843.

Your Majesty will not have failed to observe in how very different a position the British Government stands in Europe from that in which it is placed in India. In Europe peace is maintained by the balance of power amongst the several states. In India all balance has been overthrown by our preponderance, and to exist we must continue to be supreme. The necessity of our position may often render necessary here measures wholly unsuited to the state of things which prevails in Europe. The least appearance of weakness or of hesitation would lead to a general combination of all against a foreign, and necessarily an unpopular, Government. Your Majesty must regard India as being at all times in a state of danger, from which it can only be rescued by the constant exercise of vigilance, and by the occasional adoption of measures which may appear extraordinary, but which are practically adapted to the extraordinary position which the British Government occupies in this country. It will ever be Lord Ellenborough's desire, should he be compelled to adopt such measures, to make them as far as possible conformable to European views and principles, but he feels that his first duty is to preserve this Empire to your Majesty's Crown, and he will never hesitate to adopt the measures which may appear necessary to secure that object.

Lord Ellenborough to Sir Robert Peel.

Barrackpore: Nov. 20, 1843.

If we only remain firm and strong, we must ultimately exercise as far as the Indus the same influence we now exercise over the chiefs of the hills and plains within the Sutlej.

Everything tends to consolidate the Empire, and to give an imperial character to our position. The name alone will be wanting. But my opinion remains unchanged, that the name is the keystone of the arch.

In his own mind Sir Robert Peel was not even yet fully convinced that the treatment of the Ameers had been just. Under the severe necessities of the situation, in concert with the Duke of Wellington and his other colleagues, he had not seen his way to condemn the policy of Ellenborough and Napier towards these unhappy princes, and compel their restoration to power. But neither was he prepared to be lectured for not having promptly confirmed what had been done, without awaiting the information now supplied.

To Lord Ripon.

Dec. 9, 1843.

I hope you will give an answer to Lord Ellenborough's unreasonable and unjust complaints of delay in our decision.

If a Governor-General supposes that the Government at home has no responsibility for acts done in India; that in the absence of necessary information—nay with the proofs before them that mistakes have been made in India as to the *identity* of native Princes to be deposed, and that there has been gross miscalculation of the value of territories to be forfeited—they have nothing to do but to ratify and approve, he is under a great misapprehension of our duties and our relations to him. In his private letter to you he dwells on the inconvenience of entrusting discretionary power to a Commander of the Forces naturally disposed for war. Were we to take for granted that that discretionary power which he entrusted to Sir Charles Napier, to decide on the guilt or innocence of the Ameers, and on the fate of Scinde, must necessarily be soberly and wisely exercised, and tha the natural tendencies of a military commander had no influence on his decisions?

Were we to overlook altogether the consideration of the probable expense of defending our position in Scinde, the probable cost of life from the prevalence of sickness, the effect which our occupation of Scinde might have upon the Sikh and other neighbouring nations, by infusing jealousy and suspicion of our intentions with regard to them?

Whatever Lord Ellenborough may think, these were, and depend upon it they *are*, most grave considerations. Time, distance, the course of events, may have so fettered our discretion that we have no alternative but to maintain the occupation of Scinde. I do not believe that the postponement of a resolution to maintain it till we had a knowledge of the facts, has in the slightest degree increased our difficulties, and in my opinion Lord Ellenborough should be informed of this in plain terms.

Whose fault is it that the Court of Directors, which hailed his appointment with unanimous satisfaction, and gave him a willing confidence, has been alienated from him? Certainly not ours.

To Lord Ellenborough.

January 2, 1844.

Lord Ripon showed me a private letter which you had addressed to him, in which, as in your letter to me, you express your regret and dissatisfaction at the interval which elapsed before the Government signified its decision with regard to the retention of the conquest of Scinde.

I consider that the question involves most important considerations; that the Government of this country has its full share of the responsibility attaching to a decision: that the immediate vindication of the course taken, so far as Parliament and the public here are concerned, rests with them; and that therefore it is very natural and very just that they should have before them all the information which can enable them to judge as to the justice and as to the policy of great public measures to which, by sanctioning them, they become parties.

No one is more sensible than I am that distance from the scene of action, lapse of time, the bearing and practical results of accomplished facts, must materially fetter the discretion of the Executive Government here, in respect to proceedings in India connected with operations in the field: but it can hardly be expected that we should approve, adopt, and become responsible for, acts so important as the

deposition of the Ameers, and the permanent annexation of a great country to the British Empire in India, without asking for those explanations on some points, and additional information on others, the demand for which in my opinion was fully justified by the general character of the documents on which we were invited to pronounce our judgment.

I cannot see any proof, in the facts that have reached us in regard to Scinde, that the difficulties in respect to that country and its future administration have been aggravated by the course taken by the Cabinet.

I shall be very sorry if this has been the case, but considering the consequences involved in a decision and the nature of the information transmitted to us in the first instance, the immediate unhesitating approval and confirmation of everything that was done could hardly have been expected.

To Lord Ripon.

Feb. 9, 1844.

I hope you will repeat by the next mail the most positive orders, first, that no sort of restraint that is not justified by an absolute necessity shall be imposed upon the Ameers; and secondly, that there shall be paid to them, without regard to expense, a studious consideration in respect to their personal treatment.

I was never more convinced of anything than I am of the humanity and policy of treating these fallen princes with great indulgence and great liberality.

The hard necessity of our lot *may* have left us no alternative but to depose and to banish them, but there not only is no pretence for withholding from them favour and kindness, but the extension to them of favour and kindness is the only mode by which we can reconcile the public mind here to our policy in Scinde.

Meanwhile the Governor-General had made up his mind (in error, so far as appears from the letters) that Lord Ripon was giving him less effective support than Lord Fitzgerald.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Feb. 19, 1844.

Depend upon it, no honest Governor-General can ever be popular with the Court [of Directors]. The whole administration of India was, when I arrived here, one vast job.

To tell you the truth, I do not think Lord Ripon knows his true position with respect to the Court. I see a great change, since the death of my excellent friend Fitzgerald, in the tone of their letters. Depend upon it, no English gentleman could endure to remain three months as Governor-General without the constant, vigilant, and decided protection of the President of the India Board. I know the whole system. There is intrigue with the clerks at the India House; there is intrigue with the Court and with the Directors individually, and there is intrigue with clerks at the India Board too, whenever a President does not look into everything himself, and do his own duty.

The rest of the letter relates to the writer's thirst for military command.

I hope you will have seen the expediency of doing what I suggested in my letter to Graham. I am sure nothing would have so good an effect upon public opinion here; and I cannot but think it would be a measure very agreeable to the army. Circumstances might have arisen recently, and may arise hereafter, in which the commission of Captain-General may be most useful to a Governor-General in the field, where I shall be, if anything of importance should arise.

Having once resolved, after much deliberation, to support his Governor-General against the censure of the East India Company, Sir Robert Peel did not do it by halves. He warned the President of the India Board, who had submitted to him a draft letter to the Chairman, to make no admissions that might be used by Ellenborough's enemies against him.

To Lord Ripon.

Drayton Manor: Saturday [April 6, 1844].

The Chairman's letter seems to preclude the hope that reasoning or expostulation will be of any avail.

If this be so, I doubt whether I should refer to disapprobation of particular acts, or to rebukes for tone and manner. It is difficult to make such admissions without the appearance of justifying in some degree the determination of the Court. It would be safer to state that, referring to the general tenor of Lord Ellenborough's conduct in India, to his indefatigable perseverance and self-devotion in the performance of his public duties, to the disinterested exercise of his official patronage, to the position in which affairs were when he assumed the government, to the serious evil of a sudden and unexpected change, her Majesty's Government considered the recall of the Governor-General to be equally inconsistent with justice and with sound policy, and must peremptorily decline to take any share in the responsibility which must attach to it. They must abstain from entering into any discussion as to the selection of a successor; first, because they will not assume that the Court will inflexibly adhere to their intentions of recall; secondly, because such a discussion as a preliminary to the act of recall, or entered into by the Government for the purpose of merely superseding the necessity of formal recall, would involve them to a certain degree in that responsibility which they entirely disclaim, and of which they will bear no part.

From Lord Ripon.

April 22.—There is no chance of the Court taking any other course, and on Thursday I shall receive their formal act of recall.

I presume they will then propose some name or other for our consideration. I am quite sure that Ellenborough will not stay an hour longer than may be necessary.

I know not what available man we have for the post. Graham is the only one who is entirely qualified for it, and him I have no doubt the Court will accept. But can he be spared?

From the Queen.

April 23, 1844.

The Queen has heard with the greatest regret that the Court of Directors after all mean to recall Lord Ellenborough. She cannot but consider this very unwise at this critical moment, and a very ungrateful return for the eminent services Lord Ellenborough has rendered to the Company in India. They ought not to forget so soon in what a state he found affairs in 1842. The Queen would not be sorry if these gentlemen knew that this is her opinion.

From Prince Albert.

April 24.—The Queen wishes me, in returning to you the enclosed protest of the Government against Lord Ellenborough's recall, to tell you that she highly approves of and concurs in it. I think this must break the neck of the old system. Lord Ellenborough will certainly not spare it, when he comes home.

From Lord Ripon.

April 28.—I am confined to my bed by an attack of inflammation, and have other symptoms of the same kind as I had last year. What can I do? It is impossible for me to go out to-morrow without infinite risk, above all to the House. I am wretched at the idea of trouble falling upon others which ought to fall upon me, but I cannot help it. Whatever the Cabinet think should be written to the Court, I am ready to sign. I feel that I am becoming more and more useless to you and to my colleagues.

To Lord Ripon.

(*Most private.*) April 30, 1844.

I advise you to hear what the Chairs have to say as to the selection of a Governor. They will probably propose

Metcalfe, or Pottinger, or both. Each is, in my opinion, out of the question. Each would probably decline. Metcalfe cannot be spared from Canada. Pottinger's published declarations about Scinde [opposed to annexation] constitute a great difficulty in respect to him.

Graham is no doubt highly qualified for India. But the Home Office is more important than India, and I know not how he is to be replaced there.

Sir George Murray, and Sir Henry Hardinge, would be acceptable appointments to the public, but Hardinge could not, I fear, supersede Gough in the military command.

Tell the Court our only object is to select the most qualified man entitled to our confidence. This is the principle on which we acted in the selection of Ellenborough. We relinquished his assistance in the House of Lords in giving effect to that principle. The return we meet with from the Court is his recall, against our remonstrance.

Find out from the Court what is their impression as to the solution of the difficulties in which we are involved. The public and Parliament will demand explanations. Are they to be partial or complete? If complete, do the Chairs think India can be governed by the present authorities at home, after the manifestation of disunion between them as to the Government of India, and the policy to be pursued there?

On the previous day the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords had pronounced the recall of the Governor-General to be 'a gross indiscretion -the most indiscreet exercise of power that he had known since he had had a knowledge of public affairs.'

From Lord Ripon.

(*Most private.*) May 1, 1844.

The Chairs have just left me. They are evidently much discomposed at what the Duke said in the House, and feel that it places them in such a position as to make some explanation necessary in order to clear up their case.

Their manner was civil, but I saw they were much hurt

at what passed on Monday. This is a very delicate topic. But I ought not to conceal from you what their feeling about it was.

To Lord Ripon.

May 2.—The question of publication is one of extreme importance. I will venture to say that you cannot publish everything, and leave the Home authorities, the Crown and the Court, in their present relation to each other.

Is it impossible for you to come to some agreement with the Court as to the publication of that which will be sufficient to show the grounds on which the Court recalled Lord Ellenborough, and those on which the Crown sustained him, without exposing to the world that as to grave questions of Indian policy, not yet adjusted, and in respect to which military operations may become necessary, there is between the two chief authorities responsible an important difference of opinion?

May 3.—I have sent for the Chairs to call upon me, as you cannot come. I want to have some conversation with them before we announce the selection of a Governor-General. It may be well to have a preliminary assurance that a Governor of our selection shall have a decisive support from the Court.

I have every hope that I can persuade Hardinge to go. It will be most important to give him the chief military command.

If the Chairs have not left you when you receive this, do not hint a word about Hardinge's appointment.

May 4.—I have settled everything, and most satisfactorily, as to Hardinge's appointment, and the restoration of harmony with the Court.

I am afraid, on account of Gough's claims, Hardinge cannot at present be Captain-General. But you should manage with the Duke and the Chairs that he take out with him a dormant Commission of Captain-General, to be used in the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander-in-Chief.

Paper circulated to the Cabinet.

May 4, 1844.

I was occupied yesterday in attempting to make a satisfactory arrangement as to the succession to Lord Ellenborough.

Having ascertained that Sir Henry Hardinge would feel it to be his duty to accept the appointment if it were deemed advantageous for the public service, I sent for the Chairs, and reminded them of the sacrifice we had made in relinquishing the services as a colleague of Lord Ellenborough, in order that we might make the appointment most acceptable to the Court of Directors, and the return we had met with in his recall against our advice and in defiance of our remonstrances.

I said that there was the choice between two courses; to leave them to themselves to make what appointment they thought fit; or to act cordially with them in making a selection by friendly communication; that I thought the latter course the best for the public interests; and that if adopted it ought to be pursued in a most frank and friendly spirit, and as if there had been no recent collision.

I discovered that their opinion was in concurrence with my own, that Sir Henry Hardinge was highly qualified for the appointment.

I told them I would not propose it to him, or to any one, without an assurance that the selection had their cordial approbation, and moreover that they *and the Court* were prepared to give to the person named by me entire confidence, and entire support to the policy he might pursue.

They said the Court was then sitting. I requested them to go to the Court, to tell them all I had said without reserve, and to send me a written assurance as to the views of the Court, and their opinions and feelings with regard to Sir Henry Hardinge.

I received from the Chairs that evening the accompanying note, and made forthwith all the arrangements for the appointment of Sir Henry Hardinge on Monday next.

The Queen heartily approves.

(*Enclosure.*)

From the Chairman of the East India Company.

East India House: May 3, 1844.

I have the pleasure to inform you that having consulted my colleagues in a Secret Court, at which all the Directors were present, I find they are unanimously prepared cordially to concur in the appointment of Sir Henry Hardinge as Governor-General and Captain-General; and I am to add that he possesses their entire confidence. I earnestly hope, therefore, that Sir Henry will undertake that important trust.

From the Queen.

May 4.—The Queen is much pleased to hear of the assent of the Court of Directors to Sir H. Hardinge's nomination, and hopes with me that you may be able to remove all difficulties standing in the way of his being made Commander-in-Chief likewise, which would be of great importance.

From Lord Ripon.

May 4.—Most sincerely do I rejoice at the successful manner in which you have settled about Hardinge. I do not believe that any one else could have brought it about.

The Chairs are highly pleased with the appointment, and all that has taken place in respect to it manifests a cordial disposition on their part to get back to a state of good understanding.

To Lord Ellenborough.

Whitehall: May 6, 1844.

You will see that the Court notified to us their wish and intention to recall you; that they invited us to discuss with them the selection of a successor; that we protested against your recall as unjust and imprudent; that we refused to give or to imply any sanction to it, and declined to consider the nomination of a successor, on the ground that it might seem to imply concurrence, and might relieve the Court

from some portion of the responsibility which they were about to incur, and which we were resolved should fall entirely and absolutely upon them.

They persisted in their resolution to recall you.

We then applied ourselves to the immediate consideration of such proceedings on our part as might diminish the risk of public embarrassment and danger from the act of the Court.

In consequence of the illness of Lord Ripon, the communication between the Chairs and the Government in respect to the nomination of a successor to you passed through me. The Government was desirous that the appointment should be one combining the following recommendations.

First, that it should be that of a person eminently qualified for the high trust of Governor-General. Secondly, that it should be the appointment most likely to be acceptable to you personally. Thirdly, that it should convey to the world a public demonstration (so far as it could be conveyed by the selection of a successor) that *we* had approved of your general policy, and were prepared to give effect to it in future.

It appeared to us that all these recommendations would be combined in a higher degree in the person of Sir Henry Hardinge than of any other.

Sir Henry Hardinge consented to undertake the office.

I desired the Chairs to call upon me. I reminded them of the circumstances under which you had been appointed —of the sacrifices we had made in foregoing your aid as a colleague in the Cabinet and in the House of Lords, from a pure desire to select the man most highly qualified and best entitled to the confidence of the Crown and of the Court of Directors. I observed that the return we had met with from the Court was the recall and dismissal of a colleague, appointed under such circumstances, retaining our entire confidence, removed in defiance of our protest and remonstrance. I said I would not undertake to select a successor to you—would leave them to act on the letter

of the law, and find a Governor-General for themselves, unless I had an assurance that they would give their full confidence to the person I should name, and every assurance of cordial support to the policy which it was possible and fitting that the Court should give.

I named to the Chairs Sir Henry Hardinge, and at the same time pointed out to them that he had been cognisant of all the transactions in India as a Cabinet Minister, and had been a party to the approval of the acts of your Government. I requested to know whether his nomination would be cordially approved of by them, and whether they and the Court would give me assurances of confidence and support, which I required as a preliminary to my making the proposal to Sir Henry Hardinge.

They sent me in writing the assurances I required. The formal appointment will take place this day.

I will not dilate here on the deep regret with which the whole Cabinet received the declaration of the Court in respect to their intention of recalling you. We have put upon record our opinion as to the injustice and impolicy of that act.

It only remains for me to assure you that the opinion of the Court of Directors, and the proceedings they have adopted, have not in the slightest degree shaken or abated the confidence which the Queen and her Majesty's servants have reposed in you.

We do ample justice to the motives by which you have been influenced, to your disinterested exercise of official patronage, to your unwearied zeal in the public service, to the success of your efforts to retrieve past misfortunes, to restore the spirit and confidence of the Army, to dispel the doubts as to the supremacy of British rule in India which were gaining ground on your arrival in that country.

To mark emphatically our sense of your public services, I have advised the Queen that you should be elevated to the rank of an Earl, and the distinction of the Grand Cross of the Bath should be conferred upon you.

The Queen has been most graciously pleased to approve

of this advice. It was in exact conformity with her Majesty's own personal wishes and feelings.

The moment that I hear from you that this elevation in rank in the Peerage is acceptable to you, and that I know your wishes as to the title to be assumed, the patent shall pass.

I convey to you on the part of my colleagues the fullest assurance that you will return to this country with confirmed claims on their esteem, regard, and confidence.

Soon afterwards came from India the following letter:

Lord Ellenborough to Lord Hardinge.

Barrackpore: April 15, 1844.

You see what has happened at Lahore. There can be no doubt that out of the state of things in the Punjab will arise an invasion of our protected territory. All things tend to it.

I had rather any necessity for our moving should be put off for a year and a half from this time. If it could be, I should have an army with which I could march to the Dardanelles. In four months I shall have 275,000 in arms.

I think I could cross the Sutlej with rather more than 33,000 infantry, 7,000 cavalry, and in all 162 guns. But, as I have told Sir George Arthur, I want 40,000 men, and *one*, and that *one* a General. The last I have not got.

Does not this excite your ambition? It would be an operation of two years, which would require the most dexterous political management as well as military, but which well managed should give us the Punjab, Cashmere, and Peshawur, that is, everything within the mountains; and it should be terminated, in order to secure the whole, by the assumption of the Imperial title by the Queen. Without that there is nothing secure. We must give a national position to the Chiefs of India, who will all be ennobled in their own opinion by becoming the Feudatories of the Empire. There would then be something intelligible in our position here. As it is, all is confusion.

I think you will at once see that, supposing this operation

of two years to be successfully completed, we have under our foot, whenever the state of Europe may permit us to take it, that country which has ever been the ultimate object of my desires, but of which I hardly dare to whisper the name—Egypt.

Perhaps I may have seen in a vision something beyond this. But this is enough for the present.

And if I were thoroughly supported at home—if I were supported one half as well as I have ever supported all who have served under me, I know I could do all this, *with a General.* I do not say I can without one; but I could make a General's work very easy for him.

In the meantime I conclude that what I wrote to Sir James Graham about has not been done, which will be a monstrous error.

To accomplish the great things I may be compelled to attempt, it is most expedient that I should appear to be one of the Army by which they must be done.

People here blame me for having placed myself under fire at Maharajpoor, but I did so as a matter of calculation. It was essential to my position.

Now, I have only one word more to say, and that is, *Come.*

This letter Sir Robert Peel sent in circulation to Ripon, Stanley, Graham, Goulburn, and Aberdeen, marked *Secret*, with the remark:

'If its contents were known to the Court of Directors, it would not dissatisfy them with their recent letter of recall.'

In a letter by the same mail to Sir Robert Peel, coming events cast their shadows more quietly before.

Calcutta: April 18, 1844.

You see the course things are taking at Lahore. I assure you I think the existence of a large army within forty miles of our frontier, extorting for each successive crime it permits higher pay from the nominal head, and positively governing the country, is of more real danger to us than would be the existence in the same position of the same army thoroughly disciplined and obedient to a powerful and hostile government.

I dread mutiny more than war. I dread nothing but mutiny in India.

I am preparing quietly for what must come, but I earnestly hope the necessity for action may not occur till November 1845.

I wish you would send me out a good clerk from the Treasury. He need not stay above a year, but he would in that time establish everywhere a good system for the transaction of business.

You can have no conception of the want of business-like habits in this country. I have made great reforms, but I cannot do everything myself, and I have really no assistance I have done much. Business is done better and in a much shorter time. But all the civilians set their backs against improvement, and hardly one co-operates. Each man writes off to complain to his patron director; and then from these patron directors, with all the prestige which still attaches to them, although most of their real power is gone, come letters calculated to produce through the whole service a spirit of mutiny against the Government which it is their duty to support.

This is a shameful state of things. It would be injurious to any government, but it is really dangerous where all we can do is required to give the appearance of unity and strength.

You may readily believe that under these circumstances I do not stay here for my own personal satisfaction. Indeed, I did not come for my satisfaction. I came to accomplish a great purpose long since prepared. But every day new events require immediate action, and certainly a change of government is in itself a bad thing.

On May 7, Mr. Hume having moved for all the correspondence between the Government and the Court of Directors, Sir Robert Peel 'called on the House not to send out with a new Governor the decisive proof of the Home authorities having held different opinions.' In this he was supported by members speaking for the Directors, and Lord John Russell agreed that the production of the papers should be deferred.

In India the Governor-General, recalled by the Company, received with satisfaction, by the same mail, the marked approval of the Crown.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Calcutta: June 19, 1844.

I have received your letter informing me of my recall by the Court of Directors, and of her Majesty's having been graciously pleased to signify her intention of conferring upon me an Earldom and the Grand Cross of the Bath.

It is most gratifying to me that her Majesty should think fit at this juncture to manifest her approval of my conduct in India.

As to *title*, a new name puts History into confusion, and I have no wish to change mine.

Immediately upon the arrival of the mail I advised my temporary successor, Mr. Bird, to send off by express to all the principal native courts letters announcing my recall, and that my successor, my relation and best friend, would act upon the same principles of policy and carry out all my views.

I do not think there will be any misunderstanding upon this point. Even Mur Nassur Khan says, 'What good shall I receive from their recalling the Governor-General when they send his brother as his successor?' The idea of identity is everywhere attached to this connection[1] between Sir Henry and me. You could not have done a more politic act than in selecting Sir Henry to succeed me.

There will, however, be a great practical mischief in the encouragement given to every discontented man, every disappointed jobber, every dismissed incompetent, to assail the Governor-General by misrepresentations in the newspapers, and to endeavour to create a prejudice against him amongst the members of the Court through the means of private letters. This course has been pursued with respect to me since I first arrived. I cannot comprehend upon

[1] Lady Emily Hardinge and the first Lady Ellenborough were sisters.

what ground I am represented to be so odious to the Civil Service. Certainly I put an end to some gross jobs.

I certainly appointed the fittest men in the service to the highest situations. Indeed, in every civil and political as well as in every military appointment, I have placed either the fittest man, or a man as fit as any other.

I have endeavoured to make a strong Government by bringing forward ability and rewarding merit wherever I could find it, and I fear I shall be looked upon rather coldly by some of my friends when I return to England; for I have disregarded all recommendations, and leave India without having conferred one undeserved favour.

I leave my successor no difficulties but such as arise out of finance. But these are great, and I frankly confess that I do not see my way out of them.

While the Punjaub remains in its present state, we cannot safely reduce our soldiers. We are weighed down by the enormous extent of our civil establishments also. The whole corporation, for such it is, hangs together, and every man excuses and protects his friend's job.

I am really quite disheartened upon this subject. There are no good instruments in the hands of the Government. The Government alone, sometimes the Governor-General alone, desires economy. All others are satisfied if the thing lasts their time. They wish to make their time as short as they can, and have a fellow feeling with all who endeavour to make more rupees.

The Governor-General is often the sole representative of the public of England and the people of India. The Court of Directors, and all the servants of the Government, pull the other way.

You cannot suppose that I leave my position in such a country with any regret.

I have laboured hard to do my duty, and have thought of nothing else. But I am not sorry to be relieved from the unavailing struggle with difficulties insurmountable under the present form of Indian government, and which I regret to think my successor will find aggravated by my recall.

CHAPTER II.

IRELAND, 1841–1843.

O'Connell and Repeal—The Irish Government—De Grey, Eliot, Sugden—The Law Officers—National Education—Patronage—Chief Secretary and Lord Lieutenant—Repeal Agitation—Poverty of the Tenantry—Payment of the Priests—County Franchise.

FROM India the transition seems abrupt to Ireland. But Irish agitators watched with interest the fortune of British arms in Afghanistan and Scinde. O'Connell, freed from his compact to support the Whigs in office, had made a new departure, and now used all his eloquence to convince the Irish that their one hope of justice, liberty, and prosperity, lay in repealing the Act of Union with Great Britain.

The great agitator did not find this easy. In the House of Commons there were not more than twelve Repealers, and to rouse all Ireland was a work of time. Sir Robert Peel thought it politic at first to treat the movement with contempt. But in two years it grew so strong as to compel attention.

In Ireland the new Government was represented by Lord Ripon's brother Earl De Grey, Lord Eliot, and Sir Edward Sugden. De Grey had 'Protestant' connections, being brother-in-law to Enniskillen, the red-hot Orange leader. Eliot was 'Catholic,' and disposed to liberal measures. Sugden, a great lawyer, in De Grey's opinion knew little of mankind. Peel's true adjutant-general was Graham. Their correspondence throws much light on their joint management of Ireland.

The Irish Government was not a happy family. De Grey gave little patronage to Catholics, and none to the few Protestant clergy who favoured 'National Education.' Eliot, responsible, yet not consulted, felt aggrieved. Sugden, in prosecutions, and in dismissing magistrates, let his zeal outrun discretion. The other law officers did not inspire confidence.

The Under Secretary, Lucas, disagreed with the Chief Secretary. De Grey reported Eliot and Sugden as being, for counsel, useless. Prime Minister and Home Secretary had to settle policy, press for Catholic appointments, keep the peace between Chief Secretary and Viceroy, and generally do the work.

One urgent question was that of Education. The difficulty was about religion. Catholics regarded Protestant teaching, and Protestants regarded Catholic teaching, on this subject, as heresy. 'United Education' pleased neither Catholic nor Protestant. Both wished their children to be taught in school their own religion.

Sir Robert Peel supported 'National Education,' on two grounds. First, he wanted Irish children of the two creeds to mix, and to sit side by side in school. Secondly, he wished all to learn the Bible.

Lord Stanley, as Whig Irish Secretary, had tried to found a system of 'united secular and separate religious education.' But this 'had in great measure failed.'

'National Schools,' with few exceptions, were Catholic or Protestant, not mixed. Seeing this to be the fact, Lord Stanley inclined to recognise it, by giving to the 'National Church Society' separate grants in Ireland, as in England. Meanwhile the clergy in general, Protestant and Catholic, hotly opposed the 'National System,' and Presbyterians used it only because they could make it what they chose.

From Lord Stanley.

Knowsley: Nov. 30, 1841.

I am sorry to find that the clergy in Ireland are likely to take up the question of Education so warmly.

The fact I believe to be, that the scheme for *united* education has in great measure failed; and it would be found that in a small proportion only of the schools are Protestants and Roman Catholics combined, except in overwhelming proportions one way or the other.

But, on the other hand, I believe that it has been the means of giving Scriptural education to a much larger number of Roman Catholics than could otherwise have been induced to receive it. And the system is so flexible,

and capable of being moulded so easily to suit the views of managers, that I am satisfied Protestants have it in their power to make the education as Scriptural as they please, for those of their own communion.

In proof of this, the system has now been very generally taken up by the Presbyterians of the North, who were among the most violent sticklers for the free admission of the Scriptures, and I had a letter from Dr. Elrington complaining of this very fact, and saying it was very hard that the Presbyterians, by evading the rules, obtained aid which Churchmen were too conscientious to receive in the same manner.

I own I despair of seeing the clergy depart from the ground which they have taken up. And while I would adhere to the present system, as giving in some cases united education, and in the great majority the least objectionable education you can consistently give to the entire satisfaction of the great body of Roman Catholics, I think it may be well worth consideration whether, as in England the Privy Council give aid to schools supported by the National Society and by the British and Foreign, a similar grant might not be made in Ireland, part to the present National Board, and part to the branch of the National *Society* established in Ireland.

This suggestion the Chief Secretary opposed, and in his letters Peel soon perceived a feeling of resentment at not being more consulted.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 6, 1841.

I do not like the general tone of Eliot's letter. Will it not be well for you to make communications on public matters to the Irish Government as much as possible through him?

Between ourselves I think De Grey is a little apt to keep the Secretary too much in the background. In all parliamentary matters the Secretary is mainly responsible; he has the conduct necessarily of all parliamentary busi-

ness; and his opinion therefore is entitled in such matters to great deference and authority.

Meanwhile the Irish Attorney-General and Lord Chancellor, without consulting the Home Office, had begun injudicious prosecutions, and removal of magistrates for favouring Repeal.

Dec. 19.—Are the Irish Government prosecuting a man of the name of Connor for seditious language?

I doubt the policy of this if they are. When a country is tolerably quiet it is better for a Government to be *hard of hearing* in respect to seditious language than to be very agile in prosecuting.

Jan. 2, 1842.—In the case of magistrates it must be a very strong act which would warrant removal. You will observe in the proceedings [at Repeal meetings] studious loyalty to the Queen. The charge would be limited to the expression of an opinion on a political subject, the discussion of which is not forbidden by law, namely, the repeal of an act of the legislature.

On rumours of invasion or armed insurrection reported by the Lord Lieutenant, Sir Robert Peel remarks:

To Lord De Grey.

July 10, 1842.

Lord Glengall is one of the class that in my day in Ireland we called 'Alarmists.'

'Fifty thousand men are ready to come over from the United States to aid Irish patriots.' This is very startling. But it is consolatory to hear that 'how they were to arrive was not mentioned.'

'I have received information that there are in the county of Kilkenny large depots of arms.' Then point out one of them. This is the sort of information that a Government wants. If there be any foundation for the story (which there is not), the information, however vague, will be more useful to the Government than to Lord Glengall.

I consider this letter a very characteristic one. It reminds me of a hundred others which I received when in Ireland.

Soon afterwards, Lord De Grey having selected for a bishopric a leading opponent of 'National' Education, the Chief Secretary succeeded in arresting the appointment.

From Lord Eliot.

July 15, 1842.

The proposed Bishop of Meath, Dr. Elrington, is an active, able, uncompromising foe of the present system of National Education; and his appointment as successor to Dr. Dickinson, who was a member of the Board, would, I am persuaded, be generally looked on as a declaration of war against that system. The result would be increased agitation, and consequently increased difficulty in resisting the change even now so vehemently demanded by a large body of the Protestant clergy.

To Sir James Graham.

July 16, 1842.

I have told De Grey that if Dr. Elrington has taken a public and prominent part against the plan of Irish Education, or has encouraged the recent systematic petitioning against it, on the part of the Irish clergy, I think that the selection of him at the present moment, and particularly as the successor of Dr. Dickinson, would be an unfortunate one.

To complete the difficulties on Education, in the House of Commons the Chief Secretary and the Solicitor-General came into sharp collision, Eliot attacking the Protestant Education Society, and Jackson in return condemning 'Mixed Education.'

From Sir James Graham.

July 17, 1842.

After the occurrences of Friday night, I am afraid that the immediate selection of Dr. Elrington for preferment would expose us to many serious inconveniences.

Eliot unfortunately, by his needless attack on the Kildare Street Society, almost justified Jackson in making the strong declaration which he did against the system of mixed education. But, after that speech from a Law Officer of the Crown in Ireland, the promotion of Dr. Elrington would lead to the secession of the Archbishop of Dublin from the Commission, and to a battle royal on the ground of Education.

I am glad we are to have a fight with Sheil. Next to a drink there is nothing like a fight for bringing Irishmen together; and if Eliot stands up to his man, and Jackson supports him well, the events of Friday night will be partially obliterated.

Oct. 12.—The Primate's charge to his clergy is said to have been written by Stopford, and to be vehement in denouncing the mixed scheme of Education.

Our policy on this question must not be left in doubt. We must decide whether a separate grant to diocesan schools shall receive our attention; the claim of the Presbyterians will immediately follow; the demands of the Roman Catholics will become urgent and irresistible.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 20, 1842.

It will be quite impossible to go on in the way we are now going on with regard to Irish matters. We must require the opinion on each subject of the Irish Government. Lord De Grey and Lord Eliot must tell us what they, in their official and collective capacity, advise.

Let them either decide a matter for themselves, or if they do not wish to decide it, let a despatch be written, stating the facts of the case, and giving the opinion of the Irish Government upon it. If I were you I should require this. We are invited, not only to govern Ireland in details, but to solve the difficulties arising from the discrepancies of opinion of those upon the spot.

A little later the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary came near to public disagreement.

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 15, 1842.

I am afraid of a rupture between De Grey and Eliot. The mutual estrangement is on the increase, and an open breach on the eve of the Session would be the greatest disaster. I trust, however, to the prudence of De Grey, who is aware of the danger, and will endeavour to avert it.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 15, 1842.

I enclose an ominous letter from Eliot. I think De Grey underrates the mischievous consequences of a rupture in the Government of Ireland.

If it takes place, we shall have a decisive proof that the Government of Ireland cannot be satisfactorily administered under the present constitution of it. There will then be too frequent proofs of discordance between the chief authorities, the Lord Lieutenant and his Secretary. And the evil consequences of that discordance, paralysing authority in Ireland, and disturbing the harmony of the Government here, will compel us to devise some permanent and effective remedy.

The basis of a new arrangement would be the abolition of the office of Lord Lieutenant—in my opinion a great evil, but a less evil than discord between the Lord Lieutenant and his representative in the House of Commons.

Dec. 23.—I told you I had written to De Grey, urging upon him the necessity of preventing disunion with Eliot. I have desired Drummond to bring you the copy of a letter which I have written to Eliot.

If we can find a good man friendly, or not unfriendly, to the National system of Education for the next bishopric, we shall in my opinion terminate this difference, and do good in other respects. Pray urge this on De Grey, as from yourself, in aid of the representations I will make to him.

We must take care that our appointments are not at direct variance with our resolutions and measures.

To Lord Eliot.

(*Most private.*) Dec. 23, 1842.

As there was nothing in the private letter which you recently wrote to me which was not consistent with the greatest personal respect and esteem for Lord De Grey, and as it contained only a very fair and temperate expression of feelings, with which I thought it very important for great public interests that Lord De Grey should be acquainted, I took upon myself the responsibility of transmitting your letter to him, and I expressed an earnest hope that by means of frank and unreserved communication in all public matters between you and him the difficulties which are inherent in the relation of Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary might be greatly diminished if not altogether removed.

No one is more sensible, from personal experience, of the extent of these difficulties than myself. I acted as Chief Secretary with three Lords Lieutenant.

The first had been five years in Ireland before my appointment. He had contracted intimacies and private friendships, to the influence of which he was very prone to yield, and engagements had been entered into, or civil assurances (construed in Ireland into engagements) had been given with respect to offices and appointments of all descriptions, which absorbed the patronage vacant during my official connection with that Lord Lieutenant (the Duke of Richmond) and left me scarcely a voice in the disposal of it.

When Lord Whitworth, and still more when Lord Talbot succeeded to the office of Lord Lieutenant, our relations were just inverted. For every office they found an irresistible claim, and every public measure seemed in a train of settlement which could not be disturbed.

However, we were all so deeply penetrated with the conviction that nothing but public embarrassment of the gravest kind could arise from disunion and the want of harmony, and felt so assured that the difficulties of our situation towards each other did not arise from petty

jealousies or the want of personal esteem, but were inseparable from the peculiar nature of the relation of the office of Chief Secretary to that of Lord Lieutenant, that we resolved *not to disagree*, and to defeat by our own cordiality and our own forbearance the mischievous efforts of those who are constantly trying, for their own purposes, personal or political, to foment discord between the chief authorities in Ireland. It is the old Irish game, and played with consummate dexterity.

The separation of the Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary during half the year; the confidential habits that grow up between the Lord Lieutenant and the Under Secretary in that interval; the predominance of the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, and of the Chief Secretary in Parliament; the necessity for each to take decisions on the spot, without the opportunity of communication; the legislative authority of the Secretary, balanced against the executive authority of the Lord Lieutenant; the indefinite nature of the relation in which they stand towards each other—the Chief Secretary a cypher by his patent, but practically occupying one of the most prominent and important offices of the State—all these things are pregnant with difficulties, which afford an ample field for the cunning and malevolence of the old breed of Irish politicians, and which nothing can solve but the good sense, mutual forbearance, and zeal for public interests, of the parties who have to contend with them.

The overcoming of these difficulties must rest mainly, from the alternations of duty in his case, with the Chief Secretary; the contest with them makes his office a most valuable preparatory course for higher duties; the complete mastery of them proves his qualification for those higher duties.

I had every confidence, from my knowledge of the personal qualities of Lord De Grey and of yourself, that the public evil of disunion would be averted—and that confidence remains unabated.

You would be under a most erroneous impression if

you thought your opinions were disregarded, or your feelings were not consulted, in the decisions taken here on Irish affairs.

I am writing to you, as I have always written, in unbounded confidence.

To what does the Attorney-General, so far as political considerations are concerned, mainly owe his appointment? His moderation on Maynooth, and his refusal to give a pledge against the system of National Education. Why was Mr. Greene preferred as Solicitor-General to Mr. Warren? Certainly not in consequence of the recommendations of either the Lord Lieutenant or the Chancellor. In justice to each of them I must say, they willingly waived their opinions, in cheerful deference to your wishes.

When Lord De Grey suggested an inquiry into the system pursued by the Board of Education and the practical results of it, and when the Cabinet unanimously determined not to evade the difficulty either by protracted investigations or a suspension of decision or a separate vote, surely the decisive support of your views on a question of that paramount importance—the more valuable from its being conscientious support on the abstract merits of the question—must compensate you for a thousand little uneasinesses and perplexities that beset a Chief Secretary, as they beset every other official with equally arduous duties.

The decisive, the exclusive support of the Government given to the national system will, I earnestly hope, recommend it to favour among many who have hitherto regarded it with coldness and distrust.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Hill St.: Dec. 24, 1842.

The danger has passed away for the present, and I hope we shall get through the Session without a return of it. Lord St. Germans [Lord Eliot's father] cannot be immortal, and there are some great advantages in an hereditary peerage.

I think that so far as we have gone the appointments to

the Bench of Bishops have been right. It was necessary to counterbalance our firm adherence to the Education measure by a large dispensation of patronage to the strong Protestant party. This adherence is now announced, and this share of patronage has been bestowed. It now becomes important to have some one Bishop at all events not hostile to the scheme of National Education which we uphold.

I suppose it would be too hazardous a step to send Eliot to Canada, the influence which Gibbon Wakefield[1] has over him being notorious, and his power of resistance to popular influences being very feeble. But he would have a better chance than any other man of success in the management of poor Bagot's new Administration, and in 'wielding that fierce democracy,' if we could but rely on his obedience to instructions.

He has served our purpose in Ireland; he has ceased to be useful there; his absence from the House of Commons would be a positive gain.

From Lord Eliot.

Phœnix Park: Dec. 26, 1842.

You will, I trust, permit me to express to you the great gratification which your very kind and unreserved communication has afforded me. The assurance that I enjoy your confidence would incline me to remain without a murmur in a far more difficult and unpleasant position than that in which I am placed.

Lord De Grey's conduct towards me is most friendly, and I entertain towards him feelings of sincere respect and regard. I am not unmindful of the fact that he is the responsible head of the Government in this country, and I am ready to acknowledge that it is his duty to act in that capacity according to the dictates of his own judgment. It is therefore not of Lord De Grey so much as of the constitution of the Irish Government that I sometimes feel disposed

[1] A well-known advanced Colonial Reformer.

to complain. I am more or less responsible for every act of the Government, and no man likes to be responsible for acts of which he does not altogether approve.

I confess, however, that I see no way in which this disadvantage can be obviated, and I therefore feel that I ought to do nothing to render the working of the existing machinery more difficult than it is. So long, then, as you shall think that I can render any services to your Government by continuing to hold this office, I will disregard all personal considerations, and strive to follow the example which you have set me.

I am fully sensible of what you say with respect to the tactics of our opponents here. I know how industriously and skilfully they labour to make it appear that there are dissensions among the members of the Government, so I will take care not to play their game.

The result of your communication to Lord De Grey was a correspondence between him and me. Lord De Grey thought it better to state his view of the question in writing than in conversation. He accordingly wrote me a letter, with the lines of which I could not but be pleased, so kind and conciliatory was it, although I could not entirely concur in all the opinions which he expressed, or admit the perfect accuracy of all the statements he made.

My answer was, I trust, a proper one, and I have reason to believe that, without retracting what I said to you, I have succeeded in removing that painful impression which it had produced on his mind.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 27, 1842.

I am sure De Grey may manage Eliot, but he must show him full confidence, and ought to admit him into all his councils, and talk over with him every important appointment.

So closed 1842. Next year the Repeal agitation suddenly grew formidable, and O'Connell boasted that an Irish Parliament was about to sit again in College Green.

From Sir James Graham.

May 5, 1843.

Sheil told Dawson Damer that he never knew the excitement so great, or the danger so imminent. He felt, or pretended to feel, great alarm. He said that an immediate increase of the military force was necessary; that the feebleness of Eliot was an encouragement to violence; that the burdens of the poor rate and of the tithe rent charge had driven the small half-ruined Protestant proprietors into the ranks of the disaffected; and he appeared to think that we were on the eve of a convulsion.

From Lord De Grey.

Private.) May 6, 1843.

Matters are looking so serious, that delay or temporising will be ruin. The rapid spread of the Repeal agitation, and the burst of audacity which has broken out within this very short time, are astounding.

Many motives are at work to swell the Repeal party. Many are beginning to say 'We feel assured it will be granted, like the Catholic claim, and we may as well go with the stream, and profit by it.'

The Roman Catholic hierarchy support Repeal. Dr. McHale remits subscriptions from nearly every priest in his diocese. America gives increased support to it. This can only be with *separation* in view. The corporations, following the example of Dublin, have nearly all declared for it. The Teetotallers are all Repealers. All Ireland is organised by 'Repeal Wardens,' sent down, appointed, and paid, by the head Association.

Till within these few weeks only one or two magistrates, exclusive of O'Connell and his family, had joined the ranks. The numbers are daily on the increase.

The money now raised is very considerable. From weekly sums under 60*l.* it has risen to near 700*l.*

The meetings are enormous, and most formidable. Their numbers are grossly exaggerated, but when O'Connell

states that he has been addressing 70,000; 80,000; 120,000; more; the world believes him.

The Radical members of Parliament remain in Ireland, telling their constituents that they can serve them better here. A building has been commenced, to hold 3,000 persons, and is announced as the future House of Commons. O'Connell boldly avows that he knows the illegality of any Delegation or Convention, but points out how the law may be evaded.

Is this a state of things that can be allowed to go on? Every hour is adding fatal strength to the danger.

Our own professed friends are out of sorts, out of spirits, out of temper. They say they are neglected, their interests overlooked, their opponents fostered. We know it is untrue, but they are told it by those who unfortunately have weight with them, and they believe it.

I would earnestly request that you would look at this subject instantly.

Pressing as I may appear now, it may be said, 'Why has not this been daily watched, and timely notice given?' My reply is that till within these few weeks the whole measure was so utterly undeserving of notice that it would have only given it importance to have put it forward. The growth has been astounding.

From Sir James Graham.

May 7, 1843.

The Duke is bent on immediate legislation. Stanley doubts the policy of it. He foresees also difficulty likely to arise from the proceedings of the Anti-Corn-Law League, which are founded on the model of the Repeal Association; and if one be suppressed and the other be left untouched, there will be an appearance of unequal justice.

Our decision of to-morrow will be most important.

To Lord De Grey.

May 9, 1843.

The Duke in the Lords and I in the Commons shall to-night declare our intentions to preserve inviolate the

Union, and to use all the authority of the Government in support of it.

Eliot seems uneasy. He is much annoyed by a letter from Lucas [the Under Secretary], which I think conveyed very unjust insinuations that for the apathy of the Government Eliot was to blame.

Your letter to me, which mentioned the suddenness with which the Repeal agitation had come to maturity, soothed him. I doubt, however, his willing acquiescence in strong measures. His opposition to them, if they are necessary, of course ought not to prevail. But disunion and secession add to the inherent difficulties of the course to be pursued.

May 10.—Our declarations in the two Houses, in favour of the maintenance of the Union, were very emphatic and decisive. They appeared to give general satisfaction among our own party, and to be responded to by the leaders of the Whigs in our House.

I was in the House of Lords when the discussion took place. The feeling there was unanimous.

We could not expect unanimity in our House. But the predominant feeling was decidedly in reprobation of the attempts made to disturb the Union.

I declared that all the influence and authority of the Government should be exercised to repress and discourage such attempts. I shall be anxious to learn the general effect produced in Ireland by our declarations.

Eliot was entirely satisfied with what I said. I thought it desirable to make the declaration myself, as the head of the Government.

From Sir Edward Sugden.

(*Private and confidential.*) Dublin: May 28, 1843.

I enclose a letter from O'Connell. You will see that I am to be the first victim of the Irish House of Commons. This threat will do his cause harm with the higher classes, but that is indifferent to him. He and the priests have

arrayed the lower orders against the intelligence and property of the country.

You can hardly overrate the gravity of the present moment. The peaceable demeanour of the assembled multitudes is one of the most alarming symptoms. The people at present quiet in action are free in speech. A settled conviction prevails amongst them that Repeal will soon be carried, and Repeal means what every individual happens to desire.

The money collected, whilst it gives the subscribers a stake in the movement, increases the misery of the lower orders. Such vast bodies of men, entertaining such opinions, and ready for action, would only be kept down by the influence of O'Connell and the priests. But it is impossible that they can much longer prevent an outbreak. The present fever heat, although it may exhaust the patient, and produce a corresponding degree of languor, is more likely to end in violence. I think a short time will decide.

The cry for Emancipation was at last met by concession, but for the present cry there is no such remedy. Repeal now means separation, and hatred to the British connection.

From Mr. O'Connell to Sir Edward Sugden.

30 Merrion Square: May 27, 1843.

I would not willingly be exceeded by you in courtesy, and I beg you to believe that if, in the performance of a sacred duty, I should use any expressions of a harsh nature—which I shall studiously endeavour to avoid—it is not my intention to say anything personally offensive.

But that duty obliges me to declare that, as the Restoration of the Irish Parliament is an event in my judgment not remote, I will avail myself of the opportunity afforded by a seat in the Irish House of Commons to move for an impeachment of the present Lord Chancellor for presuming to interfere with the subject's dearest and most precious right, the right of petitioning Parliament;

a right expressly declared to belong to the people as one of 'the true, ancient, and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this realm.' I mean to insist—and I think the argument will have weight with an Irish Parliament freely and fairly elected—that the act of the Chancellor necessarily endangers the stability of the throne, and the security of the connection between the two countries.

That the Repeal meetings to petition Parliament are not illegal, is a proposition admitted in your letter to Lord Ffrench, and really you must permit me to say that it is in a slight degree absurd to allege that these meetings 'have an inevitable tendency to outrage'! Why, meetings were held—as everybody in Ireland knows, or ought to know—as numerously, ay and as peaceably, before the passing of the Emancipation Act as during the present Repeal agitation. There have been within the last three months more than twenty of these multitudinous meetings to petition, without having caused a single breach of peace. How then they can have '*an inevitable tendency to outrage*,' without having ever produced a single outrage, is not within the comprehension of a mere Irish lawyer, although it may be within the sagacity of an English Chancellor.

With respect to your assertion that her Majesty has, like her predecessor, expressed 'her determination to prevent the carrying of the Repeal of the Union,' it has filled me with the most utter and inexpressible astonishment. You must know, and indeed I much fear you must have known when you made that assertion, that it was utterly unfounded in fact. Sir Robert Peel has himself admitted the falsity of that statement. Her Majesty, whom the people of Ireland affectionately revere, has made no such declaration, and indeed I must say it enhances the criminality of the Lord Chancellor that he has permitted the putting forward, under the sanction of his high name, of a statement so injurious to her Majesty, and one so strongly tending in itself to expose her to the hatred (if that were possible) of her brave, loyal, and attached people of Ireland.

As to the concluding paragraph of your letter, which

talks of the forbearance and conciliation of the present Government, and of their desire to improve the institutions and promote the prosperity of Ireland, it is calculated only to move the risible faculties of every light-hearted man, and to excite the indignant sorrow of every thinking being, that you should venture to treat the people of Ireland to a specimen of such ludicrous hypocrisy.

The Irish Lord Chancellor meanwhile, on his own authority, had been unwisely dismissing magistrates.

From Sir James Graham.

June 1, 1843.

I think it is better to undeceive Sugden, and to let him know and feel that his letter to Lord Ffrench is not the most perfect and unexceptionable performance the world ever saw.

As we are resolved to defend him, and have not shrunk already from doing so, it is as well that he should be put on his guard for the future, lest again he should expose us to the difficulties in which he has involved us. I should say, send the letter.

Sir Robert Peel to Sir Edward Sugden.

June 1, 1843.

I think it probable that we shall have a motion on the dismissal of the magistracy, and on your letter to Lord Ffrench.

So far as I can judge, the objections likely to be urged by our opponents will be these: that your letter admits the meetings to be legal; therefore, if they were deemed dangerous to the public peace, there ought to have been preliminary warning to the Magistrates not to attend them.

The reference to the name of her Majesty will also be commented on.

The letter says, I think, that 'her Majesty has determined to prevent the Repeal of the Union.' The declaration

on the part of the Queen was rather that she would do all in her power to maintain the Union, as the bond of connection between the two countries.

The things are substantially the same, but observe, I am purposely anticipating every objection which men influenced by party views can urge against us in a carping spirit.

Instead of their coming forward, as we should have done, in oblivion of party differences, to aid the Crown in the maintenance of the Union, we must expect every little technical objection that astute men can urge for the purpose of throwing difficulties in our way.

We must make our appeal to the good sense of those who rise above mere party considerations; must contend that it was our duty to demonstrate the resolution to maintain the Union; that our intentions might fairly be questioned if we permitted Magistrates, attending meetings —calculated by their numbers to overawe, formidable from their organisation and submission to the control of their leaders, arriving on the ground in military order, listening to inflammatory language—to remain in the Commission of the Peace.

We shall of course most decidedly support and defend the acts you have done in Ireland, under extremely difficult circumstances, which make it matter of grave consideration what particular thing should be done, at what time it should be done, and in what mode.

From Sir James Graham.

June 1, 1843.

Sheil is to ask me to-morrow when an Irish Registration Bill is to be introduced by us. This is an embarrassing question. Think of it before we meet.

We cannot deal with Registration without touching the County Franchise. We cannot enlarge the franchise, at a moment when the entire people is on the verge of rebellion, without exciting universal apprehension among the friends of British connection.

From Lord De Grey.

(*Private and confidential.*) June 8, 1843.

To fill our cup of difficulty to overflowing, I received last night a letter from Lucas, resigning his office. I wrote instantly to beg that he would see me before he despatched a copy to you and Lord Eliot, but it was done. He considers himself as holding office only till his successor shall be appointed.

Who can be that successor? I do not know where to look.

Even when Eliot is here, his advice or judgment is nil. Sudgen has no knowledge of mankind.

Of course our opponents dislike and distrust us, but, alas! so do those who have called themselves our friends. Their dislike of Eliot and Sugden has increased to so great a degree as now to have rendered their services here—honest and well-intentioned as they may be—nearly useless.

To Lord De Grey.

June 10, 1843.

Lucas's proceeding is a very shabby one, and will be considered, and justly, a discreditable flight from responsibility and difficulty. It is a very ungrateful return for the kindness with which you have treated him.

The difficulty of finding even a decent successor is extreme. I know it well, having had, when I was Chief Secretary, to look out for a successor [as Under Secretary] to Sir Charles Saxton. I hope that you and Eliot will act in friendly concert.

In the next two months many interesting letters relate to Roman Catholic claims for patronage of the Crown, on which Sir Robert Peel held a strong opinion.

To Sir James Graham.

(*Confidential.*) June 16, 1843.

We must *look out* for respectable Roman Catholics for office. There are many grounds for not rigidly acting in

Ireland on that specious principle, that, if Protestants are better qualified for appointments that fall vacant, Protestants ought to be preferred to Catholics.

Depend upon it we must discard that favourite doctrine of Dublin Castle: 'You cannot conciliate your enemies, therefore give everything to the most zealous of your friends.'

This presupposes that there are only two classes which divide the country: determined enemies and zealous friends. It will drive you to a Government of an exclusive character, to something very like a family compact. I could name the men who will hold office in Ireland for years to come under such a system. Those who have the chief influence will recommend, and by a series of most dexterous intrigues will command the appointment of their own relations and followers.

On what principle are we legislating for the Church of Scotland, and giving ourselves a great deal of trouble and vexation to make a settlement of that question? Not to conciliate Dunlop or Candlish, but to give satisfaction to a great body of moderate men, and withdraw them from the ranks of our opponents.

You must act on the same principle in Ireland.

To Lord De Grey.

July 24, 1843.

I wish we could take this opportunity of selecting some Roman Catholic barrister of high character and moderate opinions for the office of Third Serjeant.

Mr. Howley appears to me to have conciliated general confidence and goodwill on the part of the Protestants who have come in contact with him, and has, I believe, discharged with ability, integrity, and impartiality the judicial duties entrusted to him. I have no doubt that there are Protestants at the Bar of greater business, and that we might find good reason for preferring a Protestant on that ground. But I have a very strong impression that occasional *favour* shown to a Roman Catholic will be very

advantageous, and diminish the influence and power of those who are hostile to British connection.

Aug. 3.—You say that 'Howley is an excellent man, very much respected by all ranks and persuasions, and has done his duty admirably.'

It really appears to me that if a person has so discharged judicial duties, and has acquired such general confidence, the qualifications which he must have had to do this are as good a claim for an honorary appointment like that of Serjeant as business in the courts would be.

I have a strong impression that it would be greatly for the public advantage if we could make Howley Serjeant, and a respectable Roman Catholic barrister the successor of Howley.

In presence of increasing troubles in Ireland, the relations between her highest executive authorities did not improve. The Under Secretary, a little ashamed of his hasty resignation, had consented to remain, to the comfort of the Lord Lieutenant.

From Lord De Grey.

Aug. 7, 1843.

I have literally no one except Lucas to refer to with any confidence.

To be frank and honest with you, the Chief Secretary and Chancellor are useless. With all their talents and good qualities in many points, they possess no insight, respect, or confidence of any party in the country.

Aug. 9.—I am told by my doctor I must go to Buxton. I am most reluctant to leave my post, when I am aware that thousands of people look upon me as their only hope and trust, for, little as I can do for them, the want of confidence in every other member of the Government is so complete, that I know how much uneasiness will prevail during my absence.

The presence of the Chancellor or Lord Eliot will not avail, for I am bound in truth and honesty to say that neither side in politics has the least value or respect for either of them.

Lord De Grey was himself so little inclined to act on the policy of 'looking out' for Roman Catholics to hold office, that Sir Robert Peel at last addressed to him a long and able argument in support of such selection.

Lord De Grey to Sir Robert Peel.

Aug. 18, 1843.

I am as willing as any man to act towards the Roman Catholics with the utmost impartiality, but I do not feel that it is either wise or expedient to appoint an unfit man to an office merely because he is a Catholic.

Conciliation is a chimera. I would not be deterred from doing what I thought right by any fear of their anger, nor would I do what I did not honestly believe to be right with any hopes of obtaining their praise. And unluckily in the higher branches of legal appointments there is not a fit man of that persuasion, except the two or three whose extreme politics must prevent our employing them.

To Lord De Grey.

Aug. 22, 1843.

I admit that political considerations would not justify a bad appointment of any kind, still less a bad judicial appointment.

But I must on the other hand express my strong opinion that considerations of policy, and also of justice, demand a liberal and indulgent estimate of the claims of such Roman Catholics as abstain from political agitation.

What is the advantage to the Roman Catholics of having removed their legal disabilities, if somehow or other they are constantly met by a preferable claim on the part of Protestants, and if they do not practically reap the advantage of their nominal equality as to civil privilege?

I can readily believe that for nearly every office that may become vacant for ten years to come there will be found a Protestant candidate with at least equal claim in point of qualifications, and with superior claims on account of professed attachment to the Government. If this

claim is to be always admitted, there is still practical disqualification; and what motive can we hold out to the well-affected Roman Catholic to abjure agitation, and the notoriety and fame which are its rewards, if the avenue to lucrative appointment and to legitimate distinction be in point of fact closed to him?

I fear he will not be satisfied with the answer: 'True, we have made fifty appointments, but for every one of the fifty a Protestant had the preferable claim.'

Why has the Protestant a preferable claim?

Because he has had for a long series of years the advantage of monopoly—of privilege secured to him by law. He has been thrown into constant contact and intercourse with the Government.

The policy of the law has been changed, and surely we ought not to allow the effect of the preceding policy to remain in full force, and to plead the inferiority of the Roman Catholic as a conclusive reason for preferring his more favoured competitor.

Let us recollect that the law has opened to the Roman Catholic access to legitimate power and distinction independent of the Crown. Parliament, and all the weight and influence which a return to Parliament by popular sympathy confers, are at his command. If he feels satisfied that for the class to which he belongs there is little chance of favour from the Crown—that the proposed equality as to civil privileges is a dead letter—he will employ all his energies and all his influence in a direction hostile to the Crown and to the institutions of the country.

Every avenue to popular favour is opened, and if every avenue to Royal favour be closed, we have done nothing by the removal of disabilities but organise a band of mischievous demagogues.

You say that no favours will conciliate the great mass of the Roman Catholics. They will not conciliate a certain class of them; but it is a fearful prospect if the whole body is so combined against the existing order of things that nothing can soften or detach any part of it. I know not

how it will be possible in that case to conduct the Government of Ireland or to maintain the connection with this country.

Two-thirds at least of the representatives of Ireland would be opposed to that system of Government which selected one particular class for office and distinction. Those two-thirds are a small body as influencing imperial legislation, when weighed against the majority opposed to them. But they are a most powerful body in their influence on the Government of Ireland, in their means of thwarting the Executive, of alienating the public mind in Ireland from the Executive, and of impairing and weakening its authority.

You must be well aware that there is hardly an act of the Executive Government in Ireland which is not, while Parliament is sitting, the subject of immediate comment. If Parliament is not sitting it is treasured up as the subject for future comment.

The body of Irish members to which I have referred, constituting the great majority of the Irish representatives, is opposed generally to Government. But it is liable to be most materially influenced in respect to its bearing on the Executive in Ireland by the acts of the Executive. It would be quite a mistake to suppose that it will act together in systematic hostility to the Government, without regard to the conduct of the Government. There is hardly a discussion on Irish affairs which does not prove the reverse.

Now it is on this body, and on the power of this body as respects the administration of Irish affairs, that conciliatory policy towards the Roman Catholics tells with effect. The example of this body, the language held by its members, influence the feelings of the Roman Catholics in Ireland, incline or disincline them to view the Government with distrust.

Even apart from the influence of this body on the Roman Catholic mind, surely there must be many Roman Catholics of intelligence, tired of excitement and agitation,

on whom a favour of the Crown bestowed on one of their body would have a beneficial effect. It is not the favour itself, but the favour as indicative of the spirit and intentions of the Government, as a proof that the old system of exclusion will not be rigidly adhered to, and that moderation in politics and abstinence from agitation has at least a chance of reward.

We have great difficulties to contend with in the administration of the Government in Ireland. We maintain the Church and the revenues of the Church exclusively for the Protestants. The division of landed property in Ireland makes it very difficult to select for civil office and distinction of a local character any other than a Protestant. In almost every county the chief offices in the gift of the Crown must be conferred on Protestants, and the indirect and subordinate patronage will probably flow in the same direction. There exist, then, in the nature of things great limitations on the powers of the Crown in the bestowal of its patronage, and these limitations are in favour of the Protestant.

There remains general civil office not being of a local character, and the Bar. If we were to act upon the strict rule that no Roman Catholic shall ever be appointed to a civil or professional office unless he is superior in point of qualifications to every Protestant competitor, there is a seeming justice in such a rule; there may be a plausible vindication for applying it: but practically it amounts to the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the Royal favours, and a monopoly in favour of the Protestant, just as complete as it was before the removal of disability.

I very much doubt whether it would be possible to govern Ireland upon that principle; always bearing in mind that two-thirds of the Irish representatives would combine with the whole of the Roman Catholic body in Ireland in opposition to it.

On this letter have been preserved the following notes:

'I consider the doctrines contained in Sir Robert Peel's

letter full of wisdom and truth, and I am prepared to subscribe to every word of it.

'J. G. GRAHAM.'

'I entirely concur in these principles, and think it most important that they should be acted upon.

'STANLEY.'

'I have run my eye over your letter to Lord De Grey, and I am glad to see so powerful a statement of the principles upon which the Government of Ireland should be conducted, in relation to the advancement of Roman Catholics at the Bar and to the Bench.

'E. SUGDEN.'

Under pressure of the letter Lord De Grey appointed Mr. Howley Third Serjeant. This was 'joyfully and gratefully' accepted by him, and handsomely acknowledged and defended by O'Connell. But in general the Lord Lieutenant continued to exercise his patronage without consulting the colleague who had to answer for it in the House of Commons.

To Sir James Graham.

Aug. 31, 1843.

I think De Grey misunderstands the relative position of Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary.

It is quite unusual for the Lord Lieutenant to make appointments either civil or ecclesiastical without communication with the Chief Secretary. De Grey says people write to him and tell him that such and such an office is vacant, and is in the gift of the Lord Lieutenant.

That is no sort of reason for excluding the Chief Secretary from concert. I would not have held the office for an hour on such terms. How can the Chief Secretary defend the acts of the Government, of which he is the organ in the House of Commons, unless he be a party to them? The disposal of patronage is in these days one of the most important administrative acts of the Government in Ireland, the most indicative of the temper and spirit in which it is conducted.

Were Eliot to say of any particular appointment that he had not been cognisant of it, and could not defend it, De Grey would grievously complain, and there would be an irreparable breach between them, and serious embarrassment to the Government here.

But it is very hard to expect zealous defence, and at the same time exclude from confidence. The patronage is theoretically altogether in the Lord Lieutenant, but practically the Chief Secretary, who has to manage the Irish members, and to defend the exercise of patronage, ought to have very great weight with the Lord Lieutenant, and ought to be consulted on every appointment.

It is clear that Eliot does not want the patronage for the sake of patronage, but for the legitimate object of proving that he is not a mere cypher, and of having a voice in acts which he *must* defend.

I confess to you that I think that the series of exclusively Protestant appointments to places of trust and authority in the police is rather startling. There must be many Roman Catholics thoroughly trustworthy. I think De Grey admitted this. They are in the police, and we cannot remove them if it were advisable. Will it add to the efficiency of the police, or to its trustworthiness, if the Roman Catholic portion of it discovered that they were not trusted by the Government, and that promotion was conferred in a very undue degree on Protestant members of the body?

We shall have the returns of promotions called for. If there is undue exclusion, it will be the subject of party comment; and if it can be really shown that perfectly faithful service in the police by a Roman Catholic has not met with the same reward which equal service by a Protestant has met with, and that solely on account of religion, I fear the influence of this on the Roman Catholics will be injurious, and that the object of showing the preference, namely the having a civil force on which you can rely, will not be attained.

I do not apprehend there is the slightest distinction

made between Protestant and Roman Catholic in the army. The case may not be precisely analogous; but Eliot says there have been twelve or fifteen promotions in two years, and not one Roman Catholic. Surely this is unwise.

Did I not tell you that we should have a family compact in Ireland, if we listened to the Castle, and those in immediate connection with it? There are two offices vacant; for each of them a Pennefather, or a Pennefather connection, is recommended. A brother-in-law is to be Serjeant, and for no other reason whatever than that he is a brother-in-law; and a son is to be Chief Clerk.

To complete the weakness of the Irish Government, the Law Officers were found wanting in capacity and courage.

To Sir James Graham.

Aug. 24. 1843.

It is impossible not to have misgivings connected with an Irish prosecution, on two grounds. First, the carelessness and inaccuracy of Irish witnesses in respect to matters of fact. Secondly, the carelessness and want of precision on the part of Irish lawyers, in reference to the technical proceedings.

I have been told that the pleadings in many of the cases brought before the House of Lords on appeal from the Irish Courts are slovenly to a marvellous degree.

I cannot say that the recent labours of the Attorney-General of Ireland inspire me with additional confidence. It is late in the day to be hunting now for material evidence. The exhortation to Hughes to have no doubt about a fact, is thoroughly Irish.

From Sir James Graham.

Sept. 5, 1843.

The Law Officers in Ireland, if left to themselves, will make no effort to enforce the existing law. They are afraid of appearing before juries.

There is much of truth in the Duke's remonstrance.

We have reports innumerable of seditious speeches, and of treasonable language, uttered even at the altar; but no prosecutions, no attempt to convict and punish.

This state of affairs cannot long continue without fatal consequences. Acquittals, with the facts clearly established, would be less dangerous. I have expressed this opinion repeatedly to the Attorney-General, to Eliot, and to De Grey, but as yet in vain.

I begin to despair of the Irish Executive; it does not only sleep, it is dead.

In default of any vigorous initiative in Ireland, except from Lord Eliot's zeal for popular measures, the Home Secretary and the Commander-in-Chief were both inclined to try their hands.

From Sir James Graham.

Cowes: Sept. 6, 1843.

I cling to the plan of issuing a Commission for the consideration of the law and practice which regulate the tenure of land in Ireland.

The real secret of the evils of Ireland is the bankrupt condition of the landlords, and the severance of the religion of the people from all connection with the State.

We cannot heal this gangrene, but we may probe it, and propose to administer decisive remedies.

Sept 16.—From something which fell from Arbuthnot, I begin to suspect that the Duke wishes to go to Ireland, and believes that the winds and the waves will obey him, and that in his presence there will be a great calm.

I entertain an opposite opinion.

If there were a rebellion, his iron hand would crush it. I doubt very much whether his preventive measures would be of a soothing character.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 18, 1843.

I have for some time past had an impression that the Duke of Wellington was prepared, and indeed desired, to

assume the government of Ireland. In either of two events this might be desirable: in the case of actual and extensive outbreak, or in the case of well-grounded apprehension that the fidelity of the troops could not be relied on.

I do not think it would be advantageous that under any ordinary circumstances the Duke should undertake the administration of the civil government.

Such an appointment, with all the inevitable consequences—other changes in the Irish Government; impressions (perhaps erroneous) as to the course of policy to be adopted; the predominance of certain influences—would amount practically to a complete change of our policy towards Ireland.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Oct. 10, 1843.

You cannot do otherwise than appoint a Commission to inquire into the state of laws affecting landlords and tenants in Ireland, and the general state of the tenures of land, and you could not select a person to be Chairman so likely to give satisfaction as Lord Devon.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 17, 1843.

I have seen Mr. Collis, manager of the Trinity College estates. The picture which he draws of the poverty of the tenantry, and of the exactions of landlords and their agents, is frightful and heart-rending beyond measure. He describes the feelings of the peasantry as desperate, and he says that they favour Repeal in the hope of change.

I am quite satisfied that this inquiry, if conducted with ability and prudence, will open a distinct view of the causes of discontent in Ireland. But, alas! I fear that the remedies are beyond the reach of legislative power.

The Prime Minister himself proclaimed the truth, not yet a truism, that force was no remedy for Ireland, and pondered on measures to conciliate a Catholic nation.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 19, 1843.

It is clear that mere force, however necessary the application of it, will do nothing as a permanent remedy for the social evils of Ireland. We must look beyond the present, must bear in mind that the day may come—and come suddenly and unexpectedly—when this country may be involved in serious disputes or actual war with other Powers, and when it may be of the first importance that the foundations of a better state of things in Ireland should have been laid.

Let us ponder on these things, and say nothing to others until we have talked them over.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 20, 1843.

It is impossible that, in my anxious thoughts on the state of Ireland, the just and wise reflections which you make in regard to future prospects and necessary measures should have entirely escaped me.

An insurrection may be subdued by the sword; but a military government and free institutions cannot permanently coexist; and Ireland must at last be treated as a rebellious colony, or reconciled to Great Britain on terms which will command the hearts and affections of her people.

Without an adequate provision for the clergy of the national religion, a conciliatory policy would be incomplete and ineffectual. In my own conscience I feel no objection, while the Protestant Church is maintained in Ireland, to a grant, even on a liberal scale, to the Roman Catholic hierarchy and to the parochial priesthood. But I foresee that on the part of the British public in their present temper invincible repugnance will be felt to any such proposal.

At the time of the Union this measure was feasible; in defence of the Union, after the lapse of half a century, I am afraid it would be repudiated.

If it be possible, I incline to the opinion that the neces-

sary fund must be raised in Ireland, and I believe that the fears of the Protestants in that country will be found more pliable than the stubborn spirit of the sour Dissenter in England, and of the Free Church Presbyterian in Scotland.

However, I will obey your injunction. I will reflect more deeply and more instantly on this fearful subject; I will name it to no person until I have discussed it fully with you; and I will endeavour to keep my mind free from every prejudice, and unwarped even by the opinions which I now express. Eliot perpetually recurs to this subject.

The Chief Secretary was pressing also the question of Maynooth.

From Lord Stanley.

Oct. 21, 1843.

Eliot's question produces a large field for debate, and clearly nothing ought to be done in such a matter without previously consulting the Lord Lieutenant, yet I think the question is one which merits serious consideration.

On its present footing the grant to Maynooth, though annually acquiesced in by large majorities of the House of Commons, is incapable of being defended on any definite principle. And though the withdrawal of the grant would engender very bitter feelings, its continuance on its present scale, and subject to the present conditions, does not effect the object, which I conceive to have been originally contemplated, of giving the State at once a control over the education and a hold upon the affection or the interests of the Roman Catholic priesthood.

It is notorious, on the contrary, that the old priesthood were more educated men, and far more attached to England, than those who are now brought up at Maynooth; and although it is widening the question, and perhaps thereby making it more alarming, I cannot but think that an inquiry conducted with temper (if such a thing can be on Irish subjects) into the character of the institution, the effect of Government aid, and the result of an improved

and actual superintendence by Government, might lead the way in the public mind to that which every day's experience satisfies me is more desirable, though now wholly unattainable, a concordat of some sort with Rome, by which the State should obtain defined authority from the Roman Catholic priesthood, and they should have an acknowledged status, both in this country and in the Colonies.

Perhaps my experience in Colonial affairs makes me more alive to the necessity of this, because I have to deal every day with questions in which the State is involved in the anomaly of virtually upholding Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authority, without the slightest power of exercising the control which ought to accompany such support.

But for such a change of system as I think desirable I am well aware that the public mind is not prepared. Eliot's proposed inquiry might at once enable feelers to be put out, and by eliciting facts might render familiar ideas which at present would not even be permitted to be discussed.

On the other hand I agree with Graham that Eliot requires to be curbed, in order to prevent his craving for popularity bringing the Government into serious difficulties.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 25, 1843.

I have avoided the subject of payment to the priests, in obedience to your injunction, but within the last three days strong opinions in favour of such a measure have been expressed to me by Sidney Herbert and by Follett.

If we could command events, I should wish to meet Parliament with O'Connell convicted and in prison; with Ireland submissive and brought into subjection; and with a full report from our Commission on the evils which oppress the poor occupier of the soil. Then would be the moment for legislative interposition, and for the adoption of a generous policy, which might evince sympathy with the feelings of the people, by making some provision for their pastors, and by diminishing the burdens which oppress them.

This is what I could venture to desire, but not to hope.

The event will probably be far different. The prosecution will fail, the case will break down, or it will be mismanaged. O'Connell will be triumphant, when Parliament meets; Ireland will be on the verge of rebellion, and coercion will be the order of the day.

Brougham spoke to me of O'Connell's prosecution. He told me that Lord Grey entirely approved of it, and that the success of the trial appeared to him necessary for the safety of the State.

On revision of the Irish County Franchise, Sir Robert Peel writes to Sir James Graham:

Dec. 22, 1843.

We must be prepared, whatever we do in respect to the Franchise, for communications like that of Lord Farnham.

It amounts to this: 'We the Protestant landlords make a distinction between Protestants and Roman Catholics in respect to the grant of leases, for the purpose of preventing the Roman Catholics from acquiring the right to vote at a county election. We prohibit you the Government from qualifying the Roman Catholics in any other manner.'

What a persuasive to Repeal!

CHAPTER III.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1834–1843.

The Ten Years' Conflict—Patronage—'Taking on Trials'—The Call—Veto Act—Collision with Civil Courts—A Policy of Reserve—Spiritual Independence—Demand for Abolition of Patronage—Claim of Right—Convocation of Ministers—Answer from the Crown—Answer from Parliament—Letters to and from the Queen—Secession—Majority or Minority?—Free Church and Old Church.

SCOTLAND seldom troubles Prime Ministers, and of Sir Robert Peel's letters Irish are to Scotch as ten to one. But on one question in his time the Church of Scotland urgently invoked his aid.

It has been surmised that Peel, absorbed in other duties, did not fully attend to Scottish Church affairs, but was misled by colleagues. His letters do not confirm this. He was the last man, in a crisis, to throw his responsibility on others. In this, as in all other business of the State, he took great pains, and used his own best judgment.

The years 1842–3 brought to an end the strife which had been going on for ten years (1834–1843) in Scotland between Church and State. The occasion of this contest was Patronage, as opposed to popular choice of ministers. The deeper cause lay in conflicting views of 'spiritual independence.'

According to the Free Church historian of this contest, the chief issues raised were unfamiliar to Protestants, except in Scotland. Since the Reformation 'neither States nor Churches had had much recourse to the great principles involved in these questions. Scotland had been almost exclusively the battle-field for them. By none of the Reformed Churches out of Scotland was the doctrine of Christ's Headship thoroughly investigated. What the Confession of Augsburg stigmatised with the greatest energy was the intrusion of the Church into the affairs of the State. In England the Queen was "over all persons and in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, supreme." In Switzerland

also State supremacy became the order of the day. The Protestant Church of France continues to this hour enslaved. The Reformed Church of Holland has been reduced to a similar bondage.'[1]

Even in the Scottish Confession of Faith (1560) 'little or nothing is said on the relations of Church and State. Little attention was given to this most important subject. The first Book of Discipline is almost silent on the mutual relations of the Church and the commonwealth.'[2]

Christ's kingdom is not of this world. But Established Churches, in part, are of it. Things spiritual they hold from God; things temporal—stipends, churches, manses, glebes, and civil privileges—from man.

So far all agreed. But between spiritual and temporal who should draw the line? In Scotland, Church and State each claimed to draw it. Each disclaimed the intention to encroach; each charged the other with having done so.

The occasion of the strife was Patronage. The Revolution Settlement (1690) suppressed patronage; an Act of Anne (1711) revived it. Scotland complained that the Act was passed in haste, with hostile motives, by English Jacobites, in the absence of Scotch members, and in derogation from the Act of Union. The Church long maintained a protest against it. But it was statute law.

Under this law a candidate presented by a patron could not be ordained but by the Church. The Church, however, was bound to 'take him on trials;' and to admit him if found qualified. If not qualified, they could reject him, and no appeal lay from them to a civil court. The presentee had no more claim, the patron no more right but to present another.

A third condition was necessary to ordination: there must be a 'call.' That was the right of the congregation. Without their call a man could no more be ordained to charge of them than he could marry a woman without her consent.

But what was legally a call? How many must join in it? How many dissents could make it void?

In practice the call had long been dormant—in the words of Chalmers, 'an antiquated but still venerable form.' It was the

[1] *Ten Years' Conflict*, i. 4-58.
[2] *Ibid.* pages 41-48.

Church herself that had reduced it almost to a nullity. In the last century she had forced unpopular nominees on congregations vigorously protesting, and sometimes in the end seceding. She had even deposed one of her ministers, Gillespie, for refusing to take part in such a settlement. But when in 1834 another party got the upper hand, resolving to prevent the intrusion of ministers unacceptable to the people, they took in hand to make the call again, as in the best days of the Church, a reality. With this view, as the acknowledged Legislature in things spiritual, the General Assembly passed an Act providing that, where a majority of communicants objected, the Presbytery should not take the presentee on trials, but should at once reject him.

They passed this Act by the advice of an eminent lawyer, Lord Moncreiff, a firm supporter of patronage; with the sanction of the Whig Law Officers of the Crown; and with applause from the Whig Lord Chancellor of England, Brougham. They honestly believed it to be within their powers. But it was contrary to statute law. The Act of Anne bound the local Church court, called the 'Presbytery,' to take the presentee on trials; the 'Veto Act' of the Assembly bade them not take him on trials, if a majority of communicants objected.

The Act of Parliament limited the patron's right only by the judgment of a recognised Church court, on fitness for ordination. The Act of Assembly made the right subject to the veto of a popular majority, voting not on general fitness, but on acceptability to themselves. It forbade the Church courts ever again as heretofore to overrule the dissent of the congregation, or to reason with them, even though the majority were manifestly obtained by slander.

This contradiction between Church law and State law soon bore fruit. A presbytery, obeying the Veto Act, refused to take on trials a presentee to whom a great majority of communicants objected. The patron appealed to the Civil Court; the Civil Court sustained the patron's right; the Church appealed to the House of Lords; the House of Lords (1838) confirmed the judgment of the Court of Session. In another case the Court ordered the presbytery (of Strathbogie) under penalties to perform their statutory duty. The presbytery accordingly took the presentee on trials. But in this they had disregarded the new

Veto Act, and the Assembly, holding that the presbytery ought to have obeyed Church law rather than State law, suspended the majority (seven ministers), for contumacy, from all spiritual functions, sent substitutes to their parishes, and after a while, as they did not submit, deposed them.

Till then, Sir Robert Peel had been much inclined to help the Church (of which he thought most highly) to obtain large legislative recognition of the rights of congregations. But when the General Assembly—having themselves appealed to the House of Lords, and having learned that their recent Act, in the judgment of that highest civil tribunal, infringed on civil rights—instead of awaiting legislation, proceeded to depose her ministers for obeying statute law, and to send weekly emissaries to their seven parishes to supersede them, he regarded this as violent and unseemly, and became disposed to make it a condition of any legislative assistance that the Church should reinstate the ministers deposed.

He had also failed to come to a definite understanding with the Church leaders as to any limits of the right they claimed to let a majority set aside a presentee. They insisted on what they called 'liberum arbitrium,' and in this they included absolute power to give effect to mere popular dislike, even if in their own judgment it were ill founded.

To solve these difficulties about Patronage there were for some time under consideration by the Government, and by the Church, three alternative proposals.

1. The Duke of Argyll brought into the House of Lords a Bill practically legalising the Veto Act. It empowered the Church to reject a presentee on account of any objections of the majority, '*sound or unsound*,' provided only they did not arise from factious or malicious motives.

2. Lord Aberdeen also had been at first inclined to legalise the Veto Act, but had been turned against it by an experience of his own. 'He has had sad work lately,' writes Dr. Chalmers, 'with the perverseness of the people of his own parish, threatening to veto a most admirable presentee.' 'Out of 240 heads of families,' Lord Aberdeen writes, 'upwards of 200 signed a paper declaratory of their intention to oppose my presentee.' He stood by his presentee, who ultimately 'gained the affection and respect of his parishioners, with whom he lived in unbroken

harmony for more than forty years, full of good works' (Sir Arthur Gordon). After this experience, Lord Aberdeen fell back on a different position—that taken up by the General Assembly themselves in 1833, when, rejecting the proposed Veto, they resolved that it was competent for the heads of families, communicants, to object to the settlement of a presentee, and for the presbytery to reject him, but only *if in their own judgment the objections were well founded.* Legislation in this sense Sir Robert Peel was willing to support.

3. Sir George Sinclair proposed to add to Lord Aberdeen's Bill a clause expressly recognising a power in the Church courts to reject a presentee, if, in their free judgment, the objections of the people, *though ill founded*, were such that they would not profit by his ministrations.

Of these three proposals, the Duke of Argyll's Bill was formally approved by the Church ; Lord Aberdeen's Bill was not approved; but with Sir George Sinclair's modification it was matter for negotiation.

Early in 1840, Dr. Chalmers also had submitted a project, which reached Sir Robert Peel, then in opposition, but did not seem to him helpful.

To Sir James Graham.

Jan. 4, 1840.

I think Dr. Chalmers's suggestion is not a very useful one practically.

He gives a preamble with a blank for everything that is embarrassing in the recital, and fancies he obviates the objection there may be to give the Church the express powers implied by the passing of the Veto Act by giving them absolute and unconditional powers, including of course the specific power and every other.

There seems to me a great deal of ill temper on both sides.

The most pertinacious in correspondence of the three advocates of legislation was Sir George Sinclair. But, with the best intentions, he could not always show that he had authority to represent those for whom he undertook to speak.

From Sir George Sinclair.

Edinburgh: Sept. 20, 1841.

I think that in Scotland it would be consonant with the spirit and conducive to the stability of our ecclesiastical institutions to abolish lay patronage, and vest in the communicants the election of the pastors. But I know that to contend for that object would be altogether visionary.

My object has been to ascertain what is the *minimum* which the Church (meaning of course the majority) could accept, conformably with their principles.

I can attest that the majority comprises a very large proportion of the holiest, the ablest, the most devoted pastors, with whom any Church or nation has in any age been blessed. Nothing can be more cruel or more unjust than to tax them with being actuated by motives of private interest or views of personal ambition. The main object was to prevent unfit or unacceptable ministers from being obtruded upon congregations; and they would rather be themselves compelled to leave the Church which they love, than abandon the defence of the people's rights and interests. They are (as may well be supposed) desirous, if possible, to avoid the martyrdom of expulsion, though determined, if necessary, to endure it.

It would be useless to invite them to accept in its present form Lord Aberdeen's Bill. On the other hand the minority would not accede to the Veto. It therefore occurred to me that the best way was to introduce a kind of *mezzo termine*, by enabling the Church courts (not compelling them, as the Veto law does) to give effect to the objections of the parishioners (although not in their own judgment conclusive) in the event of these objections prevailing to such an extent as to present a very great bar to the usefulness of the presentee's ministrations in that particular district.

This I hold to be the minimum which the Church can

accept, and they would acquiesce in it with perfect sincerity, though not without great reluctance.

Curiously enough, this proposal was taken up warmly by a chief opponent of the High Church party.

From Mr. Hope to Lord Aberdeen.

Edinburgh: Sept. 22, 1841.

Sir George Sinclair has communicated to me his proposed addition to your Bill. I think that, if he is well founded in expecting that the Church party will take the Bill so altered, and will also put an end to the Strathbogie punishment, the Government should adopt that alteration, and pass the Bill.

I assume that the Strathbogie and similar cases are to be given up by the Church, by acknowledgments of the ministers short of confession of sin.

Sinclair tells me that to this addition, and to such settlement of these cases, Candlish, Dunlop, Cunningham, and Dr. Gordon consented, no doubt wishing more. With this result I own I am perfectly contented.

Sept. 23.—I feel great anxiety to recommend to your attention Sinclair's suggestion. The more I attend to the scheme of settlement opened up by it, I am the more satisfied. He assures me in the most positive manner that Candlish and the whole of the party are pledged to assent to it.

Sir Robert Peel, with habitual foresight, was on his guard against misapprehension. He writes to Sir George Sinclair:

Sept. 27, 1841.

I hope you can place confidence in the assurances you have received. If you can, although I am not prepared, on the part of the Government, to say anything definite at present, I should hail the cheerful acquiescence of your friends in such a proposal as that which you indicate, as a favourable omen of ultimate success.

One observation I must make: nothing could be more unfortunate than any misunderstanding.

So far all looked well. But it soon appeared that Sir George Sinclair had been reckoning without the great Church leader, Dr. Chalmers, to whom at this time neither Lord Aberdeen nor Mr. Hope was a *persona grata*.

Dr. Chalmers to Sir George Sinclair.

Sept. 30, 1841.

I am not able to comprehend what is meant by a last opportunity, which we must seize upon now, or the cause of the Church might be irrecoverably gone; if it be not that, unless the wishes of Lord Aberdeen in London and his adviser in Edinburgh shall be consulted by making his Bill the groundwork of an arrangement, the best and greatest of our national institutions must be sacrificed to the vanity or doggedness of the two men.

The very thought of this makes my blood boil with indignation. Sir Robert calls out for time and leisure (and most rightly) to mature his civil and economical measures. But there must be an instant soldering, it would appear, of the affairs of the Church; and so as to lay the irritated humours of a mortified peer and an impracticable lawyer. The thing is beyond endurance.

I have seen the report of Sir William Rae's speech at Rothesay, and I must say that I look far more hopefully to a measure wherewith he has to do than aught which may be grafted on Lord Aberdeen's Bill, or concocted between his Lordship and the Dean of Faculty.

I do think that, after this announcement, the most graceful and becoming thing for both the Dean and the Earl would be to retire from the concern.

Sir William Rae was Lord Advocate. 'The Dean' was Hope, soon afterwards Lord Justice Clerk. It is sometimes said that he misled Peel. But see the following extract.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 17, 1841.

The extreme opinions of Hope on one side of the Church question, and the intemperance with which he urged them, long since shook my confidence in his judgment.

In spite of the irritation of Chalmers, Sir George Sinclair persevered as peacemaker, and writes:

Edinburgh: Oct. 2, 1841.

I have the greatest satisfaction in announcing that I have obtained from the [Non-Intrusion] Committee a declaration in favour of my proposal, with which I feel confident that you will be satisfied.

The Committee *unequivocally* adopt the *ipsissima verba* of my amendment.

I have a plan as to the seven ministers, which is approved both by the Dean and by Messrs. Candlish and Cunningham. I never had a more difficult task than to devise such a letter as the ministers could write, and the Church receive.

Mr. Candlish had written to Sir George Sinclair: 'I think the letter goes as far as could be fairly required, and if adopted by our brethren it would remove the grand obstacle to peace and conciliation. I consider the Dean of Faculty's suggestions as great improvements on the letter. Mr. Cunningham has seen it, and I think I may say he agrees with me.'

Sir Robert Peel, though cherishing hopes of arriving at a reasonable settlement, was on his guard against growing popular demands, and, distrusting amateur negotiation, preferred to employ one of his Law Officers, Duncan McNeill, afterwards Justice-General for Scotland.

Memorandum by Sir Robert Peel.

Oct. 15, 1841.

Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and I had an interview with Sir George Sinclair at my house. We conversed on the affairs of the Church of Scotland. The purport of what passed was as follows:

I said to Sir George Sinclair that I thought, as the last Session of Parliament had terminated without any legislative enactment on the subject of the Church, all engagements on the part either of the Church or of the Government

were at an end. Each party was at liberty, unfettered by anything that had previously passed, to exercise its discretion with regard to the future;

That, supposing the duration of the Session had permitted it, we should not have objected to the introduction of the Bill of Lord Aberdeen amended as proposed by Sir George Sinclair, provided that satisfactory arrangements could have been simultaneously made with respect to the suspended ministers, and provided we had an assurance that the Bill thus amended would involve, in the opinion of the Church party, a satisfactory adjustment of the late differences—so far satisfactory at least that it should be generally and cheerfully acquiesced in.

I said that, although all engagements were at an end, our desire to bring the unfortunate differences that had prevailed to an amicable and permanent settlement remained unabated; that we thought any further communications between the Government and the Church had better pass through the Solicitor-General, who from his high character, professional reputation, and unprejudiced views of the affairs of his Church, appeared to us fitted to conciliate the confidence of all parties.

I repeated that, whatever might be done in respect to future legislation, the interests and position of the suspended ministers could never be overlooked by us, and must always be considered by us as a most important part of the general question.

From Sir George Sinclair.

Nov. 26, 1841.

I received this morning Dr. Chalmers' long and very interesting letter. I am happy to say that there is no mention of the Veto. He still, however, suspects that 'it is not the intention of the Government to give an unshackled *liberum arbitrium*,' and that the Church 'will only be enabled to give effect to the dissent of the people, if we approve of their expressed reason.'

But as this is not the purport of my amendment, I

think that he will be satisfied with my explanation, that *prevalence* may be a substitute for *conclusiveness*.

To Sir George Sinclair.

Whitehall: Nov. 27, 1841.

I return to you the enclosed letters. I wish you may not be too sanguine in inferring from them a general disposition to listen to moderate and just counsel.

I am sure our best plan is to remain passive for the present. Any declarations or active interference on our part at this moment will arm the violent party with weapons to be directed against those who are in favour of peaceful and practicable settlement. Let the latter come boldly forward, and make a public avowal of their determination not to hazard the social comfort and the permanent religious interests of a country, by being parties to a system of agitation which will advance no good purpose.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Whitehall: Nov. 30, 1841.

Could you find time to state briefly what is the nature of the proposal which Lord Cottenham is understood to have made to the Church; what is the extent of concession in respect to your Bill which you are willing to make; and in what degree our construction of the *liberum arbitrium*, so far as your amended Bill would confer it, differs from that construction or effect of the *liberum arbitrium* for which Dr. Chalmers contends?

Some short simple statement of the points at issue, explaining the views of the different parties, and the extent of their differences, will be very convenient, almost indispensable, if we have to consider the question in Cabinet.

The advice of Dr. Cook, leader of the Moderate party in the Assembly, was laid before Sir Robert Peel, but appeared to him in no way helpful towards a settlement.

To Lord Haddington.

Whitehall: Dec. 22, 1841.

Dr. Cook observes in his letter to you that 'there can be but one opinion as to its being desirable to put an end to the ecclesiastical dissensions which at present unhappily prevail.'

Now, it is impossible to put an end to them if we refuse to consider altogether the mode of putting an end to them, or listen to any proposals made with a view to put an end to them.

The words to which Dr. Cook refers were deemed by the Lord Justice Clerk and by Lord Aberdeen not at variance with the intentions and objects of the Bill of which Lord Aberdeen was the author.

The point at issue as to the meaning of the proposed clause is put clearly by Dr. Candlish:

'Our opponents insist that in every instance the rejection of the presentee must proceed on a judgment of the Church Courts upon the reasons of the people and the qualifications of the presentee. They would give the Church Courts all possible latitude in coming to that judgment, even to the extent of the most whimsical caprice; and this is their *liberum arbitrium*, or discretionary power vested in the Church.

'But this is not the kind of measure to which we have ever said we would submit; we insist that the Church Courts must, at the very least, have liberty in every instance to reject exclusively on the ground of the dissent of the people.'[3]

Such was the difference remaining to be adjusted for the better regulation of patronage. It did not seem to present insuperable difficulties.

But by this time the zeal of the dominant party in the General Assembly against what they denounced as encroachments of the Civil Court had raised the more momentous question of Spiritual Independence.

In the view of their great leader, Dr. Chalmers, himself a staunch Conservative and champion of established Churches,

[3] *Narrative* &c. by Robert S. Candlish, D.D.

the Church of Scotland, holding all her powers direct from Christ, was not accountable for the use of them to man.

The State had given endowments, and what the State had given it could take away. But any other interference of the Civil Courts in defence of individual rights against collective action of the Church was an attack on 'the Crown rights of Christ.' Parliament had reserved to the Crown and to other patrons the statutory right to have a presentee examined as to personal fitness. But if a majority of the General Assembly thought fit to set aside judicial procedure, and substitute a popular vote on acceptability to the congregation, the statutory right of patrons might be set at nought. If the local majority of ministers refused at the bidding of the majority in the General Assembly to violate statute law, they must be suspended from their office; if obstinate, they must be deposed; if a minority of the Assembly countenanced such offenders, the minority might itself be punished.

The Church, it was true, had appealed to the House of Lords, but only as to the endowments. As to rights of patrons or of presentees *to a trial* she refused to accept their judgment.

On similar principles the General Assembly claimed the direct authority of Christ for altering the constitution of the established Church Courts, by admitting to an equal voice in them unendowed ministers of chapels of ease, without previous arrangement with the State, by whose power the jurisdiction of these Courts was upheld.

Before the year 1842 began, three things had become clear: First, that Dr. Chalmers, who at first 'had strenuously resisted the Anti-patronage movement,' had now been induced to play a leading part in it, writing to the Duke of Argyll, who remonstrated with him on his conversion, that 'the best constitution for a Church I deem to be that where the ministers are paid by the State, and chosen by the people;' and that 'the Church may acquiesce in, she never will approve of a mere *liberum arbitrium*;'[1]

Secondly, that far from contemplating restoration of the deposed ministers, the majority of the General Assembly

[1] *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, iv. 270–272.

were more disposed to inflict like punishment on the minority who still held communion with the culprits;

Thirdly, that the bold defiance of the Civil Law Courts by the General Assembly was encouraging the people to resist by force the settlement of unpopular presentees. There had been much violence in November at Culsalmond, and the Home Secretary expected a repetition of it in January in the presbytery of Strathbogie.

From Sir James Graham.

Jan. 2, 1842.

I have directed the Solicitor-General not to encourage any further communications from these parties, who are evidently acting with bad faith, and who are organising resistance to the law, while they seek to gain importance by 'negotiating,' as they call it, with the Government.

I have also told him that he may let it be clearly understood, that we shall sustain the Strathbogie Presbytery in the exercise of their lawful authority.

A living in the gift of the Duke of Richmond has become vacant within that Presbytery. He intends to nominate. When the Presbytery proceed to induct, an effort will be made by popular violence to interrupt their proceedings. The law must not again be overborne with impunity in this Highland district, and we must be prepared to sustain the ecclesiastical authorities, acting in obedience to the law, with the aid of the civil power.

Jan. 3.—I think we should decline further communication with the Non-Intrusion Committee, direct or indirect, in reference to the settlement of the Church question. There is a positive refusal on their part to permit the restoration of the Strathbogie ministers to be a condition of the settlement, and this, independently of other differences, appears to me an insuperable impediment to further proceeding with them.

The Government thus adopted for the time a policy of reserve, but against this many influential appeals were made to the Prime Minister to be prompt in legislation, or at least in declaring his intentions.

From Sir George Clerk.

Treasury: Feb. 16, 1842.

After reflecting on the observations made by you and Sir James Graham on the present position of the Church of Scotland, I have come to the decision that it is highly expedient that an attempt should be made by the Government during the present Session to settle this harassing question, and to put an end to the agitation which at present prevails in Scotland, endangering the very existence of the Church Establishment. I am certain that unless some considerable concession is made in recognising the claims of the people to object to the nominee of a patron, there is no chance of putting an end to the present embarrassment of the Church.

The violent party in Scotland, whose object it has all along been to abolish patronage, will offer every obstacle to any attempt to settle this question by mutual concession and compromise; but I feel confident that a great proportion of them would accept of such a plan of settlement as I have ventured to suggest.

The measure I propose is in truth the *liberum arbitrium*, and nothing more.

From the Duke of Argyll.

3 Connaught Place: Feb. 18, 1842.

The necessity of a modification of the law of Patronage was established in my mind, when it became apparent that the Church Courts could in no case reject a presentee upon the sole ground of the negative of the greater part of the communicants, without losing the benefice.

The civil and ecclesiastical laws being thus placed in opposition to each other, a question of the utmost importance was pressed upon the attention of every member of the legislature: whether is it better to modify the law of patronage, to an extent sufficient to give scope for the operation of the Church's principle as to the settlement of

ministers, or to force the Church, under the penalty of destroying the Establishment, to the abandonment of that principle ?

It has always appeared to me that the former alternative is recommended by every consideration which should influence the decision of Parliament.

One of the ostensible objects of the restoration of patronage was declared by the Parliament of 1711 to be 'the preventing of heats and divisions in the Church.' But the power at present assigned to patrons is in my opinion too great to be compatible with the constitutional law of Scotland, as settled at the Union. I feel that patronage loses every recommendation and advantage, when it is such as to cause not only 'heats and divisions' in the Church, but actual dismemberment.

I am convinced, if some measure proceeding upon the principle above stated could be passed before the next meeting of the General Assembly, the Anti-Patronage party would be at once paralysed. I do not say that some men of extreme opinions would not leave the Church, but harmony would be restored between the great parties which now divide the country.

Evil has already been caused by delaying legislation, but if Parliament does with promptitude and decision modify the law of patronage so as to give civil sanction to the principle of the Church, I shall look with confidence for the most beneficial consequences.

During the Session of 1842 two efforts were made to settle the question of patronage—a motion for a Committee, which Sir Robert Peel opposed as not being likely to produce any satisfactory result; and an attempt to carry in the House of Commons the Duke of Argyll's Bill, in resisting which Sir James Graham announced that discussions had been resumed with the party of non-intrusion.

But whatever prospect remained of coming to terms with them was soon overclouded by the action of the General Assembly. When the Assembly met in May there appeared two

rival sets of 'commissioners,' each claiming to represent the Presbytery of Strathbogie. The one, sent by the majority, and sustained by the civil law, was repelled by the Assembly; the other, sent by the minority, and recognised by the Assembly, was interdicted by the Civil Court. The decision of the General Assembly in its own Court of course prevailed.

After admitting these members in spite of the interdict, the Assembly proceeded to carry a resolution that 'patronage ought to be abolished;' and a few days later they adopted, by a majority of 241 to 110, an important manifesto well known as 'The Claim of Right.'

In this were set forth, first, the principles of ecclesiastical independence; secondly, the ancient statutory guarantees for them in Scotland; thirdly, in detail, the recent proceedings in which the civil courts of law were accused of having acted illegally, 'usurping the power of the keys.'

The document was of great length, and ended in, first, a claim that the Church should freely possess and enjoy their ancient liberties, rights and privileges 'according to law;' secondly, a declaration that at the risk and hazard of losing the advantages of an establishment they must refuse to intrude ministers on reclaiming congregations, or to carry on the government of Christ's Church subject to coercion; and finally a protest, that 'all and whatsoever Acts of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed without the consent of the Church and nation of Scotland, derogative to the aforesaid rights and privileges, and all and whatsoever sentences of courts in contravention of the same, are and shall be in themselves void and null.'

It was impossible for a Church more boldly to challenge not only the jurisdiction of the highest civil courts, but also the power of the British Legislature itself to pass any Act affecting their rights and privileges without their consent. The defiant tone adopted may have been justified to some minds by the violation of the Treaty of Union. But the predominant influences were the popular hatred of 'intrusion,' and the stirring exhortations of leaders so eloquent, so able, and so full of good works as Chalmers, to fight against 'Erastianism' for 'the Crown rights of Christ.'

Such being the militant attitude of the Assembly, the general views of Scotch members as to the expediency of immediate action seem to have been clear.

From Mr. Alexander Pringle, M.P.

June 10, 1842.

In reference to the points on which you yesterday asked for the opinions of the Scotch members, as I fear I did not express myself very distinctly, will you permit me here shortly to state my own?

Question 1.—Has anything, since we last met, occurred in Scotland or in the General Assembly to increase the difficulties of attempting to legislate in the way formerly contemplated?

Answer.—The proceedings of the General Assembly have undoubtedly interposed additional obstacles. But, on the other hand, I believe that the public in Scotland are very generally dissatisfied with these proceedings, and hence Government may count upon additional support from public opinion.

Question 2.—Will Government hereafter be in a better position to grapple with the many difficult impending questions affecting the Scotch Church by making an attempt at conciliatory legislation, or by letting it alone?

Answer.—I should say that certainly their position would be improved by making the attempt. The danger from attempting nothing is urgent, certain, and as serious as it can well be; whereas the attempt, even though it fail, would probably have the effect of detaching from the body of Non-Intrusionists a very great number, who will continue to act with them if matters are allowed to remain as they are.

These last have confidently expected Government to interpose, and if they are disappointed the influence of Government will be weakened by the pains which will be taken to represent them as never having been serious in their professed wish to settle the question.

Question 3.—Are we likely at any further time to be in a better position for interposing than at present?

Answer.—Certainly not. The applications to the courts of law are getting more frequent, and the questions arising out of these applications more perplexed and embarrassing. Indeed I fear that, if the present occasion is allowed to pass by, there is great risk of our never again having an opportunity of interposing to any good purpose.

This agrees, I think, on the whole, with the sentiments of the great majority of the Scotch members, as you might gather from what passed yesterday.

From Sir George Sinclair.

June 16, 1842.

I *implore* Sir James Graham and you to state to-morrow in the House (when you answer Maule's question) what you yourself intended to have proposed; and that the objections propounded by Dr. Gordon—'that the ministrations of the presentee were not, in the opinion of the objectors, calculated to edify themselves, their families, or the congregation'—would have been *expressly* provided for by your Bill.

Such a declaration would be at once responded to in Scotland, and would be productive of the happiest results. Without it the country will still be the scene of turbulence and agitation. I once more entreat you to consider this suggestion well.

Sir Robert Peel, however, maintained his policy of reserve.

To Sir George Sinclair.

Whitehall: June 20, 1842.

I do not think there would be any advantage in the development of intended measures which are not to pass into a law, and in respect to which there is to be no discussion, during the present Session.

I hope, during the interval that must elapse before legislation on the affairs of the Church of Scotland can be attempted, parties in Scotland who are moderate in their

views, and sincerely anxious for a termination of the present lamentable conflicts and divisions, will pluck up courage enough to avow their own conscientious opinions, and to disregard the menaces of newspapers and of factious leaders.

Nov. 5.—You cannot be surprised, after the course taken by the dominant party in the Church of Scotland, after the declarations to which the General Assembly was a party at its last meeting, and with the notice pending of a convocation for an early day, if we feel the necessity of maintaining great reserve.

Note sent in circulation.

I have received the enclosed from Sir George Sinclair.

I am adverse on general principles to any such communication to him as that which he proposes.

It would be quite new for a Government to convey to a private individual a public irrevocable pledge that they would *not* entertain a certain proposal.

R. P. *Nov.* 12.

I think that the time has arrived when these negotiations between the Government and a party bidding defiance to law must be brought to a close.

It is well known that the Veto is inadmissible; it is equally well known that we are willing to allow the Church courts to decide on any objections stated by the parishioners provided their judgment be recorded.

This is our fixed principle, from which we shall not be either coaxed or driven. But it is absurd to ask a Prime Minister to give in an ultimatum to an individual, not authorised to treat even by the knot of recusants, with whom he communicated.

J. GRAHAM.

Later, in November 1842, Dr. Chalmers assembled in Edinburgh a 'Convocation of Ministers,' laymen being rigorously excluded. At this meeting were passed resolutions binding

those who signed them to maintain, first, that the recent decisions of the civil courts involved the principle of their supremacy over the courts of the Established Church *in the exercise of their spiritual functions*; and secondly, that no measure could be submitted to which did not protect the Church against the exercise of such jurisdiction. These resolutions were signed by 354 ministers, and embodied in a Memorial addressed to Sir Robert Peel. At the same time it was reported to him that some who signed had done so under the influence of fear. For these, if such there were, he had little respect.

To Sir George Sinclair.

Whitehall: Dec. 7, 1842.

What are we to think of the firmness and constancy of 'that very considerable number of ministers who disapproved of the resolutions' voted by the convocation, and yet lent the convocation their apparent sanction by attending? Why did they not stay away, or being there why did they not place upon record their own opinions in the shape of a resolution, and, regardless of being in a minority, insist upon a division?

I believe the main cause of the present embarrassment is the subjection of very many ministers of the Church of Scotland, through fear, and against their own conscientious convictions, to the violence and menaces of their leaders.

Every man who attended the convocation, dissented from their acts, and yet shrank from avowing his dissent and placing it upon record, acted a very weak, if not a dishonest part.

Shortly after the Convocation Sir Robert Peel received from the Moderator of the General Assembly a memorial requesting an answer to their Claim, and took an active part in drawing up the Home Secretary's letter in reply.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Whitehall: Dec. 26, 1842.

I have received your emendations and suggested alterations of the letter to the Moderator, and I am sincerely

annoyed that I should have broken in on the enjoyment of your Christmas Day. I have made all the amendments in conformity with your directions.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 29, 1842.

Some alterations which I suggested in your letter were with a view of diminishing the number of seceders, and leaving open an avenue for reconciliation.

I do not think there is any harshness in the phraseology of your letter. If there is any phrase that could be misconstrued into sarcasm, or needless reflection upon motives, I would revise it. But we must at the same time convey our decision in plain terms, as an answer is demanded, and conciliate as much favour as we can towards it, by putting on record the grounds of our decision.

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 30, 1842.

The Duke of Wellington cordially approved of the letter to the Moderator; and I have sent it to the Duke of Buccleuch.

I hope and believe that there is not one harsh expression or offensive argument; but the full strength of the case is put forth; and as we are driven to break ground, it was necessary to take up the best position, and to occupy it firmly. It will be quite apparent that we remain disposed to grant honourable terms, if those who threaten secession be willing to accept them.

Extracts from the letter follow.

Sir James Graham to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

Home Office: Jan. 4, 1843.

When we consider the nature and extent of your demands, we find them to be no less than the reversal of

the solemn judgments of the supreme Courts of Law; the repeal of the statutes under which for a period of 130 years patronage has been administered in Scotland; and the concession of privileges such as are not ascertained and defined by a constitutional law or the recorded decisions of competent tribunals, but such as 'the Church considers to belong to her.'

The contents of the Claim and Declaration and of the Address against Patronage are studiously combined in the Memorial. We could not acquiesce in these demands. We thought them unreasonable, and trusted they would be reconsidered.

Pretensions such as these have heretofore been successfully resisted by the Sovereign and people of this realm; nor could they be conceded without the surrender of civil liberty, and without the sacrifice of personal rights.

Her Majesty's Government cannot sanction any departure from fundamental principles, and devolution to the General Assembly of an independent, irresponsible authority, competent to decide without appeal which are the boundaries of spiritual and civil jurisdiction, and therefore what are the limits of its own power.

Such was the answer from the Crown. The Church had addressed a petition also to Parliament, and in March Mr. Fox Maule moved for a committee of the whole House to consider the petition.

The question to be decided, in Sir Robert Peel's view, was in substance simply this. 'Is the claim put forward by the Church of Scotland such in principle as the House of Commons ought to recognise?' To this he gave a courteous but firm answer.

Characterising the crisis as 'most important,' he dealt separately with the two distinct issues, the one of patronage, the other of spiritual independence.

Patronage the General Assembly had alleged to be opposed to the discipline of the Church of Scotland, as set forth in her earliest constitutional standards. In reply to this he cited the first statute of 1567, and an earlier declaration of the General Assembly in 1565, that they did not wish to interfere with the

rights of patronage, but claimed the rights of examination and collation as belonging to the Church.

'The statements of the Assembly that patronage was "abolished" in 1649, and in 1690, were incorrect. In 1649 patronage was transferred to the Kirk session of the parish; in 1690 to the heritors and elders. The right of a congregation to elect a minister was never admitted by the Church of Scotland, either by statute or by any recognised act of the Church.' And as to the merits of the policy, for the future, of making all appointments of ministers subject to the will of popular majorities he expressed grave doubts.

Passing to the more arduous question of spiritual independence, he began by admitting absolutely the whole claim of the Church of Scotland for 'independent and exclusive jurisdiction within their own sphere.' This he would actively maintain. 'If the civil tribunals attempted to control the Church in a matter purely spiritual, there would be at once an intervention of Parliament to control the tribunals.'

But such was not the present question. Where the matter was spiritual, the Church was supreme. 'Where the boundaries between spiritual and civil were imperfectly defined' it was not so. There he opposed the demand, as he understood it, 'that, in case of a dispute arising between a Church established by law and some other party or body, the determination of the dispute by the construction put on statute law should rest with the Church.' In his view it could rest only with the chief tribunal of the country in which it should arise, subject to an appeal to the House of Lords.

And this, he reminded his audience, was no mere speculative opinion. At that very hour the Veto Act of the Church was being enforced by the General Assembly, and those of her ministers who obeyed the mandate of the highest civil tribunals rendered themselves thereby liable to persecution.

In view of such an attitude of an Established Church, the Prime Minister, while repeating the assurance of his readiness to effect by legislation a satisfactory settlement, warned the House against departure from the principles of the Reformation. From the establishment of 'ecclesiastical domination' in defiance of law in his judgment nothing could arise but evil. Such a demand of the Church could not be conceded without

danger to the religious liberties and to the civil rights of the people.

Whether in setting these bounds to Church authority Sir Robert Peel was right or not, is still an open question. The House of Commons agreed with him, and repelled the Claim of Right by a majority of 211 to 76.

It has been remarked that 'if the question had depended on the votes of the Scottish members of Parliament, the decision would have gone the other way. They were overborne by English influence.'[5] The numbers were, in fact, as follows: Scotland had fifty-three members, of whom twenty-five voted for the claim. Of the remaining twenty-eight, twelve voted against the claim, sixteen were absent.

The decision of the House of Commons was thus unambiguous. 'It put a distinct negative upon the claim of the Church.'[6] And in the House of Lords opinion, especially of Scottish peers, was still more adverse.

The end was now near at hand. When the General Assembly met again in May 1843, it was necessary that the customary letter from the Queen to the Moderator should be drawn up with unusual care, and this again was done under minute supervision by Sir Robert Peel.

From Sir James Graham.

May 7, 1843.

I send you a revise of the Scotch letter, in which I have endeavoured to give effect to your suggestions. All of them appeared to me judicious and well founded, and I work on this letter with pleasure, because each touch under your direction improves it. Make any fresh corrections which appear to you necessary.

The letter thus carefully prepared is described by an historian of the conflict in borrowed words:

'It contained a vague promise with regard to the question of non-intrusion; and with regard to other matters it said in effect that, if you the Church will allow the civil court to put their foot

[5] *Church and State in Scotland*, T. Brown, D.D., p. 235.
[6] *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, iv. 329.

upon your necks, then, perhaps, we will endeavour to alleviate your sufferings.'[7]

This version should be compared with the letter itself.

It begins with an assurance of fidelity to the Union Settlement, a remonstrance against schism, and an appeal to ministers of religion, who claim the sanction of law for their own rights and privileges, themselves to respect law. It sets forth that the Veto Act of 1834, and various proceedings taken in pursuance of it, have been pronounced by solemn judgments of competent tribunals to be illegal. In answer to the demand for legislation as to patronage, it expresses the readiness of the Crown to assent to any measure that the Legislature may pass for the purpose of *assuring to the people the full privilege of objection, and to the Church judicatories the exclusive right of judgment.*

With respect to the claim for ministers of new chapels of ease to sit in Church Courts and vote on equal terms with the old parish ministers, the Home Secretary frankly admits that the law may need amendment, but claims that till amended it should be obeyed.

Lastly, with reference to the conflict of jurisdiction Sir James Graham writes:

'If the Veto Act, which is illegal, were rescinded by the Assembly, the respective rights of the patron to present, of the congregation to object, and of the Church Courts to examine, to hear, to judge, and to admit or to reject, would be clear and well defined.

'I expressed on the part of the Government in the course of last Session willingness to attempt legislation on these same recorded principles, hoping that both the Church and people of Scotland might be found desirous to terminate this unhappy controversy, on terms which are strictly conformable to Presbyterian discipline and to established rights.

'The acts of the General Assembly—the "Claim, Declaration, and Protest," the "Address against Patronage," the demand for repeal of the statute of Queen Anne—have unhappily diminished, so far at least as the Church is concerned, those reasonable hopes; and her Majesty's Ministers, now understanding that nothing less than the total abrogation of the rights of the Crown

[7] *Ten Years' Conflict*, ii. 457.

and of other patrons will satisfy the Church, are bound with firmness to declare that they cannot advise her Majesty to consent to the grant of any such demand.

'If her Majesty's servants could have entertained the propositions for which you contend, and could thereby have averted the calamity which you foreshadow, a day would not have passed before they would have seized the opportunity of giving contentment to the Church, and of staying the progress of a schism from which unhappy consequences may be apprehended.'

Such was the last effort of the Crown, not so much to avert the now inevitable schism, as to reduce the number of seceders, by declaring unmistakably their readiness to meet the demand for legislation, *securing to the people full power to object, and to the Church the exclusive right to judge of their objections.*

But before this letter was read to the Assembly, and indeed before the Assembly was duly constituted by the election of a Moderator, action had been taken. 'More than four hundred ministers, and a still larger number of elders,'* with a parting protest, had in a body left the old Assembly Hall, to found the Free Church of Scotland. Among their leaders were many of the most pious and distinguished clergy of the Established Church, including its Moderator, Dr. Welsh, and the first Moderator of the Free Church, Dr. Chalmers.

Their withdrawal was an impressive scene, and their splendid sacrifice of private interests to a sense of Christian duty will always command respect and admiration.

When the last of them had left, the Assembly proceeded to elect a Moderator for the year, to read the Queen's letter, and in compliance with its appeal to rescind the Veto Act, and erase from the records the deposition of the Strathbogie ministers, with other censures. Being still divided in opinion, they wisely abstained from answering the Claim of Right.

Thus after ten years' conflict Church and State were reconciled again in Scotland, but at the cost to the Church of nearly half its clergy and people, including many of the best.

This loss Sir Robert Peel deplored. It is sometimes alleged that he also repented of his part in bringing it about, but of this there is no trace in his papers.

* *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, iv. 338.

It remains to be observed that in all his dealings with the General Assembly Sir Robert Peel had taken care to obtain the direct sanction of the Queen, as appears from the following letters.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 26, 1842.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs leave to acquaint your Majesty that the Moderator of the General Assembly has recently addressed a letter to Sir Robert Peel, requiring an answer to the demands urged by the Assembly in a document entitled 'A Protest and Declaration of Right.'

The demands of the General Assembly amount to a reversal by law of the recent decisions of the Court of Session and of the House of Lords, and to a repeal of the Act of Queen Anne which establishes the right of patronage in respect of livings in the Church of Scotland.

That Act by no means gives any such absolute right of appointment to the Crown, or to other patrons of livings, as exists in England: it enables those legally entitled to present a clergyman to the living, but the Church Courts have the power, on valid objections being made and duly sustained by the parishioners, to set aside the presentation of the patron, and to require from him a new nomination.

The Church, however, demands the repeal of the Act of Anne. An answer to the demands of the Church will become requisite.

Sir James Graham has been in communication with the law advisers of your Majesty in Scotland upon the legal questions involved in this matter, and will shortly send for your Majesty's consideration the draft of a proposed answer to the General Assembly.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 29, 1842.

The Queen has received Sir Robert Peel's letter of the 26th relative to the Scotch Church. Since then Sir James Graham has sent the Queen the answer to the demands of the General Assembly denominated 'A Protest and Declaration of Right.'

The answer, which the Queen has attentively perused,

strikes the Queen as very judicious, and extremely well written. The Queen fears that the General Assembly will give more trouble on this very difficult, awkward, and momentous question. Their demands and assertions are most extraordinary and inadmissible.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 30, 1842.

Sir Robert Peel rejoices to hear that your Majesty approved of the letter which, by your Majesty's sanction, Sir James Graham purposes to write to the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Sir Robert fears that there is too much ground for the apprehensions expressed by your Majesty in respect of future embarrassments arising out of the position of the Church question in Scotland.

Sir Robert Peel saw yesterday a letter addressed by Dr. Abercrombie, the eminent physician in Edinburgh, to Sir George Sinclair, declaring his conviction that the secession of ministers from their livings would take place *to a very great extent*, would comprise very many of the ministers most distinguished for learning and professional character, and would meet with very general support among their congregations.

Sir Robert Peel has little doubt that a serious crisis in the history of the Church of Scotland is at hand, and that the result of it will be greatly to be lamented. But still he could not advise your Majesty to seek to avert it by the acquiescence in demands amounting to the abrogation of important civil rights, and to the establishment in Scotland of an ecclesiastical domination independent of all control.

Sir Robert Peel is very confident that your Majesty will feel that in the present state of the controversy with the Church of Scotland, there is peculiar reason for taking the greatest care that every minister presented to a Crown living should be not only above exception, but should, if possible, be pre-eminently distinguished by his fitness for a pastoral charge.

The interest taken by her Majesty in the crisis in the Church of Scotland was such that she desired Sir Robert Peel (January 5, 1843) 'to keep her informed of all the circumstances of this interesting and difficult question.' On January 7 he offers to send to her Majesty occasionally unofficial letters which he might think likely to be interesting to her, and on January 16 he submits to her the official answer from the Church, which her Majesty found it a work of time to peruse. She writes next day that 'The Queen has been unable yet to read through the answer, as it is so very long.'

On May 20 Sir Robert Peel, in forwarding the first accounts he had received, in private letters, of the proceedings of the General Assembly, adds: 'Your Majesty will perceive that the Non-intrusion party, despairing of a majority [9] in the Assembly, seceded before the Assembly had proceeded to the election of a Moderator.'

It appears that Prince Albert had a good opportunity of hearing the Free Church side of the question.

From Prince Albert.

June 19, 1843.

I had a very interesting conversation with M. Sydow, one of the King of Prussia's domestic chaplains, who has been for the last eight months in Scotland, in order to study the Scotch Church question. He maintains that the seceders are quite in the right.

'Quite in the right,' or not quite, the seceders have signally prospered. The sanguine calculations of Chalmers, founded on experience, and his inspiring faith in organised appeals to Christian liberality, have achieved conspicuous success.

Not one General Assembly of the Church of Scotland now meets yearly, but two, the Established and the Free. Through-

[9] 'The question whether it was a majority or a minority of members of Assembly who seceded depends on whether the previous reception of *quoad sacra* ministers by the Church's own authority, many of whom were members, was valid. If the principles of the Church are admitted, the numerical result here was in its favour. On the other hand, even on these principles the ministers and elders who throughout the country joined the Free Church were a minority.'—*The Law of Creeds in Scotland*, A. Taylor Innes.

out Scotland, as a rule, wherever stood an Established Church and manse, beside them have arisen a Free Church and a Free manse. The stipends annually subscribed by members of the Free Church, rich and poor, are not inferior to those of the Establishment; the Free Church missions and charities have larger incomes; and its tenets are steadily maintained—with one exception, a natural declension from the fervour of their first disinterested testimony to the creed of their forefathers, that to establish and maintain the Church of Christ is a chief duty of the State.

On the other hand the old Church has by degrees repaired its heavy losses; has obtained from Parliament by perseverance abolition of patronage; and after more than half a century still grows stronger in good works, in voluntary endowments, and in public favour.

Whether (as some thought in 1842) more 'promptitude and decision' in legislating against the abuse of patronage, met by a little less contempt on the part of the Church for statutory personal rights, would have averted the great schism, no one now can say. The negotiations on patronage appear to have been broken off by the Church leaders rather than by the State; and perhaps in any case there would have been a fight for absolute ecclesiastical independence in things partly spiritual, partly civil.

But one point is hardly doubtful, that in this, as in most other business that he undertook, Sir Robert Peel achieved the end he had in view.

By his unflinching assertion, in the face of English misconception, of the old Scottish constitutional principle, 'the independent and *exclusive* jurisdiction of the Church *in matters purely spiritual*;' by his bold assurance as Prime Minister that, if need were, the authority of the United Parliament would be used to guard that jurisdiction in Scotland from any encroachment by civil tribunals; and on the other hand by his determination to protect the civil rights of individuals, lay or clerical, against excited majorities of a popular Assembly, wielding united judicial, executive, and legislative powers in the names at once of Christ and of the Queen, he just succeeded in detaching a bare majority of that Assembly from the seceders, and so preserving the Established Church of Scotland.

To his wise avoidance of the two extremes it may be chiefly ascribed that half a century after 'the Disruption'—while the Free Church enjoys 'a voluntary jurisdiction, acknowledged by civil law, not much wider (if at all) than that which civil law has expressly given to the Established Church'[1]—the old Church of Scotland also not only lives and thrives, but in the candid judgment of an eminent Free Church lawyer, who has made a special study of the subject, 'is probably freer in its jurisdiction than any of the Established Churches of Protestant Europe.'[2]

[1] A. Taylor Innes, *The Law of Creeds in Scotland*, p. 264.

[2] *The Law of Creeds*, p. 481.

CHAPTER IV.

IRELAND.

1844.

Policy for Ireland Discussed—In Cabinet—In Debate—In Letters—Roman Catholic Barristers—A new Lord Lieutenant—Trial by Jury—Working the Press—Federalism—Prosecution of O'Connell—Board of Charitable Bequests.

RESOLVED at all costs to maintain the Union, and to conciliate as far as possible the Roman Catholic majority, early in 1844 Sir Robert Peel laid before his colleagues two proposals: the one to improve the education of Roman Catholic priests; the other to enable landowners to endow parochial cures with residences, glebes, and stipends charged on land.

Memorandum for the Cabinet.

(*Secret.*) Whitehall: Sunday, Feb. 11, 1844.

Are there any measures, not inconsistent with the great principle of maintaining intact the Established Church, which can safely and prudently be adopted?

There are two to which I wish to call the attention of the Cabinet.

First, the state of Maynooth, and the education provided at Maynooth for those who are hereafter to be the parochial clergy of Ireland.

Each year we grant a sum of money for the education of the priesthood. It is insufficient for its purpose, and the practical result seems anything but favourable. The State gets no credit for indulgence or liberality. The style of living, the habits engendered at the College, the acquirements probably of the tutors and professors, bearing a

relation to the stipends provided for them, all combine to send forth a priesthood embittered rather than conciliated by the aid granted by the State for their education, and connected by family ties, from the character of the institution, with the lower classes of society, rather than with the aristocracy or gentry of the country.

If there be a violation of principle in supporting Maynooth, we commit it by making the present grant, and we engender, by the scantiness and insufficiency of the vote, hostile rather than friendly feelings. We give public money professedly for the education of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and, partly perhaps from our consciousness that the vote is insufficient, we take no measures, at least none of the slightest efficacy, for ascertaining the nature and character of the education which we provide.

Can we undertake to appoint a Select Committee for the investigation of the state of Maynooth College, *avowedly for the purpose* of improving the character of the education there given, elevating the condition of the persons admitted within its walls, and this with the certain prospect before us of an increase to the vote for Maynooth as the result of the inquiry?

Secondly, the other measure to which I refer is one which has been more than once adverted to in the House of Commons.

It is said, 'You retain the whole revenues of the Church for the purposes of the Church; you refuse endowment from the public funds for the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church; you make that clergy dependent altogether upon the contributions of their flock—that flock mostly composed of the poorest and most prejudiced classes—and hold out a premium to the clergy to agitate, and encourage agitation, in order that they may maintain their influence over those on whose goodwill they are dependent for their existence.' It has been proposed therefore, in order to counteract these evil tendencies, that the law in Ireland should be so altered as *to permit* a proprietor of land, Protestant or Roman Catholic, to assign

from real property as well as personal an endowment for the priest, to give the site for the residence of the priest, and to attach under certain conditions a limited number of acres by way of glebe for the permanent use of the priest.

I am well aware that this is tantamount to a relaxation of the Statute of Mortmain; that you cannot do this in Ireland without making in England, for the benefit of the Established Church and probably of Dissenters also, a corresponding relaxation. But still, the state of Ireland, and the future prospects of our relation to that country, and the position in which we shall stand towards it in the event of war, make it very desirable that we should well consider what we can do voluntarily—now that we have resisted agitation, and steadily enforced the law—in the hope of improving the condition of that country, and mitigating the feelings of animosity towards England.

Many we shall never reclaim or conciliate, but it is of immense importance to detach, if we can, from the ranks of those who cannot be reclaimed or conciliated, all those who are not yet committed to violent counsels, and are friendly to the connection between the two countries.

While the First Minister was thus bent on winning over Roman Catholics by more generous treatment and some approach to endowment, the Lord Lieutenant had still set himself to resist the policy of selecting Roman Catholic barristers for any but minor patronage.

From Lord De Grey.

Jan. 22, 1844.

I have on a former occasion laid before you my firm conviction that there were no Roman Catholic barristers of the higher standing in the profession who were men of eminence, or fit for high posts, except two or three, who from strong politics were disqualified for employment under any Conservative Government.

But now we have the most unequivocal testimony of the estimation in which they are held by their co-religionists, and their political associates, in the fact that out of twelve Roman Catholic barristers who are Queen's

Counsel only three are retained in the political trials. They have obtained licenses for six other Queen's Counsel, all Protestants, and most of them Conservatives.

I have never denied that there were fit Roman Catholics for minor offices. I have had only one appointment of Assistant Barrister, and he is a Roman Catholic.

To Lord De Grey.

Jan. 24, 1844.

The argument that Roman Catholic defendants employed Protestant and Roman Catholic barristers indiscriminately, and without reference to religious distinctions gave a preference to Protestants, tells both ways.

Even if it proves that the most eminent men at the Bar are Protestants, and in a very undue proportion, it could not be contended that there was any physical superiority in the Protestant, any natural inaptitude in the Roman Catholic for legal acquirements or professional distinction. Whence then the disparity? Whence the disproportionate inferiority of the Roman Catholic? If not in nature, is it not in the law—in the past operation of laws not now in force, but the effect of which is not yet obliterated—which by confining the highest legal offices and distinctions to the Protestant marked him out as entitled to greater confidence, and gave him an increased stimulus to exertion? The prizes in the lottery of legal advancement were for him.

I do not say that such considerations would justify an appointment to the Bench of an incompetent person. But I certainly think it would promote one great object connected with the administration of justice in such a country as Ireland—namely, general confidence in the impartiality of the judges—to have a fair proportion of Roman Catholics upon the Bench.

In February Lord John Russell moved for a Committee of the whole House of Commons, 'to take into consideration the state of Ireland.'

During the progress of the debate, which lasted a fortnight, Sir Robert Peel brought the subject again before the Cabinet, urging its extreme importance, but submitting his suggestions as yet only tentatively, with a view to preserving unanimity among his colleagues.

Cabinet Memorandum.

Whitehall: Saturday Feb. 17, [1844].

I view our future position in respect to Ireland and the administration of affairs in Ireland with great anxiety.

Let us not disregard the warnings of the past. I look back to the year 1792. I find the petition of the Roman Catholics to the Irish House of Commons, asking for the elective franchise in most temperate and respectful terms, absolutely rejected—not allowed to lie on the table of the House—by a majority of about 200 to 23. In the very next year, in consequence of the war with France, the grant of the elective franchise, more extensive than that prayed for, is recommended by the Crown, and conceded by that same House of Commons. I remember the year 1829, and the necessities which led to the removal of disabilities from the Roman Catholics.

I fear the recurrence of the same state of things, the impotence of the Government to punish crime and repress sedition by an appeal to law. We cannot hope to pass certain Bills. If we did pass them, could we execute them through any other instrumentality than that of the known and recognised law, that is, *trial by jury*?

What I fear is that that instrument should break short in our hands. When it does, there is impunity for crime, and the Government is paralysed. Let us not forget, that it would not probably have been safe to go to trial by jury in the recent case of conspiracy in any other place than the City of Dublin; that one of our reasons for hesitating in the dispersion of the monster meetings was doubt of conviction in the county in which the trial must have taken place.

I know not what remedy there can be for such an evil

as this but the detaching (if it be possible) from the ranks of Repeal, agitation, and disaffection a considerable portion of the respectable and influential classes of the Roman Catholic population. It may be said this is impossible, the attempt will fail. But if we act on this assumption, what is the result? You have the whole Roman Catholic population banded against you.

The immediate domestic evil will be impunity for conspiracy and sedition. The danger in the event of foreign war will be extreme. You may be able to conduct the war and to hold Ireland by a military force. But I have the strongest conviction that, if the whole Catholic mind of Ireland be alienated, in the event of war, the pressure upon you will be so great that, as in 1793, concession will be deemed preferable to resistance.

What we must aim at, in my opinion, is to reconcile as far as we can the Roman Catholics, and the Protestants who are friendly to the Roman Catholics, to two great principles, the maintenance of the Union, and the maintenance of the Church Establishment. Every concession we can make consistent with those principles must be made, sooner or later. Now are there any measures other than those which we have had in contemplation which we can safely adopt? or can take into consideration?

Can we do anything or hold out any hope with regard to the extension of Trinity College? Can we establish schools, or Provincial Academies, perfectly open to the Roman Catholic youth of a higher grade than the class which receives its education at the National schools?

Might there not be some system of Roman Catholic education, not founded like Maynooth for ecclesiastics, not professedly of a religious character, but which might be *accessible* to Roman Catholics intended for the Church, and might combine with them, as at Oxford and Cambridge, young men destined for secular pursuits?

The question of the Municipal Franchise will soon be pressed upon us. We have nothing to lose I apprehend, whatever may be our decision with regard to that franchise.

As it stands at present, in all the leading towns of the South of Ireland, it secures the election of a majority of Repealers. I wish we may be able to demonstrate that our rule as to civil privilege of every kind is or shall be substantial equality.

Other things may have occurred to other members of the Cabinet. I suggest those which have occurred to me, and only for the purpose of consideration.

ROBERT PEEL.

In the House, the Prime Minister did not speak till the ninth night of the debate, and then, so far as the Cabinet had agreed, announced their policy for Ireland.

1. A Royal Commission to make clear the whole state of the relations between landlord and tenant.

2. Between Ireland and Great Britain substantial equality of Franchise.

3. Maintenance in its integrity of the Protestant Church.

4. Legalisation of voluntary Roman Catholic Endowments from land.

5. Increased funds for National Education.

An increased grant to Maynooth was not yet announced, from deference to scruples chiefly of Mr. Gladstone.

The dispositions of several members of the Government appear in private letters.

From Lord Stanley.

Feb. 18, 1844.

I think the education of the Catholics is the point to look to. From a few words which I have had with Gladstone, I think he might be brought to assent to a remodelling of Maynooth, and its establishment as one of three or more provincial colleges. He doubts the Catholics acceding to any plan for liberalising the education there.

Have we any safe means of communicating with the heads of the body? It would be well to be assured beforehand that our propositions will be accepted, before we make them.

I should like to see three colleges established; one in the north, if necessary, at which Presbyterians might receive education, one in Munster, and one in Connaught, which would be principally but not exclusively Catholic; in which young men destined for the priesthood might receive a *liberal* ecclesiastical education, in connection with a general education which they would share with others not so destined; and the conversion of Maynooth into a similar establishment; unless it were possible to engraft a Roman Catholic religious education, as a separate branch, on Trinity College, Dublin—and this last, I fear, would be found impracticable.

I should doubt whether in this debate we could go further than very general declarations. I think the promotion of Catholic ecclesiastical (combined with civil) education should be the point at which we should endeavour to meet the wishes of the Roman Catholics; and if anything be done, it should be done by Act of Parliament, so as to supersede the necessity for an annual vote.

We are, however, far from being ready for the discussion of such an Act.

The new policy was hailed with satisfaction by the Queen and Prince. In September 1841 Her Majesty had written, in approval of Sir Robert Peel's policy, 'The Queen is certain that toleration and forbearance will have the best effect upon the people of Ireland.' The following letters now passed.

To Prince Albert.

Feb. 15, 1844.

Mr. O'Connell has not yet appeared in the House. There is a considerable crowd of his admirers in Parliament Street, through which I passed with applause, in consequence of having been mistaken by the great majority for O'Connell.

From Prince Albert.

Feb. 16, 1844.

I return the *private* memorandum respecting Maynooth, and repeat to you my regret, that you were not enabled to

carry out your wise intentions. The Queen joins with me in hoping that you may in no distant time overcome the difficulties which now stand in your way.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Feb. 25, 1844.

The Queen cannot but write a line to Sir Robert Peel to express to him our extreme admiration of his speech [on the state of Ireland], which we read entirely through last night.

It is a most triumphant defence, and at the same time calculated to produce the best effect in Ireland.

The Duke of Wellington was uneasy as to a lower franchise.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: March 23, 1844.

I have always considered the disfranchisement of the Irish forty-shilling freeholders as a measure unanimously approved, excepting by very few. The ten-pound franchise was in fact the only security we could offer for the safe working of the Roman Catholic Relief Act; and having considered that whole arrangement as *one*, I have always opposed any alteration in the Irish county franchise.

However, you must be a better judge than I can be of what concessions it is necessary to make at the present moment.

If this is necessary, it cannot be avoided; necessity has no law. The most painful act of my long life, as well as of yours, was that which our duty rendered it necessary that we should take upon the occasion of the Relief Act.

But let us avoid to take a course which will give ground for a reproach that we do not maintain that which was engaged at the period of the Relief Act.

I urge these considerations upon you with a view to the general character and strength of the Government. As far as I am personally concerned, I don't care what way the question is settled: I will support whatever you may

decide upon. I have consulted nobody, I write only the dictates of my own judgment.

I don't think that this concession will give satisfaction in Ireland.

The Franchise Bill, being unsatisfactory to many Irish members, was dropped. But the Cabinet proceeded to discuss plans for improving Roman Catholic Education.

Paper sent to the Cabinet by Sir James Graham.

Home Office: April 12, 1844.

It may be convenient to lay before my colleagues at the present moment the plan for the foundation of a college in the province of Munster detailed in a letter from Mr. Wyse to Lord Morpeth in 1841.

The plan is in conformity with the Report of a Committee of the House of Commons; and if it be inexpedient to open the University of Dublin more extensively to Roman Catholics, it is a grave question whether it may not be politic to found in Ireland a new University, or at least a College, where general instruction, without regard to difference of creed, may be given by the aid of the State, and under the control of the Crown; the means of separate religious instruction being also provided.

At all events this is a subject which in the House of Commons will be speedily discussed; and the Cabinet should be prepared to take their line upon it.

Note by Mr. Gladstone.

I for one cannot but concur in Sir James Graham's concluding observation, that the Cabinet should be prepared to take their line upon this question; and it seems to me that Mr. Wyse's motion should be anticipated.

I venture, however, to hope that it will be well considered whether that line ought not to be the interposition of a previous measure, namely, the renewal of diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome.

It appears to me that this measure is one demanded by the present circumstances of the United Kingdom, and of its Colonies, independently of any reference whatever to an augmentation of the public aid to Roman Catholic education in Ireland.

W. E. G. *April* 14, 1844.

This year also the Chief Secretary for Ireland proposed the abolition of his own office, but it was not approved.

From Lord Eliot.

May 7, 1844.

A local government of some sort must be left in Ireland, and I see no reason why the head of it should not be called Lord Lieutenant, and have all the feathers in his cap which he has at present. The great body of the people like the show and magnificence of the Viceregal Court, as well as its expenditure.

With regard to my own office, I am inclined to think differently. The Lord Lieutenant, supposing him to be an able man, can perfectly well manage the affairs of Ireland, with the aid of an efficient Under Secretary, referring occasionally to the Home Secretary for advice.

In Parliament the Chief Secretary is an anomalous sort of official, his responsibility and his functions undefined. The work would, I think, be much better done by the Home Secretary. Legislative measures for Ireland would then, as now, be proposed to the Cabinet by him, and when adopted would be brought forward by one of their own body. Irish members would infinitely prefer communicating with a Cabinet Minister.

If you concur in this view of the subject I hope you will not on my account hesitate to carry the arrangement into effect.

To Lord Eliot.

May 9, 1844.

I do ample justice to the pure and disinterested motives which have induced you to make this communication. It

deserves more mature consideration than we can now give to it. My first impression is not favourable to the adoption of it.

The general current of opinion would be for the abolition of court ceremonies and parade, and for strengthening the authority which might combine the executive and legislative functions, the real business of office and of Parliament.

Suppose the Secretary of State were to undertake the functions, it would be considered, I think, an additional reason for the absolute extinction of the pageantry of the Lieutenancy.

About this time it seemed not unlikely that Lord Lieutenant, Chief Secretary, and Under Secretary would all be changed. Lord De Grey retired on grounds of health; Lord Eliot was offered promotion as Secretary at War with a seat in the Cabinet, but modestly declined it; and Mr. Lucas, possibly on that account, tendered his resignation, but was persuaded to remain.

From Lord Eliot.

May 16, 1844.

You have proposed to place me in a position to which my abilities do not entitle me to aspire, and to which others have a stronger claim. In a Cabinet composed as yours is I could not hope to render you any assistance. It comprises the ablest men in every department, and requires no addition to its numbers.

In the office of Secretary at War I should have everything to learn, and for some time should be unable to discharge its duties efficiently.

I am fully sensible of my own deficiencies, especially of my want of talent for speaking, but I have acquired some knowledge of Irish affairs, and I am not personally disliked by the Irish members on either side of the House.

Looking then to the interests of the public service, as well as to those of your Government, I believe that I ought not to abandon my post.

To Lord Eliot.

May 17, 1844.

I assure you that I do ample justice to the motives which induced you to form a decision on the proposal I made to you yesterday, and that that decision was entirely satisfactory to me and the Government.

Soon after you left me I saw Sir Thomas Fremantle, and made an offer to him, which he accepted, of the appointment of Secretary at War.

In submitting the name to the Queen, Sir Robert Peel writes:

Sir Thomas Fremantle has served in his present capacity with the greatest fidelity, is universally popular, and has every recommendation for the appointment. He is certainly invaluable in his present position, and it will be very difficult to supply his place, but it would not be just that his merits and services should be pleaded as a bar to his promotion and reward.

To Sir James Graham.

May 28, 1844

More changes in Ireland. Enclosed is a letter from Lucas, tendering resignation. It may be accidental, but it follows very shortly after Eliot's resolution to remain.

To Lord De Grey.

June 1, 1844.

I am not prepared at present with a successor to you. I requested the Duke of Buccleuch to undertake the office, and had some reason to hope that he would have acquiesced in my wish, but after consulting with Lord Montagu [his former guardian], who thought the Lieutenancy of Ireland incompatible with the Duke's commanding position in Scotland, he has finally declined.

In July, Lord De Grey was succeeded by Lord Heytesbury, of whom Sir Robert Peel writes to the Queen:

June 21.—Lord Heytesbury is a very calm and dispassionate man, with great experience in business and public life, with the highest diplomatic character, and has taken no part in respect to politics—more particularly in respect to Ireland—which could raise any prejudice against him.

Lord Heytesbury in 1835 was appointed Governor-General of India, with the entire approbation of the East India Company, and was superseded by Lord Auckland in consequence of the change of Government.

Throughout the recess there was much correspondence with the new Lord Lieutenant; on trial by jury; on patronage, especially Church preferment in connection with 'National' education; on 'Federalism;' and on working the Charitable Trusts Act passed in 1843.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 1, 1844.

I do not despair of weaning from the cause of Repeal the great body of wealthy and intelligent Roman Catholics, by the steady manifestation of a desire to act with impartiality and to do that which is just. One of the consequences of this may be refusal on the part of the laity to submit in political matters to an intolerant spiritual dictation.

We have to solve the problem of peaceably governing seven millions of people, and maintaining intact the Protestant Church Establishment for the religious instruction and consolation of one million.

Great and comprehensive interests, apart from those immediately connected with religion, are involved in the maintenance of that Establishment.

But it is folly to suppose that tranquillity can be secured in Ireland, and the powers of this great Empire can be brought to bear with effect, unless we can reconcile with the maintenance of the integrity of the Church, a perfectly impartial administration of Civil Government. Decision and firmness must accompany kindness and

indulgence, and I know no one in her Majesty's dominions better qualified than yourself to exhibit these qualities, quite compatible but not often co-existent.

Do not believe those who tell a Lord Lieutenant on his first arrival that he must belong to one local party or another, and who warn him of the fatal consequence of being left without support.

Ireland is in such a state that a great source of moral influence to a chief governor would be the conviction that he is not a partisan, that he is determined to see with his own eyes. The old party distinctions engendered by monopoly and exclusion are fast wearing away, and a great mass of public opinion not tinged by orange or by green, wearied out by agitation and acrimonious controversy, will gravitate towards a Lord Lieutenant in whose judgment and equity and courageous resolution full confidence can be placed.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 5, 1844.

Where I fear we shall meet with determined opposition is in the higher ecclesiastical ranks. There will be the greatest difficulty in reconciling them to anything of a comprehensive form of National Education. The great majority make it a question of conscience, and reject, as unworthy of their calling, any consideration of policy or prudence.

I shall be glad to find there is a growing party, including some of the more respectable Catholic laity, disposed to look with equal indifference upon the Orange and the Green —men tired of agitation and anarchy, and ready to support any Government carried on with honesty and impartiality. It will be my endeavour to seek out such men, if they exist in the country, and to hold to them if found.

The pernicious and almost unlimited influence of the priests, the increasing efforts of a most infamous press, and the utter recklessness of party spirit, both here and in the

Parliament of England, have envenomed every evil, and made the mission of peace and conciliation entrusted to me one of most exceeding difficulty.

Mr. Lucas is most indefatigable in his office, and he has not yet given me the slightest reason to think that his opinions are more Orange than ours.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 8, 1844.

In my letter on the necessity of disuniting, by the legitimate means of a just, kind, and conciliatory policy, the Roman Catholic body, and thus breaking up a sullen and formidable confederacy against British connection, I omitted one consideration which presses most strongly on my mind, and which will almost every day be practically forced upon you. It is this. How will you administer the law in a country in which the vast majority regard the law with disfavour?

In Ireland, as in England, trial by jury, and all its concomitants, are indispensable. You cannot get a conviction for murder, for sedition, for seditious libel, for treason, excepting through a jury.

Now trial by jury is an institution utterly unfitted to a country where the majority are prejudiced against the law. The effect must ultimately be to paralyse the Government and to ensure impunity.

Shall we prosecute? is the daily question. On the one hand there is the evil of apparent connivance on the part of the Executive, the risk of dissatisfaction among the friends of order and good government, the risk of increased audacity on the part of their opponents. On the other hand there is the fear of failure, of a public decisive proof that the law is powerless.

If the decision is in favour of prosecution, again the alternative is a painful and embarrassing one—certainty of failure, if the Government abstains from all interference; or the avoidance of certain failure, by such a degree of inter-

ference as gives a party character to the jury, and deprives its decision of due weight.

The cry in Ireland, among a class of men powerful from their property, and from their access to the ear of the Government, has been for a century past, and I doubt not now is, 'The Protestants are the friends of the British connection; reliance can be placed only upon them; they are superior in all qualifications for office or other favour of the Crown. Support your friends, and they will support you; the *juste milieu* system is wholly unsuited for Ireland;' and so forth.

All this means 'continue to use the monopoly of favour and confidence, which before 1829 the law secured to us; consider the members of the Church as the garrison of Ireland; and govern Ireland on the garrison principle.'

The answer is, that the system is unjust, is dangerous, but above all is utterly impracticable. The law professed and intended to destroy the monopoly, which it is sought to re-establish. It would be more odious if it were established through the exercise of prerogative, instead of through the operation of law. The law, the fixed resolve of Parliament, the united voice of the Sovereign, the Lords, and the Commons, might make the exclusion tolerable, at least not wholly invidious—it would seem to rest upon some ground of State necessity. But to throw it altogether upon the Crown, to admit that there is no ground of State necessity for exclusion, and yet devolve on the Crown the harsh enforcement of it, is to take a course hazardous to the authority of the Crown, and at variance with the principles of the Constitution.

The one cogent, unanswerable objection to the attempt to govern Ireland on the principle of suspicion and jealousy of the majority, and of favour and monopoly for the few, is that it is utterly incompatible with trial by jury, incompatible with the enforcement of law, and the maintenance of the authority of the Executive Government, which, if defied, *has no other instrument for its vindication than trial by jury.*

From Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 11, 1844.

Your reasoning upon the effect of trial by jury in a population, the majority of which is hostile to the Government, is unanswerable.

But I probably go further than you do, for I consider the institution to be of very doubtful advantage in a country where the Roman Catholic religion exists in the degraded form it has assumed here. The direct and powerful action of unprincipled priests upon the minds of an ignorant population makes them the masters of a machinery which they will ever work to their own profit. However, the thing exists, and must continue to exist, and it is for us to make the best of it we can.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 8, 1844.

It certainly was unfortunate that Lord De Grey's selections for Church preferment were from the ranks of men opposed to the National system of education.

The selection of each individual was unobjectionable, in many instances highly praiseworthy, but looking collectively to the whole series of nominations—to the Chaplaincies to the Lord Lieutenant, to Deaneries, and to Bishoprics, the current of promotion appears to have set strongly in favour of decided adversaries of the system. It was not intentional encouragement of hostility to the system, far from it. But there was not sufficient reference to the effect which would be produced by a series of appointments each having the same character.

It is not a sufficient justification to allege that we could not find eminent men friendly to the National system. The fact may be questioned. But the charge against us is that we appeared to give a preference to hostility; that we conferred preferment upon men not neutral but partisans of an opposite system, and remarkable for hostility to that system which we ourselves patronised.

I certainly cannot deny, with my knowledge of Ireland and the Irish character, that a few appointments in the Church conferred on men friendly, or at any rate not unfriendly, to the National system would have the effect of softening down the objections to it among the clergy. They would begin to inquire into facts, would admit that their impressions were erroneous in some respects, would declare that, as the Government were determined to support the system, true policy required that the most should be made of it, and would at last discover that it was quite consistent in them, and decidedly for the interests of the Church, to claim a participation in the parliamentary grant.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 24, 1844.

I found upon inquiry that the inconvenience of naming a Catholic to the place of Clerk of the Crown had been much exaggerated. This induced me to name Mr. Joyce to that situation in Donegal.

My two first nominations having been given to Roman Catholics, I shall find it expedient probably to give the next to a Protestant.

Sept. 3.—This letter contains information of too remarkable a nature to be withheld from your knowledge. The account given of the feeling that prevails in a large section of the Catholic body is entitled to serious attention, for I am persuaded a great deal of it is true. Similar information has reached me from other quarters.

(*Enclosure.*)

From Lord Arran.

There is a vast body of the Roman Catholics in this country strongly opposed to the existing agitation, and desirous of an equitable adjustment of what they consider their claims. But these are timid in coming forward, for they know not how far they might be met, were they to declare themselves.

Their objects, so far as I could gather, are the following:

Diplomatic relations with Rome; and thereby to carry her preliminary acquiescence in the terms to be granted to the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland.

The recognition, if feasible, of the diocesan titles of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

A moderate State provision for their clergy, on the scale of that assigned to the clergy in France.

To Lord Heytesbury.

(*Most private.*) Sept. 5, 1844.

Lord Arran's letter is commendable for the spirit and intentions which dictated it. It touches very delicate subjects, in respect to which we are not prepared to give any assurance.

It is of great importance to encourage the growing disposition to abandon agitation and place confidence in the friendly dispositions of the Government. The admission to patronage has in Ireland, of all countries in the world, a very mollifying effect. To the receivers it is by far the most acceptable indication of kindly feeling, and it involves the giver in no inconvenient arrangement.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Sept. 17, 1844.

It is no imaginary difficulty, that of finding men favourable to National Education, and at the same time qualified in all other respects to fill the higher situations in the Church.

The Primate is still so wedded to his opinions, and has been followed so generally by the Bishops, and all those dependent upon them, that there are but few of the more prominent clergy who are not more or less committed upon the subject.

The difficulty of getting at the real opinions of individuals is also very great. A direct question, if answered unfavourably, would be construed into an attempt to exact a pledge. Then neither the Primate nor the Bishop of

Meath considers any man fit to be promoted who is friendly to National Education: from them therefore I could expect no satisfactory information.

I hardly know any man upon whose opinion I could confidently rely, for there is hardly one who has not either his own or else some friend's interests to forward. It is the land of jobbing.

Sept. 24.—As regards Killala, the result of further inquiries led me to think that Dr. Collins was the most learned and distinguished man, and as he had also the superior merit of having been an advocate of the National system of education from its commencement, I offered the Deanery to him.

Nov. 13.—The Deanery of Limerick is vacant. I send a list of candidates for your consideration. Many have applied whose names I have not placed upon the list, because I know them to be opposed to the National system of education.

There is a very great difficulty in finding proper persons for dignities. Almost all our political friends take the other side of the question; and it would never do to select Whigs. The united politico-clerical clamour would be overwhelming.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Nov. 30, 1844.

I should strongly recommend you to select for the Deanery of Limerick an Irish divine who combines two qualifications, attachment to the Government—or at all events the profession of Conservative principles—and proved, and if possible disinterested, support of the National system of education.

O'Connell's boastful prediction that 1843 would be 'the Repeal year' had by this time collapsed, and he had fallen back on what he called 'Federalism,' or in modern phrase 'Home Rule.' To counteract his influence, and that of the Irish Press in this, Sir Robert Peel now resolved to meet reason with reason, and 'expose the absurdity' of the new proposal.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 17, 1844.

I am afraid the Government in Ireland is not well supported by the Press. Can nothing be done by way of remedy?

O'Connell's long letter about the Repeal of the Union is an appeal to reason and argument. Force and intimidation seem to be abandoned. Now we must combat this new attempt to promote the cause of Repeal, or we shall suffer by forbearance; and we can only combat it by the weapons which it employs.

There is the opportunity of making a powerful appeal to all who read and reflect, in answer to this letter of O'Connell. His want of moderation might be exposed by a recapitulation of the proceedings of last year, by a reference to the language used at the monster meetings, and to the avowals that it was intended to effect Repeal through intimidation to be effected by the demonstration of physical force.

The absurdity of Federalism might be exposed—demonstrating the necessity which it would ultimately engender for the retrocession to barbarism, for retracing the steps by which the independent legislation for parts of a great Empire has been abolished, and one supreme authority substituted for conflicting authorities with separate interests and local prejudices.

If Ireland must have Federalism, so must Scotland. Why not Wales? Why not Wessex? and the kingdoms of the Heptarchy?

The constitution of an Irish Parliament elected by household suffrage, and with ballot, or without it, might be made pretty clear to any body of Protestants not utterly blinded by faction.

I never saw any public document which gave so fair an opening to a conclusive reply by an able writer as this letter of O'Connell. But for the reply to be effective it must be seasoned for the Irish palate. Will neither love nor money stimulate an active partisan to engage in a good cause?

From Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 20, 1844.

The general hostility of the Press cannot be denied. There are no doubt many young men of talent to be found, who would write a very good pamphlet. But it is not a pamphlet we require. We want the spirit of Antifederalism to be applied in daily doses, and in the most pungent form, and this can only be done in the columns of a newspaper.

We hope to be able to bring something to bear that may meet your wishes. The points to be attended to, and the line of argument sketched out in your letter, will be the foundation upon which we shall work.

A writer was found, who had been O'Connell's antagonist at the Repeal debate in Dublin.

Oct. 21.—Lord Eliot has agreed with Mr. Butt—whose name and talents must be familiar to you—to undertake a series of leading articles, to be inserted in the *Morning Herald*, attacking Mr. O'Connell's policy, and the newly invented scheme of Federalism.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 25, 1844.

I know no one better qualified for the work than Mr. Butt. We must circulate as freely as possible the result of his labours in a captivating form.

There seems to be a great opportunity - independently of the appeal to reason and to the justifiable fears of men—to strike a blow at the influence and authority of O'Connell, and in the most vital part, the collection of Rent.

If any other man in his position, and with his antecedents, had declared in the month of September 1844 that he preferred Federalism to Repeal, it would have been fatal to him.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 28.—Mr. Butt has commenced operations. The argument and style appear to me to be well adapted for readers in this country.

Singularly enough the Chancellor—who is not at all in the secret—brought me a list of names for silk gowns. Mr. Butt's was amongst them. He will not consider this as an accident, which it really was.

Whether the articles had much effect does not appear, but soon afterwards Federalism sank into neglect, until, a generation later, something like it was revived under Mr. Butt as leader of the Home Rule party.

This was not the only conflict in 1844 between the Irish Government and O'Connell. Trial by jury was put to the severest test. By indicting the great agitator in Dublin, and by unsparing use of the right to challenge jurors, the Government succeeded in convicting him of conspiracy, and when he carried a writ of error to the House of Lords, Chief Justice Tindal and six other English judges called in to advise held that the verdict was good, Parke and Coltman alone dissenting. But the ultimate decision of the appellate tribunal lay with five Law Lords. Of these, Lyndhurst, a Tory, and Brougham, now acting with the Tories, gave their voices for sustaining the Irish and English judges; but Cottenham, Campbell, and Denman, Liberals, by a majority of one, were able to reverse the judgment, and set O'Connell free. According to Lord Redesdale, 'the decision was come to on one single point; the whole turned on the one bad count.'[1] Denman, however, also in strong terms condemned the way in which the jury had been chosen, and declared that, if such practices were allowed, trial by jury would become 'a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.'

Peel's letters on the subject are few. They show that he had but little confidence in the Irish law officers, that he was against executing the sentence before hearing the appeal, and strongly against letting the whole House of Lords decide between the English judges and the Law Lords.

To Sir James Graham.

(*Most private.*) April 7, 1844.

On one point I have a very decided opinion. You ask, 'Is the decision to be left to the Law Lords, or is a political

[1] To Mr. Croker, Dec. 9, 1844.

vote to be taken?' I answer at once, the decision ought to be left to the Law Lords, and on no account a political vote be taken.

You say that you see clearly 'that the Irish Attorney-General has great misgivings with regard to the issue of the writ of error.' It is difficult to contend for either the justice or policy of inflicting a sentence which you conscientiously believe (I am assuming you do believe it) will be set aside by the highest tribunal.

I observe that you state that it would be 'impossible' for the Crown, according to established usage, to allow the suspension of sentence until the judgment of the Lords. I doubt whether we ought not to have the opinions of the law officers on this point, and in a shape to be recorded.

From Sir James Graham.

April 13, 1844.

Pollock and Follett declare that in their opinion we *ought* to succeed before the House of Lords, on the writ of error, and that with a due regard to justice we may safely execute the sentence.

This advice of the law officers, being acted on, made the triumph of O'Connell, by actual release from prison, more complete than if, as Peel had advised, he had been only held to bail.

Under defeat, Sir Robert Peel, unlike his erratic correspondent Lord Brougham, looked still to the permanent rather than the immediate consequences of allowing a political vote to be taken in judicial proceedings in the House of Lords.

To Lord Brougham.

September 21, 1844.

Lamentable as are the effects of the judgment of the Lords, I must own that I concur in your first impressions (I mean the opinions given in the House of Lords) rather than in those under which your letter is written, respecting the voting of the lay Lords.

The permanent evil of overruling the majority of the Law Lords by the votes of unprofessional Peers would have been, I think, greater than the reversal of the sentence.

I think it is very important in a case of this kind that the Government should be clearly in the right. I admit most fully that the triumph over justice is deeply to be deplored; that the character of the House of Lords is not exalted by the judgment; that in order to effect the reversal of the sentence positions have been laid down which if acted on in other cases will materially interfere with the punishment of guilt. But notwithstanding all this I rejoice that there was no departure from the usage of the Lords.

I have just seen a letter from Follett expressing the greatest astonishment at the result. Of all the opinions Parke's seems to have surprised him the most.

I wish the opportunity may occur of again bringing before a high legal tribunal—before the House of Lords itself—in some other criminal case the question whether one bad count in an indictment vitiates the whole, and the sentence.

Thus in the case of the prosecution against himself O'Connell triumphed. But the chief battle this year with the great agitator was on the Charitable Trusts Act 1843, a measure more favourable to Roman Catholics than any that the Whigs or even the Catholics themselves had ever proposed. O'Connell, well paired with Archbishop McHale of Tuam, used all his powers of intimidation to deter Catholic prelates from serving on the Board. But by the resolution of Peel, the diplomacy of Heytesbury and Graham, the aid of the Court of Rome, and the merits of the Act itself, Archbishops Murray and Crolly and another Bishop were induced to undertake the duty, thus detaching, as Peel intended, the moderate from the extreme Roman Catholic party.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 24, 1844.

Dr. McHale has been thundering against the [Charitable Trusts] Act. The newspapers under the influence of O'Connell are all loud in their abuse of it. The demagogues feel it to be too good and wise a measure to suit their purpose.

Aug. 27.—My interview with Archbishop Murray has been of a very friendly nature. He had never had any objection to the principle of the Act. If his scruples as to one section could be removed, he would willingly accept a seat at the Board.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 26, 1844.

The issue of the Charitable Trusts Act, next best to amicable co-operation with Dr. Murray and the most moderate of the Roman Catholic prelacy, will be schism in the Roman Catholic body, produced by no low intrigues, no specious promises not likely to be realised, but by a proposal for the practical carrying out of the Act so reasonable and conciliatory on the part of the Government that the rejection of it will show that peace is not the object, and will be indefensible in any public assembly, wherein there must be some regard for reason and justice.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 26, 1844.

I do not quite despair of Dr. Murray. If he breaks off there should, I think, be a well-considered written communication to him, reciting what had passed, and formally, in terms full of respect and avoiding all reproach, repeating the whole offer on the part of Government.

Sept. 28.—I attach great importance to the having in reserve such an official letter. It should expressly state that we are prepared to place on the Commission three Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics, selected from the prelacy; that we are prepared to confer with the Commission, when appointed, on the subject of the appointment of a Secretary: that we waive all consideration of patronage, and will select no one who has not the confidence of the Commission.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 2, 1844.

You will agree with me in considering the Memorial of the Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops to Lord

Morpeth in 1840 as a most important document. Its object was to obtain for a certain number of Roman Catholics seats at the then existing Board of Charitable Donations. The larger concessions now offered to them were not even contemplated. As this Memorial was signed by every Roman Archbishop and Bishop, with the sole exception of Dr. McHale—who would also have signed it, if he had been permitted to subscribe himself 'John of Tuam'—it affords the strongest proof of the factious nature of the opposition now offered to the due enforcement of the Charitable Bequests Act.

This document will be of the greatest advantage to us in our negotiations at Rome.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 4, 1844.

It is a capital discovery that the Irish Catholic prelates bodily two years since applied to have some of their body placed upon the old Charitable Bequests Commission. These very men now profess religious scruples as to co-operation in a measure ten times more favourable to the Church than the concession which they themselves asked for only two years since.

From Prince Albert.

Oct. 5, 1844.

It is very disheartening to have to work for people who will not be helped, in order to keep open cause of complaint. Still I hope that the desperate opposition which is made to the measures of conciliation brought forward by the Government is only a proof that the most violent feel their cause sinking.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 5, 1844.

Dr. Crolly admits that the Charitable Bequests Act was meant as a boon to the Catholics, and by no means closes the door to negotiation. He wishes to gain time, and not to be pressed for a decision till after the meeting of the Bishops.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 6, 1844.

If Bishop Kennedy should persist in retractation of his acceptance of a seat at the Board, and there should be indications of wavering on the part of the two Archbishops, I think Lord Heytesbury should consider the policy of writing a letter to them capable of production; reciting all that has passed, formally inviting them to remain, stating the opinion of the Law officers as to the intention and effect of the law on the religious orders, and their interests, and, if necessary, offering on the part of the Government to clear up by an explanatory Act any obscurity or doubt.

I should not hesitate in such a letter to entreat these prelates to reflect upon the injury they would inflict upon their own character, and upon the character of their station and their order, if they permit themselves to be bullied out of their engagements to the Government to co-operate in the execution of a law favourable to their own Church and community.

I would say that their names had been submitted to the Queen; that the Queen had expressed her cordial approbation of their appointment, and had signified her satisfaction that there was a prospect of harmonious action between the ecclesiastical authorities of the Established and of the Roman Catholic Church, in the promotion of a common object connected with the due application of charitable bequests and the encouragement of future liberality for charitable and religious purposes.

I would contrast the bearing of the Act on the Protestant and on the Roman Catholic communities; the change effected in the constitution of the Board; the exclusion of so many Protestant divines heretofore members of it; the equality of privilege and influence established by the new law. I would quote any passage in the memorial of 1840 of the Roman Catholic prelates, and I would put it to the Archbishops whether it was fair and honest dealing with the Government and the Sovereign to complain of grievances, to inflame the public mind by such complaint, to

point out and insist on remedies, and then, after all, when the Crown of its own spontaneous benevolence tendered remedies far more effectual, to reject them—from unmanly fears, and the menaces of a layman.

Depend upon it, a letter might be written which, if these Archbishops could see the coming shadow of it, would keep them firm to their engagements.

I would try conciliation with them to the last—would only write such a letter when other means of persuasion had been exhausted. But I certainly would not allow them basely to submit to the dictation of a mischievous demagogue without exposure.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Dec. 10, 1844.

Bishop Kennedy persisting in his resignation, the two Archbishops and the Roman Catholic lay members of the Commission have recommended to me the name of Bishop Denvir as a substitute for the defaulter. The choice is an excellent one, and I have willingly acceded to it.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 17, 1844.

The Charitable Bequests Act is safe, and this night's 'Gazette' will, I doubt not, contain the names of the Roman Catholic Commissioners, of whom three are prelates. Their consent to serve is a signal triumph over O'Connell and McHale.

What would such Protestants as Dr. Maunsell have? They have had pretty nearly a complete monopoly of every good thing that this Government during three years have had to dispose of. Take political office, take judicial office, ordinary civil service, representative peerage, honorary distinctions, legal appointments.

I confess I am sorry for it. I am sorry that such have been the relations of the Roman Catholic body to the Executive Government that it has been difficult to avoid

the charge—the very opposite to that of Dr. Maunsell, the charge for which there is much more foundation in justice—that notwithstanding the nominal equality of civil privileges by statute, the practical result is that the Roman Catholics gain little by it.

I do not hesitate to say that I rejoice in the opportunity, when it rarely occurs, of proving to an intelligent and respectable Roman Catholic gentleman that if he takes no hostile part towards the Government, he shall not be excluded from the favours of the Crown.

I would do this from a feeling of justice towards the individual, but I would do it also from high considerations of public policy, from the conviction that the single appointment has a soothing influence on a hundred other Roman Catholics, that it supplies a refutation of the assertion that the Act of 1829 was a mockery and a dead letter.

I very much doubt whether you might not contrive for the next twenty years to exclude the Roman Catholic from everything, and yet be enabled to say, without an untruth, that you had a Protestant candidate for every vacant honour, trust, civil or legal office, at least as well qualified, and that therefore you were entitled to give him the preference.

This is very well to say, but it is practical exclusion, and it is a policy to my mind unsuited for Ireland, and inconsistent with the spirit of the Relief Act.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Dec. 19, 1844.

The 'Gazette' containing a list of the new Board appeared last night.

It has given great satisfaction to all the most respectable part of the Roman Catholic community, and if the prelates remain firm we shall have achieved a victory and secured the due enforcement of a law which was meant to be, and is, one of the greatest boons ever tendered to the Roman Catholics of this country.

(*Enclosure.*)

Lord Eliot to Lord Heytesbury.

Of those with whom I had an opportunity of conversing not one failed to consider the conduct of the Roman Catholic bishops who have joined the Board as likely to produce results of the greatest importance.

To bring the Roman Catholic hierarchy into connection with the State, they said, was in itself a great step towards an alliance between the Roman Catholic Church and the Government. To do this in spite of O'Connell and McHale was to dissolve existing party bonds, and to make the distinction between parties in Ireland, as in England, political and not religious. The 'Roman Catholic party' as such has ceased to exist. O'Connell can no longer rely on the support of the Church. He has coaxed and he has menaced the most esteemed prelates, and his threats and his cajolements have proved equally unavailing; Dr. Crolly and Dr. Murray have withstood both.

Thus far, in his resolute policy of conciliation, Sir Robert Peel had boldly encountered his chief antagonist and beaten him, and O'Connell knew it.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Dec. 20, 1844.

It is impossible to read O'Connell's speech without perceiving how greatly he is embarrassed by our success in the formation of the Board, in spite of all threats and intimidation put in play to prevent it.

He has been defeated, as he himself ingenuously avows, and 'the Castle has announced its victory in an extraordinary Gazette.'

His allusions to our proceedings at Rome, his reference to 'the Veto,' his denunciation of 'the adulterous connection' between the Roman Catholic Church and the State—all mark his deep sense of the advantage we have gained.

He will continue his agitation, and seek a closer alliance with Dr. McHale and the more violent of the Churchmen.

Already he begins to express regret at having been induced to favour the establishment of the National Board of Education.

The advantage *we* have gained is not to be looked for in the simple fact that we have established a respectable Board of Charitable Bequests. We have erected a barrier —a line of Churchmen—behind which the well-thinking part of the Roman Catholic laity will conscientiously rally, and aid us in carrying out those measures of conciliation and peace which her Majesty's Government have so deeply at heart.

From Prince Albert.

Dec. 22, 1844.

The last news from Ireland you sent us has truly gratified us. Every party seems sensible of the importance of the triumph, and O'Connell's speech shows his anger, and at the same time his fear of making another false move in the present crisis.

Persevere in your cause, and I am sure the good cause, that of moderation and impartial justice, must in the end remain victorious.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Dec. 26, 1844.

It is a great satisfaction to me to learn that her Majesty and the Prince approve of our proceedings here.

We have fought a hard fight, but we have been thus far successful; and, guided by your counsels and those of Sir James Graham, I trust we shall bring the remainder of our task to as favourable an issue.

Our Roman Catholic allies remain firm, and are pleased with the celebrity they have obtained.

CHAPTER V.

1844.

Bank Charter Act—Prediction of its Working in a Crisis—Disraeli's Party Allegiance—Factory Act—Brunow on Peel's Speech—Budget—Sugar Duties—Sandon and Ashley—Stanley goes to the Lords—Gladstone's Difficulties on Maynooth—Proposed Solution—Royal Visits.

THE chief legislative measure of 1844 was the well-known Act which, after more than half a century, still governs our Currency and Banking.

In 1819 Sir Robert Peel had passed a Bill establishing the principle that all bank notes should be payable on demand in gold. But five-and-twenty years' experience had proved that in commercial crises legal obligation to pay did not ensure actual payment in gold. County banks had failed to cash their notes, and even the Bank of England 'had been exposed to great danger' in 1825, and again in 1839. On this account the House of Commons had appointed in 1840, and in 1841, Committees which had taken important evidence, but as yet with no result. Sir Robert Peel now took the work in hand. In a paper submitted to the Cabinet he shows that there are 'three courses open for consideration,' and presents 'a general outline of the arguments for and against each of them.'

Cabinet Memorandum (Extract).

1. Maintenance of the leading principles of the present system.

For this course it may be contended, that we may safely calculate upon the success of a proposal to that effect. Many interests and many prejudices would be in favour of it; sufficient probably to command a large parliamentary majority.

Against the course it would be argued that the system is a dangerous one; that the Bank of England has very imperfect control over the issues of paper; that the nominal convertibility of paper into gold, where there is unlimited competition as to issue, does not ensure the value and practical convertibility of the paper; that the Bank has more than once been exposed to great danger in respect to the exhaustion of its treasures, and for the purpose of averting it has been compelled to make sudden and violent contractions of the currency; that the effect even of such contractions has not immediately told upon other issuers of paper; that they have occasionally increased their circulation at the time when the Bank was taking measures for the reduction of its own, and by such counteraction of the views and measures of the Bank have aggravated the ultimate pressure upon the country.

It will be strongly contended in argument that it is discreditable for the Executive Government, with the experience of the past before it, to rely upon mere numerical majorities, upon the prejudices and interests of their supporters, and sanction and advise for another ten years the continuance of a system which they cannot in argument defend.

2. The next course is the opposite extreme, the prohibition for the future of all issues of paper payable to bearer on demand, by the Bank of England and every other Bank whatever.

That course proceeds upon the assumption that the issue of money is a prerogative of Sovereignty; that paper convertible into gold at the standard price at the will of the holder partakes of all the properties of coin, is equally the measure of value, and the common instrument of exchange; that it is the duty of the Sovereign to protect the holders of such paper from the injurious consequences of its discredit; and that any profit which may be derived from the issue of such paper justly belongs to the State.

The effect of the adoption of this course would be to make a complete separation between the various depart-

ments of Banking and the department for the issue of money. By money I mean coin, and notes payable to bearer, convertible on demand into coin.

A Board would be constituted, independent of Government, but responsible to Parliament, charged with the issue of paper, convertible into gold, to be a legal tender. There would be no necessary interference with Banks, excepting so far as regards the power of issue. Government paper would be supplied by the public department of issue, to the Bank of England and to other Banks, and they would use this paper in purely banking transactions, in the same way in which they use their own paper.

In favour of this plan it would be contended, that it is in conformity with strict principle; that it deals impartially with all interests, and is capable of application to all parts of the United Kingdom; that it shows no favour to any one powerful Corporation like the Bank of England; that, if it interferes with private interests, it interferes with all in an equal degree, and on the broad intelligible principle of interference for the public good. If compensation to such private interests be due, it may be made more equitably and more easily under this plan than under any other, by giving to the existing issuers of paper an advantage over others in respect to the terms on which an amount of Government paper equal to the average amount of their past issues should be supplied to them.

If we were about to establish in a new state of society a new system of currency, it would be very difficult to contest theoretically the principles on which this plan is founded or the equity of the practical application of them.

The chief arguments against the plan are the risk of applying at once to three constituent parts of a great Empire, in each of which there is a different system of currency, any unbending uniform rule; the impolicy of disregarding altogether the feelings and habits that long prescription has interwoven with the modes of transacting business, and of rejecting the use of every instrument which is ready made to your hand; the presumption of

concluding, in a matter of so much uncertainty as this, that you can infallibly command the public confidence, for a perfectly novel and exclusive paper currency, and the tremendous hazard you incur in the event of failure. It will be contended, and not without reason, that however safe for commercial purposes such a system of currency may be, yet that a paper circulation resting altogether on Government security—a purely Government paper—is much more likely in times of political danger to be distrusted and discredited than that paper for which it would be the substitute.

Of this second method of solving the difficulties of the question it may, I think, be justly observed, that many persons, who, if they were responsible for the conduct of public affairs, would shrink from the proposal of it as a practical measure, will make abundant use of it in argument, in contrast with any other measure, for the purpose of showing its superior merit, on account of its conformity with strict principle, and the impartiality of its application to all interests which it may affect.

3. The third and remaining course is an intermediate one, between complete acquiescence in the present system, and radical subversion of it. It would consist in enactments of which the following is an outline.

Prohibit for the future the establishment in any part of the United Kingdom of any new bank of issue.

Separate the department of issue of the Bank of England from every other department.

Keep a separate account of the profits of issue. Let it be understood that the whole of these profits shall be accounted for to the Government; that they shall be applied in the first instance to the substitution generally of Bank of England paper, by holding out inducements to existing banks of issue to transact their banking business with this paper, in preference to their own.

Require constant publicity of all accounts connected with the department of issue; the quantity of bullion, the amount of notes, the amount of securities.

Permit the continuance of existing Banks, either permanently or for a definite period of years; but claim the right, if they are banks of issue, of subjecting them equally with the Bank of England to strict regulations as to the exercise of their privilege of issue.

Insist upon publicity of their transactions in such a form as shall enable the public to judge of the confidence which may be placed in them.

Deal in the first instance with England only, excepting in so far as relates to prohibiting new banks of issue.

Assume that the probable effect of regulations of this kind will be to encourage existing banks of issue in England to make voluntary arrangements for the substitution of Bank of England paper for their own; and that the ultimate effect will be such a degree of control by the Bank over the general issues of the country, as to enable it to regulate the currency by gradual contraction and gradual expansion, according to the state of the exchange.

The argument in favour of this plan is, that it violates no existing right; that it takes precautions against future abuses; that it ensures by gradual means the establishment of a safe system of currency.

It is impossible not to foresee that it will be encountered by a formidable combination. It will be resisted by those who are for the rigid application of sound principle without reference to times or circumstances, and who think that all paper issues should proceed directly and exclusively from the Government; by those of the opposite opinion, who think there ought to be unlimited competition as to issue, provided there be the security of the immediate convertibility into gold; by those who charge the Bank of England with being the chief cause of the past derangements of the currency, and consider that on that account it is entitled to no favour; by the country bankers, and those whom the country banks can influence.

The Cabinet must weigh deliberately the several considerations which present themselves. My advice is that they should determine to propose the course which

they may conscientiously believe to reconcile in the greatest degree the qualities of being consistent with sound principle and suited to the present condition of society, and should encounter the risk which it is impossible not to foresee must attend any proposal for guarding against eventual dangers at the expense of personal interests and in disregard of private feelings.

The Cabinet adopted, as Peel intended, the third course, in 1844 for England and Wales, and in 1845 for Scotland and Ireland. There was no serious opposition. His own speech in introducing his Bill has been well called 'the parliamentary foundation of all sound thinking upon the subject, and the most authoritative exposition of the true principles of the national currency.'[1]

From a mass of letters on the subject only two are here given as bearing on the much debated question whether in the Act some provision ought to have been made for possible relaxation, in extreme crises, of the 'unbending' rule which limits absolutely the amount of currency available for legal tender.

It is remarkable how distinctly it was foreseen by bankers, that when from panic, as sometimes happens, all ordinary forms of credit were suspended, if also the Bank of England were absolutely unable to advance money, on the very best securities, and on any terms however high, the momentary pressure might become so great as to ruin men of ample means, for want of actual legal tender to meet their bills. In a letter from Sir Robert Peel it will be seen what was his view of this question. He did not say that such an emergency would not occur, nor that if it did the law must be rigorously upheld. His judgment was that for such a case provision should be made not beforehand in the Act, but at the time by the responsible authorities doing what was necessary. And when within three years the case foreseen arose, that was what he personally sanctioned.

To the Governor of the Bank.

Windsor Castle: June 4, 1844.

I need hardly say to you that the letter which I have received from Mr. Horsley Palmer has not altered my views.

[1] *Peel*, by J. R. Thursfield.

If the same consequences are hereafter to follow—when the country circulation is restricted to a given amount, and the Bank can only issue on bullion—which did follow when both species of issue were practically uncontrolled, the whole measure is a delusive one.

My confidence is unshaken, that we are taking all the precautions which legislation can prudently take against the recurrence of a monetary crisis. It *may* occur in spite of our precautions, and if it does, and *if it be necessary* to assume a grave responsibility for the purpose of meeting it, I dare say men will be found willing to assume such a responsibility.

I would rather trust to this than impair the efficacy and probable success of those measures by which one hopes to control evil tendencies in their beginning, and to diminish the risk that extraordinary measures may be necessary.

From Mr. Bosanquet.

Lombard St.: June 7, 1844.

I have always been the advocate of a single Bank of Issue, as the only means of effectually controlling the currency, and preserving it from deviation from the value of the standard. But I feel confident that in the practical working of the system of currency, acting (as is proposed) as if it were exclusively composed of metal, there will be moments when sudden voids will be created in the circulation, which under such a system cannot be provided for with sufficient readiness, and which, if not in some way provided for, may be the cause at times of a total suspension of business throughout the country.

We shall be free in future from discredit in the country issues, for which the public will be much indebted to the new measure. But there still remains a portion of our circulating medium equally liable to discredit and suspension of its functions; I mean that portion which by some is termed 'the expedients for economising money,' by others 'the credit currency.' I have seen moments of

alarm when the operations of the Clearing House, the great economiser of bank notes, have been nearly suspended, owing to mercantile discredit, and when the increased demand for the use of bank notes has consequently been intense. The Clearing House, it is well known, is the means in ordinary times of saving the use of notes to the extent daily of about 3,000,000*l*. The use of bills of exchange, which to a certain extent are practically used as currency in the country districts, is in times of discredit wholly suspended. As the new Bill will also cut off all resort to the Bank of England in extremity, every banker will endeavour to provide himself with a larger reserve of notes on occasions of alarm than may actually be found necessary to meet the emergency. A larger circulation than usual will therefore be required at such periods, while in all probability an efflux of bullion is producing a diminution of the quantity. I cannot help fearing that the pressure will occasionally be of a nature to ruin many possessed of the most ample property, which even in the form of Government securities may be then found unavailable.

The ultimate result of the measure will no doubt be to cause a larger provision against such contingencies, but during the period of transition from the present lax to the future stringent system of currency, I fear that very great difficulties will be incurred.

I beg leave therefore to submit for your consideration the following suggestion: That, during the first five years of the new system, whenever the rate of interest at the Bank of England shall have risen to eight per cent., it shall be lawful for the Issue Department to make advances at that rate of interest on the deposit of Exchequer Bills: the loans to be repaid, or the Bills sold, whenever the rate of interest shall have fallen below eight per cent. Also that discretion should be given to the Bank either to issue their ordinary notes on such occasions, or notes receivable in payment for taxes, but not convertible into specie.

The general tendency of the new measure is to prevent excessive speculation and expansion of the currency. If sudden and excessive contraction could also be provided against, I think the public would have reason to congratulate themselves upon the change. But if no provision of the nature proposed is made against the extreme cases of political and commercial panic—which are the moments of all others when it is desirable that the currency should be more than usually steady—not only will the system, which in itself is sound and good, be charged with evils which result only from the working of its details, but in the midst of danger it will often have to be abandoned.

It might even be in the power of large capitalists for speculative purposes, or of ill-affected persons for the purpose of increasing alarm, to influence the state of public credit through the currency in the moment of pressure, by the further withdrawal of not more than half a million of notes—a power, I submit, which should not be within the reach of any individual or combination of individuals.

Since writing the above, I have heard that the Committee of London Bankers, as representing the whole body, have addressed you on the same subject.

Mr. Bosanquet's letter was simply acknowledged with thanks. The Bankers' address, signed by thirty firms of the highest standing, was answered to the effect that 'her Majesty's servants do not consider it to be consistent with their duty to apply to Parliament for a discretionary authority to be vested in any public department of the Government to sanction an increase of issues by the Bank upon securities, excepting under the circumstances provided for in the Bill;' that is, only where a deficiency of currency was caused by country bankers ceasing to issue notes as authorised.

It is not always understood that the purpose of this legislation was not to provide in times of pressure larger supplies of gold or of notes to meet imprudent engagements—as, for instance, those of the many new railway companies in 1847—but simply to secure that paper circulating under State authority as legal

tender should in such times be still convertible on demand into gold. 'To put a check on improvident speculation, and inspire just confidence in the medium of exchange,' was what was intended, and what has been secured.

Whether other kinds of property, 'even in the form of Government securities,' shall be convertible in a severe commercial crisis into legal tender, or shall be accepted by creditors as equivalent to legal tender, Sir Robert Peel held to be a question for the market, or for the creditor, not for the State. What the State should guarantee to the creditor is that an obligation to pay in gold shall be discharged not in promises, such as inconvertible notes, or even Exchequer bills, but in gold.

In a crisis when panic fear prevails the circumstances may or may not be such that the Government of the day by sanctioning suspension of the Act can restore public confidence.

The Bill passed its second reading in the Commons with only thirty opponents, and the Lords without a division.

Three times (in 1847, 1857, and 1867) the pressure under the Act for gold has been (as the bankers predicted) so great as to threaten ruin to persons of undoubted means. Three times (as Sir Robert Peel contemplated) the Government of the day has taken the responsibility of allaying panic, by advising the Bank of England, if necessary, to transgress the law, in prospect of an indemnity. Once only (in 1857) notes have been actually issued in excess of the amount allowed by law.

The Act has secured, as was intended, absolute convertibility of bank notes. But also a bold use of the reserve created solely for that purpose has thrice enabled Governments in perilous times to avert public disasters about to arise from imprudent engagements of capital.

Sir Robert Peel held it to be unwise to weaken the Act by providing beforehand for such cases; and in 1873 Mr. Lowe on bringing in a Bill for that purpose met with no support.

For the last thirty years the Act has worked smoothly, and in spite of hostile criticism remains a monument of the ability and foresight of its author.

Among the letters of interest in this year is one from Mr. Disraeli on his party allegiance.

Grosvenor Gate: Feb. 4, 1844.

Dear Sir Robert,—I was quite unaware until Friday night, when I was generally apprised of it, that the circumstance of my not having received the usual circular from yourself to attend Parliament was intentional.

The procedure, of course, admits of only one inference.

As a mere fact, the circumstance must be unimportant both to you and to myself. For you, in the present state of parties, which will probably last our generation, a solitary vote must be a matter of indifference; and for me, our relations, never much cultivated, had for some time merged in the mere not displeasing consciousness of a political connection with an individual eminent for his abilities, his virtues, and his station.

As a matter of feeling, however, I think it right that a public tie, formed in the hour of political adversity, which has endured many years, and which has been sustained on my side by some exertions, should not terminate without this clear understanding of the circumstances under which it has closed.

I am informed that I am to seek the reason of its disruption in my parliamentary conduct during the last Session.

On looking over the books, I perceive that there were four occasions on which I ventured to take a principal part in debate.

On the first I vindicated your commercial policy, on grounds then novel in discussion, but which I believed conducive to your interest and your honour, and the justness and accuracy of which, though never noticed by yourself, or any of your colleagues, were on a subsequent occasion referred to and formally acknowledged by the leader of the Opposition.

In the second instance I spoke on a Treaty of a difficult and delicate nature, against which the Opposition urged no insignificant charges, and to assist you to defend which

I was aware you would not be likely to find much efficacious support on your own side. I have reason to believe that my efforts on this occasion were not wholly uninfluential on opinion, although certainly I never learned this from any member of her Majesty's Government.

At the very end of the Session there were two other occasions on which I spoke, and against isolated points of the existing policy; I mean with respect to Ireland and the Turkish Empire. Although an indiscreet individual, apparently premonished, did in the last instance conceive a charge against me of treating the Government with 'systematic contumely,' he was utterly unable to substantiate, scarcely equal to state, the imputation, and the full miscarriage was generally admitted. I can recall no expression in those remarks more critical than others which have been made on other subjects, as on your agricultural policy, for example, by several of the supporters of your general system. These remarks may indeed have been deficient in that hearty good will which should be our spontaneous sentiment to our political chief, and which I have generally accorded to you in no niggard spirit; but pardon me if I now observe, with frankness but with great respect, that you might have found some reason for this, if you had cared to do so, in the want of courtesy in debate which I have had the frequent mortification of experiencing from you, since your accession to power.

Under these circumstances, stated without passion, and viewed, I am sure, without acrimony, I am bound to say that I look upon the fact of not having received your summons, coupled with the ostentatious manner in which it has been bruited about, as a painful personal procedure which the past by no means authorised.

To Mr. Disraeli.

Whitehall: Feb. 6, 1844.

My dear Sir,—Although the omission on my part to request your attendance at the meeting of Parliament was

not an accidental or inadvertent omission, it certainly was not the result of any feeling of personal irritation or ill-will on account of observations made by you in the House of Commons.

I hope I have not a good memory for expressions used in debate which cause surprise or pain at the moment, and it would be quite unsuitable to the spirit in which your letter is written, and in which it is received, were I, after the lapse of several months, to refresh my recollection of such expressions, if such were used.

My reason for not sending you the usual circular was an honest doubt whether I was entitled to send it—whether towards the close of the last Session of Parliament you had not expressed opinions as to the conduct of the Government in respect to more than one important branch of public policy, foreign and domestic, which precluded me, in justice both to you and to myself, from preferring personally an earnest request for your attendance.

If you will refer to the debate on the Irish Arms Bill, and to that on Servia, and recall to your recollection the general tenor of your observations on the conduct of the Government, you will I think admit that my doubt was not an unreasonable one.

It gives me, however, great satisfaction to infer from your letter—as I trust I am justified in inferring—that my impressions were mistaken, and my scruples unnecessary.

I will not conclude without noticing two or three points adverted to in your letter.

I am unconscious of having on any occasion treated you with the want of that respect and courtesy which I readily admit are justly your due. If I did so, the act was wholly unintentional on my part.

Any comments that were made on expressions used by you towards the Government were, so far as is consistent with my knowledge, altogether spontaneous on the part of the member from whom they proceeded. They were at any rate not made at my instigation or suggestion, direct or indirect.

Lastly, I cannot call to mind that I have mentioned to a single person—excepting to the one or two to whom the mention was absolutely unavoidable—that I had omitted to address to you a request for your attendance. Nothing could be further from my wishes or feelings than that there should be any ostentatious notice of the omission.

The confidence felt in Sir Robert Peel's finance by this time was so great, and the general credit of his Government so good, as to enable Mr. Goulburn to effect an important reduction of interest on the National Debt.

On March 9, 1844, Sir Robert Peel reports to the Queen that 'he does not recollect any occasion on which greater progress was made with the public business than last night. The resolutions for effecting the reduction of 250 millions of 3½ per cent. Stock were passed without a dissentient voice; the whole of the votes for the Army, except two previously passed, were agreed to; the whole of the Ordnance estimates were passed after a discussion of half an hour; and a vote of eight millions towards making good the supply voted to your Majesty was passed without a comment. Other business of less importance was transacted, and the House was up at half-past eleven.'

In this Session the Government carried a Factory Act diminishing the working hours of children to six and a half hours a day. Lord Ashley endeavoured to engraft on the Bill provisions for limiting the hours of adult labour to ten, and twice obtained a majority against the Government, but Sir Robert Peel and his Home Secretary, being determined to resist this as perilous to the interests of both employers and workpeople, called upon the House of Commons to reverse its decision. On this subject Sir Robert Peel writes:

To the Queen.

March 19, 1844.

This additional restriction of labour was opposed by your Majesty's servants on the ground that it exposed the manufacturers of this country to a very formidable competition with those of other countries, in which labour is not

restricted; that it must lead at a very early period to a great reduction in the wages of the workmen, as it is vain to suppose that their masters will give the same wages for ten hours' labour as they give for twelve; that the articles of cotton, woollen, silk, and linen manufacture exported to foreign countries amount to thirty-five millions out of forty-four millions of our export trade; and that it would incur great risk of serious injury to our commerce, and therefore to our means of employing manufacturing industry, were we to enact that the number of hours in the year devoted to labour should be diminished by five hundred.

Your Majesty's servants took two divisions on Lord Ashley's motion, and in each were in a minority. They declared their determination not to give way, and the question will be again discussed, and another division taken, on Friday next.

A great body of the agricultural members, partly out of hostility to the Anti-Corn-Law League, partly from the influence of humane feelings, not foreseeing the certain consequences as to the Corn Laws of new restrictions upon labour, voted against the Government.

It is difficult to foresee what may be the result of this question. Your Majesty's servants are in a minority, but they consider it would be inconsistent with their public duty to sanction or acquiesce in the views of the majority. There may be a different result of the division on Friday next.

Your Majesty's servants have brought in a Bill limiting the hours of labour for young children to six and a half, and prohibiting the labour of all females and of all young persons below thirteen years of age for more than twelve hours. Lord Ashley proposed to limit the labour to ten hours a day, making a difference of ten hours of labour in each week. On Saturday the labour at present is for nine hours only.

The Russian Ambassador, who was present at the debate when the House finally rejected Lord Ashley's clause, gives an

appreciative account of Sir Robert Peel's speech and of its remarkable effect.

Baron Brunow to Count Nesselrode.

Londres: le 2/14 Mai, 1844.

Ce résultat est uniquement dû à l'énergie morale que Sir Robert Peel a déployée en cette occasion. Son discours, prononcé d'une voix forte et mâle, a produit sur la Chambre l'impression la plus profonde. Jamais, à aucune autre occasion, je n'ai entendu Sir R. Peel parler avec tant d'énergie.

La physionomie de la Chambre présentait en ce moment l'aspect le plus intéressant et je dirai le plus instructif. Il s'agissait du sort de l'administration. Il s'agissait de plier devant la volonté du premier ministre, ou de courir la chance de le perdre. La majorité ministérielle a courbé la tête devant l'homme d'état, dont elle reconnait la supériorité parlementaire, et dont elle ne saurait se priver sans abdiquer elle-même le pouvoir, et sans retomber sous le joug de ses adversaires politiques.

De là le résultat du vote. Cent trente-huit voix en faveur du Gouvernement, tandis que le 19 Mars sur cette même question il s'était trouvé en minorité de neuf. Comme victoire ministérielle, ce résultat est décisif.

In another letter of the same date Baron Brunow writes:

Le discours de Peel a été admirable. Il est impossible de parler avec plus de raison, de modération et de force. C'était de l'éloquence dans le sens antique du mot. La sensation que ses paroles ont produite a été profonde. Le chiffre du vote a dépassé l'attente de tout le monde. Les cent trente-huit voix sont tombées du ciel. Je pense que Sir Robert Peel en aura été surpris. Le fait est que si la parole humaine a le pouvoir d'agir sur les convictions d'une assemblée, le discours du premier ministre est fait pour motiver et pour expliquer le résultat inattendu. Son autorité y gagnera indubitablement.

As the income tax was to expire next year the 'Budget' of 1844 was unambitious.

On April 30 Sir Robert Peel explains to her Majesty that 'we propose to make remissions to the extent of 400,000*l.*, chiefly on articles which are the raw materials of manufacture, of which foreign wool is the principal; or on articles such as coffee and currants, &c., which are consumed by the poorer classes. The reduction of the duty on marine insurances will be a great benefit to the commercial and shipping interests.'

On cotton wool and on all other wool all duty was finally abolished, and on foreign sugar, not slave-grown, the duty was reduced by one half, leaving to colonial sugar still a protection of 10*l.* per ton. This being opposed by free-traders as excessive, but by protectionists as insufficient, the Government one evening were left in a minority, some of their usual supporters voting against them.

One of them also used the occasion to remonstrate with his leader for expecting his followers to support the measures of his Government, and on his 'frequent and needless reference to general principles.'

From Lord Sandon.

Saturday night: June 15, 1844.

It has come to my ears that you are likely to look at the division of last night in a serious light—serious to yourself, but much more serious to our country.

You will forgive me if I should step beyond the common limits, and take the liberty of offering an opinion.

The question of last night, looked at by itself, can have no great Ministerial importance. It involves no more than 400,000*l.* in the current year; public credit therefore is not endangered. On no principle of finance is Government defeated; on a detail it is. Now, in this point of view, a Government with a majority, on questions of principle, of about a hundred, has no right to consider such a defeat a fatal affront.

There has no doubt been from time to time an expression of dissatisfaction among some of the supporters of

Government. But is it not inevitable where questions of protection to particular interests are concerned?

Will you forgive me for saying frankly what I think? I do think your language, and Gladstone's, on commercial questions—*not your acts*—has given some just cause of apprehension, and explains in some degree the irritation.

There has been, forgive me for saying it, a prominent and frequent, and, I think, a needless reference to general principles, which cannot but create alarm for your continued adherence to measures of modified protection. You may think such reference necessary, but you cannot be surprised if it leaves behind, in those who entertain different opinions, a feeling of misgiving, and of irritation. I say this not to offend, or to remonstrate, only to explain.

On the whole, I entreat you to think gravely and calmly, and as in the presence of the country, and in the presence of posterity, before you take an irretrievable step upon this matter.

No personal discomfort, no annoyances, however deeply or even justly felt, will justify you for breaking up a Government, the only possible Conservative Government, under circumstances which would make it to all appearance impossible that it should ever reappear; because it would be, at least apparently, by a schism between that great party in the country and all its leaders in Parliament.

You are not deserted by your friends in Parliament. They admire your talents, they look with pride and gratitude on all that you have achieved for your country both at home and abroad, even in these few years; and they look with hope and confidence to your future administration. They have no confidence in any other party; they have some of them a misgiving, principally as to some points of your commercial views.

Try their attachment by any real test, and you will see, as you have seen, how they will answer to it. But you cannot expect that upon all points, whether of individual interest, or class interest, the whole of your supporters

should sacrifice everything to this general but honest allegiance.

I beseech you consider this well. The country, and posterity, will not see, or will not value, the personal annoyances you may have experienced. They will see you, on the last great occasion, supported by a majority of nearly a hundred, on the last but one by a majority of 140; they will see you now in a minority on a special case, one of detail, not of principle; and, explain it as you will, they will not be able to understand the grave consequences which it is reported you are inclined to affix to this last result—consequences fraught with irretrievable ruin to our dearest interests.

I must beg pardon for the freedom which I have taken. I shall be content to bear any amount of reproach, if I can only contribute one grain towards averting a great and fatal catastrophe. No other man will take the liberty with you that I take, and therefore I take it. It is the principal service I can render.

To Lord Sandon.

June 17, 1844.

I am much obliged to you for your communication, and attribute to its true cause the unreservedness with which you express your opinions.

I will not say more than that declarations of general confidence will not, I fear, compensate for that loss of authority and efficiency which is sustained by a Government not enabled to carry into effect the practical measures of legislation which it feels it to be its duty to submit to Parliament—at least not enabled to carry them without the dissent and disapprobation in many cases of a large and respectable portion of the party with which that Government is connected.

Having thus politely acknowledged the communication of his follower's view, Sir Robert Peel gave effect to his own.

On the same day he writes to inform the Queen that her Majesty's servants propose to submit to Parliament in substance

and effect their original proposal on the subject of the sugar duties; that at a meeting at the Carlton Club there were some dissentients (five or six), including Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Ferrand; and that the information which reaches him inclines him to apprehend that the House of Commons will not be inclined to rescind the vote of Friday.

In the House, after a lucid explanation of his policy, he 'tried the attachment of his friends' by the test of announcing that the Government still thought the course they had chosen—namely, a gradual, safe, and circumspect relaxation of the sugar duties—the best. Whereupon the Committee reversed their adverse decision by a majority of twenty-two.

From the Queen.

June 18, 1844.

It is impossible to say with what satisfaction the Prince and Queen received Sir Robert Peel's communication announcing the majority of twenty-two for the Government. With what different feelings did we get up this morning from those with which we retired to rest last night! The Queen cannot say how relieved she is. Last night every one thought the Government would be beat, and therefore the surprise was the more unexpected and gratifying.

On the same occasion Lord Ashley wrote a letter understood by Sir Robert Peel as a withdrawal of his confidence.

To Lord Ashley.

June 20, 1844.

I hear with sincere regret, both on public and on private grounds, that the course taken by the Government on the question of sugar duties induces you to withdraw from the Government that confidence and support which were given by you from pure and disinterested motives, and of which they were justly proud.

I thank you sincerely at the same time for having conveyed to me your feelings and intentions in a manner

least calculated to aggravate the pain which the intimation of them must necessarily give.

From Lord Ashley.

June 20, 1844.

My letter has been misunderstood, if it has been taken to mean a withdrawal of support. My support, such as it is, being the strength only of a single vote, will still be given to most of your measures. It may be given with less of confidence and hope, but be assured that I am not going to seek for or to accept a political leader from among your opponents.

No event in public life has caused me so much sorrow.

To Lord Ashley.

June 21, 1844.

The correction of my misapprehension gave me great satisfaction. It was an honest mistake on my part founded on certain expressions which I will not more particularly refer to.

If your letter had borne the construction which I erroneously placed on it, it could not have altered my feelings of personal respect and esteem for you.

Disraeli this time made a speech which Graham characterised as 'open and avowed rebellion,' declining to change his vote within forty-eight hours at the menace of a Minister.

After the Session, Lord Stanley was called to the Upper House. This was arranged with characteristic promptitude—see the dates of the letters.

From Lord Stanley.

St. James' Square: July 27, 1844.

I am induced, I believe, not less by public than by private motives to bring before you my position as regards the Government.

I have no desire of personal distinction, and no colleague of mine need apprehend any attempt on my part to

supplant him. But speaking frankly, as I shall always do to you, I will own that I am not satisfied with my present position.

I am thrown away where I am, and I might be useful elsewhere. In the House of Commons it has now become necessary that business should be done by Departments; and it is done accordingly by yourself, Graham, Goulburn, and Gladstone. You do not want speeches in the House, except on rare occasions. Colonial affairs seldom come on, and when they do, they are to be discussed before an audience who know nothing about them, and take no interest in them.

I am therefore a cypher in the House, and feel that, while I am sitting there nine hours a night doing nothing, my place might be just as well filled by any member who would give a vote when wanted; while elsewhere I might be of essential service.

I need not say to you that the House of Lords is in a state alike discreditable to the Government and to the body. I think I could do something to rescue that branch of the Legislature from the state of inanition into which it has fallen.

If I were desirous of personal distinction, I should not seek to be removed from the House of Commons, and should in that House take a very different line from that which I have deliberately adopted, as best calculated to promote the public interests, by not obtruding myself in useless discussions. But a seat in the House of Lords would bring me more into the general administration of the Government, and would, I venture to think, alter for the better the position of the Government in the House of Lords, and of the House of Lords in the conduct of public affairs.

I know not whether any feeling adverse to such a removal exists in any quarter. If on the part of any of my colleagues, it is fit that I should know it.

With *one* of them [Wellington], I *can* have no rivalry. His age, his character, his position, would render such

an idea not less presumptuous on my part than absurd. But I might be of daily use to him, in taking off his shoulders a constant load of debate, and in supporting and enforcing the views which he propounded as the organ of the Cabinet.

I certainly should not feel inclined, whenever I may succeed to a seat in the House of Lords, to act *under any other* colleague; and if it be your wish that at any future time I should take the lead in that House, I think it of paramount importance that I should be introduced into it while the Duke is still in the full possession of his powers.

I state to you my views and wishes unreservedly, with reference to private and to public objects. I do not deny that a change would be agreeable to me personally, as relieving me from a position in which I feel that I am misplaced.

Between Graham and me there can never be any jealousy, and I frankly admit that you were quite right in selecting him as the Home Secretary, rather than myself, on the first formation of your Government. He has amply justified your choice, and has shown a power of conducting business, a knowledge of detail, a temper, and an indefatigable industry, which have very much raised his public character, and which I fairly own I do not think I could have equalled.

Though I admit that my removal would be acceptable to myself, I would not urge it if I did not think that it would be beneficial to the public interests and to those of the Government of which I am a member.

As the head of the Government you will be the best judge what weight is to be attached to that opinion, and I shall leave the question in your hands.

From the Duke of Wellington.

July 28, 1844.

Considering that in the course of nature Lord Stanley must be in the House of Lords, it would undoubtedly be

desirable, that he should be called to that House at an early period, if his talents can be spared from the House of Commons.

I am as well as I have been for the last twenty-two years, and as well able to transact any business, in the House of Lords or elsewhere. But it would be highly advantageous to me, and a great object would be attained by having there Lord Stanley.

I am quite ready to do anything, or nothing, in order to promote the views of Government. I could continue as I am, or take any part, or no part, as might be deemed most convenient; and I entertain no doubt that Lord Stanley will experience no more difficulty than we have up to the present moment, that his presence there will be of the greatest advantage, and will overcome certain existing difficulties, and will prevent others which we may expect in course of time.

To the Duke of Wellington.

July 29, 1844.

We shall feel the loss of Lord Stanley in the House of Commons very severely, but I cannot deny that I think it would be for the public service that he should have the opportunity of acting under your guidance.

It is your just influence and authority in the Lords, founded not merely on your position and high character, but on the weight which is attached to whatever falls from you in debate, that has smoothed our difficulties in the Lords, and kept that Assembly in harmony with the House of Commons.

I could not propose or consent to anything which could have the slightest tendency to detract from your authority, or to diminish the necessity for your constant vigilance and your interposition in debate.

I have the firmest assurance that Lord Stanley's main wish is to profit by the opportunity of co-operating with you, and to act in obedience to your directions.

To Lord Stanley.

Whitehall: July 30, 1844.

The arrangement you suggest shall be made, and made at any time you may deem most convenient.

I cannot say that I have unmixed pleasure in effecting this. I cannot conceal the deep regret with which I contemplate even that degree of separation which is necessarily caused by your quitting the House of Commons. I feel something like the loss of a right arm, which it may have been unnecessary of late to have in constant action, but which has been quiescent mainly because it was prepared for action, and because the weight of its blow was known from experience.

I proposed to you the appointment of Colonial Secretary rather than of the Home Department from the honest belief at the time that it was the more interesting and the more important of the two. I had served in both, and the impressions derived from my own recollections were confirmed by the circumstance of Lord John Russell's transfer from the Home to the Colonial Office.

It is impossible for me, however, not to feel that matters connected with the domestic administration of affairs—finance, trade, railways, prisons, poor law, legal reforms, and Ireland—have absorbed the attention of the House of Commons, to the exclusion of almost every other object of national concern, devolving perhaps unavoidably the active part in debate upon departmental authorities, excepting indeed the case of Ireland.

Neither can I deny my concurrence in your opinion that a wider field is opened to you, and that—quite apart from the consideration of personal wishes or feelings—you will have the opportunity of rendering greater service to the Queen and to the country in the Lords than in the Commons.

In recommending to the Queen that the arrangement you suggest should be made, I have acted in opposition to my own private feelings, but not in opposition to

my conviction in respect to the interests of the public service.

The Queen consents, observing very justly that 'the Queen must certainly agree with Sir Robert Peel that in the House of Lords, Lord Stanley's presence will be of great weight and advantage to the Government; at the same time the Queen fears that Sir Robert Peel will feel Lord Stanley's loss in the House of Commons, which may add to the very arduous task Sir Robert already has in that House.' I cannot better express my own sentiments.

I have repaid your frankness by the unreserved communication of the feelings with which I received and have acted upon your letter. If I had any reluctance in promoting the arrangement which it suggests, I need not conceal it, when it has arisen solely from considerations of warm personal regard and of entire confidence, and from the natural unwillingness to forego the inestimable advantage of your co-operation in that field of political conflict where we have for many years fought together, and fought with success.

From Lord Stanley.

(Confidential.) Goodwood: July 31, 1844.

I cannot allow a post to go out without expressing my deep sense of obligation to you, not so much for complying with my wishes as for the manner in which you have done it—for the handsome terms in which you speak of any assistance I have been able to render you (quod sentio quam sit exiguum), and most of all for your kind and most friendly expressions of personal regard. Believe me that I value them very highly, and that they add very much to the pleasure with which I look back to our past intercourse in the public service, and forward, I hope, to a long continuance of it.

The withdrawal of Lord Stanley did not leave Sir Robert Peel single-handed in debate. He had still the invaluable and unfailing aid of Sir James Graham, and the help of several

efficient juniors. But unfortunately just in this time of need —when extreme Protestants were infuriated against a policy intended to conciliate Roman Catholic support; when extreme Protectionists were taking offence at 'needless reference to general principles' on import duties; and when both the preparation of a great Free Trade budget and the control of speculative railway enterprise especially demanded strength at the Board of Trade—Mr. Gladstone thought it necessary to retire from the Presidency of that department.

For months Sir Robert Peel strove to avert this blow. With unwearied patience he discussed the case in all its aspects. With characteristic delicacy he refrained from any attempt to argue down his younger colleague's conscientious scruples, suggesting only that the course of events might place the question in some new light. In return Mr. Gladstone did his best, by silence and self-questioning, to remove the difficulty, but failed to reconcile retention of office with his sense of what was due from one so deeply committed as he held himself to be by his book on 'Church and State.'

At one stage he proposed to cover his withdrawal by accepting a congenial foreign mission.

From Mr. Gladstone.

13 Carlton House Terrace: July 12, 1844.

In writing this letter I am prompted by an unfeigned desire to prevent that injury to the public welfare, be it great or small, which might be occasioned by an indication of disunion, upon a question of religious policy, between the Government generally and even one of the most insignificant of its members.

I shall endeavour to run over briefly the grounds of the suggestion or tender which I have to make.

You have stated to me that you are inclined to entertain the question of a renewal of public relations with the Court of Rome, but in the first instance to approach it by indirect communications; that there is a vacancy in the mission at Florence; that you think the person who should fill it might be made the medium of these first overtures;

that you have advised Lord Aberdeen to appoint a Roman Catholic to the post, if there be a fit person of that religious profession at his command.

I, on my part, mentioned first my desire to concur in any course that would postpone the period of the embarrassment, and also secondly, if possible, to make this interval not a mere postponement, but a means by my own removal of avoiding the crisis altogether. After much reflection my mind is quite satisfied that I am fully entitled and even bound to endeavour to effect that removal by any honourable means.

What I have to say is that if a vacancy should happen, and if you and Lord Aberdeen should think fit to appoint me to Florence or to Naples, and to employ me in any such communications as those to which I have referred, I am at your disposal; believing as I do that they ought to take place, independently of anything which you contemplate in Ireland, and that what you intend there only enhances their necessity.

The legislative business of the Board of Trade will, I hope, offer no formidable prospects for the next Session, except with regard to import duties. As respects its executive functions, they will be increased by the state of railway affairs; but I have already stated how difficult it will be, on account of the connection of my family with that interest, to arrange for the discharge of that part of them through my hands.

To this proposal Mr. Gladstone asked for no reply, and none is found among the Peel papers. Perhaps the offer was best discussed in conversation.

In this year her Majesty received at Windsor the King and Queen of the French, with their sons, and the Emperor Nicholas of Russia. The importance attached by Sir Robert Peel to such intercourse as tending to soften hostile national feelings appears in interesting connection with his estimate of the personal character of the Queen.

To the Queen.

Oct. 20, 1844.

It must be a source of peculiar satisfaction to your Majesty to contemplate the visits which your Majesty has received in the course of the present year from the two most powerful of foreign Sovereigns, and the probable consequences of those visits, in removing prejudices, assuaging hostile feelings, and improving the national relations between countries which influence for good or evil the destinies of the whole world.

For these visits and all their good effects the people of this country and the friends of peace in all countries ought to be grateful to your Majesty personally. They are not acts of government for which a ministry can claim credit; they are the spontaneous tribute of homage to the character of your Majesty; and the consequences of them will long be memorable in history, as signal proofs of the extent to which the interests and welfare of a great empire may be promoted by the personal character of its ruler.

A letter to Prince Albert shows the kind of society that Sir Robert Peel delighted to gather round him in his few days of leisure when in office.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 17, 1844.

I have some very distinguished scientific men on a visit here—Dr. Buckland, Dr. Lyon Playfair (the translator of Liebig), Professor Wheatstone (the inventor of the electric telegraph), Professor Owen, of the College of Surgeons, Mr. George Stephenson the engineer, Mr. Pusey, Mr. Smith of Deanston.

I showed them the manufactures from the Alpaca wool, with which they were much pleased.

I invited yesterday all my principal tenants to meet them at dinner and acquire information, which was most kindly and liberally given them by all the philosophers, on practical points connected with vegetation, manure, the feeding of animals, draining, &c. The meeting was a most interesting one.

CHAPTER VI.

1845.

Resignation of Gladstone — Second Free Trade Budget — Protectionist Discontent—Maynooth—Academical Institutions for Ireland — Irish Tenants' Compensation—A Roman Catholic Under-Secretary for Ireland —National Defence—Overwork of the Prime Minister—Orange Disturbances—Conciliation and Coercion—Free Trade in Food.

As the meeting of Parliament drew near, it became necessary for Mr. Gladstone to act on his convictions, long kept secret out of regard for his colleagues. His own reflections, for nearly a twelvemonth, had brought him to consider as an open question, to be dealt with on its merits, the policy of providing higher education for the Roman Catholic majority, priests and laity, of the Irish people. But as to the necessity of resigning office, his conscience would admit no doubt.

From Mr. Gladstone.

(*Secret.*) Hawarden Castle: Jan. 2, 1845.

Only one month has still to pass before the time arrives, at which the whole of your plans for the Session with regard to Education and to the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland ought to be declared; and as, since these questions were first agitated, I have never been able to hold any other than one view of the obligations of my personal position, I think it right at this time again to advert to the subject.

While, as I have said, the incessant consideration of the question has left my convictions of my primary duty quite unaltered, I own that I have felt more and more what must be the pressure of the motives that have urged you on; and therefore, although the dangers of the course (and the most hopeful means of mitigating them) appear to me

as they did last spring, I have become progressively more inclined to take my own chance of justification, whatever it may be, upon the ground of my personal pledges, and to reserve as a distinct matter the merits of the case itself, so that I am less apprehensive of any public inconvenience from the step I contemplate, and of course less desirous in proportion to discover any collateral mode of avoiding disclosures.

To this slight modification of my sentiments in the last spring and summer I will add nothing, because I believe you to be in pretty full possession of all I can tell; except to express the greatest readiness to explain myself further, in conversation or otherwise, if upon any point I have been defective, and a sincere desire, of which I trust you think I have given evidence, to shape my conduct in such a manner as may least interfere with your general arrangements; irrespectively so far as may be of objections on the score of any impediment, except such as I feel *ought* to be detrimental to my character.

As to the practical meaning of this letter, Sir Robert Peel had little doubt; but after consulting Sir James Graham, he made one more attempt to avert the blow.

To Sir James Graham.

Jan. 3, 1845.

I have this day received the enclosed from Gladstone. I really have great difficulty sometimes in exactly comprehending what he means. The last part of the last sentence is to me an enigma. I take for granted, however, that the letter means to announce his continued intention to retire, and I deeply regret it.

From Sir James Graham.

Jan. 4, 1845.

Though Gladstone's letter is obscure, the resolution, I fear, is taken; and you must consider his note as an announcement that, if we proceed with our Maynooth measure, he will retire before the meeting of Parliament.

His loss is serious, and on every account to be regretted. But I do not think that we should be justified in averting it by the abandonment of a most important part of our Irish policy, which the state of the country renders urgently necessary for the maintenance of the Union and the safety of the State.

To Mr. Gladstone.

Whitehall: Jan. 20, 1845.

I will not ask you for any answer to this by letter. You may allow me to have one more conversation with you on a subject which is one of deep concern to me.

I am strongly impressed with the belief that an important change has taken place in our relations to Ireland, and in our real and practical though not ostensible and formal relations to the See of Rome, so important as to require from you a careful reconsideration of your own course, upon which indeed it appears to me to have a material bearing.

The consequences of the Bequests Bill, the schism between the Irish agitators and the chief authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, the rescript of the Pope enjoining forbearance from turbulent agitation on the part of the clergy, the declaration of the Papal authorities that they will co-operate with the Civil power in maintaining submission to the law in Ireland, the adherence of the English Roman Catholics to Dr. Murray in preference to O'Connell—are important, many of them unforeseen events. They have caused, I think, a very general impression throughout the country that the recent policy of the Government towards Ireland has been a wise one; at any rate, that it has been entirely justified by the result, and that there is no alternative but cautious perseverance in it.

I have taken no step whatever with regard to the succession to your office; first, because the contemplation of succession is sufficiently painful to me to induce me to postpone it to the latest moment; secondly, because I have

always foreseen the possibility at least of the occurrence of events altering the position of affairs, and justifying different views of the duties and obligations of individuals.

From Sir James Graham.

Jan. 21, 1845.

Until we know Gladstone's final decision, it does not appear to me prudent to take any step whatever. Your letter to him is most conciliatory, and is likely to produce an effect on him.

If Gladstone remain, the operation is simple, and the movements not very complicated: if Gladstone go, the changes must be extensive, and the moves numerous.

From Mr. Gladstone.

(Secret.) Whitehall: Jan. 21, 1845.

I would with readiness avail myself of the interval of silence which you so kindly offer, if it did not seem to me that I might thereby contribute to false impressions on your mind.

All the circumstances you recite are such as may well produce an influence upon your conduct, in the position which you hold; and in their degree upon mine also, anywhere else than in the station of a member of the Government.

I have given in print a deliberate and detailed exposition of the principles upon which, as it appears to me, it is best that national religion should be professed in Christian States; and have treated every departure from them as a sign of declension in the tone of society, a descent from a higher condition of public sentiment to a lower one. Nor can changes in this department of public affairs be regarded as of anything less than the first order of importance; they are, as I believe, the notes of the ebb and flow of national life.

I by no means conceive that either up to this time such principles have been consistently represented in the actual state of the law, or that they will hereafter cease to be so

represented in it at all; but I am under the impression that there is a crisis in the history of their application to the practice of the Constitution, and that upon the measures now in contemplation much will hereafter be founded.

I have neither said nor written anything which should prevent me from exercising an impartial judgment upon any alteration proposed in obedience to the altered conditions under which with the progress of generations the work of Government is to be carried on; much less anything which could be justly held to commit me to the opinion that society should be broken up, or its peace hazarded, because it can no longer realise its ancient theories of religion.

But on the other hand, both what I have declared, and the manner of declaring it, have been such as to require that any vote or further declaration of mine with regard to these matters, which can have no other value than that of honesty, should be given under circumstances free from all just suspicion.

Now it is my deliberate unvarying conviction, that my official participation in the measure you contemplate with regard to the College of Maynooth would give to every one the right to say of me, 'That man cannot be trusted;' and when that was said with justice, nothing would remain either to defend or to abandon.

I further believe that such conduct on my part would not recommend but discredit your policy in the eyes of those who are acquainted with my former declarations; while if there are any who might regard my retirement as an accession to the kind of resistance with which you are most likely to meet, they will soon be undeceived.

The determination which has stood the test of such long suspense is, you will believe, one not lightly adopted. It is associated with feelings which I will not attempt to describe; choosing rather to trust, even amidst the complications and uncertainties of political life, to give evidence of them by future acts, than to attempt to convey them in verbal professions.

To Sir James Graham.

Jan. 22, 1845.

Gladstone will not defer his answer till he can see me, for fear of causing doubt on my part as to his intentions. He renews therefore in writing his fixed resolution to leave us on the Maynooth question.

I am not at all alarmed, and must forthwith consider the best means of repairing the heavy blow, and great discouragement, of the simultaneous loss of Stanley and Gladstone.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Jan. 25, 1845.

I quite concur in your notions. You must increase your parliamentary strength in the House of Commons, on the resignation of Mr. Gladstone.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Jan. 28, 1845.

'I came from Windsor this morning with full authority from the Queen to make the best arrangement I could for giving strength to the Government in consequence of recent retirements. I have been occupied the whole of this day, and return to Windsor with the *projet*, of which I enclose a memorandum.

I believe I could not have done better.

(*Enclosure*)

Earl of Dalhousie, President of the Board of Trade, not in the Cabinet; Mr. Cardwell, Vice-President; Mr. Herbert, Secretary at War, and in the Cabinet; Earl of Lincoln, in the Cabinet, retaining his present office.

The Duke replies: 'I quite concur in the opinion that you could not under existing circumstances make a more satisfactory arrangement.' At Mr. Gladstone's request his private secretary, afterwards Sir Stafford Northcote, was left at the Board of Trade as assistant legal adviser.

To Lord Stanley.

(*Private.*) Windsor Castle: Jan. 27, 1845.

I should be so glad to do anything that would be personally agreeable to Gladstone, that, if you approve of Mr. Northcote, I will take upon myself the responsibility of sanctioning his appointment to the office named by Mr. Gladstone, and will make any excuse that may be necessary to Mr. Gladstone's successor.

From Mr. Gladstone.

[Board of Trade,] Whitehall: Feb. 3, 1845.

I must not close my last note from this desk without thanking you for a thousand acts of kindness which I trust will not readily be forgotten.

Deprived of Mr. Gladstone's official aid, the Prime Minister himself brought in his second Free Trade Budget, on the same lines as the first.

'If the House consented to renew the income tax, there would be,' he said, 'a surplus of 3,400,000*l.* With this it was proposed to carry further the tariff reforms of 1842; to reduce taxation on raw materials, and on articles of general consumption (on sugar, no less than 1,300,000*l.*), to sweep away all export duties; to abolish import duties on 430 articles producing little revenue; wholly to repeal excise duties on sales by auction, and on glass. All this could be accomplished at the cost of continuing the income tax for three years.

'It would be said that the principles laid down should have been carried further. But while adopting right principles, the Government desired to allow for the present state of society, and to avoid such hasty interference with important interests as might have the effect for a time of paralysing industry.'

The speech was well received, except by Protectionists, and this time the income tax was not obstructed by Lord John Russell or by Cobden.

To the Queen.

Feb. 18. 1845.

Lord John Russell and other members of the Opposition, while they denounced the income tax as inquisitorial, oppressive, and unjust, declared somewhat inconsistently that they would vote for its continuance.

From Prince Albert.

Feb. 18, 1845.

You got the income tax voted yesterday with an extraordinary majority. It is evident that everybody wants you to bear the abuse for it and still to have the five millions in case of getting into office.

From Lord Stanley.

Feb. 15, 1845.

I heard last night with great pleasure your speech, and carefully watched the effect. Nothing could be more perfectly clear than your whole statement, and I think we are landed; though Lord Campbell told me, very unnecessarily, not to holloa till we were out of the wood. I told him we were well aware of all the risks we had to encounter, but that we were quite prepared to meet them all.

I sat between Monteagle and Everett. The latter I think is well satisfied with the cotton. Monteagle said it was a great plan, and an honest budget, and he hoped his own side of the House would not be too lavish of their praise. Our side looked sulky, but I think they will acquiesce.

Earl Spencer to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Feb. 17, 1845.

I like the Budget very much. The taking off entirely the glass duty has long been a favourite project with me. I proposed it in my first budget, which was knocked over, and could not find an opportunity afterwards.

I do not object to the continuance of the Property tax.

On the contrary I like it, if the surplus it gives is as well applied as in the instances of the glass duty and the raw cotton, and the general sweep of [duties on] raw materials and exports.

It is not a clap-trap budget, and I suppose the Protection Society, and all those who try to curry favour with the farmers, will be very angry, and prepared, if they dare, for any factious move.

Sir Robert Peel to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Whitehall: Feb. 20, 1845.

Lord Spencer's letter is very satisfactory. There is no one whose opinions are entitled to greater respect from the honesty and sincerity with which they are given.

No one knows better than he does that, with such an amount of debt as ours, and with the two Houses of Parliament to persuade and conciliate, it is not very easy to do everything which, abstractedly and without such impediments to free action, it might be politic to do.

From Sir James Graham.

Feb. 23, 1845.

If the landlords insist on the removal of burdens which affect land especially, they will destroy the principal defence of the Corn Law, and have no ground of resistance to the League.

On March 20 Sir Robert Peel was able to announce to the Queen that the resolutions respecting the tariff were finally disposed of. He adds: 'Sir Robert Peel's most sanguine expectations are thus practically fulfilled. The Income Tax Bill, the Sugar Duties Bill, and the Tariff have been passed by the House of Commons before Easter.' Her Majesty replied: 'It is a very great thing to have effected, and gives great encouragement for the new labours after Easter.'

Meanwhile 'the country party'—hostile to the Free Trade principles of the Budget, and apprehending that their own turn must come to lose protection—were already beginning to meditate withdrawal of their support.

Sir James Graham to Mr. Croker.

March 22, 1845.

I am aware of the fact that our country gentlemen are out of humour, and that the existence of the Government is endangered by their present temper.

The country gentlemen cannot be more ready to give us the death-blow than we are to receive it. If they will rush on their own destruction, they must have their way. We have endeavoured to save them, and they regard us as enemies for so doing.

If we have lost the confidence and good will of the country party our official days are numbered. But the time will come when this party will bitterly deplore the fall of Sir Robert Peel, and when in vain they will wish that they had not overthrown a Government, which its enemies could not vanquish, but which its supporters abandoned and undermined.

On March 24 her Majesty graciously sent to Sir Robert Peel, with the remark that she thought it would gratify him, expressions used by her uncle the King of the Belgians: 'Your having this excellent Sir Robert Peel is a great blessing for you: he is such an able Minister, and besides such a safe one, who never will let Monarchy be robbed of the little strength and power it still may possess.'

In gratefully acknowledging this communication Sir Robert Peel writes:

His Majesty has an intimate knowledge of this country, and is just so far removed from the scene of political contention here as to be able to take a clear and dispassionate view of the motives and acts of public men.

Sir Robert Peel looks to no other reward, apart from your Majesty's favourable opinion, than that posterity shall hereafter confirm the judgment of King Leopold, that Sir Robert Peel was a true and faithful servant of your Majesty, and used the power committed to him for the maintenance of the honour and just prerogatives of the Crown, and the advancement of the public welfare.

He would indeed have been utterly unworthy if, after the generous confidence and support which he has invariably received from your Majesty, he could have used power for any other purposes.

To the Maynooth Bill, which came on in April, there was hot resistance, but Sir Robert Peel was determined to stand by it, or fall; as appears from the following letters.

From the Queen.

April 9, 1845.

We are very anxious to hear the effect which has been produced by the Maynooth Bill in Ireland. The Queen anxiously hopes Sir Robert does not feel uneasy about the result of the debate. The measure is so great and good a one, that people must open their eyes, and will not oppose it.

To the Queen.

April 9, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel moves on Friday next that the [Maynooth] Bill be read a second time. Mr. Ward moves as an amendment that the funds required for the endowment of Maynooth should be taken from the revenues of the Established Church in Ireland.

Sir Robert Peel is humbly of opinion that the servants of your Majesty ought to consider this Bill a vital question, that is, to risk the fate of the Government upon the issue.

He feels at the same time that it is his duty to your Majesty and to Ireland not to permit a defeat upon any technical or collateral point to be decisive of the fate either of the Government or of the Bill.

Suppose Sir Robert Peel should be defeated on the preliminary question on Friday, it will still be open to him to move on Monday that the Maynooth Bill be read a second time. He does not at all despair, even after the first defeat, of succeeding in this motion. The two parties who combined on the first will not be able to

combine on the second, at least not nearly to the same extent.

The impression is that Sir Robert Peel will be in a minority on Friday night, and then will throw up the Bill, and probably resign.

This impression it is not desirable at present to remove. It may deter many of the friends of the Government from entering into the combination.

Sir Robert Peel humbly assures your Majesty that he will do all he can do with honour to ensure the success of a measure which could not be defeated, after being once proposed by a Government, without very serious evil.

Sir Robert Peel had an interview this morning with Mr. Blake, who showed him two letters, one from Archbishop Murray, the other from Mr. Corballis, an eminent Roman Catholic barrister, each expressing entire satisfaction with the measure, and with the tone and spirit in which it was introduced; each expressing a confident expectation that it would be received with very grateful feelings by the Roman Catholic body, lay and ecclesiastical.

Your Majesty may be interested by seeing the manner in which Mr. O'Connell spoke of the measure, and he therefore encloses a report of the speech at the Conciliation Hall.

Should anything of importance reach Sir Robert Peel, he will not fail to communicate it to your Majesty. He thinks he shall receive a cordial support from the Roman Catholic members, and from several opponents who think the subject too important to be trifled with, and not a suitable one for factious combinations among men of extremely opposite opinions.

To Lord Stanley.

April 9, 1845.

My present impression is that our best prospect of ultimate success is to go on with the Bill temperately and firmly in the ordinary course.

I have great confidence in the effect of a steady declared intention of a Government to carry a particular measure, or to throw on others the responsibility of defeating it.

On the second reading of the Bill the majority was large in the Commons, and in the Lords more than three to one.

From Lord Brougham.

Saturday [April 19, 1845].

You may believe how anxious I have been for a good division, not doubting, of course, the result, but only insatiable of numbers. You will then believe my delight in reading the 147 this morning.

(*Enclosure*)

Madame de Lieven to Lord Brougham.

On est ici dans une grande joie de la grande majorité de Peel; et M. Guizot, tout malade qu'il est, en a été bien réjoui.

Sir Robert Peel to Lord Brougham.

April 20, 1845.

I am gratified by the kind feelings which prompted you to write, and by your approbation.

This Bill must pass. I will concentrate all my efforts to pass it. If the Bill be secured, I care comparatively little for the consequences.

To Mr. Croker.

April 22, 1845.

The opposition to the Maynooth Bill is mainly the opposition of Dissent, in England; partly fanatical, partly religious, mainly unwillingness to sanction the germ of a second Establishment, and to strengthen and confirm that of the Protestant Church.

Oxford and Cambridge are quiet, well represented by their respective members, Goulburn and Estcourt, opposed

to Law and Inglis. We have with us almost all the youth, talent, and real influence from public station in the House of Commons. Many of our opponents there merely yield to the wishes of Dissenting constituents.

Tariff, drought, 46*s.* a quarter for wheat, quicken the religious apprehensions of some; disappointed ambition, and the rejection of applications for office, of others.

All this raises a storm, at which I look with much indifference, being resolved on carrying the Bill, and being very careless as to the consequences which may follow its passing, so far as they concern me.

Her Majesty watched the six nights' debates with much interest, and freely expressed her own opinion.

From the Queen.

Buckingham Palace: April 15, 1845

It is not honourable to Protestantism to see the bad and violent and bigoted passions displayed at this moment.

The importance Lord Heytesbury states the success of the Bill is of in Ireland shows how fatal its failure would be. Indeed, we cannot think of its failing.

On April 20, in recommending Mr. Forbes Mackenzie for a Lordship of the Treasury, Sir Robert Peel remarks: 'He has supported the Maynooth Bill, and Sir Robert Peel is informed that he would carry his county without difficulty. Such a return would in itself—considering the vehemence of opposition in Scotland—be an important demonstration in favour of the Bill.'

On April 25 her Majesty writes much pleased with the division (317 to 184) on the third reading. She adds:

We were most enthusiastically received last night in the theatre and outside, and not one 'No Popery' observation was to be heard.

The Maynooth Bill was closely followed by another part of the same policy, the Academical Institutions (Ireland) Bill, which

was read a second time without a division. It was obstinately opposed by O'Connell, McHale, Inglis, and others, but passed by large majorities, without concessions.

To Mr. H. L. Bulwer.

May 12, 1845.

You will receive the account of measures for the improvement of academical education in Ireland, which have been explained in Parliament, and, though designated by Sir Robert Inglis as involving 'a gigantic scheme of Godless education,' were favourably received.

The adult youth of the South and West of Ireland—many of them at least—are treading in the footsteps of their forefathers, and would turn out, without the opportunities of instruction, such members of society as you would expect from such an example.

Provided they drink, and smoke, and attend horse-races, and lead a life of idleness and dissipation, we are utterly regardless of them and their religious instruction; but because we try to wean them from vicious habits, to substitute knowledge for idleness and profligacy, but cannot at the same time compel them to forswear their own religious faith and be good Protestants, then for the first time we profess to feel the tenderest care for their religious welfare.

We shall carry our measures, in spite of Exeter Hall, and shall be compensated for the reproach and clamour which assail us by the approval of men like yourself, of dispassionate judgment and comprehensive views of public policy.

A third great Irish measure of the year was a Tenants' Compensation Bill, founded on the almost exhaustive Report of the Devon Commission. The Bill went somewhat beyond their recommendations, and was advocated with admirable vigour by Lord Stanley. 'No better exposition has ever been made of the condition of things existing in Ireland, and of the cruel state of the law as regards the tenants.'[1] The Bill passed its second reading

[1] *Peel and O'Connell*, by G. Shaw Lefevre. p. 240.

in the Lords, and went to a Select Committee, but its opponents succeeded in preventing its passing into law.

The following letters of this year, in order of date, explain themselves:—

To Earl St. Germans (late Lord Eliot).

Jan. 24, 1845.

Recent events in Ireland, and the immediate approach of a Session in which our policy with regard to Ireland must necessarily occupy so prominent a place, increase my regret at the absence from the House of Commons of the Irish Minister by whom, through his moderation, firmness, and discretion, that policy has been so materially aided and advanced.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Jan. 25, 1845.

We carried the second reading of the Irish Tenants' Compensation Bill. But the debate was very uncomfortable, notwithstanding the efforts made by Lord Stanley; and I think it likely that English and Scotch proprietors will take the alarm.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Jan. 27, 1845.

We are anxiously awaiting your decision upon the Maynooth question, and to know who is to be our new Chief Secretary. To me Eliot's loss will be irreparable.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Jan. 29, 1845.

The two best men for the office of Chief Secretary are Sidney Herbert and Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Lord Lincoln is a very able and estimable man, but he has never expressed an opinion in reference to Irish politics, and his father is notorious for Ultra-Protestant feelings.

Sidney Herbert declined. I then proposed the appointment to Sir Thomas Fremantle, or rather, pressed it upon

him. In his perfect temper, discretion, experience in public business, honour, and integrity I have unbounded confidence.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Jan. 31, 1845.

I look forward with great impatience to the development of your Irish policy, which will put an end as well to exaggerated hopes as to exaggerated fears.

The Maynooth Bill will, I hope, restore courage to our trembling Roman Catholic prelates, and to the equally trembling laity. I had a better opinion of the last, when they could veil their cowardice under the name of religion.

But having now the Papal authority in their favour, and the most respectable of their prelates in the front of the battle, that they should not come forward with some public demonstration in their support is nothing but sheer poltroonery.

You will probably have heard that Archbishop Murray was present at my Levée—an event of some importance in Irish history, and particularly satisfactory at the present moment, as showing that Dr. Murray at least does not quail before the power of O'Connell.

From Lord Ashley.

Feb. 26, 1845.

A notice has been sent to me to attend a meeting at your house on the subject of Mr. Bright's motion respecting the Game Laws.

If I decline to be present, I hope it will not be regarded as any personal discourtesy to yourself. The truth is that, being so unfortunate as to find myself in frequent opposition to my old political friends, I have no desire to add the differences of private conference to those which so often take place, now perhaps inevitably, in public debate and division.

I have made up my mind to vote for Mr. Bright's motion [for a Committee to inquire] if it be fairly and decently

introduced. This I much regret, because I had hoped that the subject might be handled by some respectable country gentleman; and I have no satisfaction in following a person who is almost unfitted by his manners for educated society, and of whom I never heard it proved that he was either honest or humane.[2]

But the abuses of the Game Laws are so frightful, and so repugnant to public feeling, that I cannot undertake to refuse, so far as a single vote can go, the prayer that the whole evil be examined, stated, and, if possible, removed.

To Lord Ashley.

Feb. 27, 1845.

I am much obliged by your letter. The views expressed in it are entirely in concurrence with my own; and, I have the satisfaction to add, with those generally expressed at the meeting.

To Sir James Graham.

Drayton Manor: March 26, 1845.

I return Fremantle's and Lord Heytesbury's letters. There is sheer cowardice in dealing with the disturbers of the public peace.

'Armed bands are traversing the country.'

I will venture to say that with common resolution, and with the command of military and police disciplined and armed ten times better than these bands, the thing as a practice could not last.

There is more advantage in repressing outrage by means of the ordinary laws, and, above all, by the courage and resolution of the owners of property, than by any attempt to supply the place of courage and resolution by extraordinary laws.

To Lord Heytesbury.

April 21, 1845.

The Queen and Prince consider that they could not with propriety pay a visit to any other part of the Queen's

[2] An example of the prejudice felt against new men.

dominions before they have been to Ireland. Their leaning manifestly is—should there be no political impediment in the way—in favour of a visit to Ireland at the close of the autumn.

To Mr. Croker.

June 9, 1845.

As to the rejection of the first Maynooth Bill in 1799, I believe at this moment no human being but myself knows the real truth. Read these letters, return them, and say nothing about the matter.

It was an act of sheer mischief and mutiny of Lord Clare, who perhaps then had a foresight of diminished influence on the passing of the Act of Union. He rejected the Bill [in the House of Lords] without communication with the Irish Government.

To Sir James Graham.

July 8. 1845.

Lord Erne's letter is pregnant with instruction.

By courage and the enforcement of the ordinary law tranquillity has been restored in Fermanagh. No sting is left behind, no reflection cast on the efficacy of the law, tending to weaken confidence in it. The well disposed have learned their own strength, and know they have a weapon in their hands which well used is sufficiently powerful.

Cabinet Memorandum.

July 1. 1845.

In the course of a discussion which took place a few nights since in the House of Commons, there was a very strong feeling expressed in favour of the erection of a National Gallery more worthy of the country. I wish to suggest, at present for consideration only, the following proposal.

Erect a National Gallery, fit for the reception of works of ancient and modern art, on the site of St. James's Palace. Widen the street (Cleveland Row) to the West of St. James's Street, making it of equal width with Pall Mall, and

terminating at the Green Park. Make an ornamental garden between the Mall and St. James's Park and the south façade of the New Gallery. Add to Buckingham Palace apartments which will enable the Sovereign to hold at that Palace Drawing Rooms and Levées. Call Buckingham Palace St. James's Palace, the New Gallery the Royal Gallery.

The present building at St. James's cannot long remain. It is a great blemish to the best part of London. What better application of the site can there be than a Royal Gallery?

If you provide for really valuable pictures ample and suitable means of exhibiting them, the expense of constructing a magnificent gallery will at no distant period be repaid by presents and bequests.

It would seem much more decorous that the Queen's subjects should wait upon her Majesty at the Palace which is her residence than that she should leave it for the purpose of waiting upon them. For times of public excitement it would be much better that the Sovereign should hold the Levées &c. at the Palace, where she resides, than that she should have to pass and to return through an immense concourse of people.

ROBERT PEEL.

Other letters show how far the First Minister at this time carried his zeal for giving to Roman Catholics a full share of office.

From Lord Heytesbury.

July 19, 1845.

Mr. Lucas has been an indefatigable and very efficient servant of the Government, and we shall feel the loss of his clear head in business, though I doubt whether in his heart he went cordially with us in our more recent line of policy. But whatever his own feelings might be, he never allowed them to influence his public conduct, which was ever in conformity with the views of the Government.

We shall miss him most as the medium of communication with the heads of the Orange party. They had the greatest confidence in him.

To Lord Heytesbury.

July 18, 1845.

The selection of a successor to Mr. Lucas will be no easy matter. Will you turn in your mind whether it would be practicable to nominate a Roman Catholic gentleman to this office?

Independently of the difficulty there may be in finding one perfectly unexceptionable, the principle of the selection may require very serious preliminary consideration.

I confess I think it would be of immense importance to establish a closer connection between the Executive Government and the Roman Catholic body, to facilitate the means of friendly communication.

Our Executive as at present constituted is of a very exclusive character. The Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary, the Under Secretary, the Chancellor, the Law officers, the judges whom we have appointed, all without exception are Protestants.

We may be told that this is necessary, in order to secure the confidence of the Protestants. But if so, how hopeless it must be to gain the confidence of the Roman Catholics!

I think it very probable that the selection of a Roman Catholic for a place of such trust as that of Under Secretary would be startling to many, and provoke much dissatisfaction and clamour. But the undue apprehension of this would fetter almost any attempt to govern Ireland on the principle of impartiality.

However, all I suggest at present is, first, the dispassionate consideration of the thing itself. The qualifications of the man are a subsequent concern.

From Lord Heytesbury.

July 20, 1845.

I enter fully into all your views of policy with regard to this country. I am as desirous as yourself that Roman Catholics should be placed, as soon as may be, in offices of

honour and emolument, and gradually in those of trust and confidence. But I cannot think that the time is yet come for making a Roman Catholic, untried and unknown, the main-spring of your Government in Ireland; the channel of confidential communication with all your authorities, military, civil, and ecclesiastical; the depositary not only of all the secrets of Government, but of those of everybody connected with it; the man, in short, upon whom must rest, during at least eight months of the year, the details of administration.

Recollect, I entreat you, what the position of the individual himself would be in a Government, and in an office, manned unfortunately upon the most rigid exclusive principle. No confidential communication would ever be made to him from the provinces. Mr. Pennefather, to whom more than hopes of the succession were held out last year, by Lord Eliot, would, I doubt not, immediately resign. There would be nobody left to counsel or direct a Roman Catholic successor. On the contrary, a sort of passive resistance would spring up, which would meet him everywhere, but which he would find it almost impossible to grapple with, or overcome.

Under such circumstances the machinery, which ought to be entirely under his control, would be made to work with the greatest difficulty, and the whole action of the Government would be paralysed.

I think, however, I could suggest a way in which your principal object might be effected, without stirring up all those evil passions which would be put in motion by the appointment of a Roman Catholic, at one bound, to so immensely important a post in the administration of the Government. The course which I would recommend is the following.

Promote Mr. Pennefather to the office vacated by Mr. Lucas, and select some Roman Catholic, well connected and of fair acquirements, to be Mr. Pennefather's successor, in the second place. There he would be trained to habits of business, get accustomed to office, and office get accus-

tomed to him, and thus be rendered fit and eligible for higher employment, whenever it could safely be entrusted to him.

This concession to the Catholic party, who expect nothing of the sort, would be considered as flattering to them as if he were placed in the more responsible office; and we should avoid that angry rupture with the Protestant party which would be the inevitable consequence of his appointment to the delicate trust which has ever required so much management and tact.

To Lord Heytesbury.

July 23, 1845.

I think there is great weight in your observations. In the present feverish state of the public mind, Protestant and Roman Catholic, the appointment of a Roman Catholic to the office of Under Secretary would in all probability add to the inflammation.

July 24.—Every purpose would, I think, be answered by the nomination of a trustworthy Roman Catholic to the office of Chief Clerk.

If the Government could place entire confidence in his integrity and discretion, such a nomination would give most advantageous opportunities of confidential communication with the Roman Catholic body, and would inspire new confidence on their part in the acts and intentions of the Executive.

From Lord Heytesbury.

July 25. 1845.

We may be looking out for a Roman Catholic eligible for Chief Clerk. It would be well also, as vacancies occur, that Sir Thomas Fremantle should introduce a Roman Catholic clerk or two into the office. We must gradually prepare for the change of system.

I have already introduced several Roman Catholics amongst the stipendiary magistrates, and shall continue to give them their due proportion of nominations.

To Lord Heytesbury.

July 30, 1845.

The Queen, to whom I mentioned your intention of placing a respectable and well-qualified Roman Catholic in the office which Mr. Pennefather holds, expressed great satisfaction.

If the question of acceptance or rejection were to turn upon 200*l.* a year, I should be sorry to forego the advantage of a really eligible man for such a consideration. But I think a change of name would be requisite to cover the increase of salary.

Would there not be a positive advantage in this—a greater compliment and greater confidence implied in a Roman Catholic for the appointment of 'Assistant Secretary' than of Chief Clerk?

I am surprised at a Queen's Counsel taking an office which bears that name.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Aug. 3, 1845.

I am glad to inform you that Mr. McKenna gratefully accepts the proposition made to him. As he started no objection to the title of the office, it was not for me to stir that question. He will, therefore, be appointed to the Clerkship, as Mr. Pennefather was before him.

I conceive that I have not acted extravagantly in informing him that he will receive 1,000*l.* per annum. With this he appeared to be perfectly satisfied.

Meanwhile the new policy in Ireland of favouring Catholics had stirred up the Orange leaders to fresh demonstrations of physical force.

To Sir James Graham.

Aug. 22, 1845.

What shabby fellows those great Protestants are! Lord Erne sends his band to Enniskillen, and Lord Enniskillen his wife, giving all the countenance they can to the proceedings of their inferiors, unaccompanied by any risk to themselves.

To Lord Lifford.

Aug. 25, 1845.

I wish the moral improvement of Ireland—the advance towards the establishment of kindlier feelings between different religious parties—were as rapid and satisfactory as the advance towards a better state of things so far as concerns material comforts.

Men long possessed of the monopoly of patronage and power are apt to be very angry at the slightest trespass upon what they consider their exclusive domain.

When one calmly reflects on what the Protestants possess, on their share of the good things which Government has to bestow, the proportion in which they hold office, judicial, legal, fiscal, civil, in addition necessarily to the whole of the appointments connected with the Church, it is impossible not to smile at the lamentations over the abject and degraded condition of the Protestant interest, and to regret the folly of seeking not only to perpetuate the exclusion of the majority from acts of grace and favour, but to wound their feelings by offensive confederacies and commemorations.

From Sir James Graham.

Sept. 8, 1845.

Lord Roden's conduct at Belfast was most indiscreet. He and Lord Winchilsea together are firebrands in the midst of gunpowder. Our dangers from without are threatening enough; we might be spared this internal discord, in which folly unfortunately is hardly less dangerous than bad intentions.

Sept. 30.—In truth Lord De Grey and Sugden carried the dismissal of the Repeal magistrates to an inconvenient length. We were compelled to adopt and to defend their acts, and there is no retreat from what has been done.

The comparison is now not unfairly drawn between our treatment of the justices who are avowed friends of Repeal

and our lenity towards the sympathisers with the Orange delinquents.

Affairs are rapidly verging to a crisis in Ireland, in which it will be very difficult for us to conduct the government. Lord Heytesbury is prudent and judicious, but we placed him in the midst of a labyrinth from which there is no escape.

Oct. 2.—The present state of affairs in Ireland greatly distresses me. I see no cure for the evils which render the impartial government of that country almost impossible; and if every other difficulty were overcome the concessions which alone would satisfy the Irish Catholics are such as Great Britain is not prepared to make. The Protestants of Ireland would resist them to the last extremity; and, after all, the loyal attachment of the Irish Catholics under a Protestant British Sovereign and Protestant British institutions would be found at least precarious.

As I understand this case of Ireland by practical experience better, the more desperate do I consider it, and I assure you I am unhappy when I consider either the past or the future, and am aware that, notwithstanding honest intentions and constant efforts, the government of that country does not prosper under my care.

Another source of anxiety in this year was the sudden increase of wild speculation in railways, involving engagements for capital expenditure far beyond the means of promoters to fulfil. Sir Robert Peel anticipated what might be the results.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 21, 1845.

Direct interference on our part with the mania of railway speculation seems impracticable. The only question is whether public attention might not be called to the impending danger, through the public press.

The publication of information might be a fitting prelude to an article inculcating the necessity of caution; reminding the public of the results of feverish speculations

like the present; exhorting all dealers in credit to beware how they advance money on such securities as railway shares; proceeding to remind parties who think themselves safe—deeming their own speculations to be moderate and rational—that they are liable to be affected by the recklessness of men who, without capital, are existing only on the prospect of continued advance in the nominal value of that in which they speculate, who by their rashness are daily hastening the period of explosion, and aggravating the extent of the mischief which will ensue from it; to comment on the Share List published on the authority of Parliament; to show that it contains the names of ladies subscribing for shares to the amount of many thousands; to advise speculators to remember that there may be such a thing as war, and that there is no security for the continuance of abundant harvests.

Such a statement, though apparently unauthorised, might easily have a character given to it which would command attention, and might arrest the progress of the mischief. It ought to appear in the 'Times.'

Action was taken accordingly, and it may be observed how clearly Sir Robert Peel foresaw the 'panic with a vengeance' which within two years ensued.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 27. 1845.

I have no alteration to suggest in the accompanying draft. I cannot think the insertion of it runs any risk of producing panic.

It is intended to produce a reasonable apprehension. The warning to a crowd to beware of pickpockets, or the rousing from their beds of those who live near a house on fire, produces panic in one sense, and very salutary panic.

I am much more apprehensive that our advice will be disregarded than that it will operate injuriously by the propagation of terror among speculators.

(*Private.*)—The Governor [of the Bank] rather amuses

me. He writes one day under the influence of great alarm, and seems to recommend some forcible intervention on the part of the Government. We answer, 'We cannot interfere with any act of authority, but let us caution the public, and advise the people not to be parties to their own ruin.' The Governor's sensitiveness is then all on the other side. He says, 'Great care must be taken to avoid creating a panic.'

But if the mischief which he apprehends is really at hand, there will be a panic with a vengeance.

A correspondence later in the year affords a good example of the tact, combined with firmness, of Sir Robert Peel in curbing the Duke of Wellington's inclination to use force in Ireland.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Netherby: Oct. 3, 1845.

I send you a letter from the Lord Lieutenant and police reports from Tipperary, which confirm my apprehensions that great excitement prevails in Ireland, and that the renewal of the monster meetings is pregnant with serious consequences.

I have also received from the Duke of Wellington the letter herewith forwarded, with a copy of the answer which I have thought it necessary to write.

The Duke's tone indicates displeasure with me, and almost implies an accusation that I have failed to carry into effect the decisions of the Cabinet.

I know not how these monster meetings are to be put down without an alteration of the law, and any alteration, to be effectual, cannot stop short of the suspension of Civil Government in Ireland. If it be the pleasure of the Cabinet to embark in this course, previous deliberation and a solemn decision are necessary: and unanimity, I am afraid, must not be expected in the adoption of a policy so much at variance with our recent measures and with declarations made in the House of Commons.

The Duke thinks that 'conciliation without coercion will be ridiculous;' I fear that conciliation with coercion

will be impossible; and coercion has long been tried in Ireland, with what success history will record.

I am cordially and sincerely desirous to act in strict concert with you. These letters from the Duke give me pain, because they imply an opinion that I have neglected my duty.

At the same time I make great allowances, because I know that constant efforts are made to mislead the judgment and to inflame the passions of the Duke; and when the truth is presented to his mind he yields to reason, and is generally just.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 5, 1845.

I am sorry to see the Duke's letter. But I am accustomed to communications of a similar nature, written without weighing expressions, and under the temporary influence of excited feelings.

I never understood the Cabinet to have come to any decision which would have justified you in directing interference with a monster meeting. It was the opinion of us all that whenever the law might justify the suppression or prohibition of a formidable meeting like that in Tipperary, it would be our duty to order interference. But from interference not sanctioned and defensible by law nothing but ultimate and increased evil could arise.

Might it not be well to write a second letter to the Duke of Wellington, and send him that part of the judgment—or opinions rather—delivered in the House of Lords which refers to peaceable meetings of vast numbers, and to the power of the Executive in respect to them, and state calmly and deliberately what are the reasons that have prevented the interference of the Executive? You can tell him that you will again take the opinions of the legal advisers of the Crown.

I would say frankly that you are willing to interfere, and to take all the responsibility of interference, if it be

warranted by law; but prohibition by proclamation ought to be followed by suppression, if the prohibition be disregarded; suppression may compel the resort to force; and that you cannot advise, and will not undertake, resort to force, unless you feel assured that it is justified by law; that in point of conscience you could not do it; and in reason you feel satisfied that if—not by the verdict of a heated and prejudiced jury, but by the deliberate judgment of the Bench and the legal profession—the Crown should be declared to have acted *illegally*, in a case where lives had or might have been sacrificed, the consequences to the public peace and to the authority of Government would be most injurious.

But I would ask the Duke what he would advise—whether any other step can, in his opinion, be taken than to be governed by the decisions of judges and the opinions of the Law officers of the Crown; whether he thinks it would be desirable to assume an authority, if the Law officers should be of opinion that the Crown did not possess it.

I would ask these questions, avoiding everything in the mode of asking that could by possibility give offence.

The question really comes to this: Are we, or are we not, to act according to law? And it ought to be answered by those who are dissatisfied with inaction.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 7, 1845.

I have never doubted for a moment your kind support in every difficulty. It has never failed me, and happily the most cordial agreement in feelings and in opinions prevails between us.

A few remaining letters relate to the great question of the people's food. This had been painfully forced on Sir Robert Peel's mind by the terrible manufacturing distress in 1841-2, and was soon to be still further impressed by apprehensions of famine in Ireland.

To Sir James Graham.

Aug. 16, 1845.

I read Cobden's speech at Sunderland. It was a very able one. He is the master spirit of the League.

From Mr. Croker.

Aug. 29, 1845.

I cannot help sending you the enclosed letter from Brougham. You are aware that in 1820 he was a hot and high protection man, and made and published speeches that carried the principle of Corn Laws higher than any of us ever did. You might, if you like, say something relative to those principles. I need not tell you how I myself feel about the landed interests, being satisfied that there is no other foundation on which the country can stand, and that the country gentlemen are the only support that a Government can rely on. But my opinions are not worth talking about. Only tell me what kind of answer you wish me to give to H. B.

Lord Brougham to Mr. Croker.

(*Confidential.*) Aug. 1845.

I wish you would ascertain from Peel as soon as convenient this point, as I am anxious to do no mischief.

I am writing Adam Smith's life. I have made a clear statement of his free trade principles, and shown that he regarded them as flexible to other considerations than wealth, as defence, and police; to which I add balance of the Constitution, and Conservatism. I dwell a good deal on this in reference to Corn Laws.

Now it is possible that Peel may feel this to cut more ways than one, and to give the Ultra-Protectionists encouragement I by no means myself wish them to have. He may suppose it would—especially coming from one of my free-tradish school—operate to make the said good men and true (as they are) unreasonable, and, if so, I should only put a few words, saving my own consistency, in case I may

next Session be obliged to remind the folks in and out of doors of the broad ditch that separates me from Bright, Cobden, & Co.

To Mr. Croker.

Aug. 31, 1845.

What I should really wish to see is the result of Brougham's own natural reflections, without adverting to the probable bearing of any comments he may make on the party interests of the day. I know no one more capable of taking an extended and comprehensive view of the question of protection.

Your views as to the importance, in a moral and social point of view, of the agricultural interests are quite sound; but the question at issue is, What will conduce to the real welfare of that interest?

I believe the maintenance—if possible the steady increase—of commercial prosperity is absolutely essential to it.

I should shudder at the recurrence of such a winter and spring as those of 1841-2.

CHAPTER VII.

NATIONAL DEFENCE, 1844–5.

Defence of Canada—Commission on Naval Defence—Effect of Steam Navigation—Bridges across the Channel—Wellington's Official Protest—Peel's Reply—Choice of Evils—State of Defensive Forces—Increase of the Army—Personal Supervision—Overwork of the Prime Minister.

In the military and naval departments of Government Sir Robert Peel's vigilance, his judgment, and his mastery of detail are best illustrated by his correspondence in the recess of 1844, and again of 1845, with the Secretary for War, the Admiralty, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Commander-in-Chief, on the defences of the country. At those dates there was much hostile feeling in the United States, and in France, towards England. The Americans were increasing their forces on the frontier of Canada.

To Lord Stanley.

(*Confidential.*) Sept. 7, 1844.

A great expenditure on military defences by land might be a protective measure against the hostile disposition of the Americans, but the cost of them is thrown away so far as Canadian policy is concerned.

We cannot in my opinion remain passive. If the spirit and letter of the engagements as to the amount of armament are clear, we ought, I think, temperately but firmly to require adherence to them. That is the proper course, more dignified than retaliation. If we do not get satisfaction, we have then no alternative that occurs to me except counter-armament.

To Lord Haddington.

Dec. 1, 1844.

In my opinion a Commission ought to be forthwith appointed, for the purpose of considering the scheme of additional naval defence. To those officers of the navy who are most qualified to form a judgment one or two Ordnance officers might with advantage be added.

You will observe the recommendation of the Duke of Wellington, that a more full and satisfactory inquiry should be made as to the means of arming merchant steam-vessels, the time within which the armament could be effected, and its probable efficacy afterwards.

With regard to your observation, that there might be advantage in providing that the maritime districts should be bound to provide a contingent for the navy according to their population, I feel great difficulty in forming an opinion without more explanation. Details are indispensable to the consideration of the principle. It is a very fit subject for inquiry.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 7, 1844.

There are *awful* reports from a Commission on the state of defence of all the great naval arsenals and dockyards.

One would suppose that each was at the mercy of a handful of men, and that it will require an enormous expenditure to give to each not complete but the most ordinary works of defence.

To Lord Stanley.

Dec. 23, 1844.

I presume we cannot look for a reduction of the military force in the Estimates of next year.

As a proof, however, that complaints require to be thoroughly sifted, ask Ripon to send you a long private letter from Hardinge, scrutinising, with an eye which is only in the head of an old Secretary of War, the demands of the

Bombay Government. I really believe no civil Governor could have resisted the demand. Just see how Hardinge dissects the case, and proves by reference to figures that instead of diminished numbers, they really have about 8,000 men more than they had four or five years since.

While I despair of reduction, I must hope that we shall not be called on for increase of the military force.

We must make a great naval effort next year. I had from Sidney Herbert a memorandum estimating the increase—independent of harbours of refuge and land defences of the ports and arsenals—at 750,000*l.*

To the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 26, 1844.

I am very much obliged to you for your memorandum on the state of the defences of our ports and naval arsenals. I think it of great importance that your opinions on these subjects should be made known to the members of the Government. In considering the nature and extent of the demands to be made upon Parliament, there are two considerations to be borne in mind—the state of our finances, and the effect which too sudden and marked and extensive preparations might have upon the dispositions towards us of Powers whose hostility is most to be apprehended.

Whatever be the state of our finances, it will be true economy, as well as true policy, not to leave certain vital interests unprotected. But even if we were richer than we are, we should be obliged to make a selection among demands for expenditure. Within the last few days there have been brought under my consideration estimates of a large sum for the defence of Malta; of one million for the Channel Islands; of a proposed increase of 800,000*l.* in the Navy estimates. There is also a question relating to the defences of Canada, and the proposed fortifications of the dockyards and arsenals, and the refuge harbours in the Channel.

For each separate charge very good reasons might

doubtless be assigned, but when we regard the aggregate amount we shall be compelled to consider our means, and to select for immediate completion the undertakings most important in point of time. Without the Income Tax, and its renewal, we should still, after near thirty years of peace, have a revenue unequal to the expenditure.

When I say that the effect of sudden and extensive preparation for hostilities on the dispositions of foreign rival powers is to be duly considered, I do not mean that we are to postpone, out of deference to their feelings, that which is essential for our defence, but that our preparations should be made with caution, that we may not give good reason for ascribing to us hostile intentions, or lead other powers to think we are so defenceless, that it is good policy to quarrel with us without delay.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 27, 1844.

You will have observed that my mind was travelling on the same road with yours, in respect to the difficulty of bringing these great questions and large demands under the consideration of Parliament; in view not alone of the difficulty to be met within the walls of Parliament, and within the country, but likewise on account of the impression which would be made abroad by sudden attention to these objects, and the temptation given to strike before we should have made any progress in the completion of the works, of which none are so aware of the necessity as are our neighbours, and jealous rivals.

Indeed, their observations upon the defenceless state of our arsenals on their recent visit were what first drew the active attention of the Government to the subject.

There can be no doubt of their knowledge of the defences of Portsmouth; and the state of Sheerness, and the defences of the rivers Thames and Medway must be as well known to them as to ourselves.

Part of the consideration of the question must be how

it shall be brought under the consideration of the House of Commons.

All the Administrations since the peace of 1815 may be more or less to blame for the state in which the defences of the country are found. But there is one element in this discussion which is the cause of the greatest part of the evil. It is the alteration of the system of maritime warfare occasioned by the use of the power of steam which has rendered necessary that attention should be given to the works at Malta, as well as those of Gibraltar, and to the state of the Channel Islands.

The state of our defensive system in general would under any circumstances require revision, after the neglect of the whole for thirty years of peace; and the deterioration of all that existed; and the omission to provide for the defence of new establishments, and the absolute want of any means of defence, excepting the fleet and army voted in the supply of the year, avowedly barely sufficient for the performance of the peace duties; indeed known not to be sufficient to afford the necessary reliefs.

The dangers resulting are aggravated beyond all calculation by the progress of steam navigation, its threatened application to maritime warfare, and the known preparations of our neighbour and naval State in this peculiar equipment, for the purpose, publicly avowed by high authority, of invading this country.

These are new facts which must be considered by Parliament, and must have the effect of inducing Parliament to make provision for the safety of the country.

I am very sensible, however, of the difficulty and danger of touching the subject, resulting from the effect discussion of it here will produce abroad.

But of this we must never lose sight, that our defenceless state is at this moment as well known in France as it is in this country, if not better, and that we shall do no good by shutting our eyes to the danger.

The question is, What shall we do? How shall we do it? In what course of operations?

From all this you will see that my mind is at work in the same direction as yours.

One letter to the Admiralty relates to the personal safety of the Queen.

To Lord Haddington.

Nov. 2, 1844.

I advise you to have the Royal yacht severely tested before she next goes to sea with the Queen on board. Hardwicke and Sir Charles Napier have both declared to me their opinion that, from not answering her helm sufficiently, she is not safe.

Sir W. Symonds says one thing, his opponents say another. But *saying* on each side will be of no avail, should there be any serious accident with the Queen on board.

Why not send the Royal yacht with Sir W. Symonds and a select party of her friends and opponents into the Bay of Biscay in December? The truth will then be known.

From Lord Haddington.

Nov. 6, 1844.

I wish the 'Victoria and Albert' were on the Firth to-day, with the pleasant party on board that you recommend me to send to the Bay of Biscay for a merry Christmas and a happy new year. It would give her a severe trial indeed.

Seriously, however, you did well to write to me. It shall be my special care to see that she shall be thoroughly and effectually tried.

In 1845, owing to warlike demonstrations in France, the Duke of Wellington became seriously uneasy. Officially the question that he raised ought to have been discussed chiefly between him and the Secretary for War, but practically all was settled by Sir Robert Peel.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Most confidential.*) Apsley House: Aug. 1, 1845.

The Duke, as you well know, has been long annoyed at what he considers the defenceless state of the country.

But the debate which took place the other night in your House has had such an effect upon his mind that he determined to write to Lord Stanley, he being what used to be called War Minister. He would not write to you, because he was anxious to make his sentiments known in the manner that would be least disagreeable to you.

He has thought it necessary, for his own justification, to leave a record that, if a war were to break out, we have not the means of protecting ourselves. He says that steam makes a bridge for the French and not for us, they having an army of near 400,000 men, and we not having one thousand for any sudden emergency.

He does not believe that Louis Philippe and M. Guizot are to be trusted, or that they would be able to prevent war should a sudden ebullition arise.

While writing to you I would just say that it seems to me there would be great advantage if you and the Duke saw each other oftener. I am aware that your incessant occupations may render more frequent intercourse impossible. I only mention what I think would be desirable.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Aug. 7, 1845.

Although I was delighted to find this day that your attention was seriously turned to the defence of the naval arsenals and of the Thames in case of an attempt upon any of them by surprise; and notwithstanding the minute circulated by Sir James Graham this morning upon the necessity of an additional force; I think it desirable to send you the enclosed letter written this morning, and its enclosure, with certain statements of my own view of our danger, which it may be useful to you to have, as it suggests points for consideration and inquiry.

I need not add that if I can be of any use or assistance to you in any way, you may command me.

(*Enclosure.*)

London: Aug. 7. 1845.

I perused some days ago the report of a discussion in the House of Commons on the defences of the country, in the course of which the opinions which you delivered were so inconsistent with those entertained by myself, which I had more than once communicated to you, Lord Stanley, and other colleagues, that I was anxious to relieve myself from the responsibility which might eventually attach to my character for leaving the country in a defenceless state, under the circumstances of danger of invasion in an unprecedented degree existing on account of the comparatively modern invention and practice of the application of the power of steam to propel vessels of the largest size, and with the heaviest ordnance likewise of modern invention.

I was sensible of the possible inconvenience to yourself and the Government from any discussion with me upon such a topic, and of the usual result, and of the difficulties in which I might involve you and the country, and of the uneasiness which I might occasion to the Queen herself. I therefore considered that the best way in which I could relieve myself from the professional responsibility which I considered to weigh upon me, was to write a letter upon the subject to Lord Stanley, which I did on Saturday last. But having omitted to send it to him, having considered that Lord Stanley might not unreasonably think that I took a liberty with him in entrusting him with a confidential communication of this description—that he might think it his duty to communicate my letter to you—I have thought it best myself to address you upon the subject, and I send you the letter which I had written to Lord Stanley, as explaining the real feelings of my mind upon the subject, which I beg you to dispose of as you may think proper.

I sincerely wish that I could prevail upon you to consider calmly this great and important subject, compared with which all other interests of the country are mere trifles.

All admit the great change made in the system of mari-

time warfare. Lord Palmerston and you call it a bridge across the Channel between France and this country. I say it is rather a multitude of bridges, from a basis in France extending from Bordeaux to Dunkirk. . . . From each port on this extended basis an attack may be directed against any point on the coasts of her Majesty's dominions of Great Britain, Ireland, and the coasts of the Norman Islands.

Thus then her Majesty's dominions are in a situation for defence worse than that of the frontier of any state in Europe contiguous to France, each of which, with or without the Rhine or the Alps or the Pyrenees for a frontier and a temporary defence, may have its ten or from twenty to one or two hundred miles to guard and take care of; whereas our frontier is of hundreds of miles, every port open to attack, for the defence of which we have not one disposable soldier, and we must depend for our safety upon the operation of our fleets.

The operations of fleets in the last war were carried on by blockades to prevent the enemy's fleets from going to sea, whether to protect their own commerce, or to annoy ours, or to make more formidable attacks upon our frontiers. The blockades of future times, if practicable, must have for their objects to prevent an attack upon the coasts of the country.

Can any fleet which the seafaring population of the country can afford seamen to navigate and fight, blockade, with sufficient force in each division to defend itself if attacked by the enemy's reserve, each of the ports on the supposed basis from Bordeaux to Dunkirk? . . .

The objects to be provided for and secured principally are Milford Haven, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Sheerness. These are vital for the preservation of the fleet itself. But besides these there are others of great importance, each and all of which are liable to be and will be attacked, in the case supposed of depending solely upon the operations of the fleet for defence. These are London itself, Bristol, Liverpool, if only for the purpose of levying contributions,

and producing a moral effect upon the country, Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Edinburgh, Limerick.

In the case supposed of the country being as at present without a disposable man in the shape of a disciplined soldier, and on the hypothesis of the blockading divisions being blown off the ports intended, what is to prevent 5,000 men being sent from each of them to each of our large towns, including London itself, to levy contributions, to create confusion, and prevent the country from recovering from the blow? . . .

Then in my letter to Lord Stanley I put the hypothetical case of the enemy landing 25,000 men near one of our great naval arsenals, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Sheerness; attacking, succeeding in taking and destroying the arsenal. This hypothesis is not the representation of an impossibility, or even extravagant, considering what I have seen done, and have even done myself, having at the time superior armies in the field opposed to me. In this case you would not have a man.

Look at my sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, invested, attacked, regularly breached, the breaches carried by storm, both in a few days, in the winter the one, in adverse weather the other, while superior armies were in the field advancing to their relief and close to me.

If a body of troops was landed in the neighbourhood of one of our places, of a sufficient force to invest the place, say 25,000, then I defy all the fleets of England to save it without the assistance of an army in the field.

I entreat you to weigh all this well. I know the soundness and truth of all the opinions which there are in this letter. You have some distinguished naval officers at your command. Be pleased to require from them an opinion what ought to be the manœuvres of the fleet in the case supposed? and whether, in case one of the naval arsenals was invested and attacked by a sufficient force, say 25,000 men, it would be in the power of the fleet to relieve it, or save it from destruction, without the assistance of an army?

I tell you fairly that I consider the danger so certain and so imminent that I conceive that if there existed an absence of party and prejudice in our Imperial councils, that which ought to be recommended is an alteration of the military policy of the country; and that an army should be formed capable by its numbers, its discipline and efficiency, of giving real protection to the country against these dangers, in addition to all the fleet which the seafaring population of the country could man, which would still be necessary, not only for the protection and defence of the country, but for the maintenance of its government and control over its colonial and transmarine Empire.

My opinion is that you ought to have 100,000 men for the defence of the two Islands with the Channel Islands. These, with the advantages of the use of your railroads, would enable you to defend all points and to be in security.

These would cost you four millions sterling, and I put such a notion at present out of the question. But I do say, organise the English, Scotch, and Irish Militia, which the Parliament has placed at the disposition of the Sovereign. Don't make yourself responsible for the want of preparation of that force.

When the reports arrived of the recent affair in New Zealand, I recommended Lord Stanley to increase each of the regimental depots in Great Britain and Ireland to six hundred men, which would give an augmentation of 10,000 men, and render each of these depots efficient as a battalion.

This would cost only 200,000*l*. Then your Pensioners might give 10,000 more, and the cost the same, and you would thus have some force in rear of the fleet in case of accidents.

Observe! that do what you may—whether augment depots, or enrol Pensioners, or organise Militia—at least a year must elapse before any effect can be produced, by having a force fit for service.

It is my duty to tell you all this. I entreat you to

investigate the subject maturely—admit nothing as true only because I state it—and then decide whether you will incur the risks of leaving matters as they are.

I beg you to believe that, decide what you may, it is my wish and intention to aid and assist the Government in anything upon which you may decide after due examination,

I have done my duty to my own satisfaction in submitting these papers to you. There my responsibility ends; you must decide the rest.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(*Secret.*) Aug. 8, 1845.

I feel it my duty, after having read with the greatest attention your letter to Lord Stanley, to return it to you, in order that it may be transmitted by you without delay to Lord Stanley.

You observe that 'your object in addressing that letter is to lodge an official protest against that for which you will be responsible in character,' and that you wish it to be considered a protest which may be produced hereafter in the event, but in that event only, of hostilities with France.

I thank you for having sent this letter in the first instance to me, but I submit to you that the Secretary of State for the War Department is the proper authority with whom an official protest of this nature should be lodged.

It may not perhaps be advisable to make any communication to her Majesty upon the subject previously to her departure for the Continent, but I think it right to enable you to send your letter to Lord Stanley at such a time as may admit of his making such a communication should he feel it inconsistent with his duty to withhold it.

I shall write to you with as little delay as possible on the subject of the language held by me in debate in the House of Commons, in answer to allegations *publicly*, and in my opinion unwisely and improperly because *publicly*, made, that this country is in a most defenceless state, if France should think fit to attack it.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Aug. 8, 1845.

I find your letter of this day's date upon my table on my return from the Privy Council, together with that which I had written to Lord Stanley and requested you to dispose of it as you pleased, meaning of course that you should throw it into the fire if you should think proper.

I stated the reason for which I sent it to you instead of sending it to Lord Stanley. And I think I stated to you clearly that decide what you may it is my wish and intention to aid and assist the Government in anything upon which you may decide after due examination.

I considered that I had done my duty to my own satisfaction in submitting to you my letter to Lord Stanley and in writing to you the letter of yesterday. I considered that there my responsibility ended and you must decide the rest.

If you think proper to bring the subject before the Queen now or at any other time, I shall be much concerned to be the occasion of giving to her Majesty possibly a moment's uneasiness, and that by the adoption of the course which appeared to me most likely to avoid evil.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Aug. 9, 1845.

The letter you have addressed to me, and that to Lord Stanley in which you protest against the language held and the opinions expressed by me in a recent discussion in the House of Commons, compel me to make and leave upon record the following communication.

Whatever be the real state of our defences, I presume even the strictest regard for truth does not compel a Minister of the Crown publicly to proclaim that this country is in a most defenceless state.

That was the expressed opinion of Lord Palmerston.

It may be my duty to express in Parliament unqualified assent to it; but if it be, I can conceive nothing more likely to stimulate and encourage the war faction in France, to increase their evil influence over the Government of France, and to induce that Government (if it be not sincere in its desire for peace) to seek the immediate opportunity for quarrel.

It may be said that the French Government is quite aware of our weakness, and that the admission of it by a Minister gives them no new information. But such an admission of it produces a very different effect upon the public mind from information possessed by the Government, and renders it much more difficult for a Government like that of France, which has little control over the popular will, and equally little over its own servants, military, naval and diplomatic, to persevere in a pacific policy (should such be its inclination) when there is a universal demand to strike a blow which a British Minister has admitted cannot be parried.

If we are in a defenceless state, it is one thing publicly to confess it, and another to take practical measures for the improvement of our condition and the increase of our means of resistance.

I offer my opinion on such a subject with the greatest deference to your superior authority, but it appears to me that the more quickly and unostentatiously we can do that which is necessary, the more certainly shall we attain our object, which I presume to be the augmenting of our *relative* strength and *relative* means of defence.

In the present temper of the French people the Government of that country will have little difficulty in procuring, or rather will have great difficulty in resisting, the offer of increased means of offence if our preparations and precautions are brought forward too ostentatiously. No doubt we have a perfect right to make what preparations for defence we may think fit—have a perfect right to disregard the opinions or remonstrances of France on such a subject, to retort upon her that she collects her materials of offence,

and organises her strength with little consideration for our feelings. But the practical question is, What is the best mode of taking our precautionary measures, and increasing the means of defence as compared with those of attack?

I do not question the policy, or I should rather say the necessity, for additional and continuous preparation for the contingency of war, a contingency which may occur with little previous notice. But there are limits to the extent of that preparation. There are dangers in an opposite direction which it will be prudent not to disregard.

This country is encumbered with a debt of 787 millions. The annual interest of that debt raised by taxation amounts to 28 millions. There has been peace in Europe for the long period of thirty years, and but little progress has been made in the reduction of debt. We have to make the painful choice between two evils, the incurring of considerable risk in some part or other of our extended empire in the event of war, or the rapid accumulation of more debt if we are to be prepared at all points.

I should wish to see the estimate of the sum which would be required to provide such a garrison and such means of defence as will prevent all anxiety in respect to Malta, Gibraltar, the Channel Islands, the West Indies, the Cape, Canada, and the other North American provinces. The demand for this service alone would probably amount to many millions.

I am quite willing, however, to admit that the defence of the British Islands stands on very different grounds—that the risk which may be excusable or unavoidable in the case of a distant colony cannot with any degree of ordinary prudence be incurred at home.

I fully admit that precautionary measures for our security ought to be taken. The question is as to their extent, their urgency in point of time, the best mode of adopting them with reference to that which I cannot but deem a very important consideration, the quiet increase of our *relative* strength, and the avoiding provocation or temptation to hostility before we are prepared.

On reviewing what has been done during the present year, the purport of my communications constantly repeated to the Admiralty and Ordnance, the responsibility as to increased expenditure beyond the estimates which I have been ready to incur, I cannot charge myself with neglect or indifference.

The machinery of the income tax is not only prepared but in operation, the revenue from other sources is flourishing, and an increase in the percentage upon income, and the extension of the tax to amounts of income now exempted, will give a very large additional revenue. In the course of the present year the Estimates of the Navy and Ordnance have been increased to an extent of 1,100,000*l.* I have authorised the Admiralty in addition to that increase, taking upon myself the responsibility for doing so, to incur a further expense of 100,000*l.* for the purpose of applying the screw to ships of the line, and arming their decks with very heavy ordnance. I have given to the Ordnance Department authority to incur increased expense if necessary beyond the estimates for the purpose of completing the defences of Portsmouth, and of improving those of Sheerness, Pembroke, and the river Thames.

Scarcely a week has passed that I have not written to Sir George Murray urging more rapid progress in the manufacture of percussion muskets, and the holding in reserve a large supply of arms and accoutrements. With regard to measures the progress of which must be slow, but which will ultimately add to our security, I have prevailed on Parliament to make a vote for purposes which have been *talked about* for years, but practically neglected up to this time—I allude to harbours of refuge. The vote is small in amount, because a large amount cannot at once be expended, but the House of Commons has expressly sanctioned the construction of refuge harbours at Portland, Dover, and Harwich. The probable cost of these harbours will not be less than four millions sterling, and this expenditure has been sanctioned in a year when our estimated surplus of revenue will not be 100,000*l.*

With regard to existing naval means and naval preparation I must of course rely on the information which I receive from the highest naval authorities. If I can depend upon it, I could not say with truth that I agree with Lord Palmerston and Sir Charles Napier as to our utterly defenceless condition. [*Details follow.*]

I am not insensible of the comparative advantage which steam navigation gives to France, possessed as she is of so powerful an army, in respect to the invasion, or at least attack, of our shores. When I noticed Lord Palmerston's observation about the facility with which France could establish a steam bridge, I did not mean to imply that we had the same facility for establishing steam bridges for the invasion of France, but that the advantage of steam was not altogether on the side of France—that while her steamboats were establishing the bridge, ours would not be idle spectators of the operation. Still, that steam is a most important element, that new precautions must be devised, that increased facilities for invasion are given by steam as compared with sailing vessels, cannot be questioned.

Now as to our force in ships of the line. [*Details follow.*]

With regard to the commercial steam marine, and the opportunity which it might afford for a sudden increase of our naval force, I have been in frequent communication with Lord Haddington. I have advised him not to place too great reliance on assistance from this quarter; constantly to bear in mind that the vessels reported to be available this month may next month be on a distant voyage, and that even in the case of those that are on the home station, and available at the moment they are wanted, time will be required not merely for arming them, but for making all those alterations in a vessel not built for purposes of war which arming implies.

In writing to Lord Haddington on this subject I told him I thought the calculation that these steamers, after their arrival at the ports where the depots are, could get their armament aboard in forty-eight hours, was far too sanguine.

In a letter I had from him in reply dated August 5, he says he has seen the Deputy Surveyor, has questioned him in the presence of two experienced naval captains, and that the Deputy Surveyor still maintains that in two or three days he can have the armament aboard.

I still am incredulous on this point, but I am to have a detailed report from the Deputy Surveyor of the Navy, with a full description of the exact state in which the guns are now fitted and prepared, of the course he would pursue in fitting them to the steamers, the time he would take, and the number of men he would employ.

I had a letter from Lord Haddington a few days since in which he states that the Admiralty has the names of 104 merchant steamers of 400 tons and upwards, that at the different depots agreed upon with the Ordnance, the guns and ammunition requisite for the armament of these vessels, the stores and provisions, tanks for water, and powder magazines are all prepared. He promises me that the Deputy Surveyor of the Navy shall go a second time to the principal ports with a view to examining and reporting upon the state of their mercantile steamers.

With regard to the manning of the navy, there are, I understand, 200,000 registered merchant seamen, and the Admiralty are now occupied with a consideration of the best means of making the coast guard available for immediate naval service, and for turning to account the maritime population on the coast, such as boatmen, fishermen, and persons of that class. So much for the state of naval means at present existing and in the course of preparation.

I now advert to our military means.

I am strongly impressed with the necessity of constituting an efficient local force as distinguished from the regular army. I consider it a great misfortune that for so many years the condition of the militia has been neglected. I fear, however, that mature consideration of the existing law will be requisite before anything effectual can be done.

Many years have elapsed since you raised a military

force by ballot, another name for conscription. There have been great changes in popular feeling in the interval. Under the excitement of war, a militia force raised in the manufacturing districts by ballot might be depended upon. The proved necessity for forced military service, the shame of shrinking from danger, the natural feelings connected with the honour and safety of the country, would absorb all other feelings, and justify confidence in a militia raised by ballot.

But is it quite clear that without a demonstration of necessity, a demonstration not merely intelligible to public men, but brought home to the public mind, it would be politic suddenly to apply ballot, after long disuse, in all districts of the country, and that the force raised by ballot could, were peace to continue, be thoroughly relied upon? It is a subject deserving of immediate and serious consideration.

You say that I am much mistaken about the pensioners. Your assertion that I am so is alone sufficient to convince me of the fact. I am obliged to rely upon the information given me on matters of this kind by the public departments, which are, or ought to be, immediately conversant with them.

What I said was that I understood that a force of from forty to fifty thousand men might be raised from pensioners of the army, marines, and artillery, not fit for active duty in the field, but capable of performing some military duties, and thus relieving the regular army to a certain extent.

I have before me a memorandum from the Secretary at War, of which the following is an extract. 'The whole number of pensioners in Great Britain and Ireland is 74,000, of whom 25,000 would be available for local companies, and 19,000 for reserve companies composed of older and less efficient men, who would still, however, be fit for a certain amount of garrison duty. This would give a force of about 44,000 men available in case of emergency. In ordinary times many would of course claim exemption as a matter of private convenience.'

I am quite willing to admit that even upon such

authority as this I ought not to have made a statement without severe scrutiny into the accuracy of it. But I had not the slightest notice of Lord Palmerston's intention to speak on the military and naval defences of the country.

It was necessary for me to reply on the instant, and while I was speaking information to the effect of that which I have above quoted was given to me.

With regard to the regular army. The average force during the last two years in the United Kingdom has been about 10,000 men more than it was when the present Government was formed in the autumn of 1841.

Looking at the state of the naval arsenals and of the military force in this country in 1839 and 1840, during the discussions with France on the Syrian question; at the state of public feeling in France in the autumn of 1840; at the ordinances, issued in August 1840, for the increase of the French navy by 10,000 men and the French army by 100,000 men; considering that of our naval force fifteen sail of the line were then in the Mediterranean, that our coasts were utterly unprotected—it required some assurance on the part of Lord Palmerston to make the speech he did.

That, however, is quite beside the question. The neglect of the late Government is no reason, and would be no justification, for the neglect of the present. But I think it was most inconsiderate and impolitic on his part to call public attention in France to our defenceless state; to enable a French newspaper of great influence (*La Presse*) to work upon public feeling in France by the justifiable boast that 'a late Minister of the Crown in England has established the fact that France may grapple with her ancient rival on her own soil.' Is a present Minister of the Crown to be blamed because he declines giving a public confirmation of such a fact?

To return, however, to the state of the army. You state it to be your opinion that we ought to have 100,000 men of the regular army for the defence of the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands, and that this would cost 4,000,000*l.*

You admit that at present this is out of the question. Still your opinion is on record, that such an increase of the regular army *ought* to be made, and that opinion must carry with it great weight.

The addition of 50,000 men to the regular army, and the maintenance of a regular force of 100,000 men within the United Kingdom, do no doubt involve very important considerations, constitutional, financial, and diplomatic. They would compel a material and immediate change in both our financial and diplomatic policy.

But national security is the paramount object, and your opinion and authority on such a subject will have great weight with the country.

I think the Queen ought immediately upon her return to be made acquainted with your sentiments as to the necessity of immediate and much more decisive measures for the defence of the country. I am sure she will not be annoyed by the expression of opinions on a matter of such vital importance, which can only be dictated by a sense of public duty on your part; but even if she were, it would not be right to withhold your opinions from her.

In the meantime I shall most cordially avail myself of your kind offer of advice and assistance on all those points connected with the improvement of our military and naval defences which are under the consideration of the departments concerned with them, and will send to you all the confidential information which I receive upon the subject.

There is only one point more to which I have to advert. In one of your recent letters or memoranda you suggested a vote of credit. The purpose of such a vote must have been avowed. It would have created considerable alarm, and I think the Queen could scarcely have sent an unexpected message to Parliament asking for a vote of credit on the ground of national defence, and have left the country afterwards on a visit to a distant part of Germany.

I prefer taking upon myself the responsibility of sanc-

tioning any expenditure which it may be necessary to incur, and trusting to Parliament for indemnity.

To Lord Stanley.

(Secret.) Aug. 11, 1845.

Enclosed are three letters from the Duke of Wellington, and two letters from me to the Duke, one returning to him a very long letter which was addressed to you.

The circumstances which induced the Duke to place it at my disposal are explained in one of his letters.

I declined to receive the letter—at least to retain it—and returned it to the Duke, expressing a wish that it should be sent by him directly to you.

From Lord Stanley.

(Secret.) Aug. 12 1845

I have read the Duke's letter to you, and your answer, which you must allow me to say I think excellent in matter and tone. At present the Duke has not addressed to me the threatened official communication.

I send you—I dare not send the Duke—what appears to me a very wild letter from Lord Metcalfe, on the chances of war with the United States, and the course to be pursued. I am clearly of opinion (contrary to his) that in such an event our operations on the Canadian frontier must be purely defensive. It must, however, be admitted that in Canada, as elsewhere, our defensive works are sadly deficient.

Whenever I have touched on the question with the Duke he always refers back to a plan laid down by himself in 1826, the expense of which was so enormous that all Governments have deferred acting upon it.

I believe the fact to be that, if a war were to break out, all colonies are defenceless to a great extent. None, however, except Canada could be seriously endangered so long as we maintain a naval supremacy, and on that we must rely. The sums which would be required for defending

them by military works would be such as to appal Parliament, to say nothing of the consequent expense of increased garrisons, barracks, &c.

Pray return me Lord Metcalfe's confidential despatch. How shall I deal with it?

To Lord Stanley.

Aug. 13, 1845.

I am glad that you approved the general tenor of my letter to the Duke. Enclosed is his reply to it, written in very good temper. He certainly will not send the letter which he addressed to you.

The Prime Minister's minute personal supervision continued to be necessary in the War Departments, military and naval.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor: August 13, 1845.

Before I left London on Monday, I wrote to Lord Haddington and authorised him to fit out with screws and provide heavy armament for two more ships of the line, making six in the whole not provided for in the Navy Estimates.

I earnestly begged him at the same time really to see that these things *were done.*

To Sir James Graham.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 13, 1845.

The calculations in my letter to the Duke of Wellington as to the actual force of Pensioners were founded on a memorandum given to me by Sidney Herbert, on the accuracy of which I relied.

Now is it accurate, or not? Will you be good enough to ascertain the fact for me from Herbert, mentioning to him the counter-calculations of the Duke?

Cockburn sent me an account of actual and estimated

steam force, English and French. But it turned out on inquiry to be erroneous, a great over-statement of our strength.

I asked Murray to let me see the actual return on the first of July of the percussion guns in store, and the accoutrements. I have been writing on this subject for months past. I enclose his reply. After the warning which the Tahiti affair gave us, it does seem extraordinary that our reserve of percussion muskets is 35,000, and of infantry accoutrements of the proper pattern 12,722!

What are these Boards for, and for what are estimates voted?

If you knew what trouble I have taken on this subject you would be surprised at such a result. Not 13,000 infantry accoutrements in store in such a country as this! I dare say there is three times the quantity in Nassau or Coburg.

From Sir James Graham.

Aug. 14, 1845.

The Duke's answer to your letter is written in a most conciliatory tone; and your facts and your reasoning have clearly produced the desired effect.

The return as to accoutrements is most unsatisfactory. At least 80,000 ought to be provided. Without accoutrements arms are useless.

I hope you will insist on a monthly return of small arms and accoutrements being regularly made to you.

The following letter gives incidentally some measure of the amount and nature of the daily toil which, together with deliberate 'worrying' by Protectionists and Leaguers—in part from pure malevolence, in part designed to break him down—was beginning to threaten the health of Sir Robert Peel.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 14, 1845.

I have had a very kind letter from the Duke.

All that you say about the absence of communica-

tion is quite fair. But where are the means, during the Session? The fact is that the state of public business while Parliament sits is becoming in many ways a matter of most serious concern.

I defy the Minister of this country to perform properly the duties of his office—to read all that he ought to read, including the whole foreign correspondence; to keep up the constant communication with the Queen, *and the Prince*; to see all whom he ought to see; to superintend the grant of honours and the disposal of civil and ecclesiastical patronage; to write with his own hand to every person of note who chooses to write to him; to be prepared for every debate, including the most trumpery concerns; to do all these indispensable things, and also sit in the House of Commons eight hours a day for 118 days.

It is impossible for me not to feel that the duties are incompatible, and above all human strength—at least above mine.

The worst of it is that the really important duties to the country—those out of the House of Commons—are apt to be neglected.

I never mean to solve the difficulty in one way—namely, by going to the House of Lords. But it must be solved in one way or another. The failure of the mind is the usual way, as we know from sad experience.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Walmer Castle: Aug. 28, 1845.

I cannot express to you the pleasure it gives me that there is frequent communication between you and the Duke. I do assure you that the uneasiness which he felt was preying on his mind; but I am certain it is not necessary for me to say that you will ever find him, heart and soul, most anxious to lend you all the aid in his power.

CHAPTER VIII.

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 1845.

The Corn Law Question—Changed Opinions—'Gradual Abatement of Protection'—Peel on Free Trade—Howick and Melbourne on Peel—Failure of Potato Crop—Remedies—Proposed Suspension of Corn Laws—Cabinet Meetings—Dissent of Colleagues—Lord Lincoln's Advice—Peel's Criticism—Correspondence with the Queen—Resignation—Lord John Russell undertakes to form a Government—Peel sent for to bid the Queen Farewell.

FOR the next nine months, for many documents in full, reference must be made to Sir Robert Peel's own Memoir, which begins with a review of the Corn Law question as it stood at the close of the Session of 1845.

The old Protectionist doctrines as regards corn 'of Sir Henry Parnell and Mr. Ricardo, of Lord John Russell and Lord Melbourne, as well as of the Duke of Wellington, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Huskisson,' and of Sir Robert Peel in former days, were passing out of date.

The amount of protection given in the Corn Law of 1815, 'based on the assumption that wheat could not be profitably grown at a price lower than eighty shillings a quarter,' had been diminished in 1828, and again by Sir Robert Peel himself in 1842, with a refusal to give any pledge against further reduction. He had removed prohibitory duties on foreign cattle and meat, and had lowered the duties on sugar, and on other articles of food. Also 'the progress of discussion had made a material change in the opinions of many persons.' Of himself Sir Robert Peel writes, 'The opinions I had previously entertained had undergone a great change.'

He had been impressed by various considerations such as—

'The conflict of arguments on the principle of protection;'

'Concurring proofs that the wages of labour do not vary with the price of food;'

'The contrast presented in two successive periods, of dearth and abundance, in the health, morals, and tranquillity and general prosperity of the whole country;'

'Increasing difficulty of resisting the application to articles of food of those principles which had been gradually applied to so many other articles;'

'The result of the experiment made with regard to cattle and meat, in 1842;' and

'Evidences of rapidly increasing consumption.'

The growth of Free Trade principles in his mind had been manifest in his letters and in his speeches. It had alienated some followers, and alarmed the country party.

Yet he had defended agricultural interests against extreme demands of theoretical free traders, leagued manufacturers, professed agitators, and (what cost him most) against the bitter cry of half-starved workpeople, suffering from the artificial price of the chief staple of their food. Denounced as the one man responsible for their distress, he nevertheless had thought it right to oppose the annual motions of Mr. Villiers for abolition of all advantage to British over foreign growers of corn.

But, while maintaining for a time this attitude, he had ceased in principle to uphold protection. Still counselling, with Adam Smith, a prudent and humane regard to existing interests in the transition, he looked forward to complete free trade.

Such had been his tone in 1843; in his Budget speech of 1845 he had excused himself for not carrying his principles further; and in June, on Mr. Villiers's motion that the Corn Act of 1842 should be forthwith repealed, it was observed that the Prime Minister's arguments were directed chiefly against the word 'forthwith.' 'Every act we have done,' he said, 'has been an act tending to establish the gradual abatement of purely protective duties.'

The following note is in his own handwriting.

June 1845.

Lord Howick said that 'there was not one word in my speech attempting to contradict the two first resolutions. Had the last resolution been worded to the effect that it was expedient that all restrictions on the importation of

corn should be gradually abolished, the right honourable Baronet's speech would have been an unanswerable speech in support of Mr. Villiers' motion.'

Lord Howick saw clearly in what direction Sir Robert Peel was tending.

Lord Melbourne also, in August, speaking at a City dinner —after praising Sir Robert Peel's recent measures as being 'founded upon sound principles, and calculated to confer lasting benefit upon the community at large'—had gone on generously to condemn 'the malignant invective levelled against him, upon the notion of some supposed inconsistency of these measures with his former opinions and conduct. Having carefully observed Sir Robert Peel's principles, and his language in defending them, he knew of nothing which should in point of consistency preclude him from bringing forward those measures, or any others in the same direction which he might convince his understanding and persuade his conscience would be conducive to the advantage of his country.'

Amidst increasing obloquy from aggrieved Protectionists, hostile leaguers, unscrupulous personal assailants, and political rivals, this warm and well-timed tribute from an old antagonist moved Sir Robert Peel to gratitude.

To Lord Melbourne.

Aug. 9, 1845.

There may be some difficulty in a public man returning acknowledgments to a political opponent for acts or expressions prompted solely by a sense of duty. But I must encounter that difficulty, rather than do violence to my feelings by remaining entirely silent.

Allow me then in these few lines to assure you most sincerely that I appreciate the generosity of your conduct and the value of your testimony.

In October 1845 began the great natural calamity which hastened (perhaps by only a year or two) the advent of free trade in corn. The Memoir gives in detail correspondence enough to impress on a fair mind the reality of the danger in Ireland,

and the sincerity of the fears entertained alike by Ministers responsible, and by impartial men of science. A few extracts must here suffice.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 13, 1845.

The accounts of the state of the potato crop in Ireland are becoming very alarming. There is such a tendency to exaggeration and inaccuracy in Irish reports, that delay in acting upon them is always desirable. But I foresee the necessity that may be imposed upon us at an early period of considering whether there is not that well-grounded apprehension of actual scarcity that justifies and compels the adoption of every means of relief.

I have no confidence in such remedies as the prohibition of exports, or the stoppage of the distilleries. The removal of impediments to import is the only effectual remedy.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 13, 1845.

A great national risk is always incurred when a population so dense as that of Ireland subsists on the potato; for it is the cheapest and the lowest food, and if it fail, no substitute can be found for starving multitudes.

Your intimate knowledge of the condition of the peasantry of Ireland, your kind and humane feelings towards them, and the fatal certainty that a famine in that quarter of the United Kingdom will be a great crisis in our national affairs, will lead you, while there is yet time, to deliberate anxiously on the course which it may be necessary for us to take.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 15, 1845.

My letter on the awful question of the potato crop in Ireland will have crossed yours to me.

Interference with the due course of the laws respecting

the supply of food is so momentous, and so lasting in its consequences, that we must not act without the most accurate information.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Oct. 15, 1845.

We must consider whether it is possible to apply a remedy to the great evil with which we are threatened. The application of such remedy involves considerations of the utmost magnitude. The remedy is the removal of all impediments to the import of all kinds of human food; that is, the total and absolute repeal for ever of all duties on all articles of subsistence.

You might remit nominally for one year. But who will re-establish the Corn Laws once abrogated, though from a casual and temporary pressure?

I need not recommend to you the utmost reserve as to the possibility of Government interference. There could be none without summoning Parliament, to adopt measures, or to confirm those of the Executive.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 17, 1845.

The suspension of the existing Corn Law on the avowed admission that its maintenance aggravates the evil of scarcity, and that its remission is the surest mode of restoring plenty, would render its re-enactment or future operation quite impracticable. Yet, if the evil be so urgent as I fear it will be, to this suspension we shall be driven.

Oct. 27.—The anti-Corn-Law pressure is about to commence, and it will be the most formidable movement in modern times. Everything depends on the skill, promptitude, and decision with which it is met.

As an example of promptness, within a fortnight from the first serious alarm the men of science whose aid Sir Robert Peel invoked were ready with their first report.

From Dr. Lyon Playfair (afterwards Lord Playfair).

Dublin: Oct. 26, 1845.

I send you a draft copy of a report which I intend to offer to my colleagues to-morrow for their signature, and with verbal alterations I am sure it will be adopted. You will see the account is melancholy, and cannot be looked upon in other than a most serious light. We are confident that the reports are underrated rather than exaggerated.

Oct. 28.—We now see that probably the more important question is as to the seed for future years.

The following additional letters are now first published.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Oct. 17, 1845.

I have always been sensible of the danger of the total or a large failure of the potato crop in Ireland. The largest proportion of the people does not live upon the markets. Thousands raise their own food. They make bargains to work for a certain period on condition of having a certain proportion of land, on which they raise the crop which is to feed them and their families for the year. The potato crop fails. What is to become of their bargain? The labourer bound to give his labour must starve.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Oct. 18, 1845.

I expect, at any rate let us assume, that intervention, either by prerogative or by legislation, will be requisite. . . .

The one remedy will be the removal of impediments to the free import of those articles of which human food consists.

It will be so invidious to remit, *from the fear of scarcity*, the duties on maize, and retain them on wheat, that the attempt would be hopeless.

The temporary remission of all duties on corn is, in the present state of public feeling, tantamount to the permanent and total remission of those duties. Once remitted, they will never be re-established.

I do not conceal from myself therefore the vast consequences which will follow the necessity for intervention.

But let us at present act only on the assumption that that necessity *may* be forced upon us.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Oct. 21, 1845.

After personal conference with Dr. Lyon Playfair, the eminent chemist, I have requested him to proceed to London, and, if possible, take with him from London to Dublin Professor Lindley, the botanist. After making experiments on the diseased potatoes with a view to their partial preservation, they will confer with Lord Heytesbury, and so far as science can suggest a palliative I have the utmost confidence in their skill.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 22, 1845.

The peasantry without potatoes cannot go to market, and must starve at home; but an effort must be made, both by public and by private charity, to assist them. And, that this charity may go as far as possible, it is necessary that provisions of every kind should be as cheap as possible; and then immediately arises the question of free importation.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Oct. 23, 1845.

'The admission of maize by an act of prerogative' opens a very wide question. The assumption of the power *may* be advisable, or necessary, but it compels, I think, the immediate summoning of Parliament, for the purpose of sanction and indemnity.

But further, why limit the act of authority to *maize*? Maize is not the usual food of man in this country, but wheat is. If the fear of scarcity justifies the admission of maize contrary to law, can we defend the continuance of eighteen shillings duty on wheat? These are grave considerations.

The Cabinet met at Sir Robert Peel's house on Friday, October 31. The Memorandum laid before it on November 1 is given in the Memoir. It reports measures already taken; recommends the appointment of a second Commission with powers of spending public money on drainage and other works, and to relieve exceptional distress; and draws attention to a necessary consequence of such action.

'Can we vote money for the sustenance of any considerable portion of the people, on account of actual or apprehended scarcity, and maintain in full operation the existing restrictions on the free import of grain? I am bound to say my impression is that we cannot.'

Sir Robert Peel advised the assembling of Parliament before Christmas. He gave the alternative of a brief adjournment for consideration, but held it to be necessary, before summoning Parliament, that the Cabinet should 'make its choice between determined maintenance, modification, and suspension of the existing Corn Laws.'

The last course was what he himself counselled. The Cabinet, owing to serious difference of opinion, adjourned till November 6. Meanwhile Sir Robert Peel kept up an active correspondence with Ireland.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Oct. 31, 1845.

By my advice the meeting of the Cabinet to-day was confined to a statement of all the facts which I have been able to collect bearing upon an ultimate decision. We meet again to-morrow to consider the difficult, complicated, and momentous question, 'What can be done?'

Nov. 2.—You should let us know precisely what instructions you give in consequence of the Reports of the Commissioners [Dr. Playfair and Professor Lindley].

You say the First Report was circulated extensively. Had the Constabulary instructions as to conveying it to districts where it might remain unknown?

The Second Report contains definite recommendations, particularly with regard to the use of corn-kilns for the drying of potatoes. It states that a temperature higher than is usually required for corn will be requisite.

Now here is a case in which the Government can interfere with good effect, and without risk of any concomitant evil. Any expense which the increased temperature might require might be incurred by the Government for the drying of the potatoes of the poor.

If any chemical preparation would be of use, it might be extensively supplied at the charge of the Government.

In all such things I will willingly give the Irish Government authority to incur any amount of expense that may be necessary.

I should advise an immediate conference on this, and the other subjects to which I have adverted, between the Commissioners, the head of the Board of Works, and the Head of the Police.

From Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Nov. 3, 1845.

The Third Report of the Commissioners of Drainage shows that a large sum, 600,000*l.*, may be laid out in this manner.

I am inclined to think that encouragement given by the Government at a very small expense would induce proprietors at this time to carry forward very extensive operations. Then come the great works of drainage and navigation, connecting the great lakes in Ulster and in Connaught.

Facilities may be afforded at the meeting of Parliament to carry those Railway Bills which had proceeded to a certain stage during the last Session. Every mode of employment must be suggested, and the machinery ready for adoption.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Nov. 3, 1845.

Among other measures to which immediate consideration should be given is the possibility of increasing the supply of food by an increased stimulus to fisheries—aid given by the Government for the construction of larger boats, and the making of better nets.

It is possible that there may be in this way some relief of immediate pressure. It is possible also that activity and energy encouraged under temporary pressure may survive the occasion, and that a source of permanent supply may be opened.

From Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Nov. 5, 1845.

I am most happy to take up the question of the Fisheries, as I am inclined to think that assistance afforded in various ways will encourage the fishermen in the remote districts, and be permanently as well as immediately useful in increasing the supply of food.

Nov. 6.—Seventy thousand copies of the last Report have been sent down for distribution, thirty to each Roman Catholic priest. I propose to have an abstract made, embodying concisely the recommendations, to be printed on small sheets, and direct the constables to distribute them to the cottiers on the land.

On November 6 Sir Robert Peel submitted another Memorandum to the Cabinet. In it he proposed (1) to issue an Order of Council opening the ports at a lower rate of duty; (2) to call Parliament together to sanction the Order; and (3) to give notice of a Bill after Christmas to modify the Corn Laws. But in this he was supported by only three of his colleagues, Aberdeen, Graham, and Sidney Herbert.

Thereupon Sir Robert Peel made up his mind not to recede from his position, but to give an opportunity for reconsideration; and if ultimately his opinions did not meet with general concurrence of the Cabinet, to resign. He adds:

'I determined also not to attempt the adjustment of the question at issue unless there should be a moral assurance of ultimate success. It was most painful to me to differ from colleagues with whom I had hitherto acted with uninterrupted harmony, for whom I had sincere personal regard, and cordial esteem and respect, founded on an intimate knowledge of their motives and conduct.'

Wishing to do full justice to his colleagues, he gives in the Memoir all important communications received from them. The two following Memoranda, not before published, relate to these and other Corn Law papers.

Memorandum.

In one or two instances there are letters which I have not made use of because there were harsh expressions, to which there could be no public object in giving publicity. I speak not of harsh expressions used towards myself, but used by one person towards another, in a communication addressed confidentially to me.

I have given all documents which after careful examination I thought of the slightest importance. But if there be a single document of those in my possession calculated either to do justice to others, or to correct or modify erroneous impressions, to which my observations on the documents I have selected for publication might give rise, it is my earnest wish, and indeed express injunction, that such a document should also be published.

Note.

The enclosed are letters received by me from several of my colleagues.

They will demonstrate the extent of the difficulties which I had to surmount, and the painful task imposed upon me—a task which nothing but a paramount sense of public duty could have induced me to undertake. Every motive of personal ease and personal ambition—I mean the vulgar ambition of retaining power—would have induced

me to sacrifice my own opinions to the opinions of men whom I highly respected, and to whom I was truly attached.

R. P.

Lord Stanley writes (November 3): 'I find it difficult to express to you the regret with which I see how widely I differ with Graham and yourself as to the necessity of proposing to Parliament a repeal of the Corn Laws. I have reflected much and anxiously upon it; but I cannot bring my mind to any other conclusion. I have thought it best to put down in writing the view of the case which presents itself to me.' The enclosure, having been sent back to him, is not forthcoming. Sir James Graham, to whom by request it was shown, writes: 'I return this paper with a heavy heart. I am not convinced by the reasoning, but I am touched by the kindness and the truth of some expressions it contains.' Sir Robert Peel, restoring it to Lord Stanley 'with the deepest regret,' declines to enter into any controversy.

The next letter is given anonymously in the Memoir. The first Trustees kept back also some of Sir Robert Peel's remarks on it. There is no reason now why these should not be published. The manuscript runs thus:

This letter, from Lord Lincoln, actuated as I knew it to be by the most friendly feelings towards myself, and conveying with the utmost frankness the opinions of a very intelligent and honourable mind, had every claim upon my serious and respectful consideration.

Though not written in concert or communication with any one, it expressed sentiments which I have no doubt were shared by many persons, by some probably of those who were our own colleagues. I propose therefore to pass in review the main suggestions offered, and to state my own impressions with regard to them.

I entirely agreed with Lord Lincoln that it was our duty as the Ministers of the Crown to offer to the Queen our advice to her Majesty as to the measures which the exigencies of the country required, and to take upon

ourselves the whole responsibility of proposing those measures to Parliament.

My recommendations to the Cabinet had been in complete accord with this construction of the obligations which we had contracted in undertaking the functions of Government.

I could not, however, concur with Lord Lincoln as to the policy or propriety of the practical course which he was inclined to advise.

It was his opinion, avowed in this letter, 'that the present Corn Law could not long be maintained; that any Corn Law could not be of long duration, and that whether any attempt at modification should be made in preference to total repeal was a question of very doubtful policy.'

Holding this opinion, Lord Lincoln observed that 'the course which he should like to see taken would be, that in the Session preceding the dissolution I should propound to the country my intention to propose to the new Parliament either a modification of the Corn Law, expressly framed with a view to its abolition within a given time, or a total repeal of the Law, coupled with any measure either of adaptation of taxation or other relief which might in some degree lighten the pressure upon those who would most severely feel its force.'

Lord Lincoln 'thought this would be a manly and honourable course, and could not see that it would be otherwise than statesmanlike.'

But my opinion as to the real character of the course thus suggested was totally at variance with that of Lord Lincoln.

The grounds for this opinion, given in full in the published Memoir (pages 164–168), are to this effect.

Who were to defend and to maintain the Corn Law? Surely not a Government who had resolved shortly to advise its abandonment, or a Chief Minister of the Crown who had secretly formed that intention. Were import duties for the time to be suspended? and if so, could any assurance honestly be given that

they would be reimposed and firmly maintained? Lastly, which would inflict the heavier blow on constitutional Government—the severance, under stress, of party ties, or the sacrifice of national interests to party attachments, and of a public man's deliberate judgment to preserving the show of personal consistency?

In the last part, now first published, of his remarks Sir Robert Peel adds:

I felt a strong conviction that true party interests would not have been promoted, the honour of public men would not have been maintained, the cause of constitutional Government would not have been served, if a minister had at a critical period shrunk from the duty of giving that advice which he believed to be the best, and from incurring every personal sacrifice which the giving of that advice might entail. I felt sure that ultimate acknowledgment, however tardily made, would amply repair, so far at least as the public interests were concerned, the temporary evil of unjust suspicion and unjust reproach cast upon the motives and conduct of public men.

I am persuaded that, notwithstanding the letter to which I have been thus referring, Lord Lincoln came ultimately to the same conclusions as to the obligations of public duty to which I had come; for from no colleague did I receive, throughout the arduous contest which followed, a more decided and unvarying support, or more signal proofs of his willingness to incur any obloquy, and submit to any sacrifice to which the giving of that support might expose him.

Among the letters omitted from the published Memoir (see the Preface to it) were some which passed between the Queen and Sir Robert Peel. These, having regard to their historical importance, he had embodied in his manuscript, but with the injunction that no such letter should be published without her Majesty's approval. In 1857 the events were too recent, and too many of the actors in them were still upon the stage, to allow these letters to appear. But now, with her Majesty's

gracious permission, they are inserted in their proper order, as arranged by Sir Robert Peel. The first of them relates to the earliest Cabinets in the autumn of 1845.

Whitehall: Nov. 5, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and feels it to be his duty to your Majesty not to withhold from your Majesty the expression of his apprehension that there are important differences of opinion in the Cabinet, in respect of the measures to be adopted in consequence of the apprehended scarcity in Ireland.

Sir Robert Peel feared that this was the case from the general tenor of the discussion at the last Cabinet, and these fears have been in some degree confirmed by what he has since heard.

The Cabinet will again meet to-morrow, and Sir Robert Peel will not fail to give your Majesty the earliest intimation of the result.

Her Majesty was pleased to write the following note in reply:

Windsor Castle: Nov. 5, 1845.

The Queen has read Sir Robert Peel's letter of this day's date with much concern, and much regrets that there should be any disagreement in the Cabinet at this moment, when every one should be united, and co-operate to remedy the alarming state of scarceness which is threatening.

The Queen is naturally unaware of the exact cause or nature of these differences, which she much hopes will be adjusted, but whatever should be the result of the Cabinet of to-morrow, the Queen would be glad if Sir Robert Peel would come down either to-morrow evening and sleep here, or, if the Cabinet should not be over in time, come Friday morning.

On November 25 the Cabinet met again, and agreed to instructions for the Lord Lieutenant and for the Commission. Next day Sir Robert Peel stated in writing his opinion as to 'the consequences that ought naturally to follow the issue of such a letter.'

Extracts from Cabinet Memorandum, Nov. 26.

I cannot consent to the issue of these instructions, and undertake at the same time to maintain the existing Corn Law.

The instructions contain a proof, not only that the crisis is great, not only that there is the probability of severe suffering from the scarcity of food, but that we are ourselves convinced of it.

I am prepared for one to take the responsibility of suspending the law by an Order in Council, or of calling Parliament at a very early period and advising in a speech from the Throne the suspension of the law.

I conceal from myself none of the difficulties that attend on suspension of the law. It will compel a very early decision on the course to be pursued in anticipation of the period when the suspension would expire. It will compel a deliberate review of the whole subject of agricultural protection.

I firmly believe that it would be better for the country that that review should be undertaken by others. Under ordinary circumstances I should advise that it should be so undertaken, but I look now to the immediate emergency, and to the duties it imposes on a Minister.

I am ready to take the responsibility of meeting that emergency, if the opinions of my colleagues as to the extent of the evil and the nature of the remedy concur with mine.

Three days later, November 29, Sir Robert Peel sent in circulation a longer memorandum, entering into detail, referring to recent action of foreign Governments, and to precedents at home for opening the ports. After reviewing the alternatives of voting money or buying corn for Ireland, he puts again his question of November 1: 'Shall we modify the Corn Law, shall we maintain it, or shall we suspend it for a limited period?' And again he gives his own voice for suspension. But he takes care to add that suspension in his view 'involved the question of the principle and degree of protection in agriculture.'

Of the replies received from his colleagues, the most important was from the Duke of Wellington, whose judgment on the Corn Laws differed from Sir Robert Peel's, but who nevertheless declared a fixed intention to support him. This declaration Sir Robert Peel sent on to Lord Stanley.

The following letters are now first published:

From Sir James Graham.

Nov. 29, 1845.

I saw Stanley this evening. His judgment and wishes are opposed to the opening of the ports, and as to the future he sees no alternative but the maintenance or the abandonment of the principle of protection.

I told him that you would see him again in private before the Cabinet on Tuesday.

From Lord Stanley.

St. James's Square: Saturday night, Nov. 29, 1845.

I will call on you at four o'clock to-morrow, but from what Graham told me this evening I am strongly inclined to think that the best thing, for our own credit and for the country, would be that we should agree to differ.

Dec. 1.—I return with thanks your memorandum and the Duke's answer. The reasoning of the latter does not strike me as very conclusively or logically leading to the result, and I do not think the course adopted by him could be adopted by any one else.

He talks of supporting the Queen's Government, in measures of which he disapproves, as if he were not a member of the Government which is to be supported.

What follows is from the manuscript Memoir.

To the Queen.

Nov. 27, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty to your Majesty, begs leave to inform your Majesty that the subject of deliberation at the Cabinets held yesterday and the day

preceding was the instructions to be issued for the guidance of the Commissioners who have been appointed in Ireland to take precautionary measures against the calamities of scarcity and disease to be apprehended from the failure of the potato crop.

These instructions were agreed upon by the Cabinet, and will be despatched to-night.

The consideration of these instructions brought under review the additional measures of precaution which it may be advisable to adopt, particularly with reference to an increased supply of food.

It was the opinion of all your Majesty's servants that, before they can presume to offer to your Majesty advice with regard to the calling of Parliament for the despatch of business, they ought to be satisfied that they are completely agreed as to the measures which the present emergency may require immediately on the meeting of Parliament.

To such measures, if adopted, there ought to be a reference in your Majesty's speech from the Throne.

The Cabinet will reassemble on Tuesday, and your Majesty may rely upon receiving from Sir Robert Peel the earliest intimation of the result of that meeting.

Sir Robert Peel does not feel himself to be justified in concealing from your Majesty his apprehensions that there may be serious differences of opinion on this most important subject.

Should Sir Robert Peel prove to be in error in this respect, he feels assured that your Majesty, with your usual kindness, will view that error with indulgence, and attribute Sir Robert Peel's present communication to your Majesty to its true motive.

Osborne: Nov. 28, 1845.

The Queen is very sorry to hear that Sir Robert apprehends further differences of opinion in the Cabinet. At a moment of impending calamity it is more than ever necessary that the Government should be united.

The Queen thinks the time is come when a removal of

the restrictions upon the importation of food cannot be successfully resisted.

Should this be Sir Robert's own opinion, the Queen very much hopes that none of his colleagues will prevent him from doing what it is right to do.

Whitehall: Nov. 29, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and, in acknowledging the note which your Majesty has had the goodness to write to him, begs to assure your Majesty that he will do anything he can, consistently with his honest conviction, to bring about a general concurrence in the measures to be humbly submitted by your Majesty's servants for your Majesty's approbation in reference to the present emergency.

Cabinet Room, Foreign Office: Tuesday evening, Dec. 2, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty to your Majesty, begs leave to acquaint your Majesty that the Cabinet has separated without coming to a final decision. The Cabinet is to meet again the day after to-morrow.

Sir Robert Peel is not without hopes that there will be general concurrence. He thinks at any rate that there will be so much agreement as to enable Sir Robert Peel to offer his humble advice to your Majesty on the various subjects on which it is immediately required.

In the present state of public affairs it must be some absolute necessity which would induce Sir Robert Peel (so long as he possesses your Majesty's confidence and support) to withdraw from the responsibility which they impose.

Whitehall: Dec. 4, 1845 (Thursday).

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and regrets to be under the necessity of stating to your Majesty that the impressions under which he wrote to your Majesty on Tuesday evening after the Cabinet of that day are very materially altered by the result of the Cabinet to-day.

Sir Robert Peel will reserve explanations in detail until he has the opportunity of an audience of your Majesty. There will be another Cabinet to-morrow, but Sir Robert Peel does not think it at all likely to make any alteration in the impressions under which he now writes to your Majesty.

In any event Sir Robert Peel is anxious to wait upon your Majesty, and will obey any command your Majesty may be pleased to give him for Saturday next at the hour most convenient to your Majesty.

Osborne: Dec. 5, 1845.

The Queen has just received Sir Robert Peel's letter, which naturally causes her much uneasiness. She will be ready to see Sir Robert Peel any time that suits him best to-morrow, and if it suited him he could stay here Sunday, or, if he could not do that, sleep here at least to-morrow night—whatever would suit Sir Robert Peel.

Whatever should be the cause of these differences, the Queen feels certain that Sir Robert Peel will *not leave her* at a moment of such difficulty, and when a crisis is impending.

Whitehall: Friday evening, Dec. 5.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and will wait upon your Majesty to-morrow evening. Sir Robert Peel will avail himself of your Majesty's kind proposal to remain at Osborne until Monday morning.

He will come to Osborne with a heart full of gratitude and devotion to your Majesty, but with a strong conviction (all the grounds for which he will, with your Majesty's permission, explain to your Majesty) that in the present state of affairs he can render more service to your Majesty and to the country in a private than in a public station.

In the published Memoir Sir Robert Peel gives an account of the discussions in Cabinet from November 25 to December 5. On December 2, after reminding his colleagues of opinions he

had expressed in the House of Commons, 'that protective duties are in themselves evils,' he declared in favour of 'reconsideration of the Corn Law, such as would ensure the ultimate and not remote extinction of protective duties.' On this he remarks:

Memoir (*page* 221).

There was a period in the course of those discussions when I entertained the belief that some such measure might receive the assent of all my colleagues. These expectations were, however, not fulfilled.

Lord Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch, after anxious reflection, each signified his inability to support a measure involving the ultimate repeal of the Corn Laws.

All the other members of the Government were prepared to support such a measure, and I felt sure of the cordial support of all, even of those who had hesitated in the first instance. I could not, however, conceal from myself that the assent given by many was a reluctant one.

Under such circumstances, and considering the declared intention of the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Stanley to retire from office, I thought it very doubtful whether I could conduct to a successful issue a proposal for the final adjustment of the Corn Law. I thought that the public interest would be very injuriously affected by the failure of an attempt made by a Government to adjust that question. Other members of the Cabinet, without exception I believe, concurred in this opinion; and under those circumstances I considered it to be my duty to tender my resignation to her Majesty.

On December 6, I repaired to Osborne in the Isle of Wight, and humbly solicited her Majesty to relieve me from duties which I felt I could no longer discharge with advantage to her Majesty's service.

Her Majesty was pleased to accept my resignation with marks of confidence and approbation which, however gratifying, made it a very painful act to replace in her

Majesty's hands the trust she had confided to me. . . . All that passed on the occasion of my retirement made an impression on my heart which can never be effaced.

From the Manuscript Memoir.

The letters which follow relate to the communications which were made to me during the interval which passed between my return from Osborne and the failure of Lord John Russell to form a Government.

From the Queen.

Osborne: Dec. 11, 1845.

Lord John only arrived at a quarter to four this afternoon, so that we much regret having lost the pleasure of Sir Robert Peel's company yesterday, which we should much have enjoyed.

The Prince has kindly written down what passed between us and Lord John, which the Queen encloses.

The Queen hopes Sir Robert is no way the worse for the agitation and anxiety of the last few days.

From Prince Albert.

Osborne House Dec. 11, 1845.

My dear Sir Robert,—Lord John arrived this afternoon. He is not prepared to form a Government until he has consulted with his friends and former colleagues, most of whom he has appointed to meet him to-morrow in London.

Everything seems to depend upon the line Lord Lansdowne will take. Lord John knows that many of his friends disapproved of his letter. He had been anxious not to embarrass the Government as long as he thought they were going to deal with the difficulty, and had withstood the pressure upon him to make a declaration; but when he thought nothing would be done, he considered it necessary to speak out.

He is afraid of his minority in the House of Commons,

but much relieved by your Memorandum, which just came in time. He is equally afraid of the House of Lords, for which we could give him no pledge, except that we were sure the Peers would see the wisdom of not engaging in single combat.

Lord John is equally anxious with us that a convulsion should be avoided, and thinks to be able to settle the Corn question upon a basis acceptable to the good sense of the country.

He asked whether the Protection party, which had the majority, could not form a Government; but agreed with us that the experiment would be highly dangerous.

Ever yours truly,

ALBERT.

In reply to these notes, the letter which follows was addressed by me to the Queen.

Whitehall: Dec. 12, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and returns his grateful acknowledgments to your Majesty and the Prince for the kind communications which he received early this morning.

Sir Robert Peel does not think the House of Lords would be successfully opposed to such an adjustment of the Corn Laws as that of which Lord John Russell spoke to your Majesty.

He thinks that neither the Duke of Wellington nor Lord Stanley would advise resistance, but of course he can only speak of his own impressions, which are however strong on this point.

Sir Robert Peel humbly assures your Majesty that, being satisfied in his own heart and conscience that he has acted throughout the late trying crisis solely with a view to the public good, he does not suffer in health from the anxiety inseparable from such events as have lately occurred.

But Sir Robert Peel does contemplate with deep pain and regret the necessary exclusion from that intercourse

with your Majesty and the Prince into which you have been pleased so graciously to admit him.

He can with truth say that one of the greatest pleasures he had in official life (perhaps the only one besides the hope of promoting the public welfare) was the frequent opportunity your Majesty afforded him of witnessing your Majesty's domestic happiness, and rejoicing in the influence of your virtuous example.

That it may please Almighty God to show His continual favour and protection to your Majesty, to the Prince, and to your children, is the heartfelt prayer of a devoted and faithful servant deeply grateful for your Majesty's confidence and kindness.

From Prince Albert.

Osborne: Dec. 12, 1845.

My dear Sir Robert,—I expressed to Lord John the Queen's hope that the Duke of Wellington would remain at the head of the Army.

Lord John thinks this likewise of great importance, and begged that the Queen would inform the Duke that she had sent for Lord John, and that, however uncertain Lord John was whether he could form an Administration, she wished the Duke to keep the Command of the Army. It was better for the Queen to do this at once, as it was *her* Army, and there would be then no further question about it.

I now send you a copy of the Queen's letter to the Duke.

Ever yours truly,

ALBERT.

(*Enclosure.*)

(*Draft.*) Osborne: Dec. 12, 1845.

The Queen has to inform the Duke of Wellington that, in consequence of Sir Robert Peel's having declared to her his inability to carry on any longer the Government, she has sent for Lord John Russell, who is not able at present to state whether he can form an Administration, and is gone to town in order to consult his friends.

Whatever the result of his inquiries may be, the Queen has a strong desire to see the Duke of Wellington remain at the head of the Army. The Queen appeals to the Duke's so often proved loyalty and attachment to her person, in asking him to give her this assurance.

The Duke will thereby render the greatest service to the country and to her own person.

Sir Robert Peel to the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 15, 1845.

Your letter exactly confirmed the impressions under which I first spoke and have now written to the Queen.

I am much obliged to you for sending me the copies of the Queen's letter to you and your reply with regard to the Command of the Army.

I think it would be a great misfortune if under any circumstances the Command of the Army were to pass into other hands than yours; and that you acted very judiciously in requesting the Queen not to press your continuance in the Command unless it had the concurrence of her responsible advisers.

The Memoir, as published, goes on to record an interview sought by Lord John Russell with Sir James Graham to ascertain the nature and extent of the support he might expect on the Corn Laws from Sir Robert Peel. A written answer as to Sir Robert Peel's intentions was drawn up by himself, and is as follows:

'He thinks it would be embarrassing were he to suggest the details of any measure for the adjustment of the great question which presses for a settlement.

'He was prepared, some time before your letter of November 22 had appeared, to advise measures which in their general outline did not materially vary from those which that letter suggested.

'He would have thought it good policy to conciliate acquiescence in the certain attainment at no remote period

of the main object, by very liberal dealing as to pecuniary burdens, and at the same time to prevent alarm and the risk of disturbance by such provisions as caution and forbearance might suggest.

'In the present state of public affairs, and with Sir Robert Peel's views as to the importance of a settlement of this question, he would be little disposed to make captious objections to the details of measures conceived in the spirit to which I have referred, or to enter into party combinations for their defeat or obstruction.'

The manuscript Memoir continues:

In consequence of the letter thus addressed by Sir James Graham with my concurrence to Lord John Russell, Lord John had an interview with her Majesty, and her Majesty was pleased to write the following letter:

Windsor Castle: Dec. 13, 1845.

The Queen has seen Lord John Russell and Lord Lansdowne this afternoon.

Lord John has stated to her that he has consulted with his colleagues, and has shown to them a letter from Sir James Graham, explanatory of the line of conduct which Sir Robert Peel is prepared to take; that this explanation has not enabled them to judge of their *real* prospects of being able to carry on a Government, as there may be very different opinions entertained on *prudence*, *forbearance*, and *safety*, by different people, and a measure which they considered in harmony with those terms might not appear the same to Sir Robert.

Lord John therefore intends to frame the outlines of a measure, and to submit them to his friends on Tuesday. When they shall have agreed in it, he means to communicate it to Sir Robert Peel, in order to ascertain from him whether it is such a measure as he is willing to support.

Should Sir Robert Peel then say that he cannot pledge himself, or that the measure is not such as he could

support, Lord John could not undertake to assume the Government.

Lord Lansdowne is *personally very unwilling* to take office, but ready to do so if the Queen and the public good require it. He thinks, however, that nothing would justify their attempt to form a Government but *necessity*, i.e. a clear proof that no *other* party is willing or able to do so. This public proof would enable them to state to the country that they have taken office only in order to settle this important question, and that they invite Parliament calmly and temperately to discuss it. It might bring the Lords to an acquiescence in their propositions, if they (the Lords) would not abandon the country to anarchy.

The Queen could not but see the fairness of the claim, 'that those members of the Cabinet who had disagreed with Sir Robert should declare that they are not capable or willing to carry on the Government;' and undertook to write to Sir Robert Peel on the subject. (They might else at a later period say that they had been prepared but they had never been asked.)

With an enormous minority in both Houses this would give the only chance of success to the Queen's new Government.

As Sir Robert Peel is still the Queen's adviser, she begs him to consider this question, and to give her his assistance in bringing about the desired object.

The Queen could see Sir Robert any day and time between this and Tuesday.

Lord Lansdowne is very anxious to save the House of Lords from any humiliation, and declared himself in the strongest terms against a dissolution of Parliament.

To the Queen.

Whitehall; Sunday, Dec. 14, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel . . . humbly submits for your Majesty's consideration whether in the present state of affairs erroneous inferences might not be drawn, were Sir Robert

Peel to wait personally upon your Majesty; but he is of course prepared immediately to obey your Majesty's commands, should your Majesty desire to see him.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 14, 1845.

The Queen has received Sir Robert Peel's letter this afternoon, and though she mentioned to Lord John Russell and to Lord Lansdowne that she would perhaps see Sir Robert Peel upon the subject which she wrote to him about at such length yesterday, she concurs with Sir Robert in the prudence of her not doing so at this moment, as it might give rise to erroneous impressions.

The manuscript Memoir continues:

It is necessary that I should advert to that part of her Majesty's letter of December 13 which mentions the opinion given by Lord Lansdowne, that 'nothing would justify Lord John Russell's attempt to form a Government but necessity, i.e. a clear proof that no other party was willing or able to do so.'

Her Majesty, it will be observed, expresses her own opinion as to the fairness of the claim preferred by Lord Lansdowne 'that those members of the Cabinet who had disagreed with Sir Robert Peel should declare that they are not capable or willing to carry on the Government. They might else at a later period say that they had been prepared but they had never been asked.'

Sir Robert Peel goes on to remark that, admitting the reasonableness of the claim for a public proof that none of his late colleagues would undertake the Government, he might have advised her Majesty to ascertain this directly from Lord Stanley or others; but knowing how matters stood, he resolved himself to obtain for the Queen, by conversation with Lord Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch, the assurance desired. To his reasons for this, given in the published Memoirs, he adds one, hitherto unpublished.

I knew that her Majesty's own personal feelings and inclinations were in favour not only of immediate measures for facilitating an increased supply of food, but in favour also of the final adjustment of the Corn Laws.

What follows is also now first published:

After the conversations above referred to, I felt myself justified in giving to her Majesty those assurances which had been suggested by Lord Lansdowne as a necessary preliminary to the undertaking of the Government by Lord John Russell and himself.

With respect, however, to that part of the Queen's letter of December 13 which notified the intention of Lord John Russell to send to me the outlines of a measure for the adjustment of the Corn Laws; to ascertain from me whether it was such a measure as I was willing to support, and if I disapproved of the measure, or could not pledge myself to its support, in that case to decline the assumption of the Government, I felt it my duty humbly to protest against the fulfilment by Lord John Russell of any such intention.

I wrote therefore in reply to her Majesty's letter of December 13 the following letter:

Whitehall: Dec. 15, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty and respectfully submits to your Majesty the following communication in reference to that which he had the honour of receiving from your Majesty on the evening of Saturday last.

Sir Robert Peel feels himself to be fully justified in informing your Majesty that no one of his colleagues, who differed from Sir Robert Peel on the subjects which have been under the recent consideration of the Cabinet, is prepared to undertake the formation of a Government, or thinks that it would be for the public advantage that such an attempt should be made by other parties.

That which your Majesty anticipates as a possible

event, that they might say at a later period that they were prepared to carry on a Government had they been invited to do so, cannot therefore occur.

Your Majesty is pleased to observe that Sir Robert Peel is still your Majesty's adviser, and your Majesty desires his assistance in bringing about the desired effect.

In the remainder of this letter (see the Memoir) Sir Robert Peel explains that the communication to him of Lord John Russell's plan, for the purpose of his pledging himself to it, would, in his opinion, increase rather than diminish the risk of failure. Two paragraphs, unpublished, refer to a confidential conversation between Lord Lansdowne and the Queen.

Sir Robert Peel concurs in the opinion expressed by Lord Lansdowne, that collision between the House of Lords and Commons on this particular question would be most injurious to the country.

Sir Robert Peel cannot of course give any assurances as to the course which the House of Lords might take, but it is his impression that many peers of great authority. who might not assent to the necessity or the advantage of a particular measure, would exercise their influence in the House of Lords to prevent its rejection after it had passed the House of Commons.

The manuscript Memoir goes on :

I proceed to give without comment, in the order of their respective dates, the whole of the communications which passed with the Queen and the Prince between the receipt of my letter of December 13 and the sudden abandonment by Lord John Russell of the attempt to form a Government.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle : Dec. 15, 1845.

The Queen has just received Sir Robert Peel's letter in answer to her communication of Saturday, and is anxious to explain to Sir Robert that it was not in consequence of a wish expressed by Lord John Russell (though he knew

of it) that she informed Sir Robert of the course which Lord John means to pursue; but solely in order to give Sir Robert the earliest notice of what he has to expect.

The Queen thinks Sir Robert's reasons for the abandonment of the proposed plan well deserving consideration, and wishes to know whether he has any objection to her showing to Lord John Sir Robert's letter when she next sees him.

Sir Robert's declaration that none of his colleagues who differed from him in the Cabinet are prepared to undertake the formation of a Government will be quite sufficient (she trusts) to remove the scruples of Lord Lansdowne. On this head the Queen has written to Sir Robert at the suggestion of Lord Lansdowne and Lord John.

Whitehall: Dec. 15, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty and begs to assure your Majesty that he has no objection to your Majesty's communicating to Lord John Russell his letter to your Majesty of this day. He thinks, indeed, that it is of importance that it should be made known to Lord John Russell *without delay*, and before he can make any communication to Sir Robert Peel of the nature of that which he proposes.

From Prince Albert.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 16, 1845.

My dear Sir Robert,—Your letter of this morning came just in time. I now send you a copy of what the Queen wrote to Lord John Russell, thinking that you might wish to be in possession of the exact state of the negotiation.

Ever yours truly,

ALBERT.

(*Enclosure.*)

The Queen to Lord John Russell.

(*Copy.*) Windsor Castle: Dec. 16, 1845.

The Queen thinks it right to forward to Lord John Russell the enclosed letter, which she has received

yesterday from Sir Robert Peel, as she thinks that the opinions expressed in it will influence Lord John in the course he means to pursue with respect to the measure he has under contemplation. The Queen cannot but agree in Sir Robert Peel's arguments, and thinks that the course he proposes to pursue will give equal if not more security to Lord John Russell.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 16, 1845.

The Queen has this moment received the enclosed letter from Lord John Russell. The result of the negotiation will now depend upon the communication which the Queen will receive from Sir Robert Peel, which she hopes to receive soon, as the long pending crisis seems much to agitate the public mind.

From Prince Albert.

(*Secret.*) Windsor Castle: Dec. 17, 1845.

Your last letter has put us into a good deal of embarrassment. We have sent to see Lord John and Lord Lansdowne in order to prevent a hasty decision; still it is not unlikely that they will give up the task.

From the personal knowledge of and acquaintance with you, we can quite enter into your feelings and motives, and I predicted almost the exact answer you have given. Full allowance, however, must be made for the peculiar difficulties in which the other party is placed.

My *private* opinion is that you will support a measure for total and immediate repeal, if brought forward by Lord John, but that you wish it should remain on record that you were entirely unpledged and unfettered in the course you thought it right to take.

I likewise feel that your support in that way will be of infinitely more weight.

I do not expect an answer from you to this letter, but thought it right to warn you of the contingency of the Queen's having again to call upon you for your services.

To Prince Albert.

Whitehall: Dec. 18, 1845.

Sir,—I assure your Royal Highness that it was with very great regret that I was compelled to return an answer to the last gracious communication of her Majesty which did not necessarily terminate communications carried on through the intervention of her Majesty, which must, I fear, have been annoying to the Queen.

I read with peculiar satisfaction that part of your Royal Highness' letter, in which your Royal Highness states that you had predicted almost the exact answer which I gave. It is a very strong proof that the answer could not have been at variance with reason and justice.

I objected to concert and to preliminary pledges, as calculated to dissatisfy the House of Commons, to embarrass all parties, and to diminish my ability to render efficient services.

A pledge on a particular point is open to all the objections to which a pledge to a series of measures is liable. It is open to some additional objections.

I do not know, and ought not to know, the equivalents with which it may be intended to accompany any particular plan for the adjustment of the Corn Laws.

I do not know the constitution of the Government which may make the proposal, that is to say, whether there may not have been serious differences as to the measure to be proposed; whether some may not have been inclined to support those measures which as Minister I should have advised, and yet, in necessary ignorance of all that has passed, of the nature and extent of the relief which may be offered to the land from fiscal burdens, I am asked to pledge myself to the support of one particular and most important measure, and to relinquish the power of free independent action, which will constitute my chief strength.

I must say that, after the communications I have made

to her Majesty with no other view than to promote the public welfare, I do not think this is reasonable or just.

From Prince Albert.

(*Private.*) Windsor Castle: Dec. 18, 1845.

I return you your letter as you desire. Lord John and Lord Lansdowne are now considering the question with fifteen other politicians, and will give us an answer this evening.

Lord Lansdowne, I believe, regrets much that your letter did not contain any stipulations *you* wished for, which would have strengthened him and the moderate party in the new Cabinet.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 18, 1845.

Lord John Russell returned at five this evening, and informed the Queen that after considerable discussion, and after a full consideration of his position, he will undertake to form a Government.

As at present arranged, the Council is to be on Monday. The Queen *much* wishing to have a parting interview with Sir Robert Peel, however painful it will be to her, wishes Sir Robert to inform her when he thinks it best to come down here.

To the Queen.

Whitehall: Dec. 18, 1845.

Sir Robert Peel with his humble duty to your Majesty returns his respectful thanks to your Majesty for the early information your Majesty has kindly given to him of Lord John Russell's acceptance of office. He sincerely rejoices that your Majesty is relieved from the anxiety and suspense to which he fears that he himself has contributed.

At whatever time it may be most convenient to your Majesty that Sir Robert Peel should wait upon your Majesty he will obey your Majesty's commands. He does

not think that any public reason can interfere with your Majesty's convenience in that respect.

He humbly thanks your Majesty for your gracious intention to give Sir Robert Peel the opportunity of once more expressing in person to your Majesty his deep gratitude for your Majesty's confidence and favour, and his unalterable devotion to your Majesty.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 19, 1845.

The Queen hastens to acknowledge Sir Robert Peel's kind letter received this morning. She would be glad if he could come down here to see us at twelve to-morrow morning.

The following letter is of special interest, as recording Sir Robert Peel's feelings just after receiving from the Queen the announcement of Lord John Russell's acceptance, and under the impression that his own tenure of power was at an end.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Dec. 19, 1845.

The long suspense that has prevailed since we tendered our resignation has been terminated by the consent of Lord John Russell to form a Government.

I did not know of this decision until a late hour last night, and received the first intimation of it in a kind note from the Queen.

I will tell you all that has passed when we meet. It is too long a history to write.

For myself, on every personal and private ground I heartily rejoice at being released from the thankless and dangerous post of having the responsibility of conducting public affairs, and being expected to conform not to my own sense of the public necessities, but to certain party doctrines, to be blindly followed, whatever new circumstances may arise, or whatever be the information which a Government may receive.

However, I should never have acted on private feelings —on my own loathing of office, and of the curse of patronage, and such things—while I had the prospect of continuing in office with advantage to the Queen's service.

Whatever country squires may think, it is not safe to guarantee the continuance of the present Corn Laws.

The time has come when you must decide on the maintenance of them intact, or on the modification of them with a view to the gradual reduction and ultimate extinction of protecting duties. I could not guarantee maintenance, and permit a Parliament to be elected with an understanding that 'Protection to Agriculture' was to be the watchword.

I look forward with the utmost satisfaction to the opportunities of increased intercourse in private life with you, for whom I entertain feelings of the sincerest esteem and regard.

I go to Windsor to-morrow at twelve, to take a last farewell of the Queen, my most kind and gracious mistress.

CHAPTER IX.

INDIA, 1844-45.

Hardinge Governor-General—His Policy towards the Punjab—Satisfaction of Nesselrode—Ellenborough's Self-vindication—Sikh Government and Army—Home News—Free Trade Budget—Maynooth—Irish Policy—Hardinge on High Tory Defections—Peel on the Dissolution of his Government—Counsels Hardinge to remain.

EARLY in 1844, the East India Company having recalled Lord Ellenborough, he was succeeded as Governor-General by Peel's intimate friend Hardinge.

From this date, letters exchanged between them are full of interest, setting in a clear light on the one hand the pacific Indian policy approved and partly inspired by Peel, on the other Peel's own view of his Administration at home, and his private feelings throughout its varying fortunes.

With his usual foresight he earnestly desired to give also to Hardinge, being so capable and discreet a soldier, what he had refused to Ellenborough, the chief military command.

To the Duke of Wellington.

May 3, 1844.

I think Sir Henry Hardinge will accept the office of Governor-General of India. It appears to me that this is by far the best arrangement that can be made as concerns every interest, that of the Crown, of the public, of Lord Ellenborough, and of the East India Company. It will be the best proof that the past policy is to be pursued.

I earnestly hope that an arrangement can be made for uniting the chief military command with the civil Government. Under the circumstances of the present crisis, and

in the present state of the Indian army and its relation to the Government, the union of the civil and military authority might be of the greatest advantage. Might not Sir Hugh Gough have the command in Ireland?

Against this arrangement technical objections prevailed. Sir Hugh Gough, as the senior officer, retained the Indian Command-in-Chief. But the Governor-General's Commission was made such as to enable him to issue instructions for the army, and a high honour was conferred on him with the warm approval of the Queen.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

May 24, 1844.

I observed, when you rose to speak the other night at the East India Company's dinner, that the ribbon you wore was of a Prussian order. I think you have richly deserved the ribbon of the Bath, and it is fitting that the Governor-General of India should appear on public occasions with the insignia of his own, not of a foreign country.

I do not like the thought of your meeting General Nott, or Sir Hugh Gough, or General Pollock, in India, having higher military distinction, with certainly no higher military pretension, than yourself. I have therefore advised the Queen to confer on you previously to your departure the Grand Cross of the Bath.

I have the satisfaction of informing you that the Queen in a most kind and gracious manner approves of my recommendation, and has signified to me her wish that you should be invested before you leave this country.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

May 25, 1844.

Your letter is more valuable than the honour which it confers. For although I am as much alive as other men to public marks of approbation, your good opinion so warmly given will afford me more lasting satisfaction.

The time we have spent together in public life, the

constant proofs of your friendship in private life, are associations and recollections which I shall carry with me to India, and cherish as some of the happiest days of my life.

If it were possible to express half I feel I would attempt to do it. Your kindness on all occasions has been too great for me to say what I feel.

Just before Hardinge reached India the deposed Governor-General sent home his forecast of coming events.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Calcutta: July 22, 1844.

I received your letter mentioning your conversation with the Emperor of Russia, the contempt with which he spoke of the stories in the French journals of his machinations in the vicinity of our Indian territories, and at the same time his evident dislike of any movement on our part beyond the Sutlej.

I do not believe the Emperor of Russia has engaged in any machinations against us; but while I admit the policy of adopting the principle that both Powers should leave the territories of Central Asia intervening between their respective frontiers as a neutral ground, I cannot think Russia would be justified in fixing the Sutlej as the limit beyond which we should not extend our direct supremacy, at least not while she exercises the supremacy she now so ostentatiously exhibits over Persia.

The Punjab is within India, and everything within the summits of the mountains which form the north and west boundary of the valley of the Indus must be on terms of real friendship with us, or dependent upon us, or occupied by us. We cannot admit an open or a concealed enemy within our camp. Beyond these limits we cannot advance without weakening ourselves, even if we hold all the country in our rear. The monstrous error of Lord Auckland was that of advancing beyond these limits without having secured all within them.

I have said, and I repeat it, that I should prefer the Punjab as it was under the friendly Government of Runjeet Singh to having it in our own hands. But we cannot tolerate in the Punjab a State hostilely disposed; still less can we long endure there the pernicious example of a mutinous army extorting higher pay and donations from the nominal Government by threats of violence. Such an example is more dangerous to us than the presence of a powerful enemy upon our frontier; for we depend altogether upon the fidelity and obedience of the native army, which such an example long continued would shake and ultimately perhaps subvert.

We are, however, not yet ready for so great and protracted an operation as would be that against the Punjab; and it is for my successor to consider what measures may be eventually necessary for securing this *perilous* empire.

It is impossible for any statesman who carries his views forward a few years not to see that there must be eventually a contest among European Powers for the possession of Egypt. In that contest we must join, for to none so much as to us does it import that Egypt should be at all times traversable. Depend upon it, the French see how the possession of Scinde tells upon the future contest in Egypt, and depend upon it the Emperor of Russia sees it also, and further sees that until we can be at our ease on the side of the Punjab we cannot detach any large body of troops to Egypt.

The extent to which our military position has been improved by occupying Scinde as our own, by withdrawing from Afghanistan, and by substituting troops on which we can rely for the mutinous army of Gwalior, is perfectly well known in all the military Courts of Europe.

The indication the Emperor of Russia gave of his uneasiness at the idea of our moving across the Sutlej only satisfies me that his mind and mine have been travelling the same way, and tends strongly to confirm me in my own opinion.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Calcutta: Aug. 1, 1844.

I had the satisfaction of finding Lord Ellenborough here, affording me most cordially every assistance. He was pleased with the appointment, and I have done all in my power to cultivate the good feeling.

Everything is perfectly quiet. The Punjab, even in his own view, will not require our interference, and if the Governor-General abstains from going to the frontier, confining his preparations to measures of a defensive character, I am satisfied the case for justifiable interference will not occur this year.

On my arrival I wrote a letter to our Residents at Lahore, Gwalior, Indore, and Nepal, desiring them to explain to the native Durbars in the most explicit terms that the present Governor-General contemplated no change whatever in our foreign relations with these States. You may rely on my adherence to the most conciliatory system of policy.

Lord Ellenborough has the satisfaction of leaving everything here in the most prosperous condition, and as the Punjab was to be forbidden fruit, I really think he is glad to be relieved.

Every honour continues to be paid to him as if he were Governor-General. He is on the very best of terms with his late Council, his secretaries, the judges, and all the authorities. They all admit his great talents, and he is personally a favourite with them. The army, officers, and men, are devoted to him. His medals, and his general orders, and the fair distribution of honours and employments to the most deserving, have justly rendered him most popular.

Aug. 17.—I send you a copy of my letter to the Queen, which will convey to you my views of our affairs. Everything is going on satisfactorily. The Punjab is our difficulty. It forces us to incur a heavy expense. We have no treaty

with Lahore, and our state is that of an armed truce, with a vagabond army in a state of mutiny on the frontier.

We wish to prove that ours are precautionary measures and not measures of future conquest, and Sir Hugh Gough has been privately advised by me to discourage the warlike conversation too common in our camps and at mess-tables, which is reported to the Lahore Government by our servants their spies.

I see you have had a crisis on sugar duties, and have gained the day with your usual skill.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Whitehall: Oct. 4, 1844.

Your letter to me containing your general views with regard to the policy of the Government in India, in reference to native Powers generally, and especially to the Punjab, if circumstances connected with our own essential interests and safety permit us to pursue it, arrived at a very opportune moment. I received it just previously to a long interview with Count Nesselrode, who leaves England, after a visit of a few weeks, to-morrow.

He touched on the subjects affecting intimate friendly relations between England and Russia; dwelt, I believe with perfect sincerity, on his own desire, that of the Emperor, and Count Orloff, to maintain a cordial good understanding with this country; stated that there is a powerful party in Russia attached to a French alliance, and that that party was strengthened by an apparent desire to extend our Northern frontier in India, that they took pains to impress the Russian public with a belief that there was no assignable limit to the progressive aggrandisement of our Indian Empire, and that Russia and England must ultimately, and at no remote period, come into hostile contact on that account.

I said to him, 'I will speak to you without reserve, and will tell you the truth, and the whole truth. Here is the

confidential letter of my intimate friend the Governor-General of India.'

I then read to him extracts from your letter, and convinced him that the consolidation and improvement of the vast domains we possess in India were objects much nearer your heart than the extension of our empire, or the gratification of the cravings of an army for more conquests and more glory.

I stated to him the facts with regard to the Punjab—the real dangers we incur from the neighbourhood of an immense, unruly, ill-disciplined military force, impatient of the control of its own natural rulers, if there should be a chance of plunder or successful aggression, in consequence of our comparative weakness.

He was entirely satisfied, as indeed he could not fail to be.

I have received within the last fortnight several letters from Lord Ellenborough, the last dated from Cairo. He writes in good humour with the Queen's Government, accepts gratefully the honours which I offered him, is delighted with your appointment as his successor, evidently considers your appointment as the best that could have been made with reference to public interests, and also as the appointment that offered to him the best reparation and consolation for his recall by the Court of Directors.

He has closed his official career by writing to Ripon a very long, very carefully considered, and able letter, vindicating his policy from the charges preferred against it by the Court of Directors, and attributing in express terms his recall to the hostility of the Court, provoked by his defeat of their jobs, and by the manifestation of his firm resolution to administer patronage on the novel principle of rewarding merit. The charges against the Directors are very serious ones.

The Queen is just returned from Scotland, quite well, delighted with her residence at Blair.

Louis Philippe comes to Windsor on the 9th, remains there until the 13th.

We have had hard work to keep the peace. The public mind in each country was much excited, and the selfish interests of party, and the violence of newspapers on each side of the Channel, were near forcing two great countries into a war, for the most trumpery cause of quarrel (excepting only so far as the point of honour was concerned) that ever led to hostilities. I despaired at one time of getting that which appeared to me a point of honour and *sine quâ non*, the promise of pecuniary compensation to the Consul-missionary, Pritchard.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Calcutta: Sept. 21, 1844.

The news from the Punjab is too vague to justify my reporting it as any movement of importance.

No doubt the time is rapidly approaching when some event of importance must take place. The army is immense, the treasury empty, the cultivators of the soil ruined and abandoning their farms, and the soldiers of the plains—that is, the Sikhs—about to make war on the hill tribes, who are Rajpoots.

I have no expectation of any attack from the Sikhs. Our force is respectable. The arrangements are purely defensive, and I believe we have succeeded in convincing the Lahore Government that we have no aggressive policy in view against them.

In Scinde, Napier wrote strongly deprecating the danger of allowing four Ameers to remain under Ali Morad's protection. I took a different view, and knowing how odious the measure would have been in England, as well as in the East, of forcing our ally to surrender his relations, who in their distress had sought refuge with him, I desired Ali Morad to be held responsible for his relations, and to allow them to remain with him on the same terms as they had been for the last year and a half.

I recollect the embarrassment of this question in the Cabinet.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

(*Private.*) Brighton: Nov. 6, 1844.

Ellenborough has been here some days. We have made him an Earl, and given him the Red Ribbon. I have met him twice at Windsor Castle.

Lord Lonsdale is willing and wishes to relinquish the Post Office. I wrote to Lord Ellenborough a few days since offering him that office and a seat in the Cabinet, or, if he preferred it, an attempt on my part to induce the Duke of Buccleuch to take the Post Office, leaving the Privy Seal vacant for Ellenborough.

Ellenborough, perhaps wisely, declined both proposals, in a friendly letter, intimating, however, that his head had been so full of grand conceptions and schemes with great results, that Post Offices and Privy Seals were beneath his notice.

I think he will find that he has erroneous notions of his position. His return here has not caused the slightest sensation. There is no curiosity, among this most curious people, to see so great a performer on the Indian theatre.

He will not infect the people of this country with the love of military glory. If you can keep peace, reduce expenses, extend commerce, and strengthen our hold on India by confidence in our justice and kindness and wisdom, you will be received here on your return with acclamations a thousand times louder and a welcome infinitely more cordial than if you have a dozen victories to boast of, and annex the Punjab to the overgrown Empire of India.

We are prospering and, speaking of Great Britain, all contentment here.

The Queen opened the Royal Exchange on the 28th of last month. As usual, she had a fine day, and uninterrupted success. It was a glorious spectacle. But she saw a sight which few sovereigns have ever seen, and perhaps none may see again, a million human faces with a smile on each. She did not hear one discordant sound.

From Lord Ripon.

(*Secret.*) India Board: Dec. 31, 1844.

You will see that Ellenborough has made a most unjust and unreasonable attack upon the conduct of the Board of Control.

I utterly deny that I have in any way abandoned my proper function, or reversed the nature of my office as regulated by Act of Parliament.

As little have I abandoned Ellenborough to the tender mercies of the Court. On the contrary, I have in very many instances fought his battle against them; and you know the great difficulties with which I have had to contend in the discharge of my duties, in consequence of the hostile relations between the Court and the Governor-General. I found that hostility in full vigour when I came to the office; I saw at once all the evils that might follow from it, and used my utmost efforts to avert or at least to mitigate them. If in the measures in which I have endeavoured so to act I have conducted myself as Lord Ellenborough seems to think, I clearly am not fit for my situation. But as long as I hold it, and as long as I possess your confidence, and that of my colleagues, I cannot forego my own sincere opinion, or my unquestionable right to exercise my own judgment upon all public questions which may officially come before me.

It is very painful to me to trouble you with all this; but, presuming as I do that Ellenborough will expect me to defend his conduct if attacked in Parliament, I beg to assure you that I will not allow any personal feelings of annoyance to prevent me from doing what is my duty in that respect, as regards both Lord Ellenborough himself and the interests of your Government.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Calcutta: Nov. 23, 1844.

I have received with the greatest pleasure your most gratifying letter of October 4. You really give me

energy to work, and as my health is excellent, I do not despair of accomplishing my pacific vocation to your satisfaction.

Dec. 23, 1844.—A few lines from you are always most welcome and encouraging.

The protected Sikh States on our side [of the Sutlej] are to a man against the Rajpoot minister, and in favour of their countrymen at Lahore, with whom they intermarry. The whole population on the left bank of the river being Sikhs, we shall have difficulties in preventing them from interfering, but our adherence to good faith shall be marked so clearly that you may rely upon it our conduct shall never be questioned. Indeed I do not anticipate any necessity for interference by force of arms.

We are well prepared to watch events, and make our neighbours respect our neutrality, and, beyond this state of preparation, I see no necessity for assuming a more warlike attitude.

I regret our friend [Ellenborough] has declined your proposal. I still hope to see him in your Cabinet. Between you and the Duke you would find him tractable.

From Sir James Graham.

Jan. 6, 1845.

I have read Hardinge's letter and report to the Queen with the greatest pleasure. It is quite refreshing to see that a Governor-General can give an account of his Oriental administration without bombast and without vain boasting; especially when the report redounds so much to his own honour.

I feel persuaded that Hardinge will do well. I like the spirit of kindness, and of indulgence towards the natives, which guides his policy, and which breathes throughout his letters. This is far better than fawning flattery of the army, and dangerous reliance on force alone.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Calcutta: Jan 7, 1845.

I have given the most decisive order to every authority on the frontier not to interfere, to use the utmost caution in all their letters and conversation, and to assure the Maharajah of our friendship and good faith—that we desire to maintain the Sikh Government in power, and that we anticipate no cause of quarrel by any violation of our frontier.

The Sikh Government and nation have given us no cause of offence. On the contrary, when the Cabul disaster occurred they permitted large bodies of our army to traverse their country, and afforded us considerable assistance in retrieving our affairs.

It would be repugnant to every good feeling to take advantage of a friendly Power in the hour of its distress. On the contrary, I should be disposed to give assistance to the Sikh Government if such a course could in prudence be pursued.

But I am convinced no aid we can afford can avail, except that of crossing the Sutlej, with a large force, and subduing the Sikh army. To incur the risk of a great military operation and its attendant expenditure to reinstate a Sikh Government is quite out of the question. We should have to repeat the operation periodically. There are not the means of establishing a Sikh State in the Punjab, except as a military Power, and this has become such a nuisance that the only serious question which will arise is this. Is the example of an Eastern army of 50,000 men within forty miles of our frontier so dangerous to our power in the East as to compel us, on grounds of self-preservation, to disperse an army, which successfully extorts from the Government it professes to serve twice the amount of pay that we give our Sepoys?

The inconvenience of being obliged to keep our army on the frontier in a state of military preparation is no justifiable cause for interfering in the internal affairs of a

friendly State; but if that friendly State be so powerless that its existence from day to day depends on the will of an army which it cannot control, and if the contagion of such an example should be found to pervade our ranks, you may depend upon it that this is a danger to which we must be most anxiously alive.

In the *précis* of intelligence to the Secret Committee I have merely stuck in at the close of the letter a paragraph relating to this question of pay, and my determination to exercise forbearance to the utmost extremity. But in writing to you I freely admit that this is the point which affects us most deeply.

Jan. 23.—If the re-establishment of a Sikh Government be practicable we shall do our best to aid in that object.

On the other hand, if the disorder increases, the Government by waiting events will lose no advantage. Forbearance and moderation will eventually assist us, if active interference be forced upon us. Or, if order be restored, we shall have afforded a proof of our disinterestedness, which will give confidence to all native States, by the proof that we don't voraciously take advantage of the misfortunes of an ally.

At the same time we are omitting no precautions, and incurring a very trifling expense.

Ellenborough's letters to me are full of military details for the occupation of the Punjab. I would rather have him on the frontier at the head of a column than in our councils, for the English atmosphere has not yet cooled his warlike propensities. His talent is great, and I wish you had enlisted him [in the Government].

Feb. 7.—I am perfectly satisfied that our arrangements on the frontier are prudent and complete. If the army were required to fight I have no doubt of its fidelity, and, although I receive hints and rumours, my own opinion remains unshaken that we shall have no difficulty with our Sepoys.

I wish you well through your House of Commons

labours. I shall be cautious not to add to them. I can't expect to hear from you often, but your encouragement gives me spirit.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Whitehall: March 1, 1845.

Many thanks for your letter to me, and for the copy of that to the Queen. I am so overwhelmed with business that I have hardly time to do more than acknowledge it.

The loss of Stanley and of Gladstone in the House of Commons is severely felt. Sidney Herbert promises well as a debater. Lincoln and he, as probably you know, are in the Cabinet.

Ellenborough has been hitherto quiet. Lord John Russell and Lord Auckland wish to prevent discussion relating to his recall. Macaulay is bursting with an oration against him. The Court of Directors remain on the defensive, and are decidedly for peace. Hume moves for papers relating to Ellenborough's recall. We shall strenuously resist the motion.

There is universal satisfaction here with your administration, with your views, intentions, and acts.

Drayton Manor: March 24, 1845.

Your letter of February 7 finds me here, enjoying a few days' repose after the first campaign—a short one, as Easter is so early, but a weary, arduous one in point of labour and severity of attendance, and a very successful one in point of business done.

I have repeated the *coup d'état* of 1842, renewed the income tax for three years, simplified and improved the tariff, and made a great reduction on indirect taxation.

The House of Commons was taken by surprise, and so pleased with the total repeal of the customs duty on raw cotton and the excise duty on the manufacture of glass, and the total repeal also of taxation on four or five hundred articles retained in the last tariff of 1842, being raw materials for domestic manufacture or goods partially

manufactured, that they have consented to pass the Income Tax Bill, the Customs Bill, and the Sugar Duties Bill all before Easter.

I would not admit any alteration in any of those Bills. This was thought very obstinate and very presumptuous; but the fact is, people like a certain degree of obstinacy and presumption in a minister. They abuse him for dictation and arrogance, but they like being governed.

I heartily approve of all your acts and all your news in respect to the Punjab and the policy to be pursued in regard to it.

Frederick has been distinguishing himself at Cambridge, being one of six in the first classical class. Johnny is in the Fusilier Guards. I was amused by his asking me two days since whether I had any objection to his declaring himself a future candidate for the adjutancy of the regiment. He is only seventeen, and is yet at drill.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

March 8, 1845.

Everything is now in such a complete state of defensive preparation that we shall have no difficulty.

Our declaration to the Durbar, that we would not recognise a successor if the Boy's[1] deposition were brought about by some violent act of the army, has had the effect intended of saving the Prince's life, and of keeping the Government on its legs; but reports threaten a change, the details of which I have given in the letter to the Queen.

April 8.—I congratulate you on the perfect success of your great financial statement. What a triumphant contrast to the state of things in 1841!

The impossibility of paying the Sikh troops is near at hand. That will probably induce them to squeeze their rich sirdars. These will endeavour to force upon us the

[1] 'The Boy,' Dhuleep Singh, had succeeded his brother, Shere Singh, in 1843.

necessity of interference by arms, and by some sudden impulse the army may attempt to violate our frontier.

I am disgusted with the Jew, and was delighted at the castigation you gave him. But I have fears for your health, now that so much must of necessity be thrown on you, in Stanley's absence, and by Mr. Gladstone's secession.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Whitehall: May 4, 1845.

You will see by the papers what a turmoil we are in about an increased grant to Maynooth.

We shall carry our proposal without the slightest modification notwithstanding. The Low Church party alarmed by Puseyism, the Dissenters hating all establishments, and the Wesleyan Methodists are the parties who have combined in the attempt to defeat the measure. Lord Winchilsea and Lord Kenyon are blowing the trumpet of agitation to the High Church.

I feel very confident that you will cordially approve of our policy, and of our resolution to encounter every hazard in giving effect to it.

Our revenue is very prosperous, so much so that I shall be abused for having proposed the continuance of the income tax.

We had a letter yesterday from General Brotherton, his monthly report of the Northern district. It is to this effect: 'This district is in a state of profound tranquillity. With prosperity and employment there is contentment, and a total indifference to all political agitation. Some Irish clergymen have laboured, but without effect, to create a ferment about Maynooth.'

I was struck with the contrast between this communication and some which you must have seen from the same General Brotherton in the winter of 1841–2, in which he apprehended an attack on the barracks, and speculated on the possible necessity of trying the experiment of artillery on an infuriated mob.

I should have thought that it was true Conservative policy to have brought the country and all its interests into the state in which they are.

When we have got a thoroughly efficient naval force, and the means of sending thirty sail of the line, in addition, to sea in two months, have put the defences of our dockyards and harbours, hitherto utterly neglected, into decent order, and have laid the foundations for a better state of things in Ireland, for detaching from treasonable agitation the great mass of Roman Catholic intelligence and wealth, we shall have fulfilled our mission; and, so far as I am concerned, right glad shall I be to be either compelled or permitted to retire from incessant toil, which is too much for human strength.

Ripon will write to you about Napier, &c. I have strongly advised him to do what he can to prevail on the Court to give Napier all their confidence, and the promotion which is his due, and throw upon the Court the responsibility of overlooking his claims.

I see his defects, but he is not the man to whom any fresh cause of complaint should be given.

May 27.—If you have time to follow closely our proceedings you will watch with interest the development of the Irish drama. Come what will, I am sure we are in the right. We can prevent the carrying of Repeal by force. We can probably prevent actual disturbance and bloodshed from monster meetings. But we cannot by mere force—by mere appeals to selfish Protestant Ascendency principles—govern Ireland in a manner in which a civilised country ought to be governed.

What other instrument have we for pacific government—even for the most determined enforcement of the law against evildoers—but trial by jury? What a useless, fragile instrument is that, if five-sixths of the population of a country are to be united, rich and poor, lay and spiritual, in a confederacy of jealous hostile feeling towards the Government and the law!

You will see by the papers what is the notion that

some of the Conservative party take of the functions and duties of a Conservative Government.

They cannot deny that trade is prosperous, that the people are contented, that the labourer has a greater command than he ever had over the necessaries and comforts of life, that Chartism is extinguished—at least fast asleep—that the Church is stronger than it ever was, except for its own internal stupid differences and controversies, that any wish for organic change in the Constitution—for addition to popular privileges—is dormant, that the revenue is so prosperous that our calculations of deficiency are constantly baffled, that our monetary system is sounder than it has been, and yet that there has been boundless activity in commerce and in all speculations of gain, and that even land is increasing in value, in consequence of the prosperity of commerce.

But we have reduced protection to agriculture, and tried to lay the foundation of peace in Ireland; and these are offences for which nothing can atone.

After a most laborious and trying Session, the first months of the recess gave Sir Robert Peel a refreshing change of scene to his country home, and leisure to reflect on the important letters which mail after mail brought him from India.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 17, 1845.

I write this from Drayton, the quiet and repose of which are in singular contrast with the incessant bustle and feverish activity of the scenes I have just quitted. I am finishing my gallery, and thinking of the place which your valued portrait is to occupy.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Calcutta: June 12, 1845.

I send you a copy of my letter to the Queen. Her Majesty has written me a charming note, and I am very much pleased at her gracious condescension.

I cannot express the indignation I feel at the proceedings of the Conservative party on the Maynooth grant.

It is wicked folly in the old high Tories to lead the country to its ruin in objecting to a grant the principle of which has been familiar for the last half-century. They surely ought to see that a Conservative party after the Reform Bill can only govern on Peel principles, and if they by their faction and folly lose the only man who has wisdom and capacity to govern the country, the present generation will never see a Tory party in power.

The old game of 1829 will be fatal. I must say that, however inefficient in the House, I wish I were near you to express the devotion and attachment so fully felt by

Your affectionate

H. H.

Aug. 18.—Affairs do not loom very favourably at present for the re-establishment of a Sikh Government.

To obtain that end every exertion of patience and forbearance shall be exhausted. I am more convinced than ever that the true interests of India require a Sikh Government as an advanced guard on the Sutlej. I am equally convinced that Scinde ought never to have been annexed. It will always be a dead weight and serious cause of anxiety to the Government of India.

I have touched in my letter to the Queen on the importance of Peshawur. Rely upon it we must never allow the Afghans to reoccupy the banks of the Indus from Peshawur to Mooltan. The entire occupation of the Punjab would certainly enable us to defend Scinde more effectually. But conceive the dispersion of our native forces stationed at posts—say Peshawur—351 miles from the Sutlej!

I hope to be able to bolster up the Sikhs as a nation. But pray bear this in mind: the Punjab must be Sikh or British. We cannot tolerate Afghans or Mahommedans.

Every military and civil officer, with the exception of my colleagues and a few secretaries, is for conquest,

honour, and promotion; and so is the press, which lives for the two services. I need not assure you that I am proof against such persuasions. Napier bears my resistance to his vagaries good-humouredly.

I go up leisurely on September 20. My health is excellent, in spite of this climate, infinitely worse than Kurrachee, and I take a gallop every evening to keep myself in bodily activity.

I hope you do the same. I am rejoiced the Session is over. I know your superior strength, but efforts almost superhuman cannot last for ever.

Your campaign of this Session will be one of the most memorable of your long political leadership of this great empire, becoming each year more complicated in its varied and conflicting interests, and more difficult of management.

Your measures in principle and detail seem to have received the approbation of the most able of our Conservatives.

Pray remember me most kindly to Lady Peel. I always remember the constancy of her friendship with grateful pleasure.

If anything serious should occur I shall send for the Council, and (may I say without presumption) not for the solution of any great difficulty, but for the assistance of steady men of business practised in administrative details. Lord Ellenborough can inform you of the aid I should receive in any very trying question of decisive policy. But they are excellent men, and we are on the best of terms.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Oct. 26, 1845.

Whatever may be your ultimate decision with regard to our intervention in the affairs of the Punjab, I shall feel entire confidence that the decision has been taken after the calmest review of all the considerations which require to be maturely weighed.

I shall feel assured that, uninfluenced by the clamour of people accustomed to conquest and sighing for the opportunities of distinction and gain, uninfluenced also by the fear of unjust imputations on your policy, of having that ascribed to ambition which is really prompted by a wise and comprehensive caution, or forced on you by an overruling necessity, you will take that course which your deliberate and dispassionate judgment, having reflected on all probable contingencies, and the probable issue of each alternative offered for your choice, shall convince you is the best for the permanent welfare and security of our Indian Empire.

Not for the purpose of influencing your decision, but of keeping you apprised of whatever may pass here which can be interesting to you, I send you the copy of a private letter from Aberdeen, reporting to me the impressions of Brunnow with regard to the bearing of our policy in respect to the Punjab upon the interests of Russia. To this letter I sent a reply, a copy of which I also enclose.

I have since seen Aberdeen. He says that Brunnow is perfectly satisfied that the occupation, if it take place, would be forced upon us by an absolute necessity. Brunnow said that the Emperor would participate in the confidence which he himself felt, but added that there is a good deal of national jealousy in Russia; that we cannot give the explanations to the public which we can give to him; that we cannot penetrate them with his and the Emperor's convictions; and that his uneasiness arises from the apprehension that our advance into the Punjab, following the annexation of Scinde, will not be attributed generally in Russia to those motives which he himself feels would be the true ones.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Sept. 8.—You are, I hope, recruiting your strength after one of the most arduous of your parliamentary campaigns.

Here we are in our worst months of heat and malaria. I am quite well, but obliged to write to you as rapidly as my pen can travel over the paper, to save the express. And I have been obliged in equal haste to write a despatch to the Secret Committee, on the Punjab.

Major Broadfoot reports that the state of anarchy and fear at Lahore is such that the most influential chiefs desire our interference, and in his despatch he specifies their terms.

They have no hope of re-establishing a Sikh Government, and in their despair are determined to bring on British interference, as the least of the evils under which they are suffering.

You and Lord Ripon are aware of my decided opinion, given as far back as last January, that the Sutlej River is a better line of frontier in a military and political point of view than the Indus, and that if a Sikh Government can be maintained our real interests and true policy ought to induce us to omit no efforts to accomplish that end.

I retain as strongly as ever those opinions; time and experience have confirmed them. But the case now brought forward by Major Broadfoot is on the supposition that a Sikh Government cannot be maintained. I don't think that point conclusively settled by any means. But we have to deal with the supposition advanced by him, and unquestionably, if the ignorant, dissolute drunkard at the head of the Lahore Government chooses to force on a rupture, or if the army, having thrown off all restraint, should in a moment of passion and excitement rush into hostilities with us, the chance of a Sikh dynasty being preserved would be at an end.

We unanimously agree that no such system as a British Resident and a British subsidiary force can be listened to, and we greatly object to the establishment of a Sikh Protectorate in the Punjab on the same footing as in our Cis-Sutlej States.

We have given our reasons briefly for this conviction, for we cannot stop the steamer, and I have no doubt the

despatch I have written is imperfect. But I would not hear of any delay, and I am now, at the last hour, adding some observations, equally in haste, for your information.

We have stated that, while we deprecate any interference in the domestic affairs of the Sikh nation, we are of opinion that no half-measures will be of any avail; and my colleagues entirely concur with me that the Punjab, to be safe, must either be occupied by a Sikh army acting under a Sikh dynasty or by a British force acting under the British Government.

Our letter written three days ago to Major Broadfoot, not concurring with him in taking serious offence at certain expressions of the Sikh Durbar, will show you how determined we are to exhaust all the means of conciliation before we are roused into action.

But if it should become inevitable, then the question naturally arises how we propose to occupy the Punjab, rejecting the terms expected by the influential chiefs.

To resist aggression and punish invaders of our frontier, leaving the Punjab to settle down into the state in which it formerly was, would be very objectionable.

The other alternative is to occupy the Punjab by a British force, and gradually administer the country by British justice, conferring on five-sixths of the population, who are not Sikhs, all the benefits of an impartial administration, or such as is best suited to their condition, emancipating them from the thraldom to which they have been exposed under a military sect.

The Sikh ascendency has never given the mass of the people any advantage, and its downfall would be received with satisfaction. The Punchayet of the army have usurped the powers of the State, and in various instances acted with the greatest cruelty towards the people.

The form of Government should displace as little as possible, and if we could use the present instruments with safety it would be prudent to do so.

Details I need not enter upon, and I will merely close this rapid exposition of my views with the remark that,

viewing any such occupation as a measure prejudicial to the interests of India, all my efforts will be directed to avert it.

Agra: Oct. 23.—There is every prospect of avoiding a rupture this autumn. I purposely abstain from accelerating my march to the frontier, have instructed the Commander-in-Chief to make no alterations in the distribution of the troops. And I can say that my presence on the Jumna, leisurely pursuing my course, has already acted as a sedative on the ardour of our own army and the apprehensions of the Sikhs.

Be assured of my perseverance in the course I have hitherto pursued of caution and forbearance.

Camp, Umballa: Dec. 4, 1845.

The Lahore Government has been and is urging the Sikh army to move against the British stations, in order to save their own lives by getting rid of their troops. The troops are evidently very reluctant to engage in the enterprise.

I have not allowed a man of our force to be moved. The Ninth Lancers, which had moved a march, I stopped. The Commander-in-Chief has acted strictly in accordance with my views. You will find there has been no want of forbearance on my part.

I adhere to my former opinions that the Sikh army will not cross the river, and that we shall not be forced into military operations. At the same time the most keen observer of passing events can scarcely calculate on the vanity of Asiatic barbarians, when excited by the belief that their Hindoo brethren on this side are ready on religious grounds to join them and overthrow us.

I will not dwell on this formidable question. Any suspense is tolerable except this, which by discussion may familiarise the Sepoy to the imitation of a system successful with the Sikh army.

I shall persevere in my pacific policy as long as it is possible, and I do not anticipate any immediate collision.

As to diplomatic relations, they must be considered at an end with a Government which lives in the hourly terror of having their throats cut.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

(*Secret.*) Whitehall: Dec. 16, 1845.

Ripon will have informed you of the apparently sudden and abrupt dissolution of the Government. He probably told you little more than the fact. The circumstances which led to it are briefly these.

There has been throughout Ireland, Scotland, and many parts of England a mysterious disease of the potato crop. I should think it was no exaggeration to say that the article of subsistence on which three millions of the people of the United Kingdom ordinarily subsist was absolutely destroyed.

The accounts from Ireland in the month of October, from the Lord Lieutenant, from the Constabulary, from men of science whom we sent there to investigate the facts —Dr. Lyon Playfair and Dr. Lindley, the first chemist and first botanist—were very alarming. The worst account was from the men of science. They put on record their opinion that one half of the potato crop in Ireland was rotted, and that there was no security for the preservation of the remainder.

The Cabinet met on the last day of October. On November 1 my advice was to organise very extensive measures for the prevention of famine; to unite in a Commission the heads of all departments, Board of Works, Constabulary, &c., to take precautions against fever, the certain consequence of scarcity; to encourage public works.

But I at the same time strenuously advised that we should anticipate agitation by our own spontaneous act, and do that which has been done at former periods of general scarcity—suspend restrictions on the import of provisions. At this moment the duty on foreign wheat is fourteen shillings.

I feared that with the increasing price of provisions, caused by the new demand to supply the deficiency of the potato crop, there would come stagnation of business in England, short work in the mills, and there might come very severe pressure in all the potato-consuming districts in the month of March or April.

I advised, therefore, instant decision, foreseeing that suspension of the Corn Law must compel, during the interval of suspension, reconsideration of the whole question.

My opinion was overruled by a very large majority of the Cabinet, every peer, with the exception of Aberdeen, being then of a different opinion.

I was unwilling to break up the Government by retiring, mainly because I was unwilling to shrink from the responsibility of meeting the difficulties I foresaw.

Agitation commenced. Lord John Russell on November 22 published a very dexterous letter, encouraging that agitation, suggesting the measures which the Government ought to take, and leaving them no option but either to do nothing or to act in apparent conformity with his advice, and propose the very measures he had recommended.

Still, had there been unanimity in the Cabinet, I should have been content to meet these new and greatly increased difficulties rather than retire.

But even at the last there was not unanimity. The Duke of Buccleuch and Stanley determined to resign, rather than acquiesce in the measures I proposed. Others assented to them rather from fear of breaking up the Government than from cordial acquiescence.

Assent on such grounds was no real aid to me. If we were not sincerely convinced that a great case of public necessity justified the suspension and subsequent reconsideration of the Corn Laws, with a view to their final settlement, the question would be much better in the hands of Lord John Russell than in mine.

Nothing but paramount duty and absolute necessity

would have induced me to undertake such a question. The retirement of two members of the Cabinet would, after all the delay, and in the altered position in which I stood on December 1 as compared with November 1, have quite paralysed me. There would be fresh resignations among men in office, and in the Household, great difficulty in supplying their places, great reluctance to accept office; above all, the loss of that influence and authority which united councils would have given.

We were all of opinion that the Queen and the country would be exposed to less embarrassment by immediate resignation than by parliamentary faction.

I think the earnest wish of the new Government and of the United Kingdom will be that you should not hastily relinquish your great functions. Your position is different from that of every other official man.

Independent of the extraordinary state of affairs in the Punjab, the imminent risk of actual hostilities, after all that has recently occurred in India—Auckland's misfortunes, Ellenborough's recall—any sudden interruption of your Government might have very injurious consequences. My earnest advice therefore to you is to decide nothing hastily, to wait until you hear from home.

I have had no copy of this letter taken. For the present, even in India, consider it as confidential.

Ever, my dear Hardinge, with sincere regards,

Most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

CHAPTER X.

1845-46.

Lord John Russell fails to form a Government—Peel's Resignation by Command withdrawn—Stanley leaves the Cabinet—Vacancies filled—Third Free Trade Budget.

THE last twelve days of 1845 were crowded with political events. Sir Robert Peel's manuscript Memoir continues:

It will have been seen that her Majesty desired me, in her note of December 19, to repair to Windsor Castle on the following day, for the purpose of finally taking leave of her Majesty. On the evening of the 19th I received the following note from the Prince.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 19, 1845.

My dear Sir Robert,—The Queen begs you will *not* come to-morrow morning. She had told Lord John that she meant to take leave of you to-morrow morning, and has just heard from him that as he is *not certain* that he can form an Administration, he thought it better that you should postpone your visit to the afternoon! The whole thing is most extraordinary.

Pray come, therefore, at three o'clock, if you hear nothing further from me.

Ever yours truly,

ALBERT.

In consequence of the Prince's note I repaired to Windsor Castle at the time appointed. On entering the room her Majesty said to me very graciously, 'So far from taking leave of you, Sir Robert, I must require you to withdraw your resignation, and to remain in my service.'

The Prince was present at my audience of her Majesty, and in the course of conversation I was informed of the peculiar circumstances which had induced Lord John Russell to abandon the attempt to form a Government.

I understood the sole cause to be this, that a decided objection had been made by Lord Grey to the reappointment of Lord Palmerston to the Foreign Office: that Lord John Russell had been unwilling to admit the force of that objection, and that, not finding a perfectly unanimous concurrence among his colleagues in respect to the constitution of the Government, he considered that he could not successfully discharge a duty which the circumstances of the time and the state of parties rendered more than ordinarily arduous.

Sir Robert Peel goes on to state (see Memoir) that her Majesty was pleased to observe that he might naturally require time for reflection, and for communication with his colleagues. His reply was that he had not communicated with any one, but that his own mind was made up; that he should feel it his duty, if required to do so by her Majesty, to resume office; that he humbly advised her Majesty to permit him to decide on this at once; and that he had taken a similar course when invited by King William to become First Minister in 1834. Of this the Queen was pleased cordially to approve.

From a letter despatched the same night (December 20) to the Queen it appears that, having left her Majesty at Windsor at four o'clock, he met his colleagues in Downing Street at half-past nine, and announced to them that he was the Queen's Minister, and whether supported or not was resolved to propose in Parliament such measures as the public exigencies required. Failure or success must depend upon their decision.

His letter to the Queen proceeds:

There was a dead silence, at length interrupted by Lord Stanley's declaring that he must persevere in resigning; that he thought the Corn Law ought to have been adhered to, and might have been maintained.

The Duke of Wellington said, he thought the Corn Law was a subordinate consideration. He was delighted when he received Sir Robert Peel's letter that day, announcing that his mind was made up to place his services at your Majesty's disposal.

The Duke of Buccleuch behaved admirably; was much agitated, thought new circumstances had arisen, would not then decide on resigning.

All the other members of the Government cordially approved of Sir Robert Peel's determination not to abandon your Majesty's service.

There was no question about details, but if there is any it shall not alter Sir Robert Peel's course.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 21, 1845.

The Queen has received Sir Robert Peel's letter of to-day with great pleasure. She cannot sufficiently express how much we feel Sir Robert Peel's high-minded conduct, courage, and loyalty, which can only add to the Queen's confidence in him, and cannot fail to meet with success, and the ultimate grateful acknowledgment on the part of the country.

The conduct of the Duke of Wellington has much touched us, and that of the Duke of Buccleuch is very honourable.

Lord Stanley's withdrawal left the Secretaryship of State for the Colonies vacant, and Sir Robert Peel hastened to offer it to Mr. Gladstone, who had been out of office, owing to the Maynooth grant, for nearly a year. It appears that there was at first some doubt as to his acceptance; he required proof of the necessity for dealing promptly with the Corn Laws, and before deciding wished to see Lord Stanley. But any hesitation was brief; on the following day his services were secured.

To Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Dec. 21, 1845.

I have seen Gladstone. Much with him will depend on the weight of evidence as to a special case, justifying precautionary measures, and, as one of them, dealing now with the Corn Laws.

(*Secret.*)—He said he should like to see Stanley before he decides. I am sure Stanley would not try to influence him against giving us his assistance at such a crisis; but I fear the result of a conversation.

Do not say to Stanley that I mentioned anything of this to you; but if you could see him to-morrow morning, and by conversation prevent him from unintentionally prejudicing Gladstone, it might be of great advantage.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) St. James's Square: Dec. 21, 1845.

I will see Stanley to-morrow morning. I had intended at all events to call upon him, and I will endeavour to prevent his doing mischief. But my spell is broken, my influence is gone, and I am afraid that my interference is now regarded with suspicion.

I do not like your account of the interview [with Mr. Gladstone] at all. If there be no preconceived prejudice, the case is strong; but prejudice is stronger than any evidence.

The decision of the Duke of Buccleuch becomes every hour more important.

Dec. 22. (*Secret.*)—You have made an excellent day's work. I think it would be desirable that Stanley should resign the seals to-morrow, and that Gladstone should receive them at Windsor.

Stanley looked forward to his audience with the Queen with some apprehension. Surely, whatever her private feelings may be, it would be imprudent on her part to testify marked displeasure.

Stanley has served the Crown faithfully on many trying occasions, and will be ready in time of danger to prove his loyalty. An unkind word on the present occasion might leave a sting behind, which it would be imprudent to inflict, and forbearance now will be remembered with gratitude hereafter.

Lord Stanley, though firmly opposed to dealing with the Corn Laws, as yet was friendly to the Government, and did not use his influence against them either with Mr. Gladstone or with the Duke of Buccleuch. On his own part, he hoped to do the Government more good out of office than in.

From Lord Stanley.

St. James's Square: Dec. 22, 1845.

Gladstone called here between five and six. I had been led by Graham to expect his arrival, and to anticipate his acceptance of office. You could not have done better, and I am very glad he has joined you.

I also saw the Duke of Buccleuch this morning, and had no difficulty in assuring him that I could have no personal feeling as to his taking at last a different course from that which I felt myself bound to take. I am not so sure that it is for your advantage in a further point of view that he should remain. He would do you more good in this crisis, as I think I shall, out of office than in.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 22, 1845.

I have done nothing whatever with regard to the office of President of the Council [vacant by the sudden death of Lord Wharncliffe], and will do nothing until I have seen and talked with you.

I rejoice to say that I have prevailed on the Duke of Buccleuch to remain in office, and Gladstone to accept the seals of the Colonial Office.

This, with Lord Dalhousie's nomination to the Cabinet, is a good beginning.

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 23, 1845.

The Duke of Buccleuch accepts [the Presidency of the Council]. I told him that the offer was a mark of her Majesty's gracious confidence and favour; and that the acceptance would be regarded by the public as an additional pledge of his cordial support.

I am in good heart as to our prospects.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 24, 1845.

The Queen was much pleased with the Duke's acceptance. The arrangement had occurred to her Majesty and the Prince exactly as we contemplated it.

St. Germans' scruples vanish before the documents [as to impending famine], and he accepts the Cabinet and the Post Office.

The warlike ex-Governor-General of India was also enlisted.

To the Queen.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 25, 1845.

Lord Ellenborough declared himself ready to go to Canada as Governor-General, if there was the probability of war, and seemed fired with the memory of his exploits in India. Sir Robert Peel convinced him that in that event—war—there would be an ample field for his martial genius at the Admiralty.

To Lord Heytesbury.

(*Secret.*) Dec. 23, 1845.

You will have been as much bewildered as I have been by recent events.

Lord John Russell took a course quite unusual—neither accepted nor declined. There was in my opinion no alternative. I might as well have hesitated in November 1834, when King William sent for me.

He summoned from all parts of the country some fifteen or twenty politicians of different views and feelings. He had no authority, not having accepted the functions of Prime Minister. They sat about ten days in consultation, some for accepting office, some against. I believe on the tenth day they divided ten to five for acceptance. Lord John accepted, and notified his acceptance to the Queen.

In the meantime I had given him assurances of cordial support to any measure for the adjustment of the Corn Laws that was in accordance with the principles on which I should have undertaken, if in office, that adjustment.

I referred to his own letter, in which he advised *caution*, scrupulous forbearance, and some relief from burdens.

He was satisfied that I meant to deal fairly and honourably by him, in my capacity of an individual member of Parliament. The only persons I could answer for as individuals to take the same course were Sir James Graham, Sidney Herbert, and Lincoln. They were the only parties, indeed, with whom I communicated on the subject.

I declined any concert as to details of measures, but I said the last thing I contemplated was to extract any personal or party advantage from Lord John's difficulties, should he, starting in a minority, undertake to assist the Queen.

Considering that no one would form a Government on the Protection principle, that Lord John Russell had failed to form one—had thrown up the task on which he entered, for no better reason than that one intemperate and headstrong man objected to another gentleman having one particular office (for that is the real cause of failure)—considering that there had been an interval of suspense and uncertainty for a fortnight; that the country was without a Government, a hostile message from the United States impending,—I think you and Fremantle will approve at least of one thing, that I instantly resolved to resume office.

Lord Heytesbury to Sir Robert Peel.

Dec. 25, 1845.

I feel greatly obliged to you for your very interesting letter.

Fortunate, indeed, is it for the country that you came to the resolution to resume office, sinking all minor considerations in the one great object of preserving the Empire from the consequences of entrusting the reins of government to men so thoroughly reckless as Lord Grey and Mr. Cobden.

But will the danger they have so narrowly escaped carry its lesson home to the country gentlemen? I have very great doubts about it. Bolstered up by the violence of their own little local conclaves, and looking rarely beyond the preservation of their seats in Parliament, it is to be feared that the desire of avenging imaginary wrongs will prevail with them against the dictates of prudence and sound policy. I can therefore hardly consider the crisis is passed.

From Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Dec. 26.—I am glad to find that you have reconstructed the Government with so much facility.

Lord Heytesbury allowed me to read your letter to him, and we concur entirely, that you took the only course that was open to you. I feel assured, moreover, that you will be supported by the voice of the country, wherever it can make itself heard through the shouts of the League on the one side and the wailings of the agriculturists on the other.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Dec. 26, 1845.

I cannot resist telling you what a relief it has been to me that you have resumed the Government. It is no affectation to say that I had not a moment's peace after my last meeting with you. Perhaps my old age may have

had too great an effect on my nerves, but I contemplated nothing short of revolution.

Of Lord John Russell himself I have not a good opinion as a politician; and I feared, as I have since known to be the case, that even sensible and moderate Whigs would look to junction with the Radicals. I know positively that the language among them was that they need no longer be squeamish, that they must 'go the whole hog,' and unite with the Radicals heart and soul. You may easily believe what a comfort it has been to me that you are again the Minister; and I only hope that during my life there may be no change.

You can have no notion how much the Duke suffered, when he thought we were to be cursed with a Whig-Radical Government.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Secret.*) Drayton Manor: Sunday, Dec. 28, 1845.

I have been hard at work to reconstruct the Government. I have put Dalhousie in the Cabinet; Gladstone succeeds Stanley at the Colonial Office; the Duke of Buccleuch will be President of the Council, Haddington Privy Seal, Ellenborough First Lord of the Admiralty.

I thought these arrangements in the Lords would be acceptable to the Duke, and best calculated to render him assistance.

The Duke's conduct from first to last was—I can pay it no higher compliment—consistent with the past.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Woodford: Dec. 30, 1845.

It rejoices my heart that you have so zealous a supporter in the Duke, and I, who know him well, can assure you that you will never find him wanting in strenuous endeavours to support you.

The Duke would be always ready to go to you at a

moment's warning; and, if it be a weakness, he has that of being gratified by being appealed to and consulted.

I was pleased when Lord Aberdeen quite recently wrote to tell him that the Russian Minister had inquired anxiously, for the Emperor's information, whether he continued a member of your Government. The Duke answered in a manner which must be sure to renew cordial intercourse between him and Lord Aberdeen.

I have always told the Duke that I should be rejoiced when the Corn Laws could be got rid of. I have thought that there would be great danger in repealing them until our agriculture should be improved.

I am confident that England might be made to produce a very great deal more than it does; but the great drawback is the almost total want of education among the farmers.

The Colonial Office requiring an Under Secretary in the Upper House, Lord Lyttelton was proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and approved.

From Mr. Gladstone.

Dec. 26, 1845.

I have been considering the best way of providing a successor to George Hope, and I wish to know what you think of an idea which has occurred to me, namely, to offer the place to my wife's brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, who would be able to represent the department in the House of Lords.

I have a very high opinion of Lyttelton in every particular. He has not indeed carefully cultivated the faculty of speaking, or had great practice in it, but he has no difficulty in it. As to his character and his understanding, they are of such an order that I should consider his avowed adhesion to the Government a real addition to its moral and also to its intellectual strength. Indeed if I knew any appointment that could be made of a nature more advantageous to the public service, nothing would induce me to suggest this.

His connections were Whig, but his own sympathies do not lie in that direction, while at the same time he decidedly inclines to freedom of trade.

There would be one difficulty in the way, namely, the course which the Government has taken with reference to the Sees of Bangor and St. Asaph ; but I do not know that it would prove insuperable.

To Mr. Gladstone.

Dec. 29, 1845.

The thought of Lyttelton as your Under Secretary—I should rather say as representative and organ of the Colonial Office in the House of Lords—entered my mind at least as soon as it could have occurred to yours. I mentioned it to Graham several days since as a very desirable arrangement.

It is a great public advantage that those of the younger public men who stand prominent in point of character and ability should be qualifying themselves for the highest functions by acquiring that tact and experience in official business which can only be acquired by the insight into a great department of the State. I can say with truth of Lord Lyttelton, no appointment could be more satisfactory to me.

Surely St. Asaph and Bangor might now be looked upon as a thing settled. But even if it were not, how could the Government of this wonderful Empire be ever constructed, if a difference on such a point were to be an obstruction to union ?

Might not anyone now say with perfect honour, and what is of more importance—if they are not identical—with perfect satisfaction to his own conscience, ' I will not so far set up my own judgment on one isolated measure, against that of a whole Administration, as to preclude me from co-operation with them at a critical period in the conduct of public affairs ' ?

Not seeing this in the same light, Lord Lyttelton declined.

To the Treasury and Board of Trade, Sir Robert Peel had

already given orders to prepare a complete Free Trade Budget, depriving of protection manufacturers of linen, cloth, and cotton as well as owners of land.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 27, 1845.

My wish would be not to give undue prominence to corn, but to cover corn by continued operation on the Customs tariff; expunging all articles which are not worth retaining either for revenue or protection; diminishing duties which have been—though not so intended—prohibitory or nearly so; reducing, as far as it may be safe, all protections where there is no special case to be made out for retaining them; and thus applying to corn a principle of nearly universal application.

I see no reason for retaining protective duties for cotton, woollen, or linen manufacture. We ought to be able to compete with other countries, at any rate in these branches of manufacture. Surely our reduction of the duty on gloves is an encouragement to consider silk—I believe there is more smuggling in silk than in any other article of clothing.

I wish you would send this letter to Dalhousie and Clerk, that they may be directing their immediate attention to the subject. Let us leave the tariff as nearly perfect as we can.

Dean [Chairman of Customs] may perhaps shake his head, as he has done before. But I attach great importance to *our doing*, and doing now, what yet remains to be done. Let us put the finishing stroke to the good work.

CHAPTER XI.

INDIA, 1845-46.

Sikh Invasion—Ferozpore—Sir Hugh Gough—Criticism at Home—Sobraon—Sikh Submission—Terms of Peace—Thanks of Parliament—Rewards.

In the last year of Sir Robert Peel's Ministry his correspondence with Sir Henry Hardinge becomes of double interest, recording, with the freshness of first impressions, thoughts and feelings of two close friends, in presence of dramatic events in which they played the leading parts—the one in India, the other at home.

The first letter from Sir Robert Peel takes us back to his return to office.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Whitehall: Dec. 22, 1845.

The events of the last fortnight seem to be a dream.

On Saturday the 6th I waited on the Queen, and tendered resignation. On the following day the Queen sent for Lord John Russell, who was at Edinburgh. He came, did not either accept or decline, showed little energy or resolution, summoned all his friends, and had daily consultations. I assured him I should act towards him with perfect good faith—should cordially support, if proposed by him, the measures I should myself have recommended as Minister. He was quite satisfied as to my intentions. On Thursday, December 18, he made up his mind to accept.

The Queen desired me to wait on her on Saturday last, December 20, to take my final leave. On Friday Lord John threw up the task he had undertaken, because Lord Grey would not sit in a Cabinet of which Palmerston was Foreign Secretary.

The Queen said to me, 'You have come to take leave. There has been suspense for a fortnight. Lord John, having undertaken to be my Minister, has found it necessary to withdraw. I am without a Minister, and without a Government.'

I said to the Queen, 'I want no consultations, no time for reflection. I will be your Minister, happen what may. I will do without a colleague, rather than leave you in this extremity.'

I returned to town, held a Cabinet, feeling assured that almost all my colleagues would support me under the new circumstances.

The Duke of Wellington said it was not a question of measures, but of Government, of support of the Queen. He was 'delighted' with my answer to the Queen.

Lord Stanley said he must resign. The Duke of Buccleuch is still uncertain. All the others will remain.

What will be the issue I know not. I wish I did know it as certainly as I know that you will approve of my last act, the determination to resume all the responsibilities of office.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

(*Secret and confidential.*) Camp, Ferozpore: Dec. 30, 1845.

I am obliged to write rapidly, to get through the mass of work passing through my hands.

I am convinced you and your colleagues will be satisfied that I have pushed forbearance to the extreme limit which prudence would allow, and that the military arrangements made for defensive purposes were only commensurate with the necessity of securing our frontier posts, and were not calculated to invite aggression.

The sudden irruption of the Sikh army, consisting of 65,000 men and 150 pieces of artillery, was met by a rapid march of 150 miles, the movements of which had been so accurately combined with other posts on our line of operations, that in our progress here we brought with our ranks every available man.

When the enemy attempted to surprise our camp on the evening of the 18th we beat him back at every point, advanced four miles from our camp in pursuit, and captured seventeen guns.

We advanced in beautiful order on the morning of the 21st, and happily formed our junction with Littler, who brought up 5,000 fresh men, 21 pieces of artillery, and two regiments of cavalry. We then moved to the attack of the enemy's intrenched position, defended by 60,000 men and 108 pieces of well-served artillery, organised on the French system, and having carried his batteries on this side we captured 92 pieces of his artillery. The enemy has been driven back across the Sutlej, and disheartened by the severity of his loss.

Fortune, and the bravery of the British troops, have favoured us during the whole of these arduous operations. We have beaten the most warlike and best organised army of Asia, with a numerous artillery as well served and as obstinate at their guns as our own. Everything is secure; the Sikh chiefs on this side overawed and subdued; the Lahore property on this side confiscated by my proclamation of the 13th; Hindostan, Gwalior, Rohilcund tranquil; the impression of our irresistible force renewed; and a great victory on this side of the Sutlej is the forerunner of a more complete and final success at Lahore.

In policy, this is the view which I desire to take. It is the truth. And yet in the face of these facts it is my duty to her Majesty, and to you as the head of the Government, to state, most confidentially, that we have been in the greatest peril, and are likely hereafter to be in great peril, if these very extensive operations are to be conducted by the Commander-in-Chief.

These are painful avowals for me to make to you, and *not* to communicate to him. I rely on your friendship to justify the disclosure of my sentiments, in a case where the safety of India is at stake.

Gough is a brave and fearless officer, an honourable and amiable man, and, in despite of differences, a fine-

tempered gentleman, and an excellent leader of a brigade, or a division. He deserves every credit for his heroism in the field. The most devoted courage is always displayed by him, and his merits and his services exceed those of some general officers ennobled by the Crown—if I may venture to hazard an opinion in his favour, at a time that I am fulfilling an important public duty in expressing my opinion, that he is not the officer who ought to be entrusted with the conduct of the war in the Punjab.

If I am afraid of making this avowal of my opinion to you, I am unfit for my present office. I respect and esteem Sir Hugh Gough, but I cannot risk the safety of India by concealing my opinion from you.

So long as the public safety was not compromised I have supported Sir Hugh Gough. My Council discussed the propriety of his removal, and I overruled their interference. Subsequently, *without my knowledge*, the President of the Council wrote to the Chairman [of the East India Company] on the subject, and my letters to him and to Lord Ripon are simple statements of what has passed.

If I had not instructed Littler to move, we should on the 21st have had 5,000 men, 21 guns, and two regiments of cavalry less in action.

During the night there was great despondency amongst the officers. I lay down amongst the men. It was excessively cold. I had not eaten, and had been on horseback twenty-four hours, and the poor fellows were suffering from thirst.

The C.-in.-C. came to me about midnight, and said the army was in a most critical and perilous state. I concurred and at once told him, as I had previously told those who approached me, that we must wait patiently till morning, then attack the enemy vigorously, carry everything before us, or die honourably; but that the suggestions of retreat, to which others had referred, were quite out of the question. Sir Hugh cordially agreed with me, and I urged him to get some rest.

I then saw Prince Waldemar and his suite, and entreated

H.R.H. to retire. He declined, and I felt it prudent privately to tell him that our position was critical, and that it was my duty to order him away. I gave him an escort and he consented. He is a very amiable and gallant prince.

I sent my wounded A.D.C., R. Wood, away almost by force, and my doctor;[1] and I then, out of a numerous staff, had only my friend Colonel Benson and Arthur, a mere boy, left by my side. He had miraculously escaped in our assault of the enemy's batteries. Charles attended me up to that time, when I compelled him to leave me, as his presence distracted me from my duty.

Towards morning, having heard where Sir John Littler was, I sent Colonel Benson and Arthur to give him orders to come up, and that Arthur should lead him. He delivered the message, but galloped back to me in time to be by my side in the advance we made in the morning. We rode twenty paces in front of the line, to prevent the men from firing, and when the line drew up, the men hurra'd, the regimental colours dropped to me as at a review, and a very disagreeable night was almost obliterated.

To return, however, to the more painful part of this letter.

Sir Hugh Gough has no capacity for order or administration. He is at the outposts wonderfully active, but the more important points, which he dislikes, of framing proper orders, and looking to their execution, are very much neglected. His staff is very bad, and the state of the army is loose, disorderly, and unsatisfactory.

At one time I had reflected on the necessity of sending for Sir Charles Napier, and appointing him to the command of the army in the Punjab. But I abandoned it, as it is uncertain whether we shall be able to concentrate means sufficient to invade the Punjab, and dictate terms at Lahore before the hot season sets in.

If my appointment in succession to Gough is in the

[1] To his doctor he gave in charge Napoleon's sword, presented to Hardinge by Wellington after Waterloo.

way, don't consider me. I am quite ready to yield for the public interest. In a few days I shall be able to determine whether we ought to cross the Sutlej or not.

I lost my most able political agent, Major Broadfoot, also Herries, Somerset, and altogether five aides-de-camp killed, six wounded, Arthur being the only A.D.C. unhurt.

We can beat the Sikhs in the field, but their artillery is most formidable.

I have visited the hospitals, and shall endeavour to do so again to-day. What fine fellows our countrymen are! Her Majesty may be proud of her soldiers. Pray make my most humble duty to her Majesty for not making a report on these momentous events. You know how gratefully I felt her Majesty's condescension in deigning to write to me.

I am up every morning at a quarter before four, but my health is good, and I can endure any fatigue.

As everything is in a state of security, though not free from annoyances which an active and reckless enemy may inflict, I shall act with the greatest prudence, and risk as little as I possibly can. At this extremity of the Empire a defeat is almost the loss of India.

I have told Gough I have a right to interfere, and control him in all and every matter. We are on good terms. I have praised him as he deserves in my general orders, and political expediency requires that I should do him full justice. But the public safety also requires that you should be informed of the truth, and I should be deficient in fortitude and moral courage if I did not reveal to you opinions, and facts, which render it most important that the invading army should be placed in other hands, and in my opinion the most proper arrangement will be to make Napier C.-in-C. of the Punjab army.

In our present state I shall not write to Napier, and in case of accident to myself, Mr. Currie, my chief secretary, and my son Charles are the only persons who are aware of the contents of this letter.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Cabinet Room: Feb. 24, 1846.

The Indian mail goes to-night, and I have hardly time to write even these few lines. I congratulate you most heartily on the glorious battles in which you have taken so distinguished a part, and the successful result of which is so mainly, indeed so entirely, to be attributed to your counsel and personal exertions.

We had a Cabinet yesterday on the receipt of the intelligence from India, and I write to you amid the interruptions of another Cabinet to-day.

On leaving Downing Street, I shall give notice in the House of Commons for moving the thanks of the House to the Governor-General, and officers and men employed in the late operations on the Sutlej.

Your private letter to me was most interesting and most important. We have resolved to send you by the earliest opportunity the Commission of Captain-General such as Lord Wellesley had.[2] I trust you may rely on very shortly receiving such an authority as shall enable you to take the chief command in the field.

Your loss has been very severe. It demonstrates the extent of the danger, and the necessity for unparalleled exertion. We are astonished at the numbers, the power of combination, the skill and courage of the enemy.

We shall lay some of your letters on the table of the House, tending to show the policy which you had resolved to pursue, and the unprovoked and wicked aggression you have repelled.

Your escape, and that of your sons, amid all the perils that surrounded you, has filled us with delight, and gratitude to God for your preservation.

God bless you, my dear Hardinge. Excuse my hurried letter. I am fighting a desperate battle here; shall

[2] For technical reasons, instead of this, a 'letter of service' was sent out empowering Hardinge to take chief command; but the campaign being over, he did all he could to keep the letter secret.

probably drive my opponents over the Sutlej : but what is to come afterwards I know not.

On the news of so critical a battle reaching England, among the first to raise a cry of mismanagement in India was the late Governor-General.

Lord Ellenborough to Sir Robert Peel.

Feb. 23, 1846.

Depend upon it all minor considerations must be thrown over, and our whole energies devoted to the saving of our Empire, which has been placed in extreme peril by defective dispositions of force, and rescued only for the time by the devoted courage of the army.

In India a lost battle is a lost Empire, where forces so large are engaged.

The first impressions of many other critics at home are faithfully reflected in the 'Greville Memoirs' (v. 381). 'March 1. Now that we have got the whole of the Indian news, it is clear that Hardinge's mismanagement has been very great. He was in a continual cloud of error, not believing that would happen which did, and consequently making none of the preparations for encountering the danger till so late that there was just a possibility of meeting and repelling it, and no more. From all these negligences and errors we have suffered such a loss as we never experienced in India before.'

Such were the comments of the ill-informed. In Lord Hardinge's Life, by his son (p. 76), it is shown in detail that the force left on the frontiers by Ellenborough had been more than doubled since Hardinge's arrival; and, as reported above, Gough and he 'had brought into the ranks at Ferozpore every available man.' Nine days later, at Ferozshah, there were seven regiments of British infantry, 'a force unparalleled in the annals of India.'

A few weeks later—with his usual facile frankness in recanting hasty judgments—Greville sings a pleasing palinode. 'There certainly never was anything more complete than this

piece of Indian history; so grand and so dramatic, such a glorious mixture of bravery and moderation, and such a display of national dignity and power. Auckland [Governor-General before Ellenborough] said to me last night that it was impossible to pick a fault if you wished to do so. He approves of everything that Hardinge has done.'

The speedy revulsion in public opinion, modestly ascribed by Hardinge to Peel's able support, was due no doubt chiefly to Hardinge's own brilliant and solid success. But it was invaluable to him to have at home so true and capable a friend to vindicate in detail their joint policy, and in Parliament to do him amplest justice.

In India soldiers were of one mind in his praise.

Lady Sale to Lord Ellenborough.

Simla: March 2, 1846.

Let me tell you that the Press of India has not half expressed the feeling that pervades the Army in favour of Sir Henry Hardinge. He appears to have possessed powers of ubiquity. He was everywhere, and did everything, most energetic, and yet cool as if in the drawing-room. He personally brought up troops, and rallied regiments, and himself galloped through a cross-fire of our own troops, to prevent their destroying each other.

He has nobly carried out what you had prepared, and the elephants in drafts proved as useful as you expected.

It is due to Lord Ellenborough to record also that fifty-six boats which he had built on the Indus had been brought up by Hardinge to Ferozpore, and in them the army crossed the Sutlej.

On March 4, having moved a vote of thanks, Sir Robert Peel was able to write: 'Not one man in either House dared to question your policy. All united in heartfelt approbation of your conduct throughout the military operations.'

This unanimous response to Sir Robert Peel's motion was most grateful to the feelings of one chiefly concerned.

From Lady Emily Hardinge.

Nice: March 8, 1846.

My first act after reading the debate on the vote of thanks is to take up my feeble pen to say that human gratification cannot go beyond mine. but it is surpassed by my gratitude to God, and to you: and pity for the suffering relatives of the dead sobers the ecstasy of my feelings.

I assure you, my dear Sir Robert, that my own personal privation has not caused me greater regret than the conviction that Sir Henry's absence has deprived you of a faithful devoted friend, who might perhaps have soothed your harassed feelings, and shared in the constant anxiety to which you are exposed, and which would have broken down the strongest body and mind unsupported by a good conscience and a sense of public duty.

May God continue to protect you and yours, is my constant prayer.

The next letters from India were even more satisfactory.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Camp, Ferozpore: Jan. 18, 1846.

Overtures have been made from the Ranee and from the Chiefs. They say they are ready to submit to any terms. But they can offer no guarantee for the performance of any pledge, in the ungovernable state in which their army remains. The Durbar and the Chiefs, reckless of consequences and of humanity, urge the army to make another attack, in order that it may suffer another defeat. Its destruction and disgrace by the British army is the object which they still have in view.

The Sirdars frankly admit that they believed in our pacific assurances.

If I had left the frontier stations as I found them, they would have been swept away with ease, and the Sikhs on

this side would have marched on Delhi. The means provided, although purely defensive, were not more than the necessity of the case required.

It may be argued that the preparations ought to have been on a larger scale. In that case, if I had provided siege train, I should have been accused of justifying the invasion, my actions not being in accordance with my peaceful professions.

The Sikh aggression was made when we were prepared with defensive means. That we are not prepared (for want of transport) with offensive means is no fault of this Government. It would have justified hostilities, and placed us in the wrong.

Camp, Lullianee: 3 A.M. Feb. 19, 1846.

On the 10th we assaulted the enemy's intrenched camp at Sobraon, drove the Sikhs into the river with immense loss, and captured sixty-seven guns. The same night we passed the Sutlej, and are now encamped about twenty-four miles from Lahore.

On the 15th Rajah Golab Singh came into my camp from the Regent, imploring the clemency of the British Government, and stating the readiness of the Chiefs to accept the terms I might dictate.

We demanded the perpetual cession of the Jullundhur Doab, giving us a much better frontier. This, whilst we punished the Sikhs, exhibits in a strong light our moderation and forbearance.

We demand 1,500,000*l.* compensation for the expenses of the war, the disbandment of the army, and its limitation as to numbers; and we are engaged in an arrangement by which Cashmere may be accepted by us as part payment, declaring the Rajpoot tribes of the hills independent of the plains.

If these arrangements be effected, the revenue and population of the Sikhs will be diminished by about one-third.

Can we, after the experience of the past, trust such a military Republic, which under French teaching has proved

itself to be the most warlike power in Asia? My only doubt is whether I have gone far enough.

They had 70,000 good troops, 300 pieces of artillery well organised, 30,000 irregular cavalry. After the Cabul disaster, they hoped by a sudden inroad to sweep away our two frontier posts of Ferozpore and Loodianah; the protected Sikhs were then to rise, Gwalior to make an effort, and Nepal to be ready in case of a first success against us.

The Durbar also hoped that the Hindoo Sepoys would join them if successful, and that they would in a month be in possession of Delhi.

If fortunate in war, the Sikhs, joined by the Hindoos of Rajpootana and all the discontented, would overrun India, and become a great military Power. If unsuccessful, the Sikh Chiefs would get rid of their army.

I will not fatigue you with complaints of our difficulties. The campaign has to me personally been most arduous. I am in good health, but my knee has been seriously injured. I can scarcely walk, and cannot ride.

And now let me express the increased respect and admiration which the perusal of your letter excited for your boldly standing in the breach when the Whigs would not form a Government. Your moral courage, directed by your political sagacity, has already saved the Constitution; and I anticipate a successful Session under your surpassing skill in leading the House.

Sometimes I wish I were by your side, but I check the desire by the knowledge that I could be of little use.

With the most ardent aspirations for the success of your patriotic sacrifices, I am ever,

Your most attached and affectionate

H. HARDINGE.

From my colleagues I have not one word of suggestion, nor did I expect it. The Council are excellent men, but there is not one who is equal to any emergency.

On receipt of this last news, Lord Ashley, in suggesting a national thanksgiving, writes: 'I cannot refrain from congratulating you on having appointed Hardinge. His conduct surpasses all my power of commendation.' Sir Robert Peel replies:

In conformity with the course taken after the victories of Vittoria, Salamanca, and Waterloo, a form of prayer and thanksgiving will be ordered. We shall thus break through a bad principle, which has hitherto prevailed, of not returning thanks to God for Indian successes.

I am indeed gratified by the conduct of Hardinge, by the combination which he has displayed of scrupulous justice and moderation with heroic valour. It consoles me for the heavy loss which I sustained in allowing him to go to India.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

Whitehall: April 4, 1846.

I know not what I can add to the simple expression of my admiration of your conduct, military and civil, throughout the whole and every insulated part of your proceedings and policy on the banks of the Sutlej.

The original forbearance, the promptitude, valour, and skill with which a scandalous and unprovoked aggression was repelled, the full reparation demanded, the dignity and calm fortitude with which it was insisted on, the wisdom of the conditions imposed, with reference not merely to our character for moderation in victory, but to the permanent interests of the Indian Empire, are themes on which volumes might be written. Those volumes, however, could add nothing to the simple assurance of the most cordial approbation of every act that has been done and every line that has been written.

On receiving the last despatches I went to the Palace. The Queen said, 'I hope you are come to recommend to me honours for Sir Henry Hardinge and Sir Hugh Gough.' I said I was come for that purpose, and I rejoiced that her Majesty had anticipated me, for that the voluntary un-

suggested signification of her pleasure would add new lustre and value to any honours that might be conferred.

I have undertaken to answer for your acceptance of the dignities of a Baron and a Viscount. Sir Hugh Gough will be made a Baron.

I have been in communication with Sir Walter James on the subject of your titles. I rejoice that he concurs with me in determining not to exchange the glorious name of Hardinge for any other.

(*Confidential.*)

We have thought so much of you and of the Sutlej for some days past, that we have almost forgotten domestic conflicts.

The position of the Government is an extraordinary one. On the great question of the Corn Bill, though we carried the first motion by a majority of 97, we had only 112 Conservatives in the division.

One hundred and twelve Conservatives compose little more than one-sixth of the House of Commons. Deduct forty official men, it would appear as if our independent strength did not much exceed seventy members.

We have two Cabinet Ministers, Gladstone and Lincoln, as yet without a seat; Rous beaten in Westminster by Evans; Lincoln beaten in his own county; many friends retiring rather than violate implied engagements, and their places in the counties supplied by opponents.

I have threats of resignation from Lord De la Warr, Lord Beverley, Lord Forester, and other peers in the Queen's Household; fixed intentions to resign, I should say, rather than menaces. I know not how I shall replace them. I doubt if I could before the second reading in the Lords.

However, we are still the Government. I have the confidence and most kind and cordial support of the Queen.

I think Lord John Russell has lost ground, from hesitation and vacillation as to the acceptance of the Government,

when it was offered to him, with the assurance of my cordial support in the great measure which he would have come in to carry. He has lost ground also from throwing up the Government after he had accepted it, for no better reason than that one ill-conditioned, obstinate gentleman opposed the appointment of another, not to the Cabinet, but to a particular office.

The illusions of the Protection party that they could form a Government are, I think, vanishing. I do not understand Lord Stanley's position. If through his agency, or with his consent, the Corn Bill is either rejected or mutilated by the House of Peers, he shall take the consequences (which I think he contemplates with no sort of satisfaction), and be called upon to form a Government on Protection principles.

I have no doubt that of the 230 or 240 Conservatives—or whatever was their number—who voted against us, many will return to their old standard. But suppose a hundred of them remain inveterate and disposed for mischief, they may find the means of placing us in a minority, by a union with the Whigs and Radicals.

I will give them every fair opportunity of doing so. I will upbraid them for not proposing a vote of want of confidence; will make no concession to either party, Protectionists or regular Opposition, for the purpose of preventing their union, or conciliating the favour of either; will propose just the same measures which a liberal Conservative Government would have proposed if not overtaken by the hurricane of Irish famine, and if not compelled, first, to meet what is really in Ireland a great and increasing danger; and, secondly, to adapt the future Government policy of the country to the state of public feeling which a suspension of the sliding scale, after a decisive proof of its inadequacy to meet the emergency, would infallibly produce.

I know not how a Government having only 112 supporters of its own party on the most important and exciting question of domestic policy can stand. But you have

shown that a small minority can beat a large majority, and possibly we may profit by your example.

Your successes have given us moral strength. When I said the other night in the House of Commons that in three years I have moved six resolutions of thanks for Indian victories, including China, the memory of Afghanistan and Cabul seemed to revive on Conservative benches, and protection of national honour seemed for a moment to outweigh protection of national wheat.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

(Confidential.) Camp, Lahore: March 4, 1846

I have made a point of supporting Sir Hugh Gough, and have carried on the public service with all the cordiality which the public interests required; and I have given him in my General Orders expressions of approbation which have satisfied him, and which he deserves, for his gallantry and many other most excellent qualities, quite distinct from his capacity as a Commander-in-Chief.

The campaign being over, and no further military operations being probable in the course of the next year, I shall be rejoiced to find him retained as Commander-in-Chief. His services are great, and although I adhere to my opinion, I shall be very happy to have him in time of peace, and I am sure we could act cordially together.

Camp, Sooltanpore: March 19, 1846.

I wrote yesterday a very long despatch to the Secret Committee, explaining my motives in consenting to occupy Lahore till the end of the year. I am confident the garrison is safe. If attacked, it will punish any such attempt.

I am aware of the responsibility, with the Cabul disaster on every man's tongue who objects to the measure. If I had refused the prayer, we should have heard of the plunder of the town, and the deposition of the Government, shortly after our departure.

If a Sikh Government can stand, we shall avoid

annexation, and have put down a mutinous, dangerous, army. If the experiment should fail, we must be prepared for some other alternative.

I send down in one mass 250 pieces of brass cannon, the finest I ever saw, to Delhi; and thence through Agra, Benares, Patna, &c., to Calcutta, and I have no doubt the effect will be felt.

The expenses of the war will be defrayed by the million and a quarter received from Lahore, which will be immediately paid.

I read your speech [on the Corn Laws] with the greatest interest and entire conviction of the humane policy by which you had been guided. I trust the good sense of the landed interest will avert the calamity of causing your retirement. I am convinced by your arguments and the facts on which they are founded.

Here in the field no man can want inducements to do his duty; but the mighty toil you undergo requires a degree of patriotism which is the perfection of moral courage, when accompanied by the heavy responsibility you incur on such a variety of subjects. I most ardently trust your wise counsels will be rewarded by success, and the honourable applause of all good men.

Budda: March 31, 1846.

To-morrow we shall enter the lower range of hills towards Simla, and as I have outmarched the red boxes, I will devote the leisure I have to make a few comments on the treaties just concluded, and the military operations so recently closed. These comments may serve to clear up any doubts you may entertain, or may by anticipation answer any objections which may be made in England.

As far as I can judge, the leading papers will be disappointed that the Punjab was not annexed to the Indian Empire.

The Lahore treaty will be distasteful to this class of politicians, as it is to a large portion of the civil service here, or rather I should say at Calcutta. The extension of

territory opens out a wider field for the display of their administrative talents—affords to them and to the officers of the army quicker advancement; and scarcely one of these gentlemen reflects upon the consequences, being dazzled by the brilliant prospect of British conquests making the Indus and the Khyber mountains the boundaries of our Empire.

These are very captivating objects of ambition, and may be forced upon us. But in the view I have always taken of this question, I cannot consider it politic to annex the Punjab, if it can be avoided. And my answer to all those who desire annexation is, that, without reference to its policy, that measure was impracticable with the force I had at Lahore the beginning of this month.

At Lahore we had never more than 15,000 infantry. Peshawur, about three hundred miles from the Sutlej, across the Indus, and four very difficult rivers intervening, must have been occupied if annexation had been attempted. The Sikhs have always had a garrison of 10,000 men at Peshawur.

A partial annexation might have been attempted, and some may argue that this has been effected, by the occupation of Lahore with nine regiments. But the very attempt to annex would have altered the whole state of things at Lahore.

The army was ready to defend the fortresses. The moderation of our terms, and the presence of forty-two superior pieces of ordnance, separated the Government and the chiefs from their army. The five battalions of Mussulmen (not Sikhs) obeying Golab Singh refused to allow 25,000 Sikhs to enter Lahore. If we had declared in our proclamation that the Sikh sect had ceased to reign, the chiefs and the army would have united against us, and we should have been engaged at this late season of the year in a protracted war of sieges.

If the system had been resorted to of partitioning the Punjab into districts subject to the British rule, making each state independent of the other, we should have

perpetuated strife and confusion, and afforded to the Mussulman population an opportunity of recovering their former power, especially on the Indus. Any such revival of Mahomedan power is most impolitic, and in connection with Scinde dangerous.

This system therefore was full of objections; and annexation was absolutely impossible from want of force.

The measure which under these circumstances I considered to be most politic, and which I knew was practicable, was to punish the Sikh army by disbandment, and to weaken the Sikh state by taking away one-third of its territories. The accident of Golab Singh being minister at the time assisted the execution of the measure. I took the Jullundhur in part compensation of the expenses of the war, which I fixed at two millions. The transfer of Cashmere and the whole of the Sikh hill districts to Golab Singh for 750,000*l.*, payable to us immediately, enabled me to close our transactions with the Sikh Government, receiving 1¼ million in money, and creating a Rajpoot dynasty in the hill districts, independent of the Sikhs, and under British protection.

This, in my opinion, was the least inconvenient mode of weakening the Sikh state. The indemnity money will nearly cover the whole of the war expenses, including a year's batta as a gratuity to the army. Of the disbanded Sikh army 32,000 will be reorganised and employed immediately. Golab Singh will employ 5,000. We shall enlist 2,000, or probably 3,000, infantry. Thus 40,000 of the Sikh army will be abstracted from turbulence and mischief. I know of no better mode of disposing of a mutinous disbanded army.

After some fifty more manuscript pages of interesting military narrative, the letter ends with a summary of results.

In seventy days the Sikh army, with 70,000 men and 300 pieces of artillery, have been driven from our territory in four successive actions, in which we have captured in the

field 220 pieces of artillery, and compelled the Sikh soldiery to surrender 26 guns, bringing them into our camp.

The arrogance of the republican army has been humbled. It has been disbanded in sight of our faithful sepoys, whom they attempted to debauch in vain. The citadel has been occupied by the victors. Our gallant 80th occupies a part of the great Akbar's palace, and is quartered in the grand mosque towering above the town. The terms of peace have been dictated in the Governor-General's State tent, in presence of Prince Waldemar, the two bravest and most heroic of our generals, Gough and Napier, the officers of the British army, and the native officers of our Sepoy regiments.

My advice to the leading chiefs was given in plain but significant terms, and every event at Lahore was calculated to prove to all Asia that the kingdom of Runjeet Singh has been dismembered, and its power as a military state for ever annihilated.

As to England and Europe, the moderation of our terms, compared with the magnitude of the offence and the promptitude of the vindication, may surely enable our countrymen to contrast our present position and conduct with that of France, where a ferocious and not very honourable struggle of fifteen years in Algeria has produced results neither so advantageous to their country nor so favourable to their arms.

Your affairs on the shores of the Pacific cannot be embarrassed by the terms I have made. Oregon cannot be damaged by my example.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

(*Secret.*) Whitehall: April 24, 1846.

I fear it will be for the public interest, and for your fame, that you should remain some time longer in India; and I must not let my own private feelings and desire to see you interfere with such high considerations.

I write to you, however, with the same unreserve as I should speak to you if you were sitting beside me, and

speculate on events and contingencies which baffle all speculation.

First, as to our own tenure of power. Let us assume that we shall remain in office—perhaps a very bold assumption.

Suppose there should be an early vacancy in the Ordnance, shall I keep it open for you, if I can do so without prejudice to the public service? You are the fittest man to be the head of the Ordnance.

You could not have quitted India until the affair of the Punjab was satisfactorily settled; and so early a return from India, considering how difficult it would be to replace you—how impossible it would be to find a successor equally qualified—may not be, even though the Punjab is settled, consistent with your own high and pure notions of public duty.

But there can be no harm in suggesting these things for your private consideration, and you can confidentially communicate with me your opinions and feelings and wishes. If, having done more good in India in two years than others have done in five, you feel entitled and incline to return, it would be my anxious desire to do whatever I could do to reserve for you the Ordnance.

I write to you as I should speak to you, and fully reckon upon your telling me in return what you think and what you wish.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Simla: April 5, 1846.

I send you a very long and, I fear, a tedious narrative of facts relating to our treaties and military operations.

I mean it as a paper of reference, in case you should at any time require explanation of our proceedings.

If ever annexation be forced upon us, we shall be able to effect it with comparative ease. If the Chiefs at Lahore were but tolerably honest, the Sikh Government would stand.

Napier has got home safe. His ambition is to be

original and eccentric, and he therefore dashes into extreme opinions, disdaining the more simple dictates of common sense. But he is very clever, very agreeable, warm-hearted, and an excellent soldier. He detected instantly some of the weak points of our Bengal system.

He bears my thwartings quietly, because he feels that I like him personally, and admire his character.

April 20.—I never can sufficiently express the warmth of my feelings for the admirable manner in which you have defended my conduct, and carried with you the unanimous approbation of the House.

I hear from several of those who heard you, that your sentiments were delivered with a depth of feeling that ought to make me proud of such a man's friendship. And so I am, but it is quite impossible to express what I feel for the affectionate care of my character, and the generous support with which you have honoured me before our countrymen. No Governor-General was ever treated in a manner more grateful to his feelings. I owe it all to you, and the impression never will be effaced from my memory, or that of my boys.

Your friendship has been constant during the last quarter of a century, and I include dear Lady Peel in the devoted attachment which I feel towards you and your house.

I observed you seized the most judicious points in justifying the delay in moving up to the frontier, and were perfectly master of all the military details.

All our accounts from Lahore as regards our troops are satisfactory; they are healthy, and satisfied.

To those who would have preferred annexation the answer is, that it was then impracticable, even if it had been then the best policy.

In their sense, therefore, I believe I have taken the next best measures which were practicable. And if our honest endeavours to maintain a Sikh Government should fail, we are in a position to apply a remedy more effectually than we could have done whilst at Lahore.

I follow you with anxiety in the herculean task you have taken upon your own shoulders. I fear your health will give way under such severe toil.

To Viscount Hardinge of Lahore.

April 22, 1846.

There is here universal approval and admiration of your conduct and policy from first to last.

Above all things your moderation after victory is most applauded. It is justly thought that it adds a lustre to the skill and valour displayed in the military achievements. It is ten times more gratifying to the public mind than the annexation of the Punjab would have been. This is the common sentiment, the instinctive feeling of the whole mass of the people.

But your policy is cordially approved by the reflecting few. They consider that the annexation of the Punjab would have been a source of weakness and not of strength; that it would have extended our frontier at the greatest distance from our resources, and at the weakest points; that it would have been a perpetual blister, from bringing us into contact with new tribes, unused to our sway, unconscious of its advantages, unable to appreciate the benefits of government on settled principles; that you would have been with reference to Afghanistan and all the bordering countries in a much worse position than you were in September last with reference of the Punjab, at a greater distance from your resources, with a hostile country and difficult rivers in your rear.

These are Indian considerations, but there are higher considerations still, nearer home, affecting still more vital interests, that are decisive in favour of your policy. There is not a country in Europe or in America that does not do us justice, that does not admire the signal proof of bravery and military skill ten times more because it was called forth in a righteous cause, and because it has been followed by dignified forbearance and moderation in the hour of success.

I firmly believe that what has taken place on the banks of the Sutlej will have its influence on the banks of the Oregon; that there is not an American who will not feel that if England follows the example you have set of moderation and justice in her negotiations, and is compelled to vindicate her rights or her honour by an appeal to arms, she will also follow on the St. Lawrence or the Hudson the example of disciplined valour and heroic devotion.

Ever, my dear Hardinge, with true attachment,

Affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

May 23.—I have read your letter of March 31 with mixed feelings of regret and satisfaction—regret, that you should have been labouring under any anxiety as to the feelings and opinions which would prevail in England with reference to recent events in India; satisfaction, derived from the hope that previous doubt and uncertainty on your part will enhance the gratification that all that has passed here must by this time have given to you.

Indian critics, and Indian newspapers, may make what comments they please, but here, amid all the bitterness of party feeling, and political warfare, full justice has been done to you. And because justice has been done, there is one universal, unmixed feeling of gratitude and admiration.

Happen what may hereafter in the Punjab, the future will never shake the conviction of the people of this country that, in your position and with your means, a sane combination of courage, wisdom, and moderation entitles you to unqualified praise.

I am satisfied you will approve of the course which I took in regard to the pension. I feared to check or even ruffle the current of intense admiration, by making any proposal as to pecuniary reward which might be thought unreasonable, or lead to any controversy in the House of Commons.

I acted, therefore, as I thought you would wish, and

anticipated objections by suspending the pension of 3,000*l.* from the Crown, so long as the pension of 5,000*l.* a year from the Company should be payable.

I might write volumes to you about the present state of political affairs at home, but I could give you no certain means of forming a judgment on the probable result of the contest that is raging.

I have passed the Corn Bill and the Tariff through the Commons, and am writing to you at nine on Saturday morning of May 23, having escaped at three o'clock a threatened defeat on the Factory Bill, by a majority of 203 to 193. The chief interest of the question was owing to the positive declarations made by Graham and by me in 1844, that we should consider defeat decisive of our fate.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Simla: May 26, 1846.

You have again made me feel my good fortune in having such a friend to bring before the country my humble exertions in the public service. You have encouraged me to make those exertions by the conviction that I should receive a generous and honourable support. Every word you utter or write has always an animating influence in cheering me onwards in my course. I am bound to sustain your good opinion, and when the measures require personal energy, I feel none of that uneasy feeling which made me in the House of Commons conscious that I did not give you the support I ought. Here I can make up for the deficiencies of a scanty education (having joined my regiment at fourteen) by perseverance and some firmness.

In saying this, depend upon it the success which you have stamped with your approval, and therefore given it a value, and the honours which the Queen has conferred, will not mislead or dazzle me. Your commendations will only animate me to be more vigilantly careful in public affairs, and as you sent me here, rely upon it I shall not fail on the score of wanting steadiness and prudence.

The Queen's approbation so admirably expressed to me in her note has made me most grateful.

I admire the moral courage you display, and the true patriotism which marks every act of your public life. I fear your Administration will not outlive the Session. The folly of 1830 will be repeated.

June 7.—Every act of yours is so marked by a careful and constant vigilance for my honour and interest, that I should be the most ungrateful of men if I did not feel these proofs of your friendship most deeply.

The liberality of the Court is far beyond any expectations I could have formed, and your approval of what has been done, expressed in such glowing terms, makes the deepest impression upon me. It is my happiness and good fortune to serve under such a Minister. Your speeches have turned the tide of popular opinion in my favour, for I own the current had set in strong the other way. I shall send the printed speeches to the generals, and other most distinguished officers of the army. Your words of fire would animate us to any exertion.

I do not think I can with honour take such large rewards, and then consult my personal wishes, and return to England. But I confess I should be glad to be restored to my family at the earliest period consistent with my duty.

Of course I must remain to see and watch the result of the Lahore experiment, and I hardly expect to be able to get away before 1848, unless the Whigs express a wish to have a Governor-General of their own.

We are popular with the people, and the whole country is feeling the advantage of a disciplined army in substitution of their own ferocious bands. But they are the finest men I have seen, and hold our Sepoys in contempt.

Your confidential question about the Ordnance Department is most gratifying. Of all others it is the department I should most desire to superintend. But in the present state of affairs here, and after all your liberalities towards me, I can scarcely be allowed to indulge my own wishes,

and desert my post. To reserve such a department would embarrass your Government, even for a short time, and I therefore gratefully recommend you, whenever poor Murray is taken away, to put me out of the question.

There never was such a Session as you have had—more than enough to disgust you for ever with public life.

July 22.—I have received your letter regarding the pensions. If I could have advised a course, I should have urged that which you have wisely taken.

I learn by the mail just arrived that the Duke of Richmond and others have struck out the clause of limitation. I know the meaning of this manœuvre. It was a trick to annoy you, and no compliment to me.

The restriction was most proper. I felt you would have done me no act of friendship, but an injury, if you had gone further. The alteration has vexed me, but I am confident you will have restored the grant, and me, to the position in which you had judiciously placed both.

Pray remember that I hold myself entirely at your disposal. In all probability I shall never again engage in public life, when I retire from my present post, in which I was placed by you. The attachment of a quarter of a century will have outlived my powers to be useful to you. My devotion and affection are not derived from your power, but from admiration of your public and private character, which I venture to say now; when, according to all probable chances, you are no longer in power.

The reaction will soon follow. Your fame, like the Duke of Wellington's, need not wait for posterity. It is close at hand during your life.

What injustice attends a public man's career! I am praised, and you are scandalously abused. It really makes me ashamed.

CHAPTER XII.

1846.

Moving the Address—Exposition of Policy—Rancour of Cobden—Remonstrance of his Friends—Explanations—Resignations—Letters to old Supporters—Obstruction of Free Trade Bills.

As the meeting of Parliament drew near, having engaged Lord Francis Egerton to move the Address, Sir Robert Peel made known to him his whole intentions.

To Lord Francis Egerton.

Jan. 4, 1846.

Can I prevail on you to move the Address?

No consideration of the mere interests of party would induce me to make this proposal. Your intervention as a mediator, as the counsellor to all parties of prudence and moderation and forbearance, would be at this crisis of great importance.

Many circumstances combine to make a strong impression on my mind that the occasion is one not unworthy of your intervention. They will all occur to you, and will all be weighed in that spirit which has guided your course in public life.

I will leave, therefore, without comment, the decision to your own judgment, earnestly hoping that it may be in favour of acquiescence in my proposal.

From Lord Francis Egerton.

Worsley: Jan. 5, 1846.

In my view of the present state of public affairs, the main object of every rational man must be to promote a

settlement of the Corn Laws. By accepting your proposal I may make my contribution to this result more effectual than in any other shape.

My impression is this. The Queen's Speech will proclaim the intention to bring the Corn Laws under the consideration of Parliament, for purposes inconsistent with the maintenance of the present system.

Am I right in believing that the member who moves the Address is not supposed to be in the secrets of the Cabinet, and therefore expresses nothing more than his general confidence in the Government, and his approval of the principles on which they are acting?

Under this view of the case I shall most readily contribute my mite to the adjustment which I earnestly desire.

If your reply confirms my impressions, I shall have to trouble you for what schoolboys call 'sense,' and advice as to the best mode of shaping my discourse.

To Lord Francis Egerton.

(*Secret.*) Jan. 6, 1846.

I rejoice in the prospect that the discussions in Parliament will open under your auspices. No one is so well qualified to give a proper tone to them.

I quite concur in your view of the position of a mover of the Address. But I will, without in the slightest degree fettering your independent action, put you in possession of all my thoughts and feelings. Recollect that you know them before I have had the opportunity of mentioning them to the majority of my colleagues. Receive them therefore as entirely confidential.

I meditate not a mere dealing with the Corn Laws, but the continued and more extensive application of those principles which governed the introduction of the Tariff in 1842.

I see a buoyant Revenue; I see the Excise increasing, notwithstanding the loss of glass and auction duties; I see

flourishing commerce, peace and contentment; I firmly believe that by a further relaxation of protecting duties, the continuance and increase of such blessings will be secured.

I would begin with cheapening clothing, before I cheapened food. I would ask the manufacturers to set the example of parting with protection.

We have reduced the duties on the raw material in the great branches of manufacture; wool, cotton-wool, and flax are admitted duty free. I am now occupied in taking a general view of *all protecting duties*—duties on carriages, silk, spirits, &c.

I would make the reduction of protection to agriculture a part of this great scheme. I would deprive the agriculturist of the argument that he is entitled to protection, because the manufacturer is highly protected.

I would settle the question of the Corn Laws by considerable immediate reduction and ultimate extinction of protecting duties. But I cordially agree with you that if there be not immediate settlement, the new law must involve in itself the principle of early and certain abolition of duties on food. Maize, colonial corn, rice, I think I would admit at once; maize for the special benefit of the feeder of cattle. The admission of maize will, I believe, go far to promote a settlement of Oregon.

I think we must have some new measure for the prevention of assassination in Ireland—something inflicting fines on the district where murder is committed, charging that district with the payment of all expenses connected with the discovery and the prosecution of offenders, and provision for the family of the murdered man.

We shall not reciprocate blustering with Polk, but shall quietly make an increase in the Naval and Military and Ordnance Estimates. We shall perhaps refer with satisfaction to the manner in which the Boundary question has been settled. We have offered arbitration on the Oregon question.

Our relations with France are very friendly.

Lord Francis Egerton replies, 'I am intensely satisfied.'

The Address was seconded by Mr. Beckett Denison, member for the West Riding, who wrote:

Doncaster: Jan. 6, 1846.

You will find our agricultural friends most unwilling to consent to any further loss of protection. They are very sore, though without just reason, as I sincerely think; and I have nothing but a limited income from land to depend upon.

The whole kingdom is under very great obligations to you for what you have accomplished since 1841, and it is chiefly because I have long been convinced that you understand ten times better than any other person how to deal with the complicated and conflicting interests of the nation, that I am most anxious you should continue to secure the support of members representing divisions of counties.

Sir Robert Peel replies:

Does not the state of the revenue, buoyant under all our reductions, the state of commerce and manufacture, above all, the spirit of contentment and loyalty for the last three years, speak volumes in favour of the continued application—to articles of manufacture as well as to the produce of the land—of those principles the cautious and deliberate adoption of which has mainly led to our present prosperity?

My fortunes are connected with the prosperity of the landed interest, and I declare to you that as a landholder I should deprecate with the utmost earnestness the return of such a state of things as I witnessed in the winter of 1841.

Depend upon it, with the present impressions of the working classes—very different about Corn Laws from what they were in 1841—that state of things could not return without serious danger.

Letters exchanged with Strathfieldsaye show a hopeful spirit on both sides.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Secret.*) Jan. 7, 1846.

I am very confident as to success. I can demonstrate that everything that has been done has been for the benefit not merely of the community at large, but of the agricultural interest. Wool bears a higher price than it did before the reduction of the duty on foreign wool. So does meat. So do bullocks, cows, and sheep.

The agricultural labourers have been better off this winter and last winter than they were before.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Strathfieldsaye: Jan. 8, 1846.

You have much in your favour, as you will be able to prove that all the free trade changes have been successful. I have myself been gradually coming to the belief that the entire absence of all restrictions on corn would be a general benefit.

The Corn Laws are considered as a class monopoly, and are thus most detrimental to the aristocracy, and to the landed interest.

You will find the Duke all that you can desire.

On January 12 Sir Robert Peel informs the Queen that he has brought before his colleagues the general plan, which he had explained to her Majesty on the previous day, for the adjustment of the question of the Corn Laws, and of import duties on many articles connected with the clothing and subsistence of the people; and that 'no objection was made by any one to the principles of the plan, which appeared indeed to meet with general acquiescence.'

In reply her Majesty expresses 'great satisfaction, feeling certain that what was so just and wise must succeed.'

At the request of the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel wrote down for him his recollection of the Cabinet meeting, at which they had decided to resign.

Sunday [Jan. 25, 1846].

The Cabinet met on Thursday, December 4. At that Cabinet the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Stanley declared their intention of resigning, rather than acquiesce in my proposal to open the ports and reconsider the Corn Law.

I took until next morning to reflect on the probable effects of their resignation.

The Cabinet met again the following day, Friday, December 5. I stated my impression, that my position was materially altered, by the lapse of time and other circumstances, since November 6; that I doubted whether I could succeed in passing any satisfactory measure on the subject of the Corn Laws, if two of my colleagues were to resign; that nothing would then ensure success but the cordial support of the whole Government.

I inquired from each member of the Cabinet, being a member of the House of Commons, whether they thought I should succeed, and whether if I failed I should or should not make matters worse.

The opinion of all ultimately was (Lord Granville Somerset hesitated on the second point) that I should certainly fail, and that failure would make matters worse.

I said that was my own opinion, and I therefore felt it my duty to resign.

The impression of the Cabinet generally was that the decision was a right one; but I do not think the question was put to the Cabinet distinctly, 'Ought Sir Robert Peel to resign or not?'

The account given by the Duke in the House of Lords is omitted from his 'Speeches,' but may be read in Hansard's 'Debates.' In reference to it Sir Robert Peel writes:

Whitehall: Tuesday [Jan. 27, 1846].

However occupied in preparing for to-night, I must write one line cordially to thank you for your admirable statement of last night, so kind and just to all parties, and so judicious, and clear.

After Parliament met, Sir Robert Peel for the first time was made aware of the rancour with which he was still assailed by Mr. Cobden, and of its cause.

From Sir James Graham.

Jan. 25, 1846.

Fremantle put into my hands the enclosed letter [no copy kept] from Cobden to Charles Buller, in answer to a remonstrance with reference to some language which Cobden had recently used concerning you at a public meeting.

I determined to show the letter to you, in obedience to the dictates of that confidence which reigns between us. You may return it to me if you like, without comment, and it will never be known that you have seen it.

To Sir James Graham.

Jan. 25, 1846.

I return this letter. It is now nearly three years since the occurrence took place to which it refers.

After I had spoken (Feb. 17, 1843) Mr. Cobden said, 'I rise to explain &c.' and concluded by observing, 'In what I stated I intended (and I believe everybody but the right hon. gentleman understood what I meant) to throw the responsibility of his measures upon him as the head of the Government; and in using the word "individually" I used it as he uses the first pronoun when he says, "I passed the tariff, and you supported me."'

I followed Mr. Cobden, and said, '*I am bound to accept the construction* which the hon. member puts upon the language he employed. He used the word "*individually*" in so marked a way that I and others put upon it a different interpretation. He supposes the word "individually" to mean public responsibility in the situation I hold, *and I admit it at once*!'

Now I ask you, or any other honourable and impartial man, to say whether that which I said was not a complete disclaimer, made at the time, of any adherence to an injurious or offensive interpretation of Mr. Cobden's original words.

Mr. Cobden might have thought—perhaps justly—that I should have gone further. Why did not he convey to me (not necessarily in a hostile manner) his opinion that I ought to disclaim more fully any imputation upon him? Why did not some third party who heard what passed suggest that my explanation was incomplete?

My memory may fail me, but I do not recollect to have heard one word upon the subject from any person present on the occasion, at the time when further explanation might have been natural, and satisfactory to wounded feelings.

So much for that particular transaction. Whether Mr. Cobden has reason to complain of my having dealt in personal abuse, or having imputed his public conduct to corrupt or interested motives; whether on his part or on mine there has been, speaking generally, more forbearance from mere personalities not necessary to argument, is a matter which I would confidently leave to the judgment of some much less friendly and partial arbiter than you would be.

Cobden's fiercest outburst had been in December, when Sir Robert Peel's Government fell.

'The intelligence was received,' says Miss Martineau, 'throughout the country with dismay.' But in one quarter it was far otherwise.

'I was speaking,' writes Cobden, 'in the face of nearly the entire adult male population of Stockport, whose terrible sufferings in 1841, when Peel took the Government from the Whigs, to maintain the very system which was starving them, were fresh in my memory. When the news was announced, the whole audience sprang up, and gave three times three cheers. I was quite taken aback, and out came that virulent attack upon Peel.

'I will keep a more watchful guard over the old serpent that is within me for the future. You must not judge me by what I say at these tumultuous public meetings.'

A copy of this letter (to Mr. Combe) was sent to Sir Robert Peel by Prince Albert, who had it from Baron Stockmar. Peel's only comment was, 'It would have been more generous and just

to appease an excited mob rejoicing in the fall of a Minister, or at least to be neutral, rather than to inflame their passions by reference to forgotten events.'

The old serpent next year contrived to slink from public meetings into a private letter. 'I must say,' writes Cobden in February 1846, 'that Peel's atrocious conduct towards me ought not to be lost sight of. I do not complain of his insinuating that I wished to incite to his assassination, and hounding on his party to destroy me in the eyes of the world. His conduct might have been excused on account of his state of mind, from the recent death of Drummond, and the distress and anxiety of his wife and daughter, who, I believe, unnerved him by their alarm for his safety. But although this excused him at the instant, it did not atone for his having failed to retract or explain his foul charge subsequently, which, in fact, made and now makes it a deliberate attempt at moral assassination, which I cannot and ought not to forget. And therefore I should feel justified in repeating what I said at Covent Garden, that I should forfeit my own respect and that of my friends if I ever exchanged a word with that man in private.'

'No nature,' writes Mr. Morley, 'was ever less disposed for harbouring long resentments.'

But in this case Cobden failed to see, first, that the alleged 'foul charge' was merely a warm retort, from a Minister assailed in Parliament as individually responsible for a nation's misery, that be the consequences what they might, such attacks should not deter him from doing his duty; secondly, that on Cobden's explaining, Peel promptly and fully accepted his construction of the words used; and thirdly, that when Cobden, in disregard of social usage, instead of intimating any desire for further satisfaction, 'kept his wrong to himself,' a busy Minister would regard the incident as closed.

Mr. Combe and Mr. Buller having failed, a lady next tried her hand as peacemaker.

From Miss Martineau.

Ambleside: Feb. 22, 1846.

Some three years ago Mr. Cobden asked me to give him any hints at any time about the management by the League

of the Anti-Corn-Law question. I saw little to disapprove till I read in the newspapers his furious attacks upon you at Stockport, and at the Covent Garden meeting.

I wrote a remonstrance, and his replies have done him great credit; he has never since fallen into the same mistake. But the inquiry I was led into has shown me that which it is my present business to communicate to you.

It is painful to allude to that night when, under extreme anguish of mind, you charged Mr. Cobden with an imputation greater than any man can be expected to bear. I leave it, merely saying that there is no doubt that all the world was and is willing to make allowance and let it pass. I will venture upon saying that Mr. Cobden himself thinks this.

But he is a man made of flesh and blood, full of honour and high principle, and he has suffered most bitterly since from your not having made any sort of *amende*.

There are some men of his party heathenish enough to hint want of spirit in him, because he has, with incessant struggle and pain, kept his wrong to himself.

I find that the great impediment to the frank reception of your great acts, and a due appreciation of yourself among a countless multitude of the most influential class in this country, is the fact of your not having made the *amende* to Mr. Cobden. Even now, the smallest regretful allusion to that old quarrel would, I am confident, set you right, and be of incalculable importance to the carrying of your measures.

Most people would say that it is now impossible for you to set this matter right, Mr. Cobden having insulted you as he has done. But I believe not only that what is just and generous always may be done, but that you are a great doer of the impossible, in the government of yourself, as well as in the government of the country. In the administration of public affairs, as surely as a great act or measure is declared impracticable, you forthwith achieve it; and I have a strong confidence that you have the same power in a matter of Christian morals.

I could write much of the gratitude and reverence with which I regard your present noble efforts. May Heaven bless you, and reward you with the consciousness of being the greatest benefactor of your own or perhaps of any age!

By return of post Sir Robert Peel replied.

To Miss Martineau.

Whitehall: Feb. 23, 1846.

I have had the honour of receiving a letter from you which demands my prompt acknowledgment, as well from the personal character of the writer as from the benevolent motives which alone could have dictated the communication.

The time for any public notice of the transaction to which you refer has long passed away—such notice would be liable to great misconstruction, and could hardly be satisfactory to the feelings of Mr. Cobden; but above all it would imply misconduct on my part in having withheld for three years a reparation which ought to have been made without delay.

Now, until I heard of some personal attack made by Mr. Cobden upon me a few weeks since, I had not the slightest conception that he laboured under any such impression as that which I infer from your letter was the cause and, in his opinion, the justification of that attack.

As for my own impression of the intention and effect of that which passed at the time of the *amende* which I meant to make, and which I thought I had made, I beg to refer you to the accompanying extract from a letter to a friend of my own upon this subject. [See page 328.]

Miss Martineau, in reply, undertook 'to possess Mr. Cobden with Sir Robert Peel's view, that the *amende* was made and accepted years ago.' But public satisfaction was also made to Cobden's feelings. Mr. Disraeli having one day maliciously adduced the example of the Prime Minister as having 'accused an hon. member of abetting assassination,' Peel saw and seized the opportunity to repeat his former disavowal, and 'unequivocally

to withdraw an imputation which was thrown out in the heat of debate under an erroneous impression of the hon. member's meaning;' and in return Cobden, at last appeased, expressed regret for the terms in which he had spoken of Peel.

Nothing at this date is more remarkable in Sir Robert Peel's letters than the quiet dignity of his behaviour under personal provocations. His courtesy and kindness were the more admirable, as his temper was by nature warm, and might well have been roused to occasional impatience by the storm of undeserved reproach, the falling-off of friends like autumn leaves, the taunts of foes, the ingratitude of men whose real interests he wished to save from being ruined by their own selfish and short-sighted action.

The mere physical strain, month after month, by night and day, and for long hours in presence of adversaries on the watch for any weak point, was alone enough to break down self-control in any one whose natural feelings were less habitually restrained by reason, and by a single eye to furthering the great work he had taken in hand, determined not to fail.

A few extracts from letters exchanged with old supporters may be introduced by words recording the impression made on one who arranged them all for easy reference, the late Accountant-General of the Army.

Note by Sir John Milton.

Nothing can exceed the testimony which these letters bear to the amiability, uprightness, and magnanimity of Sir Robert Peel, in the manner in which he received, and bore with, and argued about, the numerous desertions of his followers, in the midst of his great difficulty and labour in carrying his commercial reforms. To compare the tone of these letters with the disgraceful virulence of his opponents is indeed instructive as to what constitutes a great statesman.

To Lord Exeter.

Jan. 24, 1846.

I well know that every act of yours is influenced by a high sense of honour and of public duty; and it is this

conviction on my part that makes me regret so sincerely the communication which I have received from you.

Captain Rous, M.P., to Sir Robert Peel.

Jan. 28, 1846.

If a victory on the Westminster hustings at this particular moment will be of service to H.M.'s Government, I shall be happy to accept a place in the Treasury, or in the Ordnance.

Feb. 18.—My defeat is painful, because I had calculated on the fine feelings of men who never possessed any chivalry where politics were concerned, but I am more annoyed at having unwittingly deceived you as to the result.

The Whigs, Rads, and Leaguers combined; the Tories were neuter, or canvassed against me. Westminster now belongs to the League; their money was spent freely.

D'Israeli in full dress uniform, Lord John Russell in simple toga, and a Leaguer in rags met and polled together. This is the key to the problem.

To Captain Rous.

(*Private.*) Feb. 19, 1846.

I presumed that such contingencies as those to which you refer—the combinations of opposite parties against you—had been duly considered.

They were not improbable events, and if I had not thought your success was considered certain under any circumstances, I certainly would not have advised a vacancy in the representation of Westminster.

To Mr. Milnes Gaskell.

Jan. 29, 1846.

I deeply regret that a sense of public duty compels you to resign your seat at the Board of Treasury.

You have done all you could to mitigate the pain which this interruption of official relations necessarily causes by

the expressions of general confidence and esteem with which you accompany the relinquishment of office.

Each of us has acted from a consideration of public interests, and I trust that the severance of official ties will cause no abatement of reciprocal friendship and regard.

To Lord Granby.

Jan. 29, 1846.

I cannot receive without deep regret the communication which you have made to me. It is prompted by motives and feelings which are highly honourable.

To Lord Hardwicke.

Jan. 23, 1846.

If anything could tend to diminish the pain with which I contemplate separation from you in public life, it would be the kind terms with which you accompany your tender of resignation.

From Mr. Sturt, M.P.

Jan. 29, 1846.

I differ so much with all my constituents that I feel bound to resign my seat. I have been a quiet yet steady supporter of your policy, and am grateful to you for the labour you undergo. My criticism on your present measure shall be very gentle—whether it might not have been managed without stranding others and myself. But let this pass.

To Mr. Sturt.

Jan. 30, 1846.

Is it quite right to abandon your seat? Many members have felt inclined on the first impulse to do so, but have wisely, I think, taken time for consideration.

Could I avoid decision on the Corn Laws during the present Session?

We shall have to vote money for the sustenance of the poor in Ireland. We have on their way from the United States many cargoes of Indian corn, ordered by the Government in consequence of the coming pressure. There will

be fever—there is fever—the consequence of bad and deficient food.

When Mr. Villiers should give notice of his motion 'to consider' the Corn Laws, what was I to do? Was I to refuse consideration, even for the admission of maize? Was I to take up the position that the present protection to agriculture shall be maintained intact? Surely that would be committing the aristocracy to a fearful struggle.

It appeared to me that to refuse any modification of the Corn Laws in the state of things which Ireland *will present* before July next, would be to subject the landed proprietors of this country to great odium; that to assume the position of eternal fidelity to the present Corn Law would be full of danger; to hold vague equivocal language about present maintenance of that law, but future change at some indefinite period, would be unjust to every interest; that to tinker the present law in some slight particulars would be a paltry policy, satisfactory to nobody. There remained in my opinion but one course open, to settle the question, or lay the foundation for its settlement by others.

It would be most painful to me to think that there was a course open to me by which I could, with a due regard to the public welfare, have spared such men as you—such truly honourable and high-minded supporters—the embarrassment to which many are now subject. But turn in your mind that which I have written, very hastily and very imperfectly, and let me hope that I may remove some part of the impressions which have induced you to administer a rebuke so mild and gentle as to make it a kind and friendly rather than a harsh communication.

To the Hon. W. Gordon.

Jan. 30, 1846.

I cannot think it possible that your constituents will after mature reflection disapprove of my measures. Will you not wait until you can hear from Aberdeenshire? The opinions of the intelligent farmers will be ten times more valuable that those of party politicians here.

To the Right Hon. William Peel.

Jan. 31, 1846.

We are in a great turmoil here about resignations. Many are convinced, who talk of resigning their seats. They feel that they cannot conscientiously vote against me, yet are inclined either to give up Parliament, or to pass through the ordeal of re-election.

Lord Ashley asks for the Chiltern Hundreds; Sturt is inclined to do so; Dawnay has taken them. Jocelyn and Lord Arthur Lennox are forced out of Parliament against their will.

Lord Henniker also (afterwards Lord Hartismere) having been elected as a Protectionist, and having with Sir Robert Peel become convinced of the necessity of repealing the Corn Laws, with four others honourably resigned his seat, but on a requisition from his supporters stood again, and was triumphantly returned for East Suffolk as a Free Trader.

To the Hon. F. Charteris (now Earl of Wemyss).

Feb. 13, 1846.

I deeply regret that any act of mine should have led to the necessity of vacating your seat. But I know you will be repaid for such a sacrifice, by the consciousness that you have acted a manly and honourable part, that you have reconciled the fulfilment of that duty which conviction imposes with the scrupulous regard to every obligation by which past declarations and professions may have fettered you.

To Sir Howard Douglas, M.P.

Feb. 1, 1846.

I have great doubts as to the propriety on constitutional grounds of vacating a seat by a voluntary act of the holder of it. I should think, however, from all I hear from Liverpool, that your constituents would entreat you to remain, and to exercise your free judgment from a review of present circumstances, unfettered by past declarations of opinion.

To Mr. Round, M.P.

Feb. 11, 1846.

I assure you that it is much more satisfactory to me that you should obey the dictates of your own conscientious conviction than give a vote in favour of the measures which I have proposed, at variance with your own judgment and sense of honour.

To an inquiry from the Queen 'whether Sir Robert Peel thought Cobden's public letter advocating immediate repeal to be of real importance,' he replies (Feb. 1) that 'he does not attach much importance to the letter; for he thinks that Cobden and those who generally act with him would rather accept the measure proposed by Sir Robert Peel than endanger their success in the Lords by pressing their own opinions.'

On Feb. 4 the Queen inspires her Minister with courage by the gracious remark that 'she is sure that Sir Robert will be rewarded in the end by the gratitude of the country. This will make up for the abuse he has to endure from so many of his party.'

On the same day Sir Robert Peel writes on the question of sending Lord Lincoln as Chief Secretary to Ireland. 'The great difficulty is his return for the county of Nottingham. If that return could be carried in defiance of the Duke of Newcastle, and of that sort of dictation to members of the House of Commons which is proceeding to very dangerous lengths, it would be a great triumph not only to your Majesty's servants, but to the constitutional freedom of election.

'The risk is great, but there are times when it is politic to incur great risks. The advantage of success would greatly overbalance the risk of failure. To gain a great agricultural county by a member of the Government at the present time would be an immense advantage, and a most useful lesson to certain peers.'

Her Majesty in reply encouraged the enterprise, but unfortunately the Duke of Newcastle had power enough to turn out of the House of Commons two Cabinet Ministers, his son Lord Lincoln, and his son's friend Mr. Gladstone. Lord Lincoln, after three months, found a seat in Scotland; Mr. Gladstone remained without one.

The Queen was most anxious to see both these Ministers in the House again, to support their labouring chief.

Feb. 11.—The Queen returns Lord Lincoln's letter with many thanks. He still writes in good heart, which is a great thing.

Sir Robert Peel can imagine how very anxious the Queen is that all should go off well, not only at the present moment, but for the remainder of the Session.

She says but little, but her anxiety is very great, though she is very sanguine. Sir Robert Peel has the confidence of the country, and she need not add that he has hers, as he knows that well enough.

Whitehall: Feb. 11, 1846.

Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty, returns his grateful acknowledgments to your Majesty for your Majesty's very kind note.

The implicit trust he has in your Majesty's confidence, and favourable construction of his motives and actions, is a source of the greatest satisfaction and encouragement to him.

He believes the country generally, as distinguished from mere party, is in favour of the measures proposed. It is thought that 197 of the Conservative members will vote against them, and not more than 123 for them. This is of course a very heavy blow to the Government. It will be very important to have a good majority, one of a hundred, in the Commons, in order that the Peers may not be encouraged to resistance.

The following letters relate to Sir Robert Peel's speech on the second reading of the Corn Bill.

From Prince Albert.

Feb. 17, 1846.

Allow me to tell with how much delight I have read your long speech of yesterday. It cannot fail to produce a great effect, even upon a party which is determined not to listen to the voice of reason.

From the Queen.

Buckingham Palace: Wednesday [Feb. 18, 1846].

The Queen must write a line to Sir Robert Peel to say how much she admired his speech.

Feb. 19.—The Queen has received this letter, which she thinks will please Sir Robert.

From the Queen-Dowager to the Queen.

Witley Court: Feb. 18, 1846.

My dearest Niece,—Sir Robert Peel's admirable speech has convinced and satisfied me entirely. Although I trusted to him, and was sure that he must be right, I could not comprehend the necessity of the great changes. But this speech has explained all so clearly that I have no longer a doubt on the subject, and feel quite happy by the conviction that his foresight has been great indeed.

May he be rewarded, and may he be supported, and maintained in his present position, for the good of the country, is my anxious prayer.

From Mr. Moffatt, M.P.

Feb. 17, 1846, 3 A.M.

I can't sleep before expressing my delight at your speech this evening. I never before perfectly understood the effect of eloquence. For the last two hours I have been scarcely able to realise this mental masterpiece. The strict truth of the premises, the logical accuracy of the conclusions, and the comprehensive character of the whole, render it an address not to be forgotten. That speech has landed the measure, and will retain you at the head of the great party at present disunited.

From Sir Thomas Lethbridge.

Feb. 18, 1846.

There is not a man of any feeling, gratitude, or reflection who should not hasten to cast in his mite of praise, for the

noble, manly, and statesmanlike conduct which you have shown, under the severe trials to which you have been put since last autumn. Humble and retired as I am, I therefore offer you my heartfelt gratitude and admiration.

Those who have condemned you in harsh and illiberal terms must now feel the extent of their own discomfiture and degradation.

From Lord Heytesbury.

Dublin Castle: Feb. 19, 1846.

I have been watching with the highest admiration the bold front you have presented to the cruel warfare waged against you. But your speech of Monday last will, I trust, have the effect of putting an end to much of the senseless clamour, and bring back at least a part of your old supporters.

From Mr. Bulwer.

Madrid: Feb. 25, 1846.

Every one tells me that your last speech was the best they have ever heard in Parliament.

For myself, I have always considered the Corn Laws a question of time. Their permanent duration was impossible.

It did well enough for me, or others like me without office or high political position, to vote for a theory which was considered good, even when it was not practicable to carry it out; but it is absurd not to see, and unjust not to confess, that the case in all such matters is quite different with those who from the estimation in which they stand, and the responsibility with which they are invested, are the guardians of Government and tranquillity, and hardly justified in advocating a maxim until the time has arrived for making it a reality.

From Mr. E. H. Bunbury.

Naples: Feb. 25, 1846.

I cannot resist the desire of expressing to yourself the great pleasure I have felt in observing, from this loophole

of retreat, the course of your Government, and in appreciating the wisdom by which it has been marked.

If my age, or rather my strength, had allowed me to remain in the House of Commons, it would have been a very grateful duty to have sealed my opinions by my vote.

As to your present plan, I have felt it my duty, as the owner of some twelve or fourteen thousand acres of land, to desire my agents in Suffolk and Cheshire to declare my entire concurrence in the measure, and to endeavour to open the eyes of my neighbours.

Feb. 28.—Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty to your Majesty, encloses an analysis of the division of last night [Corn Bill, second reading], which will be interesting to your Majesty and the Prince.

It is not a very satisfactory document. It shows the relative strength of parties voting to have been—Government, 112; Whigs and Radicals, 227; Protectionists, 231; Whig Protectionists, 11.

Sir Robert Peel, in order to make the communication complete, adds the names of the absentees.

From the Queen.

Osborne: Feb. 28, 1846.

The Queen was agreeably surprised to receive Sir Robert Peel's box at ten this morning, and truly rejoiced that this tiresomely long debate is over.

The division is a very good one, though three more would have looked better, but ninety-seven is in fact a hundred.

We are very thankful for the copies of Sir Robert's beautiful speech.

From Prince Albert.

Osborne: March 1, 1846.

We have read with great interest the analysis of the division. There appear certain supporters of the Government, only 112 out of 658 members of the House.

This does not look like a strong Government. But this

division has arisen from circumstances which can hardly reappear, and there is a moral strength in the Government which must tell more every day.

Mr. Cobden's speech, which we read with much attention, and which was certainly a very able one, points to that very strongly; and I hope that the constituencies will soon begin to influence their members, who seem less open to reason than the mass of the people.

Your position is an anxious one, but you have passed the worst day, I hope, and your followers will soon increase.

From the Queen.

Osborne: March 4, 1846.

The proceedings of each night are of the greatest interest to us.

March 5.—Where *is* a seat to be found for Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Lincoln?

March 5, 1846.

Sir Robert Peel does not despair of some early opening for the return of Lord Lincoln and Mr. Gladstone. Their absence is very inconvenient, but no minor considerations will induce Sir Robert Peel, supported as he is by your Majesty's kind favour and confidence, to relax his efforts to bring the great question which is agitating the public mind (or rather which would agitate it but for confidence in ultimate success) to a satisfactory issue.

April 2.—The Queen is delighted that everything went off so well, and as it ought, in both Houses on the vote of thanks. But it is too absurd—indeed indecorous—that Sir Robert Inglis should think that he is the representative of Providence.

April 3.—Your Majesty's observations on Sir Robert Inglis's very unnecessary interference are most just. It was on the present occasion quite uncalled for, as there was in each resolution of thanks a general reference to Divine Providence.

Considering the sanguinary nature of great battles, and that (however just the cause) many forfeit their lives

through no fault of their own, too direct a reference to the special intervention of Almighty God is not very seemly.

When Lord Jocelyn brought the resolutions to Sir Robert Peel, he altered them in this sense. As they were originally drawn, they almost made it appear that the fire of artillery on the confused mass of Sikhs, after they had been driven into the Sutlej, had been directed by Divine Providence, and was an agreeable sight to a merciful Creator.

On the 'Assassination Bill' Sir Robert Peel writes:

April 4.—Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty, and in compliance with your Majesty's wishes gives the best opinion he can as to the course pursued on the Irish Bill by Lord John Russell.

As it is Lord John Russell's apparent intention to vote for the first and second reading of the Irish Bill, he wishes to conciliate the feelings of the powerful Irish party opposed to the Bill, by general declarations in favour of Liberal policy towards Ireland.

He will thus retain their confidence and support, notwithstanding his support of the Bill in its first two stages. He will then unite with them in Committee on the Bill, and will attempt, supported by the whole Whig party, acting in concert with the Irish members, to make material alterations in the Bill.

During the critical month of April, Sir Robert Peel was kept informed as to the mind of Lord John Russell by his brother the Duke of Bedford.

Lord John was in trouble about the Irish Protection of Life Bill; great efforts had been made to induce him not to support it; but his absence from the debates was owing to an illness of Lady John; and, when a division should take place, he would come up from Scotland to vote for the Bill. The Whigs did not approve of Lord George Bentinck's false step of uniting with Irish Repealers.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Apsley House: April 5, 1846.

The Duke of Bedford told me that Lord John did not well know how to manage 'The Irish Coercion Bill,' as they call it. [His difficulty was that all the Whig Lords supported it; whereas in the Commons it was objected to by many of the Whigs, and to a man opposed by the Irish members.] For this reason, and in order to conciliate the Irish, it was Lord John's intention to move certain resolutions and amendments, hoping that thereby the hostility would be appeased.

I was not prepared to hear that the great majority of the Whigs (as he distinctly told me) did not at all fancy the total repeal of the Corn Laws, and thought it should be accompanied by large compensation to the agricultural interest, which the Duke of Bedford says had been intended, if the Whigs had been in power. Lord John's letter to his constituents had created great anger among the Whigs, though some signified their approbation.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

April 6, 1846.

I think the chief difficulty in the way of the Whigs forming a Government is, that Lord John Russell has not shown himself equal to the emergency. He seems to have little control over either his party or those who must be his colleagues.

From Sir James Graham.

April 6, 1846.

I return Arbuthnot's letter. The information which it contains is, I have no doubt, substantially correct; but we shall carry the Corn Law Repeal in spite of lukewarm support from the Whigs, and of hot opposition from the Protectionists.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Confidential.*) Apsley House: April 22, 1846.

The Duke of Bedford came to me this morning.

Lord George Bentinck had told him it was his most anxious desire to turn out the Government, which he was confident he could do if he were sure of the support of the Whigs. In that case he would move want of confidence, which would be carried in case Lord John Russell would join with him. Lord George said he was certain of carrying with him a very large portion of Protectionists, were this to be done soon, but that he could not answer for what might happen a month hence.

The Duke added that Lord John would do the same as Mr. Pitt did in the case of Mr. Addington—move the previous question.

He said his brother would never rely on the Irish, or on the Radicals; and therefore, were he the Minister, there could be no hope of a majority, unless he were greatly supported either by your friends or by the Protectionists.

The Duke also told me that, should a Whig Government be formed, Lord Grey was not to be a member of it, for which he was quite prepared.

I have better hopes of the duration of your Government since the Duke of Bedford has talked to me.

In the first place Lord John would not, the Duke assured me, go further than move the previous question, and this does not satisfy Lord George Bentinck; and again, should sufficient time be given, many who oppose the measures of Government would reunite themselves to it; and this makes Lord George Bentinck eager not to delay his motion.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

May 2, 1846.

The Duke of Bedford called on me yesterday. He was evidently anxious that I should inform you of the cause which had prevented his brother Lord John from attending

the debates on the Coercion Bill. On account of Lady John's serious illness he had gone to her in Scotland. The Duke added that Lord John had been informed daily whether a division was to take place, and that he had resolved to come up and vote *for* the Bill.

Great efforts had been made to persuade him not to support the Bill.

From the Duke's anxiety to have you informed of this, and from his general conversation, it struck me that he had hoped for your support should the Government be changed. It is quite evident that they do not think they have numbers enough to hold a Government unless they have other support; and since Lord G. Bentinck's false step of uniting with Irish Repealers, they consider the Protectionists as a disunited party.

On the third reading of the Corn Bill (May 15) Mr. Disraeli made an elaborate onslaught on his late leader. Amid frantic party cheers, he satirised him as one who by the very law of his being was always changing old opinions for new. 'For forty years he had traded on the ideas and intelligence of others. His life had been one vast Appropriation Clause.' From the days of the Conqueror there was no statesman who had committed political petty larceny on so great a scale. Yet he had told the House he did not feel humiliated! It was impossible to know what were the feelings of others. Feeling depended upon temperament, upon the organisation of the animal that feels.'

Other speakers followed, and it was long past midnight when Sir Robert Peel rose to bring the long discussions on the Corn Bill, which had lasted nearly three months, to a close. On such an occasion to bandy personalities, he felt, would be an insult to the House. 'Of the hon. member for Shrewsbury,' he added, 'I will only say, that if—after reviewing the whole of my public life previously to my accession to office in 1841—if he then entertained the opinion of me which he now professes, it is surprising that he should have been ready, as I think he was, to unite his fortunes with mine in office, implying the strongest proof which any public man can give of confidence in the honour and integrity of a Minister of the Crown.'

The Minister passed on to a long and able vindication of his policy. When he sat down, Mr. Disraeli rose again, and denied that he had given any such proof of confidence.

'I can assure the House,' he said, 'that nothing of the kind occurred. I can say that I never asked a favour of the Government, not even one of those mechanical things which persons are obliged to ask. With respect to my being a solicitor for office, it is entirely unfounded.'

Had he forgotten his letter written in September 1841?

Sir Robert Peel might have referred to it pointedly, but did not. Significantly passing by the assurance to the House that 'nothing of the kind occurred,' he was content to repeat his comment.

'If the hon. gentleman really believed that I deserved the character he gave of me to-night, then it was not right that in 1841 he should have intimated to me that he was not unwilling to give the proof of confidence that would have been implied by the acceptance of office.'

The letter was kept private so long as the writer of it lived, and its existence has been known to few. It is published now only to remove a doubt which has too long prevailed, whether Sir Robert Peel (who left a character for strict regard to truth) on this occasion said more, or less, than he could prove.

That day, hearing that the Bill had passed the Commons by a majority of 98, her Majesty writes:

Buckingham Palace: May 16, 1846.

The Queen must begin her note by our warm congratulations on the excellent division of last night, which must have its effect on the Protectionists.

All these events must encourage Sir Robert Peel in his very hard task—no doubt often most disagreeable; but Sir Robert must not be discouraged. He possesses the confidence of the country, and he knows well how much he possesses ours.

On May 28 the Corn Bill passed its second reading in the Lords by a majority of 211 to 164; and Sir Robert Peel gave notice that, after a short recess, the Government would proceed with the Bill for Protection of Life in Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII.

JUNE 1846.

Organised Revenge—'Boldness and Dexterity'—Protection of Life in Ireland—Conversion of Lord George Bentinck, Lord John Russell, and their Followers—Advice of Charles Villiers—Of Wellington—Of Brougham—False Charge by Lord George Bentinck—Revived by Disraeli—'Abominable Combination'—Wellington's 'Blood up'—Peel's Forecast—Wellington's Comments—Victory on the Corn and Tariff Bills—Defeat on Ireland—Advice from Cobden and Brougham—Tribute to Cobden—European Opinion—Arthur Stanley—Croker—Carlyle.

RESISTANCE to the Corn Bill having failed, it remained to organise revenge. With whom could aggrieved Protectionists combine?

It was no easy problem. How it was solved has been set forth by one who not obscurely claims to have shown the way.

'How was Sir Robert Peel to be turned out? Here was a question that might well occupy the musing hours of a Whitsun recess.

'It was submitted to the consideration of Lord George Bentinck that there appeared only one course to be taken, and which though beset with difficulties was, with boldness and dexterity, at least susceptible of success.

'The Government had announced their intention of moving the second reading of the Irish Coercion Bill. If this second reading were opposed by both Lord John Russell and Lord George Bentinck, the defeat of the Administration seemed more than probable.

'The first great difficulty to be considered in this project was that produced by the fact that both Lord John Russell and Lord George Bentinck had hitherto supported the measure.'[1]

In April, Lord John Russell (according to his brother) had resolved to vote for the Bill; and Lord George Bentinck, by his speeches, was committed to it deeply.

[1] *Lord George Bentinck.* B. Disraeli.

These leaders were able to turn round and oppose the Bill, each 'on grounds satisfactory to himself.' Lord George Bentinck's reason was candid. 'We refuse to trust her Majesty's Ministers.' Lord John Russell's was a paradox. 'To allow the measure to pass would be injurious to Ireland, and to the protection of life.'

But to explain the change of front to Tory gentlemen—to prove to them that it was honourable, or necessary, to side with agitators against the Irish Government, was difficult, and might not have seemed possible, but for one determined will.

'They were embarrassed by their previous vote, and were astonished to learn that if they repeated it, the Government was in for ever. Lord George held a rapid council with such of his friends as he could immediately collect. *Only one voice* supported him, on the ground that the step was not only wise, but indispensable.'

To that one abettor Lord George spoke his mind.

'It may be perilous, but if we lose this chance, the traitor will escape. I will make the plunge, and as soon as I can. There is a rumour that Lord John is hardly up to the mark. I suppose he has heard that our men will not vote against the Bill. Now, if I speak early and strongly, it will encourage him to be decided.'

Lord George did speak early, and 'strongly,' exhorting his party to 'kick out the Bill and her Majesty's Ministers with it.'

The debate was adjourned, and his biographer resumes:

'Three days had to elapse before the struggle could be continued, and they were days teeming with intrigue, with calculation, combinations, and canvassing.

'There was a very lively recollection among the Tory party generally of the evil effects which accrued in 1830 from their former punishment of Sir Robert Peel. Old gentlemen at clubs shook their heads, remembering the family boroughs that they had lost by avenging the betrayed Protestantism of 1829. And why should Lord John be brought in? Was not he as bad as Sir Robert Peel? Rather worse.'

Such were the misgivings of some whose votes were wanted. But 'with boldness and dexterity' their qualms were soothed, their scruples overcome.

The Whigs were not so squeamish.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Apsley House: June 7, 1846.

It was decided at Lord John Russell's to move the reading of the Coercion Bill that day six months.

There was a long discussion who should be the person to move it. The Irish members were very shy of doing so, and at last it was decided that it should be moved by Lord John himself.

O'Connell made a very long speech, laudatory of Lord John Russell, and said he was only too proud of serving under such a leader.

(*Enclosure.*)

Lady Westmorland to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Sunday morning [June 7, 1846].

The Whigs decided unanimously to oppose the Coercion Bill, and as they are assured of the co-operation of the Protectionists, 'they reckon Peel as good as out.'

I think it is the basest combination one ever heard of.

Meanwhile Sir Robert Peel's chief care was that his Free Trade Bills should pass the Lords.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Confidential.*) June 8, 1846.

The point on which I am far more anxious than on any other is the safety of the Corn Bill and the Tariff Bill. I see nothing but confusion from their failure.

I have done everything in my power to ensure personal attendance.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

June 8, 1846.

I am sure, from what I have heard, that the determination of Lord Russell now to oppose the Coercion Bill is not admired by many of the Whigs.

The Duke of Wellington would have advised you to let it be known in the debate that you would not submit to a defeat. By resignation, or by a dissolution, you would

throw the Whigs, who are behaving atrociously, into a great dilemma.

While Wellington thus advised a firm stand on 'the Assassination Bill,' the Anti-Corn-Law leader felt sure that Peel, and Peel alone, could carry the Corn Bill.

The Duchess of Northumberland to Mr. Arbuthnot.

June 8, 1846.

Charles Villiers, the Leaguer, says that he is competent to form an accurate opinion of the state of feelings in the country; that he knows it is now entirely in favour of Sir Robert Peel. He says he will answer for it that the towns would return 'Peelites,' that Peel has the whole City heartily with him, so much so that upon the slightest intimation a requisition would be got up, with thousands of signatures, to ask him to oppose Lord John as the City member, and that Jones Loyd[2] is ready to propose him.

He says no other Minister but Sir Robert Peel could have carried the repeal of the Corn Laws; that half the commercial men in the City would have been against it, had it been attempted by Lord John or anyone else; but their confidence in Sir Robert Peel's knowledge and sagacity is such that they say—'Upon a question where so much is said on both sides, upon which our own minds are not made up, we feel that the safest course is to trust to him who has proved himself the greatest financier of the day.'

He says 'Sir James Graham is an admirable coadjutor of Peel's, for the business of the House of Commons. See how those two men do their business, and understand it! Now Lord John has no one to give him any assistance, and is incapable of doing the business himself. The country sees and knows this, and notwithstanding the cry of the newspapers, and the abuse of the gentlemen of the West End, the country *will* have Peel, and no one else, and his popularity has been greatly increased by the manner in which he has been assailed.'

[2] Jones Loyd (Lord Overstone) had in 1841 proposed Lord John Russell.

From the Duke of Wellington.

June 8, 1846.

I hear that the plot thickens around you, that the Protectionists and Whigs have joined to throw out the Irish Assassination Bill, with the sole view of putting an end to your Administration.

I advise you to strike the first blow, and to strike it on the ground of the vote on Tuesday [altering a Money Bill] in the House of Lords. You will then stand on the strong ground of the Privilege of the House of Commons. Propose this night a new Bill, to provide for the families of Lord Hardinge and Lord Gough, and declare your intention of resigning the Government if that Bill should not pass through both Houses.

You will find both Whigs and Protectionists as quiet as mice upon that measure. You will certainly carry it in the House of Commons, and I think I can engage to carry it in the House of Lords.

This bold step will certainly carry for you the Corn Bill, and probably the Assassination Bill. But if I was in your position, I would not allow this blackguard combination to break up the Government.

I would prefer to dissolve the Parliament. You would then take the bull by the horns, and if your Government is to fall, it will at least fall with honour.

With tact Sir Robert Peel replied:

June 9, 1846.

I was very much obliged by your note of yesterday, as I am by all your communications. I feel that your opinion is valuable, and deserves the most mature consideration.

It was not possible for me consistently with the forms of our House to act on your suggestions respecting Lord Hardinge's Bill yesterday. I could not bring in a new Bill without notice. There is therefore time to consider our course, as the House does not meet to-day.

I will ask you in the meanwhile to reconsider your

suggestion as to my publicly announcing that the Government would resign on failing to carry Lord Hardinge's Annuity Bill.

Considering the vast importance of other pending questions, the Corn and the Irish Bill for example, would it not create surprise that we should make the fate of the Government dependent on the success or the failure of a measure of such comparatively small importance?

Menaces of resignation if the Houses of Parliament do not adopt certain measures are very unpalatable, and I think they should be reserved for very rare and very important occasions. In general I think it is the best policy to avoid them.

The Commons will reject a Money Bill altered by the Lords. When the Lords alter a Money Bill they do it with the foreknowledge that it is tantamount to a rejection.

But I doubt whether we could safely fight a battle against the Lords on the ground that alteration of a Money Bill by the Lords was *unconstitutional*. I rather think the Commons, whenever a conference takes place with the Lords in consequence of an altered Money Bill, avoid denial of the power of the Lords, though they refuse to acquiesce in the alteration.

A threat of resignation on the Annuity Bill would hamper the consideration of the course which the Government ought to pursue in the event of defeat on the Corn Bill and the Irish Bill. But what I chiefly fear is that public attention is so absorbed by those Bills, that to risk the fate of the Government avowedly on the Annuity Bill would not be satisfactory.

I have such confidence in your judgment that it is with distrust in my own that I come to a different conclusion from you. The difference of the Assemblies with which we have to deal is I believe the main cause of any diversity of views.

Lord Brougham advised withdrawal of the Protection of Life Bill, but on this Sir Robert Peel stood firm.

To Lord Brougham.

June 9, 1846.

In justice to the House of Lords, to our own convictions, to the importance of the measure itself, and to the general character of the Government, it would have been impossible, in my opinion, to withdraw the Irish Bill.

The best ground for withdrawal would have been such a *bona-fide* improvement in the state of Ireland as to justify the hope that the ordinary law was sufficient. But this is not the case; and the withdrawal of the Bill would be in truth a sacrifice of public interests to the necessities of the Government.

Factious combinations may prevent the passing of the Bill; but these are less evils than the abandonment of a measure passed on our representation of its urgency, with the general consent of the Lords.

The rejection of the Life and Property Bill was moved, not by Lord John Russell, but by Sir William Somerville, 'with considerable reluctance.' He was followed by Lord George Bentinck, whose conversion was explained by Mr. Sidney Herbert.

'The noble lord, who says there has been no cause whatever for any interference in Ireland as regards the food of the people, has now found out that there is no cause for interference to protect life and property.

'The noble lord said that the blood of murdered men must rest upon the head of any man who delayed the passing of this Bill one day. Upon whose head is the blood of murdered men to be now?

'Suddenly, upon no fresh information, you turn round and say, What we told you was crime before God and man, that course we can now adopt, it is for the benefit of the country!

'*Now*; because there are other reasons; not that we love Ireland less, but that we hate more the men who at present hold the reins.

'The people of this country will judge. They know the opinion which the noble lord expressed, and the strong terms in which he hurled defiance at that party with whom now he is leagued.'

It was in this debate that Lord George Bentinck made the charge against Sir Robert Peel that he 'chased and hunted Canning to death,' and that he 'stood convicted by his own verdict of base and dishonest conduct; having stated in 1827 that he could not support Canning's Ministry on account of Catholic Emancipation, whereas in 1829 he told the House that he had changed his opinions on that subject in 1825, and had communicated that change of opinion to the Earl of Liverpool.' A week later this false charge was renewed by Mr. Disraeli.

Sir Robert Peel's private letters in 1825 (published in a former volume) show plainly that to say he had then changed his mind on Roman Catholic Relief was the exact opposite of the truth. On the contrary, the House of Commons having given a majority for the Catholics, he had thereupon tendered his resignation as Home Secretary, and had with difficulty been persuaded by Lord Bathurst and others to remain a while, on the ground that otherwise Lord Liverpool also must retire, and his Government must fall. It has also been admitted by the chief supporter of the charge that it was 'without real foundation,' but served a purpose.

'Had it not been for the Canning episode, it is difficult to see how the evenings devoted to the adjournment debate on the Coercion Bill could have been filled up,' so as to postpone the fatal blow until the Corn Bill (as the Whigs required) should first become law.

It is needless, therefore, to trouble the reader with the evidence, which is ample, that the agreement, on which Mr. Disraeli dwelt, between reports in the 'Mirror of Parliament' and in the 'Times' (both differing from Hansard's), was caused by the one having been made up from the other.

A few letters may show how the charge and the defence were regarded when first made.

From Lord Francis Egerton.

June 10, 1846.

I send you a note indicative of the impression made on rational men by Lord George's speech. I was sitting by a Whig *gentleman* at the time, and my own disgust was more than equalled.

Enclosure from Mr. James Loch.

June 9, 1846.

I hear that there never was anything so bad as Lord George's speech last night. I heard two Protectionists say so.

From Lord Dunsandle.

Friday night [June 12, 1846].

I cannot tell you how thoroughly delighted I was in hearing your speech this evening. You cannot fancy I for a moment doubted the fact, having been in the House present at the debates in 1827 and 1829. But I did fear you might not have been able to make and prove the triumphant statement you did.

I almost love the Whigs, they were so honest, may I say cordial? As to Disraeli . . . Lord George is not better.

From Lord Brougham.

Saturday [June 13, 1846].

A thousand sincere and hearty congratulations. A. Eden, my brother-in-law, heard you, and gives me the most extraordinary account of your success—I mean of the universal effect of your speech, both on the question itself and in destroying whatever of G. B.'s attack, and self, he had not himself destroyed. The feeling, A. E. says, is universal, and extends over the Protectionists themselves.

In the Lords, I believe Stanley received a lesson which he will not soon forget—how he lets cheers of friends intoxicate him and turn his head!

To Lord Brougham.

June 13, 1846.

Many thanks for the kind interest you take in what concerns me so intimately.

Stanley swallows 'a fact' too easily. There seem to me very few facts, at least ascertainable facts, in politics.

He is not wise in intermeddling with the doctrines of political economy.

From Mr. Edmund Peel.

Bonehill House: June 23, 1846.

Should anything more be said by Lord George Bentinck, will you allow me to tell him that I am in possession of a letter which you wrote to me in 1827, which would satisfy any person possessed of reason and common sense, that there is not the slightest foundation for accusing you of having changed your opinion on the Catholic question in 1825?

I know Lord George well. He is a most persevering man, but sadly too credulous, and would work as hard on a bad scent as on a good one.

If Lord George behaved right, he ought to get up in the House of Commons and publicly express his regret for having made an accusation which he could in no degree substantiate.

To Mr. Edmund Peel.

Whitehall: June 25.

I will ask you not to make any communication whatever under any circumstances to Lord George Bentinck respecting the subject of recent discussions.

You may depend upon it, he is too blinded with rage to see the force of any evidence, and, besides that, I have even stronger than that which my letter to you affords.

As regards the true relations between Peel, Lord Liverpool, and Canning, the following letters are of interest.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

June 16, 1846.

I was for many years in the strictest and most unreserved intimacy with the late Lord Liverpool. I believe that there was scarcely anything of a public, and I might add of a private, nature that he did not communicate to me.

In 1827, very shortly before that attack which deprived him of consciousness, he told me in confidence that at the termination of the Session he was determined to retire from

all public business. He said that not only quiet and retirement were requisite for his much shattered health, but that the time had arrived when he felt it was necessary to take into consideration the Catholic claims; that he was too old, and had taken too prominent a part in that controversy for him to be the mover of concession; and then he added that he had a still stronger reason for declining to be a party to the concession which was required.

He said that you, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, would continue to oppose concessions, to which you had uniformly most strongly and most perseveringly objected; and that without your aid the attempt to make such an arrangement would be hopeless. He foresaw that the time was approaching when the claims of the Catholics would not only be considered but granted also; and he knew well from the whole tenor of your conversations with him that you could not be prevailed upon to lend yourself to any concessions.

I have stated nothing but that of which I have a perfect knowledge. My proofs are convincing, I think, that your communications with Lord Liverpool had never led him to believe that you would join with him in concessions to the Catholics; but that, on the contrary, your opposition to their claims would be an insurmountable obstacle, were he inclined to consider and to concede them. Indeed the opposition which he would meet with from you was the main reason which he assigned, independently of the state of his health, for determining to retire from public life, when he had come to the conviction that the claims of the Catholics could not much longer be withheld.

From Mr. George Arbuthnot.

Downing Street: July 9, 1846.

Mr. Planta, you know, was much in Mr. Canning's confidence. Mr. Canning, during Lord Liverpool's Government, used to speak to him freely and with much bitterness of the opposition he met with from other members of the Government—it is unnecessary to repeat the names. But

he always excepted you, saying, 'With Peel my communications are perfectly satisfactory.' He continued to hold the same language after you had declined to join his Cabinet, and up to the time of his death.

I thought this testimony from an impartial witness might be satisfactory to you.

From Princess Lieven.

Paris: le 20 Juin 1846.

En lisant vos discussions à la Chambre basse, je me suis souvenu que j'avais pris dans le temps des notes sur la crise ministérielle de l'année 1827. J'ai retrouvé ces notes, et j'en ai extrait un passage qui vous regarde. Voilà ce que j'écrivais au commencement du mois de Mai 1827, opinion très peu suspecte. Je puisais mes renseignements soit à la Cour, soit auprès de M. Canning.

Je vous envoie cet extrait; j'ajoute qu'étant très intime alors avec M. Canning, je lui ai entendu répéter que c'est Lord Grey qui lui avait porté le coup le plus rude, dans son discours où il appelle M. Canning 'the most profligate Minister.' Canning a délibéré deux jours s'il ne devait pas demander la pairie, et gâter ainsi toute sa carrière, pour la simple satisfaction de répondre à Lord Grey.

Voilà des faits; je n'ai pu m'empêcher de vous soumettre tout cela. Je suis indignée de tout ce qu'on vous dit; je suis pleine d'admiration pour votre courage, et pleine des vœux les plus ardents pour votre succès et la durée de votre administration; et dans ces sentiments-là je me trouve en grande et nombreuse compagnie.

(Enclosure.)

M. Peel, outre son haut talent, jouissait d'une grande considération personnelle. Il était dans l'opinion publique le seul rival de M. Canning. Patron du parti Protestant, il avait pris dès le commencement de la crise une attitude distincte de celle de ses collègues du Cabinet.

Plus jeune qu'eux, ayant par conséquence une longue carrière publique à parcourir, il eut la prudence de sentir

qu'il ne devait pas la compromettre par une rivalité dont le succès était douteux. Il sentit que le premier poste appartenait à M. Canning, et ses principes sur la question religieuse l'empêchant de reconnaître pour chef un partisan de l'Emancipation Catholique, il comprit qu'une retraite volontaire était le rôle qui convenait le mieux à sa situation présente et à ses espérances futures. Il se tint donc préparé à sortir du Cabinet si M. Canning était nommé. Sa conduite fut franche.

Sir Robert Peel at this time in the House of Commons had lost much support. Hardinge was in India, Stanley in the Lords, hotly opposing the new policy, Gladstone and Lincoln were out of Parliament. Of the Tory party the majority were hostile to the Corn Bill, and others, from old pledges, had thought it necessary to resign. In the Upper House the Duke of Wellington, while loyal to the core, had made no secret of his own judgment on the Corn Laws being opposed to that of Sir Robert Peel. But Peel's high courage and tenacity of purpose in fighting his way with his two Bills through all his adversaries, Protectionist, Irish, Radical, and Whig combined, had stirred to generous warmth the temper of the old warrior his comrade.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Private.*) June 10, 1846.

On receiving your reply, the Duke was greatly pleased.

His blood is up. He is most anxious that you should defeat the abominable combination against you, and he feels that you will be able, if you hold high language, and if you resolve not to be overcome.

The vile and blackguard attack of Lord George Bentinck has done good. Everybody, save the most rabid portion of the Protectionists, is disgusted.

A dissolution as an extreme measure might be of essential use, for all men of business and of the moneyed interest deprecate a change of Government.

I must confidentially tell you that the way to make the Duke work heart and soul with you will be to impart to him what you think of doing.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Whitehall: June 13, 1846.

I am strongly inclined to think that the best plan in all such critical circumstances as the present, when the position of affairs, opinions, feelings, combinations are varying from day to day, is to avoid decision until the moment for it is arrived, and we have all the facts before us.

But of this rest assured, that I will come to no decision myself, still less take one in concert with anyone else, until I have seen the Duke and fully communicated with him on the state and prospect of affairs.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

June 19, 1846.

Lady de Grey had a breakfast yesterday at which Lady Lyndhurst was present and stated as follows: 'The whole is up, and Sir Robert Peel's resolution is taken to resign.'

This being said by the wife of the Chancellor created a great sensation. It was repeated to the Duke of Bedford, and by him Lord John Russell was informed of it. Of course by this time it will be all over the town.

You told me that you would communicate with the Duke before you came to any final resolution; I therefore let you know what Lady Lyndhurst has announced.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Secret.*) June 20, 1846.

I cannot of course be answerable for the follies of Lady Lyndhurst. I have had no communication direct or indirect with Lyndhurst, or any of his family, on the position of the Government.

Many people assert that which is untrue solely for the purpose of getting a short-lived notoriety. If the pretence of knowing Cabinet secrets made Lady Lyndhurst a lioness at a breakfast for three hours, that probably was sufficient fame for her. The exposure of her ignorance would probably not take place till after breakfast was over.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Apsley House: June 20, 1846.

This morning the Austrian Ambassador called on me and told me that he had just been with Lord Aberdeen, of whom he requested to know what would be written to Sir Robert Gordon, as it would distress him to give a different version to Prince Metternich.

Lord Aberdeen said that he could not speak positively, but that he was nearly certain you would retire, and that if you did retire it would not be for the purpose or with the wish of returning to office again by turning out your opponents.

As your approaching resignation is now so generally talked of, I should hope that the time is come when you could communicate with the Duke upon the subject.

He is very uncomfortable. He dreads the return of the Whigs to power, and he has now precisely the feelings which he had when he originally gave up his own opinions in order to maintain the Queen's Government and your Administration.

Next day Sir Robert Peel sent to the Duke his view of the whole position.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Monday, June 21, 1846.

The enclosed memorandum contains a statement of my general impressions with regard to the present position and prospects of the Government.

I have not communicated it to any of my colleagues, and shall abstain from doing so until after you have read it and I have had an opportunity of conferring with you upon it.

In the paper enclosed, Sir Robert Peel's clear foresight of defeat for any Government, not powerfully supported, if the regular Opposition chose to traffic with the Irish vote; his insight into the policy of Repealers, avowing their contempt for British interests and British public opinion, on purpose to disgust Great

Britain with the Union; and his view of the resources of obstruction, foreshadow later times.

For an Irish national demand supported by a British Opposition, dissolution was no remedy, unless the Government had at their back a loyal and united party.

(*Extracts from Enclosure. See Memoir.*)

A Government ought to have a natural support. A Conservative Government should be supported by a Conservative party.

Depend upon it, we shall not pass the Irish Bill into a law. We shall be defeated by concerted delay, if we cannot be defeated by numbers.

It may be said public indignation will coerce the Irish members into decent conduct, and into observance of the usages of debate.

Do not trust to this. There is an Irish party, a determined and not insignificant one, for which British indignation has no terrors. Their wish is to disgust England with Irish business and with Irish members, and to induce England, through sheer disgust, and the sense of public inconvenience from the obstructions offered to the progress of all other business in Parliament, to listen to a repeal of the Legislative Union for the purpose of purging the House of a set of troublesome and factious members, who equally obstruct legislation for Ireland and for Great Britain.

In my opinion the loss of the Irish Bill, by whatever means, will make the administration of Government in Ireland impossible by the present Executive.

The loss of it will be a signal triumph over that Executive, not merely of Repealers, but of the disturbers of the public peace and promoters of assassination throughout Ireland.

I think therefore we ought not to submit either to the rejection, or to the defeat by other means, of the Irish Bill.

There is an alternative, however; we might dissolve Parliament, instead of relinquishing office.

I am decidedly against dissolution on an Irish question, above all on such a question as a Coercion Bill.

Shall we dissolve on some other ground? Unsuccessful dissolutions are, generally speaking, injurious to the authority of the Crown. The dissolution of the Whigs in 1841 was, I think, an unjustifiable one. Dissolution now, if the result is likely to be the same, would be at least equally so.

On what ground shall we appeal to the country? We must appeal to it on some principle. The natural one seems to be 'Free Trade and the destruction of Protection.' If we are to succeed, we shall succeed by an unnatural combination with those who agree with us in nothing but the principles of Free Trade.

A short time only would pass before this combination would be dissolved, and we should be at the mercy of our new allies.

I offer these suggestions for the deliberate and dispassionate consideration of my colleagues, with a strong opinion on my own part that it will be for the credit of the existing Administration, for the permanent advantage of a really Conservative party, for the interests of the Crown and of the country, that we should not fall into the errors of the last Whig Government—retain office after we have lost power; or advise a dissolution with little prospect of securing a majority of members honestly and cordially agreeing with us in great political principles.

The Duke of Wellington's long and able answer is given in full in the Memoir. He writes:

London: June 21, 1846, at night.

If the Administration cannot carry . . . the Irish Assassination Bill, I entertain no doubt that it must retire from the service of her Majesty, or take steps in order to acquire such strength as to enable it to carry on the Queen's service in Parliament. . . .

I confess that I have no feeling upon the point on which the Parliament should be dissolved.

The question for the country will be in reality, whether you are to continue the Minister, or the Queen is to look for other servants!

Considering your services to the public, your restoration of the revenue and finances of the country, your regulation of the banking trade, your restoration of the manufacturing prosperity of the country, and your final settlement of the Corn Laws, there is no friend of yours who can hesitate in letting this question go to the public, notwithstanding the prejudice which has been excited by some, and exists in some quarters against you.

The question at the elections will be the support of your Administration. Many will oppose it whose support I wish you had. But I am very much mistaken if you should not be supported by a majority of the thinking men of the country.

I confess, however, that if it were necessary I should feel no objection to go to the country on the simple question of the Irish Assassination Act.

Sooner or later the people of England must be informed of what is really going forward in Ireland, and must make up their minds to govern it as people in a social state ought to be governed.

The Whigs in December, 1845 [when Lord John Russell undertook to form a Government], were to have had a Coercion Act; they voted in the House of Lords in January, 1846, for this very Assassination Bill which is now opposed with party views.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(*Secret.*) June 23, 1846.

(*Extracts.*)

If you have no objection, I will send the letter you were good enough to write to me on Sunday night in circulation with my memorandum.

I see no reasonable hope that a new Parliament to be elected now will pass a Coercion Bill.

From Ireland you will have a worse return than you have at present.

You will have no material alteration of parties, and in the new Parliament Whigs, Protectionists, and Free-traders will again unite against a Coercion Bill.

I feel that we have done what it was our duty to do.

The Memoir proceeds:

This memorandum, together with the Duke's letter, was communicated by me to the other members of the Government; and I do not recollect that there was the slightest difference of opinion as to the course which it would be our duty to pursue in the event of our failure to carry the Irish Bill.

All doubt on that head was speedily removed. On Friday, the 25th of June, in consequence of a concerted union between the Protectionists and Whig parties, for the purpose not only of defeating the Bill but displacing the Government, the Bill was rejected on the second reading by a majority of seventy-three.

On the Monday following it was announced in the two Houses of Parliament, by the Duke of Wellington and myself, that her Majesty had accepted the resignation which had been tendered to her Majesty by her official servants.

On June 23 Mr. Cobden had sent to Sir Robert Peel a long letter of advice, prefaced by a stipulation that the Minister, 'when he had perused it, should put it in the fire.'

His biographer remarks on this that some persons will be shocked that Peel did not respect the stipulation. He did not burn the letter, but promised secrecy. This promise he observed, and it was not till more than thirty years after his death that the letter, by request of Cobden's friends, was lent to Mr. Morley, in whose pages those who are not shocked may read it.

Sir Robert Peel wrote in reply:

To Mr. Cobden.

House of Commons: June 24, 1846.

(*Extracts.*)

If you were aware of the opinions I have been expressing during the last two years to my most intimate friends with regard to the purity of your motives, your intellectual

power, and ability to give effect to it by real eloquence, you would share in my surprise that all this time I was supposed to harbour some hostile personal feeling towards you. I need not give you the assurance that I shall regard your letter as a communication more purely confidential than if it had been written to me by some person united to me by the closest bonds of private friendship.

I do not think I mistake my position. I would have given every proof of fidelity to [the Corn Bill and Tariff Bill]. I would have instantly advised dissolution, if dissolution had been necessary to ensure their passing.

I do not agree with you as to the effect of my retirement from office, on a justifiable ground, after the passing of those measures.

Such a position as mine entails the severest sacrifices. The strain on the mental power is far too severe.

What must be my feelings when I retire from the House after eight or nine hours' attendance on frequently superfluous or frivolous debate, and feel conscious that all that time should have been devoted to such matters as our relations with the United States, our Indian policy, our political or commercial relations with the great members of the community of powerful nations?

You will believe if you reflect on these things that office and power may be anything but an object of ambition, and that I must be insane if I could have been induced by anything but a sense of public duty to undertake what I have undertaken during this Session.

But the world—the great and small vulgar—is not of this opinion. I am sorry to say they do not and cannot comprehend the motives which influence the best actions of public men. They think that public men change their course from corrupt motives, and their feeling is so predominant that the character of public men is injured, and their practical authority and influence impaired if in such a position as mine at the present moment any defeat be submitted to, which ought under ordinary circumstances to determine the fate of a Government.

If I am defeated on the Irish Bill, will it be possible to divest dissolution, following soon after that defeat, of the character of an appeal to Great Britain against Ireland on a question of Irish Coercion? I should deeply lament this.

I have written this during the progress of the debates. I may therefore have very imperfectly explained my views and feelings; but imperfect as the explanation may be, it will I hope suffice to convince you that I receive your communication in the spirit in which it was conceived.

It may be noted with how light a touch Sir Robert Peel handles one important subject. Cobden, in his ignorance of Peel's mind, had written, 'I assume, of course, that you would not think it necessary to stand or fall by the present Coercion Bill.' Peel stood by it, and Cobden's vote (given, no doubt, on grounds of duty) was one of those by which he fell.

Similar counsel against resignation was given by a would-be leader of the Conservative party in the Lords.

From Lord Brougham.

(*Secret and confidential.*) June 24, 1846.

God knows the urgent advice I give, against breaking up the Government and letting in the enemy, is in me purely disinterested. I gain every way by my friends walking across the House to the Opposition Bench. For I am heartily sick of possessing the irresponsible and anomalous power which I have of late been enjoying. I long to lay down the cup with the sweets of which I am cloyed. I desire the more ordinary or more wholesome beverage of an avowed and responsible connection with party.

In other words, the moment you retire and your colleagues with you, I at once plant myself on the front Opposition bench, as a leader—I hope of the united Conservatives, at any rate of the late-present Government.

I hear a rumour of my old and valued friend Graham coming up to our House. If this move is produced by any wish on your part to have strength in that quarter, I assure

you it is wholly unnecessary, because you will have a strong party with you, and you may rely on me as a regular member of the party.

I have been sounded by the expectants, as I was last winter, but have cut the matter very short.

To Lord Brougham.

(*Confidential.*) June 25, 1846.

There is no truth in the story about Graham going to the House of Peers. I should strongly dissuade him from it, for his own sake, under present circumstances even if he wished it, which I am sure he does not.

I think, quite apart from other considerations, if we cannot carry through the House of Commons a Bill for the prevention of murder in Ireland, giving powers which the late Government had for five years out of the five and a half for which they remained in power; which they refused to part with; which the Queen recommended from the throne; which the Lords passed with scarcely a dissenting voice—we ought not to remain responsible for the administration of affairs in Ireland.

From Lord Brougham.

In all my life never did I see faction in so hateful and naked a form as in the present Whig proceedings. God bless you, and prosper you as you deserve! More you cannot desire.

P.S.—Much comfort you give me as to Graham.

Sir Robert Peel's last speech in office was worthy of the occasion. He made no complaints. Had Ministers been defeated on the Corn Bill, he said, they would have advised a dissolution. Being refused the powers necessary for protecting life in Ireland, they had preferred resignation. For Ireland their general policy remained the same; 'complete equality with Great Britain of municipal, civil, and political rights;' 'bestowal of the favour and confidence of the Crown without reference to religious differences;' and 'immediate though cautious consideration of

the social condition of the people in respect to the tenure of land.' In commercial policy, if a new Government would continue to apply with caution the principles of free trade, they should have his cordial support. In foreign affairs, there was a real desire on the part of the Great Powers to co-operate in the maintenance of peace. On the Oregon question, he announced that the United States had accepted the conditions offered to them without the alteration of a word.

In conclusion he referred to the Corn Act.

Seventeen years before, when Sir Robert Peel had made painful sacrifices, and 'borne the brunt of a desperate conflict,' for Roman Catholic Relief, having been till then its chief opponent, he took no credit for his own work in framing and carrying the measure, but gave the whole praise to others, especially to Canning.

As regards Free Trade the case was different. Since the days of Huskisson, Peel had been inclined to a liberal commercial policy. He, first, had laid the necessary foundation for it in his income tax, and for the last five years he had done far more than any former Minister to bring in free trade, and to reduce the taxes on food. With leading statesmen on both sides of the House, he had thought it right to move with caution, and therefore to oppose the annual resolutions of Mr. Villiers for abolition of the Corn Law.

At last, in presence of what he regarded as a great public necessity for prompt action, confronting cruel obloquy and odious charges of bad faith, by personal influence, and skilful leadership, determined purpose, boundless patience, and toil almost beyond his strength to bear, he had accomplished what in Villiers's opinion no one else could—he had carried victoriously through both Houses a measure of gradual but final abolition. Yet, having achieved this, again he placed the claims of others above his own. He thought it right to associate with the triumph of his Corn Bill not his own name, nor that of any party leader, nor that which some would have preferred, the name of Charles Villiers, but one till lately of small esteem in Parliament, the name of Richard Cobden. He did so, moved, perhaps, in part by a generous wish to prove how fully he had forgiven the bitterness which Cobden so long nursed against him, but mainly, no doubt, guided by what he thought due to justice

and to truth. His tribute to Cobden's pure motives and simple eloquence was sincere. Years before he had written to Graham, 'Cobden is the master spirit of the League.'

For himself he was content to hope 'that he might leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because no longer leavened with a sense of injustice.'

His right to more than this was put to him strongly by Lord Brougham, who wrote:

June 30, 1846.

I wish you had left out two or three sentences of your last night's speech, especially about Cobden.

I am as much persuaded as of my own existence that the League was utterly impotent, and that had Richard Cobden lived to the age of Richard Jenkins, he never could have moved one peg in the Protection system.

The deed has been your own doing, and yours alone; and with my anti-mob views I own I should have liked it little, if at all, had it been the handiwork of the League.

Peel's answer was 'Quod dixi, dixi.'

July 1, 1846.

I have no wish to enter into any controversy with you as to what I said of Mr. Cobden.

I said it deliberately, and meant what I said to apply to his speeches and conduct *in the House of Commons*.

To every word of what I said as applicable to that conduct I adhere, and think it entirely justified.

Great interest had been felt in Sir Robert Peel's reforms by Foreign Powers, and he had found time to keep in touch with them.

The King of Sicily had caused Peel's chief speech to be circulated in Italian, and writes to his Minister:

'A provargli ch' egli non si era ingannato, gli presenterete da mia parte una copia del decreto della riduzione da me operata sulle tariffe doganali. Ho creduto in tal modo giustificare l' opinione ch' egli ha di me.'

In Spain the Government were engaged in 'substituting protective for prohibitory duties.' From Austria there were 'positive promises of good intentions.' In Sweden and Norway some progress was reported.

To Princess Lieven, Sir Robert writes:

'I rejoice to find your Emperor disposed to be free-trader, in sentiment at least. I wish I could see his Imperial Majesty and Count Nesselrode for an hour. I am sure I ought to convince them that the state of the Russian finances is far from satisfactory, and that prohibitory duties are in great measure the cause of it.'

De Bunsen writes: 'The papers you send will increase the feeling of admiration which the announcement of your measures has excited in the minds of all Prussian statesmen, and of the King. They will strengthen the conviction and the influence of those who believe that the true line of progress must lie in the direction pointed out by you.'

The King of Würtemberg thought it 'impossible that a policy based on such principles should not be followed by other States. The elements of calculation were too clear, and the conclusions drawn from them too vigorous, not to compel assent to the arguments laid down by the British Minister.' 'C'est un homme qui aime véritablement son pays, et qui sait écarter tout ce qui est personnel.'

In Belgium, Count Arrivabene wrote: 'Personne n'osera soutenir que les facultés de l'homme d'état qui dirige les affaires de la Grande-Bretagne aient baissé. Au contraire elles n'ont jamais jeté un plus grand éclat. Ce qui hier pouvait être jugé une utopie, le rêve d'un homme de bien, commence à être aujourd'hui.'

Princess Lieven was full of sympathy. 'On ne pense qu'à votre bill, à vous. On admire votre œuvre, et votre merveilleux courage, et votre plus merveilleux talent. J'ai bon espoir; ce qui est entrepris par vous doit réussir.

'Jarnac me rassure. Il soutient qu'il n'y a, qu'il n'y aura, en vous ni découragement ni dégoût, que vous resterez ferme, inébranlable, sans tenir compte des humeurs et des passions que vous rencontrez sur votre chemin, enfin grand homme jusqu'au bout. Vous avez les vœux de toute l'Europe; ici vous savez à quel point votre gloire est sentie et chérie.'

Across the Atlantic it was not far otherwise.

From Mr. Gladstone.

March 13, 1846.

I suppose you have heard the news that the proposals [as to corn] had reached the United States, and produced an immense sensation; that there were illuminations; and that the Senate had postponed for eight days the consideration of the [hostile] notice [as to Oregon].

In narrating the final struggle to maintain the Corn Laws, History will record the parts played by Stanley, Bentinck, and Disraeli. But not unworthy to be named here with them was another champion, Peel's old friend Croker. His bosom was torn with conflicting emotions. 'I love Peel,' he writes, 'yes, *love* him.' But he loved the Corn Laws more, and sacrificed to them a friendship of seven-and-thirty years. His efforts to defeat Peel were whole-hearted. He did not hesitate to impute to 'his dear friend' adroit deception, and disgraceful fear. He wrote to Wellington: 'You were deceived in the first instance; you were brought to believe that the proposed measure arose out of the Irish famine. *It is now admitted that that was a mere pretext.*' He wrote to Hardinge: 'The main and immediate cause was terror, cowardice. *This I know.*' He assured Graham that 'Ireland had no more to do with it than Kamschatka.' But in vain, for Graham knew Ireland; Hardinge knew Peel; and Wellington replied, 'I applauded Peel's determination, and determined to stand by him. . . . I should be ashamed of myself if I was now to run away.'[3]

So Wellington and Peel fought this last battle side by side, together conquered, and together fell.

The fate of the retiring Minister moved men of all parties, and of none. Arthur Stanley writes:

'Peel's speech is to me the most affecting public event I ever remember. No return of Cicero from exile, no triumphal procession up to the temple of Capitoline Jove, no Appius Claudius in the Roman Senate, no Chatham dying in the House of Lords, could have been a grander sight than that great Minister retiring from office, giving to the whole world Free Trade with one hand,

[3] For the letters in full see *The Croker Papers*, vol. iii. p. 51.

and universal peace with the other, and casting underfoot the miserable factions which had dethroned him.'

In his Memoir, reviewing the policy of his measures in 1846, Sir Robert Peel remarks, that light will have been thrown on this by subsequent experience. But as regards his motives, he requests the reader to place himself in the situation of the Minister on whom lay the responsibility of action, and to consider, first, whether there was not so much reason for apprehension of scarcity as to justify the suspension of import duties on food; secondly, whether there was not ground for declining to give a pledge that the duties should be reimposed; and thirdly, whether there was not, under all the circumstances, least of public evil in the final settlement of the Corn Laws.

He goes on to observe:

If indeed subsequent events could fairly be taken into the account, the sufferings that ensued from the deficient harvests of 1846 and 1847, the various measures taken by Parliament to mitigate those sufferings, the hurried suspension of the Navigation Laws, and of the remaining duties on articles of subsistence, would exercise no unfavourable influence on the opinion which might be formed on the precautionary measures of 1846. Nor would that influence be diminished if the aspect of affairs in this country subsequently to the revolutionary movement in Paris in February 1848 were included within the review. Many of the men who had been the loudest in the condemnation of the measures of 1846, and the least scrupulous in imputing dishonesty and treachery to the advisers of them, openly rejoiced on April 10, 1848, that provision had been made (by a lucky accident, of course) for the total repeal of the Corn Laws.

Lastly, Sir Robert Peel refers to the charge against him of having maintained a needless reserve.

I wish to give some explanation on this point. I am the more desirous to give it because it was my intention, but for the unforeseen events of 1845, to enter into that friendly communication, the omission of which is blamed

and lamented; to apprise the Conservative party, before the Corn Laws could be discussed in the Session of 1846, that my views with regard to the policy of maintaining that law had undergone a change.

His reasons for not giving effect to this intention were the character of the unforeseen emergency, and the 'position of the Cabinet.' He 'could not have alluded to the differences which prevailed among the members of the Government without extinguishing whatever degree of hope there might be that those differences would be ultimately reconciled.'

It would not be right to omit here the tribute of gratitude with which the Memoir ends.

In the course of this Memoir I have acknowledged the deep obligation which I owe to the colleagues with whom I acted in the administration of public affairs—to those in particular who were united with me in the service of the Crown after the failure of Lord John Russell's attempt to form a Government.

But I should do injustice to one of those colleagues, with whom, from the nature of our respective offices, my intercourse in regard to the transactions which form the subject-matter of this Memoir was the most frequent and the most intimate, and whose responsibility was equal to my own, if I did not express, in the strongest terms, my grateful acknowledgment for the zealous support and able assistance which I uniformly received from Sir James Graham.

The correspondence which I maintained with him, whenever there was not the opportunity of daily personal intercourse, during the whole period of our official connection contains ample proof of the unreserved confidence which subsisted between us, and of the obligations which I owe to him for that cordial co-operation which is the most valuable and most effectual when it is prompted by warm feeling of personal regard as well as by the sense of public duty.

Sir James Graham has had his full share of the obloquy

with which I have been assailed; and I close this Memoir with the hope that the evidence incorporated with it may serve to rescue his name, as well as my own, from some degree of unjust accusation and unmerited reproach.

As an instalment of the justice for which he hoped from history, Sir Robert Peel received, in the very crisis of Free Trade triumph and Protectionist revenge, a token of esteem from one who was no flatterer with tongue or pen, but a devout admirer of all effective service rendered to mankind.

From Thomas Carlyle.

Chelsea: June 19, 1846.

Will you be pleased to accept from a very private citizen of the community this copy of a book [Cromwell's Life and Letters] which he has been engaged in putting together, while you, our most conspicuous citizen, were victoriously labouring in quite other work?

Labour, so far as it is true and sanctionable by the Supreme Worker and World Founder, may claim brotherhood with labour; the great work and the little are alike definable as an extricating of the true from its imprisonment amid the false; a victorious evoking of order and fact from disorder and semblance of fact.

In any case, citizens who feel grateful to a citizen are permitted and enjoined to testify that feeling, each in such manner as he can. Let this poor labour of mine be a small testimony of that sort to a late great and valiant labour of yours, and claim reception as such.

The book, should you ever find leisure to read and master it, may perhaps have interest for you; may perhaps, who knows, have admonition, exhortation, in various ways instruction, and encouragement for yet other labours, which England, in a voiceless but most impressive manner, still expects and demands of you! The authentic words and actings of the noblest Governor England ever had may well have interest for all Governors of England, may well be, as all the Scripture is, as all genuine words and actings

are, 'profitable'—profitable for reproof, for correction, and for edifying and strengthening withal.

Hansard's Debates are not a kind of literature I have been familiar with, nor indeed is the arena they proceed from much other than a distress to me in these times. Loud-sounding clamour, and rhetorical vocables not grounded on fact, not even on belief of fact—one knows from of old whither all that, and what depends on it, is bound!

But by-and-by, as I believe, all England will say what already many a one begins to feel, that whatever were the spoken unveracities in Parliament—and they are many on all hands, lamentable to gods and men—here has a great veracity been *done* in Parliament, considerably our greatest for many years past, a strenuous, courageous, and manful thing, to which all of us that so see it are bound to give our loyal recognition, and such furtherance as we can.

CHAPTER XIV.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN, 1841–46.

Difficulties in Canada—Peel's Counsel—Bagot's Action—Wellington's Anger—Questions with the United States—Ashburton Treaty—Palmerston's Criticism—Relations with France—*Entente cordiale*—National Defence—Proposed Resignation of Aberdeen—Prevented by Peel.

THE record of Sir Robert Peel's Ministry would be incomplete without some letters showing his insight, sagacity, and vigour in Colonial and in Foreign affairs.

Routine work of this kind of course was left to the Ministers in charge, and Sir Robert Peel was too good a man of business not to make each colleague feel the full weight of responsibility for his own department. But when either of them had to deal with questions of exceptional difficulty or importance, the Prime Minister came promptly to his aid.

In the Colonial Department the best example of this may be found in the affairs of Canada.

In July 1840, Sir Robert Peel, in opposition, had insisted, against the Duke of Wellington's protest, on supporting and carrying the Union of the two Provinces. In August 1842, the new Governor, Sir Charles Bagot, having reported that he was in great difficulties with his French and British Parliament, Lord Stanley wrote asking for 'advice and assistance in solving this most embarrassing problem.'

Though on the eve of starting for Scotland to attend the Queen, Sir Robert Peel answered by return of post.

To Lord Stanley.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 28, 1842.

From my imperfect acquaintance with the particular views of the political sections into which the Chamber is

divided, and with the personal character of the leaders, I must necessarily speak rather of the principles on which Bagot should act, than of the course he should pursue.

I would advise him not to be disheartened by the prospect of the difficulties in which no doubt he will be placed by being in a minority in the Chamber.

If the majority against his Government is composed of men of extremely discordant principles, I think he should fight the battle as long as he possibly can, in the hope that by great prudence and moderation, and strict adherence to constitutional forms, even where the extreme exercise of his power is necessary, he may call to his aid whatever there may be of sound public opinion. . . .

Suppose the French Canadian party and the Conservative party should unite, and place his Government in a minority. Why should he not maintain his Government—if he is conscientiously convinced that he cannot form a better—until some act be done by the majority which shall paralyse his Government? Even in that case I would not advise dissolution. I am afraid we have not practically that resource. But I would not allow the French party to dictate the appointment of men tainted by charges or vehement suspicion of sedition or disaffection to British authority to be Ministers; still less would I allow them to dictate the dismissal of servants of the Crown, if those servants have acted faithfully, and hold offices not liable to change.

There may ultimately be no alternative but the selection of a Ministry from the majority. But in that case why should he not select his own servants, or attempt to select them? I would make a distinct proposal of office, in writing, to the least exceptionable members of the majority, and require a written answer.

If the majority were composed of men of extreme and discordant opinions, still I should be disposed to make the Ministry a fair representation of the opinions of the majority. If Conservatives and French Canadians, or if French Canadians and Radicals choose by their unnatural union to obstruct the Government, let them take the con-

sequences, and either consent or refuse to act together in office. In either case, there is the prospect of some advantage to the Governor, from a demonstration of their unwillingness or unfitness to combine for any other purpose than that of obstruction.

Suppose the party refuse office on the terms offered by the Governor, let him get their terms in writing, and then, if the individuals are notoriously unfit, let him refuse to take them, and try an appeal to the good sense—the sense of justice—of the Province.

If there be no such sense, the case is hopeless. But I should not despair, so long as the honour of the Governor is unsullied by any discreditable concession.

If everything else fails, could not prorogation be tried? and the parties obstructing the Government be made responsible for any embarrassment that might arise?

Sir Charles Bagot says that he has derived great advantage, and has created an impression favourable to the Government, by making appointments to office of men of high character, not on the dictation of party, but on the score of civil desert, and personal qualification.

I would persevere in this system. I would not voluntarily throw myself into the hands of the French party, through fear of being in a minority.

I wish what I have written may be of any service to you in framing your instructions. I write in very great haste.

The power of combating a majority in a popular assembly, by firmness, moderation, and dignified long-suffering, where the intentions of the Executive are undoubtedly pure, and where the majority is composed of men of antagonistic principles, is much greater than might be at first sight supposed. The difficulty in Canada is that the weapon of dissolution as a last resource is not in our hands.

Before instructions founded on this letter could reach the Colony, the Governor had acted, throwing himself into the arms of party leaders 'tainted by disaffection.'

On hearing this Lord Stanley again sought counsel from Sir Robert Peel, whose first act was to send all the papers on to the Duke of Wellington.

Copies had been sent also from the Colonial Office, but the Duke, aggrieved by Lord Stanley's neglect of his advice on former occasions, was about to send them back without any expression of opinion, although he was so much disturbed as even to contemplate resignation.

Sir Robert Peel received, as usual, in confidence, a lively picture of 'what was passing in the Duke's mind.'

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Walmer Castle: Oct. 18, 1842.

The Duke has been thunderstruck by the news from Canada.

Between ourselves, he considers what has happened as likely to be fatal to the connection with England. And I must also, in the very strictest confidence, tell you that he dreads lest it should break up the Cabinet here at home.

Oct. 20.—I learnt from the Duke this morning that he should return the despatches sent to him by order of Lord Stanley without saying one word upon them.

He said to me that he was very unwilling to interfere with the affairs of Lord Stanley's department; for that on three separate occasions he had by his desire stated in writing what he thought advisable to be done, and that Lord Stanley had not only not followed his advice, but had taken no notice whatever of the papers which he had written for him, not even acknowledging the receipt of them.

Yesterday he read to me all the despatches, and commented upon them most unreservedly. He perpetually said, 'What a fool the man must have been, to act as he has done! and what stuff and nonsense he has written! and what a bother he makes about his policy and his measures, when there are no measures but rolling himself and his country in the mire!' At every sentence there was an exclamation of this nature, and I have seldom seen the Duke so hurt and annoyed.

In the evening he said to me that he must, however, take up a position about it which he would be able to maintain, and that above all he must take care not to break up the Government.

This morning after breakfast he again told me that he should return the despatches without writing one word about them; that his opinion was, that we must now grant the amnesty, if required, and confirm Sir C. Bagot's acts, but that he should be recalled.

The Duke can talk of nothing else, and is in a perfect fury of anger and indignation. Pray, in writing to him, don't appear to know what is his opinion; but it will be very necessary, if you want to learn his, that you should tell him very openly what you yourself think.

The correspondence with Lord Stanley follows.

To Lord Stanley.

Oct. 17, 1842.

I have read with great attention all the papers received from you this morning. It is impossible not to admit from the statements made by Sir Charles Bagot that his position was a very embarrassing one.

Assuming that he had no safe alternative but to admit the French party, that it was politic to anticipate a hostile vote, and to form his Government in unison with the known will of the majority of the popular assembly, I still think his mode of doing this was ill chosen and unfortunate. It seems to me that every object would have been ensured by taking the course which the Sovereign in this country would take under similar circumstances. Written communications would certainly be preferable to verbal.

From Lord Stanley.

Knowsley: Oct. 21, 1842.

Concurring in what you say of the mismanagement of the negotiation by Bagot, and fully sensible of the difficulty of defending his course in itself, I yet see such formidable

obstacles to the disavowal of his policy, that I lean to the opinion that we must avow and adopt it.

But great as our difficulties in doing so were before, the Duke's strong and decisive condemnation of it will be a formidable aggravation of them, unless we can lead him to moderate his views. In the Cabinet his opinions would of course be listened to with respect, and considered with all the deference due to his name, and station, and public services. But if they should fail to meet with acceptance, and he should still press them, I confess I should look with some apprehension to the result which, from Arbuthnot's letter, it is evident he has contemplated.

In various quarters the Duke of Wellington denouncing the arrangement, as a tame surrender to a party tainted with treason, would produce an impression most dangerous to the Government, if it could get over the effects produced by the first announcement of his retirement, on the ground of an avowed difference of opinion.

To Arbuthnot and the Duke, with his usual skill, Peel wrote in terms which soothed their excitement.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Most private.*) Drayton Manor: Oct. 21, 1842.

Whatever may have been done in Canada has been done on the undivided responsibility of Sir Charles Bagot.

I was as much taken by surprise, and so I am convinced was Stanley, as you or the Duke can be. Stanley sent me Bagot's despatches and private letter. I forwarded them instantly, with a request that they should be sent on to the Duke. They contain the explanation of the grounds on which he acted. It is clear enough that his position was very embarrassing, but he played his own game in the most foolish manner.

Of course the Cabinet must maturely consider the position into which affairs are brought by their representative, though without their previous authority and consent, and determine what is best to be done. Nothing has been done to commit them to any course. They may take that

which their own sense of duty and of the public interests may point out.

Oct. 24.—As I have not a thought in politics which I do not wish to communicate to the Duke, I have sent him the copy of my private letter to Stanley [see above], written immediately after I read the despatches from Sir Charles Bagot.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Oct. 24, 1842.

I think you must have been astounded by the despatches from Sir Charles Bagot. With them was a private letter to him from Stanley, expressing great surprise at the contents of them, and observing that he would not allow the mail to depart without acknowledging them, though he must reserve any expression of opinion as to the course the Government ought to take until he had the opportunity of conferring with his colleagues.

Suppose that Sir C. Bagot was reduced to such difficulties that he had no alternative but to take the best men of the French Canadian party into his councils, and that it was better for him to do this before there was a hostile vote; still the manner in which he conducted his negotiations was a most unwise one. He makes it appear to the world that he courted and rejoiced in the necessity for a change in his councils.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Walmer Castle: Oct. 24, 1842.

I was rejoiced to find that you and the Duke view the late transactions in Canada in the same light. I showed your letter to the Duke, who on reading said, 'Peel and I quite agree upon the subject.'

Oct. 25.—By this post you will receive from the Duke an answer to what you sent to him. He gave me your letter to read at breakfast, and he has since been into my room to show me what he had written to you.

He had said to me, 'How curious it is that we come exactly to the same conclusion!'

From the Duke of Wellington.

Walmer Castle: Oct. 25, 1842.

I take the same view as you do of the conduct of Sir Charles Bagot.

A wise man would have taken the course of changing the official servants of the Government, if such measure was necessary, during the recess of Parliament. He might then have had time to consider not only the necessity for the change, but the principle on which it should be made, and that on which the official servants of the new Government should be selected.

However, it appears to me that we must consider the arrangement as settled and adopted by the legislature of Canada.

It will remain to be considered afterwards what is to be done with Sir Charles Bagot, and with his measures.

Thus Jam was restored, and the Home Secretary writes admiring the foresight of his chief.

From Sir James Graham.

Oct. 27, 1842.

Stanley showed me your letter [of Aug. 28] when he received it. It carried conviction to my mind. The view which I have taken of Bagot's policy was formed on the principles so clearly developed by you. They are irresistible, and cannot be shaken. The event will only confirm their wisdom, and, what is rare with others, you were 'wise in time.'

Of Foreign Affairs the most important were the Boundary and other questions with the United States, and the *entente cordiale* with France.

The Eastern boundary between Canada and the States was settled in 1842 by Lord Ashburton, whose rank, as a former Cabinet Minister, and connection with America, through Lady Ashburton, rendered him a *persona grata*. He settled also questions relating to the 'right of search' of slave-trading vessels,

and to the burning of the steamer 'Caroline' in American waters by British boats in 1847. It was agreed to drop the right of search, to apologise for the violation of territory, and to adopt a boundary, denounced in the United States as 'a humiliating surrender' on their part, and in Parliament as 'a bad bargain for England.' No one, however, paid much attention to the attacks of Palmerston on what were regarded as reasonable concessions for the sake of peace.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Oct. 26, 1842.

The enclosed from Lord Grey will amuse you.

'I agree with you entirely as to the expediency of Lord Ashburton's arrangement, and am thankful to have the question settled.

'I hear that the "Morning Chronicle" is full of vituperative articles upon it, supposed to be written by Palmerston. How he could make up his mind to attack an arrangement certainly preferable to that to which we would have agreed in 1831, it is for him to consider, but to me such attacks from such a quarter create only feelings of disapprobation and disgust.'

On these questions Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were heartily at one in promoting peace, but of the two Sir Robert Peel saw more clearly the necessity of being prepared for war.

Memorandum sent to the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Haddington, and Lord Stanley.

Whitehall: Oct. 17, 1841.

Considering the state of our relations with the United States, and *the possibility* that some immediate and decisive demonstration on our part may be necessary, it appears that we ought without delay to take such measures as shall enable us to make it with effect.

Such measures need not partake of the character of menace, or of any desire for war. But, if it be conceded that war may be inevitable; that the decision upon war or peace may be beyond our control; that such events as those

that are occurring on the frontiers of Canada may precipitate a decision on the spot—surely we ought to take measures which, without diminishing the hopes of peace, may be suitable to the alternative of war.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Oct. 25, 1841.

It is clear that we cannot abandon the right of visitation without abandoning also all hope of arresting the progress of the Slave Trade.

But this right, exercised as it must be at the discretion of individual commanders, liable therefore to abuse, and entailing vexation and possibly injustice, will, if not clearly defensible by the recognised law of nations, soon involve us in war. The question of Slavery will in that case soon be forgotten, and another will arise, namely, Which party has public law on its side?

This consideration seems to me a principal reason for attempting without delay adjustment by means of negotiation and convention.

Nov. 1, 1841.—Might it not be advisable for you, in the present state of our discussions with the United States, to write without delay an official letter to the Admiralty requesting to know the exact nature of all orders given to H.M. ships in respect to the exercise of the right of visit? We ought, in my opinion, to check as far as possible wanton visit, from the sheer love and hope of gain.

If I were you, I would place upon record such a communication to the Admiralty. It may tend to prevent abuse, and at any rate can be referred to as evidence of an unprompted desire on the part of the British Government to narrow as far as possible the grounds of American complaint.

May 16, 1842.—I think we *must* come to an agreement on the Boundary.

Some of the recent letters from Bagot have, it seems to me, a natural bearing on the question. It would seem from them that we are to be involved in new controversies about

the Civil List in Canada, and that squabbles on this subject between the Mother Country and the province are to be the instruments by which the late constitutional settlement, and the union of the provinces, are to be disturbed.

Now, if there is not a British party in the Canadas sufficient to put down these attempts at renewed conflicts, I for one should be very much disposed to hold high language.

Let us keep Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; for their geographical position makes their sea-coast of great importance to us. But the connection with the Canadas *against their will*, nay, without the cordial co-operation of the predominant party in Canada, is a very onerous one. The sooner we have a distinct understanding on that head, the better. The advantage of commercial intercourse is all on the side of the Colony, or at least is not in favour of the Mother Country. Why should we go on fighting not our own battle (I speak now of a civil battle) but theirs—in a minority in the Legislature, the progress of the contest widening daily old differences and begetting new ones?

But above all, if the people are not cordially with us, why should we contract the tremendous obligation of having to defend, *on a point of honour*, their territory against American aggression?

Let us fight to the last for the point of honour, *if the people are with us. In that case we cannot abandon them.* But if they are not with us, or if they will not cordially support and sustain those measures which we consider necessary for their good government and for the maintenance of a safe connection with them, let us have a friendly separation while there is yet time, rather than recommence a system of bickering and squabbling on petty points, the result of which will be increasing ill humour and alienation on their part, constant encouragement to American sympathisers, and ultimately the necessity of our vindicating British honour, with Canadian feeling adverse to us, the war at the door of the United States, and three or four thousand miles from our shores.

But the chief object in Peel's time of Conservative diplomacy was to maintain a cordial understanding with France.

On this as an end the Cabinet were at one. The Duke of Wellington held that for peace in Europe, France must be contented. Sir James Graham, anxious for retrenchment in warlike expenditure, built his hopes of it on the reversal of Palmerston's policy towards France. Lord Aberdeen went further than his colleagues to meet every wish of the French King and his Minister.

But as to the best means of preserving peace they inclined to differ. Aberdeen relied most on Louis Philippe and Guizot. Wellington advised against leaving the country in danger of invasion. Peel was not disposed to turn a deaf ear to the counsels of either colleague. Between civilian and soldier he held the balance even.

The conflicting tendencies may be traced from the first till they culminate in the Foreign Secretary's offering to resign.

Sir Robert Peel distrusted Guizot's policy in Spain, and suspected France of secretly supporting the attempts of the Queen Dowager to re-establish herself there.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Oct. 17, 1841.

All these elaborate assurances of Guizot are, I fear, consistent with secret encouragement to Christina.

Our primary object should be resistance to the establishment of French influence in Spain.

Nov. 9.—Why should we not at once frankly declare to Spain what our views are?

That we will not commit ourselves to more than the moral support of the existing or any other Government, but that moral support shall continue to be given with perfect cordiality and disinterestedness.

That it is our wish to see Spain a powerful country, with an army able to protect its rights; that we have no jealousy of Spain as a Naval Power.

That we are resolved to deal directly with Spain in regard to Spanish interests and affairs.

That we would be no party to any *Congress* for the

professed settlement of Spanish affairs, or to any understanding with France, kept secret from Spain; that as regards the marriage of the Queen, we would support the right of the Spanish Government to decide that question for themselves, according to the wishes and feelings and interests of the Spanish people.

That we are ready to enter into commercial relations with Spain, and that we shall consider such relations the best foundation for more intimate political relations.

Pray consider the policy of making at this time some such formal communication to Spain of our general view and policy.

I do not see why we should not openly avow it in the face of the world. If it is in invidious contrast with French policy, that is no fault of ours.

Nov. 13.—Pray consider whether it would not be desirable to write *forthwith* to Mr. Aston, that the communications received by our Minister at Paris from the King and his Government betoken hostile designs against Spain; that we counsel Spain studiously to avoid giving any unnecessary umbrage, to take special care that there is no trespass on French territory, no injury or insult to French subjects.

Tell Mr. Aston to instil into the Spanish Government that our means of assisting them must mainly depend upon France *being in the wrong*; that in that case even our moral influence will be most powerful, but that if France has *right* on her side, the case will be very different. She may make the vindication of her *right* the pretext for hostile designs against Spain, and a foreign country may find great difficulty in counteracting it.

Tell Mr. Aston to advise Espartero to secure St. Sebastian and the northern parts of Spain against the possibility of French occupation.

Sir Robert Peel was unfavourably impressed also by Guizot's reported treatment of a popular demand in France for setting aside the treaties relating to Belgium.

Mr. Bulwer to Lord Aberdeen.

Paris: Dec. 2, 1842.

Guizot took me aside and said, 'I am going to say something to you in confidence, which you must forget that *I* have said. A communication will be made to Lord Aberdeen by Ste.-Aulaire respecting the treaties of 1831–1833. It will be desirable that Lord Aberdeen should reject every proposition of this kind in the strongest manner, and without grieving himself in the least.'

Lord Aberdeen to Sir Robert Peel.

Dec. 13, 1842.

After Bulwer's letter, I fully expected that Ste.-Aulaire would have made the proposals to which he referred. He did not do so, however, nor did he say anything which could lead me to imagine that he had any such intention.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Dec. 14, 1842.

I am not surprised that Ste.-Aulaire did not make any proposal to you respecting the treaties of 1831 and 1833. I pay him the compliment of supposing that he is unwilling to act the chief part in a discreditable farce.

There can be nothing more dishonourable and nothing more dangerous to monarchy in France, than to make in the name of the King proposals to this country with the intent that they should be rejected; to pretend to be in earnest when they are not in earnest; and all this for the purpose either of patching up a Government or of making out a plausible case for the Chamber.

I am quite surprised that Guizot should venture to state what he must have stated to Bulwer. I think it would be a clear case of impeachment against him. He is saving himself at the expense of the kingly authority and of the honour of his country.

Even during the Queen's visit to the King of the French at Château d'Eu, Sir Robert Peel did not lay aside suspicion.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Aug. 31, 1843.

I hope you will let Louis Philippe understand that we cannot conceive it possible—which of course means that we shrewdly suspect—that he may contemplate, by various cunning devices, under the pretence of friendly concert with us, rendering the marriage of the Queen of Spain with the Duc d'Aumale inevitable.

I see that, for the purpose of doing honour to his Royal visitors and their companions, he sent a very large order to England for cheese and bottled beer. I hope you will have had calm weather, so that you may all enjoy these delicacies.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Château d'Eu: Sept. 2, 1843.

The King is evidently delighted beyond measure at the visit, and expressed himself to this effect in the strongest terms.

Sept. 3.—It appears that at Paris, and throughout the country, the visit has been on the whole favourably received, and is likely to produce a good effect. The Queen seems much pleased and amused with everything she has seen.

The King desired me to say that he felt deeply grateful to you for the Queen's visit.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Sept. 3, 1843.

I rejoice to hear that everything goes so prosperously. The French newspapers were bewildered by the Queen's visit. Some of them seem very apprehensive that her Majesty will return with a commercial treaty in her pocket.

The year 1844 began auspiciously for the *entente cordiale*, the French Minister being much pleased with a speech of Sir Robert Peel.

M. Guizot to M. de Ste.-Aulaire.

Paris: 5 février, 1844.

Le discours de la Reine est excellent, en complète harmonie avec le nôtre, et dans la plus juste mesure. Le roi en est parfaitement content. Avec l'entente cordiale on vient à bout de toutes choses.

Et le débat vaut le discours. Indépendamment de la noblesse du langage, Sir Robert Peel a l'art d'adapter parfaitement ses paroles au but qu'il veut produire. Ce qu'il a dit convient aussi bien, et fera un aussi bon effet, ici qu'à Londres.

But in the summer an act of violence on the part of the French in Tahiti towards the British Consul, for expressing his disgust at their conduct in dethroning Queen Pomare, and the tardiness of the French Government in giving reparation, led Sir Robert Peel to write with great plainness to Lord Aberdeen, who passed the letter on to the Ambassador of France.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 12, 1844.

M. Guizot has been himself alone to blame for what has occurred. If he chooses to send out expeditions to occupy every place where they can find the pretence for occupation, and if the commanders of these expeditions occupy other places not contemplated by their Government, and if M. Guizot has not the power or courage to disavow them, *he* is responsible for whatever may occur in consequence of such proceedings.

It is absurd to throw the responsibility on Mr. Pritchard. If the French Consul got up a plot with the French naval officer to swindle Queen Pomare out of her sovereignty, can M. Guizot be surprised that English residents in Tahiti feel indignant with such transaction, that they loudly proclaim their sense of the wrong which has been committed; that the language they hold adds to the excitement among the natives; and makes an unjust usurpation uncomfortable for usurpers?

Is not this the natural consequence of the original wrong?

If we had acted as the French have done—if an English officer, contrary to his instructions, had seized on the sovereignty of a place wherein the French had a consul resident several years, if this consul had indignantly protested, had struck his flag, and taken no pains to conceal his sentiments, and if the English officer had put him in a dungeon, and transported him without trial—what would the French Ministry, and the French Press, and the French public, have thought of such proceedings on our part?

Should we have hesitated to say 'the original fault was with our unauthorised officer, we disavow him, and make ample reparation'?

I am certain we should not. And if M. Guizot can only exist by declining to do what we would do, there is anything but advantage to us in his continuance in power.

It seems that he is now going to send four sail of the line to Tunis. France will have one menacing fleet off Tunis, and another off Morocco.

As in the Tahiti affair, so in the Algerine affair. We cannot exclude from our consideration that the conduct of France in the original occupation of Algiers was marked by a gross violation of her engagements towards Europe.

It is certainly now quite too late to call upon France to fulfil those engagements; but the original wrong is now the cause that Morocco and Tunis are threatened; and unless we hold very decisive language to France, and are prepared to act upon it, with regard to Tunis and Morocco, they, or so much of them as suits the purposes of France, will follow the fate of Algiers.

On New Year's Day, 1845, the Prime Minister received from the Foreign Secretary a formal protest against defensive works recommended by the Commander-in-Chief. In Aberdeen's view they 'would stultify the whole policy' of the cordial understanding; there was no real danger, 'mere panic;' there would

be no sudden attack; and in the event of war the power of steam would tell for England.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Foreign Office: Dec. 31, 1844.

I have read the reports of the officers appointed to inquire into the state of our coast defences, and also the memorandum of the Duke of Wellington on these papers.

Being fully aware of the respect which is due to the opinions and authority of the Duke, I very much desire to abstain from all unnecessary discussion. But, as it is impossible for me to approve of a system which would virtually stultify our whole policy for the last three years, it is right that to you at least I should express my sentiments without reserve.

I understand then that it is intended to recommend the adoption of an extensive plan of military defence. Sheerness and Pembroke are to be fortified, and the works of Plymouth and Portsmouth to be strengthened and improved.

Now I have no doubt that in a professional view all this is perfectly judicious. . . . But I would request you to weigh seriously the political effects of this course of proceeding. I would ask you if we should not be acting under the influence of mere panic. . . . Why incur an enormous expense, and create general distrust at a moment when there is no reason to apprehend any danger? . . .

No doubt war may ensue. . . . But war is not to be made against England by a *coup de main*, nor, indeed, is it probable that war shall ever again be undertaken as lightly as in former times. . . . There can be little probability of our being taken by surprise.

It is true that the invention of steam as an instrument may be expected materially to affect the results of naval warfare, and yet I cannot but imagine that the power of steam will give us great advantages as compared with any other State. Our steam force is incomparably superior to that of France.

With his usual frankness, but perhaps less than his usual prudence, Sir Robert Peel sent on this letter without comment to the Duke, who replied:

Jan. 7, 1845.

I return Lord Aberdeen's letter.

Begging his pardon, I have given an opinion on the subjects to which it refers. I did so because I was so required by those who had a right to direct me to give my opinion.

I understand that you and your colleagues, the First Lord of the Admiralty particularly, having heard of the observations of the French officers of the navy upon our undefended state, and having adverted to the reports made of the state of works at Portsmouth, were desirous that I should give my opinion upon the subject.

I therefore gave it in detail.

These are not new opinions of mine, and I had no intention of 'stultifying our foreign policy.'

It may be a very foolish opinion, but I think it better to rely upon our own means for our defence than upon the good faith and forbearance of France; and that if strong we are more likely to reap the benefit of such course to be adopted by our neighbours.

I have the highest opinion of and the firmest reliance upon the exertions and gallantry of the British Navy. But, as I stated in my memorandum on the state of defence of our naval arsenals, we have no Fleet.

I have written what is before me only because my opinion was required, and I wished at least to render the country the service of stating in what manner it might be defended from the invasion of a foreign enemy.

I will never say or write another word upon the subject, and it is far from my wish to interrupt any line of policy recommended by Lord Aberdeen.

Perceiving the Duke's annoyance, Sir Robert Peel replied:

To the Duke of Wellington.

Jan. 10, 1845.

Lord Aberdeen's letter to me was not intended for your perusal, and as he misunderstood some of the observations made by you, on which he was commenting, perhaps I ought not to have sent it to you. But it has not been my habit through my long official connection with you to have any reserve from you, and as the letter related to public matters of first-rate importance, and as I thought it natural that you should be fully apprised of the views entertained by Lord Aberdeen as to the bearing and probable effect of any sudden and very extensive preparations for the contingency of war on our foreign policy, I resolved on the unreserved communication of the letter to you.

I am confident that Lord Aberdeen is as deeply impressed as I am, and as every one of your colleagues is, that in offering observations and opinions on the military and naval defences of the country you have but one object, which has been the object of your whole life, namely, to promote the best interests of the public service, and that those observations and opinions are entitled to greater deference than the observations and opinions of any other man or body of men in this country.

When Parliament met, Sir Robert Peel's tone again gave lively satisfaction in France.

Princess Lieven to Lord Aberdeen.

Jan. 30, 1845.

Aujourd'hui amis et ennemis, tous, ont les yeux fixés sur le Parlement anglais. L'ennemi espère un mot—un demi-mot—de Sir Robert Peel qui puisse se traduire en concession ou abaissement de la France. Les amis comptent avec confiance que ce demi-mot imprudent ne sera pas prononcé. . . . Je le répète, votre langage et celui de Sir Robert Peel auront une influence presque décisive sur le sort du Cabinet.

Lord Aberdeen replies: 'I do not think in the whole of Peel's speech there was a single word which could by possi-

bility create the slightest inconvenience to the French Government. Lord John and Palmerston did their best to be mischievous, but they signally failed. I am as much abused as ever for my baseness, cowardice, and concessions.' The Princess answers:

March 11.—Vous et Sir Robert Peel avez tenu un langage excellent au Parlement sur les relations avec la France. Cela a été vivement apprécié ici.

On the other hand, Sir Robert Peel sharply censured the French King's opposition to the liberal foreign policy of Great Britain.

To Lord Aberdeen.

(*Secret.*) Jan. 31, 1845.

I must say that the accounts we receive from various quarters of the folly of Louis Philippe, and his apparent desire on all occasions when the interests and feelings of other Powers are concerned, to disclaim a friendly understanding with England, are very embarrassing.

What a pretty state the *entente cordiale* is in as regards Greece, if Louis Philippe, in conversation with the Austrian Ambassador at Paris, professes agreement with Austria and dissent from England, 'from the unfortunate tendency of the British Government at all times to support revolutions and thus disturb the peace of Europe.'

Considering by whom this is said, and of whom it is said, the force of impudence cannot go much further.

As the year advanced, each of the two Governments pushed on its preparations, the one for attack, the other for defence, beyond what the pacific Foreign Secretary approved.

To Lord Aberdeen.

June 29, 1845.

It may be true that there must be some previous indications of the probability of war between this country

and France; but the preparations at Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne surely justify precautionary measures on our part, which a notice of six months or even a year would not enable us to take.

I very much doubt whether such a state of preparation as would be likely to prevent serious injury to this country at the commencement of hostilities is not an additional guarantee of peace.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Sept. 3, 1845.

Lord Cowley says that our making preparations of defence will startle the French, and give rise at first to much blustering, but that he is confident the result will be their treating us with greater respect, and will lead ultimately to a better understanding with us than if they continued to imagine we were defenceless.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Château d'Eu: Sept. 8, 1845.

Guizot had heard of our apprehensions respecting the naval preparations of France. These he treated with ridicule, and contradicted my assertions, that they were doing more than could be justified by a peace policy, in the most positive manner.

He said that Havre was completely at our mercy, that a couple of steam vessels could bombard and destroy the place, and that he had been obliged to agree to some defensive works.

I told him that we intended to strengthen Portsmouth and Plymouth, and perhaps one or two other points; to which he replied that he had no objection whatever, . . . and that he should be prepared to defend and justify our proceeding.

On returning home, however, Lord Aberdeen tendered his resignation.

Foreign Office: Sept. 18, 1845.

From various circumstances, and more especially from conversations with yourself and Graham, I cannot but foresee the probability of a great difference of opinion in matters connected with an important part of our Foreign policy, which may be attended with the most serious consequences.

Graham has assured me that his own views with respect to our relations with France have recently undergone an entire change, and such I perceive is also the case with yourself. A policy of friendship and confidence has been converted into a policy of hostility and distrust. . . .

It is my deliberate and firm conviction that there is less reason to distrust the French Government, and to doubt the continuance of peace, at the present moment than there was four years ago, and I cannot perceive the slightest ground for any change in the policy which at that time it was thought wise to pursue. . . .

I would never for an instant forget the possibility of war, and would make all reasonable provision accordingly; but I would continue to live under the conviction of the greater probability of peace.

After dwelling on the superiority of the English to the French steam navy, Lord Aberdeen continues:

It seems to me that we are now acting under the influence of panic, both with respect to the intentions of France and our own real condition, and that such a course of conduct has a direct tendency to produce the very evil which it is intended to avert. . . .

I trust that you are perfectly safe from any captious opinions or undue pertinacity on my part. My habitual deference and long tried attachment make anything of the kind impossible. But a case may after all occur in which a regard for my own honour, conscience, and understanding, will leave me no option.

Indeed, when I recollect the strong opinions of the Duke, the difficulty of my position with respect to him is

greatly increased, and is inexpressibly painful. He must necessarily consider me as the only obstacle to the adoption of measures which he sincerely believes to be indispensable for the welfare and safety of the country.

So long as the Duke's apprehensions were regarded as merely chimerical, the matter was of less importance. But the case is now greatly altered. . . .

The spirit and feeling with respect to France are so different from mine, and everything is looked at in such a different point of view, that it is difficult not to anticipate some unpleasant consequences. . . .

Under all the circumstances, it is my belief that it will be the safest course for you to allow me now to retire from the Government. No difference has as yet taken place, and none is expected. It is well known to my friends that office is not only irksome to me, but that considerations of health have more than once pretty urgently called for this proceeding. No other motive will be assigned, and it will be more easy to sanction this, as I have no wish ever to enter the House of Lords again. . . .

No person whatever has any knowledge of this letter, and I have no wish that you should answer it; but I request that you would consider the subject dispassionately and maturely. I have thought it right and necessary to state my own honest impressions; but I am quite prepared to act in whatever manner your deliberate judgment shall decide to be on the whole best for the country and yourself.

Thus invited to decide the point, Sir Robert Peel at once condemned the proposed retirement, on two grounds—the moral impossibility of concealing its true cause, and the grave mischief that must ensue from an avowed difference of opinion between the Cabinet and the Foreign Secretary in regard to France.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Whitehall: Saturday night, Sept. 20, 1845.

I received with deep regret your letter. I will write to you more fully upon the important—the vital—subject to

which it refers; but I think it right to lose no time in frankly saying to you that I see insuperable objections to that mode of avoiding possible difficulties which you suggest, namely, your retirement from office, no reason being assigned for it, or some other reason than that which I must be conscious would be the true and *bonâ-fide* reason.

The peculiar importance of your office, its immediate bearing on the interests and feelings of other countries besides our own, and not less than this your own high character and personal position as a public man, forbid a proceeding of that nature.

My duty to the Queen, and to our colleagues in the Government, would make it impossible for me to be a party to it.

I could not conceal from the Queen, or from them, the true motives for your retirement, and the explanation of those motives to them would destroy all hope of an escape from those serious difficulties which—as you fully contemplate—would be the consequence of avowed differences in respect to our policy towards France.

Even if I could overcome my own objections to concealment in such a matter, my experience of public life convinces me that a week could not pass without entailing the necessity of an explicit disclosure of the real grounds of your retirement, and every evil that could result from immediate and distinct avowal would be aggravated by the delay and the fruitless attempt at concealment.

I will say nothing as to the effect of your retirement with reference to my own personal feelings and position. Independently of the evil consequences of the retirement on the particular ground above alluded to, I should consider your loss *irreparable*.

Sir Robert Peel again thought it his duty to communicate to the Duke of Wellington Lord Aberdeen's whole letter, including the reference to the Duke's apprehensions having been considered chimerical.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Sunday, Sept. 21, 1845.

I shall not communicate to any other person but yourself the enclosed letters which have passed between Aberdeen and me. If I make an exception, it will be in favour of Sir James Graham, who is referred to in Lord Aberdeen's letter.

I think the consequence of serious differences on the subject would be so embarrassing to the Queen, and so unfortunate for the country, that I shall feel it to be my duty to do all in my power to prevent or reconcile them, and to suggest some course of proceeding which may be adopted without the compromise of honest opinions, or danger to the country.

It appears to me practicable to reconcile the adherence to our policy with respect to France—that is to say, the maintenance of a friendly understanding with France, and confidence in the disposition to maintain peace of the King and M. Guizot—with such reasonable precautions as may provide for the security of the country.

The Duke replied at great length, warmly agreeing as to the personal loss and public mischief that would result from Lord Aberdeen's resignation; modestly claiming 'a little more knowledge' than the Foreign Secretary's of what was required for safety; but readily agreeing to conduct the preparations for defence in such manner as to give the French least pretext for declaring war.

Walmer Castle: Sept. 22, 1845.

I take exactly the same view as yourself of the misfortune of which the letters enclosed are the subject; and I concur in every word of your letter; to which I will add my conviction that the disclosure of any differences of opinion upon the subject would alone be sufficient to occasion the evil which all see must occur, the only difference being [as to] the nature and degree of preparation to be made against it.

There is no individual connected with your Government more sensible than I am of the absolute importance of

connecting France with the councils of Europe, and above all of a good understanding between this country and France. These were the principles on which the transactions of the peace of 1815 were settled and carried into execution, connected as these were with those of precaution against the dangers of the hostility of France.

Every day's experience proves that nothing can be settled in Europe or the Levant without war, unless by good understanding with France; nor can any question be settled in other parts of the world, excepting by the good understanding between France and this country.

It cannot be expected that a good understanding could prevent either country from pursuing its own course according to its own discretion on any question not the subject of agreement.

Still less could it be expected that the feelings of ancient rivalry, not to say hostility, between the two countries should be extinguished.

I believe the King and his Minister are wise men, and sincerely desire—the former for the sake of his dynasty, and both for the sake of France—to maintain peace with this country.

But look at the state of naval preparation in France. Look at the proportion of the expenditure in that department, compared with that in all others. For what is that preparation made? Is it with a view to co-operate with England in joint objects? Is it to prepare for a defensive warfare as against England? The last thing! It is with a view to carry on against England offensive maritime warfare, and to make the British Empire the seat of the war.

Who has made these preparations? Louis Philippe, and in the latter years at least Guizot. As Frenchmen, at the head of the new Government, they are right. But don't let us deceive ourselves. These preparations are not symptoms of friendliness, or cordial good understanding with, or even of a desire of peace with, England. They are symptoms of deadly hostility. Those who make them—

the King at least, knowing man as he is of the state of the defensive resources of this country, of the constitutional difficulties in the way of bringing them to such a state of maturity as to render them efficient in defence against attack—must mean that the first war against this country shall be the last.

I cannot close my eyes to this state of the facts, any more than I can to another fact of which I am equally convinced, that the King and his Minister M. Guizot are the best friends to peace with this country that can be found in France, and that it is the undoubted duty of those exercising the power of its Government to maintain the best understanding with the existing French Government, and to make every sacrifice to attain that object which is consistent with the safety of their country.

I now come to a part of this subject of which I think that my habits and pursuits have given me a little more knowledge than Lord Aberdeen has.

I think that he has mistaken the effect produced by steam navigation, and the influence of steam vessels upon the safety of this country; it is not solely by their armament as ships of war; it is by their power and celerity of movement, their small draft of water compared with that power, and their capacity of carrying troops and their equipments, and the consequent certainty of military combinations.

We have a superior steam armament to that of the French Government, as we ought to have, and in the mercantile service one infinitely superior.

But it is useless to this country in a view to offensive operations against France, as the steam navigation of France is to be used against this country; because years must elapse, happen what may, before this country can have any army which any men in their senses could desire to send out of it, to make an attack upon another.

In truth we are, and must be, on the defensive in war, owing to the nature of our laws and constitution; and in our present state we are helpless, not only with a view to

offensive operations but to our defence against invasion and conquest, except by the means of our navy.

You have proofs daily of my constant and laborious study to extricate the country from this difficult position by degrees, so that we may be able to seek and provide for our safety without the disgraceful feeling that we are doing so at our peril.

But all these measures require time, the consent of Parliament, and all the publicity attending thereupon.

Whatever may be the chances of war during the life-time of Louis Philippe, that misfortune will become more and more certain, and to be expected immediately, in case of his death. It is so because in truth the prevailing sentiment in the minds of Frenchmen is implacable hostility. We cannot change their feelings. We must endeavour to provide for an efficient defence by prudent measures which will not accelerate our danger.

With equal moderation, and with warm regard for the feelings of his colleague, Sir James Graham wrote:

(*Secret.*) Sept. 22, 1845.

I have read with deep and sincere pain the letter from Lord Aberdeen. I am particularly sorry that any views or opinions entertained by me should differ from his, for my respect and affectionate regard for him are cordial and sincere. I think highly of his abilities; I admire his sterling honesty and firm principles, and I never served with any colleague whose friendship I was more anxious to win, or whose esteem I consider of greater value.

It is the pride and the strength of your Government to have such a man in the place which he now fills. His loss would be fatal and irreparable, and as the case now stands there is no reason for taking the steps to which he refers. He is willing not to overlook the possible contingency of a sudden war with France; and he is even anxious that every reasonable provision should be made accordingly.

I will make no adverse comments on certain arguments in Aberdeen's letter, from which I dissent. Shades of

difference of opinion must occasionally arise among colleagues honestly eager for one common object, the public safety; but human affairs are conducted by the compromise of extreme opinions. When I differ from such a colleague as Aberdeen, I am not only ready but anxious to reconsider; to distrust the soundness of my own judgment, and to abate the earnestness which the conflict of adverse opinions on matters of importance is too apt to generate.

The Duke of Wellington has given an example worthy of imitation on this head, and among colleagues so predisposed no serious rupture is to be anticipated while you, who possess our mutual friendship and implicit confidence, preside over our deliberation.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Walmer Castle: Oct. 6, 1845.

M. Thiers has formed a correct judgment of the feelings and opinions of the great Northern Powers in relation to France. They believe her to be still under the influence of the Revolution.

But I confess that I do not feel the same confidence as Lord Aberdeen in their exertions in our favour in case of a dispute with France.

The course which they would take would depend in some degree upon the subject of dispute. If it should be the Spanish Marriage, or a question arising out of the Treaties of Peace, they might take part with England, particularly if we should come forward in strength. But not on the Oregon question, or one arising out of the Protectorate of Tahiti.

I would make one more observation. Neither this country nor any other ever had allies if not in strength itself. If not secure against invasion—if our independence and even existence as a nation is at stake, how can it be expected that any nation will incur the risk of allying itself with us?

But I beg to refer to the course of these Great Powers at the commencement of the Revolutionary War in 1793–94–95,

and down to the Peace of Amiens. Their sole object in communicating with us at all was to obtain money. They negotiated peace each of them without reference to us, although we declared our readiness to cede our *ultra mare* conquests in order to obtain advantages for the Continental Powers.

Look at their conduct when the war recommenced, and England was threatened with invasion, in the commencement of the century. The only apprehension they manifested was that the project for the invasion might fail, and that the French force might be turned against Germany—as it was.

But still there was no concert with England on the part of any, till this country showed that she had a force, and was determined to make use of it; nor, in fact, till the period of the commencement of our successes in the Peninsula. It was at that time that a commencement was made of a manifestation to unite counsels and efforts with England to attain general peace.

I contend, therefore, that we must begin by putting ourselves in a state of security; then show that we are strong; and we shall again be the soul of the Alliance of Europe.

A few days later Lord Aberdeen sent to Sir Robert Peel a long dissertation of Guizot on the thesis, 'La vieille maxime, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, est devenue absurde et dangereuse,' and pressed for an answer.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Foreign Office: Oct. 11, 1845.

I am glad to perceive that Guizot agrees with me in the opinion which I have long entertained, that the old maxim of 'preparing for war in order to preserve peace' is entirely inapplicable to the condition of Great Powers, and to the political system of modern times, and present state of society.

Oct. 16.—You returned Guizot's letter to me without any remark; but I am naturally desirous of knowing what

you thought of it, and how far it had been successful in explaining the policy of France with respect to warlike preparations.

Thus challenged to give an opinion, Sir Robert Peel replied:

To Lord Aberdeen.

Drayton Manor: Oct. 17, 1845.

Guizot's letter to you left unchanged my impression that his desire is for peace. . . .

He says that he doubts the soundness of the axiom, *Bellum para, pacem habebis*, and you concur in his opinion. . . .

I think it unwise, generally speaking, to waste the resources of a country during peace in preparations for war. . . . But I greatly doubt whether, speaking of this country, the *reverse* of the axiom is true. I do not believe that there would be security for peace by our being in a state which would unfit us to repel attack without several months' preparation. . . .

There is a medium which we ought to observe between preparations for war and the defenceless state in which we might be content to remain if we could have entire confidence in peace.

I have confidence in the disposition and intentions of Louis Philippe and Guizot; but is it possible to review the history of France and its Government for the last fifty years, and feel that confidence with regard to those whom so probable an event as the death of a man of seventy-three years of age may make their successors within a month? . . .

Now as to Guizot himself, he may be perfectly sincere as an individual in controverting the maxim. But as the Minister of France, speaking for France, can he point to her practice as confirming his theory? Was the expenditure of some twenty millions on the fortifications of Paris a confirmation of it? Was this, or was it not, a preparation for war? . . . Has France at this moment an army of

350,000 men? Has she a National Guard of one million of men? Has she made great and successful exertions to improve her marine, and increase her naval strength? . . . Is it not rather late in the day for the Minister of France to exclaim, 'I reject and abominate the doctrine *bellum para, pacem habebis*'?

On resigning office, Sir Robert Peel wrote to Mr. Guizot:

Whitehall: Dec. 18, 1845.

I should deeply regret my retirement from office, if I did not feel assured that our united labours for the last few years have established foundations of concord between England and France strong enough to bear the shock of all ordinary casualities, and of personal changes in the Administration of this country at least.

By means of reciprocal confidence, of reciprocal trust in concurrence of views and purity of intentions (I may add without arrogance after the receipt of your kind note, by means of reciprocal esteem and private regard), we have succeeded in elevating the tone and spirit of the two nations, have taught them to regard something higher than paltry jealousies and hostile rivalries, and to estimate the full value of that moral and social influence which cordial relations between England and France give to each for every good and beneficent purpose. If it had not been for that confidence and esteem, how many miserable squabbles might have swollen into terrible national controversies!

Be assured of my earnest desire to contribute in every capacity, public and private, to the perfection of this great work.

Be assured also of my unalterable friendship based on the sincerest esteem and respect.

When the Conservatives resumed office, the appointment of Lord Ellenborough to the Admiralty increased the apprehensions of Lord Aberdeen, who writes:

Foreign Office: Dec. 29, 1845.

Ellenborough's activity will know no bounds, and I confess it is not without some alarm that I look to the

result. Knowing his military propensities, I expect to hear the 'note of preparation' loudly sounded by himself as well as by the Duke. It may be difficult to resist these *duo fulmina belli*.

Even her Majesty felt some slight misgivings.

Windsor Castle: Dec. 27, 1848.

The only fear the Queen has about Lord Ellenborough is that if he and the Duke of Wellington get together, the warlike preparations by sea and land may be urged a little too strongly.

Sir Robert Peel, however, controlling equally his more and less warlike colleagues, succeeded in maintaining to the end of his government, and handing over to his successor, the *entente cordiale*.

CHAPTER XV.

PATRONAGE, 1841–46.

Exercise of Patronage as Irish Secretary and as Prime Minister—Church Preferment in Ireland, Scotland, England — Peerages—Baronetcies—Pensions and Royal Bounty—Whig Pensions—Wordsworth—Tennyson—Hood — Owen — Bell — Forbes — Murchison — Brown — Hamilton — Faraday—Haydon—Shee.

In a former volume some account was given of Mr. Peel's administration of patronage in Ireland. There, in subordinate office, and with a bad inherited system, he had not a free hand. The country being governed by ascendency of class and creed, political claims almost shut out those of personal qualification. Appointments were made not in respect of fitness in the candidate, but in order to enlist or to retain the goodwill of a patron, family, or friends.

The situation now was different. The First Minister of the Crown could use his patronage as he thought best. In Parliament he must look much to party, family connection, and electoral influence. But in professional advancement, in civil appointments, and in considering claims in science, literature, and art, he could act on his own judgment of what was due to individual merit.

To this he recognised two limits: exclusion of extreme opponents, and preference for those whom as a class he thought it wise and just to conciliate by favours of the Crown.

Of the application in Ireland of these principles examples have been given. Sir Robert Peel would not promote a repealer, an appropriator of Church revenues, or even a vigorous opponent of Mixed Education. And he urged the policy of preferring Roman Catholics, although they might be less well qualified than candidates of other creeds.

In Church patronage he impressed upon successive Viceroys the importance of judging for themselves, looking solely to character and professional merit, in the interest at once of the Church, of the nation, and of the Government responsible for selection.

To Lord De Grey.

Sept. 15, 1841.

You will soon find out who are the men in the Irish Church who *deserve* consideration; I hope they are many.

The Primate is an honourable and disinterested man; he might *occasionally* be consulted by you with respect to the character and qualifications of candidates; but I would not, if I were you, put myself into his hands, or those of any other person.

Let it be understood that in respect to Church preferment you act on your own sense of duty, and on the result of your own inquiries; that the sense of duty prompts you to prefer the claims of professional merit to any other; and that your inquiries are directed to the ascertainment of such claims.

It is absolutely necessary for the best interests of both Church and State that the patronage of the Irish Church should be applied upon such principles.

I will willingly forego any parliamentary support which could only be conciliated by a disregard of them. But the fact is—if such a consideration is to be attended to—that the party interests of a Government are in the long run much better promoted by the honest exercise of patronage than by the *perversion* of it for the purpose of satisfying individual supporters.

Aug. 9, 1843.—When the Primate placed the office of Judge of the Prerogative Court at my disposal, I told him that the return I should make to him would be to recommend for the office the person whom I sincerely believed to be the best qualified.

Mr. —— is not, I apprehend, a Doctor of Civil and Common Law; I am not aware that he ever had any practice in an Ecclesiastical Court. The real motive for select-

ing him would be that he is inefficient in his present office. I really could not reconcile it to my sense of what is right, either towards the Primate or towards the public, to propose him to the Primate. I could not defend in Parliament the making use of this judicial appointment for the convenience of Government arrangements. I would rather restore the nomination to the Primate.

Oct. 23.—I do not think it would be advisable to transfer Dr. —— to England, particularly if he has failed in Ireland in the discharge of his episcopal duties.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Nov. 6, 1844.

I have received the enclosed from an Irish Bishop, who has very little claim to recommend to Irish preferment. His own absence from his duties is a scandal to the Church.

I wish you would inquire into the circumstances, and consider whether any representation to the Primate or Archbishop of Dublin would be likely to have any effect. It would be a very appropriate result of his communication to me if, instead of advancing other members of his family, he were compelled to do his own duties.

On Church patronage in Scotland the Home Secretary, with whom it rested, writes:

From Sir James Graham.

[Nov. 1841.]

The late Government placed the Crown patronage in abeyance, by granting to the communicants a leet of the minister when a vacancy occurred, thus substituting election for nomination.

I am disposed to revert to your practice [at the Home Office]. When unanimity prevails in recommending a particular clergyman to a vacant cure, such recommendation ought to have weight; when the heritors and parishioners are divided, the Crown must exercise its power of selecting; and that selection, with a view to the future

peace and religious unity of the parish, will not usually be in favour of either of the rival candidates.

In the Church of England Sir Robert Peel's exercise of patronage was marked by purity of purpose, just comparison of claims, and strict regard to the interests, as he conceived them, of sound religion.

Seeing the tendencies of one party in the Church to Roman ritual and doctrine, he resolved to give no important post to any one whom on this ground he could not trust. But if in the case of any able and meritorious person he could in some way satisfy himself that there would be no danger to the Church, he did not draw the line so narrowly as Lord Ashley and his party would have advised. Of the Wilberforces he passed by the one who afterwards joined the Church of Rome, but made his brother Dean of Westminster, and Bishop of Oxford. The following letters indicate the kind of inquiries he made.

From Mr. Goulburn.

(*Private.*) Jan. 13, 1842.

My son gives an excellent report of Wilberforce. He has been supposed to be inclined to what is called Puseyism, but he does not consider him more so than a good Churchman ought. He has published two little books, in one of which—an allegory—he gives into the hands of the pupil the staff of Church discipline, with more encomium and urgency than the Low Church party.

Would it not be as well, perhaps, to see the Bishop of Winchester? He is opposed to Puseyism. Wilberforce is his Archdeacon, and he would give you a sincere opinion, which would be good against all future cavil.

My son was satisfied of his real religious feeling and piety, and his parochial administration in Surrey was also excellent.

From Mr. Croker.

Feb. 1842.

Wilberforce is a charming man in society, a most excellent parish priest, one of the best preachers I ever heard, of competent scholarship, of a very deep yet cheerful

piety, and very active and intelligent in temporal matters, and one who will, I doubt not, make a very good bishop.

He has, I think, something of his father's restlessness, and seems, on the whole, to want a little of that *aplomb* and dignity which we see, for instance, in the Bishop of London. But these qualities would be no doubt developed by the episcopal character, and I should say, as far as my judgment goes, that you may safely, both as to Church and State and to your own reputation, make him a bishop when you will.

On March 22, 1845, Sir Robert Peel submitted to the Queen that in the event of a vacancy, by promotion of Dr. Turton, 'there would be public advantage in selecting for the Deanery of Westminster a divine of irreproachable life and sufficient theological attainments, and at the same time eminent as a man of science. It strengthens the Church to have such men occasionally selected for preferment.' Should this principle of selection be approved he would bring under notice Dr. Buckland, a Canon of Christ Church, and Professor of Geology at Oxford. As, however, her Majesty might wish that the Deanery should be offered to Archdeacon Wilberforce, Sir Robert Peel would most cheerfully withdraw any other claims that might interfere with his.

In reply her Majesty wrote:

As Sir Robert Peel has asked the Queen whether she would like to see Archdeacon Wilberforce succeed to the Deanery of Westminster, she must say that such an arrangement would be very satisfactory to us.

Archdeacon Wilberforce therefore became Dean; but shortly afterwards, on his becoming Bishop of Oxford, he was succeeded at Westminster by Dr. Buckland.

To Dr. Buckland.

Nov. 9, 1845.

Although the period has not exactly arrived for making the appointment, yet I cannot longer resist the temptation

to communicate to you my intention of submitting your name to her Majesty for the Deanery of Westminster.

In offering you so prominent a situation in the Church, I rejoice in the opportunity of marking my personal regard and esteem for you, and my sense of the services you have rendered to the University of Oxford, and to the great interests of science, by your unremitting and successful exertions to widen the range of scientific inquiry and knowledge, and to make them conducive to the comfort and improvement of mankind.

I feel that I am adding strength to the Church by placing in an eminent position in the Church one who unites with distinguished intellectual attainments a pure and blameless character and a kind and generous heart.

In answer to a very long letter commenting on Sir Robert Peel's having conferred a bishopric and two deaneries on Heads of Houses at Oxford, he writes:

To Mr. Gladstone.

Whitehall: June 23, 1845.

I think the only Bishop I have appointed from Oxford had ceased to be the Head of a House before the proceedings in reference to the tests and the sermon of Dr. Pusey took place.

I certainly did not exclude the consideration of theological opinions in reference to the unfortunate controversies at Oxford, when I made the appointments mentioned in your letter; but I had no intention by those appointments of implying any sanction on the part of the Crown of the collective opinions or proceedings of the Board of Heads of Houses.

The following letters relate to bishops and deans.

To Lord Stanley.

Sept. 5, 1844.

Cathedral preferment has been of late very much curtailed by Parliament. It is the chief source from which

I am called upon to satisfy the claims founded upon great professional merit and learning, and upon services connected with the great public schools and universities. I have found it so inadequate to this purpose that I have determined to reserve to myself the liberty, unfettered by engagements, of deciding, as vacancies may occur, what are the arrangements best calculated to do justice to individual claims, and to promote the general interests of the Church.

From the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Oct. 31, 1844.

I am satisfied that in the nomination of Mr. Lonsdale to Lichfield you have given an excellent Bishop to the Church, and that in the opinion of all who know him a better appointment could not have been made.

To the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Sept. 26, 1845.

My desire is to place on the Bench the divines best entitled by professional character and merit to preferment.

For the Deanery of Peterborough Dr. Butler is recommended as 'in early years a most distinguished member of the University of Cambridge, and for twenty years Head Master of Harrow. Sir Robert Peel is not aware of any stronger claim on the ground of high character and useful public service.'

The Deanery of Carlisle (in 1844) was offered to Dr. Cardwell in these terms: 'Should this preferment be acceptable to you, you will be indebted for it solely to your high character and the services you have rendered to the University and the Church, justly entitling you to a mark of the Royal favour.' Dr. Cardwell having declined, from reluctance to abandon the part he was taking at Oxford in resisting the Tractarian movement, the Deanery was bestowed on Dr. Cramer, with the approval of Dean Gaisford, who writes: 'I shall always respect Dr. Cardwell for the reason which he has assigned for his refusal. He does not overvalue his continuance here. I believe him at present quite essential to our welfare, in more ways than one.'

On May 30, 1845, Sir Robert Peel recommends for the Deanery of Wells the Master of Balliol College, Dr. Jenkyns, remarking that under his superintendence Balliol had stood pre-eminent among other colleges of Oxford, and that his theological opinions were very sound.

Of him Dean Gaisford says: 'Your choice could not have fallen upon a worthier person, or one more likely to discharge with efficiency the duties of the trust to be placed in his hands.'

The Deanery of Worcester was gracefully offered to Mr. John Peel by the Queen herself, who wrote:

Windsor Castle: June 12, 1845.

The Queen understands that the Deanery of Worcester has become vacant by some new arrangement. Believing that Sir Robert Peel's brother, Mr. John Peel, has a fair claim to such preferment, but being afraid that Sir Robert would perhaps hesitate to recommend him, on account of his near relationship to him, the Queen wishes to offer herself this Deanery, through Sir Robert, to his brother.

From the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Aug. 5, 1845.

The Bishop of Worcester some time ago requested me to mention to you that he was desired by the members of the Chapter of Worcester, with whom he cordially concurred, to express their hope that on the vacancy of the Deanery of Worcester, which is expected to take place at the end of this year, Mr. John Peel might be promoted to that dignity.

I have reason to know that a similar feeling prevails among the Canons of Canterbury, should there be a vacancy there.

This concurrence of sentiment, I may say with sincerity, is founded on the regard and esteem which are due to Mr. Peel's temper and character, and which are common to all who know him.

Mr. John Peel thankfully accepted her Majesty's offer. As regards Canterbury, after objecting to a proposal made through

the Archbishop to combine the Deanery with a living held by an applicant, Sir Robert Peel writes:

From all I have heard of the relative merits of the Canons, I was disposed, after consulting you, to submit the name of Archdeacon Lyall.

He is wholly unknown to me, and I should have made the selection solely from the persuasion that upon the whole, looking to his professional character and services, he was entitled to a preference. You are, however, better acquainted than I can be with the comparative claims.

On a vacancy in the Deanery of Llandaff Sir Robert Peel writes to the Archbishop: 'Can I make this preferment instrumental to the reward and encouragement of professional merit and active professional exertions within the Principality? I should be prepared to advise the Queen so to dispose of the Deanery, if I could ensure the selection of a clergyman *bona fide* on those principles. Do you think you can assist me in ascertaining the comparative claims of those who might fairly be considered competitors for such a distinction on the ground of professional merit? What I wish is to reward the piety and learning of some eminent Welsh clergyman without what is called "interest."'

To an English dignitary who pressed for a substantial living in addition to the preferment he held, Sir Robert Peel replies:

April 5, 1843.

I do not consider patronage as the means of gratifying private wishes of my own. It would be a complete departure from the rule to which I have always adhered.

All patronage of all descriptions, so far from being of the least advantage personally to a Minister, involves him in nothing but embarrassment.

Dec. 19.—I thank you for your consideration of what you deem the unrequited sacrifices which I make in the public service. But I beg to say that my chief consolation and reward is the consciousness that my exertions are disinterested; that I have considered official patronage a public trust, to be applied to the reward and encouragement

of public service, or to the less praiseworthy but still necessary purpose of promoting the general interests of the Government.

The Crown livings in the Prime Minister's gift were 'not more than one-eighth' of the whole, and some of them were 'inadequate to the decent maintenance of the incumbent.' Of all such he proposed to Lord Lyndhurst to transfer the future patronage to 'a member of the Church of England willing to make an additional permanent endowment of the living.'

Under an Act passed by Sir Robert Peel the surplus income of Chapters had been applied to endowment of poor parishes. 'My general rule,' he writes, 'has been to confer with the Bishops of the respective dioceses in respect to these appointments, with a view to conferring them upon the most deserving clergymen who may be candidates for them.'

Of this Act the Bishop of Exeter writes:

I can never be brought to the consideration of this statute, and of the consequences which, with God's blessing, may be hoped from it, without feeling deep thankfulness to its author. May it always bear the name, by which it is now known, 'Sir Robert Peel's Act.'

It is an Act of which, unlike almost all other human legislation, it is *certain* that the effects cannot but be good.

Sir Robert Peel replies:

Your testimony to the beneficial operation of the Act which I introduced, for increasing the means of affording spiritual consolation and instruction and joining in the public worship of Almighty God, is most gratifying to my feelings.

The first academical appointment made by Sir Robert Peel was to the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge.

From the Bishop of London.

Sept. 21, 1841.

Mr. Whewell is a man of extraordinary powers of mind, and his Bridgewater treatise evinces the soundness of his

general religious views. I have some doubt whether he possesses a sufficient staple of divinity to qualify him for the difficult task which I foresee he will have to undertake, of combating or checking the extravagances of the Oxford Tractarians, which are beginning to make themselves felt at Cambridge. If he should be appointed to the Mastership, I hope he will feel the necessity of devoting himself somewhat less to science and more to theology. He will easily master any subject to which he applies his mind.

To the Queen.

Oct. 16, 1841.—Professor Whewell is a member of Trinity College, of the highest scientific attainments. His name is probably familiar to your Majesty as the author of one of the Bridgewater treatises, and of other works which have attracted considerable notice. He is a great favourite among all who have had intercourse with him, from his good temper and easy conciliatory manners.

Though not *peculiarly* eminent as a divine (less so at least than as a writer on scientific and philosophical subjects), his works manifest a deep sense of the importance of religion, and sound religious views.

Sir Robert Peel, after making every inquiry into the subject, and with a deep conviction of the importance of the appointment, humbly recommends to your Majesty that Professor Whewell should succeed Dr. Wordsworth as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

From Dr. Christopher Wordsworth (late Master of Trinity).

In my judgment, who have necessarily thought much and often on the subject, this is the very appointment which was most to be desired by all the best friends of the Society; and for myself I beg to tender you my special thanks for the benefit which you have conferred upon us, and the humble tribute of my admiration of the high and

pure principles by which you have been actuated in the nomination.

The following letters, in order of date, will illustrate Sir Robert Peel's practice in disposing of civil appointments with regard to political service, or disservice.

To Lord De Grey.

Sept. 4, 1842.

I do not see any objection to your compliance with the wishes of the Rev. Mr. Mathew ['Father Mathew'] on behalf of his brother.

There seems every reason to believe that his intentions are pure, and though there is, no doubt, danger in an excitable country like Ireland in systematic assemblages even where the object is so laudable as that of promoting sobriety—though there is risk that combinations for good objects may be perverted to bad ones, yet I think we diminish rather than increase the risk by establishing a hold on the prime mover of the Temperance organisation.

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 21, 1843.

I was astonished by receiving a letter from Disraeli asking for a place for his brother.

His letter is an impudent one, and is considered by me doubly so when I remember his conduct and language in the House of Commons towards the end of the last Session.

I thought it better to answer him by return of post. To have bantered him on the subject of party ties would have been degrading; to have held out vague hopes would have been represented by him as unfair; I determined therefore to give him a civil but flat refusal.

I send you copies of this last and of a former correspondence with him relating to patronage.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 22, 1843.

I am very glad that Mr. Disraeli has asked for an office for his brother. It is a good thing when such a man puts his shabbiness on record. He asked me for office himself, and I was not surprised that being refused he became independent and a patriot. But to ask favours after his conduct last Session is too bad. However, it is a bridle in his mouth.

To Lord Heytesbury.

(*Confidential.*) Drayton Manor: Aug. 16, 1844.

I enclose a letter which Mr. Boyd, M.P. for Coleraine, has addressed to Sir T. Fremantle. The purport of it is to propose that Mr. Boyd's son, a young man of twenty-two years of age, should be Registrar-General under the new Act, as a consideration for Mr. Boyd's vacating Coleraine, in order that my nephew Captain Dawson may succeed Mr. Boyd in Parliament.

This is a gross job, according to the most approved old Irish practice. As it is a job from which a relative of mine would derive advantage, I am doubly anxious that it should be discountenanced and defeated.

To Lord Stanley.

Jan. 17, 1845.

I have applied every single civil office which has been at my disposal to the satisfaction of some claim connected with past political or public service.

To Lord Heytesbury.

April 18, 1845.

Lord Castlereagh, having voted against Maynooth in a former year, gallantly supported us, and spoke in our favour on the present vital occasion. Lord Hillsborough opposed even the leave to introduce the Bill.

I have accepted the resignation of Mr. Pringle [a Scotch Lord of the Treasury] because he cannot support us on the

second reading of the Maynooth Bill. It would seem strange if simultaneously we were to confer a great favour [a Lord-Lieutenancy] on an Irish member who made no sacrifice whatever for us on a vital occasion.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 28, 1845.

As to Charles Buller, if you recall to mind his declarations of opinion about the Irish Church, more extreme, I think, than any yet delivered, you will, I think, agree with me that he could render us no assistance in high parliamentary office.

To Lord Heytesbury.

Feb. 17, 1846.

Chief Justice Bushe was one of the most distinguished men Ireland has produced, of great wit, high personal character, and eloquence which I have rarely heard equalled.

I should think the Chancellor of Ireland would not be sorry to show his respect for the memory of Chief Justice Bushe by some favour bestowed on his son-in-law.

In bestowing honours Sir Robert Peel was more sparing than any other Minister who ever advised the Crown. In five years the peerages conferred were six: three military (Hill, Hardinge, Gough), one for diplomatic service (Ashburton), one for Indian (Ellenborough), and one on Lord Francis Egerton, who became Earl of Ellesmere.

The Duke of Wellington had made seven peers. In later days Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone have created each more than ten times as many. Mr. Gladstone's record (see Sir Edward Hamilton's book) was eighty-one peers of the United Kingdom, and ninety-seven baronets.

The following letters show Peel's practice and motives.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(*Confidential.*) Sept. 19, 1841.

I will ask you to read the enclosed copy of a letter which I have written to a very worthy man and a steady

friend of the Conservative cause. It refers to an application on his part for a Peerage, and this is the answer which I propose to return invariably to such applications. I hope you will agree with me.

It seems to me that the distinction of the peerage, and every other distinction, has been degraded by the profuse and incautious use which has been made of them.

I am very much inclined to give a similar answer as to Baronetcies, Privy Councillorships—honorary, I mean, without office—and everything else of the kind.

(*Enclosure.*)

Considering the state of the House of Lords in reference to the immense additions recently made to its members, I am compelled by an imperative sense of duty to maintain absolute silence on the subject of the Peerage, and thus leave to myself the unfettered discretion of considering and deciding on the claims which may be preferred for it at the time—if that time should ever arrive—when I may be called on to consider further additions to the Peerage, not connected with official service or Government arrangements.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Sept. 21, 1841.

I received last night your letter about the Peerage. I quite agree in your answer.

I gave advice on the same principle to King George IV. and to King William IV., and the principle on which you propose to act is more important at present than it was heretofore.

I quite concur with you, and you may rely upon my concurrence in the application of the principle to every case.

To Mr. Gaskell, M.P.

Oct. 1, 1841.

The example of the late Government is not one which I should be disposed to adopt in respect to the conferring

of Baronetcies or similar distinctions. Nor could I admit any claims founded on their lavish distribution of such distinctions, or on an alleged superiority over those on whom they may have conferred them.

To Lord Eliot.

Sept. 7, 1841.

I tender to Sir Edward Sugden the highest judicial office in Ireland. I cannot accompany that tender with any assurance as to the Peerage, and I shall be very glad to know whether Sir Edward Sugden, exercising his own discretion, will or will not accept the offer thus made.

From (Lord Advocate) Sir William Rae.

London: Oct. 13, 1841.

Your arrangements respecting our Scotch judicial appointments being now completed, my venerable and respected friend the late Lord President has retired into private life as Charles Hope.

In the thirty-seven years during which he has been a chief judge, the following additions have been made to the British Peerage, all resting on the individual favoured having filled high judicial station—Erskine, Stowell, Gifford, Lyndhurst, Tenterden, Plunket, Brougham, Denman, Abinger, Cottenham, Langdale, Campbell.

While these things have been going on here, the only honour conferred upon the Scottish Bench has been the creating the late Sir Hay Campbell a Baronet, when he retired from the Bench in 1810.

In such circumstances I respectfully submit to you that it would be a step just to the profession, and graceful upon your part, if you were now to confer the title of Baronet on the two individuals who have reached the pre-eminent station of Lord Justice General and Lord President of the College of Justice in Scotland; these individuals being Charles Hope and David Boyle, than whom there are no two men who stand higher in every quality befitting the

judicial office, or to whom the country owes a deeper debt of gratitude.

This suggestion has entirely originated with myself, and I have had the less scruple in bringing it under your notice because it can never affect myself.

I wish for no answer to this note, but leave the matter in your hands, assuring you that, whether the suggestion receives effect or not, it shall never be known that a proposal of the kind proceeded from me.

To Sir William Rae.

I doubt the policy of my making the offer which you suggest.

My doubts arise less from my strong unwillingness in general to add to the number of civil distinctions—considering the lavish and improper use made of such distinctions by the late Government—than from my respect for the Judicial Bench in Scotland. The members of it appear to me distinguished honourably for not constantly seeking honours from the Crown.

Since I came into office—that is, within the last six weeks—I have had three applications for British Peerages from Irish judges. I have peremptorily refused them all. I dare say each applicant would indignantly refuse a Baronetcy, were I—which is far from my intention—to propose it to them.

Knowing the Irish estimate of Irish judicial claims to the Peerage, I should be unwilling myself to propose a Baronetcy as the reward of very long and distinguished service in the highest judicial capacity in Scotland.

You must remember too that the late and present Presidents are each of them Privy Councillors; that each of them therefore holds a higher personal rank than that of Baronet; and considering their positions in the country, and their high family connections, I confess to you that I should anticipate the refusal by them of a proposal on my

part, which would place the names of Hope and Bayle in juxtaposition with but below —— and ——.

I think I shall hear from you that on reflection you agree with me.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 28, 1841.

As a general rule, I would advise you, for your own sake, to be as sparing as possible of knighthood. The distinction of being without an honour is becoming a rare and valuable one, and should not become extinct.

To the Right Hon. H. Hobhouse.

Oct. 29, 1841.

If ever I am called upon to make an addition to the existing honorary distinctions, I shall try to limit it as far as possible.

I was rather in hopes that some recent honours that have been conferred would make gentlemen prefer the distinction, which is becoming rare, of an unadorned name.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Nov. 22, 1841.

I must positively decline to give any civil assurances with respect to the future creations of Baronets.

I must dissatisfy many persons, but I will take care that no one shall say that I encouraged hopes which I did not afterwards realise.

To Lord De Grey.

Nov. 23, 1841.

I do not intend to advise her Majesty to create any Baronets on account of the birth of the Prince.

There would not be a simple squire in the land if the fever for honours were not checked.

As to former offers of a Baronetcy, I never yet met with a man in Ireland who had not either himself refused honours from the Crown, or was not the son of a man,

or—like your friend—had not married the daughter of a man who had been hardhearted enough to refuse the solicitations of the Government. In general it is a Peerage that has been refused.

You will become very familiar, before you leave Ireland, with the expression, 'My father over and over again refused a Peerage.'

Nov. 29.—I do not mean to advise the Queen to create any peers on account of the birth of the Prince of Wales.

To Mr. R. M. Milnes, M.P.

Jan. 19, 1842.

I am, perhaps, unduly influenced by the impressions which have been made upon me both by the quantity and quality of the applications. But with these impressions fresh upon me, if you had asked me my opinion as a private friend, whether your father should accept a Baronetcy, I should certainly have said No.

The last batch may have served not only to influence me, but also to influence some of the applications addressed to me.

'I am as good a man as Sir John ——' has probably occurred to several.

You will quite understand me, that it is from the unfeigned respect I have for the talents of your father, that I advise him to retain the distinction of not being a Baronet.

To Mr. George R. Dawson.

Aug. 29, 1844.

I am resolved to be very sparing in the grant of civil honours, and, uninfluenced by any personal objects or private wishes, to consider the power of conferring them as a great public trust, to be administered on some public principle, such as, for instance, the strengthening of the Administration by rewarding those who do not hold office, or, in the case of those who do hold office, bestowing honours as the reward of public service, distinguished

either by the length and fidelity of it, or by the eminence of such service.

Ten years' exclusion from office has brought me claims from half the gentry of this country to be made either Peers or Baronets.

I have nothing whatever to object to a very large proportion of the candidates; but I object to the indiscriminate grant of honours. I have given a promise to no one, but I will frankly say to you, that, considering you have the rank of Privy Councillor, and that you are in the public service, I fear there is no general principle, such as I have above referred to, which would enable me to gratify your wishes.

With respect to the advantage to children, my language to my own is, to gain distinction, and establish the claim for honours (if they covet them) by their own personal exertions and public service.

Towards the close of his ministry Sir Robert Peel offered Baronetcies to three distinguished persons.

To Mr. Hallam.

March 7, 1846.

Will you allow me to have the satisfaction of submitting your name to the Queen for a Baronetcy? I ask the question in the simplest form, for my motive in desiring that the favour of the Crown should be shown towards the most distinguished historian of his time must be obvious without comment or explanation.

From Mr. Hallam.

March 9, 1846.

It is naturally most gratifying to me that I should have been thought worthy of such a favour of the Crown as an hereditary title, which has rarely been conferred for literary or scientific labours, and only upon men of the most distinguished merit. It would be challenging too unfavourable a comparison if I, who have been little more

than a collector of facts, should be placed on a level in reward with those who have carried forward the landmarks of human knowledge.

But, deeply sensible as I am of the value of the honour, I have been induced on reflection to decline it. My own advanced years, and the loss of those who would have shared it with me, have produced an unwillingness to change my denomination; and I am inclined to think that the title would not, on the whole, be of advantage to my son.

To Mr. Hallam.

March 17, 1846.

I am about, I fear, to make a very unreasonable request, for a compliance with it would entail upon you a sacrifice of precious time; but I am emboldened to make it by the recollection that Southey, Wordsworth, and Rogers have granted me a similar favour.

I have formed a collection of portraits of the most eminent men of the time in which I have lived. I miss your portrait from the series, and am very anxious that this great blank should be supplied.

I will employ any artist that you may prefer, should you be disposed kindly to accede to my request. If you have no preference, I should be inclined to select Pickersgill, solely because he has painted for me two of the best portraits I have, those of Cuvier and Professor Owen.

From Mr. Hallam.

March 18, 1846.

It is with much pleasure that I accede to your very flattering proposal. Such a testimony of your esteem must be highly gratifying to me, though I little deserve the terms of eulogy in which you have had the goodness to couch your request.

To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

(*Secret.*) June 20, 1846.

You will understand why I select this particular time for making this communication to you.

Will you ask my old friend your father whether it would be acceptable to him that I should add his name to the very select number of those whom, under certain contingencies, I mean to propose to the Queen for the honour of the Baronetcy?

I should name him to the Queen for a mark of Royal favour as the honoured representative of a great class of the community which has raised itself by its integrity and industry to high social eminence. I should gratify also my own feelings by a mark of personal respect for a name truly worthy of such illustration as hereditary honour can confer.

From Mr. (John) Gladstone.

Carlton Gardens: June 22, 1846.

On Saturday evening my son William made me acquainted with the kind disposition towards me which you had expressed to him.

I am sensibly alive to the unmerited honour which you mean to propose to her Majesty to confer upon me, and still more so for the reasons that influence you in doing it. To my family it will be a source of high gratification, whilst it adds to the many marks of kind confidence we have received at your hands.

Whilst I thus venture to express these honest feelings, I must also beg to refer to a very recent step which I felt it a duty to take, in publishing the opinions I entertain, and the apprehensions I am impressed with of great national evils, which I think likely to be produced by the Repeal of our Corn Laws.

I have long entertained and publicly supported these opinions; they are the fruits of my practical experience and observation of many years, and highly as I have

appreciated the enlarged and sound political principles which have guided the conduct of your Government, yet, when I contemplate the injurious consequences to the public interests that I sadly dread may be produced by the stupendous experiment about to be made, I confess I could not bring myself longer to postpone expressing the opinions I entertained. I feel that I may be in error, and the more so when I consider these opinions are opposed to yours.

To Mr. Gladstone.

June 24, 1846.

I do not think that the publication of your sentiments on the commercial policy of the Government constitutes an impediment to my having the satisfaction of submitting your name to the Queen.

To Mr. Montefiore.

Osborne: June 28, 1846.

I have the satisfaction of acquainting you that the Queen has been graciously pleased to confer on you the dignity of a Baronet.

This mark of Royal favour is bestowed in consideration of your high character, and of your eminent position in the ranks of a loyal and estimable class of her Majesty's subjects agreeing with you in religious profession, and in the hope that it may aid your truly benevolent efforts to improve the social condition of the Jews in other countries, by temperate appeals to the justice and humanity of their rulers.

From Sir Moses Montefiore.

June 29, 1846.

I feel most deeply grateful, and the feeling is greatly enhanced by the gratification I derive from the expression of her Majesty's gracious appreciation of the loyalty of that class of her Majesty's subjects who agree with me in religious profession.

Permit me to state my firm conviction that this mark

of her Majesty's gracious favour will have the most powerful effect in aid of the efforts for the improvement of the social condition of the Jews in other countries.

In no department of patronage was Sir Robert Peel more scrupulously just or more discerning than in the distribution of pensions and the Royal Bounty.

For literary, scientific, and artistic eminence, and for direct services to the Crown, the whole amount that could be granted each year in pensions was 1,200*l.* This the Minister thought most inadequate. 'It would have been better,' he writes, 'if Parliament had given nothing to the Crown than such a pittance for the recognition of such services.' The sum voted for Royal Bounty was still more scanty. Yet from these two sources he did much to reward the highest merit.

One of the first letters of interest on this subject is from the Duke of Wellington. In supporting an application from sisters of a deceased general officer, incidentally he records his own honourable practice.

Strathfieldsaye: March 7, 1842.

I have never asked and never will solicit a favour for any individual whatever. I have friends and relations, as others have, in the public service, in the military and other liberal professions. But they must advance themselves, as I did, by labour, and by making themselves useful to the service and to those conducting it, and not in consequence of private solicitations, particularly from me.

To the Duke of Wellington.

March 7, 1842.

No one can be more thoroughly sensible than I am of your forbearance, and of your perfect disinterestedness in respect to everything connected with the patronage of the Government.

The late Administration, I believe, after the vote of want of confidence, granted away every shilling of the Civil List Pension Fund for the present year.

They had also bequeathed to the new Ministry urgent claims

left by themselves unsatisfied. The chief case was that of Wordsworth, whom Peel had helped in 1835, but who received nothing from the Whigs.

From Mr. Gladstone.

Fasque: Aug. 18, 1842.

I believe that the impediment to Mr. Wordsworth's receiving a pension to a larger amount than that of 150*l.* per annum from the late Ministry was the smallness of the sum left disposable, after 1,000*l.* of the allotted 1,200*l.* had been absorbed for Sir John Newport upon his resignation of office.

Mr. Wordsworth's statement is that the late Government were willing to have given him a pension of 150*l.*, but that the arrangement was declined by him, inasmuch as he thought that amount (as I understood) derogatory to his age and standing, regard being had to the proportions in which literary pensions have usually been assigned.

To Mr. Gladstone.

Oct. 10. 1842.

The writing of this memorandum was a very shabby act. The late Government did nothing for Mr. Wordsworth. They granted 700*l.* or 800*l.* per annum last year to some of the masters who had attended the Queen in her youth, and now —— wants to get for himself the credit of being instrumental in procuring a pension for Mr. Wordsworth.

I wish I had never seen this paper, for it is difficult for me to overcome the obstacle which it presents in my mind to a compliance with the proposal it contains.

I wish you would be good enough to return it to Mr. Wordsworth, and say that if the late Government had intended to grant a pension to him they had ample means of doing it; that frequent opportunities have presented themselves, since the absorption of nearly a year's available means in the grant to Sir John Newport; that I do not attach the slightest weight to this memorandum; and that

I think it ought not to have been written and sent to Mr. Wordsworth.

Can you tell me confidentially what are his circumstances? If they are very straitened, I should be disposed (forgetting the memorandum) to recognise his claim as a very strong one. But I know cases of eminent scientific merit, and literary too, where the means are extremely limited. Can you assist me in procuring, without wounding any one's feelings, information which it is always painful to seek, but which, in order that I may act justly, I must somehow or other procure?

From Mr. Gladstone.

Oct. 11, 1842.

I gathered most distinctly that Mr. Wordsworth's claim was raised at the time when the late Government made the arrangement for Sir John Newport which attracted so much notice. With regard to Mr. Wordsworth's circumstances, I know that they are straitened.

I deem it a great honour to take part in giving effect to ideas so strictly just.

When the new year for pensions began, Sir Robert Peel wrote:

To Mr. Wordsworth.

Oct. 15, 1842.

The total amount which I have, free from absolute engagement, does not come to 600*l.* a year, and I feel convinced that I cannot apply a moiety of that sum in a manner more in accordance with the spirit and intentions with which the grant to the Crown has been made than by placing (with your sanction) your honoured name on the Civil List for an annual provision of 300*l.*

From Mr. Wordsworth.

Rydal Mount: Oct. 17, 1841.

The provision which has been offered me as a mark of favour from the Crown I accept with entire satisfaction.

It will prove a substantial addition to my comforts for the remainder of my life, and, coming as the reward of literary merit from one so eminent in every respect as yourself, the gratification is above measure enhanced. Let me add that the considerate delicacy with which you have stated in your letter everything bearing upon this grant, and the terms in which you express yourself towards me personally, have affected me more than I could find words to utter, had I the courage to seek for them.

As regards Tennyson's pension, his biographer tells a story that does less than justice to Peel.

'The question,' he writes, 'arose whether Sheridan Knowles or my father should be placed on the pension list. Peel knew nothing of either of them. Houghton said that he then made Peel read "Ulysses," whereupon the pension was awarded to Tennyson.'

In fact, Knowles applied in 1844, and got a pension in 1848. In 1845 Mr. Hallam drew Peel's attention to the merits of Tennyson, and his slender means. Peel, having formed 'a very high estimate' of the young poet's powers (but observing his own rule to make no promises), at once offered all he had then at his disposal, a sum of 200*l.* This Hallam declined, the need being less urgent than Peel had been led to suppose. Six months later, when the time arrived for granting pensions, the Minister, having borne the case in mind, offered Tennyson 200*l.* a year.

From Mr. Hallam.

Feb. 11, 1845.

Your distribution of the patronage of the Crown has been so unanimously approved that I am persuaded of your willingness to listen to every recommendation which comes with sufficient weight.

The person to whose merits I would solicit your attention is Mr. Alfred Tennyson, whose name must be familiar to you, even if you have never looked at his writings. Perhaps I do not overstate the fact when I say that he is considered by many as the very first among the younger class of living poets.

He is at least a man of a fertile and thoughtful mind, and few would hesitate to ascribe to him the high praise of genius.

But I would particularly refer you to Mr. Rogers or to Mr. Henry Taylor for their opinions; though I could easily mention others—for example, Mr. Milnes, whose judgment in poetry deserves considerable regard.

Mr. Alfred Tennyson is not by any means prosperous in worldly circumstances, but much the reverse. In his moral character no man can be more honourable. He was the most intimate friend of a son of mine, untimely snatched away.

To Mr. Hallam.

Feb. 15, 1845.

I have read some of Mr. Tennyson's works, and have formed *a very high estimate* of his powers.

The only means I have of relieving the embarrassments in which he is involved is by a contribution on the part of the Queen from a very limited public fund, which I have applied occasionally to the relief of literary men or those connected with them.

If through your kind offices I could convey, in the manner most acceptable to his feelings, the sum of two hundred pounds to Mr. Tennyson, as a recognition on the part of the Queen of his high merits and distinction as a literary man, I will do it with the greatest pleasure.

There are not the means of making any permanent provision for Mr. Tennyson. Every shilling of the miserable pittance granted to the Crown for Civil List pensions has been appropriated.

From Mr. Gladstone.

Feb. 24, 1845.

Mr. Tennyson is but a young man for a pensioner, I should think under thirty-five.

As to his genius, I will not trouble you with any eulogy of mine, but will observe that Mr. Rogers told me he con-

sidered him by much the first among all the younger poets of this generation.

Secondary and external faults, conspicuous enough, drew upon him some years ago an unfavourable article in the 'Quarterly.' Since that time he has republished, and the general opinion seems to be that he has done much in getting rid of those defects, and that his genius has greatly ripened.

Still it appears established that, though a true and even a great poet, he can hardly become a popular, and is much more likely to be a starving one.

To Mr. Hallam.

Sept. 21, 1845.

I have not forgotten our correspondence respecting Mr. Alfred Tennyson.

There exist the means of appropriating in the present year an annual sum of 400*l.* to the recognition and reward of eminent literary and scientific merit. One half of this I propose to grant to Professor Forbes, of Edinburgh.

The impressions left on my mind by the poems of Mr. Tennyson, confirmed as they are by the highest testimonies I could receive in his favour—your own and that of Mr. Rogers—will induce me, should it be agreeable to Mr. Tennyson, to submit his name to the Queen, with my humble recommendation to her Majesty that a pension of 200*l.* per annum should be granted to him for his life.

From Mr. Hallam.

Sept. 22, 1845.

I cannot sufficiently express my sense of the generous consideration which you have given to the case of Mr. Alfred Tennyson, and of the delicate manner in which you have offered to submit his name to her Majesty for a pension. It is really my opinion that the favour of the Crown will have been shown towards a man of great poetical genius, and one, as I can add, of almost chivalrous honour and purity of character; and that you will have the response of

applause from the lovers of poetry, especially the younger of both sexes, who regard Tennyson as the first name among the later cultivators of that sacred field.

From Mr. Tennyson.

Cheltenham: Sept. 29, 1845.

I have received a letter from Mr. Hallam, wherein he informs me that you propose (if agreeable to myself) submitting my name to the Queen with your recommendation to her Majesty that a pension of 200*l.* per annum should be granted to me.

I accept your offer; and believe me (though I am not one who says much) deeply sensible of your kindness, and not ungrateful for that delicacy which doubles an obligation in conferring it.

To Mr. Tennyson.

Oct. 1, 1845.

I rejoice that you have enabled me to fulfil the intentions of Parliament by advising the Crown to confer a mark of Royal favour on one who has devoted to worthy purposes great intellectual powers.

An interesting correspondence arose in the case of the well-known humorist, Hood.

To Mr. Hood.

Nov. 16, 1844.

You perhaps think that you are known to one with such multifarious occupations as myself merely by general reputation. But I assure you that there can be little which you have written that I have not read, and that there are few who admire more than myself the good sense and good feeling which have taught you to infuse so much fun and merriment into writings correcting folly and exposing absurdities, and yet never trespassing beyond those limits within which wit and facetiousness are not very often confined.

I am not conferring a private obligation upon you, but am fulfilling the intentions of the Legislature, which has

placed at the disposal of the Crown a certain sum (miserable indeed in amount) in recognition of public claims on the bounty of the Crown.

One return I shall ask of you, that you will give me the opportunity of making your personal acquaintance.

From Mrs. Hood.

Jan. 14, 1845.

It is with shame and timidity I venture to address you, but I trust in your goodness to pardon me when I have stated the urgency of my distress.

My husband's present dangerous state of health, and my earnest wish to preserve him on his sick bed from the intrusion and painful annoyances of law proceedings, induce a boldness in me quite foreign to my nature.

The assistance you afforded my poor husband from the Government funds enabled him to pay off a great part of his liabilities, but there still remain a few creditors who threaten to proceed immediately. If you, sir, through me, would avert these distresses from my dear husband, I cannot express the blessing you would confer upon me. He does not know of this application, nor have I consulted any friend, as I fear his displeasure.

He has kept his bed for two months, suffering most distressingly. Still, with a power quite astonishing, he wrote and drew last month at intervals for his magazine, a strong desire to afford us a subsistence urging him to exertion almost incredible. I fear he is too ill to do the same for the present month.

He dwells with continual pleasure on your handsome letter to him.

To Mrs. Hood.

Jan. 17, 1845.

Enclosed is the sum of 100*l.*, which I beg you to apply to the payment of those demands which are the most pressing. I trust this will relieve your anxiety, and prevent any immediate obstacle from the impatience of creditors to the recovery of your husband.

From Mr. Hood.

Feb. 17, 1845.

Dear Sir,—We are not to meet in the flesh. Given over by my physicians, and by myself, I am only kept alive by frequent instalments of mulled port wine. In this extremity, I feel a comfort for which I cannot refrain from again thanking you, with all the sincerity of a dying man, and at the same time bidding you a respectful farewell.

Thank God, my mind is composed, and my reason undisturbed, but my race as an author is run. My physical debility finds no tonic virtue in a steel pen. Otherwise I would fain have written one more paper—a forewarning one, against an evil, or the danger of it, arising from a literary movement in which I have had some share; a one-sided humanity, the opposite of that catholic Shakspearian sympathy which felt with King as well as peasant, and duly estimated the mortal temptations of both stations.

Certain classes, at the poles of society, are already too far asunder. It should be the duty of our writers to draw them nearer by kindly attraction, not to aggravate the existing repulsions, and place a wider moral gulf between rich and poor, with hate on one side and fear on the other.

But I am too weak for this task, the last I had set myself. It is death that stops my pen, you see, not a pension.

God bless you, sir, and prosper all your measures for the benefit of my beloved country.

In comparing scientific claims Sir Robert Peel's habit was to consult his personal friends eminent in that department, obtaining from them impartial and interesting testimony to some of the greatest names.

From Sir John Herschel.

Jan. 2, 1842.

There are few ways in which the Royal Bounty can be more availably bestowed for the interests of science than

by relieving men of a very high order of attainment, and who have distinguished themselves for original research, during those years while their powers are still unimpaired and available for discovery, from the necessity of looking either to public or private instruction as their chief means of support.

The higher and far the most important pursuits of science—those which are directed to the improvement of its theories—are in a very remarkable degree unremunerating, and the man who devotes himself to them with a determination to give his genius fair play must lay aside all hope of fortune.

As you request my opinion on the subject, I have not the smallest hesitation in stating that I regard Professor Forbes as holding a very high place indeed among those who have distinguished themselves by their capacity for original research, and have demonstrated that capacity by scientific discoveries of great theoretical importance and interest.

From Mr. Airy (Astronomer Royal).

There is no person in the Kingdom who possesses equal claims to public notice on purely scientific grounds with Professor Forbes.

From Dr. Buckland.

Oct. 4, 1842.

Owen has for some years been without an equal in this country, and I know not his superior in the world.

Hamilton is in the same category with Herschel and Sir D. Brewster, with more genius than either of them.

From Professor Owen.

Royal College of Surgeons: Nov. 1, 1842.

Your goodness will pardon me if my feelings render me unequal to thanking you as I ought. The manner in which you have deigned to make the offer far outweighs in

my estimation the handsome provision which will enable me to pursue my studies with renewed ardour, and to show by increased exertion my gratitude for the Royal favour.

Jan. 19, 1846.—Permit me to offer my grateful acknowledgments for your most generous and timely grant to my zealous fellow-labourer in Comparative Anatomy, Mr. Goadby.

When he received it, with the addition so kindly made and so unexpected by him, his spirits had been bowed down and his constitution was suffering; both seem now to be completely re-established.

From Mr. (afterwards Sir Roderick) Murchison.

Feb. 10, 1845.

The honour [of knighthood] which the Crown, with your good wishes and recommendation, is about to confer on me cannot fail to give fresh energy to one who, though he is old enough to have fought for a former King at Vimiera and Corunna, has still the loyal feeling of a British soldier that the smile of his own Sovereign far exceeds any other reward.

From Dr. Buckland.

Oxford: Aug. 19, 1843.

Brown is universally regarded by the best judges as the first botanist now living; the great work of Humboldt, 'Plantæ Equinoctiales,' being dedicated 'Roberto Brown, Botanicorum facile principi.' The secretary of the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh considers that no botanist equal to Brown has existed since Linnæus, and the Professor of Botany at King's College is of opinion that Brown's greatest work contains the germs of almost every great discovery that has been unfolded since. Though placed, as I have seen him, at the right hand of Princes and Presidents in Germany, he is comparatively little known in England. His extreme modesty has kept him unduly from the eye of the public.

From Lady Bell.

Sept. 9, 1843.

Your letter has fulfilled every earthly desire of the widow of Sir Charles Bell. That his labours in the cause of science should be appreciated by his country was perhaps the noble weakness of my husband, and I have pride in reflecting that he foresaw what Sir Robert Peel would do. In his name and for myself I thank you.

To Lord Eliot.

Nov. 4, 1843.

I write to Sir William Hamilton, the Astronomer Royal, offering him a pension of 200*l.* a year.

I was unwilling to give less to him than was given last year to Professor Owen, and this year to Mr. Brown, the great botanist, the companion and collaborateur of Sir Joseph Banks.

Men of science naturally dislike to have distinctions drawn between the amounts of pecuniary rewards, when such distinctions may be regarded by the world as indications of inferior pretensions.

From Mr. Faraday.

March 16, 1846.

I venture to offer the enclosed as the most fitting return to you from one whose occupation in life must be the sole motive for your recent and former kindness, and I hope you will believe it is accompanied with the unfeigned respect and admiration of one who, though he has but few opportunities and no power of judgment in such things, cannot but admire that in the government and counsels of the country which is manifest in its effects.

To Mr. Faraday.

March 17, 1846.

I am much obliged to you for the Memoir on Electricity. I had heard from some of my scientific friends of your recent experimental researches into that most important element, and of their success. It will be very gratifying to

me, when I have a few hours of comparative leisure, to read the result of your observations and inquiry in a memoir presented to me by yourself as a token of your personal esteem.

Among artists, nearly the last case with which Sir Robert Peel dealt was the saddest—that of Haydon, the historical painter. He had been helped before, and his renewed appeal found his benefactor immersed in the debate which led to his fall. A colder heart might not have recognised the genuine cry of despair, or might have put off acting till too late. Sir Robert Peel sent instant aid. Of several to whom similar applications had been made, the one who answered promptly was the busiest man of all. This moved poor Haydon's deepest feelings. Hence his touching words of last farewell.

From Mr. Haydon.

June 15, 1846.

I have suffered so much misery that I really begin to fear the brain. I am on the very brink of ruin again, and unless I can get immediate relief or employment, I must be in a prison. Do I deserve this? Have I not done my duty to Art?

I begin to think that I am a specimen of how far a human being can bear without insanity. My exhibition of Aristides and Nero has failed. I am at this moment without one guinea in the world, not an order, and 138*l.* to pay this next ten days, when failure must be destruction.

When I think of the opulence with which I am surrounded, the thousands showering on others all round me, of how much self-interest I have sacrificed to advance the taste of the nation, indeed, sir, it is excruciating pain. Nothing but the deep religious feeling of my nature keeps me from violence.

I am now in the midst of Alfred, the third in my series. The purchase of Aristides would save me. Let me beg you to see it, and judge if I overrate its deserts.

For God's sake do not treat this letter as an artificial appeal to your feelings.

To Mr. Haydon.

June 16, 1846.

I am sorry to hear of your continued embarrassments. From a limited fund at my disposal I send towards your relief the sum of fifty pounds.

From Mr. Haydon.

June 16, 1846.

I thank God with all my heart for your sympathy. You have relieved me and saved my family from immediate ruin. But if others do not follow your noble example, or my picture does not sell, I dread to reflect.

God bless you, Sir Robert Peel, with all our souls and hearts.

June 22.—Life is insupportable. Accept my gratitude for *always* feeling for me in adversity. I hope I have earned for my dearest wife security from want. God bless you.

(*Endorsement.*)

Last letter from Haydon. It must have been written a few minutes before he deprived himself of life. Observe the word 'wife' had been originally written 'widow,' and been altered by him.

A pension conferred on the President of the Royal Academy being settled on his wife, upon her untimely death it was transferred to his daughters. This boon, announced with Sir Robert Peel's habitual delicacy, evoked a warm response.

From Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A.

The manner and spirit in which this favour has been conferred, and the sympathy you have shown for my incurable domestic calamity, convince me that you will justly appreciate feelings which cannot be adequately expressed.

You allude, my dear Sir, to your retirement from office.

During a long life I have never allowed myself to be influenced by any political or party feeling, a conduct which I conceived to be most befitting my position as an artist. The rancorous hostility, however, with which you have been recently so unjustly assailed by those

> Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,

has extorted from me one departure from a feeling so long observed, and compels me to declare my conviction, that the important services which you have rendered to your country, the generous sacrifices which you have made to her interests, and the extraordinary powers you have displayed in effecting your patriotic objects, have secured for you a proud station among the most eminent statesmen that the annals of history have ever presented to the admiration and gratitude of an enlightened people.

Pardon, my dear Sir, this political outbreak of a man who, though not wise enough to be silent, is too old, and too honest, to be insincere.

CHAPTER XVI.

1846–47

Withdrawal to Drayton—Farewell Letters to the Queen—Messages from the Political World—Hume—Brougham—Graham—Wellington—Aberdeen—Bulwer—Dr. List—Bunsen—Whig Administration in Ireland—Correspondence with Hardinge.

On leaving office Sir Robert Peel withdrew to his country seat at Drayton. There, in the lovely summer weather, with his wife and children, his books, and his farm, he found it easy to forgive the enemies whose conspiracy had relieved him from the toils and cares of state. And instead of angry words and cries hurled at him face to face, there came to him, as from a world which he had left, with no unpleasing frequency, warm tributes of respect and gratitude, political regrets, and personal congratulation.

One of the first letters to follow him to his peaceful home was from his Sovereign.

Osborne: July 1, 1846.

The settlement of the Oregon question has given us the greatest satisfaction. It does seem strange that at the moment of triumph the Government should have to resign.

The Queen read Sir Robert Peel's speech with great admiration.

The Queen seizes this opportunity (though she will see Sir Robert Peel again) of expressing her *deep* concern at losing his services, which she regrets as much for the country as for herself and the Prince.

In whatever position Sir Robert Peel may be, we shall ever look on him as a kind and true friend.

To the Queen.

Drayton Manor: July 2, 1846.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and from this place of profound tranquillity and repose, presenting such a contrast with all that has been recently passing, offers to your Majesty his grateful acknowledgments for your Majesty's most kind recognition of his humble efforts faithfully to discharge his duty to your Majesty as your Majesty's chief Minister.

If Sir Robert Peel's Administration has been in some respects a successful one, much of its success must be attributed to the cordial support and generous confidence which he has at all times received from your Majesty.

He can truly say that his chief, perhaps only, cause of regret in quitting office is the necessary interruption of that kind confidence in respect to other than purely public matters with which he was honoured by your Majesty and by the Prince, and which was so truly gratifying to his feelings.

Your Majesty and the Prince will find that through the remainder of his life he will not be unmindful of it; and your Majesty knows that his attachment and devotion will spring from purer sources than the desire to return to power.

One favour he has to ask of your Majesty. He knows your Majesty will recollect your gracious promise to give to him the portraits of your Majesty and the Prince. He hopes they will be in that simple attire in which, when he has had the frequent happiness of being admitted to your private society, he has seen your Majesty and the Prince.

The additional favour he asks is that your Majesty will have the kindness to permit the portrait of the Prince of Wales to be included in the picture which contains your Majesty's portrait.

The Prince was born very shortly after Sir Robert Peel entered into your Majesty's service, and has always been regarded by Sir Robert Peel with even a warmer interest



DRAYTON MANOR

than that which under any circumstances the feelings of loyalty and devotion to your Majesty would have inspired.

By the grant of this request, and by the kind assurance your Majesty has already given him that he will retain a place in the regard and esteem of your Majesty and the Prince, your Majesty will have conferred on Sir Robert Peel the highest reward it was in your Majesty's power to bestow.

From the Queen.

Buckingham Palace: July 3, 1846.

The Queen this morning received Sir Robert Peel's very kind letter from Drayton, and thanks him much for it. It affected her much, and she can hardly believe that Sir Robert is no longer her Minister.

The Queen most readily grants his request that the Prince of Wales should be included in the portrait of herself which she has promised to Sir Robert Peel, and both the Prince's and her portraits shall be painted as Sir Robert kindly wishes.

The approaching leave-takings, particularly of Sir Robert Peel, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Liverpool, will be very painful to the Queen.

Drayton must be most soothing to Sir Robert Peel, surrounded by his family, and far away from all the turmoil and annoyance he has gone through.

We regret Osborne much, and shall return there on Thursday.

Of other letters samples follow.

From Mr. Joseph Hume.

June 29, 1846.

I am sorry to think of your retiring from power, after doing such immense good for the nation. But your speech of this evening has satisfied me that you could not, under existing circumstances, do otherwise; and with the relief from incessant labour I hope you will enjoy your triumph —for such it is—of sound principles over long-established ones.

From the Rev. Dr. Edgar.

Belfast: July 1, 1846.

My poor country has been the great gainer by your Government, and her poor, who but for your foresight would now have been perishing by thousands, can never sufficiently express what they owe to their great benefactor.

With your political measures I do not interfere, but as a minister of peace I cannot but rejoice in the sublime moral triumphs you have won.

From Sir James Graham.

July 1, 1846.

I met Brougham in the street this morning. His excitement is still at its height. He said he wished you 'to hold a conciliabule' to decide on the course to be taken in both Houses.

It is clear that he seeks to organise an immediate Opposition, and to make common cause with all who will join it. That is not my view of the course which public duty demands, and Brougham is not the associate whom I should choose.

From the Duke of Wellington.

July 2, 1846.

Lord John Russell came to me yesterday, and delivered a message from her Majesty requiring me to continue in command of the army.

I requested him to recollect that I could not form any political connection with him, or have any relation with the course adopted by Government in Parliament; but that on the other hand I felt as I had done in December, that I could have no political concert with any party opposed to the Government so long as I held the office of Commander-in-Chief.

Lord John then told me that he was anxious to have

in the Cabinet the assistance of those members of the late Cabinet whose opinions upon certain subjects appeared to differ but little from those of himself and his friends; and he mentioned particularly Lord Dalhousie, Lord Lincoln, and Mr. Herbert.

He asked me if I would mention to Lord Dalhousie his intention to make such a proposition, in order that Lord Dalhousie might have time to consider of it, and might not think himself under the necessity of giving an immediate answer, without giving to the subject full consideration.

I told him that I was sensible that it was important to a person in his position to avoid to make such offers without having some certainty that the offer would be accepted, and that I would convey his message.

He answered immediately that, on the contrary, he and Lord Lansdowne were anxious that it should be known that they wished to have the assistance of all who might appear to concur in opinion with them on subjects likely to come under consideration.

From Sir James Graham.

July 2, 1846.

Lord John mentioned to the Duke his intention to offer seats in his Cabinet to Lord Dalhousie, Lord Lincoln, and Sidney Herbert.

Last night a letter couched in the same terms was received by the three. It announces the Queen's command to form a Government, refers to our commercial policy, to which he and his friends had given a zealous support; expresses an opinion that their presence in the Cabinet would promote the Queen's service and the public welfare, offers them seats in the new Cabinet, but postpones his explanations of general policy until the preliminary point of acceptance of office has been decided.

All three have declined the offer on the double ground of public duty and of private honour.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Drayton Manor: July 2, 1846.

I wish you were here; at least if that complete solitude and repose, for which I am as 'hungry' as Guizot can be, had the same charms for you.

I particularly admire Guizot's letters, especially those that touch on private rather than public concerns. They are beautifully expressed.

Lord Aberdeen replies:

I send you a note received from Madame de Lieven. I think she writes as well as Guizot, which is saying much.

Princess Lieven to Lord Aberdeen.

Paris: le 1er Juillet, 1846.

Je suis pleine de tristesse, et en même temps d'orgueil pour vous. Jamais Ministère n'a quitté les affaires sous des auspices plus magnifiques, plus glorieux; tué le jour de la plus grande victoire; annonçant sa retraite le jour où il annonce un autre triomphe en Amérique. A l'intérieur, à l'extérieur, les plus grands succès. C'est dramatique, c'est superbe, mais je recommence—c'est triste.

L'opinion publique ici est toute pour Peel et pour vous. Le ministre libéral, le ministre ami de la France; cela fait resonner toutes les fibres françaises.

To Sir James Graham.

July 3, 1846.

I do heartily rejoice that we have concluded with honour a successful career as well as a desperate conflict.

I could not have sustained it much longer, and had many warnings of this, which I was determined to disregard, while there was a chance of failure in that which had become the chief and indeed sole object of our ambition.

Few know what I have been suffering from noises and pain in the head.[1]

With what pleasure we shall talk over the stirring events of the last five years! Your cordial support and entire and unreserved confidence have been my chief stay; and I look forward with the utmost satisfaction to the continuance out of office of an intimacy and cordial friendship which began before the ties of official relations and a common responsibility united us.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor: July 4, 1846.

I am heartily glad that the offer of the command of the army has been made to the Duke, and that he has accepted it. The Queen mentioned the subject to me at Osborne.

I told her that it would be monstrous to see the British army commanded by any other man than the Duke of Wellington, and I told her too that the Duke would feel so convinced that it was for the interests of the army, of the country, and of the Queen that he should hold the command as a great office independent of party connections, that he would act on his own sense of public duty, and would retain it.

Five years is a long tenure of office with the Reformed Parliament. It is more than enough for my strength.

I doubt whether our power could have been brought to a close under more favourable circumstances.

You must come and see me now, and we will talk of farming and of the past.

From Sir James Graham.

July 4, 1846.

I return the letter from Bradford. The heartfelt tribute of grateful thanks from poor and suffering millions is some compensation for the malignant hatred and abuse of pampered landowners.

[1] Sir Robert Peel mentioned privately to Mr. Cardwell that the pressure was relieved by frequent bleeding at the nose.

I need not assure you of the warmth or sincerity of my attachment, or of my fixed intention to act in strict union with you. My friendship and my sense of public duty have led me cordially to co-operate with you for the last ten years in every vicissitude of fortune. I do not remember one serious difference of opinion between us in this long and trying period. I am too old to make new alliances. I shall remember our past union with pride, and I hope that till the close of our lives we may never be divided.

From Miss Bisset.

July 14, 1846.

The more I hear of your incessant occupation at the moment I presumed to write, the offering of a proper acknowledgment of your goodness appears daily less practicable.

Your kind heart will be gratified when I mention the blessed effects already produced by your noble gift. Under Providence you have preserved a whole family. Your deeds of mercy to poor Mr. Haydon are registered in heaven; and I feel persuaded that your equally benevolent assistance to us will be so recorded.

The worshippers of great genius will venerate the first statesman of this and every other age. The lovers of real goodness will value the good husband, the kind father, and the benefactor of mankind.

From Sir Henry Bulwer.

Madrid: July 18, 1846.

You have not only accomplished the attainment of a great object, but achieved the most difficult task of going out of office with far more power than a minister usually possesses, and with far more popularity than a leader of opposition usually acquires. I know no example of a similar position.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 14, 1846.

I do not know how other men are constituted, but I can say with truth that I find the day too short for my present

occupations, which consist chiefly in lounging in my library, directing improvements, riding with the boys and my daughter, and pitying Lord John and his colleagues.

Sir Robert Peel made time, however, to advocate the principles of Free Trade abroad, especially in a well-known answer to an address from Elbing. This was regarded by his opponents as a symptom of disordered brain. 'The Elbing letter,' Lockhart writes to Croker, 'sent furieusement l'apoplexie.' Peel wrote also to Dr. List:

Drayton Manor: Aug. 22, 1846.

I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of the letter which you have addressed to me, and of the memorandum which accompanied it. I thank you for this communication, and have given it an attentive perusal.

The sentiments which it expresses in favour of the policy and reciprocal advantage of an intimate union between this country and Germany have my cordial concurrence; a concurrence as complete and unqualified as is my dissent from your views as to the mode by which that intimate union can be most effectually promoted.

You are of opinion that England ought cheerfully to acquiesce in the maintenance of high duties on the import into Germany of the products of English industry, for the purpose of benefiting the people of Germany, of conciliating their good-will towards England, and of thus encouraging amicable relations between the two countries.

I, on the contrary, am of opinion that the people of Germany will be benefited by their access to the products of English industry in exchange for their own, that the good-will to be purchased by denying that access will be the good-will not of the people of Germany, but of comparatively a very small portion of that people, either interested in the manufactures with which English industry would compete, or labouring under erroneous impressions as to the principles which ought to govern the commercial relations of two great countries; and that we shall be laying the best foundation for reciprocal amity and for an intimate

union between Great Britain and Germany by relaxing the restraints on our commercial intercourse, and by the diminution and not the increase or the maintenance of the present protective duties.

You observe that views in favour of protection are at present uppermost in the minds of the German public; that it does not matter, with regard to the object of your memoir, whether such views are true or not—it matters only whether they exist or not.

I must be permitted, with all due respect for your authority, to doubt the allegation that such views are uppermost in the mind of the people of Germany; but if they are, I totally dissent from your position that it matters not whether such views are or are not correct.

If they prevail, and if they are not correct, they ought to be combated by those who, as statesmen, conduct the public councils in Germany, and, let me add, by those also who, as writers on political economy and the commercial policy of nations, undertake to enlighten the public mind, and to form and direct the public opinion of their fellow-countrymen.

I for one believe those views to be completely erroneous, to be injurious to Germany, injurious to England, and impediments to that intimate union which I wish to see established and confirmed between two powerful nations whose political interests are so nearly identical. I am bound, therefore, frankly to inform you that I cannot advise that acquiescence in them on the part of the ruling authorities in this country which it is the object of your memorandum to inculcate.

From Chevalier Bunsen.

4 Carlton Terrace: Aug. 26, 1846.

I have duly received and delivered your very clear and positive answer to Doctor List's memoir. It so happened that the German papers brought at the same moment the translation of your answer to the Elbing address. I sent both to List, that he might see your perfect consistency.

He is a sincere German patriot, although the means he proposes for the benefit of his country cannot be admitted by either of us to be the true ones.

The course of events was now to throw its light on Sir Robert Peel's recent policy in Ireland. The Whigs had hardly been six weeks in office when the state of that country became alarming, and grew more and more so through the autumn and winter. Many letters, not untinged by party feeling, give the impressions of well-informed Conservatives as to the failure of the new Government with their enormous staff to deal effectively with famine. Sir Robert Peel's frank readiness to assist them stands in contrast to the use they had made of his embarrassments in Ireland to displace him.

From Lord Lincoln.

Aug. 13, 1846.

Every reader of the debates must see that there is the want of a master mind in the Government, and that none of the Cabinet are able to take an effective line, even in the business of their own departments. Anything, however crude, that is brought forward or suggested by any independent member is instantly adopted in the *paulo post futurum*, and 'taken into mature consideration.'

From Mr. Goulburn.

Aug. 13, 1846.

When I met Lord John Russell in the House this morning, he took me aside and stated that the account of the potatoes in Ireland was alarming—so much worse than it had been when we were called upon to consider it at a later period of the year—that he wished to consult me as to what had better be done.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Aug. 31, 1846.

Several things have happened since we parted which I sincerely regret. But all are as dust in the balance com-

pared with the permanent good which the public will enjoy from the settlement of the Corn and Sugar questions on sound principles, the first fruit of which is the important relaxation of the hostile tariffs of the United States.

What would have been our position now, on the eve of a general election, with the potato crop destroyed and the price of provisions rising, if we had maintained the Corn Law, and left the League lords of the ascendant, both in argument and popular feeling?

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 2, 1846.

In spite of philosophy and rigid principles of political economy, some immediate and decisive effort must be again made for averting the danger of sudden scarcity in districts both of Ireland and Scotland.

I am firmly convinced that the permanent adjustment of the Corn Laws has rescued the country, and the whole frame of society, from the hazard of very serious convulsion.

Examine any other course. Take the choice of the least objectionable, and what a conflict should we have been engaged in, with the certainty of the issue degrading the aristocracy and the proprietors of land.

Suppose we had taken suspension for six months. Can any man in his senses believe, either that in the present state of the potato crop the suspension could have been allowed to expire, and all the high duties of 1842 to revive on the 1st of August last; or that after that which would have been inevitable—a second suspension—the Corn Law of 1842 could have survived failure on the two first occasions on which it was put to the test?

It would have gone by the board, forcibly wrenched out of the hand of Parliament, possibly after the excitement of indignant feelings which the lapse of years would not have assuaged. No interval of grace, no modified scale, no voluntary concession.

And with these things staring them in the face, at

least, if not penetrating their reason and conviction, there are people talking of reviving the law of 1842, and re-establishing the former measure of protection.

Monteagle writes to me that he is gone with a heavy heart to Ireland, fearing that what has been done will be wholly incommensurate with the evil.

I hear of nothing but gratitude from Ireland for our measures of relief. Every Relief Committee gives us a parting benediction.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Sept. 4, 1846.

The farmers in this neighbourhood will not venture again to plant potatoes on a large scale, and the poor are gladly resorting to the use of Indian meal and of bread compounded of Indian meal and American flour, which is cheap and nutritious; and happily their wages are higher than ever was known, and they are contented.

I consider it the most fortunate event of my life to have been enabled in any degree, however slight, to contribute to the attainment of this national good, which compensates for a severe dispensation of Providence. And you will think of this and be comforted, when friends forsake you, when enemies assail you, and when the tinsel of the vanities of public life becomes tarnished in your estimation.

From Lord Lincoln.

Sept. 3, 1846.

Many people in Ireland continue to write to me as an ex-Secretary, and great dissatisfaction seems to prevail with the new Government measures for meeting distress. My own strong impression is that they are ill-judged.

From Prince Albert.

Osborne: Aug. 16, 1846.

The visit to Ireland is given up for this year. Lord John advised its being postponed, on account of the great

distress apprehended from the total failure of the potato crop.

It is only a week ago that poor Lord Granby assured his Protectionist friends that one heard nothing of potatoes any more, now that they had served your purpose.

'They have ears, but hear not; eyes, but see not.'

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Sept. 26, 1846.

The real extent and magnitude of the Irish difficulty are under-estimated by the Government, and cannot be met by measures within the strict rules of economical science. It is clear that O'Connell is much alarmed.

Ireland itself is softened in all its parts by this sudden calamity, and capable of receiving new permanent impressions, if a master hand can be found to direct them. I doubt whether John Russell will be found equal to this occasion.

From Lord Jocelyn.

Tollymore Park, County Down: Oct. 13, 1846.

The Government have shown a great want of foresight in not laying up stores and depots of grain through the country, owing to which I fear many thousands in the South and West will perish from starvation.

From Mr. John Young, M.P.

Oct. 23, 1846.

It is scarcely possible to describe or conceive the amount of panic, confusion, and exaggeration that prevails. As for the peasantry themselves, they are extremely dispirited, quite heartbroken, and in fact are suffering great privation, which they endure with much patience.

Politics are quite in abeyance, but you will be glad to hear that in this county there is not, so far as I can learn, the remotest idea of giving me any opposition. The Catholic clergy are particularly civil. I have met several, and they all speak with gratitude and respect of you.

From Prince Albert.

Windsor Castle: Nov. 8, 1846.

In Ireland the state of things is frightful, and the Irish baffle all human ingenuity to help them, by their behaviour. Many of your predictions and apprehensions are being realised.

From Lord Lincoln.

Dublin: Nov. 17, 1846.

Having now travelled through every part of this country, I am more than ever convinced of the fact that, if Ireland has been your difficulty, it is an equally great one to the Whigs, and will soon be a much greater.

As regards political feeling the change is extraordinary, and would be incredible amongst any less volatile people. There is in general a sort of underhand liking for the Lord Lieutenant, but a universal feeling of contempt and dislike pervades all classes against the Government, whilst in every direction one hears the declaration that they 'must have Sir Robert Peel back.' Of course this desire is accompanied by extravagant notions of what you could and would have done.

The distress in many parts rather exceeds than falls short of the daily accounts in the newspapers, and the working of the Labour Rate Act is inflicting mischiefs both moral and financial which, if continued for a few months longer, will be felt for years.

In whole counties you do not see a plough at work, or a man preparing the ground for next year's produce, and the whole population is employed in works, of which inutility is the happy exception, but great and substantial mischief the general characteristic.

The whole of these works are, under the Act, to be paid for in ten years out of the land. But in many cases the fee simple of the land is hardly adequate to the repayment of one year's such expenditure, and in every case such is

the determination not to repay, that I believe the whole standing army of England could not collect one-tenth of the first instalment.

In the meanwhile all works of real improvement are at an end, and good landlords are taxed for the sins of the bad, to make useless new roads, and spoil old ones. They are obliged to cease building farmhouses, or draining their lands, or even employing as many hands in ordinary cultivation as in former years.

As for the Executive, I hear the most lamentable accounts of its utter inefficiency. Lord Bessborough is said to be the only man amongst them worth his salt, but his indolence is extreme; whilst O'Connell's greediness of patronage is so insatiable that none other amongst the supporters can get a slice, and many of the old Whigs are bitterly indignant. As for Labouchere, his incompetence is pitiable. He has lost his head, and is afraid to do anything.

The last monthly return of crime by the constabulary exceeds, I hear, any month in our time.

Lord Bessborough is enjoying himself at home with his Queen, and does not return for five weeks.

The farmers—I mean all who hold eight acres or more —are not badly off. They have had very good prices for everything they had to sell all summer, and the oat crop of this district is considerably over an average. But they are in great dread of the others, who they fear will plunder them, and therefore they are anxious to abet every job for employment, and every foolish and inconsiderate expenditure proposed.

All the agitating priests and clergymen take the same line, and urge speedy and unlimited employment, increase of wages, Government distributions of grain, &c. So that the pressure from without on magistrates, ratepayers, and the Government is very heavy.

In consequence, with very little pause and inquiry, the baronial presentment sessions have granted everything asked or brought before them.

From Sir James Graham.

Nov. 20, 1846.

The state of affairs in Ireland appears to me very alarming. The immense advances of public money charged on the land for works which will not greatly improve its value will be ruinous to the proprietors, if payment be exacted; and the fear of the necessity of repayment begins already to shake their allegiance to the British connection.

I am greatly mistaken also if the gross produce of Ireland next year be not less than in the present year. They have no seed potatoes, and no crop will be immediately substituted. Are then these advances without repayment to be repeated? or is the debt due by the land of Ireland to the Exchequer of England to be augmented, until the attempt to recover it, or the habit of dependence on free gifts, will be equally fatal and ruinous to the parties?

I have long looked at the state of Ireland with despair, but never with so much apprehension as now.

I did think that it might be imprudent to disturb the settlement of last Session with respect to the Corn Laws on light and uncertain grounds; but when I see France purchasing wheat in Mark Lane *for exportation* at 58*s.* the quarter, the policy of maintaining an import duty of 4*s.* on the first necessary of life is not to be defended, when scarcity has been proclaimed by the Queen in Council, and by form of prayer in every parish throughout the Kingdom.

I always communicate my thoughts to you unreservedly, because this has been my habit for years, and because I wish to correct any error in my own judgment by the light of your superior discernment, on which I rely with such implicit confidence.

I suppose the Government will now trust to the chapter of accidents, and postpone the meeting of Parliament till

the last moment. What would have been said last year if we had prolonged the prorogation till February? What *did* Lord John Russell say, in his letter of November, with respect to the duty of calling Parliament together in a great crisis of public affairs?

I am by no means sure that the delay is not expedient in the peculiar circumstances of the moment. But if we made this admission, the contrast is striking when we recollect the treatment which we experienced at the hands of Lord John.

To Sir James Graham.

Nov. 22, 1846.

I think the Government has been right hitherto in refusing to set aside the adjustment of the Corn Law question made last Session.

Any temporary suspension of duties on the import of foreign corn—I mean a suspension to be terminated before February 1849—would be almost out of the question; and if that be so, suspension would be tantamount to total and immediate, instead of deferred repeal.

I think a desire to maintain if possible the settlement effected by us must have influenced the conduct of the Government. We must always recollect too that maize and many other substitutes for corn are now admissible duty-free.

From Mr. Goulburn.

Nov. 24, 1846.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer called upon me yesterday, and I had some conversation with him as to Ireland. Nothing can equal the picture which he himself drew of the state of that country, nor did he hesitate to avow an utter inability to devise any means of meeting the present difficulty satisfactorily, still more to provide for the yet greater evils which appeared to threaten it in future.

He stated that in many parts of Ireland there was an

absolute stagnation of private employment; that of land which usually grew corn very little indeed was now cultivated or sown; that in many districts farming occupation has entirely ceased; and that there was in consequence reason to anticipate a tremendous deficiency in corn next year, merely from the refusal of occupiers to cultivate their land.

He certainly had no idea how Ireland was to be governed for the future. It is evidently impossible to make new roads for ever, or to employ upon them for successive years a large proportion of the population. The repayment of the loans advanced from the Treasury is more than problematical, and the further loans are in some cases to such an amount as to eat up the greater part of the property. The combination against repaying advances will be pretty general, the expense to be borne by the country ultimately tremendous.

Your observations with respect to a departure from the Corn Law settlement are just. My own opinion, when I saw you last, was strongly opposed to any such departure. But the rapid rise in the price of every species of grain, and the demand from abroad, for exportation, has begun to make me doubtful whether an import duty could be justly maintained.

I am sure that the Irish expenditure will be frightful. The million which you would freely give will by no means cover it, and what Lincoln says that he has seen exactly corresponds with my anticipations from reasoning. I believe that the agriculture of Ireland will be retarded by these loans, and that the crop of next year will be deficient from the neglect of culture during the autumn and winter, when the gentry and farmers have escaped from the payment of wages, and when the labourers have depended on the public purse for the supply of all their wants.

I see traces of Trevelyan's hand in issuing public letters from the Treasury; and we know well how little reliance can be safely placed on his discretion in the conflict with these Irish difficulties.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Dec. 1, 1846.

Have you seen the official account of Imports to October 10?

The large import of provisions, either duty free or at a low duty, alone has prevented a general scarcity; in most adverse circumstances the revenue has been sustained; and manufacturing industry, though checked, has not suffered in the extreme.

In short, your policy has triumphed, and a national calamity has been averted.

Lord Lincoln to Sir Robert Peel.

Dec. 10, 1846.

I hear that the Treasury exercises no control whatever over the other offices in their expenditure. The most lavish application of money is going on everywhere. In my old office Morpeth promises everything he is asked for, and the Treasury ratifies all his demands. The old stagers are bewildered at the liberality to which they have been so unused, and old Milne is gone abroad half deranged. The Treasury clerks are equally annoyed, I hear, at the utter abolition of purse-strings.

Dec. 14.—I really do think the landlords of Ireland have some reason to complain of the manner in which money that they are ultimately to repay is being expended.

Sir James Graham to Sir Robert Peel.

Dec. 9, 1846.

Engineer officers are laying out drains on the lawns of country gentlemen, their pay being advanced by the public, and the unhappy estates being charged with the debt for work so superintended.

Dec. 29.—I have read over again our instructions to the Lord Lieutenant in the winter and spring of last year; and, with the light which subsequent experience has thrown

on this most difficult case, I do not see how the dangers which we anticipated, and which are now fully realised, could have been met more prudently; and, although I may be prejudiced, I incline to the opinion, that every departure from our course has increased rather than mitigated the evil.

As in previous years, letters exchanged with Lord Hardinge still give the most unreserved expression of Sir Robert Peel's feelings on affairs at home, and also show how his counsels, in the absence of any instructions from the new Government, continued to inspire the policy pursued in India. The first of these letters has been published in the 'Memoirs,' the rest are new.

To Lord Hardinge.

Drayton Manor: July 4, 1846.

You will see that we are out, defeated by a combination of Whigs and Protectionists.

A much more emphatic hint would have sufficed for me. I would not have held office by sufferance for a week.

Were I to write a quire of paper, I could not recount to you what has passed with half so much detail and accuracy as the public papers will recount it. There are no secrets. We have fallen in the face of day, and with our front to our enemies.

There was nothing I would not have done to insure the carrying of the measure I had proposed this Session. I pique myself on never having proposed anything that I have not carried.

But the moment when success was insured, and I had the satisfaction of seeing two drowsy masters in Chancery mumble out at the table of the House of Commons that the Lords had passed the Corn and Customs Bills, I was satisfied.

Two hours after this intelligence was brought, we were ejected from power; and by another coincidence as marvellous, on the day in which I had to announce in the House of Commons the dissolution of the Government, the news

arrived that we had settled the Oregon question, and that our proposals had been accepted by the United States without the alteration of a word.

Lady Peel and I are here quite alone, in the loveliest weather, feasting in solitude and repose, and I have every disposition to forgive my enemies for having conferred upon me the blessing of the loss of power.

From Lord Hardinge.

Simla: Sept. 3, 1846.

Your retreat preceded by two most important victories has been a noble triumph. You fought until the battle was gained, and then fell with your face to the foe.

I am quite delighted that you are a free man. I wish I were at Drayton.

Sir J. Hobhouse has written a very civil letter, assuring me of every possible support, and sending me a friendly message from Lord John Russell.

I have replied that I will evade no difficulties arising out of the Lahore treaty; but I propose to withdraw the British garrison the end of December, affording the Government ample time to give their instructions before then; and that, adhering to the policy of the late Government, under which I acted, I will satisfy the obligations imposed upon me as a public man. If their instructions are adverse to the Lahore policy, I request to be relieved.

To Lord Hardinge.

Sept. 24, 1846.

The papers will tell you with what a sad calamity we are again visited, by a failure of the potato crop much worse than that of last year. Thank God I am released from the painful and thankless office of averting not only danger from the country generally, but that danger especially which impends over a set of men with great possessions and little foresight, who call themselves Conservatives and Protectionists, and whose only chance of safety is that their counsels shall not be followed.

They call a minister a traitor to their interests who contemplates the possibility that that which took place in the United States might take place here—that there might be in a second year a recurrence of that mysterious blight of one main article of subsistence, of which we had painful experience in the last year—and tries to save the landed proprietors of this country from the odium which would overwhelm them if they were to succeed in excluding the food that it is absolutely necessary to get from foreign countries, as a substitute for that which has been lost at home.

If stupid folly had so far prevailed that the Corn Law of 1842 had been maintained in all its integrity, if wheat were at this moment subject to a duty of twenty shillings the quarter, and if Indian corn were virtually excluded, next winter would not pass without a convulsion endangering the whole frame of society, without the humiliation of constituted authorities forced to yield after a disgraceful struggle.

These Protectionists are ten times more angry than before, because three months have not passed without demonstrating that if their advice had been taken the country would have been involved in inextricable difficulties.

In spite of their predictions all agricultural produce —wheat, barley, oats, beef, mutton, cattle—bears a high price, which will probably increase, notwithstanding great importations from abroad. All they have to say is that this is the consequence of the total failure of the potatoes.

Be it so. But if their advice had been taken, we should have had famine prices for many articles, and a state of exasperated public feeling and *just* agitation, which it would require wiser heads than theirs to allay.

So far from regretting the expulsion from office, I rejoice in it as the greatest relief from an intolerable burden.

To have your own way, and to be for five years the Minister of this country in the House of Commons, is quite enough for any man's strength. He is entitled to his discharge, from length of service. But to have to incur the

deepest responsibility, to bear the heaviest toil, to reconcile colleagues with conflicting opinions to a common course of action, to keep together in harmony the Sovereign, the Lords and the Commons; to have to do these things, and to be at the same time the tool of a party—that is to say, to adopt the opinions of men who have not access to your knowledge, and could not profit by it if they had, who spend their time in eating and drinking, and hunting, shooting, gambling, horse-racing, and so forth—would be an odious servitude, to which I never will submit.

I intend to keep aloof from party combinations. So far as a man can be justified in forming such a resolution, I am determined not again to resume office.

I would be nothing but the head of a Government, the real *bona-fide* head, and to be that requires more youth, more ambition, more love of official power and official occupation, than I can pretend to.

I will take care too not again to burn my fingers by organising a party. There is too much truth in the saying, 'The head of a party must be directed by the tail.'

As heads see, and tails are blind, I think heads are the best judges as to the course to be taken.

From Lord Hardinge.

Camp, Bhyrwal Ghut: Dec. 21, 1846.

I have received your admirable letter of Sept. 24. Your measure of last Session was quite providential. I fear the state of Ireland is very calamitous, but may be mitigated in some of its rigour by your Act.

I have received no instructions as yet from the Government. The Cashmere insurrection is well over. Golab Singh is quietly in possession.

The result you will find is this—that the Sikh Government and all the assembled chiefs, in full confidence of British good faith and honour, have requested the Governor-General to continue the occupation; that I have consented to do so on condition that a British officer, acting under my orders, shall have the complete control over

every department of the State; that British troops may be placed in any forts or posts, and in such strength as the Governor-General chooses to determine; that a contribution of 220,000*l.* shall be paid yearly for our expenses, &c. This state of things to continue for eight years, that is till September 1854, when the Maharaja will be of age.

There never was such an extraordinary change in the feelings of a whole people. The Maharaja is to be in my camp to ratify the articles on the 26th, and I shall then return his visit at Lahore, marching through the Sikh country with two battalions and eight guns!

This has been accomplished by frankness, integrity, and open dealing.

The first effects of this arrangement will be felt by reducing 30,000 men in the three Presidencies. We are, as you know, in a very bad condition as to finance. The Afghan war cost eleven millions, for which we are now paying 500,000*l.* a year.

I do not know how far the Whig Government may approve of this policy. It was impossible to wait, as the period of occupation expires on December 31.

I anticipate no disturbance. We shall govern the Punjab cheaply, instead of ruinously; our finances will have time to recover; internal improvements may proceed; and the question of annexation is postponed.

Of course a system of peace and consolidation, instead of extension and aggrandisement, is very unpopular with the army and with the press. I care not a straw for such considerations. I believe I have acted in this affair for the best interests and security of India. I am sure I have acted in a becoming manner for the honour and reputation of the British name.

To Lord Hardinge.

Whitehall: Feb. 7, 1847.

I hope I am not too late to acknowledge by this mail the receipt of your letter conveying an account of your arrangements for the Punjab.

Moderation, forbearance, and scrupulous regard to good faith have given you every advantage which the most successful spirit of aggrandisement could have secured. They have given you besides the respect and confidence of those who have invoked your assistance, and made you the chosen ruler over attached and grateful friends, instead of the mere conqueror of discontented and unruly enemies hating your dominion and anxious for an opportunity of overthrowing it.

I am quite sure the British people will consider all that has occurred a proof of your foresight and sagacity, and a crowning triumph of the policy of vigour and forbearance.

We are here in a strange state, the Government as weak as water, so far as the ordinary elements of the strength of an administration are concerned, but strong from the dislocation of party, and from the deep prevailing sense of that calamity under which Ireland and the West of Scotland are suffering so grievously.

There is little disposition to criticise, a strong wish to arm the Government with all the authority which may be requisite to mitigate a misfortune which will derange our finances and disturb all the relations of society in Ireland.

When I tell you that there are at this moment 500,000 men in Ireland receiving daily wages from Government for doing worse than nothing, superintended by a staff of 11,000 engineers, pay-clerks, and so forth, hastily selected, I need say nothing more to you, who have been in Ireland, to impress you with the magnitude of the evil.

As regards myself, I am thoroughly enjoying the contrast between this and the Sessions of the last five years, enjoying not only leisure and the blessings of domestic life, but political liberty and independence—freedom from the base servitude to which a minister must submit who is content to sacrifice the interests of a great empire to those of a party.

CHAPTER XVII.

1847-48.

Peel a Spectator—Letters to King Leopold—Famine in Ireland—The Whigs seek Advice—General Election—Tamworth Letter—Peelite Success—Peel declines Presidency of Royal Society—Diplomatic Relations with Rome—Revolutions on the Continent—State of England and Ireland—Records of Cabinet Councils.

LETTERS to the King of the Belgians often throw light on Sir Robert Peel's view of the general situation. The following are examples:

To the King of the Belgians.

Dec. 19, 1845.

The only consideration which should have induced me to retire from the service of my gracious Sovereign was the deep and intimate conviction that delay, and differences in the Cabinet which would have terminated in the retirement of some of its members, would have deprived me of the ability to conduct the question to a successful issue.

Foreseeing certain failure, I thought it less embarrassing to the Queen and the country to enable her Majesty to form a Government before public men had been yet more deeply committed to extreme measures, and combinations formed among my opponents which might give a more marked democratic character to the new Administration.

Windsor Castle: Jan. 1, 1846.

Your Majesty is well aware of the difficulties which beset the administration of public affairs in an Empire, comprising three Kingdoms differing so much in religious opinions, and vast Dependencies with separate interests jealous of the predominance of the mother country; and

having a reformed House of Commons, whose action is to be reconciled with the prerogatives of an ancient Monarchy, and with the feelings and sentiments of the House of Lords.

It would be an easy matter to ensure a Conservative majority in each House of Parliament by undertaking to govern according to the prevailing opinions of that majority. But those opinions would be no safe guide for the administration of affairs in Ireland, or for the commercial policy by which our trade and manufactures are to be encouraged, and our financial burdens to be alleviated.

I am sure your Majesty will concur in the opinion that a Government must not purchase present peace, present success, or even the consolidation and conciliation of a powerful party, by sacrificing to the prevailing and popular feeling of the day its own convictions in respect to the true and permanent interests of this vast community, founded on much more extensive information and a deeper insight into our domestic and foreign relations than superficial and irresponsible observers can command.

I have done everything in my power, and (supported as I feel myself to be by the generous confidence of a gracious Sovereign) will continue to do so, to harmonise the action of conflicting authorities in the State, and to maintain order and contentment among very powerful and enlightened classes of society, by convincing them that their comfort and happiness is one of the main objects of civil government.

This policy may be obstructed; it may temporarily fail; but I have a deep conviction that it is the true Conservative policy, and that another policy, though sanctioned for a time by powerful majorities, would ultimately tend to discord and confusion.

I am not, however, insensible to the immense importance of combining, if possible, with the steady adherence to this policy the maintenance unbroken of a powerful party, well affected to the Monarchy and to the settled institutions of the State.

He now wrote:

Drayton Manor: Jan. 27, 1847.

I have one advantage at present which I have not had for a long time past, that I can write with the coolness and impartiality of a spectator.

So far as I can judge, from the very anomalous state of parties, there appears no desire to disturb the present Administration in the tenure of power.

The Protectionist party boast that power was conferred on the present holders of it mainly through their exertions. Whether any secret understanding exists between them, or any section of them, and the Government, I know not.

So far as the strength of the Government depends upon the number of its supporters attached to it by party ties, or cordial approbation, it must I apprehend be very weak; but it incurs little risk of active hostility; on account of the dislocation of all other parties, and the general disposition to merge party differences in a common effort to mitigate the calamity with which Ireland is afflicted, and lay the foundation for a better order of things in that country.

From these various causes—from the combination entered into between the Protectionist party and that of the present Government, for the purpose of displacing the late Government, and the mutual feelings which naturally exist between them after the success of that combination, from the gravity of the Irish question, and the little real sympathy which exists between the more prominent of the Radical party and the chief members of the Administration—there is little ground for apprehension that democratic measures will be proposed by the Government. If proposed, they would meet with little favour either with the House of Commons or the country, still less with the Peers.

The feeling of the country is opposed to hasty and ill-considered change, will be perfectly satisfied with gradual improvements of laws or institutions, and would revolt against popular measures proposed not from the honest

desire to remedy that which was defective, but with a view to strengthen a falling party.

In my opinion, therefore, the inclination and the interest of the Government will dissuade them from any extreme measures.

The King replied:

Though you say, my dear Sir Robert, that you are now in the position of a mere spectator, it is a source of great consolation to me to know that in reality you have it in your power to check and moderate whatever rash resolve would bring danger to England or the rest of the world.

Later in the year Mr. Cardwell, after visiting Drayton Manor, writes: '*Le mort imaginaire* is full of life. He calls himself a bystander, and I do not doubt he sees most of the game.'

Some of his adherents made it their business to keep him informed.

From Lord Ripon.

Jan. 14, 1847.

I presume that at a very early period the state of Ireland must be brought before both Houses, and some scheme proposed, with the view of meeting the formidable dangers that appear to threaten that devoted country.

You will have the satisfaction of knowing that the calamity under which Ireland now labours is in no measure owing to you or your measures. On the contrary, you clearly saw and distinctly pointed out what was likely to be the consequence of the potato disease of 1845; and if you had not been so violently opposed and thwarted about the Corn Bill, there would have been more leisure for maturely considering how the expected mischief could most speedily and safely be met. That was not allowed to you, and the country is now suffering all sorts of consequent evils.

From Mr. John Young.

Jan. 14, 1847.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has invited me to a *tête-à-tête* dinner to-morrow, to talk about Ireland. He is

evidently very much at a loss, and used such expressions as 'everything seems to go wrong in Ireland,' 'how is it to end?' and that 'he did not see what could be done to carry the country through.'

In Ireland nobody expects the present Government to carry the country through. Everybody looks to and talks of you. And the case seems very much the same with the moneyed and commercial men in England.

Still the *frondeurs* of the Carlton Club, the drawing-rooms, and country coteries, are as spiteful as ever. They begin, however, not to think themselves as omnipotent as they did a few months ago.

Lord Stanley has taken his position as leader of the House of Lords, and entrenched himself in it. From all I hear his strength in it cannot be doubted, and if you stand aloof, and let people know and see you mean to do so permanently, by degrees the Conservatives who adhered to you will drop off, all but a score, and unite with Lord Stanley, and give him a decided majority to turn out the present Government, take, and keep their places. And then, though he will not dare or attempt to subvert, or reverse, your commercial policy, he and his men will cramp and confine it, and not let it have fair play.

From Mr. Cardwell.

Jan. 15, 1847.

Pemberton at the Treasury tells me they have had a report of 104 deaths in one day in Ireland from famine.

He further says, 'If you were to come over to the Treasury, you would not know yourself. Trevelyan is First Lord, and Chancellor of the Exchequer; has a new room, with four private secretaries and three Commissariat clerks, and the whole has been left to him.'

From Mr. Young.

Jan. 16, 1847.

Wood was very communicative, I presume meaning the whole to come to you. For no other reason could he have sent for me.

He praised you very highly, and looks on your being Prime Minister again, if in health, as certain.

From Mr. Trevelyan.

Treasury: Feb. 6, 1847.

I cannot forbear congratulating you on the great national benefit derived from your Drainage Act of last Session in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It has been the saving of that part of the Kingdom, which will, there is every reason to hope, be brought through this remarkable crisis by means of it, not only unscathed, but with every social relation strengthened and improved.

Unlike the Whigs, Sir Robert Peel was little disposed to embarrass the administration of his political opponents, but when directly consulted he did not hesitate to give his opinion, and on one point, at the request of Mr. Trevelyan, he wrote the following Memorandum:

(*Secret.*) Whitehall: Feb. 18, 1847.

I wished to avoid as much as possible hostile criticism on the proposals of the Government for the present relief and future aid of Ireland, but I confess I was surprised by that in respect to the provision of Seed Corn.

The sum is totally inadequate for the purpose, but the partial and incomplete interference of the Government will have its natural effect in Ireland. Landlords will neglect their duty, and will argue, with some justice, if the principle of Government interference in respect to the provision of seed be admitted, why limit it within bounds which make the application of the principle practically useless? . . .

My firm belief is that Government interference as to the provision of seed in Ireland, whether you spend 50,000*l.* or 500,000*l.*, or send good seed or bad seed, will tend to diminish rather than increase the aggregate production of the oat and barley crop in the United Kingdom next year and the year following.

But can there be any one duty more incumbent on Irish proprietors at this time than to bestir themselves in order to ensure, at their own expense, the importation of 20,000 quarters of corn, fit for use, into Ireland (if importation be requisite), and to assign that quantity to tenants who will really use it for the purpose for which it is intended?

ROBERT PEEL.

A farewell letter to an eminent Scottish judge records Peel's judgment on the administration of justice in Scotland.

To the Lord Justice Clerk (Boyle).

May 7, 1847.

By far the most painful circumstance connected with my retirement from office is the interruption of intercourse with many persons for whom I entertain the sincerest esteem and respect.

I do not say it for the first time, that every communication which I have ever had with you served to confirm an impression which was made at a very early period of our official intercourse, that the administration of criminal law was conducted in Scotland under your auspices in a manner that might well be cited as a model of a perfect distribution of justice.

Though our relation has been a public one, and our correspondence almost entirely on public matters, I cannot have been in the habit of witnessing the exercise of so many qualities calculated to command respect without sentiments of personal esteem and regard for you which I shall carry with me into private life, and which will make me proud of being ranked in the number of your private friends.

The only letter of this year to the Duke of Wellington relates to the professional progress of William Peel, of whom his father entertained the highest hopes.

Whitehall: June 14, 1847.

Some years since I sent you a letter from a son of mine, a midshipman on board the flagship in the Mediterranean,

giving an account of the siege of Acre. In returning it you observed that 'the boy who wrote such a letter was probably destined to carry on and conduct great operations,' and you were good enough to add instructions for the guidance of my boy in his future career.

Your observation and advice made the deepest impression on his mind, and he resolved to prove himself worthy of the interest you had taken about him. When he returned from the Syrian operations, he went to the coast of China. He remained there till the close of the Chinese war, and on his return home resolved to give up eight months to perfect himself in the science of gunnery.

On his arrival at Portsmouth, Sir Thomas Hastings advised him to return, told him that fourteen months was the ordinary time for gaining a certificate; that the instances were very rare in which it had been gained in less than ten months; that, as he knew nothing of mathematics, he *could not* gain the certificate in eight months.

My boy said he *would* gain it in eight months, and he did; and the Admiralty gave him the step of lieutenant on the first day on which he was entitled to have it by length of service.

He then went to the Pacific, was sent to make a report on the Oregon territory, made his way alone across Mexico with despatches, and has just taken the command of the 'Daring,' a brig off Vera Cruz.

The enclosed [1] is the first letter he has written since he reached his vessel. I send it to you, for I wish you to know the effect produced on the mind of a gallant boy by your favourable opinion and encouragement, and to know also that he has not been unworthy of the interest you took in his career.

In July 1847 the highly Conservative Parliament in which Sir Robert Peel had carried by large majorities his Income Tax twice, his three great Tariff Reforms, his legislation for Roman Catholics, his Bank Acts, and finally, at the cost of breaking up

[1] Unfortunately the letter is missing.

the party, his measure repealing the Corn Laws, was dissolved. In August most of the elections took place.

He himself had been invited to stand for more than one great town, especially for the City of London. But he preferred remaining member for Tamworth, from old attachment, and for greater independence.

From Lord Brougham.

(*Confidential.*) Saturday [April 17, 1847].

Sir J. Easthope was with me yesterday, and I delighted him by reading a passage in your letter about protected agriculture.

He dined in the City yesterday with the Rothschilds, who were furious at J. Russell for throwing over the Jew Bill.

Easthope finds the greatest acceptance to his proposition that you should be placed at the head of the poll. He therefore considered it as right that this communication should be made to yourself, and he came over to beg I would see or write to you on the subject. Of success I *know* there is not a doubt.

Now I am really very anxious on public as well as private grounds on this matter. . . . Will you turn over this in your mind?

To Lord Brougham.

Sunday night, April 18, 1847.

A communication was made to me some time since, to ascertain confidentially whether I would consent to stand for the City. I expressed a deep sense of the honour conferred and confidence implied, but positive determination not to interrupt by any act of mine the connection which subsists with my present constituents.

That connection commenced soon after the events of 1829. The body is not a numerous one, and is attached to me, no doubt, by other than purely public ties. But on purely public grounds, from confidence in the rectitude of

my intentions, they have repeatedly, and sometimes under trying circumstances, renewed the trust which they first committed to me after I had been rejected by the University of Oxford, and I cannot reconcile it to my feelings to abandon them for any other constituency, however superior in point of dignity and importance.

From Lord Brougham.

House of Lords: Monday [April 19, 1847].

I grieve beyond what I can describe. I have seen the parties, and had you given the least encouragement, by twelve to-day you would have been landed. All the notables of the City were ready to sign.

Do, I beseech you, reconsider. The service rendered to all sound principle would be incalculable. Admit your determination against ever taking office, and even against ever leading a party, to be quite irreversible, which I certainly do for one firmly believe it to be (*I know my own is*), yet it would be invaluable to have you placed at the head of the poll, or rather chasing away all opposition.

To Lord Brougham.

April 19, 1847.

So much of feeling enters into my decision in respect to the adherence to Tamworth, that I am scarcely accessible to reason. But even if I were, I should long hesitate before I relinquished the advantage of that independence which the representation of a small place enables a man to enjoy. I greatly doubt whether I cannot render greater public service by means of that independence than by being the organ of even such a constituency as that of London.

In his election address Sir Robert Peel reviewed and justified his policy towards Catholics and in repealing the Corn Laws. The manifesto was warmly approved by all his friends, and his followers went to the country on the lines laid down by him.

To Sir James Graham.

July 15, 1847.

As my opinions on some points may not be calculated for the meridian of English constituencies, which are clamouring for 'No Popery,' I resolved to write my address without communication with a single human being, so that none might be committed or prejudiced by the expression of my opinions.

I feel very confident, however, that they will not be at variance with yours on any material point, religious or political.

From Sir James Graham.

July 16, 1847.

I have read your address with great pleasure. I subscribe to every word of it, and you may indeed with just confidence anticipate that in no matter either religious or political, after our long and intimate union, is there any danger of a serious difference between us.

From Prince Albert.

Osborne: July 17, 1847.

Your address is history telling its own tale, and therefore peculiarly effective, as it deals only in facts, whilst the whole political controversy which led to your retirement from office was one of personal feelings and personal interest.

From Lord Heytesbury.

July 19, 1847.

A more clear, manly, satisfactory exposition of the motives by which your conduct was actuated could not have been given. The clouds raised by prejudice and misrepresentation are already clearing away, and in despite of the grossest personality and vulgar abuse the truth has already pierced the mists by which party feeling had surrounded it.

From Lord Lincoln.

July 16, 1847.

Whatever Liverpool Orangemen and University bigots may say of your letter, I am quite prepared to make Scotch Puritans swallow it. I shall not evade any of the points in deference to their love of Papist-burning.

The country strongly supported followers of Sir Robert Peel. Wiltshire returned Sidney Herbert without a contest. Ripon carried Graham. Liverpool, with all its Orangemen, placed Cardwell triumphantly at the head of the poll. The Universities elected Goulburn and Gladstone.

From Sir James Graham.

Aug. 1, 1847.

Cardwell's triumph at Liverpool is a great event. It is at once the discomfiture of bigotry and of Protection, and a pronouncement in favour of your principles. Stanley's man also at the bottom of the poll.

From Mr. Sidney Herbert.

Salisbury: Aug. 5, 1847.

My election has taken place without so much as a threat of opposition. About four hundred horsemen, *mostly farmers*, accompanied me to the hustings, and scarcely an angry word was heard.

There is certainly now a very general conviction that the measures of 1846 were necessary, and that the termination of the Corn Law struggle is a real blessing.

The clergy here are strong against Maynooth, but naturally very shy of any alliance with the Dissenters on the subject.

I think you will be glad to hear of the result of an election in a purely agricultural constituency, which was expected by the Protectionists to take signal vengeance upon a member of your Government.

Even Lincoln, with difficulty, made good his boast that he would make Scotch Puritans swallow the policy whole.

Hamilton: Aug. 3, 1847.

I have had a most tremendous contest. The opium money has been poured out freely, and bribery, treating, and every other electioneering trick the order of the day.

The Free Kirk, and all the Dissenting ministers, have been most active against me, and denounced the pains of Hell on Sunday last in their chapels against those who voted for a friend of the Papists.

The general effect of the appeal to the country was not easy to decipher.

From Sir James Graham.

Aug. 22, 1847.

The result of the elections does not appear to me to be favourable to the Whig Government.

The increased strength of the Repealers is an evil omen, and the Dissenters and the Radicals have displaced many old party adherents of Lord John. The extreme difficulty of his position is self-evident, and I doubt whether he will be able to extricate himself from it.

I hear that Lord George Bentinck avows his object to be the maintenance of the present Government in office, as the only means of keeping you out. There is a gleam of sense in this view of the matter, which even his passions have not obscured.

The bearings of the general election on any hope o the return of Sir Robert Peel to power were studied carefully in France.

From the Princess Lieven.

Paris: le 13 septembre 1847.

Comprenez-vous à quel point votre nom et celui de Lord Aberdeen sont invoqués partout avec ardeur pour venir rendre à l'Europe le calme et la tranquillité dont elle jouissait quand c'était vous qui gouverniez l'Angleterre? Lord Palmerston n'a qu'une règle unique pour sa politique,

la révolution partout, et la rivalité avec la France. Jouer quelque tour à la France, voilà à quoi il applique son génie. En Grèce, en Italie, en Suisse, en Espagne, il n'a pas une autre pensée, et une perturbation générale est déjà le résultat de cette pensée dominante ; il faut peu, et peu de temps peut-être, pour que la guerre, et une guerre générale, ressorte de là. Pensez-y donc ; empêchez, si vous le pouvez, le mal de grandir jusqu'à ces funestes proportions.

Vos élections me paraissent bien étranges et bien confuses. Cependant il me paraît que de cet état même de confusion il peut ressortir un grand bien—l'évidence que ce n'est pas à des mains faibles que peut être confiée la conduite des affaires ; de là à reconnaître que vous êtes le seul homme capable de les gouverner le chemin est facile et court. Je prie Dieu, comme bien d'autres, que ce soit là ce qui arrive.

1848.

The great year of revolutions in Europe began quietly enough, but one of the first letters expresses some foreboding of political change.

From Prince Albert.

Jan. 4, 1848.

I can only find time to-day to wish you a very happy new year, and though my wishes come a little late, I hope you will not receive them the less kindly.

One cannot help entering into a new year with a little awe, not knowing what it may bring. There are plenty of clouds hanging over the political horizon.

Sir Robert Peel was engaged in reviewing the past, and had applied for some of his own letters to Sir James Graham, who writes :

Netherby : Jan. 9, 1848.

Our communications were indeed most harmonious. We seldom failed, even without concert, to take the same view of important questions ; and, whenever I entertained

doubts, your foresight, wisdom, and enlarged experience satisfied my reason, and readily won me to your opinion.

I send you another letter from Lewis. The passages in the oration 'pro Sestio,' which he recommends me to read, will delight you, if you will refresh your recollection of them; and may kindle in your bosom a generous warmth of conscious virtue and honest pride. You have realised the precept:

'Sudandum est pro communibus commodis; adeundæ inimicitiæ; subeundæ sæpe pro republica tempestates; cum multis audacibus, improbis, nonnunquam etiam potentibus, dimicandum.' And you may with confidence look forward to the great reward, which is promised to those 'qui hanc tantam rempublicam suis consiliis et laboribus aut auxerint, aut defenderint, aut servarint'—'esse immortalem gloriam consecutos.'[2]

As regards the future Sir James writes:

Jan. 15.—*I* have no faith whatever in the possibility of reuniting under any circumstances the party which you led in 1841.

Implicit reliance on your superior judgment, honesty, and prudence was the keystone of that great combination. The different shades of opinion in that party were very numerous, but the whole was blended in the confidence which you inspired, and in the general conviction that you were the man most fit to govern.

That confidence is now abjured, and without it the party is dissolved into its first elements, which are most discordant.

Time will probably solve the difficulty, and will restore order to chaos, by new combinations, not by the revival of past agreements, never more to be renewed.

I am truly grieved by your account of your brother and of your sister. These sad warnings tell us that the day of

[2] Cicero, *pro Sestio*, 139, 142.

our own departure is not far distant, and they bid us to prepare. May we be found watching and ready!

In February, Sir Robert Peel declined a high honour, the Presidency of the Royal Society.

Memorandum. Feb. 8, 1848.

I replied that I was prepared to give an immediate and decisive answer; that in my opinion the President of the Royal Society ought to be a distinguished man of science, that I thought the departure from the ancient usage of the Society had not been successful; that I should oppose any other nomination than that of a man of science.

Sir Henry De la Beche said he agreed with me in principle, but that there were great difficulties, which my acceptance of the appointment would solve; that Sir John Herschel had declined, or would decline; Faraday the same; that there were jealousies and rival pretensions between others.

I said these were difficulties which I could not solve; that the Royal Society had better cease to exist than proclaim to the world that the members must take a politician as their President on account of their disagreement, not on the principle of the superior advantage of selecting a man of science, but on the question of personal qualifications and preference; that men of science were rarely, too rarely, admitted to civil office, and that it was unfair, and derogatory to science, to confer one of the few honorary distinctions specially appertaining to science on any other than an eminent scientific man. If such jealousies as those to which Sir H. De la Beche referred were allowed to prevail, I was much more disposed to retire from the Royal Society than to solve the difficulties arising from such jealousies by accepting the office of President.

On similar principles he declined to preside at the annual meeting of the British Association.

An interesting letter is preserved from Mr. Sidney Herbert on the question of diplomatic relations with Rome.

Naples: March 3, 1848.

At Rome the case, I think, stands thus. The Pope himself, the English Catholics, and the liberal Roman Catholics, lay and clerical, wish for diplomatic intercourse with England. The Irish party are against it. They have hitherto had a monopoly of the communication with Rome; they have had exclusively the ear of the Sacred College, and they fear the effect of counter-statements, and the diminution of their influence. They are backed by the Ultra party, and are at present very powerful.

Lord Minto has stated to the Pope that we should send him a Protestant, which he thinks reasonable, and that we should object to receive an ecclesiastic, which he thinks less reasonable, because, whatever may be the pretence, it is as an ecclesiastic that we wish to deal with him; and he adds that this objection on our part might make it impossible for him to send any one.

Lord Minto answered that his embassy might always comprise some one conversant with ecclesiastical affairs; and I think that practically the Pope would send us a layman so long as we asked it, sending at the same time a prelate (Monsignore) as Secretary of Embassy.

I quite admit the prudence, on first opening our diplomatic relations with Rome, of not shocking Protestant sensibilities by the appearance at levées and drawing-rooms, in too prominent a way, of purple stockings, &c. But put what face we may upon it, we know that the real business we shall have with the Pope will be always ecclesiastical. An ecclesiastic then will always be in the mission, for they will not trust ecclesiastical affairs to any other, and whether he count as chief or as subordinate, he will most assuredly be the real Ambassador.

I agree with Lord Aberdeen that he will meddle with the ecclesiastical status of the Catholic faith in England. I agree also that there is a danger of an ecclesiastic intriguing with the Irish priesthood, or anyone else. But the subordinate will intrigue with much more ease and secrecy than the Ambassador. Surely it is better for us to deal

always with principals. Here is a power admitted to be dangerous, and about to be exercised, do what we will, by an ecclesiastic. Let the man who exercises the power bear also the responsibility, and be in a position so prominent as to be a guarantee, as far as possible, for the rectitude of his proceedings.

I am convinced from all I have seen in Rome this winter, that it will be a long time before we succeed in making any impression on the counsels of the Holy See, and that we shall make it through their embassy in London, and not through ours at Rome. They are very ignorant of the state of England and Ireland. They have hitherto had all their accounts from the Irish hierarchy and a few English Romanists, and they have heard of Exeter Hall. They think that McHale and Sir Culling Smith divide England, and that little is thought of but Protestant and Romanist conversions. They cannot believe that statesmen are ready to accept the religions of different portions of the people, and govern without reference to them, and try to promote peace between them. Unused to diplomacy, these ecclesiastics approach it with the notions they have gathered from the traditions of the last century, and think they must believe nothing, and admit nothing. They think our frank declarations of what we feel and what we want cover some deep projects. People who have been accustomed not to trust even temporal affairs to laymen have of course no sort of confidence in them where ecclesiastical matters are at stake, and the mere representations of an English nobleman at Rome go for nothing, especially when contradicted by every post by bishops and archbishops in Ireland, who write without the check which the presence of a Roman ecclesiastic in London would afford, who would be in the centre of affairs, and in daily and unreserved communication with the heads of Government.

I do not think Lord Minto has done anything yet at Rome for this reason. After some months we have a mild hypothetical rebuke to ecclesiastical turbulence, and no modification as yet of the condemnation of the Colleges. I

believe that this results entirely from the fact that Lord Minto's statements had no corroboration from ecclesiastical authorities, but the contrary; and the prevalent opinion in Rome still is that the English Government and nation conspire to calumniate the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland, with a view to disparage the Roman Catholic religion, and that the murders which take place are the retaliations of persecuted Romanists upon their Protestant oppressors.

In short, like other people, only to a far greater degree, they will believe the accounts of their own man, when they will not believe ours; and we shall make an impression upon them only by convincing a Roman ecclesiastic in London.

Of the revolutions of this year on the Continent there is little trace in the correspondence. In March, Prince Albert desires to see Sir Robert Peel 'to discuss the many awful events that are taking place around us.' And in April, Sir Robert writes to Count Jarnac, referring to reports that the King's property has been confiscated, and begging to be allowed to place at Count Jarnac's credit for the present use of the King 1,000*l.*, the act to be unknown to any other living person. Happily it appeared that for this generous offer there was no need.

With Sir James Graham many letters of interest were exchanged.

From Sir James Graham.

April 30, 1848.

Lord Palmerston's rashness and insolence are almost incredible. It matters not what the form of Government may be in any country in Europe; he will not only deprive us of every friend, but will convert every Power into an insulted and implacable enemy.

Sept. 25, 1848.

Lord Londonderry sounded me to ascertain if I would consent to the reorganisation of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and undertake a prominent part in leading it.

I at once declined. I said that with the High Tory and Protectionist party my differences on principle were irreconcilable; and that concord with Lord George Bentinck and Disraeli after all that had occurred was impossible. I was at liberty to take what course I pleased, and so were all your friends; but I added the expression of feelings which bind me to you only more closely because my action is quite free.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 26, 1848.

In your cordial friendship and warm personal regard I have the utmost confidence, and am as desirous of retaining them in the retirement of private life as if I could make them conducive to the attainment of any object of political ambition.

The following correspondence is important for the history of Cabinet Councils.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 31, 1848.

Can you give me any information with regard to a practice, which certainly used to prevail in the earlier annals of Cabinet Councils, namely, the recording formally the opinions of the ministers present, either simply by way of record for their own satisfaction, or for the information of the Sovereign?

I cannot recall to mind an instance, during my service in the Cabinet, of the revival of such a practice, yet I have heard frequent mention of it.

I think I have heard you say that during Lord Grey's Government minutes of Cabinet deliberations and decisions were occasionally made. Was this at the desire of the Sovereign, wishing to know whether certain advice offered to him was the concurrent advice of the whole Government? Or was the minute made without the previous expression of that desire—either on account of the extreme importance

of the subject or on account of differences of opinion in the Cabinet?

Were the minutes signed by the Cabinet Ministers? Where were they deposited? I presume with the Prime Minister, for they certainly are not matters of record, at the Foreign Office or at any other. At least I never heard of them being accessible.

The nearest approach to anything of the kind which I recollect was in 1829. I prepared a memorandum assigning my reasons for advising the King to permit the consideration of the Catholic question by his Government with a view to its settlement. The King desired that all those of his Ministers who had theretofore resisted the Catholic claims should see this memorandum, and inform him whether they concurred in the advice given in it. But the communication took place individually, and not in Cabinet.

If you can give me any information on this subject founded either on your reading or personal experience, I shall be much obliged to you.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Netherby: Nov. 1, 1848.

I will answer your inquiries to the best of my recollection, but I have no memoranda to which I can refer, and fourteen years have elapsed since I left Lord Grey's Government, and memory is often treacherous.

During the discussions in the Cabinet which preceded the Reform Act, and which attended its progress, serious differences of opinion from time to time arose, both with respect to the extent of the measure and with reference to the means necessary to be adopted for securing its passage through the two Houses of Parliament. The King had misgivings and serious doubts and apprehensions in his own mind respecting the course which it was his duty to pursue; he communicated these doubts to Lord Grey, sometimes in short notes written by himself, more frequently in reasoned minutes written by Sir Herbert Taylor, and

occasionally in conversations at audiences granted to Lord Grey or some one of his colleagues.

The King was aware of the existence of shades of difference of opinion among his confidential servants at that critical juncture, and hesitating much himself he required, when an important step was to be taken, that he should have some proof of the general concurrence of his ministers in the advice tendered for his adoption.

Lord Grey, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Holland, who had served in the Administration of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox in 1805, were not unaccustomed to the preparation of minutes of Cabinet under similar circumstances in the reign of George III.; and Lord Grey, as the head of the Government, after full discussion, but before the Cabinet separated, when important decisions were taken, drew a written minute, in which he embodied the advice with the reasons sustaining it; and this minute was submitted to his Majesty.

I have often told you that Lord Grey was remarkable for the skill and address with which he framed these minutes. In the statement of the reasons which led to the conclusion he contrived so to blend and reconcile different opinions, that doubts and scruples were not concealed, yet the substance of the decision was not impaired. The minute opened always with the names of the members of the Cabinet present; it purported to be the summary of their united counsel, and I do not remember that any protest, or that the name of any dissentient minister, was introduced.

The original minute, not signed, but in the handwriting of the First Minister, with the names of the members present enumerated, was sent to the King; and Lord Grey kept a copy, made by his private secretary for his own use; but no other member of the Cabinet retained a copy. Thus the original was always in the possession of the Sovereign; one copy, and one copy only, in the exclusive possession of the Prime Minister.

Both Lord Grey and Sir Herbert Taylor, from expe-

rience under George III., were equally familiar with this mode of recording advice; and whether at the commencement of Lord Grey's Government recurrence to this practice was required by the King, or suggested by Lord Grey, I am unable now to say, but my impression is, that it was approved by both, and was considered the surest and safest mode of avoiding misunderstandings on great occasions.

The advice to dissolve Parliament on the morning after General Gascoigne's majority in the House of Commons was given personally by Lord Grey in the Closet on behalf of his colleagues; they waiting in the Ante-room, ready to tender their resignations, if the advice were not immediately adopted.

On almost every other important decision respecting the Reform Act, my belief is that minutes of Cabinet were framed.

I have thus endeavoured to answer your questions; and I am not aware that I have omitted any point on which you sought for information.

From Prince Albert.

Windsor Castle: Nov. 12, 1848.

I return Sir James Graham's very interesting letter, which gives a complete account of the usage in Lord Grey's Cabinet.

The revival of such minutes, upon important questions of the day, would be of the greatest use to the Crown. I have always felt it to be a source of great weakness for the Sovereign not to be allowed to follow the arguments which may have decided the Cabinet in coming to a conclusion upon the advice which they may give.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1849.

Whig Overtures to Graham—Repeal of the Navigation Laws—Peel's Aid invoked—Peel on a United Germany—Maiden Speech of Frederick Peel—Latest Counsels of Sir Robert Peel—His Policy for Ireland—'Measures commensurate with the Evils'—Encumbered Estates Act—Advice to Lord Clarendon—National University for Ireland—Reaction against Free Trade, in England, and in Ireland.

BEFORE Parliament met in 1849, the Government again sought reinforcements from among the followers of Peel. Sir James Graham thus reports a conference with his former colleague the Whig leader:

Netherby: Jan. 16, 1849.

Lord John Russell referred to the two extremes represented by Cobden and the Protectionists, and said that if the friends of a middle policy would not unite, the opposition of the extremes would prevail. He was anxious, therefore, to extend the basis of his Government, and he and his colleagues desired that the first step should be taken by me. . . . He added that the Queen was willing to confer on me the honour of the Peerage, if that would be agreeable to me. He said that other vacancies would occur in the Cabinet, and that he would discuss in a confiding spirit how they should be filled up.

I told him that I did not desire a peerage, and that if I entered the Cabinet, I wanted no companion, not deeming it expedient, as Mr. Pitt said, to 'count noses' there, but relying on the honour and goodwill of the colleagues whom I consented to join.

We then went through in detail all the principal heads of foreign and home policy.

I was assured that there was no intention of renewing the duty on corn, or of imposing new taxes; the expenditure will only be reduced to a limit leaving the narrowest margin on the estimated balance; no duties will be modified, no taxes will be remitted; the reduction of the force by sea and land will be very small. Palmerston's foreign policy will be defended in all its parts.

With respect to Ireland (in strict confidence I may tell you) the renewal of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act is intended, without any comprehensive measure prepared for the improvement of the future social condition of that unhappy country.

I told Lord John that somebody had observed, 'Ireland was occupied, not governed;' that this could not be maintained as the permanent policy of England; and that I feared the proposal of continued coercion without any concomitant would be most violently resisted.

Lord John thought otherwise. He believed that Great Britain *for the present* would be satisfied if tranquillity were procured in Ireland, even by force.

This is only the outline of our conference. It was conducted throughout with all the freedom of former colleagues and old friends.

He seemed rather to anticipate High Tory 'reaction.' Without anything expressly said, he contrived to convey to me that as against the Radicals he might be driven to some such combination.

At the risk of wearying you, I have now put you fully in possession of the exact tone and character of our conference; and in doing this I cannot fail to have disclosed the public grounds which influenced my decision, and which, in terms as little objectionable as I could use, I assigned as the reasons of my refusal.

In reply, Sir Robert Peel comments on the situation, and especially on famine and pauperism in Ireland.

To Sir James Graham.

Jan. 20, 1849.

It seems to me that the position of parties—or rather of the relics of ancient parties—is now more complicated and embarrassing than ever.

The weakness of the Government, and the disunion of all opponents except the Radical party, will still constitute its strength. But strength resting on such a foundation cannot be very satisfactory, and implies nothing but continued tenure of office.

I had always misgivings about the introduction of Poor Laws into Ireland, fears that—partly from the extent of pauperism, partly from the unfitness of Irishmen to administer any system of laws requiring strict justice, economy, and unbending firmness in their administration—an intolerable scourge would be inflicted on the country, and yet the aggregate of human misery would not be materially diminished.

I know the reply to this is, that there must have been widespread starvation, if there had not been in force a Poor Law.

It is always difficult to say what would have been the case if certain enactments had not been in force. Of this I am sure, that a wise Government in Ireland, having at its command the resources of private benevolence and charity, more fruitful in the absence of a Poor Law, and having also at its command such sums as have been advanced from the British Treasury, might have done more to mitigate actual suffering, and to prevent the interruption of regular industry and the formation of bad habits, than has been done with the expenditure from the last two sources and that derived from the Poor Law assessment to boot.

How little Peel's followers were disposed to join other parties appears from several letters.

From Sir James Graham.

Jan. 21, 1849.

I have had a letter from Lord Londonderry, reviving his project of Conservative reunion. I have answered him

by saying that Lord Granby's vote in favour of the re-imposition of the duty on corn is not a conciliatory proof of a wish to act in concert; and I added that the debates on the Navigation Laws, with which the Session will commence, must clear the atmosphere, and show the state of parties very distinctly.

From Lord Lincoln.

Wilton House: Jan. 27, 1849.

Your letter and its enclosures from Graham have surprised me more than I can say. That he should have entertained the [Whig] proposal for an instant is beyond my comprehension.

Having heard that if Graham accepted, I and Cardwell were to be applied to, I took care to let Cardwell know that if any such application were made, I should at once decline it.

Repeal of the Navigation Laws, vigorously supported by Sir Robert Peel and his friends as part of his Free Trade policy, was carried in the Commons by sixty-one votes, but was hotly opposed in the Lords, where Protectionists worked hard to throw it out. Lord Stanley might, it was thought, for the sake of gaining Mr. Gladstone's support, adopt a compromise proposed by him, substituting reciprocity for repeal. But the issue was taken broadly, and repeal was carried by a majority of ten.

From Mr. Cardwell.

March 10, 1849.

The newspapers will not give you the faintest idea of Lord Granby's speech. It was nearly two hours long, consisted of the veriest rubbish of the shipowners' meetings swept together, and was delivered, to thin but noisy benches, with the air of a man who led the opinion of the public, and maintained the rights of the oppressed with fortitude and success.

From Sir James Graham.

March 10, 1849.

There is a speculation that the Lords will adopt Gladstone's reciprocity views, and instead of rejecting the Bill

amend it in that sense. It is supposed also that the Cabinet is divided on this as on every other question, and that Palmerston strongly advocates reciprocity.

Stanley, if he can see his way to new party combinations by the adoption of this middle term, may be willing to have recourse to it; but if he desire to overthrow the Government on this Bill, he may thus fail in his object; for it is by no means certain that Lord John would not accept the Bill in its altered shape.

To secure a majority in the House of Lords, Sir Robert Peel's personal influence was largely called in aid.

From Sir Charles Wood.

Downing Street: Sunday.

I sent you by Cardwell a long list of peers. The greater number of them are probably to be influenced by their knowledge of the Duke of Wellington's opinion, and of your own.

It strikes me, therefore, that if any peer spoke early in the debate who would be considered as expressing your opinion, it would tend more to decide votes than anything.

Ripon expressed his wish not to speak; Ellenborough, we believe, speaks against, and Harrowby. My present anxiety is principally as to the Duke of Buccleuch.

The Duke of Bedford saw the Duke of Wellington, who is becoming very keen in favour of the measure; and Lord Hardinge is exerting himself most actively.

I believe that Brougham speaks and votes against the Bill. He has got some slavery crotchet which I cannot comprehend.

May 18.—I received your message through Cardwell. Nobody but Lord John knows that I have seen you, or communicated directly with you. The Cabinet and Lord Strafford know that I have an indirect communication with *yours*, not *you*, as to the probable votes and conduct of some of them.

I have never mentioned, except to you, a wish that Lord

Aberdeen should say anything. I was in hopes of inducing St. Germans to say something, by urging that some of your friends should express an opinion early in the debate, and I tried to induce Ashburton to speak, as you suggested, but in vain.

An interesting letter from the son of Lord Gough submits 'his private explanation of two actions for which he has been severely and unjustly blamed,' and adds, 'Lord Gough's name has been traduced, and a service of fifty-five years forgotten; and had it not been for Sir Robert Peel's noble and generous speech in the House of Commons, even now Lord Gough's services would only have been acknowledged *pro formâ*.'

It was not only in public that Sir Robert Peel defended Lord Gough. In 1846 he had written:

To Lord Ellenborough.

I must express my dissent from your opinion as to Sir Hugh Gough. I frankly own my impression as to his merits has been very much changed since I have seen the correspondence between him and Hardinge previously to the recent battles.

In every other quality of a soldier than the comprehensive views of a great commander, in brilliant courage, in readiness to take responsibility, to sacrifice personal pretensions, to disregard professional punctilios, he is justly entitled to admiration.

Two letters from the Prussian Minister record how warm a sympathy Sir Robert Peel had shown for the aspirations of Germany, and how early he had foreseen the coming German Empire. On April 3 the King of Prussia had declined to accept the Imperial crown from the democratic Frankfort Assembly without the consent of the German Sovereigns.

From Chevalier Bunsen.

9 Carlton Terrace: April 12, 1849.

You have always taken so kind an interest in the destiny and politics of the King, my master, and of the German

nation, that I take the liberty of enclosing to you a despatch which I have received on the subject of the late declarations at Berlin respecting the Headship of a closer Union of German States.

I hope that those declarations will soon lead to the consolidation of a strong defensive power in the heart of Europe, founded upon sound principles of constitutional liberty, and of federal union.

Such a Constitution would be the realisation of those ever memorable words which you pronounced in Parliament in 1841, and which have found a lasting echo in the heart of every good German.

The words referred to are as follows:

'Look at that magnificent spirit which in Germany has virtually abolished the division into small states. At present there is but one feeling, from Hamburg to the Tyrol, and from Berlin to the southern confines, which if the country were threatened with aggression, would rise in all its fullness and its majesty, and annihilate the invaders.' (*Aug.* 24, 1841.)

From Chevalier Bunsen.

Endorsed: 'In answer to a letter of mine of which I did not keep a copy.'

(*Private.*) May 14, 1849.

The letter by which you were so kind as to answer my communication of the Circular of the Prussian Ministry respecting the German affair, breathes so true a sympathy with the anxious situation in which my Royal Master is placed, and betrays so just a consciousness of the political difficulties of the present position, both of Prussia and of Germany, that I have thought it my duty to transmit a copy of it to his Majesty.

The King has commanded me to express to 'the great and dear man,' the author of that letter, his best thanks and his warm acknowledgment, and to offer to you the following observations.

The King fully appreciates the justice you do to the motives which have determined him not to accept the proposal of the Frankfurt Parliament.

These motives are indeed, first of all, conscientious scruples. The King would have thought it an unrighteous act to accept the crown offered to him by that Assembly.

He thought the rights of the other Kings of Germany violated by such a transaction, originating only with an Assembly which did not respect sufficiently their Sovereignty, and by a constitution to which those Sovereigns evidently would not willingly give their assent.

He thought, moreover, that he ought not to expose the legitimate existence and position of Prussia to the creation of a doubtful Empire, which by its revolutionary origin seemed so inevitably connected with revolutionary elements, and which probably would be borne down by the same.

Having said thus much, his Majesty begs you to believe that the strength and unity of Germany is dearer to nobody than to him, and that it is his most earnest wish to bring the just and elevated national feeling into harmony with his federal duties.

To do this has been the consistent plan of his Majesty's Cabinet, from the beginning of the movement, and he feels sure you would not advise him to act inconsistently with this line of policy.

In May of this year Sir Robert Peel was much gratified by the brilliant success of his son Frederick in the House of Commons, his maiden speech being a most effective argument for the admission of Jews to Parliament.

From Sir Charles Wood.

Downing Street: Monday evening. [May 7, 1849.

It may be gratifying to Lady Peel to hear the unanimous verdict of the Treasury Bench in favour of her son's remarkable and most successful opening in the House of Commons this evening.

I only heard the latter end of it myself, but quite enough to confirm what John Russell, Baring, and Grey, and everybody else around me, said of the whole.

From Sir David Salomons.

I am one of a numerous class who, although not an avowed supporter of the Government of which you were the distinguished head, feel towards you sentiments of the highest respect, for the many great measures you advocated, and which by the influence of your high character and experience have become the law of the land.

One among those measures, the Jews' Declaration Bill, greatly affecting the civil comfort of persons professing the Jewish religion, suggested to me on a former occasion the propriety of addressing you in language of deep gratitude, a sentiment I beg again permission to repeat.

It is with very great gratification that I now venture to congratulate you on having a son who promises to be worthy of the name he bears, and who will stamp the third generation of the family of Peel with a reputation at once learned, constitutional, and liberal.

As a student of the Temple, I have had the opportunity of knowing your son's acquirements in his profession, and I rejoice that his *debut* offered a subject so congenial to his taste, and which, while it gave him an opportunity to shine, has also given a tone to the question under discussion.

From Lord Wharncliffe.

May 8, 1849.

I cannot resist the pleasure of congratulating you on the brilliant success of your son last night. My brother tells me, 'Young Peel's speech was a most admirable one, and his whole manner, matter, argument, and language, as well as voice and carriage, indicative of the highest order of mind.'

From Sir Henry L. Bulwer.

May 8, 1849.

I happened to be in the House of Lords last night, and heard from a variety of listeners even more glowing encomiums than those which are repeated in the papers of this morning.

Looking back to the time when my old tutor Mark Drury used to urge me to emulation by reading me your themes, and bidding me admire your speeches, I cannot help feeling a more than common interest in anticipating that new generations will be incited to honourable exertion by the name which animated my own boyhood, and which, rendered so eminent by yourself, will, I hope and believe, long continue to receive increased illustration from those who inherit it.

As Sir Robert Peel's own life draws to an end, his mind being in full vigour, and his position combining great authority with perfect independence, a special interest attaches to his utterances on public questions, in which he was soon to have no more part.

His thoughts turned anxiously to Ireland. On March 30, in debate on a Bill for levying throughout that country a rate in aid of the most needy districts, he took the opportunity, while supporting the rate, to suggest 'measures more commensurate with the evils.'

He proposed to seek relief of the present distress 'by encouraging draining and improvement of land; by opening up roads through inaccessible districts; by erecting piers for the accommodation of the fisheries; by promoting emigration; above all, by facilitating the transfer of land from insolvent to solvent proprietors, and by abandoning the present injurious system of giving gratuitous relief.'

'I make this proposal,' he said, 'without adventitious aid. I know not who agrees with me or who differs from me. I make it solely under the influence of sympathy for an unfortunate country, and with the conviction that some decisive measure is necessary for the relief, not only of Ireland, but of the whole United Kingdom.'

The speech evoked a general warm response.

From Lord Westmeath.

Clonyer, Westmeath: April 3, 1849.

You are entitled to our gratitude for the notice you have taken of the monstrous abuse which the Court of Chancery is, wherever its fangs can fasten. Mend it you never can. The only hope is to supersede it altogether; and the blessings of a suffering community would attend you, if you sweep away such a den of thieves.

From Mr. John Wynne.

April 4, 1849.

Ever since I was a member of the Devon Commission, my mind has been impressed with the idea that it was indispensable for the improvement of Ireland that the vast tracts of land in the possession of persons unable from the encumbered state of their properties to improve the position of the occupiers should change hands.

Without some such measures as those proposed by you, I cannot see any hope for the Western districts.

We want emigration, not such as that of 1848, by which we are losing the substantial farmer, but a well-regulated system, in which the Government, the Unions, and the Colonies should each bear their share. We want employment such as that given by the arterial drainage, which, being executed by taskwork, teaches the ignorant people how to work. We want railroad communication, not for the sake of employment of those now supported by the rate, but to give a market for the produce of those who are obliged to pay the rate. We want it to improve our position so as to induce Englishmen to purchase.

But the most valuable employment would be what would naturally flow from the introduction of capitalists as proprietors.

Since writing this, I have seen Lord John Russell's reply to your last speech. His argument against your proposition founded on the supposed necessity of having

the land cleared of inhabitants is futile. In the great majority of cases the population is not too great, if there were capital to employ them. In certain districts, they are undoubtedly too many, but there let emigration be promoted.

His antagonist plan of taking only the waste lands, and letting them on long lease, would never meet the evil. It is the cultivated land of Ireland, not the uncultivated, which will pay for improvement.

There is now an opportunity of establishing what has been so long the real desideratum, a class of labourers depending on wages instead of conacre potatoes.

But no timid palliation will do. A comprehensive scheme, such as is proposed by you, alone can save Ireland.

From Mrs. Jameson.

April 4, 1849.

I returned before Christmas from a tour of three months in Ireland. I travelled through the Western provinces. I have seen and heard what will never leave my memory.

I travelled with some peculiar advantages, a woman unknown, whom no one thought it worth while to deceive; and, allied to the people by birth and blood, I could understand them.

Sir, you are right in saying that the Irish as a nation are not disloyal. Incalculable mischief is done by a portion of the English Press, by the tone of hatred and scorn of the people as a race, and of hopelessness and sneering contempt of all that was said or attempted in their favour. This was copied, repeated, and disseminated, as the feeling of the English people towards Ireland. It was blistering the minds of those who were really loyal, but sore from suffering, and more given to feeling than reflection. The first words breathing faith, hope, and charity, as regards a most miserable and misunderstood people, were uttered, Sir, by you. The first views which showed in their efficiency and boldness the courage to cope with the exigencies

of an unparalleled condition of things, were announced by you.

Surely, feeling so strongly, I may presume to thank you. I may bring a whole heartful of blessings to your feet for myself and for others—those whom I saw suffering till almost all their human nature was crushed out of them.

Only go on! What is mere office to the power you can wield?

From Lord Monteagle.

When I told you at Lady Palmerston's that your speech on Ireland 'made my blood boil,' I hope you understood my somewhat ambiguous sentence. What I intended to imply was that there was real sinew and muscle, and true substance in your argument, a support and consolation after all the patching and tinkering.

You have announced a great and definite idea, capable, I fully believe, of being realised.

You deal with emigration truly, because you apply it within due limits. You also state that invaluable truth, that for outdoor relief Ireland is not fitted, and that, if we wish to make the poor law safe for the owners of property and effective for the claimants for relief, we must go back to the Act of 1838.

No doubt the development of your plan would be difficult, but I see no difficulty that ought not to be surmounted.

It would be worth living and dying for, if the Connaught problem could be solved not by a self-laudatory 'Irish Crisis' in the 'Edinburgh Review,'[1] but in fact, in truth, and in deed.

Sir Robert Peel was no longer himself in a position to work out the policy suggested. But the Whig Viceroy was disposed to profit by his advice. The following paper is endorsed, 'Given by me to Lord Clarendon, April 2, 1849, at an interview which I had with him at his request at my house in Whitehall Gardens.'

[1] An article attributed to Sir Charles Trevelyan.

Memorandum.

The Lord Lieutenant to appoint a Commission for the purpose—

First. Of controlling and superintending the grant of public aid to distressed Unions in Ireland.

Secondly. Of promoting, as expeditiously as possible, the re-establishment of the principle of the Irish Poor Law of 1838.

Thirdly. Of devising the means by which landed property in a hopeless state of encumbrance can be transferred with a simple and clear title.

The Commission to superintend, not only the immediate application of public money to the present relief of the destitute, but the execution of the various Acts authorising the advance of public money for public works, or the improvement of landed property.

The Commission not to supersede the authority of the Board of Works, but to act in general concert and co-operation with that Board, the head of which might be a member of the Commission.

The Commissioners should repair to the West of Ireland, should visit each Union, and confer on the spot personally with the Vice Guardians and other parties. They should have an office and permanent establishment in Limerick, or some other central point. Facilities for personal access to the Commission I should consider most useful in restoring confidence, and indispensable to its success.

I think the Commission should be sufficiently extensive to enable Committees of two or three members to be formed: one for the consideration of the state of the fisheries, the means of giving immediate encouragement to the increased supply of food from that source, and to the permanent establishment and extension of the fisheries, by premiums on individual exertion, the erection of piers, &c. Another Committee might take the drainage and improvement of land.

I should not object to the Commission taking the *temporary* management of a large estate with a good title, with the view of exhibiting an example of good management on a large scale, of good draining, the culture of green crops, &c. I know there would be a pecuniary loss attending this; the advantage would be in the example.

Suppose Connemara were the estate. I would open roads, and thus facilitate access to rude and remote districts of the Crown estate.

How were the Highlands civilised? Not by inaction and indifference. At the public charge the military roads were begun by Marshal Wade in 1732. Five hundred and ninety-nine miles of road were made, and one thousand bridges built.

In a Report made in 1797 on the effect of this great undertaking is the following passage:

'The good effects of this wise measure are very considerable. The people, protected by the laws, have their property secured to them, and intercourse with their industrious Southern neighbours has weaned them from their former slavish dependence on their *chiefs*, removed all prejudices, and encouraged industry.'

Substitute *priests* for chiefs, and the passage might perhaps not be inapplicable to the effect of a similar measure in Ireland.

But as to the priests, I would treat those upon the Crown estate as if it were the private estate of the Crown. I would disclaim the intention of establishing any rule binding upon the Government beyond the limits of the estate. But the object contemplated is to exhibit an example, which other proprietors may follow if they will, of a well-managed, well-cultivated property, with a contented and orderly population. To make that population contented and orderly, I would call in the aid of the priest.

I would repair or rebuild the chapel of each parish, repair or rebuild the priest's house, attach a small glebe to it, with a stipend of fifty or sixty pounds a year. I would do all this as the act of a landlord.

I would attach no conditions, seek for no patronage, disturb no relations between the Bishop and the priest, or the priest and his flock, give no permanent tenure, except so far as the chapel or the priest's residence was concerned. I would simply offer what I had to give, to be held during pleasure, without requiring anything in return. On hereafter parting with the property, I would try to stipulate for the continuance of that which had been done.

As to the sale of encumbered estates, and transfer of landed property, I would in the first instance direct the immediate attention of the Commission to this question, with a view of ascertaining whether through their amicable intervention, between owners and encumbrancers on the one hand and purchasers on the other, the basis of some settlement and sale could be laid; the conditions and title to be hereafter confirmed by Act of Parliament.

If no amicable intervention would be availing, I would direct the Commissioners to call to their assistance lawyers willing and able to *solve* difficulties, and to confer on the means of rescuing estates from the fangs of Chancery and the Exchequer: of giving owners and encumbrancers, willing and fairly entitled to sell, the means of sale by some simple process adapted to this special occasion.

How did you settle such questions as the compulsory commutation of Tithe, or the abolition of Turnpike Tolls, that were driving the people to rebellion in South Wales; or the appropriation of the Slave Compensation money, twenty millions in amount, except by departing from the beaten track of technical rules of courts of law, and offering in lieu of them and their ruinous expense, a special tribunal, with a special right of appeal?

If you can once effect the sale of the encumbered Irish estate, and give a good title to the purchaser, *offer arbitration* as to the appropriation of the proceeds between owners and encumbrancers; but indulge them in the luxury of a Chancery suit, to determine appropriation, if they prefer that to arbitration.

Some are startled at the name of a Commission. What

are the Vice Guardians, or the members of the Poor Law Board, but Commissioners?

I should prefer to a Commission extensive powers to the present Lord Lieutenant, with a Council of his own selection, visiting the different localities, executing his orders on the spot, aiding him by their local experience, introducing unity of system in giving relief, withholding it, employing labour, gradually reverting to the workhouse test, throughout the several Unions to which public aid is given.

Lord John Russell says that there are many estates now on sale in Ireland, and that he is willing to establish a maximum of future Poor Law charges.

If this be so, there is little need for giving compulsory powers to the Commissioners in respect to the sale of land. But I doubt whether there is any estate on sale which in the present state of the law an English purchaser would buy. With the estate he would probably buy a Chancery suit, and a duel besides.

From Lord Monteagle.

April 9, 1849.

I reflect by day, and dream by night, on your proposition, which is brought more clearly and practically before the mind than I could have thought possible in the number of pages.

I am very glad that Clarendon has seen your paper. He knows the case well, and has large aspirations. But so had John Russell in December last. Now, I cannot but feel that the economical ague has chilled him, and this ague I attribute chiefly to two causes: (1) the utter waste and mischief of the five millions thrown away on public works; and (2) the want of a large and definite scheme, that would enlarge the thoughts and even the sympathies of the British people.

Sir Robert Peel also introduced to Lord Clarendon an eminent agricultural expert.

From Lord Clarendon.

Viceregal Lodge: Sept. 2, 1849.

Advice from Mr. Caird, founded upon his own observation of the agricultural deficiencies of Ireland, may do much good. The moment is favourable, as the people are everywhere anxious and grateful for instruction.

The landlords are the real obstacle to improvement, and their condition generally is deplorable. As a body they are insolvent. Many of them lack the first necessaries of life, and though still exercising the rights of property they can perform none of its duties.

Our best hope, therefore, is in the Encumbered Estates Act. I am well pleased with the Commissioners, who feel the importance of their labours, and look forward to immortalising themselves by leading the way to reform in England as well as here.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Woodford: Oct. 8, 1849.

Lord Stanley did not add to the spirits of Lord Clarendon. He told him that he expected landlords to be bankrupt, tenants to run away, poor rates to be uncollectable; that the Irish who had emigrated were returning, because they found the market overstocked with labourers; and they would return penniless, and would lean on the poor rates, already overburdened.

From Lord Clarendon.

Oct. 24, 1849.

I was much pleased with Mr. Caird, who seems to be an intelligent practical man of business. I hope he will publish the result of his inquiries, as his opinion may carry weight, and I expect it will be favourable to the investment of English capital in Irish land.

Six weeks ago I had great hopes of this, but they are now fast fading away; for it would require more courage than capitalists ordinarily possess to buy land in a country where life and property are so insecure.

The crop-lifting and organised conspiracy against rents in the South, the excitement in the North, the revival of political agitation, the ruin of the landowners whom the crisis has now really crushed, and the increasing pressure of taxation with diminished means of meeting it, all combine to make the coming winter the worst we have yet had to scramble through.

The Encumbered Estates Commissioners commence their sittings to-day. Many pending suits will be transferred to them from the Court of Chancery. But the present state of the country will keep off buyers.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Oct. 27, 1849.

I am glad that Mr. Caird has visited Ireland under your auspices, and my preconceived reliance on his practical wisdom and sound judgment is confirmed by his letter to you. I have not read anything so sensible respecting Ireland for a long time.

It is curious indeed to collate your letter to me in October 1845 with the Lord Lieutenant's to you now. The difficulties which then you announced as the result of your long and painful experience are now clearly understood and painfully felt by the present Government. As an Opposition, they studiously aggravated them. Now the tables are turned, and I regard the contrast with proud satisfaction.

You, having been ejected from power on the Irish ground, do not repudiate even kindly communication with the Lord Lieutenant of your former adversaries, and you give them in the midst of their embarrassments the benefit of something more than forbearance, in return for implacable hostility. *Sic itur ad astra.*

From Lord Clarendon.

Viceregal Lodge: Nov. 10, 1849.

I was extremely obliged to you for sending me that admirable extract from your letter to Sir James Graham.[2]

[2] This letter has not been identified.

What you said five years ago is as true now as it was then, and will, I have no doubt, be five years hence.

In a country where common sense is rare, and truth almost unknown, where no public opinion exists, and there is no respect for law, Government is without the support it might reasonably expect; and he who has the misfortune to administer the affairs of Ireland must always feel that he creates enemies in proportion as he endeavours to act with justice and impartiality.

The 'difficulty' has still to be solved, and I shall rejoice when the task falls into abler hands than mine.

On the policy of founding a National University for Ireland, letters show that Prince Albert, Sir James Graham, and Sir Robert Peel agreed, and Lord Clarendon was guided by their advice rather than by the Prime Minister's.

To petty objections raised to a central examination Sir Robert Peel replied:

To Lord Clarendon.

Aug. 27, 1849.

The acquirement of the degree after a public examination is an event in a man's life. . . . It does seem to me absurd (excuse my frankness) to permit the inconvenience of a few hours' journey, and the expense of a second-class fare, to incline the balance by a hair's breadth in deciding this question. I declare I think it would be more rational to propose that the bachelors of the three Colleges should not be married out of Cork, Galway, and Belfast respectively on account of the distances which separate these localities from the fair sex of one another and of Dublin.

If the youth of Galway are so *adscripti glebæ* that the horizon of their life up to the period of manhood has been bounded by the Isles of Arran and the Twelve Pins of Bunabola, for God's sake for once bring them to Dublin.

From Sir James Graham.

Aug. 30, 1849.

To give solidity and weight to the institution, you must clothe it with a national character, and win to it public favour by the largeness of its scope and the amplitude of its influence. I should desire to see even the students at Maynooth descend into the arena of the new University, and contend for honours in Arts and Sciences with the Presbyterian scholars from Belfast.

The State would act wisely if it endowed without parsimony bursaries and University scholarships, as annual prizes, to be awarded after a public examination, part of which should be oral. And I entirely agree with you in regretting that Sir Robert Kane and others should have made any concession to the Belfast authorities, who are actuated both by local and by sectarian prejudices, and are misled by the example of the Scotch Universities, which appear to me rather beacons to be avoided than examples to be followed.

We know that the result of the rivalry among them, in the absence of any central control, has been an underbidding in the cost of the degree, and a low standard of proficiency for its attainment.

Lord John Russell's Memorandum of last year must have been hastily written without sufficient care. It is probably tinctured also with some natural affection for the Edinburgh system, where Lord John himself was educated. But I still hope that no final decision has been taken, and that your opinion will have its due weight with Lord Clarendon.

You and I encountered much obloquy, and made many sacrifices in the cause of Irish Education, for the improvement of Maynooth, and in the struggle which gave birth to these Colleges. I still take the most lively interest in these measures, I believe them to be among the foundations on which a better social system in that country must be erected, and on this as on so many other occasions, I have the happiness of entirely concurring with you, our independent opinions being formed without consultation.

From Lord Clarendon.

Viceregal Lodge: Sept. 2, 1849.

I am extremely obliged to you for your valuable letter[3] upon the University, which confirms my own ideas about the constitution and proper use of that body. In discussing the question with Prince Albert here, I did not hesitate to give my opinion that a degree would be worthless, and the Colleges would sink into Provincial Academies, if they did not publicly compete together for honours.

H.R.H. promised to favour me with his advice in writing, and I have received from him one of the ablest and most lucid statements of opinion I ever read. His views are entirely in accordance with yours, and I need hardly say, therefore, that they will guide me in the decision which must now be taken.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 6, 1849.

I concur in every word of what you have written to me. I have taken the liberty of sending it to the Prince.

From Prince Albert.

Balmoral: Sept. 12. 1849.

I am very glad that my notions about the Irish University meet so completely yours and Lord Clarendon's. I trust that the matter may be considered as carried: as I showed my letter to Lord John, who, though not giving much attention to it, seemed to approve the tenor of it, and complained of his short note having been inserted in the printed papers.

From Lord Clarendon.

Viceregal Lodge: Nov. 10. 1849.

The Colleges have opened under far more favourable circumstances than could have been expected, considering

[3] See *Life of the Prince Consort*, ii. 210.

the violence with which they have been assailed, and, if hope were not always a prelude to disappointment in Ireland, I should say that you might have reason to be proud of your work, and that your anticipations of national benefit from these institutions will be fully realised.

At Galway, where, being the poorest locality, no students were expected the first term, twenty-two have already entered, and the answering for the matriculation examination was so good, particularly in mathematics and in Greek, that the examiners had to frame more difficult questions. At Belfast there are now 112 students, and more will enter after Christmas. Dr. Henry writes me word that he considers success as certain. The same may be said of the Cork College, where there are between forty and fifty students.

As regards Free Trade, from first to last Sir Robert Peel's letters show a firm conviction that any attempt to reimpose protective duties on necessaries would cause a desperate conflict, in which he was prepared to fight again for untaxed food.

On July 6 on a Protectionist motion by Mr. Disraeli he delivered an important speech in support of Free Trade. To be appreciated it should be read in full. It is described by the Duke of Wellington as 'most powerful and able,' and by Professor Lindley as 'a great public argument which has never been surpassed for unanswerable reasoning, and perhaps was never equalled for the admirable skill with which a violent party question was treated as a mere matter of philosophical discussion.' Mr. Bright pronounced the speech to be 'more powerful and more to be admired than any which has been delivered within the memory of man in this House.'

Arduous as was the task of sustaining the Whigs in office, Sir Robert Peel was determined, if possible, to achieve it, in order at once to avert democracy and prevent a return to Protection. But the state of parties was perplexing.

From Sir James Graham.

July 20, 1849.

Ministers were beaten last night on the motion of Henry Drummond, condemning past expenditure, and

enforcing the necessity of large future reductions. I was absent from the division. The Radicals and Protectionists combined.

To Sir James Graham.

July 24, 1849.

The Government seems to have little prospect of acquiring strength. Their main source of strength will be the declared resolution of the Protectionists to restore Protection *as a principle.*

If the Government will tie the Protectionists to that stake, and will declare in express unequivocal terms, without a lingering retrospective look of affection at their budget of 1841, that they are against Protection as a principle, and that the test of party difference is now Protection or no Protection, they may hold their ground.

But they leave people in doubt as to their real inclinations at least, if not intentions.

Their task is a very difficult one. They are carrying on a Conservative Government, and to keep the ship afloat, they have to pitch over, day by day, the heavy encumbrance of some rash pledge given in Opposition.

The act of pitching over is not always done very gracefully, though it is so often repeated that one would hope that, with practice, there might be at last some dexterity acquired.

Nov. 15.—If the Protectionists really meditate the serious proposal of a revival of any duty, fixed or fluctuating, on food, there will be a furious struggle. Whatever I can do to defeat the project, I shall do with hearty goodwill.

Nov. 17.—I totally disbelieve the rumours that Lord John Russell would propose the restoration of any duty on the main articles of food in this country.

Depend upon it that he, and many at least of his colleagues, would prefer the alternative of breaking up twenty Governments to the alternative of such a fearful struggle as must follow the attempt by a Government to reimpose duties on the import of food.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Netherby: Nov. 22, 1849.

I am informed that Palmerston in 1845, on reading Lord John's letter from Edinburgh, before your resignation, instantly wrote to Lord John, and declared that he would be no party to the policy of a free trade in corn, and announced in civil valedictory terms a final political separation. The sudden opening to office which ensued changed Palmerston's views and intentions, but the previous letter still exists, and, as well as I could collect, was seen by my friend.

Ellice himself argued that public opinion was shaken with respect to Free Trade, and that the fall of wages and want of work in the agricultural districts had rendered the labourers discontented with the present state of affairs.

To Sir James Graham.

Woburn Abbey: Nov. 27, 1849.

The Duke of Bedford showed me an admirable letter which old Arbuthnot had written to a croaking country banker, censuring him for spreading panic among the farmers, and telling him that the restoration of the boroughs in Schedule A was a more probable event than the renewal of Protection.

The whole letter does the greatest credit to him. I hope he does not speak his own opinion only.

Meanwhile distress of farmers was not allowed to interrupt sport.

From the Duke of Bedford.

Woburn Abbey: Nov. 30, 1849.

A friend of yours and mine went into Suffolk the other day to join a shooting party at his brother's, a very strong Protectionist, and sends me an account of the slaughter, from which I make the following extract in confirmation of what you said to me the other day about game.

'There are more hares and rabbits than ever, and one of my brother's tenants told me he had six acres of barley so much eaten by them that he did not attempt to cut it. But his grumbling about free trade is worse than ever.'

No doubt the destruction of this barley crop is put into the farm accounts, and will be considered among the losses caused by free trade.

In Ireland the cry was loud for Protection.

From Mr. John Young, M.P.

Dec. 4, 1849.

I find the state of the country deplorable, and people in general well nigh desperate. In Cavan, I really do not believe there is such a thing as a free trader. I really do not know what to do or to say, the torrent is so violent. My seat for the county is at stake. It is vain to attempt to reason with people in the frenzy all Ireland is now in. What can we say to ruined or desperately struggling men?

In England the Free Trade policy seemed irrevocable.

From the Duke of Bedford.

Woburn Abbey: Dec. 5, 1849.

It is well for the country, and a mercy to us all, that the Corn Law question was settled when it was. But when difficulties and dangers are passed, people are apt to forget the escapes they have had, especially in political matters.

I never voted for any change in the Corn Laws till I supported your measure in 1846. I had no clear conviction on the question till then. But I am now persuaded that, if a successful attempt were made to retrace our free trade steps, we should witness the commencement of a war of classes.

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 8, 1849.

I still have a strong suspicion that among some members of the Cabinet there lingers a secret wish to revert to a fixed duty.

Before we renounced Protection, we counted the cost, and weighed the balance of conflicting dangers. Among them I never overlooked the certainty that free trade in corn, once established by the Legislature, was an irrevocable step, and that any attempt to reverse the policy on a change of Ministers would tend to a convulsive struggle, in which all the institutions I most highly value would inevitably be overthrown.

Still, I did not hesitate, and I do not now regret my decision. The crisis was imminent, no time was to be lost; and my firm belief is, that we saved the nation from ruin.

If the landowners are to be ruined, I shall be among the first. But I feel that I did my duty to the public. When I was their servant, all other considerations were secondary. Yet even as a proprietor of bad land, I do not despair; and as to the welfare of the community, I am certain that immense and lasting benefits have been received.

I know that these are common sentiments and feelings; I only express them that you may be assured how unshaken I am by passing events. And this may be some satisfaction, when you remember how cordially we have agreed on this vital question, in all the different circumstances in which it has been our duty to regard it, and in all the changes which honest conviction has forced upon us.

From Sir Charles Wood.

Downing Street: Dec. 15, 1849.

There is certainly a very strong feeling in the country, especially in Ireland. The price of corn has fallen below what was anticipated, and certainly below what I had myself expected. Very large quantities of foreign corn have recently come in.

The Protectionists reckon on a great reaction in the country, and are anxious for a dissolution, in order to get rid of a House of Commons of which they despair, and to have one returned under the influence of what they believe to be the feeling at present in the country. They are ready,

I hear, to join in nearly any vote, with any party, which may give them a chance of this.

It is a dangerous game for them to play. I do not myself believe in the change of opinion being anything like so general as they suppose; and I do not think that they could succeed. But I am quite sure that if they did, the next turn would carry away much more than the resuscitated Corn Law.

Dec. 19.—Clarendon says that a dissolution would give ninety Protectionists from Ireland.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Dec. 23, 1849.

I think it quite possible that the Irish and the Radicals may combine with the Protectionists, so as to place the Government in a minority on some vital question of foreign or colonial policy very early in the approaching Session, and then the fearful struggle will commence, for which the extreme parties on both sides are panting, and in which our form of government itself, and our most sacred institutions will be exposed to imminent danger.

Stanley ought not to be willing to run great risks, with such an inheritance at stake. But anger and resentment are evil counsellors, and have before now betrayed even wise and good men into dangerous errors.

Come what may, I am happy in the reflection that I am cordially united with you, and that we shall act together in the midst of future difficulties, as we have done now for so many years, without a shadow of difference or of misgiving.

I care little about the various projects afloat for tinkering the Administration. None of the changes contemplated will strengthen it. That it should be able to stand for the present is the great object.

CHAPTER XIX.

1850.

Letter to the Drayton Tenants—Disraeli's Motion on Agricultural Distress—Supported by Gladstone—Defeated by Peel—Efforts to restore Protection—Foreign Policy of Palmerston—Coercion of Greece—Alienation of France and Russia—Censured by the Lords—Supported by the Commons—Peel's last Speech—Diplomacy, its Use and Abuse—Fatal Accident and Death—National Grief—Private Letters.

In the winter Sir Robert Peel addressed his own tenantry on the probable effects of free trade upon agricultural profits, and announced his intention of sharing the loss.

To the Tenants on the Drayton Estate.

I wish to communicate with you on the present state and prospects of agriculture, so far as they concern our position of landlord and tenant.

There can, I think, be no question that the effects of the recent changes of the law in respect to the free import of the main articles of subsistence will be to maintain a range of low prices in average seasons, and to prevent very high prices in seasons of dearth.

It is because I believe that this will be the effect of the changes, that I look upon them as irrevocable, and that I advise you to dismiss altogether from your calculations the prospect of renewed protection. It is my firm persuasion that neither the present nor any future Parliament will consent to reimpose duties upon the main articles of human food, either for the purpose of protection or of revenue.

When I undertake a general review of the relations in

which we stand to each other, it will be upon principles which I think you will admit to be just. I shall take into account all the considerations which fairly enter into the question—shall try to estimate the effect of recent legislation, and of improved means of conveyance, in reducing not only the price of produce, but the cost of production also, and shall compare the disadvantage, to which the tenant-farmer may be exposed from competition with producers in other countries, with the benefit which he may derive, if he has ordinary skill and capital, from the abolition of duties on many articles which are, or may be, profitably consumed upon a farm.

I do not undertake to make a general and indiscriminate reduction of rent. But, aided by good advice, I shall consider the special case of each farm, and the circumstances under which it was entered upon; and in the instances in which I shall be satisfied that there is a fair case for the abatement of rent, I will make it, and make it with much greater pleasure in favour of an old and improving tenant, than in favour of a stranger.

I am prepared also without delay to co-operate with you in preparing to meet not foreign competition only, but that competition with domestic skill and capital which will be at least as formidable to those farmers who are insensible to the rapid progress of agricultural improvement and neglect to keep pace with it. To aid the exertions which are required to encounter successfully that competition, I make to you the following proposals.

I will set apart twenty per cent. of the last half-year's rent, and will forthwith apply the amount, under the general direction of my agent, but in concert with the tenant, in such improvements as may be most beneficial to the farm. I shall give the preference to drainage, to the removal of unnecessary fences, and to the means of preventing the waste of manure. On this expenditure no return will be required from the tenant.

The same course shall be taken with regard to the half-year's rent which will be due at Lady Day.

To Mr. Roebuck, who urged the advantages of fixing rents by competition, Sir Robert Peel replied:

January 2, 1850.

I so far agree with you that I think much evil has grown out of the entire exclusion of the commercial principle from the relations of landlord and tenant. The usage of permitting the son to succeed the father at the old rent, without reference to the real value of the land, has had a tendency to prevent improvement and diminish production.

But I am not prepared to admit that a landlord ought to insist on the application of the commercial principle to the exclusion of other considerations. The sudden adoption of such a rule would be very painful, would in many cases work real injustice, and would operate in others as a discouragement to enterprise and improvement.

I have scarcely one farm that is not held on a yearly tenure. I have offered leases, but in vain. It is therefore in my power, by writing a few lines, to vacate every farm I have at Lady Day 1851.

But I have many tenants who, acting in confidence, have expended capital and made improvements, which have not yet made any adequate return. Am I justified in suddenly terminating such a tenant's holding, in telling him that, though his land is worth five shillings an acre more than when he entered upon it, in consequence of his good husbandry and the expenditure of his capital, I am entitled to that benefit?

I doubt whether I would not rather give up my estate than serve every tenant I have with a notice to quit, and advertise every farm as the subject of open competition.

If I do not take this course I must adopt some other for ascertaining the just future rent. I have no better plan than that which I propose, namely, a consideration of the special circumstances of each farm—of the natural fertility of the soil, of the extent to which it has been improved by skill and enterprise, not yet compensated by profitable

returns, of the effect produced, since the rent was last fixed, by legislation not then foreseen, setting against the lowered price of produce the lowered price of production. Having done this, I so far relax the rigid commercial principle as to give the preference to an old and improving tenant.

From Mr. Sidney Herbert.

Jan. 10, 1850.

I read with satisfaction your letter to your tenants. I am convinced it is the right course, and we have acted upon it on my brother's estates.

I think the farmers in our neighbourhood were beginning to buckle to, and were preparing themselves for the change, when that mischievous agitation sprang up and unsettled their minds with the delusion that protection is to be regained. And it is equally mischievous from a political point of view; for the landed, who are the aristocratic class, will be greatly damaged by their attempt to regain their privileges. The delusion, however, has taken a strong hold in Wiltshire, and the farmers are crying out lustily for a dissolution and a Protection Government.

Efforts to reimpose the tax on corn continued. To one zealous advocate of this, Sir Robert Peel writes:

To Mr. Henry Drummond, M.P.

Drayton Manor: Jan. 4, 1850.

I do not see the force of your reasoning.

'Three-fourths of the estates in Great Britain are mortgaged, and nine-tenths of the farmers are farming with borrowed capital.'

What a cutting rebuke to Protection! Is this the result of attempting to bolster up prices by legislative restrictions on the import of food? Is this the pecuniary return for a great deal of odium and a great deal of risk?

You and I, who remember 1836 and the distress caused by an average price of wheat of 39*s.* 4*d.*, although scarcely

a bushel of foreign wheat had been brought into consumption for two years, know how delusive is the promise held out by Protection. But if your facts be correct, the mischief of it is inestimable. There ought to be a general rejoicing that the incubus is removed, not a demand for compensation.

On a hostile motion for a Committee on agricultural distress, the Government was saved from defeat only by the support of Sir Robert Peel with a few of his staunch friends, the majority of them voting against him. His speech (Feb. 21) was devoted chiefly to answering Mr. Gladstone, who advocated reduction of taxes on real property to the amount of two millions a year, shifting that burden to rest upon the general taxpayer.

In reply, Sir Robert Peel reminded the House that the mover (Mr. Disraeli) had put the just claims of land for relief at twelve or fourteen millions. But even two millions would swallow up the whole available surplus; and that must either prevent remissions of taxation favourable to agriculture, as on bricks, timber, tea, soap, and windows; or must affect the public credit; or must require the continuance of the income tax; or (as Protectionists hoped) the re-enactment of some import duties. As against this, he implored the House to stand by the financial policy deliberately adopted for the relief of industry, 'convincing those who live by labour that we, the landed proprietors, are willing to submit to sacrifices which shall relieve from taxation those articles of food on which the industrious classes depend for subsistence.'

With all the votes that Sir Robert Peel could muster, the Government escaped by a majority of only twenty-one. One of his usual supporters who this time deserted him draws the moral that if the Free Trade policy is to have fair play, it can only be by Sir Robert's resuming command.

From Mr. John Young, M.P.

Feb. 22, 1850.

The division appears to me to confirm the impressions which that in the Address gave rise to. In the

latter, the Whigs and Radicals combined were inferior in number to the Protectionists and those who are usually termed your friends. Last night thirty-five of your friends voted in the minority; twenty-eight, yourself included, in the majority; without your assistance the Government was defeated by seven.

I enclose a list marked. On looking it over, you will see the thirty-five and twenty-eight are mostly men of considerable local influence, good fortune, and high character. They form an important body, and will cast the balance to whichever party they may eventually join. They will stand by Free Trade; they are the men who carried the repeal of the Corn and Navigation Laws, and will steadily maintain that policy. But they have no sympathies with and no confidence in the present Government. They are with you, not with Lord John Russell.

These two lists, about half as many more absent, and nearly an equal number favourably inclined but generally voting with the Protectionists—say about one hundred and sixty—would rally round you personally, or any organisation distinctly formed under your auspices and guided by your advice. But they will not make sacrifices, and risk their seats night after night, and year after year, for those whom they cannot help regarding as political opponents.

I do not believe that any active opposition is contemplated, but support will no doubt be withheld, and without such support the Whigs have no command of a majority.

I mention this because so large a number of men have sought communications with me in the course of the last week—probably not fewer than sixty or seventy—and from all I can gather, if a Protectionist Government is to be averted by any arrangement, and your commercial policy is to receive fair play for some years to come, during its infancy and this period of transition, you yourself are the only person able or likely to effect these objects.

Of Sir Robert Peel's private declarations against Protection, the last in date is perhaps the strongest.

To Mr. Lambert, M.P.

Whitehall: May 16, 1850.

If others entertain doubts as to the wisdom of the commercial policy adopted from 1841 to 1847, including the repeal of the Corn and Provision Laws, they are of course at perfect liberty to express those doubts. I entertain none, and shall do everything in my power to prevent the reversal of the policy, or the restoration of Protection, in any shape or on any pretence whatever.

'Everything in my power.' Would he have taken office? Little as Sir Robert Peel desired this, he would have done it rather than see Protection restored.

'He will not retire from public life,' said Sir James Graham in 1847, 'to please any man. He does not want to be head of a party, still less to return to office; but he will continue to take that part in public affairs which he considers best for the public service, reserving to himself the faculty of acting according to circumstances in any political contingency.'[1]

In 1850, not long before his death, walking home from the House of Commons with Mr. Cardwell, who lived next door to him, and repeating his determination to do anything rather than allow the renewal of taxes on food, Sir Robert Peel was reminded by his friend and follower of the general belief that he had resolved under no circumstances to resume office. With a gesture habitual to him, pressing Mr. Cardwell's arm to his side, Sir Robert remarked, 'I never said so.'

The last advice Peel gave in Parliament was to maintain in foreign affairs a diplomacy furthering peace, not risking war. With Aberdeen and Graham he deplored the habitual attitude of Palmerston towards the Governments of other countries. Graham's chief reason for not rejoining the Whigs had been Lord John Russell's failure to control his Foreign Secretary, and the more Palmerston had his way, the more difficult was it to abstain from public censure. Yet Peel and Graham did refrain, to avert a worse evil—a chance for Stanley to appeal to the

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, vi. 96.

country for a new Corn Law. The latest letters exchanged between them show how anxious both were to avoid such action as might cause a ministerial crisis.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: March 31, 1850.

Do you ever read the 'Globe'? The articles on foreign affairs come directly from the inner Cabinet in Downing Street. On Friday last there was one which sounds a note of triumph on account of Palmerston's impunity from all attacks or adverse comments in Parliament. Increased audacity is the natural consequence, and will probably end in some signal disaster.

To Sir James Graham.

April 2, 1850.

I send a few lines from Aberdeen referring to the article in the 'Globe,' and proving how sensitive he is to these attacks.

I have written to him in a sense which will not, I fear, be satisfactory to him. I have kept no copy of my letter, or I would send it to you.

The letters he receives from Paris, from Guizot and Madame de Lieven and others—all reckless as to any other consequences, provided only they can get rid of Palmerston—make Aberdeen still more impatient.

(*Enclosure.*)

Lord Aberdeen to Sir Robert Peel.

Argyll House: March 30, 1850.

You have probably seen the 'Globe' of yesterday, in which there is an article evidently from the Foreign Office, and in which you are expected to express your sympathy in Palmerston's 'generous and farsighted views.'

I cannot say that I am at all surprised that such should

be the expectation of the public, or even of Palmerston himself, but I think the mistake is unfortunate, and likely to prove very injurious in its consequences.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: April 3, 1850.

I return Lord Aberdeen's letter. Either from choice or from necessity the present Government is so identified with Palmerston that his overthrow would be the fate of the Administration; and no one who is not prepared to incur the evils of a ministerial crisis can safely venture on a home thrust at the Foreign Secretary.

The case does not admit of faint attacks, or of an idle war of words; the accusations, if preferred, are too grave for such half-measures. He must be endured, until he destroy both himself and the Administration of which he is now the ruling member; or active hostilities must be openly waged against the Government on the avowed ground that his management of our foreign relations is inconsistent with the peace of Europe, with our national sentiments, and with the reduction of our huge military and naval establishments.

The latter ground is fairly open, but it must be regarded in connection with our domestic concerns; and the position cannot successfully be occupied in the present state of parties, without ensuring the triumph of the Protectionists, and without placing in jeopardy the fruits of our hard-fought struggle for the establishment of Free Trade.

It is a choice of dangers and of evils, and I am disposed to think that Palmerston and his foreign policy are less to be dreaded than Stanley and a new Corn Law.

To stand between these conflicting elements of discord and evil, dreading both and approving neither, yet driven day by day to make a choice and to assist one against the other, is indeed a painful position, very irksome, but in present circumstances, as I believe, plainly inevitable, without an abandonment of public duty; and I have such

faith in the happy results of steady adherence to this the first and highest obligation, that, although I cannot foresee the end, I am satisfied it will come right at last.

To Sir James Graham.

April 4, 1850.

The purport of my letter to Aberdeen was this:

That I did not care two straws about paragraphs in newspapers, and that the certainty that Lord Palmerston was the author of the particular paragraph to which he called my attention would not induce me to attach any additional importance to it:

That I thought erroneous inferences could not—for the present at least—be drawn from silence in Parliament as to these recent events connected with our foreign policy which had attracted so much notice:

That an active offensive hostility to the Government on questions of foreign or domestic policy neither suited my private inclinations, my isolated position in the House of Commons, nor my views as to a change in the Government at present, with the consequences which I had a right to presume would follow that change:

That it sounded very plausibly to insist on the justice and necessity of discussing public measures with reference to their abstract merits alone, and of inflicting censure when censure was due; but that this virtuous theory did not suit the rough practice of what was called parliamentary or representative government.

The arraignment of the foreign policy of an Administration, if determined on, should be undertaken in earnest; to be in earnest, there must be concert and consideration. The unconnected speech of an individual member would be a very innocuous demonstration, a *telum imbelle sine ictu*, or with an ictus recoiling on the striker, who in the present state of parties might find himself disavowed by his neighbours on his right hand and on his left.

All this might be a good argument for the policy of

concert and combination—that is, for re-establishing party connections and party engagements. I had not a word to say against those who felt the force of that argument, and acted upon the recognition of its force; though I was resolved for myself not to follow their example.

The above is the general outline and purport of my letter to Aberdeen, given from memory.

On the original Sir James Graham has written: 'This is the last letter which I ever received from Sir Robert Peel.' There was in fact one more.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: April 5, 1850.

I am obliged by your kindness in telling me the substance of your answer to Lord Aberdeen. My last letter to you shows how entirely we agree in opinion, and how even without concert we are guided by common motives and principles. Old high Tory habits and predilections may to others[2] render easy and agreeable reunions and combinations of party which to me are distasteful and undesirable. I shall consider myself happy indeed if, for the short time longer while I may still linger on the stage, I remain united in conduct as I am in heart and friendship with you, whose confidence I have now long enjoyed, and whose labours and late difficulties I have shared.

To Sir James Graham. (*The last letter.*)

April 6, 1850.

Inclosed is Aberdeen's rejoinder to my letter. I knew he would not be pleased by it.

It was a source of true satisfaction to me, but not unexpected satisfaction, to find that on the question started by Aberdeen, the conclusions to which you and I had come were so entirely in unison.

[2] 'Graham thinks Gladstone, Goulburn, and Aberdeen would all join Stanley in taking office.'—*Greville Memoirs*, March 8, 1850.

I say my satisfaction was not unexpected, for I can never forget our communications, personal and written, during our few years' tenure of power, and the proofs they supplied of cordial agreement on many trying occasions, founded on the only sure basis, that of reciprocal esteem and confidence.

(*Enclosure.*)

From Lord Aberdeen.

Blackheath: April 4, 1850.

I think you appear rather to have misapprehended the drift of my remarks respecting the articles which are occasionally inserted in the 'Globe' newspaper. This is not very surprising, for you have been so long accustomed to consider every word uttered in the House of Commons as having reference more or less to party interests, that it may appear difficult for anything to be said or done without such objects in view. I look at this matter in quite a different light, and cannot help thinking that much may be done for the country, and for Europe, without the slightest connection with party objects, or without entertaining the least notion of overthrowing the Government.

The case is this. We think that we see a mischievous course of policy pursued by a Government of whose general conduct you approve. Now I verily believe that the knowledge of your disapprobation of such faulty portion of their conduct would do much to correct it.

I am even of opinion that the apprehension of my own censure is not without some utility in preventing worse measures than those we actually see. In your case of course the effect would be a thousand times greater. Indeed, I feel this so strongly that I think the intimation of your opinion, even if privately made, might be of much practical benefit in preventing mischief.

There is now no question of joining in any attack upon the foreign policy of the Government, but I really cannot see any reason why, if the occasion offered, after an hour spent in approving of the measures of the Government,

five minutes might not be employed in letting it be known that this laudation did not extend indiscriminately to all departments.

I may have the means of knowing your true opinion, but in these times of change it is not at all wonderful that great doubt and ignorance should prevail on the subject. I care very little for the House of Commons, and am only anxious that a policy which in fact you think mischievous should not appear to receive your sanction. If we are to have a repetition of our great performances, whether enacted at Naples, Leghorn, or Lisbon, it is surely not very unreasonable to desire that the director of them should not be fortified and encouraged by the belief of your approbation.

From Sir James Graham.

(Private.) Netherby: April 7, 1850.

I make great allowances for Lord Aberdeen's soreness and impatience. He attaches primary importance to our foreign relations, and in his estimation our domestic policy is secondary. At home he is liberal, but not an enthusiast; abroad he is a zealot, in the sense most opposed to Palmerston; and having much reason on his side in condemnation of the proceedings of our Foreign Office he is impetuous and indignant, and overlooks all the consequences of the course to which he is honestly impelled.

I cannot agree with him in opinion, that private remonstrance would be consistent either with the dignity of your position or with the gravity of the public interests at stake.

If you indicate dissatisfaction, a motion will be made which you must either oppose or support: if supporting you carry it, the responsibility of forming a Government devolves on us.

If you oppose the motion, to which in the abstract you are pledged by a previous declaration, on general grounds embracing the state of parties, you expose yourself to the

taunt of perpetual sacrifice of principle to expediency, and you strengthen immeasurably the power of the very Minister whom it is desirable to check and to control. Your own view of this matter appears to me entirely correct. The foreign policy of our Administration, if arraigned by a person in your position, must be attacked in earnest, and to render the attack effectual there must be concert; and if effectual after concert, it must lead to consequences which it is vain to dissemble or childish to misapprehend.

I am gladdened and gratified by the kind expressions at the end of your letter. I like to follow your track. I believe that it leads to honour and to the public good, and long may we tread this road together, whoever may accompany us, and whatever may be the present injustice done to our motives.

For such reasons Peel and Graham remained silent, until at last, in his zeal to enforce the claims of a Gibraltar Jew, whose house in Athens had been sacked by a Christian mob, Palmerston resorted to an act of violence against Greece, seizing her gunboats and merchant vessels in the Piræus. Russia at once demanding explanations, France tendered her good offices, and Palmerston accepted them. But while France was engaged in friendly negotiation, a fresh act of coercion by the British fleet compelled the Greeks to pay the sum that Palmerston demanded, with the natural effect that France marked her sense of the insult by withdrawing her ambassador. The recklessness of thus alienating two friendly and powerful nations being regarded in the House of Lords as insufferable, Lord Stanley moved and carried a vote of censure, by 269 to 132. To repair this in the House of Commons the Government did not venture to raise separately the Greek question, but employed a friend to move a general approval of their foreign policy.

Thus challenged to speak out, Sir Robert Peel, though still desirous for domestic reasons to retain the Whigs in office, did not think it right to be absent or silent.

The speech he delivered was one not unworthy to be left on record as his last. There was in it no party spirit, but also no compromise of principle, no doubtful answer to the question

raised. Invited publicly to approve the foreign policy of Palmerston, he set forth with dignity the simple truth.

For four years he had given the Government his firm support, approving their general policy at home. He agreed with them on commercial freedom, he was grateful to them for maintaining sound principles in monetary affairs, he concurred with them in extending to all her Majesty's subjects in Ireland civil equality and equal favour from the Crown. He had been able also in general to support their legislation.

In foreign affairs he had helped them in regard to Portugal, he had refused to join in blaming their Spanish policy, he had vied with them in prompt and friendly recognition of the French Republic. But he could not approve their general foreign policy as distinguished from the policy of their predecessors. Lord John Russell had announced that Lord Palmerston would not be the minister of Austria, of Prussia, or of France, but the minister of England. Such language reflected on Lord Aberdeen. Lord Palmerston himself also had charged the late Government with 'Ashburton capitulations,' and 'yielding to all the Great Powers with whom they came in contact.' To such reflections on the foreign policy for which he was himself responsible Sir Robert Peel could be no party. Nor could he affirm with truth that in the recent Greek affair in his opinion the policy of the Government had been best 'calculated to maintain the honour and dignity of the country, and peace with foreign nations.' To send a British fleet to menace Greece without first inviting the good offices of Russia and of France, to accept those of France, then drive her to withdraw her ambassador, and in the end to accede to the very terms on which she had from the first insisted, was not in his judgment 'a course consistent with the dignity and honour of England.'

Contrasting Lord Palmerston's conception of a becoming foreign policy with his own, Sir Robert Peel made use of memorable words—words present to the mind of Mr. Bright when in after years he referred with admiration to 'that last, that most beautiful, that most solemn speech.'

'Diplomacy,' he said, 'is a costly engine for maintaining peace, a remarkable instrument used by civilised nations for the purpose of preventing war. Unless it be used to appease the angry passions of individual men, and check the feelings which

arise out of national resentment, it is an instrument not only costly but mischievous.

'If your application of diplomacy be to fester every wound, to provoke instead of soothing resentments, to place a minister in every Court of Europe for the purpose not of preventing quarrels, or adjusting quarrels, but for the purpose of continuing an angry correspondence, and promoting what is supposed to be an English interest, by keeping up conflicts with the representatives of other Powers, then I say that not only is the expenditure upon this costly instrument thrown away, but the great engine used by civilised society for the purpose of maintaining peace is perverted into a cause of hostility and war.'

With Palmerston Peel would not argue. 'I have so little disposition,' he said, 'for entering into any hostile controversy that I shall make no reference whatever to many topics which were introduced into that most able and temperate speech, which made us proud of the man who delivered it.' But with the resolution itself he took issue. It concerned not Greece alone. According to the mover, the principle to be unambiguously approved was one of 'moral influence in support of any large endeavour on the part of any body of men to vindicate to themselves the right of self-government.' Against this Sir Robert Peel set the principle for which every statesman of eminence in the country for the last fifty years had contended—non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, without some clear and undeniable necessity, arising from circumstances affecting the interests of our own country. 'That,' said he, 'is the antagonistic principle for which I contend. That I believe to be the best policy as far as England is concerned. It is also my firm belief that you will not advance the cause of constitutional liberty by attempting to dictate to other nations. If you do so, your intentions will be mistaken. If you succeed, I doubt whether the institutions that take root under your patronage will be lasting. Constitutional liberty will be best worked out by those who aspire to freedom by their own efforts. You will only overload it by your help, by your principle of interference, against which I enter my protest, to which I will be no party.'

'For these reasons'—such was his last utterance in the House of Commons—'I give my dissent, my reluctant dissent, from the motion.'

In the division Ministers had a majority.

To Sir Robert Peel it was a great relief that the vote he had felt himself bound to give had not displaced them. Freed from anxiety on this point, content with the result, at ease in his own mind, as he walked home in the fresh summer dawn, he is said to have expressed his satisfaction that he had spoken in the interests of peace.

After a few hours of rest he attended a meeting of the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851. Returning home, after an interval, he went out again for his usual ride. Leaving his name at Buckingham Palace for the Queen, he passed along Constitution Hill, and had just saluted a young lady friend, when his horse, one lately purchased, became restive, and swerving threw him heavily to the ground.

Badly hurt, and fainting, he was conveyed in a passing carriage to his home in Whitehall Gardens. By an effort he mustered strength to walk into the house, but on meeting Lady Peel he swooned again, and was borne into his dining-room, a large apartment looking on the gardens and the river.

There for three days and nights he lay, enduring pain that his physicians were unable to relieve, with sensitiveness so acute that a chief cause of his suffering—'a fracture of one or more ribs underneath the left scapula'—was not detected until after death.

At first some hopes were entertained.

Mr. Gladstone to Mr. John Murray.

Carlton Gardens: July 1, 1850.

The accounts I have received of Sir Robert Peel correspond very much with those given to the people. There is, I trust, very good ground for hope. But neither can one dismiss the idea of most serious danger. A little after he is gone—be it sooner or later that his death may occur—we shall have come to know *how* great a man has been lost to the country.

At times he rallied sufficiently to speak to members of his family, and to bid his dear friends Graham and Hardinge, whose names had been often on his lips, and who came to him, a faint farewell. As the end drew near, in presence of his family he

received the Sacrament at the hands of an old friend, Dr. Tomlinson, Bishop of Gibraltar.

On the fourth day his strength failed, and his sufferings ceased.

Dr. Hodgson to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Whitehall Gardens: Tuesday, July 2, 1850. Half-past nine P.M.

Soon after five o'clock this afternoon Sir Robert Peel became much worse. Symptoms of great exhaustion came on, which have gradually increased, and at this time his weakness is such that scarcely a hope remains of his continuance in this world many hours. Sir Robert Peel appears to be free from pain, and retains consciousness. The state of Lady Peel and the family is most distressing.

Half-past eleven.—With the deepest grief I have to inform you that Sir Robert Peel expired this evening at ten minutes past eleven o'clock.

With the Trust papers is a careful record—obtained by Mr. Cardwell from Sir Benjamin Brodie, and approved by Dr. Hodgson, Dr. Seymour, and Mr. Cæsar Hawkins—of the bodily injuries sustained, and their effect; but on a subject so painful a few words must suffice.

(*Extracts.*)

The fall was accidental, in consequence of the swerving of his horse; and the subsequent state of faintness and collapse was the result of pain and shock inflicted on the nervous system.

Sir Robert Peel may be said to have had good health throughout life, suffering only occasionally from gout, and from nothing else.

When he had recovered from the first shock his mind continued perfect until his dissolution. During the last two hours he was unable to articulate.

There was a comminuted fracture of the left clavicle, attended with fullness of the parts below that bone. There was excruciating pain in the whole shoulder and upper part of the chest, which was so much aggravated by any

attempt to move the shoulder as to render examination extremely difficult.

All that could be done was to keep him in a state of repose, and to adopt measures to arrest inflammation. Extreme suffering rendered this unusually difficult. The bandages could not be borne. The constant tendency to collapse rendered employment of the chief measures to arrest inflammatory action inadmissible.

It was ascertained after death that there had been a fracture of one or more ribs, underneath the left scapula, but from consideration of the feelings and by the expressed wish of Lady Peel and his children, no further examination was made.

The chief tributes of sorrow paid in public to Peel's memory are well known. In the House of Lords, the Duke of Wellington, in tears, with broken voice, bore witness to the points of character which throughout their long and close association had impressed him most. 'I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence, or in whom I saw a more invariable desire to promote the public service.'

In the Commons, Gladstone found no words more eloquent to express the sense of national loss than those written by Walter Scott on Pitt. The context is appropriate.

> Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,
> A watchman on the lonely tower,
> Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
> When fraud and danger were at hand;
> By thee, as by the beacon light,
> Our pilots had kept course aright;
> As some proud column, though alone,
> Thy strength had propped the tottering throne.

The lines quoted were these:

> Now is the stately column broke,
> The beacon light is quenched in smoke,
> The trumpet's silver voice is still,
> The warder silent on the hill.

The French National Assembly ordered to be inscribed in its

journals the words in which their President expressed the respect and sympathy of France.

Manifestations of grief in many quarters attested the strong feeling of personal bereavement. In Whitehall Gardens the mournful aspect of the crowd, in vain awaiting some word of reassurance from the sick-room, impressed Arthur Stanley as one of the most touching sights he ever witnessed.

The statue in Westminster Abbey was placed there by the House of Commons, that in Palace Yard by private friends. Similar memorials arose in the City of London and in great towns throughout the land. Among the subscribers were five thousand of the Metropolitan and City Police.

The journals and other literature of the time abound in just appreciations of the public loss. But this volume will be more fitly closed by private letters.

The Queen wrote to King Leopold, her uncle:

> The sorrow and grief at his death are most touching, and the country mourns over him as over a father. Every one seems to have lost a personal friend. . . . Albert, who had been so fresh and well when we came back, looks so pale and fagged again. He has felt Sir Robert's loss dreadfully. He feels he has lost a second father.

The Prince, in a letter to the Duchess of Kent, laments him as 'the best of men, our truest friend, the strongest bulwark of the throne, the greatest statesman of his time.' He also writes to Baron Stockmar:

> As Peel's only ambition and chief wish was to leave a fair name in the history of the country—'the ambition of an honourable fame,' as he himself once expressed it—the time and manner of his death have, in truth, accomplished his desire. For at no time did he stand so unfettered, so eminently a patriot, and so high in public opinion, as just now; and his last speech was an epitome of the plan he aimed at maintaining, of a mediator well disposed to all parties, and thereby controlling them, and directing the government of the country.[3]

[3] From Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort.*

The remaining letters are a few of those written to console his family in their affliction. They have been kindly allowed to appear by his eldest surviving son, the Right Hon. Sir Frederick Peel, with the addition of three supplied by Lord Stanmore from the papers of Lord Aberdeen.

Prince Albert to Sir James Graham.

Buckingham Palace: July 3, 1850.
¼ to 10 o'clock.

You will have been able to estimate the Queen's and my deep affliction by your own at the *sad, sad* news which you sent us yesterday morning. We are so anxious to hear some details of the last moments of the *dear friend*, and of the state of Lady Peel and his family, that we should feel grateful if you could come for a moment, however painful the meeting must be for you.

The Queen of the French to Lady Peel.

St. Leonards: le 3 Juillet, 1850.

Il m'est impossible de me servir d'interprète pour vous exprimer toute la part que le Roi et moi nous prenons au cruel malheur qui vient de vous frapper—malheur si profondément senti par toute l'Angleterre, et par nous particulièrement, qui perdons un vrai ami, qui nous avait donné des preuves constantes de ses sentiments et de son intérêt pour nous.

Que Dieu vous donne la force de supporter un coup si terrible, et vous conserver à votre nombreuse famille, qui a de si hauts et nobles exemples à suivre, et au sein de laquelle vous pouvez trouver les consolations qui vous sont si nécessaires, ce sont mes vœux bien sincères. Recevez-en l'expression, ainsi que celle de tous mes sentiments pour vous.

Votre bien affectionnée
MARIE AMÉLIE.

The Emperor of Russia to Lady Peel.

Peterhof: le 2 Juillet, 1850.

Je ne puis vous dire à quel point j'ai été ému du malheur qui vient de vous frapper si soudainement dans vos affections les plus chères. La perte de celui que vous pleurez en est une immense pour l'Angleterre. Elle sera ressentie partout aujourd'hui que la société a plus que jamais besoin pour son salut de l'existence de pareils hommes. Dans la situation cruelle où elle vous plonge, c'est pour moi un véritable besoin de mêler au regret universel les témoignages de ma sympathie particulière.

Je sens trop qu'en ce moment des paroles ne sauraient vous apporter d'efficaces consolations. Les seules que comporte votre douleur vous les avez déjà puisées dans votre résignation aux décrets de Dieu, et dans la ferveur de vos convictions religieuses. Puissiez-vous plus tard trouver quelque adoucissement à vos peines dans l'admiration reconnaissante du pays auquel Sir Robert Peel avait consacré sa vie, et dans la pensée, que si la Divine Providence a voulu trop tôt vous l'enlever, Elle vous a du moins laissé dans son nom à vous et vos enfants un héritage impérissable.

C'est dans ces sentiments que je vous offre avec une nouvelle effusion les assurances de mon intérêt le plus affectueux et le plus sincère.

NICOLAS.

The Grand Duke of Saxony to Lady Peel.

Permit me to offer your Ladyship the expression of my deep and unfeigned condolence on the calamitous event which has suddenly overwhelmed you and your family with such awful distress.

The age has lost one of its greatest men, and if the weight of sorrow could be lightened by sympathy, yours, Madam, might well be in some measure alleviated; since not alone Great Britain but all Europe participates more

or less in your great affliction. But, alas! this circumstance, however it may perhaps soothe and gratify your feelings in after days, cannot, I am aware, now avail to repress the first natural burst of grief so legitimate as yours. For comfort therefore and consolation, now as well as later, I can only refer you to that Almighty Power whose will is always for our good, though His ways so often seem inexplicable.

CHARLES ALEXANDER,
Hereditary Grand Duke of Saxony.

Mr. Spencer H. Walpole to Mr. Frederick Peel.

Lincoln's Inn: July 3, 1850.

I cannot help feeling that the melancholy intelligence of this day's papers is not merely a family but a national bereavement, which makes us almost as sharers in your sorrow; since it has struck a gloom into the hearts and homes of every one of us. God knows it has done so to me; and I wish that the tears of all that is great and good in the land could restore again to us that wonderful man who has just finished a public career of virtue and wisdom, and a private life of moral excellence, which has seldom been equalled, and never surpassed.

God bless you, and support you all in this severe trial; and may you long be a comfort to your mother, by imitating the virtues and, if possible, by equalling the renown of one of the best and noblest spirits that ever presided over the destinies of England.

Lord Ashley to Sir James Graham.

July 3, 1850.

Ought not the remains of Sir Robert Peel to be interred in Westminster Abbey? It would, I am sure, be a consolation—a slight one no doubt, but still a consolation—to many to attend his funeral.

Few events have ever so amazed and afflicted me.

Lord John Russell to Lady Peel.

Downing Street: July 11, 1850.

I must first request your pardon for intruding upon you at a moment of overwhelming affliction. But having been charged with a message from her Majesty, I have no option.

The Queen has been pleased to direct me to propose that the rank of Viscountess should be conferred upon you, as a mark of her Majesty's appreciation of the eminent services rendered to the Crown and the nation by the late Sir Robert Peel.

Entirely concurring in her Majesty's sentiments, I trust your Ladyship will accept this honour.

Lady Peel to Lord John Russell.

With every respectful acknowledgment to my most gracious Sovereign for her desire to mark to me and my sorrowing family, by the offer of a Peerage, her Majesty's feeling for the services of my most beloved and most deeply lamented husband, I feel that the solace (if any such remains for me) for the deplored bereavement I sustain will be that I bear the same unaltered honoured name that lives for ever distinguished by his virtues and his services.

But I have also, with my sons, a higher duty of respect towards the memory of my dear loved husband—that of obedience to his wishes; for a paper in his own handwriting has just been given to me in which he expressly desires that no member of his family will accept (if offered) any title, distinction, or reward on account of service he may have rendered in Parliament or in office.

With dutiful and grateful acknowledgment to my gracious Queen, I presume therefore to decline the offer of a Peerage, feeling sure that her gracious Majesty will, with the high and kind feelings for which she is so distinguished, permit me to cherish obedience to the wishes of my dearly loved husband.

The Dean of Lincoln (Blakesley) to Mr. F. Peel.

I sincerely pray that this season of unmixed affliction may be shortened by a merciful God both to you and yours. When it has passed, you will, I am certain, be convinced that, however trying in its circumstances to the survivors, your father's end deserves, beyond almost any on record, the name of an euthanasia.

Many persons have been successful statesmen, but in my judgment your father, since he last relinquished office, has performed even a higher service than that of the greatest minister. He has unquestionably done more than any man of modern times to elevate the standard of political morality, and redeem political parties from being mere *circuli adipiscendorum honorum gratiâ*. This was what struck me most forcibly when I read his last speech—the most noble specimen of impartial wisdom I know since the time of Thucydides. In that he has left a legacy to all public men in all nations; and I believe that its effect will be felt at once in every country of Europe. How few men have ever been allowed to end their career with such a climax as this!

M. Guizot to Lord Aberdeen.

Val Richer: 4 Juillet, 1850.

La mort de Sir Robert Peel me fait une peine profonde, pour vous, et pour moi. Nous avons fait à nous trois, pendant cinq ans, de la politique sensée et honnête. C'est un lien qui devient chaque jour plus fort. Et ses dernières paroles à mon sujet, dans son dernier discours, me sont entrées dans le cœur.

J'allais vous écrire pour vous prier de lui dire de ma part combien j'en avais été charmé et touché. Il est trop tard.

Quel affreux accident! Encore un exemple, après tant d'autres, des plus belles existences brisées tout à coup misérablement. C'est bien la peine de devenir grand, pour

rester à la merci d'un caillou ou d'un coup de pied de cheval. Si le dernier mot de la vie était ici-bas, elle ne vaudrait certes pas le souci qu'on en prend.

Donnez-moi, je vous prie, des nouvelles de Lady Peel. J'ai vu leur intérieur. Le bonheur le plus pur n'en est pas moins fragile. Quand vous jugerez cela possible, prononcez, je vous prie, mon nom à quelqu'un de ses enfants, et dites leur ma vive sympathie pour leur chagrin. Donnez-moi aussi, si vous le pouvez, quelques détails sur les derniers moments de leur père ; je tiens à ne me séparer que le plus tard possible des hommes placés si haut dans mon estime ; je veux vivre avec eux tant qu'ils vivent, et ne les quitter que tout à fait sur le seuil de la porte du monde inconnu.

Lord Aberdeen to the Princess Lieven.

London : July 5. 1850.

A great light has disappeared from amongst us ! Never did I know such universal grief exhibited by every description of persons : high and low, rich and poor, from the Queen to the common labourer; all feel alike, and with good reason, for his services were equally rendered to all.

After so long an intimacy, exceeding half a century, you may easily imagine what a loss I have sustained in being deprived of such a friend.

But Europe will feel this loss. The name of Peel was connected with a wise, safe, and moderate policy, and inspired confidence in every quarter. His last speech in Parliament, delivered only the day before the fatal accident which has taken him from us, fully proved his adherence to the soundest principles of our foreign policy. It is not without a melancholy satisfaction I recollect that so much of that speech was occupied in very unusual expressions of affection and regard towards myself; and I also heartily rejoice that he found an opportunity of doing justice to the merits of that courageous Minister [Guizot] to whom I know he felt that we were deeply indebted.

I have no heart to write on other matters.

Lord Londonderry to Mr. Frederick Peel.

Aug. 7, 1850.

I cannot help sending you a copy of part of a French letter from one of my correspondents ; it is so well worded, and has given me so much pleasure.

(*Enclosure.*)

Je puis vous assurer très sincèrement qu'il n'y a pas un Anglais qui ait senti plus péniblement que moi la mort de Sir Robert Peel. Quelle perte pour l'Angleterre et pour l'Europe que celle de ce grand homme d'état !

J'avais pour lui un véritable culte ; il était pour moi le type de ce que doit être l'homme d'état, habile, honnête et patriote ; et j'ai toujours défendu sa conduite, parce qu'elle m'a paru inattaquable.

Quel est l'homme raisonnable et sensé qui oserait soutenir que l'Irlande entière ne se serait pas soulevée si en 1829 on n'avait pas accordé l'émancipation des catholiques ? Qui oserait affirmer que si en 1846 on n'avait pas aboli les Corn Laws l'Angleterre n'aurait pas ressenti le contre-coup de la tempête qui en 1848 a frappé toute l'Europe, et dont les effets sont encore si dangereux ? Je récuserais d'avance l'homme qui serait assez hardi pour prononcer affirmativement sur ces deux points, et c'est là toute la justification du courage de Sir Robert Peel, dont le coup d'œil profond n'a pas hésité quand il a vu le danger.

Je sais très bien tout ce qu'on peut dire sur la vertu qu'on appelle *consistency* ; j'en reconnais la puissance en religion, en morale, mais je ne l'admets plus exclusivement quand il s'agit de politique. Pour moi je ne tiens en politique qu'à un principe, celui de l'honnêteté ; tous les autres doivent céder devant la nécessité ; et je ne pense pas que personne osera dire qu'il y a un manque d'honnêteté de la part de Sir Robert à proposer les deux mesures dont je parlais plus haut. Il était convaincu dans sa conscience de leur utilité, et il a eu le courage honnête de les soutenir ; tandis qu'il y aurait eu manque d'honnêteté de

sa part si, convaincu de leur utilité, il ne les eut pas proposé de peur de perdre le pouvoir, ou manque de courage s'il s'était retiré devant les cris des *protectionists*.

Je suis certain que c'est ainsi que la postérité le jugera, et c'est pour cela que je le regrette si amèrement. Je ne sais pas si Sir R. Peel serait jamais rentré au pouvoir, mais je suis sûr qu'il aurait conservé une puissante influence sur tous les ministères qui auraient pu y venir, influence utile et heureuse. Ainsi depuis quatre ans c'est bien lui qui a empêché le ministère actuel de faire tout le mal qu'il aurait pu ou voulu laisser faire, et si les *protectionists* étaient venus au pouvoir il les aurait également contenus.

Mais à quoi bon vous écrire tout cela, que vous savez mieux que moi? Pardonnez-moi d'avoir voulu vous prouver que mes regrets étaient raisonnés, et raisonnables.

After long weeks spent in silent overwhelming grief, Lady Peel sought some relief in communicating with one or two of her husband's dearest friends. Sacred as are the feelings expressed on both sides, it may be allowed, after nearly fifty years, to disclose letters that suggest what the loss of Sir Robert Peel was to those who knew and loved him best.

Lady Peel to Lord Aberdeen.

Marble Hill: Aug. 2, 1850.

My dear Lord Aberdeen,—I feel sure you will forgive my writing to you. I can hardly say why I do. But, in truth, I am so unhappy. I turn at last to you, fancying I may find some little comfort if I write to one who was so kind, so true, so valued a friend.

My beloved one always talked of you as *the friend* whom he most valued, for whom he had the sincerest affection, whom he estimated higher than any.

Dear Lord Aberdeen, he was the light of my life, my brightest joy and pride. Religion points the way to peace, and with kind ministers of religion I have devoted all this dreary season of intense grief to the consolations and the

hopes she offers; but I turn to the awful realities of the bereavement I deplore, and I can do nothing but grieve.

Tell me you knew him to be the best, the truest, most perfect, in all the relations of life. I know that virtue and religion were his guides in his inward thoughts.

It has been the will of God to take him from me, and can I be but what I am—desolate, and most unhappy? Still, I am his; our union is but suspended, not dissolved; and I pray it may please God to enable me so to imitate his bright virtues and excellences as to be permitted to rejoin him in another better world.

Mentem mortalia tangunt. With such a mourner, posterity itself may drop a tear.

After an interval Lord Aberdeen replied:

Aug. 15, 1850.

If it has afforded you any momentary relief to write to me, and to dwell upon the subject which must occupy all your thoughts, you may be assured that you could never address any one with a greater certainty of meeting with the most sincere sympathy.

But it is not from me that you can expect consolation; for I know too well how vain would be the attempt. I believe there is nothing but time, and a gradually confirmed submission to the will of God, which can ever regulate and render endurable those feelings which at present are beyond your control. You may probably be incredulous, and in truth the struggle may be long and difficult, but I trust it will at last be successful.

We believe that the Universe is governed by an Omnipotent Being, the Creator of all things. His attributes are infinite; but He is certainly a God of mercy and of love, as of justice and of power. We may be sure that He desires the happiness of His creatures, and that His dealings with us are like those of a father who pities his own children. His ways, it is true, are past finding out; for they are not as our ways, or His thoughts as our thoughts. Here then is our great trial and difficulty. When we are deprived of

all that made the pride and joy of our life, we ought still to feel certain that the hand by which we are afflicted is the same hand of goodness and mercy from which we have received every blessing. A full and lively sense of this truth must prevent despair, and may go far to mitigate the bitterness of grief.

Most truly do I pray that this comparative calm may in time be vouchsafed to your endeavours.

Another devoted friend wrote:

Sir James Graham to Lady Peel.

Netherby: Dec. 24, 1850.

The attempt to offer you any consolation is vain, excepting always the recollection of the past faithful discharge of your duties, and the sure and certain hope that these afflictions, which it is so hard to bear, are dispensations of the Father of all Mercies, who uses them as the means of weaning us from this world and of preparing us for a better.

You will remember that a place in Heaven is reserved for those who 'came out of great tribulation,' and who have trusted in their Redeemer; and the blessed promise is given that 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' That is the resting-place of saints who have gone before and who have ceased from their labours; and farewells, and partings, and bitter disappointments are there unknown.

You will, I know, strive, in patient and humble submission to the Divine decree, to elevate your thoughts and hopes above this passing scene of sorrow and of care; and setting your affections on things above, you will obtain your great reward, and be reunited in eternal bliss, as I trust and hope, to him who has been taken from you to be with Christ, which is far better.

I venture to write to you thus as your husband's friend, and I think that this is the consolation which he would bid you to seek. While it pleases God to prolong your life, you

still have most important duties to perform; and for the sake of him who is gone you will strive to discharge them faithfully.

Eliza, his darling daughter and your affectionate child, has great claims on your tenderness and care. She is a lovely girl, and I am sure that you will make even painful efforts for her sake. It is most desirable that her home should be happy, and that under your guidance and care she should gradually rise from the crushing weight of the loss which with you she has sustained. It is still early to think of this, but you must bring your mind to reflect on her present position and future prospects.

With your permission, as soon as I return to London I shall call on you again; and I hope to be allowed to see you frequently. I will make no empty professions, but I can say that from my heart I pity you; and there is no service which I can render to you or to your children which I shall not regard as a debt due to the memory of one whom I remember with reverence and sincere affection.

Captain (afterwards Marquis) Townshend to Lady Peel.

Dec. 18, 1850.

Believe me, that amongst the thousands who lamented the untimely fate of him you mourn there was no sorrow more sincere or genuine than mine.

I cannot resist telling you how thankful I felt that all differences between us had been buried in oblivion. Of this I am amply satisfied by the kind—the more than kind—manner in which both you and he received me. *There was much to be forgiven.* (See vol. ii. p. 350.)

In spring of the next year her Majesty the Queen, with womanly tenderness and tact, made a most grateful offering to the disconsolate heart.

May 20, 1851.

Dear Lady Peel,—These lines are accompanied by the picture of your dear, revered, and ever to be lamented husband, which I have had copied for you, and which I trust may be a comfort to you.

Lady Peel replied:

I cannot indeed express the feelings with which I have received and read your Majesty's most kind and gracious letter, and the picture which accompanies it is inexpressibly dear to my heart, which is indeed truly desolate.

The letter and the picture, both so highly valued by me, shall ever be preserved in my family; one as the only painting I possess of the once bright, lost joy of my past life; the letter as one of the many proofs my beloved husband and I possess of your Majesty's unvarying kindness and gracious appreciation of that dear husband's value.

In conclusion, two letters of after years may show how the example and influence of the great leader lived on in his younger colleagues, to inspire and guide their course in public life.

The Duke of Newcastle to Lady Peel.

Clumber: Dec. 29, 1851.

You seem to me almost to have written to me in the name of him whose approbation was to me the highest reward for any public act or exertion; and many days at post-hour I have felt, while I have been reading the letters of others, that there was *one* missing which in former days would have been the first despatched (and certainly the first read) to convey a few warm words of approval and encouragement.

He is my leader still, though invisible. I never take a step in public life without reflecting, how would *he* have thought of it.

Many, many thanks, dear Lady Peel, for your most kind letter. God bless and protect you!

Mr. Gladstone to Lady Peel.

(After one of his great financial speeches.)

Downing St.: April 20, 1853.

You apologise for troubling me, when you have conferred upon me the greatest favour by your kindness. No testimony at such a moment, and with reference to such a subject, could be more highly prized by me than yours.

I know the recollections with which you must have written, and therefore I will not scruple to say that, as I was inspired with the thought of treading, however unequally, in the ways of my great teacher and master in public affairs, so it was one of my keenest anxieties not to do dishonour to his memory, or injustice to the patriotic policy with which his name is for ever associated.

Thankful as I am on other grounds to have your sympathy and regard, I know it will be most agreeable to you that I should value them most as proceeding from the person nearest and dearest to him, and I reciprocate them with the earnest prayer that your hopes may be even richer than your recollections; that the Almighty Father of us all may give you in abundance the consolations here which He alone knows how to dispense, and may crown them, when your day arrives, with the rest that He reserves for His people.

A SUMMARY OF THE LIFE OF SIR ROBERT PEEL

By HIS GRANDSON, THE HON. GEORGE PEEL

By the courtesy of the editor of these volumes I am privileged to offer a few comments upon the Life and Letters of Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert Peel was the statesman who mitigated and consolidated the cruel and confused code of the penal statutes; who emancipated the Catholics; who created the police and secured our property and persons from civil wrong; who smote upon the rock of the national resources, reconstituted the Bank of England, and made British credit what it is to-day; who gave to trade the Magna Charta of freedom and endowed our people with sound money and cheap bread. Nor was this lawgiver less eminent in the arts of rule. Set to govern Ireland at the age of twenty-four, he strove to lay aside the old instruments of corruption and make an honest government. Mr. Canning cited him as the best Home Secretary yet known, and Mr. Gladstone has described his ministry of 1841 as a perfect organisation. He ensured the harmonious co-operation of an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons. His energies have entered deep into the living structure of our commonwealth, for he held office for twenty-two years, served four sovereigns, and was thrice Prime Minister. He touched the dry bones of the Tory party, giving thereto a new life and

a better name, and, if it might be, a wider and a wiser purpose. Thus it was that in an age of European revolution, the British Government alone stood immovably strong.

Yet it was as a convert from another creed that he became a disciple of Progress, and the reformer had sometimes lifted up his hand against reform. He who purified the penal statutes opposed for sixteen years the relief of Catholic disabilities, and the advocate of sound money in 1819 was the advocate of rotten boroughs in 1832. He threw all his parliamentary weight into the scale against the Reform Bill. He favoured the terrible Corn Law of 1815; and it was not till 1845, a generation later, that he decided to open our ports to the free entry of food. For his was the mind upon the decision of which on many critical occasions advanced or receded the policy of the Empire.

The truth is that Sir Robert Peel was not a reformer who sometimes relapsed towards inaction, but was a Tory who, in spite of every obstacle of training and early conviction and party spirit, moved slowly and by stages, under the stress of a masculine and unbiassed reason, towards the light. This transmigration of spirit was not accomplished alone: the genius of the English people itself shared that metamorphosis and felt that influence. For it was his mission to change Tory into Conservative England, and to save us from those dangers of a reactionary party which have been the bane and curse of other Parliaments. On his entry into the House of Commons he was planted among the proud and vehement Tories, never doubting their principles, but without their vehemence and without their pride. Like them he believed in that constitution based upon Protestant ascendency and a restricted franchise which had served us well in the struggle with Napoleon, but unlike them he was instinctively and inveterately determined upon good government. So, in spite of his party, he became a statesman, and they followed him as an indispensable chief. By anxious degrees, and with infinite care and caution, he led and educated his followers

until bigotry was vanquished and sound finance was understood by those who had applauded Eldon and had voted the budgets of Vansittart. It was he who induced them to accept loyally the principle of the Reform Act. Lord John Russell has named this exercise of authority as one of Peel's chief titles to the gratitude of his countrymen: 'After the contest which took place upon the Reform Bill it was to be dreaded that those who opposed that Bill expecting results from it calamitous to the country would have retired in disgust from public contests, and thereby have left a war of classes to be carried on, which would have involved permanent injury to this country. I consider Sir Robert Peel to have been the man who prevented such a contest taking place.' And further he said: 'My testimony will always be that the harmony which has prevailed for the last few years, and the safety which we have enjoyed during times of trouble and contention in this country, have been mainly owing to the course which he thought it his duty to follow.' Thus he guided the English people safely along the isthmus threatened on either hand by the fierce gulfs of social strife. He fell at last, execrated, to use his own words, by every monopolist, but perhaps not for that reason less worthy to be held in remembrance by the people whom he had served so well.

During the first thirty years of the nineteenth century domestic politics centred upon Ireland. At the beginning of that period the Catholic question caused the fall of Mr. Pitt, and at the close it broke up the Tory party. Pitt in carrying the Union had undoubtedly intended to emancipate the Catholics; but though ready to do the right thing at the right time, genius gave way to madness, and after-times have had to deplore in vain the loss of an opportunity. The King barred the way. The Catholics under the Act of the Irish Legislature of 1793 had been granted the parliamentary franchise, and many of their ancient disabilities had been removed; but still they could not sit in Parliament, and practically all offices in the central and municipal administration were held by Protestants.

Mr. Fox, as leader of the Whigs, defined his view in a famous sentence: 'The Protestant Ascendency has been compared to a garrison in Ireland. It is not in our power to add to the strength of this garrison, but I would convert the besiegers themselves into the garrison.' The ablest men of the Tory party said the same—Canning, Castlereagh, and Wellesley. On the other side were ranged the high unbending Tories of the rank and file, of whom the choice spirit was Perceval. 'England,' he said, 'has already done everything which toleration requires and which the Catholics have a right to demand. It is time to make a stand against the principle of innovation.' Such was the leader under whom Peel held his first office, of Under Secretary for the Colonies, in 1810.

On which side of the great question was he to stand? Here was the turning point of the next twenty years of his career. It appears that in his first recorded utterance upon the matter in 1812 he declared that he would by no means pledge himself with regard to the Catholic question. But in July of that year he became Chief Secretary for Ireland by the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, and soon afterwards writes that he regards the Catholic restrictions as the fundamental law of the Constitution. And again, writing to the Duke of Richmond, he declares: 'The main principles of exclusion I would retain untouched.' In 1818 he ceased to be Irish Secretary and became a private member, but in the following year he writes that he intends in the future to offer a very unavailing but a most sincere and uncompromising resistance. In 1822 he resumed office as Home Secretary, and in that capacity again had to deal with the Catholic question. Addressing Canning in 1827, he reviews his past tenure of the two offices: 'In each office I was in immediate contact with Irish affairs, and deeply responsible for their administration. During the whole of that period, indeed during the whole of my public career, I have taken a very active and prominent part in opposition to the Catholic claims.' Lastly in 1829 on the final adjustment of the question he

declared that even now he only yielded 'to a moral necessity which I cannot control,' that is to say, to anticipated rebellion in Ireland.

This attitude had a profound effect upon his life. Born in 1788, he was only twenty-four years of age when as the young Chief Secretary for Ireland he was called upon to hold his own against the most brilliant orators of that time. In the House of Commons he had to face Grattan, Plunket, Brougham, and Canning, and in Ireland O'Connell himself. The grounds upon which he conducted the cause of the Protestants are best described in his own words: 'We find Ireland united by an inviolable compact to Great Britain; and we find it an essential article of that compact that the Protestant religion—the religion of the small minority—shall be the established and favoured religion of the State.' That being so, 'may I not question the policy of admitting those who must have views hostile to the religious establishments of the State to the capacity of legislating for the interests of those establishments?'

The critic of the character and career of Sir Robert Peel will see something of good, and something also of evil, in the position thus allotted to him in early life. It was a serious thing to become, in the phrase of Sir James Mackintosh, the spokesman of the intolerant faction, and to be allied with the inferior men of the time. That they were inferior is beyond question. Peel's close friend, the Bishop of Oxford, writing in 1827, confessed that every year was thinning the intellectual influence of the Protestant ranks, and Peel himself stated in the House of Commons that the rising talent of the House was almost unanimous against the Protestant cause. On the other hand, this position and this belief conferred upon him at an early age the high advantage of responsibility. Every talent was exerted to the utmost, and the courage, the temper, the powers of speech, and the self-reliance of the young man developed under the trial and shot up with an ample growth. That it was not ambition or calculation of advancement that dictated this attitude towards Catholic emanci-

pation is indicated by the readiness with which during these years he resigned or declined office. In 1818 by a spontaneous act he relinquished the Irish Office and retired into private life. In 1820, and again in 1821, he declined Cabinet rank, though strongly urged by Lord Liverpool. In 1825 he wished to resign the Home Office on being defeated on the Catholic question in the House of Commons, and was only induced to remain at the instance of Lord Liverpool. In 1827 he retired on the accession of Canning to the Premiership, on the ground that he could not agree with his colleague upon the question of Emancipation. Returning to the Home Office in 1828 under Wellington, he offered to resign on the Catholic question. Writing to Wellington in August of that year, he states it as his decided and deliberate opinion that the question should be settled, but by other hands than his own. However, in January 1829, convinced that Wellington's retention of office was essential to the settlement of the question, and that he alone could procure the consent of George IV., he determined not to insist upon retirement from office, and to stand by the Duke.

Thus there was an impressive scene on the evening of March 5, 1829, in the House of Commons. As the member in charge of the measure of Emancipation moved from point to point in his exposition, enthusiastic cheering broke from the audience, for they felt that it was conceived in a generous spirit, and that the goal of this controversy of centuries was touched at last.[1] And who was he, the young statesman, in the prime of manhood, gifted with unfaltering eloquence? It was not a Whig: 'I have for years attempted to maintain the exclusion of the Catholics. I do not think it was an unnatural or unreasonable struggle.' It was not a private member who could utter that exordium not unworthy of the classics: 'I rise as a minister of the King, and sustained by the just authority that belongs to that character, to vindicate the advice given to his Majesty

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, April 1896.

by a united Cabinet.' It was a statesman guided by public spirit as by a pillar of fire in the wilderness: 'I will act unchanged by the scurrility of abuse, by the expression of opposite opinions, however vehement or however general; unchanged by the deprivation of political confidence, or by the heavier sacrifice of private friendships and affections. Looking back upon the past, surveying the present, and forejudging the prospects of the future, again I declare that the time has at length arrived when this question must be adjusted.' It was an orator on the theme of spiritual freedom: 'We have removed, with our hands, the seal from the vessel in which a mighty spirit was inclosed; but it will not, like the genius in the fable, return within its narrow confines, to gratify our curiosity, and enable us to cast it back into the obscurity from which we evoked it.' The minister, the orator, the statesman, was Peel.

During the years that had elapsed since his entry into Parliament, his attention had by no means been absorbed in the Protestant cause. Towards the close of his tenure of the Chief Secretaryship he was presented with an address signed by fifty-nine Irish members, who, irrespective of their opinions on the Catholic question, urged him not to resign office. For five years, they wrote, 'you have advised and conducted the executive affairs of Ireland, as Minister of that country, with a zeal and diligence so disinterested, a firmness so manly, an impartiality so strictly unshaken, and with talents so eminently conspicuous, that you have merited our warmest gratitude.' 'You have made yourself perfectly acquainted with the course of measures fitted to the better administration of government in Ireland, and have projected many and have already executed some very important improvements in the internal policy of the country.' Surely a unique tribute to a young Chief Secretary not thirty years of age.

Again, on resigning the Home Office in 1827 he was able to declare unchallenged in the House of Commons: 'Every law found in the statute-book when I entered office which imposed any temporary or any extraordinary restriction on

the liberty of the subject has either been repealed or allowed to expire. There is not a single law connected with my name which has not had for its object some mitigation of the severity of the criminal law; some prevention of abuse in the exercise of it; or some security for its impartial administration.' His method of consolidation was to steer a middle course between the redundancy of our legal enactments and the conciseness of the French code; and so great was the change he wrought that Mackintosh used to declare that he could almost think that he had lived in two different countries and conversed with people who spoke two different languages.

But of all the gifts which statesmanship can confer upon a people perhaps one of the best is a sound monetary system. Viewed in this light the statutes of 1819 and 1844 are of profound importance, and as these are due to Sir Robert Peel it is desirable to estimate them as clearly and as concisely as possible. At the close of the Napoleonic war our money was nothing less than a scandal and a disgrace. During the preceding hundred years only about half a million of silver had been coined, and what remained in circulation was terribly deteriorated. Since 1797 our standard had been inconvertible paper; gold had disappeared from currency, and even in the vaults of the central institution, the Bank of England, there were, in 1815, not much more than two or three millions sterling. But with the return of peace the precious metal flowed back upon us, so that in two years' time from the date of Waterloo it had quadrupled itself in the coffers of the Bank. The occasion had been seized in 1816 of establishing our existing mint arrangements: the sovereign superseded the guinea, and silver was reduced to a token. Accordingly in 1817 the Bank had the hardihood to issue the new gold coinage, with the result that it was promptly exported to France and disappeared. Up to this date public opinion had strongly favoured an early abandonment of the existing paper standard and a resort to what was termed the 'ancient

metallic standard' of gold, and Parliament had declared to that effect. But if, as soon as the Bank cashed its notes in gold, the metal was to vanish, was a gold standard practicable? Five hundred merchants and bankers of the City of London protested by petition that it was not. Here was a dilemma. Most people desired a gold standard in theory, but no one knew how to establish it.

In this crisis the Government of Lord Liverpool had resort to a Committee, and the most distinguished authorities, such as Canning, Tierney, and Huskisson, consented to serve upon it, but when it came to the chairman the Government selected their former Chief Secretary for Ireland, now thirty years of age, and without office. The result was 'Peel's Act' of 1819, providing for the resumption of cash payments and the establishment of a gold standard. Into the plan thus adopted it is not my purpose to enter; suffice it to say that it rested on two principles, the first being that the paper currency was to be brought up to par by gradual stages, and the second that the gold paid out for notes was to be issued at first only in large amounts and in the shape not of coin but of bullion. Success followed even more rapidly than was contemplated in the Act, and the young statesman achieved what Canning described as the greatest wonder he had witnessed in the political world. 'Moneta in justum valorem redacta,' the restoration of the monetary standard, had been among the titles to fame inscribed upon the tomb of Elizabeth, and now time in its course was bringing another Burleigh to the councils of the State.

Yet this Act, successful and necessary as it was, proved gall and wormwood to the agricultural Tories. Students of economic history are aware that the period subsequent to the close of the Napoleonic struggle was generally one of declining prices. The Tories attributed this fall to the contraction of the currency and the strain upon gold engendered by the resumption of payments in cash. On the other hand the greatest authorities, Ricardo, Tooke, and Huskisson, held that it was only partially due to

that cause. Attack upon attack was made, debate ensued upon debate, committee followed hard upon committee. But the opposition was stemmed by an iron will: in 1830 Peel writes to Goulburn that on this question he would not move one single yard to gain a whole party, and again in 1833 that all wavering and doubt upon it was an evil in itself. Finally in the latter year the controversy was made ridiculous by the action of Cobbett, who moved that the author of the Act of 1819 should be dismissed from the Privy Council. But perhaps the philosophic historian will pronounce that it was the series of good seasons up to 1836 which gently pushed the whole discussion into limbo. Thus wisdom and justice were victorious, and those who conspired for reaction hid their daggers for the time.

But in the course of years the settlement of one problem only led to another; Government had ordered that banknotes were to be cashed in gold, but it had not provided a system under which such gold was to be kept in stock. Crises raged, and committees held inquiries, and in 1844 the author of the Act of 1819, now Prime Minister, grappled with the question once again. Round the settlement known as the Bank Charter Act fanatics lit their camp fires for thirty years, yet the Act has held its own. That excellent economist, Stanley Jevons, cites it in his work on money as 'a monument of sound and skilful financial legislation,' and Germany, and more recently Japan, in reorganising their banking system, have adopted some of its important provisions. The object of the Bank Act was to limit to their existing amount and gradually to extinguish the issues of notes by country banks, and to partially fill the void if desired with the notes of the Bank of England; further, it aimed at securing banknotes by prescribing rules to ensure their convertibility into gold. Mr. MacLeod in his work on Banking has vigorously attacked the Bank Act on the ground that there are other creditors of the Bank besides those who hold its notes, that these can drain the gold from

the Bank, that the only way of checking such a drain is by raising the rate of discount, and that it was he who in 1856 first enunciated this principle, which has been acted on ever since. But I must point out that in the two debates on December 3, 1847, and August 22, 1848, Sir Robert Peel himself enunciates this very course as desirable, and lays down this principle. He too, then, was among, or rather was more prophetic than the prophets! The Bank Act is not, perhaps, perfect, but it is eminently sound. The Government having authorised the issue of Bank of England notes as legal tender, was also bound to see that gold was behind those notes, for otherwise it would be doing an injustice to the creditor whom it forced to accept them. In other respects the Bank was left to manage its own affairs. That the Act did not provide rules upon which the general business of the central institution was to be conducted is true, but that is perhaps a proof of the prudence of the framer of this enactment. Therefore it is very right and in the fit order of things that, amid the throng of Cheapside, and with its face turned towards the Bank of England, the statue of the lawgiver should stand. Here runs the tide of international business, as it ran yesterday in Antwerp and in Venice the day before. How long will it keep this channel—is the question that rises at the thought of the channels that it has left. So long, perhaps, as there are those among us who, in the words once used by Sir Robert Peel, and not inapplicable to himself, 'shall inspire just confidence in the medium of exchange, shall put a check on improvident speculations, and shall ensure, so far as legislation can ensure, the just reward of industry and the legitimate profit of commercial enterprise.'

It has been said by Mr. Gladstone that there were two Peels, one before and one after the Reform Act. Let us glance at the earlier stage of this career, and describe what manner of statesman it was who in 1833 took his seat in the House of Commons as the leader of a band of 150 followers, the remnant of that Tory party which had

passed for ever from the scene of its long ascendency. Born in the year before the outbreak of the French Revolution, and bred in a Tory home and in the Tory university of Oxford, he had entered the House of Commons in 1809. For the next twenty years he had held office continuously with the exceptions of the period from 1819 to 1822, and of the year 1827. Loyally and without question he accepted at first the creed of those who shaped his political youth, and who were pledged to almost everything that was doomed to disappearance. He who can write in 1814 of 'the horrors of peace' is he who in his last speech reprobates a warlike diplomacy: 'What is this diplomacy? It is a costly engine for maintaining peace. It is a remarkable instrument used by civilised nations for the purpose of preventing war.' The staunch opponent of the settlement of the Catholic question writes in 1829: 'Let us settle it at once and for ever.' He who voted against the resolutions of Horner in 1811 for the resumption of cash payments carries the measure of 1819. The Chief Secretary who declares in 1815 that not a soul doubts the advantages Ireland will derive from the new Corn Law is to be the Prime Minister whom the famine in Ireland convinces of the necessity for the repeal of the Corn Laws. He who in 1816 tells Gregory that 'I believe an honest despotic Government would be by far the fittest Government for Ireland,' tells Sir William Gregory, the grandson, in 1846 that he is planning 'measures of a wide and generous character which may entirely change the aspect of Ireland to England.' All this was not yet in 1833. Yet already he had become our leading statesman. He had passed the great Acts of 1819 and 1829; he had organised the Irish constabulary and the English police; he had purified and consolidated the penal code; the law of offences against the person and the law of forgery had been humanised by him; in 1830 he had carried the measures notable as the first successful attempts in this country to reform the judicature. And he had broken with his best and dearest affections for the sake of right; with

his father's authority, opposed to him in the question of currency; with his constituents of the University of Oxford, who had rejected him for his concession to the Catholic claims; and with the Ultra-Tories. But now his father had passed away; he had exchanged Oxford for Tamworth, and the Tory party had broken up. It had broken up, yet it had not disappeared; and the House of Lords remained to rally and revive it.

At this period advice was freely proffered to Sir Robert Peel as to what course he should adopt. Some, like Croker, considered that it was best to leave the stage and commit a species of political suicide. Others proposed that he should form a Labour party, and outbid a bourgeois régime. A young novelist, hereafter to be Prime Minister, opined that now that oligarchy had fallen it was time to revive the monarchy of Charles I. But the recipient of these counsels saw more truly the course of a patriot and of a statesman, and during the Sessions of 1833 and 1834 actually supported the Whig Government on sixteen out of the twenty most important domestic questions that came up for discussion. This policy was highly judicious. For as the fear of the time was that Ministers should be hurried into extreme courses by the Radicals and the Repealers, those who now sheltered the Whigs from their own allies appeared as patriots in the eyes of the country, and as patrons of the most powerful majority that had been seen for many years. The party, called by the new name of Conservative, made wonderful progress under such a leader as this. Numbering 150 in 1833, it rose at the elections of 1835 to 250, and thence to 320 in 1837 at the elections held subsequent to the accession of the Queen The aim of Peel was described by himself in 1838: 'My object for some years past has been to lay the foundations of a great party which, existing in the House of Commons, and deriving its strength from the popular will, should diminish the risk and deaden the shock of collisions between the two deliberative branches of the Legislature.'

Such was the origin of the Conservative party. The spirit

and temper of its chief during this period have been best described by Guizot, who in 1840 was sent by Louis Philippe as ambassador to the Court of St. James. 'I often remarked the empire of mingled sympathy and fear that our great revolution of 1789 exercised over Sir Robert Peel. On this subject he shared neither the maxims nor the passions of the high Tories, and at the bottom of his soul, despite all his moral, political, and national objections, this great English Conservative himself was far more a child than an enemy of this new social order, which remains potent and fruitful in spite of its faults, of its miscalculations, and of its darker side. But what most deeply impressed me in the conversation of Sir Robert Peel was his constant and passionate absorption in the condition of the working classes of England, the absorption of a moralist as much as of a politician, and in which, despite his cold and restrained language, I saw the emotion of the man as well as the foresight of the statesman.' A noble portrait, and not more noble than true. The young Under Secretary for the Colonies of thirty years ago, whom his chief, Lord Liverpool, had described as of singularly frank and open manners, had grown up cold and reticent amid the alien and arrogant throng. The ardour of ambition had become a thing unknown or abhorrent to him who tells Arbuthnot in 1839 that he would not cross the street to be Prime Minister. Party spirit he had finally laid aside: 'As Minister of the Crown I reserve to myself distinctly and unequivocally the right of adapting my conduct to the exigency of the moment and to the wants of the country.' But all this that he had lost was as dust and ashes compared to the life that he had gained. He had seen and gazed with 'passionate absorption' upon a miserable and starving race. The din of party strife no longer sounded for one who had looked aghast on that Phlegethon of human sorrow and despair at his feet. The partisan, the debater, the agent of reform had become the profound and prescient statesman. Behind him the fires of 1789 still burned on the horizon: before him, seen as in a glass darkly, was 1848.

It is said that when the news of the flight of Louis Philippe from the throne of France reached the House of Commons, Hume crossed the floor to tell Sir Robert Peel. The fallen Minister pointed to the Protectionists behind him. 'This is what would have happened here,' he said, 'if I had listened to them.'

It is perhaps not too much to say that it was the monarchy that maintained the Whigs in office until 1841. But for that influence they would probably have fallen long before that date. Many concurrent causes served to make them unpopular: there was the reaction against Radicalism; there was their Irish policy, well conducted by Drummond, but unpopular here; there was the secession from their ranks of Stanley and Graham; there was their abominable finance, and finally there was the dogged resistance of the House of Lords. But all this was redeemed by three separate interventions of monarchy upon the political stage.[2] It will be remembered that at the close of 1834 William IV. abruptly dismissed his Whig Ministry, and Peel was summoned from Rome. On arrival he accepted the post of Premier and dissolved Parliament, but did not secure a majority, and after a short struggle resigned office in 1835. This entry into power was decidedly premature, and only served to strengthen and consolidate the Whig party. Again, the accession of her Majesty two years later undoubtedly prolonged the tenure of office by Lord Melbourne, for it was generally felt that it would be unpatriotic to perplex a young Queen by a change of Ministers. Thirdly, the Bedchamber question in 1839 between the Court and Sir Robert actually restored the Whig Ministers to the office which they had resigned. Hence it was not until 1841 that Peel was finally established as Prime Minister with a majority of over eighty in the House of Commons. During the preceding years he had greatly increased his influence and authority in the country. His short ministry of 1834–1835 had proved him to be, in the

[2] *Nineteenth Century*, April 1896.

words of Guizot, the most liberal of Conservatives, the most conservative of Liberals, and the most capable man of all in both parties. His temperate conduct of opposition had shown him, in the words of Mr. Gladstone, to be a man than whom our constitutional and representative system never had a more loving child or a more devoted champion.

Now also all that was hopeful and brilliant gathered round the Conservative chief, and followed his standard in the day of battle. Conspicuous among the rest were two, comparable for strength and swiftness to the horses of Achilles:

> Two coursers of ethereal race,
> Their necks with thunder clothed, of long resounding pace.

The one in his pale dark features showed traces of his Venetian, Spanish, and Jewish origin. It was the author of 'the wondrous tale of Alroy' and of the 'Revolutionary Epick,' who had already informed Lord Melbourne that he intended to be Prime Minister of England. Prime Minister he became. He met Peel, it is said, for the first time at a banquet given by Lord Eliot early in the year of the Reform Bill, and as the two sat side by side, 'I reminded Peel,' writes Disraeli, 'by my dignified demeanour that he was an ex-Minister, and I a present Radical.' But Peel in 1834 ceased to be an ex-Minister, and Disraeli ceased to be a present Radical. He forwarded his 'Vindication of the British Constitution' to Sir Robert, and in 1836 in the 'Letters of Runnymede' summoned him to come from 'the halls and bowers of Drayton' to 'rescue the nation' oppressed by a Whig Government. Next year he entered Parliament as a member of the new Conservative party, and Peel declared of his famous maiden speech: 'I say anything but failure; he must make his way.' 1841 came, and on the eve of the fall of the Whigs and the entry of Sir Robert into office, Disraeli delivered an impassioned eulogy on his chief. Placed in an age of rapid civilisation, Peel had adapted his measures to the condition of the times. When in power he had never proposed a

change which he did not carry, and when in opposition he never forgot that he was at the head of the Conservative Party. After such compliments, Disraeli naturally hoped to be included in the new Government, but his 'offer of service' was declined. Then in 1843 the tide began to turn; the Young England party was organised; and Disraeli stepped forward in the debate on the Arms (Ireland) Bill in August with a studied attack on his leader. After this, as was to be expected, on the opening of the Session of 1844, he was not sent the usual party whip requesting his attendance, and writes a long letter as to this 'painful personal procedure, which the past by no means authorised.' Peel in a letter of good temper and courtesy replies and justifies himself. So they parted company for ever.

The other young man was different indeed. Peel had seized upon him at once, in 1835, and had made him Under Secretary for the Colonies, the post that he himself had first occupied, writing at the same time to the father, that 'wherever your son may be placed, he is sure to distinguish himself.' It was not an inaccurate forecast, for this was to prove, in the words of Lord Salisbury, the most brilliant intellect that has been applied to the service of the State since Parliamentary Government began. These two, Peel and Gladstone, became like father and son in the service of the commonwealth. May I venture to suggest that the elder was the more finished statesman, because the younger was a statesman and so much more besides? Sir Robert gave his whole undivided attention to statesmanship and succeeded in what he undertook, actually repealing the Corn Laws on the day on which he fell from power. There is a story that one morning at Drayton he received Mr. Gladstone's book on Church and State; he opened and glanced at the pages, and as he put it aside was heard to say, 'That young man will ruin a fine career if he writes such books as these.' There was a good deal in the observation: it marks the difference between two great characters.

During these years of opposition the new Conservative party had been constantly threatened with disruption, and especially in 1837 and 1840, over Ireland and over the Union of the Canadas. Its growing strength made it more and more impatient of delay. Even Sir James Graham writes in 1839: 'To bring this great body together has been an immense effort; to have restrained its eager haste so long has been the triumph of discretion and good government; to hold it together much longer without a direct and vigorous attack on the Government I believe to be impossible.' Sir Robert Peel, on the other hand, was slow to move; and adhered to his principle laid down in 1837, 'to make the rule of my conduct in opposition the rule of my conduct in government.' Writing long afterwards and reviewing this period in the light of subsequent events, he expressed his wonder that the union between himself and his party had been so long maintained rather than that it was ultimately severed. It was a constant and tedious struggle, but rarely was one conducted towards a more useful end. At last the moment of party triumph came in August 1841. Even in that hour Sir Robert, in the debate on the resolution expressing want of confidence in the Whig Government, which was carried by a majority of ninety, lifted up his voice in tones of solemn and prophetic warning: 'If I accept office it shall be by no unnatural and factious combination with men entertaining extreme opinions, but from whom I dissent. If I exercise power it shall be upon my conception of public duty. That power I will not hold unless I can hold it consistently with the maintenance of my own opinions.' No note of dissent rose as yet from those serried ranks behind him at this plain intimation of independence, or, if such did rise, it was drowned in the earthquake voice of victory.

In 1841 no wise man could look on the condition of England without dismay. One person out of every eleven was a pauper, and the shadow of disease and starvation was cast over innumerable homes. Prices were rising, and con-

sumption was falling away. By a mysterious anomaly a quarter of a century of peace had left us an unutterably wretched people. Deficits in our national budget were returning as regularly as the springtime. A series of admirable amendments to the constitution had produced—the Chartists. To borrow the imagery of Bright, there had been no one, as of old, to touch the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors that the angel of destruction might spare and pass on. It was in this crisis of the national life that, somehow, by some saving instinct, and with the wisdom of desperate men, the nation had recourse to Sir Robert Peel. 'All turns,' wrote an acute observer of the elections of 1841, 'upon the name of Peel.' The date of March 11, 1842, on which the new Prime Minister opened his Budget, should be marked as the commencement of the inconceivable prosperity and progress of the Victorian age.

The Minister showed that for six years of peace, including 1842–3, there was an aggregate deficiency of 10,000,000*l.* in the national account. Not only in this country, but also in India was to be found a disordered finance, and 'depend upon it, if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support.' It was useless to resort to continued borrowing, and it was equally useless and short-sighted to entertain any proposal for increasing taxation on the articles consumed by the labouring classes of society. Then in a passage for ever memorable in the history of finance the Minister appealed to those ranks behind him, to the possessors of property, 'not to consent with folded arms to view the annual growth of this mighty evil. If you do permit this evil to continue, you must expect the severe but just judgment of a reflecting and retrospective posterity.' The remedy was the imposition of a tax on incomes. But the Minister went further than the plan of merely raising enough money to make good the annual deficit of the Budget. He proposed to raise the income tax for the twofold purpose 'of not only supplying the deficiency of the

revenue, but of enabling me with confidence and satisfaction to propose great commercial reforms,' in other words to initiate free trade. He calculated that after making good the deficit he should have an available surplus of 1,800,000*l.*, and recommended that this should be applied to making good the loss of revenue to be incurred by abolishing duties, in order that by the removal of such restrictions commerce might be revived and the cost of living reduced.

It was one of the characteristics of Peel that whatever legislation he undertook was based on scientific and general principles, and that though his measures were often limited in scope, and curtailed by the difficulties of his situation, he usually was careful to explain the correlation between his principles and his practice. Thus, in his speech on the Bank Act of 1844 he said: 'I have done on this occasion what I have done on others. I have stated without the slightest compromise or concealment the leading principles to which, in my opinion, our legislation in those matters ought to conform. It is of great importance that public men should acknowledge the great principles by which important measures should be regulated; and, in discussing a question of such magnitude as the present, I had rather it were said, "You fall short in the application of sound and admitted principles," than that "You have concealed or perverted those principles for the purpose of justifying your limited application of them."' Similarly with free trade. Sir Robert Peel, on his entry into office in 1841, was a free trader. Those who doubt this should study the speech delivered by him on May 10, 1842, in defence and explanation of the new tariff. Not only does he lay down the advantage of free trade, but he goes on to say that we have a right to exhaust all means to induce other countries to do justice; but if they persevere in refusing, the penalty is on us if we do not buy in the cheapest market. In spite of such fundamental principles the tariff reform of 1842 was a limited one, and for the very adequate reason that the yield of the whole customs revenue was at that

date about 23,000,000*l.*, and that the Minister had only 1,800,000*l.* of surplus to spare for making good any reductions therein. But limited though it was, it was framed on sound lines. 'With respect to raw materials,' he said, 'which constitute the elements of our manufacture, our object, speaking generally, has been to reduce the duties on them to almost a nominal amount. In half-manufactured articles, which enter almost as much as the raw material into our domestic manufacture, we have reduced the duty to a moderate amount; and with regard to completely manufactured articles, our design has been to remove prohibition and to reduce prohibitory duties, so that the manufactures of foreign countries may enter into a fair competition with our own. The general result of this tariff will be materially to diminish the charge of living in this country.'

Thus, then, it was the income tax which was the lever and instrument of free trade. Many difficulties thwarted the Minister even in this his first and essential step. When he had wished to press the Income Tax Bill forward, Cobden had been one of a small group who persisted in obstructive motions for adjournment, until Peel was at length forced to give way. These letters now acquaint us with the fears and uncertainty of leading minds even in the Ministry itself. Mr. Gladstone was unfavourable to an income tax for six reasons, and suggested a house tax; Goulburn pointed out its unpopularity; Graham recommended a careful review of the situation before the fate of the new Government was risked on such a plan; Stanley expressed his earnest hope that it would not be resorted to, except upon the most evident necessity; and Ashburton considered it a most hazardous experiment. But Peel in October 1841 acquainted Ripon that his firm impression was that a property tax should be imposed to enable reductions to be made in the duty of some of the great articles of consumption, and his will finally became law.

This, then, was the Budget of 1842, the most important in our history since that of 1798. That occasion was

distinguished by the speech of Mr. Pitt, who also proposed an income tax. Mallet du Pan, who heard it, declared that 'from the time that deliberative assemblies have existed, I doubt whether any man ever heard a display of this nature equally astonishing for its extent, its precision, and the talents of its author. It is not a speech spoken by the Minister: it is a complete course of political economy; a work—and one of the finest works—on practical and theoretical finance.' It was Sir Robert Peel who, in a time of peace, now called from repose this giant who had once shielded us in war.

But the protected interests, alarmed by the energies of the Minister, began to take counsel and to band against him. This commotion was soon reflected in Parliament, and in 1844 Lord Sandon, a supporter, addresses a letter of friendly but significant admonition to Peel. 'You are not deserted,' he writes, 'by your friends in Parliament. They admire your talents, they look with pride and gratitude on all that you have achieved for your country, both at home and abroad, even in these few years; and they look with hope and confidence to your future administration. But you cannot expect that upon all points, whether of individual interest or class interest, the whole of your supporters should sacrifice everything.' The practical answer of Peel was a speech delivered a day or two later, and addressed to his offended followers. He had been beaten on a point connected with the sugar duties, and he asked the House to rescind that vote. He said that he should speak with perfect unreserve. Some of his own party had combined against him, and Ministers had endured the harshest expressions from their own side. He explained and defended the original plan of the Government at great length, a plan aiming at a gradual, safe, and circumspect relaxation of the sugar duties. He asked for, and obtained, a reversal of the vote. But the occasion was seized by Disraeli, who rose to say that this was a degradation, that they were dragged through the mire, and that the right hon. baronet's horror of slavery extended to every place except the benches behind

him. To this language a reply was furnished by the increasing public confidence in Peel. A vast conversion scheme was carried, reducing the interest on nearly 250,000,000*l.* of the national debt from 3½ to 3 per cent.

If the Budget of 1842 was the starting point of a new epoch, that of 1845 was of profound importance also, for it was not merely founded upon free trade principles, but went very far to establish free trade. The tariff was wholly purged of 430 items of charge, and by another stroke all the duties on British exports were abolished. In order to effect such changes, or, in the Minister's own words, 'for the purpose of enabling us to make this great experiment of reducing other taxes,' Peel proposed the renewal of the income tax.

The letters reveal to us the reflections of two former Chancellors of the Exchequer of the Whig Government, Lord Monteagle, formerly Spring-Rice, and Lord Spencer, better known as Lord Althorp. Monteagle from his place in the gallery pronounced the measure to be a great plan and an honest Budget, while Spencer was equally appreciative, and hoped that his own side would not endanger the scheme. Lord Stanley, who had just removed from the Commons to the Lords, observed that the Conservative side of the House looked sulky, but thought that they would acquiesce and not desert the Government. The agricultural party were alternately furious and depressed. On March 17, Disraeli made himself their spokesman with the most biting phrases that have ever passed into the pages of Hansard. Peel answered quietly, recalling Disraeli's eulogy of free trade in 1843: 'I then held in the same estimation the panegyric with which I now regard the attack.' Thus in spite of all, the Minister held forward on his path, and day by day the nation renewed its strength like an eagle, and rejoiced to run its course.

It is desirable to attempt to obtain a just outline of the total effect of the free trade measures of Sir Robert Peel, including in the survey and anticipating the measures of 1846. The financier will consider their effect upon the

national Budget, while the economist will inquire as to their effect upon the trade of the country. Let us deal with both aspects of the situation. We may estimate that during the five years 1842–46 Peel remitted or reduced customs revenue to the great extent of something over 6,000,000*l.* per annum—great, that is, when it is remembered that this was over a quarter of the total customs revenue. This reform was so well accomplished that the total customs revenue, which was 23,400,000*l.* in 1841, had only fallen to 22,200,000*l.* in 1847. In other words, after remitting 6,000,000*l.* of revenue, the revenue only showed a contraction of 1,200,000*l.* So much for the financial aspect of the question. How stands the commercial account? It is a remarkable fact that our export trade between 1815 and 1841 had remained almost absolutely stationary: the real value of our exports in the earlier year having been 51,600,000*l.*, which is exactly the same as the figure of our exports in 1841. When the next great move towards complete free trade was made our exports had doubled as compared with those of the year of Peel's entry into office.

But the historian will not rest here, and will explain the position of Peel in the history of this movement. The last thoroughly vicious Budget in respect of the customs was that of Vansittart in the year 1819, imposing extra taxes in a season of profound peace. Then began the dawn of better things and of a more enlightened finance, marked by the report in 1820 of a Committee of the Commons on foreign trade, in which these words occur: 'Your Committee are convinced that every restriction on the freedom of commerce is in itself an evil.' Soon after, in 1823, arrived that strange and brief period of revival in the Tory party when Peel became Home Secretary, Robinson Chancellor of the Exchequer, Huskisson President of the Board of Trade, and Canning Foreign Minister. The Cabinet thus reconstructed under Lord Liverpool made rapid advances towards free trade, and in the five years 1822–25 no less than over

4,000,000*l.* of customs duties were remitted. In all this Huskisson was the leading spirit and was cordially supported by Peel. Huskisson said that from no member of the Government had he received more cordial support than from Peel in carrying his measures and in mitigating the difficulties with which he had to contend. The Acts of 1825 constituted the largest step towards tariff reform since the vigorous efforts of Pitt.

From this time forward the question slept for fifteen years, and though it is true that some useful amendments to the excise duties were carried in the period 1830–34, still, broadly speaking, the measures of Huskisson were practically all that had been accomplished for half a century. Peel in the debate immediately before the fall of the Whigs in 1841 avowed himself a free trader. 'I profess a general conviction of the truth of the principles of free trade.' It was with right that Disraeli, in his eloquent eulogy of 1843 upon the commercial measures of the Minister, claimed that he was only following the policy of Pitt, Robinson, Huskisson, and Liverpool.

Such was the opening period of this battle: its closing hour was in November 1852, when Villiers moved a resolution recording the success of free trade and pledging the House to its pursuance. Disraeli, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech on that occasion confessed that 'we are not satisfied that the interests of labour have been injured by the change,' and protested that he had no wish to advocate protection. Here was the practical close, not indeed of free trade measures, for 1853 and 1860 were to come, but of the free trade controversy. That occasion was not to pass without eulogies from Bright and from Sidney Herbert upon the Minister, then no more. 'I knew Sir Robert Peel,' said the latter, 'during my whole life almost. I admired him as a politician; I followed him as a leader, and I loved the man. He was a man, susceptible, proud, and justly proud, of the purity of his motives, jealous of his honour. I sat by him night by night on that bench

when he was attacked by the foulest language and accused of the meanest crimes. But Sir Robert Peel was a man of a generous nature—he was one who never rejoiced in the humiliation of an adversary. I say then that the memory of Sir Robert Peel requires no vindication; his memory is embalmed in the grateful recollection of the people of this country; and if ever retribution is wanted—for it is not words that humiliate but deeds—if a man wants to see humiliation, which, God knows, is always a painful sight, he need but look on the Treasury bench.' He pointed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

A question that engaged the attention of Sir Robert Peel was the hostile tariffs raised against our goods by foreign nations. On his entry into office he had inherited from his predecessors a series of commercial negotiations with France, Brazil, Spain, and Portugal. Such negotiations, so far as they aimed at mutual reduction of duties, were not likely to come to much under that Whig Government which had itself in 1840 raised the tariff indiscriminately on all our imports. But when Peel adopted a free trade policy, it was possible that something might be accomplished in this direction, for he could tell other countries that if they would reduce their imposts on our goods, we were ready on our side to reduce our taxes upon theirs. Accordingly, to give an instance, in the Budget of 1842 he did not reduce the duty on French wines, hoping that by offering a reduction in those duties during pending negotiations he might procure some concessions for our goods in the French tariff. But no concessions could be obtained, and accordingly in the Budget of 1845 the duty on brandy was immensely reduced without reference to France, and merely because such a reduction was in itself desirable, with the consequence that in three years' time the revenue from brandy was the same as before, more was being imported, and the price to the British consumer was reduced. Eventually the treaties fell through, partly because the protected interests in the various nations were too strong, and partly that foreign statesmen were content

to wait for us to act without acting on their side. Thus, having discharged his duty, and having done his best by the policy of his predecessors, the Minister stepped forward, to use his own words, with buoyancy and alacrity of spirit upon the chosen way.

But, said the protectionists, while France is smiting our exports with actually increased duties, should we begin to admit theirs free? Peel answered in a phrase: 'The best way to compete with hostile tariffs is to encourage free imports.' And what he said at the close of his career, he said also in the morning hour of 1842: 'If other countries persevere in refusing, the penalty is on us if we do not buy in the cheapest market.'

I have said enough to establish an important point in the history of England, and in the policy of Sir Robert Peel. It is constantly alleged that we adopted free trade in the belief that other nations would follow our example, and it is implied that had we foreseen that it was to be otherwise, we should not have embraced that course. But this is not only not true; it is the exact opposite of the truth. For Peel only adopted free trade completely when he had first convinced himself that to induce other nations to do the same was impracticable. He purposely limited and curtailed his reform of the tariff in 1842 in order that France, Germany, Spain, and other nations might be persuaded to accompany us in lowering their tariffs. They declined to do so, and it was only when he had convinced himself of this refusal that he struck, boldly and without reference to other nations, upon his discovery of a new world. Hence Peel's policy of free trade was not based on the assumption that other nations would go with us; it was based on an opposite experience. At the close of his speech on the Customs Tariff of 1842, he stated that even if our example did not influence other nations we should proceed on our own course. In 1846 he entered more fully into his views upon this point. 'I have no guarantee to give you,' he said, 'that other countries will immediately follow your example.

I give you that advantage in the argument. Wearied with our long and unavailing efforts to enter into satisfactory commercial treaties with other nations, we have resolved at length to consult our own interests.' Thus, though others may have deceived themselves, there was no deception and no miscalculation on the part of the Minister actually responsible.

In the middle of the year 1845 it was generally supposed that the legislative achievements and the personal ascendency of Sir Robert Peel were such as to have ensured him a triumph over all his difficulties, an impregnably strong position, and an indefinite tenure of office. He was maturing extensive plans and building up still further the national prosperity when that Providence which makes the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sends the rain upon the just and upon the unjust, changed the course of the seasons by an inscrutable decree. The fruits of the earth were poisoned and the Minister was overthrown. The five seasons that had followed the introduction of the Reform Bill had been wonderfully propitious to the growth of wheat. The winters were mild and open, and there was but little frost or snow. By a natural consequence of the abundant harvests the price of wheat, which had attained the terrible rate of seventy shillings a quarter in the spring of 1831, had declined to no more than half that rate in the commencement of 1836. A faint glow of prosperity appeared on the horizon, though in truth it was only a false dawn. But the ease of the country was the torture of the agricultural interest, and there were innumerable complaints. Then the fickle current of the seasons began to run in the opposite direction; there was a disastrous sequence of bad harvests, and at the date when Sir Robert Peel entered office in 1841 wheat was again back at its old figure of seventy shillings a quarter. It may be said that the whole period from the summer of 1838 to the summer of 1842 was a period of dearth and starvation. Such was the condition of affairs when in the winter of 1841 the new

Prime Minister came to deal with the question of the people's food.

Meanwhile the course of politics had followed, with no remote connection, the course of the weather. During the early years of the Whig Government there had been no movement for the removal of the Corn Laws, for the simple reason that the harvests at home had been ample. But in 1838 the crop of wheat was disastrously deficient, more so, probably, than any since 1816, and at once the question became grave and momentous. So at least it appeared to the vigilant mind of Sir Robert, ever sensitive to the symptoms of social change. At the very date that the Anti-Corn-Law League was stirring into life in January 1839, we find the leader of the Opposition addressing a careful memorandum to Wellington upon what he immediately realised to be now one of the most important questions of the day.

It is essential, then, to mark in the very clearest outline the exact obligations in respect of the Corn Laws under which Sir Robert had placed himself on his entry into office in 1841. Those who have given themselves the labour to investigate the history of the price of wheat will be aware that from the commencement of the reign of George III. up to the opening of the nineteenth century that price rose, slowly at first, and then rapidly on the outbreak of our war with France. Among other causes of this movement was the fact that bread made from wheat was gradually taking the place of that made from rye or barley. Then in the early years of this century occurred a tremendous collapse of price. The result was a corn law. In 1815, and on the opening of the ports of Europe, another great fall occurred. There was another corn law. In 1828 another corn law followed another fall in price. The truth was that the steady rise in wheat during the last decades of the eighteenth century had enriched and emboldened a class of men who used the Legislature for their own ends. Their purpose was simple: they desired to maintain wheat at a level

remunerative to themselves, and they did it by excluding foreign wheat or by laying a heavy tax on it. Both in 1815 and in 1828 Sir Robert Peel had been a member of the Ministry, and it is desirable to ascertain what part he took in the measures of those dates and in the debates which caused or followed them.

The best summary of his early opinions is given by himself: 'I had adopted at an early period of my public life, without, I fear, much serious reflection, the opinions generally prevalent at the time among men of all parties, as to the justice and necessity of protection to domestic agriculture.' Accordingly, in the debates of 1815, he supported the Corn Bill as Irish Secretary on the ground that corn was the manufacture of Ireland and ought to be protected, and he writes to the Lord Lieutenant that not a soul doubts the advantage that Ireland will derive from the measure. In the interval between this period and 1828 the brunt of the Ministerial case was borne by Huskisson and Canning, but in the latter year Peel, now again Home Secretary, made a short but remarkable speech. He threw a significant light upon the public opinion of that day by pointing out that no measure was more likely to engage a general approval than the new Corn Law. He admitted that in proportion to the growth of population in this country the quantity of land employed in the production of corn was diminishing, that there was a necessity for looking to other countries for a supply, and that it was quite clear that we did not produce sufficient corn for our own consumption. Then he referred to Ireland, and declared protection to be necessary in order to encourage the great corn industry of that country.

This argument as to Ireland deserves attention. Its purport was that if Ireland could be encouraged to grow corn, it would bring prosperity to her and corn to us in the time of deficient harvests. But the stern experience of facts upset this calculation; and if the exports of wheat into Great Britain from that country be examined, it will be found that from 1832 to 1840 there was an absolutely

unbroken annual decline from 552,000 quarters in the former year to 93,000 quarters in the latter. The fact was that during that period the consumption of Ireland increased simultaneously with a decrease in the acreage under wheat. Thus this once powerful argument broke in the hands of those who used it, for it was found that protection did not ensure the growth of enough Irish wheat to enable us in a time of deficiency to rely upon that source of supply, and that in spite of protection the acreage under wheat declined. Ireland became useless as an armoury wherefrom to draw weapons in the fight against free trade.

The next important speech of Sir Robert Peel upon this subject was delivered in the first Reformed Parliament. It consisted chiefly of one argument, and it was that the landed interest was protected indeed, but that so was every other interest. Hence there was no unfair monopoly. 'There is scarcely one act of a farmer's life for which he is not subject to a tax; and that tax imposed for the protection of some domestic manufacture. Nay, taxation does not end with his life—it visits him even in the grave; for if he should desire to lie under foreign marble, he must pay *2s. 6d.* per square foot for his tombstone.' Strange irony of fate! It was Peel himself who by the free trade Budgets of 1842 and 1845 was to destroy his own otherwise very formidable plea. Clearly it was not right that farmers should be exposed to unlimited competition if every manufacturer was to be protected. But clearly also if the manufacturers were to be no longer protected, then the farmers would begin to enjoy a unique monopoly. No one saw this more clearly than Peel himself. In his letter of July, 1847, addressed to the electors of Tamworth after his fall from office, he pointed out that this was one reason for his final abandonment of the Corn Laws.

But it was in 1839 that Sir Robert, now profoundly impressed, for the reasons already stated, with the gravity of the question, dealt with the subject in an elaborate and skilful speech. He expressed his deep conviction of the

seriousness of the situation, and declared in an emphatic passage: 'I have no hesitation in saying, that unless the existence of the Corn Laws can be shown to be consistent, not only with the prosperity of agriculture and the maintenance of the landlord's interest, but also with the protection and the maintenance of the general interests of the country, and especially with the improvement of the condition of the labouring classes, the Corn Law is practically at an end.' The speech contains the important admission that Canning had been mistaken in supposing that protection would ensure steadiness in the price of wheat. But the main argument was very weightily conducted, and was that if protection were abandoned, and if, as was stated by the advocates of free trade, almost the whole of Central and Northern Europe were fitted by soil and climate for the production of corn, 'what chance would domestic agriculture have of competing with these happy regions? Who would employ capital on domestic improvement when it could be transferred with such profit to fertilise the rich wastes of Central and Northern Europe? There, we are told, land pays scarcely any rent, and labour is at the rate of five pence a day. Steam is diminishing every hour the distances which separate nations, and skill and machinery will stimulate to an increase of a hundredfold the natural capabilities of a neglected but most fertile soil. All this may be consolatory enough to the manufacturer, but it should be whispered into his ear exclusively, for it is calculated to fill with dismay the proprietor and occupier of land at home.' Naturally the question arises, what induced Sir Robert Peel eventually to abandon this argument?

It is perhaps a fact little known that during the eighteenth century up to the accession of George III. England produced more wheat than she consumed, and was actually an exporter of it, not an importer. Then the tide began to turn, and the average annual importation, which was only about 90,000 quarters in the decade 1761 to 1770, rose to about 900,000 quarters in the

decade 1831 to 1840, and this in spite of the fact that during several years of the latter period our harvest at home was singularly abundant. These figures have a profound bearing upon the matter in hand, for it at once becomes clear that in spite of the existence of rigid corn laws for the protection of domestic agriculture, this country was becoming progressively unable or unwilling to supply herself with her own wheat. Two main factors, I believe, lay at the root of this growth of imports of wheat; the population was increasing, and also we were becoming, by the natural genius of our race and by the singular advantages possessed by us during that period over foreign nations, a people whose best energies were turning from agriculture to manufacture. The outcome was, that in spite of the Corn Laws we were moving by an almost irresistible tendency into a position of dependency on foreign food. When in the winter of 1841 Peel took up the question of the Corn Laws for the first time as a Minister directly responsible, these considerations powerfully affected his mind and were among those which induced him to modify and mitigate the rates of duty upon wheat by the Act of 1842. As he watched the effects of his own free trade measures up to 1845, these considerations made a continually deeper impression upon him, for he discovered during those years a rapid increase in the consumption per head of our population. In his letter to the electors of Tamworth in 1847 he declared: 'From the increasing difficulty of resisting the application to articles of food of those principles which had been gradually applied to so many articles; from the result of the experiment made with regard to cattle and meat in 1842; from the evidences of rapidly increasing consumption; from the aggravation of every other difficulty in the maintenance of the Corn Laws by the fact of their suspension on the first real pressure—it was from the combined influence of such considerations that I came to the conclusion that the attempt to maintain those laws inviolate after their suspension would be impolitic.'

Finally, let me draw attention to his two important utterances in 1840, and again in 1841, prior to his entry into office. The earlier of these two speeches is remarkable. He stated that he could not assent to total and unqualified repeal, but at the same time he enumerated certain grave objections to the present system. He considered it quite probable that these statutes had had an injurious effect upon our monetary system, for the foreign importer of wheat was in the habit of waiting till the price of wheat was so high in this country that he could, under the operation of the sliding scale of 1828, import his produce at a very low rate of duty, and thus would suddenly flood the market. Then, in consequence of the suddenness of the demand for payment, there was no corresponding export of manufactured articles; the corn imported had necessarily to be paid for in gold, and the stock in the Bank became exhausted. Again, he did not deny that this scale of duties had failed to prevent a fluctuation in the price of corn greater than he wished to see in an article of such general consumption. And again he considered that there was nothing more objectionable than to say that the present tax was perfect. His declarations on the subsequent occasion immediately before the division which was to extinguish the Whig Government were hardly less important. He declared against the Whig proposal of a fixed duty on corn. Clearly and emphatically he defined his position: 'I repeat the language which I held in 1839, that I will not bind myself to the details of the existing law, but will reserve to myself the unfettered discretion of considering and amending that law. I hold the same language now; but if you ask me whether I bind myself to the maintenance of the existing law in its details, or if you say that that is the condition on which the agricultural interest give me their support, I say that on that condition I will not accept their support.' It is therefore quite clear that on his entry into office in 1841, Sir Robert Peel was perfectly entitled to alter the Corn Laws.

The basis of his measure of 1842 was the imposition of such a scale of duty on wheat as to tend to secure a price of fifty-six shillings a quarter. This price was fixed on as one remunerative to British agriculture, though at a figure considerably lower than that aimed at by the Corn Law of 1828. Secondly, experience had shown that hitherto the sliding scale had actually encouraged the foreign importer to keep back his corn until corn in our market reached famine prices, at which point the law allowed him practically free import. Peel now devised a complicated plan. The chief point was that there were to be certain resting places in the downward movement of the scale of duties, and it was hoped that at such resting places the importer would send his wheat into the market instead of waiting for the total abrogation of the duty consequent on the famine price. The Minister considered that the measure 'would cause a very considerable decrease of protection to the home-grower.'

Lord Malmesbury, afterwards whip of the Protectionists, records in his diary at this date that 'nobody expected such a sweeping measure, and there is great consternation among the Conservatives.' The Lord Privy Seal resigned. Ripon was for too much protection; Ashburton was for some relaxation, but for too little; Mr. Gladstone wrote two able memoranda 'proving too much' against the revised edition of the sliding scale, and wrote to apologise, adding that 'my doubts upon the abstract question, how the scale will operate with respect to the relief of the consumer, will be kept profoundly secret.'

The Prime Minister had gone as far as he could venture at present. 'I agree with you,' writes Sir Robert to Sir James Graham, 'we must advance in our present course of relaxation;' and Graham writes a few months later, 'It is a question of time. The next change in the Corn Laws must be to an open trade. But the next change must be the last; it is not prudent to hurry it; next Session is too soon; and as you cannot make a decisive alteration, it

is far wiser to make none.' The Minister meanwhile declared in the House of Commons that if his measures did not prove adequate, no adherence to former opinions would prevent their full and careful revision. He was working at this time for months together at the rate of sixteen or seventeen hours a day. Cobden wrote that 'he is badgered both in the House and out of doors.' 'He is certainly looking very fagged and jaded.' 'I have reason to flatter myself with the notion that I have been a frequent thorn in his side.' And again, writing next year, he says: 'Peel is looking twenty per cent. worse since I came into the House, and if I had only Bright with me, we could worry him out of office before the close of the Session.' Yet happily such tactics did not prevail; perhaps the Minister found solace and strength in that letter which Sir James Graham had addressed to him in September 1842: 'We must augment,' wrote the Home Secretary, 'the means of education; we must keep down the price of articles of first necessity; we must endeavour to redress the wrongs of the labourer; we must mark an honest sympathy with his wants; and while we uphold the authority of law with firmness, we must temper it with mercy. All this is the exact spirit of your Government, and with the Divine blessing I pray and hope that it may succeed.' Such was the spirit which elevated and sustained these two brother statesmen. They were of such stuff as has made and makes the greatness of England.

Apart from all difficulties in the Cabinet and in the Commons, the summer of 1842 was an awful period of anxiety and distress. There had been an unbroken sequence of bad seasons, and men said that the crop of the current year also was ruined. In some places, such as Paisley, there were 17,000 persons on the brink of starvation. Then, suddenly, there was a miraculous change. The first fortnight of June was incomparably bright and warm, and a splendid harvest made glad the heart of man. The earth gave forth her increase, and between July and December

there was a fall of twenty shillings in the price of wheat. Next year the harvest was no less abundant, and the crop of 1844 was actually the largest of the last ten years. 1845 came. 'I should shudder,' Peel wrote to Croker in the autumn of that year, 'at the recurrence of such a winter and spring as those of 1841–2.' Even as he wrote the shadow of a tremendous visitation was sweeping across his path.

With the advent of the summer of 1845 the Government had acquired a position of singular stability, as recorded by four of the most competent of contemporary observers, Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, and Peel himself. The first wrote that Peel is strengthening his Government, for though his followers abuse him with all their might they vote for him steadily when they are really wanted. Mr. Gladstone, writing of the Ministry early in that year, says that it was considered to be of immovable strength; and Disraeli held that, practically speaking, the Conservative Government, at the end of the Session of 1845, was far stronger than even at the commencement of 1842. Peel himself at this time told the Princess Lieven that he had never felt so strong or so sure of his party and of Parliament. The fact was that it had become clear to the country that public affairs were handled by a master. Besides, the Whig party was forlorn: it was spoken of as a corpse and was treated as a phantom. Its auxiliary or mercenary forces, the Radicals and the Irish, had left it for dead upon the plain. Even the famous association for the repeal of the Corn Laws found itself at the close of the Session of 1845 much reduced. Lower prices and abundant harvests and a thriving commerce had lost it public support.

Yet even at this period, and independently of external pressure other than that of argument from without and of reflection from within, a momentous change was in process in the mind of the Prime Minister. Up to 1844 at any rate he had remained resolute in the maintenance of his Corn Laws. In 1843 he had stated in the House of

Commons that he was not then prepared to alter the existing law, though he declined to state that at all times and under all circumstances he would adhere to it. In speaking on the Address early in 1844 he said: 'I believe the abolition of the Corn Laws would produce great confusion and distress:' 'I can say with truth that I have not contemplated and do not contemplate an alteration in the present Corn Law:' 'I can consistently again say that the Government have not contemplated and do not contemplate any alteration of the law which at present regulates the price of corn.' These quotations establish the fact that up to 1844 at any rate he was still willing to give a good trial to his own Act of 1842. On the other hand, we know from his Memoirs that between the passing of the Corn Law in 1842 and the close of the Session of 1845 the opinions he had previously entertained on the subject of protection to agriculture had undergone a great change. But so far as they had not changed up to the date of the speech already mentioned, in 1844, it is clear that it was some time between then and the close of the Session of 1845 that Peel decided to revise his policy as to the Corn Laws, and this is the period in which agitation was weakest, prices low, harvest abundant, and trade increasing. It was not concession to anything but calm reason that convinced him. It was not the pressure of agitation, or the fear of any party or any persons, or even the contemplation of any acute distress. In his own words: 'My opinions were not formed without mature and painful deliberation, and I am wholly unconscious of any single motive of self-interest, personal or political, which was not calculated to bias my judgment in favour of an opposite conclusion.'

It is of course not to be supposed that here was a case of conversion so sudden and complete as to necessitate an announcement. The Minister at that date was burdened with 'incessant toil, too much for human strength,' pushing on with invincible resolution and enthusiasm his

complicated Free Trade Budget, renewing the income tax and fighting against the opposition roused by his scheme for increasing the endowment of Maynooth. Towards the close of the Session of 1845, he delivered three speeches of importance in which he dealt with the question of the Corn Laws. On each of these occasions he stated the same thing, that his policy was one of gradual relaxation of duties, but that he could not consent to the immediate and total abolition of the Corn Laws. Yet the direction in which his mind was tending was plain. Lord Howick, at the conclusion of the last debate, very truly observed that the right hon. Baronet's speech was an unanswerable one in favour of the gradual abolition of the duties on corn. And indeed, in that inflexibly honest mind, set only on the public good, reason and reflection had done their work. Only a touch was needed to set in train a great resolution, and now that impulse was to be given by no less a hand than that which at its opening and shutting brings food or dearth to human kind. Nature herself swept her effacing fingers across the policies and prospects of men. That spring of 1845 was more inclement than any since 1814. Summer passed and autumn came, and still the rains were falling which were to rain away the Corn Laws.

But what were the arguments which had finally conquered the mind of the Prime Minister? His opinions had been changed by experience of accomplished facts. The grounds upon which he defended his law of 1842 were that, first, total abolition would be disastrous to the agricultural interest, owing to the great fall of prices which would suddenly ensue; second, that the wages of agricultural labourers varied with prices; third, that it was important to this country that we should grow our own food, and this would not be the case if agriculture were to be ruined; and fourth, that the favour conferred on a class by the Corn Laws was to be regarded only as a compensation for corresponding burdens imposed on that class. Had

these considerations been disposed of by the experience of the three years subsequent to 1842? To begin with, the Minister had during that period immensely reduced the duties on four important articles of agricultural produce, flax, cattle, lard, and wool, and he had found that in spite of great importations of these articles the increased consumption had either maintained or actually raised their price. From this it was not to be inferred that free trade would not lower prices, but it was to be inferred that if our people were consuming more they were more prosperous, and also that agriculture, on the other hand, was not likely to be threatened with a ruinous collapse. This fact had an important effect on the mind of the Minister, who stated later that the result of the experiment made with regard to cattle and meat in 1842, and the evidence of rapidly increasing consumption, had materially altered his views. As regards wages the experience of recent years proved that protection to corn could not be defended on the ground that it meant protection to wages. 'I have six years' experience; during the first three years high prices and low wages; during the last three years low prices and high wages; and I cannot resist the conclusion that wages do not vary with the price of provisions. They do vary with the increase of capital, with the prosperity of the country, with the increased power to employ labour; but there is no immediate relation between wages and provisions, or if there be a relation it is an inverse ratio.' These conclusions of Sir Robert Peel are borne out by the experience of the concluding quarter of the nineteenth century. During the great fall of wheat from an average price of fifty-seven shillings a quarter in 1872 to an average price of twenty-two shillings in 1894, what has happened to the agricultural interest, so far as that term applies to the vast majority of those employed in the actual work of agriculture? During that fall of price the average wages of the agricultural labourer rose by about a shilling a week. Nor was this all. It is calculated that whereas the agricultural labourer at

the earlier date had to spend two-thirds of his weekly wages on a sufficiency of food alone for his family and himself, at the latter date one-third of his wages sufficed for the same purpose.

The third argument originally used by the Minister in defence of the Corn Laws had been that we should grow enough food to feed ourselves. But experience had shown that the Corn Laws could not secure that object. To begin with, it had been during the existence of the most stringent restrictions on food that our inability to feed our population had become most apparent. Again, year by year our population was increasing and our towns growing. And again, our rate of consumption per head was advancing with advancing prosperity. 'I fairly own that I doubt whether protection could be vindicated on the ground of being independent of foreign supply. In every point of view, commercially, morally, and socially, it would be an immense advantage if the agriculture of the country was in so improved a state that we could rely on our own internal resources for the greater part of our supply. But the hope to make ourselves entirely independent of foreign supply is out of the question.'

Lastly, there was the argument that protection to agriculture was a compensation due to the landed interest for the burdens imposed on land. But these very burdens on land arose in part from the misery entailed upon the agricultural labourers by the Corn Laws. It was because of a peasantry sunk into the most hopeless and degraded condition that there came round that vicious termination of the circle—pauperism, poor rates, and county rates. The Minister dealt with this subject and with his scheme of adjustment of taxation in his speeches in 1846.

Such was the condition of his mind when, early in August, the report reached him that in the Isle of Wight disease had appeared among the potatoes. In September anxiety deepened into alarm, for the disease was also present in Ireland. Two hundred and sixty years had

passed since Sir Walter Raleigh had introduced the culture of that plant into his Cork estates, and now about one-half of the eight million inhabitants of the island were dependent upon it. Those intimate with farming operations are aware that the potato is dug up during October and the early weeks of November to be stored in pits. It was not till then that surmises became certainties; the potato crop was ruined to the extent of at least one half. Of the remaining moiety a portion would be required for seed in the spring, and thus three-eighths only of the usual crop was left for food, and perhaps on the opening of the pits it would be found that the potatoes in store had rotted too. Nor was this all. The wheat harvest was bad, not only in Great Britain but in Europe. In July there was not one day of full summer heat, and the ripening of the grain was imperfect. Wheat, which had been forty-five shillings a quarter in March, rose to sixty shillings a quarter in November. There was scarcity in Russia, in Belgium, and in Holland, and the countries of the Continent were forbidding export. Then, in this crisis of national affairs, was seen all the matchless energy and administrative force of the Minister, strengthened and inspired by sympathy with the people. Wellington said that he had never witnessed such agony as he witnessed in Peel while he followed the course of the famine in Ireland.

The Cabinet was summoned for October 31, and up to November 6 held a series of meetings. There was a struggle between the Prime Minister and his colleagues, the former being supported only by Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and Sidney Herbert, and the Cabinet separated to reassemble on November 25. The impartial critic may perhaps arrive at the conclusion that the Prime Minister was justified, and that the majority of his Cabinet, though containing such eminent men as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Stanley, were mistaken in this contest of opinions. For in what did the struggle between the Minister and his Cabinet consist? The proposal of

the former was to suspend the duties on grain until a fixed day by Order in Council, summon Parliament for November 27, obtain a sanction for this Order and adjourn, declaring at the same time 'an intention of submitting to Parliament immediately after the recess a modification of the existing law.' On the other hand, two arguments were advanced by the opposing members of the Cabinet: first, that there was no need for serious alarm or prompt measures; and secondly, that without an assurance that the suspension ought to be for a limited time, they could not assent to it. They saw that the Corn Laws, once suspended, could not be reimposed, and this led them to dispute the necessity for suspension.

Now, as regards the need for prompt action, there are several facts to support the Minister. After the dispersal of the Cabinet on November 6, it was found necessary for Government to purchase a large quantity of food for Ireland, and this was done without protest from the Cabinet. Besides this, at the meeting of the Cabinet at the end of November it was unanimously agreed that Sir James Graham should forward a letter of instructions to the Lord Lieutenant stating that 'no precaution or exertion shall be omitted which may mitigate the severity of the impending evil.' What was this evil? Scarcity. Surely one remedy for such an 'impending evil' was to open the ports at once. And thirdly, the course of events told in favour of Peel. It is quite true that wheat, after touching the high price already quoted in November 1845, did fall considerably in the subsequent months. But this was largely due to the knowledge in December that the Corn Laws would almost certainly be repealed, which knowledge naturally induced farmers to thresh out and send their corn prematurely into the market. Lastly, the potato famine in Ireland raged with renewed violence again in 1846. All these considerations point to the conclusion that Sir Robert Peel had reason for proposing to open the ports at once.

But if the crisis was urgent, was the Minister wise in proposing a suspension of duties with a view to ultimately modifying the Corn Laws? His colleagues shrank from the vista thus opened to them, for he told them that 'it will be dangerous for the Government, having assembled Parliament, to resist with all its energies any material modification of the Corn Laws.' If his colleagues had possessed the political foresight of the Minister, they would by adopting this course have placed themselves in a strong position. It was the intention of Sir Robert Peel, had he won the assent of his colleagues, to have summoned his party and unfolded to them his views; but it was 'the peculiar position of the Cabinet' which prevented this. Had his Cabinet taken his advice, he would have been able to come forward at once and say: 'While reserving to myself the right of acting in an emergency as I might deem best, I have hitherto declined to accept the immediate and total repeal of the Corn Laws. Now a great crisis has arisen, and the Cabinet, acting on its knowledge of the facts, has unanimously decided to suspend the duties on wheat for the good of the people. Indemnify us for this necessary action. More than this, taught by a new and terrible experience, when once those laws have been set aside, we cannot undertake to reimpose them.' Thus they would have founded their change of policy upon an urgent and acknowledged necessity for change.

As it was, the Cabinet dispersed only to reassemble on November 25, from which date up to December 5 it held a series of meetings. Again Sir Robert urged upon them his recommendations. At their first meeting they had consented to issue instructions to the Lord Lieutenant as to the gravity of the crisis, and the Minister at their next meeting very logically argued that 'the issue of these instructions fully justifies, if it does not require, the temporary removal of impediments to the free import of corn.' But now the lapse of time began to tell upon these deliberations; nearly four months had passed,

and no Order in Council had been issued. The case for it was weakened: if it was to be issued at all it should have been issued at once. Secondly, Lord John Russell, on November 22, had thrown over his plan for protection of wheat by a fixed duty, and had declared for free trade. This must have made it yet more clear that the temporary suspension of duties meant the impossibility of reimposing protection. Thirdly, the lapse of time had forced the hand of Sir Robert Peel. His colleagues naturally could press him to define more clearly his eventual policy, and accordingly in his Cabinet memorandum of December 2 he boldly undertakes to propose a law to 'ensure the ultimate and not remote extinction of protective duties.' The Cabinet could not agree, and on December 5 Peel resigned. Lord John Russell was summoned, failed to form a Ministry, and Peel being sent for again informed her Majesty at once, that as Russell was unable to form a Ministry, and as Lord Stanley, the head of the protectionists, had also declined, he would undertake it even without consulting his colleagues.

Sir Robert Peel, in a letter written only the day before to Sir Thomas Fremantle, had described his loathing of office and the curse of patronage, and heartily rejoiced at escape from his thankless and dangerous post. Yet, if I mistake not, the afternoon of December 20, 1845, when he accepted office at Windsor, and hastened back to face a divided Cabinet and a party in arms against him, was among the happiest of his stormy and successful life. There was in that desperate and solitary errand the elevation of spirit which chivalry can alone supply. He had come to Windsor 'with a heart full of gratitude and devotion to your Majesty,' and the Queen had written that she 'feels certain that Sir Robert Peel will *not leave her* at a moment of such difficulty and when a crisis is impending.' The Queen's mind at any rate was made up: 'The Queen thinks the time is come when a removal of the restrictions upon the importation of food cannot be successfully resisted.' The

Minister, writing to a friend, describes his audience: 'I said to the Queen, "I want no consultations, no time for reflection. I will be your Minister, happen what may."'

Immediately on Sir Robert's return to London the members of the late Cabinet were summoned and met in Downing Street. One then living with the Prime Minister has told me of that night. They began to assemble after nine o'clock, Graham first, then Wellington, then the rest. The junior members of the Ministry, who knew nothing, settled themselves down to hear that they were out and that Lord John was in. The Prime Minister rose. He announced that he was in and that Lord John was out. Would they support him? There was a dead silence. They had broken up the most powerful Ministry since the time of Pitt in their reluctance to consent to the repeal of the Corn Laws, and now he whose resignation they had occasioned came back as Prime Minister charged to repeal those laws, and asked for their assistance. The silence was at length broken. Stanley declined point blank. Then was uplifted the voice of the master of many legions, who so often had sharpened the edge of battle and saved the day. Wellington said that he was delighted. He should have done himself exactly what Peel had done. He had opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws. But in his view the Queen's Government was more important than the Corn Laws, or than any other law. This turned the situation: the rest agreed, and the Minister was himself again. 'It is a strange dream,' he wrote to Princess Lieven; 'I feel like a man restored to life.' So Ulysses stood again in his hall among the suitors, stretched forth his hand, and seized and strung his bow.

But for a Prime Minister of England thus to reverse his policy is no light thing. Such a change is not necessarily an evil to the State, nor is it always to be blamed. But it is always to be watched with vigilance, and must always be challenged and put on trial. To occupy the position of Prime Minister implies a fourfold

relation: to the Monarch, who has given the summons and conferred the office; to the People, who are the beginning and end of government; to the Cabinet, which the Minister himself has chosen; and also to the Party, upon whose votes in the House of Commons his position daily and hourly has depended and must still depend. Sir Robert Peel had done his duty to the Monarch, for when the Queen had found herself without a Minister for a fortnight he supplied the place at her request. He had been true to the People, for believing that it was now necessary for their welfare to repeal the Corn Laws, he had resigned office sooner than dally and delay. To the Cabinet he had rendered its fullest due, for in deference to its opinion he had postponed his decision during November, and had resigned his post on December 5, when he had convinced himself that 'the assent given by many members of the Government was a reluctant one.' To the Monarch, to the People, and to the Cabinet he had fulfilled, and amply fulfilled, his duty. But the British Constitution is fearfully and wonderfully made; the chief of the State is also the head of a Party, and the shepherd of the people has to champion one half of his flock in a warfare against the remainder. Sir Robert Peel had broken with those of his party who still believed in protection, and still would fight for it. For many years their wrath had gathered and grown, and he had long foreseen and prepared for the inevitable stroke. 'They are not more ready to give the blow,' one of his friends had written, 'than we to receive it.' Now therefore the Cascas and the Cimbers and the Cinnas of protection gathered themselves together in the Senate House, drew forth their daggers, and definitely prepared to slay.

In a letter written by Peel in December 1845, the coolness and calculation of a fine judge of the House of Commons stand revealed. 'My wish would be not to give undue prominence to corn, but to cover corn by continued operation on the Customs tariff.' Such were the skilful dispositions of the Minister. Behind lay the strong will

and the resolute purpose. 'Let us leave the tariff as nearly perfect as we can.' 'Let us put the finishing stroke to the good work.' It was thus that he wrote to Goulburn, his Chancellor of the Exchequer. With such a relentless will on the one side and with such fierce interests on the other it was not long before the storm broke. In February, Peel gave an account to his old friend Hardinge, now Governor-General of India, that bold and brilliant soldier who had seen Moore struck down by his side at Corunna, who at Albuera had saved the fortunes of the fight, who had lost his hand at Quatre Bras, and who now had crossed the Sutlej, engaged the Sikhs, and won the victories of Sobraon and Ferozeshah. 'God bless you, my dear Hardinge,' wrote the Minister. 'Excuse my hurried letter. I am fighting a desperate battle here; shall probably drive my opponents over the Sutlej; but what is to come afterwards I know not.' Less than 120 of the Conservatives adhered to the Government; the rest, who in past years had hesitated to give tongue and had swelled the hostile chorus below the gangway with downcast eyes, now regularly organised themselves under Disraeli and George Bentinck. One night in March they howled for five minutes when the Minister rose to speak, preferring to give audience to the Marquis of Granby. On another night in May they screamed and hooted and assailed him with shouts of derision and gestures of contempt, and for a minute or more he was entirely overcome. Yet still he pressed onwards, striving as it were to outpace the awful advent of famine in Ireland. 'Abuse me, but let us pass this measure,' was the phrase continually upon his lips. Men wondered to see the great captain grow young again, as he held his own before the scanty line of his followers and alone sustained the fight. It was like that hour made immortal by Thucydides when, by the waters of the Syracusan bay and beneath the slopes of Epipolae, Nicias, himself smitten with disease, moved with a stout heart and a cheerful countenance down the ranks of the doomed

battalions of Athens. And when he had said and done all that lay in him to do and say, he felt that all that he had done was nothing, and that he had not said half enough.

It came about that on June 25, 1846, the sixth night of the debate on a certain Irish Bill, Charles Buller was interrupted in his speech by two masters in Chancery who appeared at the door of the House of Commons. Mr. Buller sate down. The Speaker rose amid profound silence. He announced that the Lords had agreed to the Customs Duties and Corn Importation Bills without amendment. At last, after a five months' struggle, the Minister had won. His work was accomplished. Then, even on that very night, his political soul was required of him. It was from Ireland that the summons came.

The nineteenth century has witnessed the persistent vengeance of Ireland. We destroyed her manufactures in the eighteenth century; in the nineteenth she has destroyed our ministries. The Irish question has not only broken up many ministries from that of Mr. Pitt to those of Mr. Gladstone, but it has dismembered the Tory party in the earlier period of the century and the Liberal party towards the close. Upon the attention of a distracted Parliament Ireland has pressed four revolutions—in the condition of her Catholics, of her Church, of her Cottiers, and of her Constitution. The first three of these behests have been granted; the fourth has not. Ireland thus remains within the gates of the Constitution, full of real or imaginary sores, and occasionally attempts to burn down the house for her amusement. Nor have such pains and penalties sufficed for our discharge. A great orator once wished that Ireland could be unloosed from her moorings, towed across the Atlantic, and anchored by America. The fancy has become a fact, and the peroration a prophecy, for yonder has been planted a New Ireland as hostile as the Old.

When historians refer to the Irish Government, we should remember that, at least from 1800 to 1850, the

ruling forces in that island have been, not one, but five. There was, to start with, the rule of the landlords, but that declined with the formation in 1823 of the Catholic Association and terminated in 1828 with the Clare election. Then there was O'Connell, whose star ascended as that of Grattan declined, and who stood from 1823 to 1843 supreme in Catholic Ireland. Thirdly, there was the predominance of the Catholic priesthood. O'Connell organised it, and in return it won for him the emancipation of the Catholics. But it also ruined him, for the priesthood in their hearts disliked his Repeal agitation and deserted him after 1843. The fourth Power was the Government of Dublin Castle, and its history was a history of growth. It flourished upon the decadence of the landlord, and it shone out as O'Connell passed into eclipse. That the unpaid gave way to the stipendiary magistrate was one of the outward and visible signs of its progress. Another of its achievements was the constabulary, a force founded by Peel and thence known as 'Peelers,' and extended and reorganised by Drummond. Prior to Drummond's appearance at the Castle in 1835 the Orange forces had raised an army of some two hundred thousand men ready for a holy strife against the newly emancipated Catholics. An army was needed against an army, and the 'Peelers' were summoned to save the State. It was not the only time that the foresight of Sir Robert averted a revolution.

Thus in 1845, of the five Powers which held sway in Ireland during the first half of the century, two, those of the landlord and of O'Connell, had perished. Two had waxed strong, those of the priesthood and of Dublin Castle, and now these rivals stood face to face. It was not long ere a fifth influence was to enter upon the scene.

In May 1840 O'Connell, perceiving that the fall of his Whig allies was not far distant, founded the Association for the Repeal of the Union, and declared for death or repeal. Accordingly, in January 1841, we find

Graham calling Peel's attention to the establishment of Repeal Wardens throughout Ireland, and Wellington in May forecasting civil war in that island. But at first the new Prime Minister was not much troubled. There are two classic methods of coercing England into concessions: the one is to make government impossible in Ireland, and the other to make it impossible in the House of Commons. O'Connell chose the former course, for at the elections of 1841 the Repeal party was reduced to about twelve members, so that he had no party to support him in the House. Yet in spite of all his efforts in Ireland the movement languished. At length in the spring of 1843 new life began to animate it. The Young Ireland party had been organised, and had started the 'Nation' newspaper; O'Connell had ceased to be Lord Mayor of Dublin, and by a brilliant stroke had hit upon a plan of holding monster meetings, and scoured Ireland from Trim to Tara. He announced that 1843 was to be the year of Repeal.

Hitherto the Irish Executive had acted on the advice of the Prime Minister to be 'hard of hearing,' but now the Lord Lieutenant writes (May 6, 1843): 'The rapid spread of the Repeal agitation, and the burst of audacity which has broken out within this very short time, are astounding.' The Roman Catholic hierarchy temporarily went with the tide, the teetotallers became repealers, and the weekly Repeal rent rose by leaps and bounds. The gravity of the situation at length induced the Minister to come down to the House to state formally that he should avoid asking for special powers as long as possible, but 'deprecating as I do war, but above all civil war, yet there is no alternative which I do not think preferable to the dismemberment of this Empire.' At last the Government struck, and struck hard. O'Connell was arrested in the autumn of 1843, and in May 1844 was sentenced to imprisonment. In September the House of Lords reversed the judgment on a writ of error, and he was released. Then, almost mysteriously, the great agitation subsided, whether it was that the hand of

death was on O'Connell, or that the priests had failed him, or that Young Ireland was dissatisfied with his methods, or that the Government had become too strong. It was as though, oppressed by some native instinct, Ireland held her breath before the dark footsteps of the coming storm.

At this moment, when O'Connell, his lifelong opponent, was passing into history, Sir Robert Peel, though harassed with innumerable other cares, turned his full attention to Ireland. He had often confessed that it was the great difficulty of his life, and 'Punch' has very aptly pictured him as the modern Sisyphus rolling uphill a huge round stone, the grinning head of O'Connell. About the time that the agitator was arrested we find the Minister writing to Lord Ellenborough, then Governor-General of India, that though the balance of good predominates, 'we have that great standing evil, which counterbalances all good, the state of Ireland;' and again, writing at a later date to Hardinge, he declares that 'when we have laid the foundations for a better state of things in Ireland, we shall have fulfilled our mission.' Further, addressing Graham during the very week of O'Connell's arrest, he writes that 'mere force, however necessary the application of it, will do nothing as a permanent remedy for the social evils of Ireland. We must look beyond the present. Let us ponder on these things.' But if force was no remedy, what were the remedies of the Minister? They may be reckoned as six in number, comprising the distribution of patronage, besides legislation affecting charitable bequests, the priesthood, education, the franchise, and the land. Let us confine ourselves to the legislation affecting the priesthood.

In 1845, then, while the influences of the landlords and of O'Connell had perished, those of the priesthood and of Dublin Castle had gained ground. But they were opposing and hostile influences. Could they be reconciled? If not, there must still be war in Ireland. It was on this occasion that, to the fury of a large number of his followers, and,

be it added, to the disgust of probably a majority of the English people, the Minister decided to send what he termed 'a message of peace' to Ireland. Dublin Castle was to conciliate Rome! These pages provide us for the first time with two Cabinet memoranda drawn up in February 1844, in which Sir Robert expressed his great anxiety as to Ireland, and pointed out the grave danger 'if the whole Catholic mind be alienated.' He accordingly suggested a series of measures, among others one for making provision for the College of Maynooth, which at present 'sent forth a priesthood embittered rather than conciliated by the aid granted by the State for their education.' For a year the scruples of Mr. Gladstone and others postponed this measure. Then Mr. Gladstone resigned, and the measure was introduced, since Peel was inflexible, even at the risk of losing so valuable an ally In a remarkable letter addressed to Mr. Gladstone in January 1845, he deals with 'a subject which is one of deep concern and anxiety to me. I am strongly impressed with the belief that an important change has taken place in our relations to Ireland, and in our real and practical, though not ostensible and formal, relations to the See of Rome.' He goes on to point out that the moment is ripe for conciliation because the Pope and the Irish Catholics have recently repudiated O'Connell and his followers.

The Minister introduced his measure in April, and every bigot in England flew to arms. 'The Carlton Club,' Greville noted in his diary, 'was in a state of insurrection afterwards, and full of sound and fury. The disgust of the Conservatives and their hatred of Peel keep swelling every day;' and, indeed, no less than 100 of his regular followers voted against the measure on the first division. The speech of Sir Robert, in closing the debate on April 18, though condemned at the time by many, is a fine effort, persuasive, vigorous, and direct. Any desire for retort upon his enemies he laid aside: such feelings, he said, 'are overpowered by, and are merged in, one feeling of deep

and earnest hope that you will not become parties to the rejection of this measure.' 'Let not your indignation fall on the measure—let it be confined to those who proposed it.' Steadily and with unbending resolution he pushed the Bill against the clamour of the Church, of the extreme Conservatives, and of the country. 'This Bill,' he writes to Lord Brougham, 'must pass. I will concentrate all my efforts to pass it. If the Bill be secured, I care comparatively little for the consequences.' And so opposition was swept aside and shrank back from before him, and the Bill became law. Men felt that there was no manœuvre that could circumvent this master of strategy, no brilliancy of invective that could outmatch this far-shining statesman, no bigotry so stubborn as his adamantine will.

During the first half of the nineteenth century there have flourished, as I have said, five Powers in Ireland —the landlords, O'Connell, the priests, Dublin Castle, and another. That other was Captain Rock. He assuredly did not hold the Queen's Commission, and he was the predecessor of the Captain Moonlight of our own day. In the autumn of 1845 Captain Rock became dominant in about ten of the thirty-two counties of Ireland, and the practical result of his dominion was that the grand total of all offences committed in Ireland against the person, against property, and against the public peace rose from about 3,000 in 1844 to over 5,000 in 1845. Was it politics or religion that was the cause? It was neither. It was not politics, because the area of outrage was confined to certain counties; and it was not religion, for Protestants and Roman Catholics fell equally under the impartial slaughter of Captain Rock. It was not even an attack of the poor upon the rich, for poor men were murdered more generally than the well-to-do. It was a war of the poor against the poor; it was the mutual murder of starving men.

Since the expiration in 1840 of the Whig Act of 1835 the Government of Sir Robert Peel, pursuant to the

constitutional principles of that statesman, so far from applying to Parliament for any extraordinary or unconstitutional powers, had actually relaxed in more than one instance the stringency of existing laws, and had relied, even in a time of immense excitement, upon the exercise of ordinary authority. But now the commencement of Irish famine had so intensified crime that they felt obliged to convey, early in 1846, a different 'message of peace' to Ireland. This time it was a Bill for the Protection of Life. Simultaneously the Government announced that they had prepared a Land Bill, which they would shortly introduce. In 1843 Sir Robert Peel, convinced that the land was the Irish question, had announced a Royal Commission to inquire into the tenure of the land and the relation of tenant and landlord. This body, the well-known Devon Commission, had presented its report early in 1845, and the Government had soon after introduced in the House of Lords a measure for securing the rights of the tenant. Owing to opposition in that Chamber, the Bill had to be withdrawn. Sir Robert Peel, however, nothing daunted, determined to enlarge and reconstruct it, and to carry it in 1846. Finally, not one but three Bills to alter the relation of landlord and tenant were introduced on June 11. An ill-omened fate was to block the way.

The Protection of Life (Ireland) Bill was in due course introduced into the House of Lords, a few amendments emanating from the Whigs were accepted, and it was read a third time without a division in that House on March 13. In the House of Commons after a debate of seven nights it was read a first time on May 1, by a majority of 149. The protectionists, led by Lord George Bentinck, voted for it. The Whigs, led by Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, voted for it also. On June 25 it came up for a second reading. The debate was closed by Cobden, who praised the Minister but opposed the Bill: 'I am not misinterpreting the opinion of the people,' he concluded by saying, 'not only of the electors, but especially of the working

classes, when I tender to Sir Robert Peel, in my own name, as I might do in theirs, my heartfelt thanks for the unwearied perseverance, the unswerving firmness, and the great ability with which he has during the last six months conducted one of the most magnificent reforms ever carried in any country, through this House of Commons.'

Cobden sat down. The Speaker rose and put the question. All the bustle of the division began. How was Sir Robert to be turned out? This was the question that the Whigs under Russell, and the protectionists under Bentinck, had been agitating with increasing impatience, as the months of 1846 dragged on, and still the Minister was in his accustomed place and refuted them at the Treasury box. Could these aristocratic leaders find it in their code to vote against the second reading of a measure on June 25, when they had voted for its first reading in the division of May 1? They could indeed. Animated with one common thirst for vengeance, the flower of the gentlemen of England, the Marquis of Worcester, and the Viscount Ebrington, and the Lord George Lennox, and the Lord Henry Vane, and the Lord John Russell, and the Lord George Bentinck poured into the 'No' division lobby with the four O'Connells and the three O'Briens and the O'Conor Don. Then they poured out again, among the green benches of the Chamber itself. A pause, and then a whisper, and it was known that the Government was beaten by a majority of 73. There was dead silence, and all eyes turned upon the fallen Minister. A colleague told him the numbers. Sir Robert Peel did not reply or even turn his head.

Let me summarise the drama of this remarkable career.

It must be admitted that, for a British statesman, Sir Robert Peel had a fault—he was too bold. On two important occasions, in 1829 and in 1846, this quality carried confusion into the great party which he led in the House of Commons. Had he been as retiring and cautious as his close and reserved manner might suggest, he would have left to others the task of emancipating the Catholics

and of repealing the Corn Laws. A less far-reaching financier might have been satisfied in 1842 to provide only so much revenue as would make good the current deficit, whereas he decided to impose on the possessors of property an income tax, to be the instrument and lever of free trade.

A politician more careful of party interests would have stood aghast in 1845 at the very thought of endowing the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth, and probably few other Governments could have carried the ultimate extinction of the note issues of the country banks. Who but he, and perhaps also Mr. Pitt, would have had the audacity to accept the office of Prime Minister in 1834 and again in 1845, on the first occasion with only 150, and on the second with only 120 followers? Thus the crime of Sir Robert Peel was that he could not live within the compass of a party, and could not be bound by our timid traditions. He was too courageous, and he was too constructive.

It may, indeed, be suggested in reply that a party only exists for the public, and that a statesman should only think of the State. A temple may have been built as goodly as the Parthenon, and grown grey with immemorial memories, yet without worshippers it is nothing; and so also a party is nothing if it be not deep in living interests, even though it may have dismissed James the Second from the throne. From the date of the passage of the Reform Bill the Whig party was a temple without worshippers, interesting but empty; a shrine that had been very sacred; a Memnon no longer in tune with the morning. It believed in its past more than in its future, and in William Russell, the patriot who was beheaded, quite as much as in Lord John. It was just a little too aristocratic. Its great men would be dining at Holland House while Sir Robert was debating in the House of Commons.

Very different was the Conservative party, new-born in 1833. Unlike the Whigs, it had no traditions; but it had interests, and it was alive. In its ranks in 1841 were seven

men who had been, or would be, Prime Ministers—Peel, Wellington, Ripon, Stanley, Aberdeen, Gladstone, and Disraeli; and five future Viceroys of India—Ellenborough, Hardinge, Dalhousie, Canning, and Elgin. Its strength lay not so much in its leaders, though these have rarely been excelled, or in the principles of government which its organiser and creator strove to instil into it, as in the support of substantial interests, alarmed at the prospect of radical change. Thus the most brilliant and the most bigoted, the most intellectual and the most inept, the most statesmanlike and the most stupid, were combined within its scope. Like the image of old days, its feet were of one substance and its head of another; it had Sir Robert Inglis and Sir Robert Peel.

This party stood for certain views of the Constitution which its leader heartily endorsed—the maintenance of the House of Lords, of the Union between England and Ireland, and of the Church. These were enough for an Opposition, though not enough for a Government, and especially for a Government called upon to diagnose profound social diseases and doctor economic decay. Accordingly, in 1841, Sir Robert Peel had to make his choice. On the one side there were the Corn interest, and the Fat Cattle interest, and the Sugar interest, and the Shipping interest—on the other the interest of the People. The Minister decided for the People, and his very first measures were a tax on incomes, a reduction of agricultural protection, and a free trade budget.

The great interests were confused. The Corn interest were very angry, but the Shipping interest smiled upon free trade, for to them it meant more commerce, and therefore more shipping. The Fat Cattle interest were sore at the opening of our ports to American cattle, but they liked the reduction of the tariff on fodder, so they rallied round the Minister and the Government survived. Then in 1843 the Irish landlords were shocked at the Devon Commission, and these revolutionary proposals as to the rights of

farmers and the wrongs of rent. But they saw that Sir Robert had conquered O'Connell, so they trooped into the 'Aye' division lobby—and the Government survived. After that, in 1844, came the Bill for the Bank Charter, and the bankers had their prayers and their petitions. But the squires only laughed and bethought them that they had been ruined in old days by the Act of 1819 and by the scarcity of gold. So the squires gave a cold shoulder to the City—and the Government survived. In 1845 there was Maynooth, and in consequence a Protestant insurrection. Yet the clergy had not forgotten 1835, and the motion of Lord John Russell for the discreet confiscation of ecclesiastical revenues. Even money for Maynooth was not so bad as larceny at Lambeth—so the Government survived. But in 1846 it was different. The land was the giant monopoly, and the others only striplings beside it—so the Government fell.

Yet there was a general impression that Sir Robert Peel was very cautious, and this impression was not incorrect. Two maxims, among others, regulated his discharge of public business—that a statesman should not prescribe till he is called in, and that he should devote himself to one first-rate measure at a time. Hence while some statesmen have been known to prescribe, not after but before their summons, and occasionally even to promise what they cannot fulfil, Sir Robert Peel was diametrically the opposite, and the best of our reformers was the least lavish in his promises of reform. It was because he was never prodigal of pledges that he seemed to his contemporaries so prudent, but those who would comprehend the scope of his measures have only to consult the statute-book. Of that caution which is another name for cowardice he had nothing, but he had that prudence which springs from honesty. Thus his reserve was founded upon uprightness, and it was in deed, not in word, that he was bold.

The age in which he flourished was one of revolutions

on the Continent, and of reforms at home. There were many agitations, of which some succeeded and some failed. Sir Robert Peel had to deal with the Catholic Association, with the Anti-Corn-Law League, with the Chartists, and with the Association for the Repeal of the Union. He granted the wishes of the first, eventually agreed with the second, and of the third and fourth he witnessed the collapse. With such experiences as these it was impossible for him to regard popular movements as infallible; he thought of government as a difficult and a refined science, to be mastered by few, and had seen too many constitutions abolished without profit to rejoice at the dissolution of our own. He regarded our Constitution on its practical side as the choice by a Monarch of a Minister, who should profoundly study the situation, test his conclusions by consultation with a Cabinet, come down with a great Bill to the House of Commons, and carry his measure without amendment. 'These people,' he used to say, 'like being governed.' Here was something a trifle despotic. It was the unconscious despotism of a strong man.

Yet with this tendency to be ascendant there was combined that which may be termed its antidote. Sir Robert Peel was always learning. At one time Sir James Mackintosh might have known more than he of the criminal law, or Horner of the depreciation of the paper currency, or Jones Loyd of the principles of Bank regulation, or Hume of the tariff, or Cobden of the Corn Laws. But, thanks to his prodigious application, and to his memory, not less retentive in civil affairs than that of Macaulay in historical, he became sooner or later the equal or the superior of these eminent men, even in the particular subject of each. Added to this, he possessed what none of them could claim—the training of a statesman. As a youth he had held his own against a Canning or a Plunket, and had gone forth to meet the Goliath of agitation, O'Connell. But the momentum of his continually expanding mind originated not in intellect but in character,

and sprang from the love of truth. The Duke of Wellington said of him that he never knew one in whose truth he had a more lively confidence. That was the secret of his constant progress. His words corresponded with his thoughts, and his thoughts followed close upon reality.

He was master of many things. The learned author of the 'Catalogue Raisonné,' published in 1829, dedicated it to him for his supremacy as a patron and a judge of art. He was a scholar of the Oxford school, and the reader of Lord Stanhope's 'Miscellanies' may benefit by his reflections upon Jupiter Latialis or his quotations from Prudentius contra Symmachum. But that of which he was most the master was the House of Commons. It would be an error to suppose that because he broke with party feeling he was not popular in that assembly, for he possessed the two qualities which have always won its heart—gravity and humour. He was grave because he was full of knowledge; but also, like Sir Robert Walpole, he could 'laugh the heart's laugh and nod the approving head,' because his mind was at ease with itself. From the death of Mr. Canning he reigned supreme in that assembly, and he understood it so well because he was endowed in an ample measure with that quality of a statesman which sympathises more easily with a senate than with individuals. He felt for it as for his own native place.

Some authorities have considered that he lacked foresight. Is that judgment profound or accurate? He faced the desperate odds against him deliberately in the cause of right, and it was not because he was blind to coming danger that he was not afraid. The true test of foresight in a statesman is the permanence of his work, and the work of Sir Robert Peel has endured. The highest prescience belongs to him who has the fortitude and the faith to carry sound principles into practice, and to be able to frame the future implies and includes the ability to forecast it.

Many eminent critics and wise men have treated of

his career and character.[3] He has been variously described as the greatest member of Parliament who ever lived; and as the man who has done most good to this country. But we may be content with this reflection—that much of what is best in English statesmanship and in the character of the English people was embodied in Sir Robert Peel.

[3] Among them Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone, Guizot, Lord Dalling, Walter Bagehot, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Goldwin Smith, Mr. Kebbel, and Mr. Barnett Smith. I should especially refer to the admirable work of Mr. J. R. Thursfield.



STATUE OF SIR ROBERT PEEL IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The following verses, written in the night after Sir Robert Peel's death, will be of interest to scholars, especially to Harrow boys and men. The Latin, in the opinion of a late Head Master, H. Montagu Butler, needs little 'pardon,' still savouring more of Horace and of Harrow than of Law and Lincoln's Inn.

E. K. Karslake to Frederick Peel.

Will you accept from an old schoolfellow the enclosed lines on your lamented father? I happened to meet with an accident as I was riding to Lincoln's Inn from the Athenæum, where I had just heard the melancholy news of his death, and while my thoughts were wholly engrossed (as no doubt were those of every one else) by the sad event, my horse slipped up and rolled over me. I employed a sleepless night in making the accompanying lines, which I wrote down in pencil in the morning.

I trust you will pardon errors in Latinity, as you know that our Law Latin, with which I have been forced to content myself for the last few years, is not quite Horatian.

ON THE LATE SIR ROBERT PEEL.

By an Old Harrow Boy.

Quid dormientem, Melpomene, lyram
Inusitatum proripis ad melos?
  Quid carminum oblitus retractem
    Dulce decus iuvenilis aevi?

Vox, consulentis gloria patriae—
Quae iam recenti fulmine curiam
  Perstrinxit, infaustis reluctans
    Consiliis popularis aurae,

Pactique et arcis Cecropiae memor—
In omne tempus conticuit. Iaces,
  Roberte, nec quidquam relinquis
    Civibus aut simile aut secundum.

Ut separatis rusticus in iugis
Male ominato contremuit metu,
Praeclara si quercus trisulca
Ante pedes cadit icta flamma;

Nigro Britannum sic stupuit die
Luctus profari nescia Civitas,
Dum fama lugubri querela
Per trepidos volat atra vicos.

O si peractis mille laboribus,
Si functus aevo, rite quiesceres,
Si spiritum efflasses supremum
Cinctus amabilibus propinquis!

Sed te iocosa fraude recalcitrans
Mannus vigentem praeripuit ducem;
Nec tale portentum cometes
Nec tremulae monuere terrae.

Huic quicquid usquam concipitur boni
Fortuna in unum contulit, hunc chorus
Fovit Camenarum, deditque
Divitiis sapienter uti.

O qua supinis Herga sedet iugis,
Cunabula almae cara puertiae,
Cum nomen incisum sine arte
Parietibus legerem vetustis,

Quam saepe dixi: "Noster in hac domo
Robertus istos crevit ad exitus;
Hoc fonte nutritus senator
Consiliis moderatur orbem!"

Hic obsoletis relligionibus
Emancipavit colla Britanniae,
Vindex laborantis Monetae, et
Perpetuus prope Consul idem.

Non hic nocentis propositi tenax
Cives honori postposuit suo,
Nec, fassus errorem, priores
Erubuit temerare palmas.

Novane gaudens lege Britanniam
Plenis revisat Copia cornibus;
Priscumne Roberto iubente
Tempora iam redeant in aurum,

Nil interest; an non bene credulum
Magi[1] potentis carmina vicerint,
Tristesque iam nutent ruinae
In caput agricolae immerentis.

Diiudicandas has ego posteris
Lites relinquo. Quicquid erit, minas
Togatus heros et suorum
Opprobria et procerum querelas

Sprevisse, mentis conscius integrae—
Quid hoc nisi ultro pro patria mori?—
Laudetur, et fasces superbos
Et meritam posuisse laurum.

Non haec inanes funera neniae,
Non vana rauca pompa decet tuba;
Regina regalisque consors
In thalamis lacrimant remotis.

[1] Cobden.

Gemunt ab imo corde Britanniae ;
Europa surdo moeret inops metu ;
  Et Victor Europae senili
    Dux lacrima decorabit urnam.

At vos, propago digna patris, mei
Quondam sodales, cum quibus aureum
  Tam saepe deduxisse solem
    Moris erat viridi sub Herga,

Solamen orbi quod licet unicum
Praestate ; factis nobilibus patrem
  Nigro repensum de sepulcro
    Reddite consiliis Britannum.

Tuque ad serenas, alma Fides, domos
Ducas beatum luce tua Virum ;
  Te vindice, expectet perennes
    Delicias melioris aevi !

E. K. KARSLAKE.

Lincoln's Inn : July 4, 1850.

INDEX

ABBOTT

Abbott, Chief Justice, i. 399
Abercrombie, Dr., iii. 97
Abercromby, Lord, ii. 273
Aberdeen, Lord, ii. 157–159, 166, 211, 232–236, 240, 266, 367, 376; in Peel's Cabinet, ii. 392; Wellington on Canada Bill, ii. 443; at one with Peel, ii. 460; Scottish Church Bill, ii. 467, 473; Foreign Office, ii. 482; appoints Stratford Canning Minister at Constantinople, ii. 485; in Scotland with the Queen, ii. 543; the life of a public man, ii. 559; Factory Bill, ii. 560; on 'united education,' ii. 561; a conversation with the Queen, ii. 571; the Veto Act, iii. 72, 75–77; Scottish Church Patronage, iii. 83; the vacancy at Florence, iii. 161; the admission of maize, iii. 226; supports Peel's proposals, iii. 229; Brunow on the Punjab, iii. 276; and Wellington, iii. 292; on Peel's probable retirement, iii. 363; Peel on Boundary question, iii. 387–389; our relations with France, iii. 390, 401, 409; Guizot and Ste.-Aulaire, iii. 392; on the Queen's visit to Louis Philippe, iii. 393; the Tahiti affair, iii. 394; his protest against Wellington's national defence scheme, iii. 396; Peel's speech for France, iii. 398; Louis Philippe's folly, iii. 399; Guizot, iii. 400, 409; his proposed retirement deprecated by Peel, Wellington, and Graham, iii. 401–407; on Ellenborough at the Admiralty, iii. 411; Princess Lieven, iii. 456; on the

ALBERT

Pope, iii. 493; his and Palmerston's foreign policy, iii. 535, 539, 540; Guizot on Peel's death, iii. 552; his letter to Princess Lieven, iii. 553; Lady Peel's letter, iii. 555; and his reply, iii. 556
Academical Institutions (Ireland) Bill, iii. 176
Adare, Lord, i. 307
Adelaide, Queen, iii. 340, 511
'Advertiser,' the, ii. 398
Afghanistan, ii. 481, 581–600; iii. 1
'Age,' the, ii. 96
Agricultural Distress, debate on, iii. 532
Ailsa, Marquis of, ii. 271. 527
Airy, Professor, Astronomer Royal, ii. 307, 308; iii. 445
Airy, Mrs., ii. 307, 308
Akbar, ii. 594, 597
Albert, Prince, ii. 408, 413, 414; Government defeated on proposed Grant for, ii. 432; Peel and the Queen's Household, ii. 455–458, 464; birth of Prince of Wales, ii. 511; a *chasse* in Windsor Park with Peel, ii. 518; visit to Scotland, ii. 537–545; on Ellenborough's recall, iii. 22; Scottish Church, iii. 98; on the Irish Catholic prelates, iii. 128; on O'Connell, iii. 133; a list of Peel's guests, iii. 162; Income Tax Bill, iii. 170; proposed visit to Ireland, iii. 181; the Queen's interview with Russell, iii. 241; Wellington and the command-in-chief, iii. 243; Russell's scruples, iii. 250–253; Russell's refusal to take office, iii. 283, 284; Cobden's outburst,

iii. 329; Peel's speech on second reading of Corn Bill, iii. 339; analysis of the division, iii. 342; Cobden's speech, iii. 343; Royal visit to Ireland postponed, iii. 463; a 'frightful state of things' in Ireland, iii. 465; on Peel's Tamworth address, iii. 487; clouds on the political horizon, iii. 490; 'the many awful events,' iii. 495; Cabinet Minutes, iii. 499; National University for Ireland, iii. 521; Peel's death, iii. 547, 548
Algeria, the French in, iii. 314
Ali Morad, iii. 263
Alison, Mr., ii. 267
Alison, Sir Archibald, ii. 327
Alston, Mr., ii. 350
Althorp, Lord. *See* Spencer, Lord
America, ii. 356, 462, 481, 492; supports Repeal in Ireland, iii. 46; hostile to England, iii. 195, 216; the Oregon question, iii. 318, 324, 371; welcomes Peel's Corn Bill, iii. 374; the Boundary question, iii. 386–389
Anglesey, Lord, ii. 6; 'a good courier,' ii. 8; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, ii. 33, 61; advises concession, ii. 50; a bitter draught, ii. 65; his recall, ii. 66–72
Anson, G. E., ii. 455–458, 463, 525
Anstruther, Captain Robert, an early friend, i. 14, 447
Anti-Corn Law League, ii. 218, 222, 224, 510, 524, 530, 557, 570; iii. 47, 334
'Anti-Union,' the, ii. 161
Apsley, Lord, i. 34, 46
Arbuthnot, C., Secretary to Treasury, i. 40, 47, 79, 433, 452, 457, 482, 491, ii. 2; on the King's attitude, ii. 3, 5, 178; his sore misgivings, ii. 10; Patronage Secretary, ii. 13; on the King and Wellington, ii. 18, 19; Woods and Forests, ii. 30; on suppression of Roman Catholic Association, ii. 103; Whig overtures, ii. 163, 167; and Croker, ii. 171; Government's Reform plans, ii. 176; Peel on Reform riots, ii. 189; relations between Wellington and Peel, ii. 232, 240.

319, 442, iii. 219, 291, 361; a significant conversation, ii. 244, 247; Molesworth's motion, ii. 359; Brougham, ii. 369; Peel at Belvoir Castle, ii. 373; Conservative leaders' prudence, ii. 375, 377; Peel has no wish for office, ii. 387; Wellington as Foreign Secretary, ii. 391; the Queen and Prince Albert, ii. 408; Wellington's health, ii. 412; Croker never to be depended on, ii. 414; Peel for action, ii. 424; the Grant for Prince Albert, ii. 432, 433; on Wellington's intentions —Irish Municipal Bill and Canada, ii. 440, 443; a peacemaker, ii. 447, 450; the Household question, ii. 459; Wellington on Peel's new Cabinet, ii. 460, 483; Ministers' intention to dissolve, ii. 463; on Lord Londonderry, ii. 483; trouble at Manchester, ii. 510; Peel on import of foreign cattle, ii. 527; distress at Paisley, ii. 532; Wellington Commander-in-Chief, ii. 535, iii. 457; India, ii. 579; Wellington and Ireland, iii. 63; Lord Spencer on Peel's Budget, iii. 170; Wellington on national defence, iii. 201; Peel resumes office, iii. 290; his opinion of Russell, iii. 291; Peel reconstructing the Government, *ibid.*; Peel's Free Trade policy, iii. 326; Russell and the Protection Bill, iii. 345–347; Wellington on the Protection Bill, iii. 351; true relations between Peel, Liverpool, and Canning, iii. 358, 360; Lady Lyndhurst's canard, iii. 362; Wellington on Bagot's Canadian policy, iii. 382–385; the Boundary question, iii. 387; our warning to France, iii. 400; Stanley on Irish agriculture, iii. 517; a croaking country banker, iii. 518; Peel's death, iii. 545
Arbuthnot, Mrs., i. 483
Arbuthnot, George, iii. 359
Arbuthnot, Sir Thomas, ii. 541
Argyll, Duke of, Wellington on Scottish Church, ii. 468; his Bill, ii. 470, 473; Peel on the Bill, ii. 471; the Veto Act, iii.

ARGYLL

72; Dr. Chalmers' conversion, iii. 81
Army, increase of, iii. 215
Arnold, Dr. Thomas, ii. 146
Arran, Lord, iii. 19
Arrivabene, Count, iii. 373
Arthur, Sir George, ii. 439, 441; iii. 29
Ashburton, Lord, ii. 482; consulted by Peel on finance, ii. 498; approves of Property Tax, ii. 500; Graham on indirect taxation, ii. 504; memorandum on Corn Laws, ii. 507; the Boundary question, iii. 386; will not speak on repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 505
Ashley, Lord, the Bedchamber question, ii. 392, 393, 399; on Melbourne and the Radicals, ii. 404; the Queen and Prince Albert, ii. 408; a Protestant point, ii. 414; the language of thousands, ii. 466; leader of the Protestants, ii. 474; Mining Reform, ii. 534; children in factories, ii. 548; Drummond's assassination, ii. 554; on Ellenborough's Scinde policy, iii. 7; his motion on the Factory Act, iii. 147, 148; misunderstood by Peel, iii. 154; Bright's motion on Game Laws, iii. 179; on Hardinge, iii. 307; asks for Chiltern Hundreds, iii. 337; on Peel's interment in Westminster Abbey, iii. 550
Assassination Bill (Ireland), iii. 344, 352, 367
Aston, Mr., iii. 391
Attwood, Mr., i. 380–382
Auckland, Lord, ii. 575, 578, 580, 589; on Ellenborough's recall, iii. 269
Augereau, i. 175
Augsburg, Confession of, iii. 69
Austin, James, ii. 401
Austria, iii. 373

Bagot, Sir Charles, Governor of Canada, iii. 44. 379–386, 388
Bagwell, Right Hon. W., i. 149
Bailly, M., *Mémoires de*, ii. 325
Bank Charter Act, ii. 572; iii. 134–143, 570
Bank of England, iii. 134–143

BLICK

Bank Restriction Act, i. 289 *et seq.*
Bankes, Mr., i. 75, 100
Banks, Sir Joseph, iii. 447
Baring, W., ii. 264, 467, 570; iii. 508
Barker, Mr., ii. 38
Baronetcies and peerages, Peel's practice and motives in bestowal of, iii. 426–435
Barrow, Mr., ii. 304
Barry, Colonel, i. 169
Bathurst, Lord, i. 30, 33, 313, 336, 374, 433, 488; ii. 8, 18, 81, 227
Bavaria, King of, ii. 352
Bayly, Henry, ii. 370–372
Beaufort, Duchess of, ii. 466
Beaufort, Duke of, ii. 227
Beckett, Sir John, i. 35, 481
Bedford, Duchess of, ii. 456, 458, 459
Bedford, Duke of, ii. 178; the Bedchamber question, ii. 458, 459; Lord John Russell and Lord George Bentinck, iii. 344, 346; Lady Lyndhurst's canard, iii. 362; repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 504; Arbuthnot's croaking country banker, iii. 524; 'a war of classes,' iii. 525
Belgium, revolution in, ii. 159
Bell, Dr., i. 156
Bell, Lady, iii. 447
Bell, Sir Charles, iii. 447
Bellew, Dr. (Bishop of Killala), i. 93
Bennett, Mr., i. 192, 202
Benson, Colonel, iii. 299
Bentinck, Lord George, i. 376; iii. 345, 346; Irish Protection of Life Bill, iii. 349, 350, 355; his attack on Peel, iii. 356; a gleam of sense, iii. 489
Beresford, Lord George, i. 409
Beresford, Lord, ii. 141
Bernadotte a hypocrite, i. 138
Bernal, Mr., ii. 292
Bessborough, Lord, iii. 466
Beverley, Lord, iii. 308
Bexley, Lord, ii. 11, 29
Bimetallism, i. 394
Bird, Mr., iii. 32
Bisset, Miss, iii. 458
Blake, Mr., iii. 174
Blakesley, Dean (Lincoln), iii. 552
Blandford, Lord, ii. 176
Blick, Rev. Francis, i. 11

BLOMFIELD

Blomfield, Dr., Bishop of London, ii. 77, 284, 550, 560; iii. 422
Bolivar, i. 354, 368
Bonaparte, i. 25, 28, 41; peace with, i. 127; defeated by allies, i. 128; return from Elba, i. 170; at Lyons, i. 172; at St. Helena, i. 183
Bonapartists of Ireland, i. 172
Bonham, Mr., ii. 414, 428, 469
Borodino, battle of, i. 41
Bosanquet, Mr., banker, iii. 140
Bourne, Sturges, ii. 21, 35
Bowring, Dr., ii. 250
Boyd, Mr., M.P. for Coleraine, iii. 425
Boyle, David, Lord Justice Clerk, Scotland, iii. 428, 483
Brazil, negotiations with, ii. 498
Breadalbane, Marquis of, ii. 545
Brennan, Patrick, ii. 137
Brewster, Sir D., iii. 445
Bridge, Rev. R., Peel's tutor, i. 17
Bridges, Sir John, ii. 141
Briggs, Mr., ii. 39
Bright, John, M.P. for Durham, ii. 568; on Game Laws, iii. 179; on Peel's Free Trade speech, iii. 522; on Peel's last speech, iii. 542
Bristol, Reform riots at, ii. 189
British Association, iii. 492
'British Critic,' the, ii. 475
Broadfoot, Major, iii. 277, 300
Brodie, Sir Benjamin, iii. 545
Brotherton, General, iii. 271
Brougham, Lord, i. 61, 343; ii. 4, 14, 21; on Roman Catholic Association Bill, ii. 103; Whig overtures, ii. 165; his view of political unions, ii. 192; on the King and his Ministers, ii. 255, 265; a feeler, ii. 360; and Croker, ii. 369, 374, 376, 395, 399, 414; Hardinge and Arbuthnot on, ii. 369; plans of education, ii. 553; Drummond's assassination, ii. 555; on O'Connell's prosecution and conviction, iii. 68, 124, 125; the Veto Act, iii. 71; the Maynooth Bill, iii. 175; on Adam Smith, iii. 193; advises withdrawal of Protection Bill, iii. 354; in praise of Peel, iii. 357; his counsel against resignation, iii. 369; Graham a peer (?), iii. 370; on Peel's tribute to Cobden, iii. 372; urges Peel to stand for City, iii. 485; some slavery crotchet, iii. 504
Brown, Colonel, i. 192, 201, 202n.
Brown, Robert, botanist, iii. 446, 447
Brown, Dr. T., *Church and State in Scotland*, iii. 93
Brummell, Beau, i. 227
Brunow, Baron, iii. 149, 276
Buccleuch, Duchess of, ii. 543; iii. 90, 113
Buccleuch, Duke of, ii. 519, 542; iii. 240, 264, 285, 287, 288, 291, 327, 504
Buckingham, Duke of, i. 221, 334, 383; ii. 382, 482, 505, 520
Buckland, Dr., Dean of Westminster, iii. 162, 417; on Owen's claims for a pension, iii. 445; on Robert Brown's claims, iii. 446
Buller, Charles, ii. 385; iii. 328, 330, 426
Bulwer, Sir Henry L., iii. 177, 341, 392, 458, 509
Bulwer's *Palmerston*, cited, ii. 165
Bunbury, E. H., iii. 341
Bunsen, Chevalier, iii. 373, 460, 505, 506
Burdett, Sir Francis, i. 39, 372, 451; ii. 46, 190, 414
Burgh, Sir Ulysses, ii. 141
Burke, Michael, i. 135
Burke and Hare, ii. 44
Burrell, Sir Charles, ii. 531
Bushe, Chief Justice for Ireland, i. 71, 80, 302; iii. 426
Butler, Dr. H. M., Dean of Peterborough, iii. 419, 560
Butt, Mr., iii. 123
Byng, Mr., ii. 71
Byron, Lord, with Peel at Harrow, i. 13, 25

CABINET COUNCILS, History of, iii. 496
Cabul, Macnaghten's murder at, ii. 581, 583; British captives in, ii. 586, 591; Nott's advance on, ii. 592, 594, 599, 600; occupied by Pollock, ii. 597; rescue of captives, *ibid.*
Caird, Mr., on Irish agriculture, iii. 517, 518
Calcraft, Mr., ii. 21

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge, Trinity College, ii. 283; King's College, ii. 285
Cambridge, Duchess of, ii. 409
Camden, Lord, ii. 321, 402, 476
Campbell, John, ii. 361
Campbell, Lord, iii. 124, 170
Campbell, Sir Hay, iii. 428
Camperdown, Lord, ii. 409
Canada, rebellion in, ii. 354–358, 362, 381; Peel's memorandum on union of Upper and Lower, ii. 435; Wellington's scheme, ii. 439, 440; Bill passed, ii. 444; defences of, iii. 195, 197, 216; Bagot's policy, iii. 379–386; the Boundary question, iii. 386; Peel's views, iii. 389
Candlish, Dr. Robert S., iii. 54, 75, 77
Candy, Mr., ii. 570
Canning, George, i. 44, 45; Catholic question, i. 67, 297, 311–314, 345, 372, 466; Oxford election, i. 250; resignation, i. 298; proposed viceroy of India, i. 300; leadership of House of Commons, i. 327 *et seq.*; opinion of Peel, i. 331, 487, 490; the King, i. 335; the Brougham incident, i. 343; Exchequer bills, i. 396; Sievrac, i. 407; Lord Liverpool's illness, i. 450; reconstruction of Government—Wellington's, Peel's, and his own claims, i. 451 *et seq.*; embarrassed by Catholic claims, i. 458; Prime Minister, i. 463; friendly relations with Peel, i. 464, 487, 493; Peel's reason for resigning, i. 466; six ministerial resignations, i. 487 *et seq.*; Whig coalition, i. 491; illness and death, i. 493; effect of his death on political parties, ii. 1 *et seq.*; the uncompromising foe of Reform, ii. 174, 176; Corn Laws, iii. 220; relations between Peel, Liverpool, and, iii. 358–360
Canning, Mrs., i. 449
Canning, Lord, ii. 482
Canning, Sir Stratford, ii. 485
Canterbury, Archbishop of. *See* Howley, Dr.
Canterbury, Lord, ii. 477
Cardwell, Dr., iii. 419
Cardwell, Lord, Vice-President of Board of Trade, i. 30, iii. 168; Peel's illness, iii. 457, 480;

CHURCH

famine in Ireland, iii. 481; M.P. for Liverpool, iii. 488; Navigation Laws, iii. 503; Peel *v.* Protection, iii. 534; Brodie on Peel's death, iii. 545
Cardwell, Mrs., i. 9
Carew, R. S., i. 231
Carlile, Mr., ii. 168
Carlisle, Lord, ii. 13
Carlyle, Thomas, iii. 377
Caroline, Queen, i. 297, 298
Cashel, Archbishop of, i. 125
Cashel, Peel member for, i. 24; gives up, i. 40, 41
Cashmere, insurrection in, iii. 474
Cassilis, Lord, i. 493
Castlemaine, Lord, i. 124
Castlereagh, Lord, iii. 425
Cathcart, Lord, i. 41
Cathedral Reform, ii. 411
Catholic. *See* Roman Catholic
Central Asia, iii. 258
Chalmers, Dr., ii. 409, iii. 70, 72, 73, 76; the *liberum arbitrium*, iii. 78, 79; his *Memoirs*, quoted, iii. 81, 93, 95; convocation of Ministers, iii. 88; his forecast, iii. 98
Chandos, Marquis of, ii. 179, 195
Channel Islands, defence of, iii. 197, 199, 205
Chantrey, Sir Francis, ii. 510
Charitable Trusts Act, 1843, iii. 126–133
Charles I. and the Coronation Oath, ii. 220
Charles X., i. 130; dethroned, ii. 156–158
Charles Alexander, Grand Duke of Saxony, iii. 549
Chartists, ii. 510, 538, 543, 546
Chatham, Lord, and Parliamentary Reform, ii. 173
Chelsea Pensioners Bill, ii. 568
China, war with, ii. 481
Christina, Queen of Spain, iii. 390, 393
Church in Scotland, the, ii. 418, 423, 429, 430, 467–474, iii. 54; in 1834–1843, iii. 69–100; the Patronage question, iii. 69, 72, 85, 415; Dr. Chalmers on the 'call,' iii. 70; General Assembly, iii. 71, 72, 80, 84, 85, 91; Convocation of Ministers, iii. 88, 90–98; Free Church and Old Church, iii. 99

CHURCH

Church Bill, Irish, ii. 216, 224, 290
'Church Briefs,' ii. 37
Church Extension, ii. 547, 563
Church Patronage, Ireland, iii. 414; Scotland, iii. 415; England, iii. 416; Peel's Act, iii. 422
Church Reform (England), ii. 283, 284
Cicero, *Pro Plancio*, ii. 106; *Pro Sestio*, iii. 491
Civil List pensions, iii. 436
'Claim of Right,' the, iii. 85, 89, 91
Clare, Lord, ii. 512; iii. 181
Clare election, ii. 47, 99
Clarence, Duke of, i. 489; ii. 42, 76, 100
Clarendon, Lord, Peel's proposed commission on Ireland, iii. 513; Mr. Caird's advice: Stanley's gloomy views, iii. 517; a National University for Ireland, iii. 520, 521
Clearing House, the, iii. 141
Clerk, Sir George, ii. 188; iii. 83
Clive, Lady Harriet, ii. 403
Clive, Lord, i. 329
Clonecurry, Lord, ii. 73
Clonfert, Bishop of, i. 131
Coal strikes, ii. 549
Cobbett, William, i. 356. 407; ii. 213
Cobden, F., ii. 522, 558
Cobden, Richard, ii. 522; obstructs direct taxation, ii. 524; a painful incident, ii. 556; opposes Chelsea Pensioners Bill, ii. 568; votes for income tax, iii. 169; his Sunderland speech, iii. 193; his rancour against Peel, iii. 328–333, 338; second reading of Corn Bill, iii. 343; his advice to Peel, iii. 367; Peel's tribute to, iii. 372
Cochrane, Lord, i. 163, 181
Cochrane, Sir Thomas, ii. 469
Cockburn, Rev. William (Dean of York), i. 197; ii. 95, 109
Cockburn, Sir George, ii. 42; iii. 217
Colchester, Lord (Speaker Abbot), i. 39, 85, 157, 250
Collins, Dr., Dean of Killala, iii. 121
Collis, Mr., iii. 64
Coltman, Judge, iii. 124

CROKER

Combe, Mr., iii. 329, 330
Combination Laws, i. 379; ii. 418
Compton, Lord, i. 80
Comyn, Peter, ii. 146–151
'Confession of Faith' (Scotland), iii. 70
Connor, iii. 37
Conservatism, false and true, iii. 273, 274, 309; origin and progress under Peel, iii. 573, 617
Conyngham, Lady, i. 317, 482, 493; ii. 18
Conyngham, Lord, i. 180; ii. 148, 150
Cook, Dr., iii. 79, 80
Copleston, Rev. Dr., pamphlet on Currency, i. 291, 292; suggested as Primate of Ireland, i. 325; candidate for bishopric of Oxford, i. 445; ii. 23
Corballis, Mr., iii. 174
Corn Laws, ii. 379, 382, 463, 497, 499, 504, 505, 507, 522, 530, 551; iii. 220, 224, 227, 229, 231, 235, 240, 281, 292, 323, 326, 335, 336, 339, 345, 347, 348, 371, 374, 531, 589–604
Corne, Rev. W., i. 252
Coronation Oath, value of, ii. 218
Corporate Reform (Ireland), ii. 322, 324, 345, 434
'Correspondent,' the, i. 114
Corry, John, i. 5
Cosby, ii. 137
Cottenham, Lord, iii. 79, 124
Cotton, Mr., Chairman of East India Company, iii. 11
County Franchise (Ireland), iii. 52, 68, 110
'Courier,' the, i. 114, 234, 236
Cowley, Lord, ii. 268, 400
Cox, Hayward, ii. 229
Cox, Miss, ii. 403
Cramer, Dr., Dean of Carlisle, iii. 419
Craufurd, Mr., ii. 223
Criminal Law Reform, i. 377; ii. 37
Crofton, Sir Edward, i. 141, 151
Croker, J. W., i. 45; on Curwen's Bill, i. 47; Peel and Government patronage, i. 48, 49, 54 *et seq.*; Irish elections, i. 63; in Paris and Brussels with Peel, i. 182; on Peel and O'Connell, i. 195; his peace salary, i. 216; on Peel's retirement from Ireland, i. 268;

Irish boards, i. 280; on leadership of House of Commons, i. 327-331; Lord Liverpool's supposed conversion to popery, i. 371; explanations and letters to Peel, i. 468-474; death of Peel's father, ii. 151; loses his seat, ii. 156; Tory schism, ii. 171; Peel and Reform, ii. 175, 186, 203, 215, 224; on Reform Bill, ii. 181, 184, 204; Peel on counter-associations, ii. 190, 191; a screw loose, ii. 192; Peel's magnanimity, ii. 215; on Peel's Cabinet, ii. 261; Stanley's intentions, ii. 277; on Church Reform, ii. 284; and Brougham, ii. 369, 374, 376, 395, 399, 414, iii. 193; Wellington's opinion of, ii. 376; collecting 'accurate' information, ii. 395; the Queen and Prince Albert, ii. 412; Peel and the elections, ii. 475; Peel's Free Trade convictions, ii. 529; Peel on Charitable Trusts Act, iii. 130; Graham on 'our country gentlemen,' iii. 172; Maynooth Bill, iii. 175; Peel on Lord Clare, iii. 181; Brougham on Adam Smith, iii. 193; Corn Laws: the 'Croker Papers,' quoted, iii. 374; on Wilberforce, iii. 416
Crolly, Archbishop, iii. 126, 132
Crown livings, iii. 422
Cumberland, Duke of, i. 180, 263; ii. 67, 118, 178, 216, 282, 322, 323, 353, 374
Cunningham, Mr., iii. 75, 77
Currency, the, i. 289 *et seq.*
Currie, Hardinge's Chief Secretary, iii. 300
Curwen's Act, i. 38, 39, 47
Curzon, Robert, ii. 197
Custom House, ii. 569
Customs Bill, iii. 270
Cuvier, iii. 433

Dacre, Lord, ii. 183, 184
Dalhousie, Lord, President Board of Trade, iii. 168, 287, 291, 455
Daly, M.P. for Galway, ii. 62, 350
Daly, James, i. 205, 265
Damer, Dawson, iii. 46
D'Arcy, Major, ii. 119

D'Artois, Comte (Charles X.), i. 130; ii. 156-158
D'Aumale, Duc, iii. 393
Davies, Rev. Richard, i. 15, 27
Davy, Sir Humphry, i. 363
Dawnay, Mr., iii. 337
Dawson, Captain, iii. 425
Dawson, Geo. R., Peel's Under-Secretary, i. 22, 303, 392, 482; ii. 53, 156, 192, 260, 483; iii. 431
Day, Mr., ii. 137
Dean, Mr., Chairman of Customs, iii. 294
De Feltre, Duc, i. 175
De Grey, Lady, ii. 389; iii. 362
De Grey, Lord, ii. 266, 389; Viceroy of Ireland, ii. 482, iii. 34; Buckingham's resignation, ii. 520; 'Alarmists,' iii. 36; Dr. Elrington, iii. 38; his relations with Eliot, iii. 40-45, 60; spread of Repeal agitation, iii. 46; Lucas, iii. 53, 55; on Sugden and Eliot, iii. 55; on appointment of Roman Catholics, iii. 56, 61, 103; Howley's preferment, iii. 60; resigns, iii. 112; Repeal magistrates, iii. 187; Peel on Irish Church Patronage, iii. 414; 'Father Mathew,' iii. 424; Peel on creation of baronets, iii. 430
De la Beche, Sir H., iii. 492
De la Warr, Lord, ii. 398; iii. 308
Denham, Captain, i. 183
Denison, Beckett, iii. 325
Denman, Common Serjeant, i. 358
Denman, Lord, iii. 124
Denvir, Bishop, iii. 130
Derby, Reform riots at, ii. 189
De Rothesay, Lord Stuart, ii. 268
Desart, Earl of, i. 46, 193
D'Esterre, Mr., i. 186
Devon, Lord, iii. 64
Devon Commission, iii. 177, 510
Devonshire, Duke of, i. 63
Dhuleep Singh ('The Boy'), iii. 270
Dickinson, Dr., Bishop of Meath, iii. 38
Disraeli, Benjamin, ii. 465; Pittacus' letter ascribed to, ii. 478; his petition to Peel, ii. 486-489; on his party allegiance, iii. 144; sugar duties, iii. 153; his 'open and avowed rebellion,' iii. 154; a malicious imputation, iii. 332; in full-dress uniform, iii. 334; his onslaughts on Peel, iii. 347,

356; his *Lord George Bentinck* quoted, iii. 349; a place for his brother, iii. 424; Peel on his protectionist motion, iii. 522; his motion on agricultural distress, iii. 532; intends to be Prime Minister, iii. 576
Disraeli, Mrs., ii. 486
Dissenters, their influence under Reform Act, ii. 223; marriages of, ii. 275; and Church Reform, ii. 285; a sorry triumph, ii. 560; 'hating all establishments,' iii. 271
Doneraile conspiracy, ii. 137
Donnaly, Mary, ii. 137
Donoughmore, Lord, i. 312
Dorset, Duke of, i. 166
Douay Testament, the, ii. 130
Douglas, Sir Howard, iii. 337
Douglas, Lord, ii. 2
Drainage Act (Scotland), iii. 482
Drainage Commission (Ireland), iii. 228
Drayton Estate, Peel's letter on agriculture to tenants of, iii. 528
Driver, Dr., i. 448
Drummond, Edward, ii. 394; his assassination, ii. 552; iii. 330
Drummond, Henry, i. 196; iii. 522, 531
Drury, Rev. Mark, i. 12, 14, 22, 325, 388; iii. 509
Dryden, John, *Hind and Panther* quoted, ii. 105; *Absalom and Achitophel*, ii. 108
Dublin, Archbishop of, iii. 39, 120
'Dublin Evening Post,' i. 105, 114, 134
'Dublin Journal,' i. 115, 218
Dudley, Lord, ii. 28, 38, 46, 266
Dugdale, Mr., ii. 467
Duigenan, Dr., i. 45, 85, 87
Duncannon, Lord, ii. 254
Duncombe, Mr., ii. 568
Dunlop, Mr., ii. 473; iii. 54, 75
Dunsandle, Lord, iii. 357
Durham, Lord, ii. 242; and Canada, ii. 357, 381; and the Whigs, ii. 369; his character and conduct, ii. 370; Croker's assurance, ii. 395
Dyott, ii. 467

Earle, Mr., Poor Law Commissioner, Dublin, ii. 394

East India Company, ii. 576, 579; and Lord Ellenborough, ii. 595, iii. 10–22; sanction Hardinge's appointment, iii. 26; and Sir C. Napier, iii. 272
East Indies, ii. 503
Easthope, Sir J., iii. 485
Eastlake, Sir C. L., ii. 510
Ecclesiastical Commission, ii. 276, 283, 411, 547; Peel's gift to, ii. 565, 566
Eden, A., iii. 357
Edgar, Rev. Dr., iii. 454
Edgeworth, Miss, ii. 331
'Edinburgh Courant,' ii. 473
'Edinburgh Evening Post,' ii. 473
'Edinburgh Review,' iii. 512
Education (Ireland), ii. 116, 127–131, iii. 35, 115, 118–120; (England and Wales), ii. 419, 533, 541, 561
Egerton, Lord Francis (afterwards Earl of Ellesmere), ii. 277, 303, 336, 359, 451, 510; iii. 322, 356
Egypt, ii. 38; iii. 30, 259
Elbing Letter, the, iii. 459, 460
Eldon, Lord, i. 127, 335, 360, 451, 460, 488; ii. 4, 32, 71, 76
Eliot, Lord. *See* St. Germans, Earl
Ellenborough, Lord, ii. 29, 81, 374; Peel's Cabinet, ii. 392; congratulates Peel, ii. 400; Board of Control, ii. 482; Wellington on defence of India, ii. 536; Governor-General of India, ii. 575–592, iii. 1; disaster in Afghanistan, ii. 581; orders for evacuation, ii. 586, 593; his hasty judgment, ii. 587; his *Indian Administration*, cited, ii. 590; Fitzgerald on, *ibid.*; an unfortunate order, ii. 593; his optimism, ii. 594; Peel on, ii. 596; his ultimatum to Akbar, ii. 597; the Somnauth Gates, ii. 598, 599; Wellington's and Peel's congratulations, ii. 599, 600; the Simla Proclamation, ii. 601; punishes the Scinde Ameers, iii. 2, 7; claims support, iii. 2–5; Peel on Indian and Home questions, iii. 7, 8; the East India Company's censure, iii. 10–22 *passim*; indicates his Scinde policy, iii. 14; his complaints, iii. 15, 17, 18, 20; appeals to the Queen, iii. 16; his thirst for mili-

ELLENBOROUGH
tary command, iii. 20; recalled, iii. 22; Peel on Governor-General Hardinge, iii. 27; the Queen's approval, iii. 28, 32; his welcome to Hardinge, iii. 29; a forecast of events in India, iii. 258; farewell to India, iii. 260; his vindication, iii. 262; his return, iii. 264, 269; attacks Board of Control, iii. 265; First Lord of the Admiralty, iii. 288, 291, 412; on Hardinge's Sikh campaign, iii. 302; repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 504; on Gough, iii. 505
Ellesmere, Earl. *See* Egerton, Lord Francis
Ellice, Mr., ii. 216; iii. 524
Elrington, Dr., iii. 36, 38
Emancipation Act, iii. 50
Encumbered Estates Act, iii. 517
England, General, ii. 591
Enniskillen, Lord, ii. 119, 389; iii. 34, 186
Erne, Lord, iii. 181, 186
Espartero, iii. 391
Estcourt, Mr., iii. 175
Evans, Mr., M.P. for Westminster, iii. 308
Everett, Mr., ii. 333
Exeter, Lord, iii. 333

FACTORY BILL, i. 259 *et seq.*, ii. 549, 560; Act (1844), iii. 147
Faraday, Professor, iii. 447
Farnborough, Lord, ii. 142
Farnham, Lord, i. 231; iii. 68
Ferdinand Philippe, Duke of Orleans, ii. 352, 353
Ferrand, Mr., iii. 153
Ffrench, Lord, iii. 50, 51
Finance, ii. 38, 411–509, 524; policy of deficits, ii. 411, 489, 498; income tax, ii. 490, 501–503. 507, 522, 573, iii. 170, 171, 270; retrenchment, ii. 492; the Revenue Departments, ii. 495; revision of tariff, ii. 496, iii. 169. 170, 270; revision of Corn Law, ii. 499; property tax, ii. 499-502, 506; house tax, ii. 503, 507; Gladstone's capacity for, ii. 512; Bank Charter Act, iii. 134–143; reduction of interest on Consols, iii. 147; the Gold Standard (Peel's Act), iii. 568–570

FREMANTLE
Fine Arts Commission, ii. 509
Fingall, Lord, i. 118, 373
Finlay, Kirkman, i. 261
Fisheries (Ireland), iii. 229
Fitzgerald, Hon. W. V., i. 64, 110
Fitzgerald, Lord, ii. 268; Board of Control, ii. 578, 580, 584, 590; on Ellenborough's Afghan policy, ii. 593; a peacemaker, ii. 595; Nott and Pollock have set all right, ii. 597; tenders resignation, iii. 2; his death, iii. 6
Fitzgerald, Mr., ii. 47
Fitzwilliam, Lord, ii. 409
Fletcher, Judge, i. 153, 214, 221
Flint, Sir C., i. 96
Flood, Sir F., i. 145, 164, 210, 283
Follett, Mr., iii. 67, 125, 126
Forbes, Professor, iii. 441, 445
Forester, Lord, iii. 308
Foster, Colonel, i. 43
Foster, J. Leslie, i. 87, 89, 246, 344; priests and Irish education, i. 392, ii. 127, 129; Louth election, i. 409; Catholic Emancipation, i. 423
France, revolution in, ii. 156; state of, ii. 449; and the peace of Europe, ii. 454, 462; her irritation, ii. 455; strained relations with, ii. 481; Protestant Church of, iii. 70; hostile to England, iii. 195; warlike demonstrations, iii. 200; in Algeria, iii. 314; *entente cordiale* with, iii. 390–412; and Palmerston's coercion of Greece, iii. 541; National Assembly on Peel's death, iii. 546
Franchise Bill (Ireland), iii. 52, 68, 110
Free Trade, ii. 507, iii. 579–581; Peel's views on, ii. 529, iii. 371, 522; Peel's second and third Budgets, iii. 169, 294, 583; the Elbing Letter, iii. 459; reaction against, iii. 525; history of, iii. 584; the question of hostile tariffs, iii. 586
Freeholders, forty-shilling, i. 79, 222, 424
Fremantle, Sir Thomas, ii. 428, 531; Secretary at War, iii. 113; Chief Secretary, Ireland, iii. 178, 185; on report of Drainage Commission, iii. 228; Irish Fisheries, iii. 229; Peel's fare-

well to the Queen, iii. 255; Peel's resumption of office, iii. 290; Mr. Boyd, M.P. for Coleraine, iii. 425
Freshfield, J. W., ii. 262, 482

Gaisford, Dean, i. 17, 362; iii. 419, 420
Galway, state of, ii. 62–64
Game Laws, iii. 179
Garrick, David, his compliment to Lord Camden, ii. 476
Gascoigne, General, iii. 499
Gaskell, Milnes, iii. 334, 427
General Assembly (Scotland), iii. 71, 72, 80, 84, 85, 90–98
George III., i. 67
George IV., on Catholic question, i. 70, 106, 107, 313, 349, 370, 458; Peel, i. 102, 334, 457; on peace with France, i. 127; treatment of Queen, i. 297; Canning, i. 303, 335, 370, 456; plot to poison, i. 315; prerogative of mercy, i. 315–317; Londonderry's death, i. 320; 'Sunday Times,' i. 336 *et seq.*; Colonel Stephenson, i. 339, 340; ministerial patronage, 358; distrust of Wellesley and Canning, i. 370; address from Roman Catholic Irish noblemen, i. 373; Royal Society medals, i. 387; command-in-chief of army, i. 435; Oxford bishopric, i. 444; Lord Liverpool's illness, i. 449; on Lord Liverpool's successor, i. 456 *et seq.*; appoints Canning Prime Minister, i. 463; against concession to Catholics, ii. 1; his attitude towards Wellington and Peel after Canning's death, ii. 2–7; offers Wellington command-in-chief, ii. 7; makes Herries Finance Minister, ii. 10, 22; a perfect despot, ii. 18; sends for Wellington, ii. 26; his views on Wellington's Cabinet, ii. 29; Duke of Clarence, ii. 42; his efforts for Hunton, ii. 43; recalls Lord Anglesey, ii. 66; opposes Roman Catholic Relief, ii. 76; a qualified consent, ii. 82; meditates Royal Academy reform, ii. 142; his failing health, ii. 145; Peter Comyn's case, ii. 147–151; his illness, ii. 149, 152; and death, ii. 153
Gérard, General, ii. 156
Germany, Peel's sympathy with her aspirations, iii. 505, 506; the King's comments, iii. 507
Ghuznee, ii. 594, 597, 598
Gibraltar, defence of, iii. 199
Gillespie, Dr., iii. 71
Gladstone, Sir John, ii. 267; created baronet by Peel, iii. 434
Gladstone, W. E., 'there were two Peels,' ii. 209, iii. 571; Colonial Office, ii. 266, 267; on O'Connell's reception at Liverpool, ii. 326; Board of Trade, ii. 482, iii. 6; Revenue Commissioner, ii. 495; Peel on Provision Laws, ii. 497; on finance, ii. 498; in favour of direct taxation, ii. 502; proposed house tax, ii. 503; on Corn Laws, ii. 504, 520, 525; correspondence with Peel—finance and Church matters, ii. 512–517; his scruples about Maynooth, iii. 107; disagrees with Graham, iii. 110; resigns Board of Trade on Maynooth question, iii. 160, 163–169; his loss felt in House of Commons, iii. 269; Colonial Secretary, iii. 285, 291; consults Stanley, iii. 287; a plea for Lord Lyttelton, iii. 292; without a seat, iii. 308, 338, 343; on America's reception of Peel's Corn Bill, iii. 374; Peel's reply to his comments on Church Patronage, iii. 418; creation of peers, iii. 426; Peel's offer of baronetcy to his father, iii. 434; Wordsworth's pension, iii. 437, 438; Tennyson, iii. 440, 441; his reciprocity views (Navigation Laws), iii. 503; Peel's fatal accident, iii. 544; his tribute to Peel in House of Commons, iii. 546; his letter to Lady Peel, iii. 560; Peel's accurate forecast, iii. 577
Glasgow University, Peel Lord Rector of, ii. 327
Gleig, Rev. G. R., Chaplain-General of the Army, ii. 45
Glenelg, Lord, ii. 358
Glengall, Lord, iii. 37
'Globe,' the, iii. 535, 539

GLOUCESTER

Gloucester, Duchess of, ii. 179, 414
Gloucester, Duke of, ii. 179
Goadby, Mr., iii. 446
Goderich, Lord (Hon. F. Robinson), i. 25, 56, 61, 62, 476; Premier, ii. 3; Wellington and the command-in-chief, ii. 7; and Herries, ii. 11; with the King, ii. 11, 13; fall of his ministry, ii. 26
Going, Mr., ii. 137
Golab Singh, iii. 305, 312, 313, 474
Gold Standard, the (Peel's Act), iii. 568–570
Gordon, Dr., iii. 75, 87
Gordon, Hon. W., iii. 336
Gordon, Sir Arthur, afterwards Lord Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, ii. 166; iii. 73, 548
Gordon, Sir Robert, ii. 268; iii. 363
Gosford, Lord, ii. 363
Gough, Lord (Sir Hugh), iii. 23, 24. 257, 297–300, 308; Hardinge's support of, iii. 310; traduced: Peel's defence of, iii. 505
Goulburn, Henry, i. 60, 282; Irish Chief Secretary, i. 302; Peel and the Home Office, i. 306; Ireland and yeomanry, i. 352; at issue with Wellesley, i. 354; Orangemen, i. 355; Irish societies, i. 390; Catholic question, i. 416; priests, i. 418; military force in Ireland, i. 421; troops for Portugal, i. 427; Irish law officers and Catholic Association, i. 429, 431; on Herries and the Whigs, ii. 22; Chancellor of Exchequer, ii. 29, 38, 482; Dawson's speech, ii. 53; 'give me credit for honesty,' ii. 89; Metropolitan Police Bill, ii. 114; Peel on Scotch hardihood, ii. 141; death of Peel's father, ii. 151; an overture from Old Tories, ii. 170; Peel on Reform, ii. 187, 195; Hildyard's Bill, ii. 196; Peel on Conservative policy, ii. 212; the Coronation Oath, ii. 218; the Address, ii. 224; the Irish Church, ii. 243; the Tithe Bill, ii. 248; Home Office, ii. 264, 267; promotions to the Bench, ii. 272, 273; Church Reform, ii. 283; Municipal Reform, ii. 314; the

GRAHAM

approaching session, ii. 318; Molesworth's motion, ii. 367; in Peel's Cabinet, ii. 392; Peel's reply to his criticisms, ii. 400; Peel on policy of deficits, ii. 411; three private letters, ii. 429; Peel's son William, ii. 452; Peel on electioneering, ii. 466; Peel on the Government, ii. 479; income tax, ii. 490; Peel on the Revenue Departments, ii. 495, 569; Peel on import duties, ii. 509; tax on clerical incomes, ii. 550; threatened, ii. 559; Peel's gift to Ecclesiastical Commissioners, ii. 567; the City election, ii. 571 reduction of interest on Consols, iii. 147; Maynooth Bill, iii. 175; Peel on railway speculation, iii. 188; on state of naval arsenals, iii. 196; potato famine in Ireland, iii. 225, 461; third Free Trade Budget, iii. 294; on Wilberforce, iii. 416; Peel on baronetage, iii. 430; 'the Irish expenditure will be frightful,' iii. 469
Gower, Lord Francis, Irish Chief Secretary, ii. 50, 52, 64, 69, 73, 82, 84; Peel's Irish measures, ii. 115, 122–125, 133–139; the flowing tide, ii. 166
Graham, Sir James, Whig overtures, ii. 163, 165; resigns, ii. 247; Peel's overtures to, ii. 257, 259; a Peelite, ii. 289, 298; Corporate Relief, ii. 312, 337; deprecates dissolution, ii. 322; on Reform, ii. 329; loses seat for Cumberland, ii. 348; his gloomy views, ii. 377; Peel's Cabinet, ii. 392; the Bedchamber question, ii. 398; congratulates Peel, ii. 400; his plan of campaign, ii. 421–423; on Wellington's forecast, ii. 427, 428; on differences between Wellington and Peel, ii. 438, 442; topics for consideration, ii. 453; Home Secretary, ii. 482, iii. 23; on ways and means, ii. 492; committee on averages, ii. 505; income tax *v.* house tax, ii. 507; Ashburton's memorandum, ii. 508; Peel on protection, ii. 528; Peel on education, ii. 533; Queen's visit to Scotland, ii. 539, 542,

GRAHAM

544; Chartist riots in Lancashire, ii. 546; Church extension, ii. 548, 550; Corn Laws, ii. 551; Wesleyans, ii. 560; military expenditure, ii. 572; rescue of the Cabul captives, ii. 597; Scinde, iii. 8; Ellenborough and the East India Company, iii. 11, 13; Peel on Dr. Elrington, iii. 38; de Grey *v.* Eliot, iii. 40, 43; Sugden, iii. 51; an embarrassing question, iii. 52; conciliation to Catholics, iii. 60; Irish law officers, iii. 62; Wellington and Ireland, iii. 63, 190; Irish peasantry, iii. 64; anxious thoughts on Ireland, iii. 65; payment of priests, iii. 67; O'Connell's prosecution, iii. 68; Scottish Church question, ii. 77, 88, 89; the Strathbogie Presbytery, iii. 82; reply to the Moderator of the General Assembly, iii. 90, 93; Roman Catholic education in Ireland, iii. 110; O'Connell convicted, iii. 125; Peel on the Charitable Trusts Act, iii. 127–129; Disraeli's 'open and avowed rebellion,' iii. 154; Gladstone's retirement from Board of Trade, iii. 164, 166; our country gentlemen out of humour, iii. 172; Ireland in 1845, iii. 187; on Heytesbury, iii. 188; on national defence, iii. 201; small arms and accoutrements, iii. 218; failure of potato crop in Ireland, iii. 223, 226; on proposed repeal of Corn Laws, iii. 224, 345; supports Peel, iii. 229; Stanley's dissent, iii. 231, 236; interview with Russell, iii. 244; on Hardinge's report to the Queen, iii. 266; on Stanley and Gladstone, iii. 286; Cobden's rancour, iii. 328; Villiers on, iii. 352; not going to Upper House, iii. 370; Peel's tribute to, iii. 376, 490; on Bagot's policy in Canada, iii. 386; France, iii. 390; on Aberdeen's wish to resign, iii. 407; Scottish Church patronage, iii. 415; Disraeli's impudence, iii. 424; Brougham's excitement, iii. 454; Russell's new Cabinet, iii. 455; Bradford's tribute to Peel, iii. 457; his

GRENVILLE

attachment to Peel, iii. 458; effects of settlement of Corn and Sugar questions, iii. 462; Irish farmers, iii. 463; Whig measures for Ireland, iii. 464, 470; alarming state of Ireland, iii. 467; on Russell, iii. 468; Peel's policy triumphant, iii. 470; the Tamworth address, iii. 487; on result of the elections, iii. 489; a forecast, iii. 491; Londonderry's project of Conservative reorganisation, iii. 495, 502; history of Cabinet Councils, iii. 496–499; Russell's overtures to, iii. 500; Gladstone's reciprocity views, iii. 503; Mr. Caird on Irish agriculture, iii. 518; a National University for Ireland, iii. 520; Drummond's motion, iii. 522; Palmerston and Russell, iii. 524; reaction against Free Trade, iii. 525; a possible combination, iii. 527; Peel's disinterestedness, iii. 534; Palmerston and Aberdeen, iii. 536, 540; Peel's last letter to, iii. 538; Aberdeen's soreness, iii. 540; at Peel's deathbed, iii. 544; Prince Albert's letter on Peel's death to, iii. 548; his letter to Lady Peel, iii. 557

Granby, Lord, iii. 335, 463, 503

Grand Canal Company, i. 98

Grand Duke of Saxony, Charles Alexander, iii. 549

Grand Jury Laws (Ireland), ii. 116

Grant, Sir Alexander ('The Chin'), ii. 10, 13, 19, 20, 165

Grant, Charles, i. 267; ii. 28, 46, 165

Grattan, i. 75, 140, 155, 246

Grattan's Committee and Bill, i. 73–85; ii. 105

Greece, and Turkey, ii. 34

Greeks, after Navarino, ii. 38

Greene, Mr., iii. 43

Gregory, Mr., Under-Secretary for Ireland, i. 36, 77, 114, 121, 162; Peel and O'Connell, i. 189; Insurrection Act, i. 199; Pastorini's Prophecy, i. 340; Peel's explanations, ii. 32, 86; his surprise and dismay, ii. 88; Peel's Police Bill, ii. 114

Gregson, Mr., ii. 37, 39, 267

Grenville, Lord, i. 247; ii. 227, 406

GRESLEY

Gresley, Mr., ii. 96
Greville's Memoirs, quoted, ii. 211, 248, 458; iii. 302, 534, 538
Grey, Lord, ii. 27; Premier, ii. 170, 175; and Duke of Cumberland, ii. 178; wishes to dissolve, ii. 182, 236; on political unions, ii. 192; resigns, ii. 203, 248; loud in praise of Peel, 215; Peel *v.*, ii. 258; Wellington on, ii. 343; Wellington's question, ii. 375; Ministers and Court appointments, ii. 406; his objection to Palmerston, iii. 284; no part in a Whig Government, iii. 346; Princess Lieven on, iii. 360; Cabinet Minutes, iii. 497–499; Frederick Peel's maiden speech, iii. 508
Guizot, M., iii. 175, 201, 390–392, 394, 395, 400, 404, 405, 406, 409, 455, 456, 552

HADDINGTON, Lord, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, ii. 285; Admiralty, ii. 482; Scottish Church question, iii. 80; naval defence, iii. 196, 207, 217; state of the Royal yacht, iii. 200; merchant steamships, iii. 212; Privy Seal, iii. 291; Peel on Boundary question, iii. 387
Halford, Sir Henry, ii. 145, 153, 178
Hall, Dr., Dean of Christ Church, Oxon., i. 253
Hallam, Henry, ii. 173; declines Peel's offer of baronetcy, iii. 432; grants Peel's request for portrait, iii. 433; his appeal for Tennyson, iii. 439–441
Hamilton, Lord Archibald, ii. 329
Hamilton, Sir Edward, iii. 426
Hamilton, Sir William, Astronomer Royal, iii. 445, 447
Hanover, King of, ii. 352, 353
Hansard's Debates, ii. 399; iii. 327, 378
Hardinge, Lady Emily, iii. 32, 304
Hardinge, Lord (Sir Henry), on Goderich's Cabinet, ii. 3; Irish Chief Secretary, ii. 159, 160, 264, 286; Peel's second, ii. 183, 350; at Drayton Manor, ii. 188; in Wellington's confidence, ii. 231, 240; municipal reform, ii. 312,

HARGREAVES

319; Wellington and Peel, ii. 321; war to the knife between Melbourne and Durham, ii. 368; in Peel's Cabinet, ii. 392; election prospects, ii. 467; Secretary at War, ii. 482; Lord Londonderry, ii. 484; plan for enrolment of pensioners, ii. 546, 574; declines command in India, ii. 585, 588; Governor-General of India, iii. 24–28, 256–282; Ellenborough's welcome to, iii. 29; military demands of Bombay Government, iii. 197; G.C.B., iii. 257; his Punjab policy, iii. 260, 263, 475; on Ellenborough, iii. 260; Peel on Ellenborough's return to England, iii. 264; the Sikhs, iii. 266, 267, 270, 274, 277–279, 296, 305; his report to the Queen, iii. 266; his gratitude to Her Majesty, iii. 273; Peel counsels him to remain, iii. 281; Peel's resignation and resumption of office, iii. 295; on Gough, iii. 297, 300, 310, 314; Ferozpore, iii. 299; his wishes about Napier, iii. 299, 300; Peel's congratulations, iii. 301; critics at home—Ellenborough, Greville, Auckland, iii. 302, 303; his *Life*, quoted, iii. 302; the thanks of Parliament, iii. 303; peace overtures, iii. 304; Sobraon: Sikh submission, iii. 305; honours for, iii. 307; home news from Peel, iii. 308; Lahore occupied, iii. 310; annexation impossible, iii. 312; summary of results, iii. 315; declines Ordnance Department, iii. 315, 320; his gratitude to Peel, iii. 316, 319; an Annuity for, iii. 354, 355; correspondence with Peel, iii. 471–476; Russell's friendly message, iii. 472; Cashmere insurrection over, iii. 474; the Punjab, iii. 475; for repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 504; at Peel's deathbed, iii. 544
Hardinge, Chas. Stewart (afterwards Lord Hardinge), iii. 299
Hardinge, Lt.-General Sir Arthur E., iii. 299
Hardwicke, Lord, ii. 520, 528; iii. 200, 335
Hare's Sermons, ii. 446
Hargreaves, Rev. James, i. 10, 26

HARROWBY

Harrowby, Lord, i. 247; ii. 193, 198, 199, 204; iii. 505
Hart, Lord Chancellor, ii. 74
Hartismere, Lord, iii. 337
Hastings, Lord, i. 300, 303
Hastings, Sir Thomas, iii. 484
Hatherton, Lord, i. 382–384
Hawkins, Cæsar, iii. 545
Haworth, Elizabeth, Peel's grandmother, i. 3
Haworth, Miss Jane, *Memoir of the Peel Family*, i. 1–6; Peel's parents and home life, i. 9
Haworth, Peel and Yates introduced calico printing into Lancashire, i. 4, 5
Hawthorne, Mr., i. 26, 36, 50, 53
Haydon, B. R., iii. 448, 449, 458
Head, Sir Francis, ii. 409
Hemans, Mrs., ii. 306
Henley, Dowager Lady, i. 10
Henniker, Lord (afterwards Lord Hartismere), iii. 337
Henry VIII. and the Reformation, ii. 155
Henry, Dr., iii. 522
Herbert, Sidney, Secretary to Admiralty, ii. 482, iii. 67; Secretary at War, iii. 168; declines Irish Chief Secretaryship, iii. 178; his memorandum on national defence, iii. 197, 217; supports Peel (Corn Laws), iii. 229; promises well as a debater, iii. 269; on Lord George Bentinck's conversion, iii. 355; declines Russell's overtures, iii. 455; M.P. for Wilts, iii. 488; on diplomatic relations with Rome, iii. 493; Peel's Drayton letter, iii. 531
Herries, John C., Finance Minister, ii. 10, 22; his interview with the King, ii. 11; the King's favour, ii. 18; Whigs object to, ii. 20; *v.* Huskisson, ii. 26; Duchy of Lancaster, ii. 29; Peel's guest, ii. 192; on Lord Wharncliffe's overtures, ii. 194; out of Parliament, ii. 482, 483; consulted by Peel on finance, ii. 498; in favour of property tax, ii. 506; on Ireland and the income tax, ii. 523
Herschel, Sir John, iii. 444
Hertford, Lord, i. 268, 473; ii. 181
Hewett, Sir George, i. 150, 176, 211

HORNER

Heytesbury, Lord, ii. 575; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, iii. 113; national education in Ireland, iii. 115, 120; trial by jury, iii. 118; a Catholic Clerk of the Crown, iii. 119; deaneries of Killala and Limerick, iii. 121; federalism, iii. 123; Mr. Butt, *ibid.*; Charitable Trusts Act, iii. 126, 128; memorial of Roman Catholic archbishops &c., iii. 127; Dr. Crolly, iii. 128; Bishop Denvir, iii. 130; a boon to Roman Catholics, iii. 131; O'Connell's embarrassment, iii. 132; the Queen's and Prince Albert's approval, iii. 133; Eliot's successor, iii. 178; Maynooth Bill, iii. 179; on Roman Catholic appointments, iii. 184, 185; McKenna, iii. 186; failure of potato crop, iii. 224, 226; Peel on Russell, iii. 288; Grey's and Cobden's recklessness, iii. 290; Peel's bold front, iii. 341; Irish jobs, iii. 425; the Tamworth address, iii. 487
'Hibernian Journal,' i. 114
Hildyard, Mr., ii. 196
Hill, Sir George, i. 26, 412, 424
Hill, Lord, ii. 535
Hillsborough, Lord, iii. 425
Hippisley, Sir John, i. 83, 140
Hobhouse, Right Hon. Henry, i. 305, 334, 489; ii. 35, 152, 275, 282, 484, 563; iii. 430
Hobhouse, John Cam (afterwards Lord Broughton), ii. 182
Hobhouse, Sir John, ii. 335; iii. 472
Hodgson, Dr., iii. 545
Hodson, Dr., i. 24
Hogg, James, ii. 309
Holland, Reformed Church of, iii. 70
Holland, Dr., ii. 192
Holland, Lord, i. 329; ii. 23, 26, 377; iii. 498
Holmes, Mr., ii. 11, 13, 191, 195, 216
Hood, Mrs., iii. 443
Hood, Thomas, iii. 442–444
Hope, Charles, Lord Justice Clerk, Scotland, ii. 472; iii. 75, 76, 428
Hope, George, ii. 394; iii. 292
Hope, Lord President, i. 399
Horner, Leonard, i. 290, 295, 379, 481; ii. 545, 549

Hotham, Lord, ii. 89–91
House tax, ii. 503, 507
Howe, Lord, ii. 511
Howick, Lady, ii. 360
Howick, Lord, ii. 360; iii. 221
Howley, Dr., Archbishop of Canterbury, ii. 77, 217, 249, 276, 284, 550, 562, 568; iii. 419, 421
Howley, Mr., Third Sergeant, Ireland, iii. 54, 60
Hudson, Mr., ii. 251, 255
Hulton, W., i. 486; ii. 94, 262, 266
Humboldt, his *Plantæ Equinoctiales* dedicated to R. Brown, iii. 446
Hume, Joseph, i. 379; on English intolerance, ii. 43; called to account by Peel, ii. 291, 292; proposed motion on Canada, ii. 358; further reform, ii. 385; opposes Chelsea Pensioners Bill, ii. 568; the Crown and East India Company, iii. 31; on Ellenborough's recall, iii. 269; on Peel's retirement, iii. 453
Hume, Dr., ii. 412
Hunton, the Quaker, ii. 42
Huskisson, Mr. i. 327–329, 336, 396; ii. 20, 23–26, 28, 46, 162; iii. 220

Ibrahim Pasha, ii. 38
Import duties, repeal of, ii. 509
Income tax, ii. 503, 507, 522, 573; Bill, iii. 170, 171, 270, 581
India, Governors-General of, ii. 575; in 1844–1846, iii. 256–282, 295
Inge, Mr., ii. 96
Ingestre, Mr., ii. 467
Inglis, Sir Robert, ii. 106, 563; iii. 176, 177, 343
Innes, A. Taylor, *The Law of Creeds in Scotland*, iii. 98, 100
Inquisition, Spanish, ii. 43
Insurrection Act (Ireland), i. 143 *et seq.*, 178, 199, 205, 495, 503; ii. 135
Ireland, Peel Chief Secretary, i. 35; Viceroy and Castle staff, *ibid.*; Castle patronage, i. 50 *et seq.*, 101, 160–163; Catholic question, 66 *et seq.*; Grattan's Committee and Bill, i. 73–85, ii. 105; Protestant ascendency, i. 87; Education Bill, i. 87–93; administration and officials, i. 94, 95–99; Pension Fund, i. 100;

policy of Lord Whitworth, i. 105; murderous outrages, i. 120, 131, 199, 231, 302; naval service, i. 113; the press, i. 114–118; Catholic Board, i. 118, 134 *et seq.*; lawlessness and disaffection, i. 122 *et seq.*; Orangemen, i. 122, 158, 159, 355, 368; Catholic bishops, i. 123; soldiers as police, i. 132 *et seq.*; Kilkenny resolutions, i. 135; Police Act: Insurrection Act, i. 143–152, 178, 199, 205, 206, ii. 135; police appointments, i. 151, 152; Judge Fletcher's charge, i. 153; special magistrates, i. 162; the 'Lords Justices,' i. 166; effects of peace on price of corn, i. 167; militia embodied, i. 178; Catholic petition, i. 184, 185, 188; perjury and crime, i. 206; parliamentary criticism, i. 207; retrenchment and reform, i. 208; military estimates, i. 208, 217; Medical Board, i. 209; sinecures, i. 212; inquiry into state of, i. 213–223; rigid economy, i. 218; magistracy, i. 218, 221; affray at Roscrea, i. 223; Catholic schism, i. 225; Vice-Treasurer for, i. 227 state of, i. 228, 232 *et seq.*; 236, 257, 416 *et seq.*; Englishmen must govern, i. 229; increase of emigration, i. 233; impending famine, i. 239–245; distillation and export of potatoes, i. 240 *et seq.*; Irish members and Peel, i. 255; Peel's farewell to, i. 265 *et seq.*; elections, i. 269; patronage, i. 270; payments for political support, i. 273; method of selecting officials, i. 277 *et seq.*; practice of selling public offices, i. 283; secret societies, i. 340, 390; Pastorini's Prophecy, i. 340; under Lord Wellesley, i. 342; religious education, i. 342; Roman Catholic Association, i. 345 *et seq.*, 357, 410, 416, 426, 428–431; Wellington's fears of civil war, i. 348, yeomanry, i. 352; Catholic Convention: State payment of Catholic clergy, i. 369; Catholic Relief Bill, i. 372; proceedings at Derry, i. 391, 392; Catholic

prelates and education, i. 393; Waterford and Louth elections, i. 409 *et seq.*; religious animosities, Roman Catholic priests, i. 409, 410, 417 *et seq.*; Protestant processions, i. 412; military forces in, i. 420, 428; effects of Clare election, ii. 48; concession to (?), ii. 50; proposed Bills for, ii. 84; Sir W. Scott on, ii. 97; Suppression Bill, ii. 103; Disfranchisement Bill, ii. 104; Poor Laws, ii. 116, 162, 345, iii. 502; Grand Jury, ii. 116; iii. 116, 272; education, ii. 116, iii. 35, 115, 118–120; police, ii. 121, iii. 61; Peel's first remedy, ii. 122; insurrection in, ii. 125, 159; more tranquil, ii. 143; repeal of Union, ii. 161; Church Bill, ii. 216, 224, 290, 293; Tithe Bill, ii. 220, 299–301, 345; corporate reform, ii. 322, 324, 325; Municipal Bill, ii. 336–347, 434, 438, 440, 445; Lords' Select Committee, ii. 383, 386; peerage in, ii. 413; Wellington on, ii. 418, iii. 63, 190; repeal agitation, ii. 453. iii. 34, 46, 47, 49; Registration Bill, ii. 455, 572, iii. 52; and the income tax, ii. 523; in 1841-1843. iii. 34-68; franchise, iii. 52, 68, 110; weakness of law officers, iii. 62; in 1844, iii. 101–133; trial by jury in, iii. 116, 124; Charitable Trusts Act, iii. 126–133; Maynooth Bill, iii. 173–176, 612; Academical Institutions Bill, iii. 176; Tenants' Compensation Bill, iii. 177; monster meetings in, iii. 190; failure of potato crop, iii. 223–229, 280, 461; Drainage Commission, iii. 228; fisheries, iii. 229; Protection of Life Bill, iii. 344, 348, 349, 351, 614; Assassination Bill, iii. 367; Church patronage in, iii. 414; Whig Government of, iii. 461–470, 501; Peel on state of, iii. 476; famine in, iii. 481, 502; seed corn for, iii. 502; Whigs and the Habeas Corpus Act, iii. 501; Peel's proposals (1849), iii. 513; Russell's policy, iii. 511; its agriculture, iii. 517; Encumbered Estates Act, *ibid.*; National University for, iii. 519–521; a loud cry for Protection, iii. 525, 590; the rulers of, iii. 609

Jackson, Rev. Cyril, Dean of Christ Church, Oxon., i. 17; advice to Peel, i, 28, 29; on Peel's election for Oxford, i. 251
Jackson, Solicitor-General (Ireland), iii. 39
Jamaica, ii. 388, 401; Lord Clare Governor of, ii. 512
James, Rev. J. T., i. 403–405
James, Sir Walter, iii. 308
Jameson, Mrs., iii. 511
Jarnac, Count, iii. 373, 495
Jefferson, ii. 334
Jenkinson, Cecil, ii. 34
Jenkyns, Dr., Master of Balliol, i. 408; ii. 45; Dean of Wells, iii. 420
Jews' Declaration Bill, iii. 508
Jews' Relief Bill, ii. 145
Jocelyn, Lord, iii. 337, 344, 464
Jones, Colonel, ii. 178
Joyce, Mr., Clerk of the Crown (Ireland), iii. 119
Jullundhur Doab, iii. 305, 313

Kane, Sir Robert, iii. 520
Karslake, E. K., his lines on Peel, iii. 622
Keith, Lord, i. 182
Kemble, ii. 223
Kennedy, Bishop, iii. 129, 130
Kent, Duchess of, iii. 547
Kenyon, Lord, ii. 295; iii. 271
Key, Sir John, ii. 216
Khyber Pass, ii. 586
Kielmansegge, Baron, ii. 570
Kildare, Bishop of, ii. 286
Kildare conspiracy, i. 149
Kildare Street Society, ii. 127, 130; iii. 39
Kilkenny resolutions, i. 116, 135
King, Charles, President of Columbia College, i. 13
King's College, Cambridge, ii. 285
Knatchbull, Sir Edward, ii. 358, 505
Knighton, Sir William, i. 319, 435, 453; ii. 4, 11, 151
Knowles, Sheridan, iii. 439

La Fayette, ii. 156
La Fitte, ii. 156
Labouchere, iii. 466
Labour Rate Act, iii. 465
Lahore, iii. 261, 263, 277; occupied, iii. 310–313; treaty of, iii. 472
Lamb, W. *See* Melbourne, Lord
Lambert, Mr., iii. 534
Lansdowne, Lord, ii. 3, 5, 12, 21, 35, 247, 255; iii. 241, 245–251, 253, 498
Law, Mr., iii. 176
Lawless, ii. 70, 160
Lawrence, Sir T., ii. 100, 142
Lees, Sir Harcourt, i. 355
Lefevre, G. Shaw-, ii. 476; Speaker, ii. 477; his *Peel and O'Connell*, quoted, iii. 177
Legge, Bishop of Oxford, i. 438 *et seq.*
Lennox, Lord Arthur, iii. 337
Leopold I., King of the Belgians, ii. 402, 415, 554; iii. 172, 477, 479, 480, 547
Lethbridge, Sir Thomas, iii. 340
Lewis, Mr., iii. 491
Leyden, Mr., i. 106
'Lichfield House Compact,' ii. 290, 364
Liddell, Dean, anecdote of Peel, i. 19
Lidwill, i. 190 *et seq.*; duel with Sir C. Saxton, i. 201
Lieven, Princess, iii. 175, 360, 373, 398, 456, 489, 553
Lifford, Lord, iii. 187
Limerick, Bishop of, ii. 96
Limerick, Dean of, iii. 121
Limerick, Lord, i. 214
Lincoln, Lord, ii. 482; iii. 168, 178, 231, 269, 308, 338, 455; Whig Government in Ireland, iii. 461–463, 465, 469; Scotch Puritan scruples, iii. 488, 489; repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 503
Lindley, Professor, iii. 226, 280, 522
Lindsay, Lieut.-Colonel, ii. 261
Lingard, Dr., ii. 136
List, Dr. (the Elbing Letter), iii. 459, 460
Littlehales, Sir Edward B., i. 53, 97, 227
Littler, Sir John, iii. 298, 299
Littleton, Mr., ii. 23-25, 163, 167, 248

Liverpool, Lord, Prime Minister, i. 30, 32; appoints Peel Irish Chief Secretary, i. 33; intimacy with Peel, i. 36 *et seq.*; on Peninsular War, i. 37; Curwen's Bill, i. 38 *et seq.*; peerages and votes, i. 41, 42; parties in Parliament, i. 44; Canning and Wellesley, i. 44, 45; Catholic question, i. 68; proposed union of Chief Secretary and Chancellor of Exchequer for Ireland, i. 109; Insurrection Act, 149; Ireland a political phenomenon, i. 207; Peel refuses Board of Control, i. 299; appoints Peel Home Secretary, i. 300; Londonderry's death, i. 319, 321; the King and Canning, i. 335; the King and Colonel Stephenson, i. 339, 340; the King and Catholic question, i. 350; Dean Gaisford, i. 362; suspected of popery, i. 371; proposed resignation, i. 372 *et seq.*; on Wellesley's marriage, i. 378; bishopric of Oxford, i. 443, 445; illness, i. 448; relations between Peel, Canning, and, iii. 358–360
Liverpool, Lord (son of above), ii. 397, 402, 545
Liverpool and Manchester Railway, ii. 162
Livy, quoted, ii. 109
Llandaff, Deanery of, iii. 421
Lloyd, Mr., ii. 126
Lloyd, Dr. Charles, i. 17, 250, 251, 288; Peel on currency, i. 291–294; Peel's help, i. 322–325; Peel's criticisms, i. 385; appointed Bishop of Oxford, i. 438–446; Lord Liverpool's opinion of, i. 443, 445; the King's views, i. 445; Peel's resignation, i. 477 *et seq.*; Oxford and the Catholic question, i. 479; Peel's wariest counsellor, ii. 1; on Canning and the Catholics, ii. 15; Peel's chief confidant, ii. 30
Loban, ii. 156
Loch, James, iii. 357
Lockhart, J. G., iii. 459
London University, Royal Charter for, ii. 290
Londonderry, Lord, i. 63, 84; Insurrection Act, i. 149; death,

LONDONDERRY

and burial at Westminster Abbey, i. 319–321
Londonderry, Lord (son of above), ii. 263; Minister at St. Petersburg, ii. 269, 331; refuses Vienna Embassy, ii. 483; on Ireland and the income tax, ii. 523; his offer to Graham, iii. 495; a Frenchman's tribute to Peel, iii. 554
Long, Right Hon. C., i. 40
Lonsdale, Dr., Bishop of Lichfield, iii. 419
Lonsdale, Lord, ii. 106, 304; iii. 264
Lopez, Sir Manasseh, ii. 104
Lorton, Lord, i. 79
Louis Philippe, King of France, ii. 353, 449; iii. 161, 201, 262, 393, 399, 404–406, 495
Lovaine, Lord, i. 58
Low Church party, the, iii. 271
Low's *Life of Sir George Pollock*, quoted, ii. 586
Lowe, Robert (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke), iii. 143
Lowther, Lord, ii. 476
Lucas, Mr., Irish Under-Secretary, iii. 48, 53, 112, 116, 182
Lushington, Dr., ii. 223
Lushington, S. R., i. 297, 453, 490
Lyall, Archdeacon, iii. 421
Lyndhurst, Lady, iii. 362
Lyndhurst, Lord, his advice to the King, ii. 4, 5, 203; most eminently anti-Whig, ii. 13; 'Protestant Lord Chancellor,' ii. 27, 52; moderate reform, ii. 203; overtures to Peel, ii. 206; amendments, Municipal Reform Bill, ii. 314–317; views on Irish municipal reform, ii. 344; in Peel's Cabinet, ii. 391; the Canadas, ii. 435; Wellington on Canada Bill, ii. 443; Peel on formation of Government, ii. 483; O'Connell's conviction, iii. 124; Peel on English Church Patronage, iii. 422
Lyttelton, Lord, declines Under-Secretaryship of Colonies, iii. 292, 293

MABERLY, Mr., ii. 21
Macaulay, Lord, ii. 409, 514; iii. 269

MELBOURNE

M'Culloch, ii. 467
McHale, Dr., Archbishop of Tuam, ii. 413; iii. 46, 126–128, 130, 132, 177, 494
McKay, Mr., ii. 99
McKenna, Mr., iii. 186
Mackenzie, Forbes, iii. 176
Macnaghten, Sir W., ii. 581
MacNaughten, his attempt on the Queen's life, ii. 553
McNeill, Duncan, Justice-General for Scotland, iii. 77
Magee, Editor of 'Dublin Evening Post,' i. 104, 116
Mahmoud, Sultan, ii. 599
Mahon, Lord (*Miscellanies*), ii. 198, 225; where should Tories sit? ii. 209; *History of England under George I.*, ii. 226; a natural result, ii. 383; on alienation of France, ii. 455
Mahon, O'Gorman, ii. 73
Malt tax, i. 216; ii. 216
Malta, defence of, iii. 197, 199
Manchester, expected Chartist riot at, ii. 510; peace and confidence restored, ii. 539
Manners, Lord, i. 196, 314, 400
Manners-Sutton (Speaker), i. 332
Mansell, Mr., ii. 587
Mansfield, Lord, i. 478; ii. 185, 227, 367
Manufacturing Distress, Peel's speech on, ii. 556
Manvers, Lady, ii. 402
Marie-Amélie, Queen of France, iii. 161, 548
Martin, R., ii. 62–64
Martin, Sir Theodore, *Life of Prince Consort*, iii. 521, 548
Martineau, Miss, ii. 558; iii. 329, 330
Massena, i. 170, 172
Mathew, 'Father,' iii. 424
Matthew, Montague, i. 106
Maule, Fox, iii. 87, 91
Maunsell, Dr., iii. 130
Maynooth, ii. 127, 129, 131; iii. 66, 101, 108, 173–176, 271, 274, 425, 612
Meath, Bishop of, iii. 121
Medway, defences of the, iii. 198
Melbourne, Lord, ii. 28; Irish Chief Secretary, ii. 33; resigns, ii. 46; Whig ministry patched up under, ii. 245; reasons for his dismissal, ii. 253, 254, 278;

MELBOURNE

Premier, ii. 312; on Corn Laws, ii. 380, iii. 220; the Household question, ii. 402, 456; for dissolution, ii. 463, 464; his tribute to Peel, iii. 222
Melville, Lord, i. 488; ii. 271
Merton, Warden of, ii. 231
Metcalfe, Lord, iii. 23, 216
Methuen, Mr., i. 217
Metropolitan Police, Peel's reform of, i. 432, ii. 39, 111; their efficiency, ii. 168, 540
Metropolitan Police Bill, ii. 111
Metternich, Prince, ii. 483; iii. 363
Mildmay, Sir H., i. 227
Milford Haven, defences of, iii. 203
Militia, Wellington's organisation of, iii. 205
Mills, Mr., 148
Milnes, R. M. (Lord Houghton), iii. 431, 440, 471
Milton, Sir John, iii. 330
Minto, Lord, ii. 349; iii. 493–495
'Mirror of Parliament,' iii. 356
Moffatt, Mr., iii. 340
Molesworth, Sir William, ii. 358, 361, 367, 369
Molyneux, Mr., ii. 266
Monaco, Prince of, i. 170
Moncreiff, Lord, iii. 71
Montagu, Lord, iii. 113
Monteagle, Lord (Spring Rice), ii. 36, 162, 247, 255, 363; iii. 463, 512, 516
Montefiore, Sir Moses, iii. 435
Montgomery, Sir Henry, i. 101
Moore, Judge, i. 249
Morgan, Lady, ii. 74
Morley's *Cobden*, cited, ii. 522, 524; iii. 330
'Morning Advertiser,' ii. 516
'Morning Chronicle,' ii. 32, 183, 398; iii. 387
'Morning Herald,' iii. 123
'Morning Post,' ii. 96
Morpeth, Lord, ii. 349; iii. 110, 128, 471
Mount Edgcumbe, Lord, i. 254
Mountjoy, Lord, i. 221
Municipal Reform Bill, ii. 312–317; (Ireland) ii. 336–347, 434, 438, 440, 445
Munro, Colonel, ii. 412
Mur Nassur Khan, iii. 32
Murchison, Sir Roderick, iii. 446

NOVA

Mure, Colonel, ii. 473
Murray, Archbishop, iii. 126, 127, 132, 174
Murray, John, ii. 330; iii. 544
Murray, Sir George, ii. 32, 166, 167, 188, 482, 484; iii. 23, 210, 218, 321
Musgrave, Sir Richard, i. 249

NAPIER, Sir Charles, iii. 2, 9, 14, 17, 200, 211, 263, 272, 299, 314, 315
National Debt, reduction of interest on, iii. 147
National defence, iii. 195–219
National Gallery, iii. 181
National University for Ireland, iii. 519–521
Naval defence, Commission on, iii. 196; progress of steam navigation, iii. 199; navy estimates, iii. 210
Navarino, ii. 34, 38
Navigation Laws, repeal of, iii. 503
Nesselrode, Count, iii. 149, 261, 373
New Brunswick, iii. 389
New Zealand, iii. 205
Newcastle, Duke of, i. 314, 330; ii. 189, 293; ii. 338, 559
Newport, Sir John, i. 116, 141, 150, 210, 213, 257, 285; iii. 437, 438
Nicholas, Emperor of Russia, iii. 161, 258, 261, 276, 331, 373, 549
Nicolls, Sir Jasper, ii. 585
Non-Intrusionists, iii. 82, 84, 95, 98
Norbury, Lord, i. 79, 129, 166
Norfolk, Duke of, i. 313
Normanby, Lady, ii. 403, 456, 458, 463
Normanby, Lord, ii. 395, 405, 461
North, Governor of Ceylon, i. 158
North America, ii. 356, 462
Northcote, Sir Stafford, iii. 169
Northumberland, Duchess of, iii. 352
Northumberland, Duke of, ii. 143, 146, 151
Norway, iii. 373
Nott, General, ii. 586, 588, 589, 591–594, 597, 600; iii. 5, 257
Nottingham, Reform riots at, ii. 189
Nova Scotia, iii. 389

O'CONNELL

O'Connell, Daniel, i. 133; quarrel with Peel, i. 185 *et seq.*; Roman Catholic Association, i. 345, 390; prosecuted by Government, i. 354, 367; Cobbett, i. 356; Catholic Relief Bill, i. 372; Derry, i. 391; policy in Ireland, i. 417; elected for Clare, ii. 47; his insolent firman, ii. 65; Peel on, ii. 85, 213; Grattan's and Peel's Bills, ii. 105; his failing popularity, ii. 132; Sheil and, ii. 161; Althorp and, ii. 248; allied with Whigs, ii. 291, 298, 373; his reception in Liverpool, ii. 326; Repeal threats, ii. 364; Repeal Wardens, ii. 453, iii. 46; Repeal agitation, iii. 34, 47, 49; Howley Third Serjeant, iii. 60; his proposed trial, iii. 68; Peel mistaken for, iii. 108; federalism, iii. 121; his conviction quashed, iii. 124, 125; Charitable Trusts Act, iii. 126; his embarrassment, iii. 132; Maynooth Bill, iii. 174; *v.* Academical Institutions Bill, iii. 177; in praise of Russell, iii. 351; alarmed at distress in Ireland, iii. 464; greedy of patronage, iii. 466; and Peel, iii. 614
O'Connor, Feargus, ii. 510
Ogle, Colonel, i. 43
O'Gorman, i. 103
Orange societies, i. 122, 158, 159, 368
Orangemen, ii. 118; iii. 182, 186
Oregon question, the, iii. 318, 324, 371, 451
Oriel, Lord, i. 410
Orleans, Ferdinand Philippe, Duke of, ii. 352, 353
Orloff, Count, iii. 261
Outram, Sir James, iii. 1
Overstone, Lord, iii. 352
Owen, Professor, iii. 162, 433, 445, 447
Oxford University, Peel resigns seat for, ii. 88, 101; Wellington Chancellor of, ii. 227–231; Chancellorship offered to Peel, ii. 228

PAGET, Lord, i. 173
Paisley, distress at, ii. 532
Palmer, Horsley, iii. 139
Palmerston, Lord, i. 168, 256, 357;

PEEL

Secretary at War, ii. 28, 32; resigns, ii. 46; Whig overtures, ii. 163, 165; Peel *v.*, ii. 176; a torrent of abuse, ii. 378; Graham on, ii. 492; steam navigation, iii. 203, 211; England defenceless, iii. 207, 214; Grey's objection to, iii. 284; the Boundary question, iii. 387; advocates reciprocity (Navigation Laws), iii. 504; Free Trade policy in corn, iii. 524; Peel on his foreign policy, iii. 534, 542; and Aberdeen, iii. 535; his coercion of Greece: alienation of France and Russia, iii. 541; Peel's last speech, iii. 542
Paris, Allies in, i. 128; outbreaks at, ii. 156
Parke, Judge, iii. 124, 126
Parliamentary Reform, ii. 164, 167, 173
Parnell, Sir Henry, i. 140, 150, 187, 228; iii. 220
Pastorini's Prophecy, i. 340, 342
Paterson, Mrs. (Lady Wellesley), i. 378
'Patriot,' the, i. 116, 353
Patronage, ii. 139; Irish Church, iii. 414; Scottish Church, iii. 415; English Church, iii. 416–422; 'Peel's Act,' iii. 422; Peel's first academical appointment, iii. 422; civil appointments, iii. 424; Scottish judicial appointments, iii. 428; Royal Bounty (Pensions), iii. 436–444; rewards for science, iii. 444; for artists, iii. 448
Patterson, Mr., ii. 99
Peel, Edmund, i. 484; ii. 263; iii. 358
Peel, Miss Eliza, iii. 558
Peel, Frederick (son), iii. 270; a brilliant maiden speech, iii. 507; letters on his father's death from:—Walpole, iii. 550; Dean of Lincoln, iii. 552; Londonderry, iii. 554; Karslake's tribute, iii. 622
Peel, Rev. John, i. 254 (brother), Dean of Worcester, iii. 420
Peel, John (son), iii. 270
Peel (General), Jonathan, i. 406
Peel, Miss Julia, ii. 251, 263, 277, 352
Peel, Lawrence, i. 293

Peel, Sir Lawrence, i. 6–8
Peel, Robert (grandfather), i. 3, 5
Peel, Sir Robert (father), i. 5, 6; M.P. for Tamworth, supporter of Pitt, i. 7; baronet, *ibid.*; on National Debt, i. 8; Robert's first speech, i. 27; his thanks to Perceval, i. 28; Robert's honorary degree at Oxford, i. 179; Factory Bill, i. 259, *et seq.*; Tamworth election, i. 269; on commercial crisis—Exchequer bills and *l.* notes, i. 380; on commercial distress, i. 398; Jonathan's election for Norwich, i. 406; Robert's retirement, i. 475; his congratulations to his son, ii. 33; his son's explanations, ii. 92–94; his son's position, ii. 110; his death, ii. 151
Peel, Lady (wife), i. 301; ii. 34, 251, 277, 352, 554, iii. 275, 316, 472, 507; Sir Robert's death, iii. 545; sympathetic letters from:—Queen of France, iii. 548; Emperor of Russia: Grand Duke of Saxony, iii. 549; Sir John Russell, 551; Aberdeen, iii. 556; Graham, iii. 557; Lord Townshend, iii. 558; the Queen's offering to, iii. 558; the Duke of Newcastle's and Mr. Gladstone's tribute, iii. 559, 560; her letter to Lord Aberdeen, iii. 555; her gratitude to the Queen, iii. 559
Peel, Sir Robert:
1788–1811. Ancestry &c., i. 3; birth, 8; devoted by father to country, 9; remarkable memory, 10, 15; pupil of Rev. J. Hargreaves at Bury, 10; school at Tamworth, 11; sensitiveness, *ibid.*; at Harrow with Byron, 12, 13; passion for field sports, 14; attendance in House of Commons, 16; pupil of Rev. R. Bridge, 17; at Christ Church, Oxford, 20; a double-first, 22; visits Scotland, 24; M.P. for Cashel, *ibid.*; enters Lincoln's Inn, *ibid.*; seconds address, 25; Dr. Jackson's advice, 28, 29; second speech on Walcheren Expedition, 29; Under-Secretary for War and Colonies, 30; speech on Peninsular War, 31

1812. Chief Secretary for Ireland, i. 32; new ruler of Ireland, 35; intimacy with Lord Liverpool, 36 *et seq.*; gives up Cashel, 39; M.P. for Chippenham, 40; peerages and votes, 41, 42; success and popularity, 42; parliamentary parties, 43; Canning and Lord Wellesley, 44, 45; Croker and Down, 48; dealings with Government patronage, 50, 51; Croker and patronage, 54 *et seq.*; impressions of new Parliament, 64; Catholic question, 71
1813. Favours bartered for political support, i. 58, 59; attitude on Catholic question, 73; Grattan's Committee and Bill, 73, 74, 76–85; Irish members' support, 74; on Pole's speech, 76; Roman Catholic amended Bill, 85; Protestant ascendency, 87; Irish education, 87–93; business capacity, 94; rebukes official negligence, 95, 96; frauds and defalcations, 97; Grand Canal Company, 98; Skibbereen Report, Pension Fund, 100; political patronage, 101; Lord Whitworth as Viceroy, *ibid.*; Prince Regent, 102; battle of Vittoria, *ibid.*; O'Connell at Magee's trial, 104; on Pole, 105; new viceroy and the press, *ibid.*; official responsibilities, 108, 126; proposed union of Chief Secretary and Chancellor of Exchequer, 108–113; control of navy in Ireland, 113; Irish press—forgery and libel, 114–118; Catholic Board, 118; Irish dependence on the Castle, 119; murderous outrages—lawlessness and disaffection in Ireland, 120 *et seq.*; Protestants and Catholics, Orange men and Ribbonmen, 122; Catholic bishops, 123; Insurrection Act, 125
1814. Fears of peace with France, i. 127, *et seq.*; on Crown Prince of Sweden, 128; Périgord, 130; fresh outrages in Ireland, 131; soldiers as police, 132, *et seq.*; Catholic Board, 134, 138 *et seq.*; 'Kilkenny

resolutions,' 135; Michael Burke, *ibid.*; Police Act, Insurrection Act, 143–151; on Plunket, i. 146; Irish police, chief magistrate, &c., 151, 152; Judge Fletcher's charge, 153, 154; Police Act, 154 *et seq.*; Orangemen, 158, 159; anonymous threats, 160; troubles of patronage, 160–163; special magistrates, 162; peerages and appointments, 164

1815. Lords Justices in Ireland, i. 166; effects of peace on price of corn, 167; Corn Bill, 167, 169; advocates protective duties, *ibid.*; Corn Law riots—Palmerston's precautions, 168; effect in Ireland of Bonaparte's success, 171; troops in Ireland, 172; fears about Irish militia: yeomanry a neutral force, 174; withdrawal of troops from Ireland, 175; militia embodied, 178; refuses Insurrection Act: D.C.L. degree at Oxford, 179; battle of Waterloo, 180; Duke of Cumberland's allowance, 180, 181; visits Paris and Brussels, 182; Catholic petition, 184, 185, 188; quarrel and intended duel with O'Connell, 185–204; serious outrages in Ireland—Insurrection Act enforced, 199

1816. Peace without prosperity: outbreaks of crime, i. 205; Insurrection Act, 205, 206; perjury and crime in Ireland, 206; retrenchment and reform, 208; Irish military estimates, 208, 217; Medical Board, 209; property tax, 210, 216; sinecures in Ireland, 212; dangers of proposed Irish inquiry, 213–223; difficulty of managing business in House of Commons, 215; malt tax, 216; rigid economy, 218; Irish magistracy, 218, 221; affray at Roscrea, 223; Irish debate, *ibid.*; Catholic schism, 225; debate on Catholic question, 226; a vice-treasurer for Ireland, 227; intends to resign, 228; Englishmen should govern Ireland, 229; Lord Talbot viceroy, 230; revolting outrages, 231; Irish policy, 232 *et seq.*; Irish emigration, 233; English riots, 234; state of Ireland, 236

1817. Disaffection in England—Habeas Corpus Act suspended, i. 237; secret committee and reform societies, 239; Bill to abolish sinecures, *ibid.*; impending famine in Ireland, 239–245; distillation and export of potatoes, 240 *et seq.*; Poor Relief Bill, 244; speech on Catholic claims, 246; requested by Dublin Corporation to sit for portrait, 247; friends' congratulations, 248 *et seq.*; election for Oxford University, 250–253; his brothers William and John, 254; address from Irish members, 255; distress in Ireland promotes peace, 257; peace establishment in Ireland, 258; complimentary memorial, *ibid.*

1818. Factory Bill, i. 259, 262; the Warrington cotton spinners, 259; grants to Royal Family, 262; a severe economist, 263; support of Irish children, 264; works of public charity: fever committee, 265; farewell to Ireland, 265 *et seq.*; remarks on his successor, 266; hints as to premiership, 268; dissolution of Parliament: Irish elections, 269; dearth of patronage, 270 *et seq.*; payments for political support, 273; refuses to bargain, 274; expects strict integrity in public servants, 278; Sir John Newport, 285; last letters from Dublin Castle, 286; in Scotland, 287; Dr. Lloyd and Lincoln's Inn preachership, 288

1819-1821. Proposes Manners-Sutton as Speaker, i. 289; grant for royal establishment, *ibid.*; views on 'Currency,' 289–295; chairman of secret committee, 290; 'Currency' debate: 'Peel's Act,' 295; Catholic question, 296; death of George III., 297; marriage, 301; declines presidency of Board of Control, 298; Queen Caroline, *ibid.*; resists Catholic claims, 298, 299; Home Secretary, 300, 305

PEEL

1822. Lord Wellesley, i. 305; sympathy with Saurin, 307; treason in Ireland, 310, 311; Canning's proposal to admit Catholics to House of Lords, 312, 314; personal relations with George IV.: prerogative of mercy, 315-317; attends King to Scotland, 318; Sir Walter Scott, *ibid.*; Sir William Knighton, 319; Lord Londonderry's death, 319-321; Dr. Lloyd, 322 *et seq.*; Primacy of Ireland, 324; Drury's congratulations, 325; leadership of House of Commons, 327 *et seq.*

1823. The King and 'Sunday Times,' 338; King's Property Bill, *ibid.*; the King and Colonel Stephenson, 339, 340; urges Protestant forbearance, 341; an impartial government of Ireland, 343

1824. Religious education in Ireland, i. 344; Roman Catholic Association, 345 *et seq.*; Wellington fears civil war in Ireland, 348; the King and Roman Catholics, 349; Irish yeomanry and militia, 352 *et seq.*; Plunket and Orangemen, 355; O'Connell's prosecution, 356; Bill for suppression of Roman Catholic Association, 357; Roman Catholic barristers, 359; plots against Wellington in Paris, *ibid.*; Lord Eldon's gratitude, 360; patron of literature and art, 362; Lord Liverpool and Dean Gaisford, *ibid.*; Sir H. Davy and proposed Natural History Museum, 363-365; Scott's portrait, 365

1825. Failure of O'Connell prosecution: Wellington's views, i. 367, 368; Catholic Convention: State payment of Roman Catholic clergy, 369; the King and Catholics, 370; Lord Liverpool's supposed conversion to popery, 371; Catholic Relief Bill: proposed resignation, 372-376; Roman Catholic Irish noblemen's address to King, 373; Bill for preventing frivolous writs, 377; Royal Commission on Scottish universities, *ibid.*; Roman Catholic bishops *in pontificalibus*, 379; Combination Laws, *ibid.*; commercial crisis and the banking system, 380 *et seq.*; Exchequer bills and *il.* notes, 381; founds gold medal at Harrow, 386; the King and Royal Society medals, 387; Rev. M. Drury, 388; application to Lord Liverpool for Dawson and his brother John, 388; Act for suppression of Irish societies, 390

1826. Extension of College accommodation at Oxford, 385; on sins and repentance, *ibid.*; proceedings at Derry: rebukes Dawson, 391, 392; Catholic prelates and Irish education, 393; Exchequer bills: small-note currency: bimetallism, 394 *et seq.*; Spitalfields weavers, 398; criminal law, 399 *et seq.*; on transportation, 401; agricultural labourers, 404; general elections, 406; his brother Jonathan and Norwich, 407; Sievrac: Sir John Sinclair, 408; Waterford and Louth elections, 409 *et seq.*; religious animosities in Ireland, activity of priests, 410; Protestant processions, 412; difficulties in Ireland, 414; threatening aspect of foreign affairs, 415; Irish priests and party animosities, 417 *et seq.*; military forces in Ireland, 420, 428; securities against Catholic domination, 422; the Roman Catholic Association and concessions, 426; Irish law officers and Roman Catholic Association, 428-431; reform of Metropolitan Police, 432, 433; Duke of York's death, 433; Wellington as Commander-in-Chief, 433-437; Dr. Lloyd and Bishopric of Oxford, 437-446; Captain Anstruther, 447

1827. Lord Liverpool's illness, 448; reconstruction of Government, 451-462; Canning's, Wellington's, and his own claims, 452 *et seq.*; at Windsor, 457; refuses peerage, 459; reasons for resigning, 460, 466, 484, 486; Canning Prime Minister, 463; friendship with Canning, 464,

487, 493; Croker's explanations, 468–474; father and Lord Goderich on his retirement, 475; Dr. Lloyd's advice, 477; feeling in country and House of Commons: colleagues condemned, 481, 482; Wellington's resignation and the press, 483; vindication in Parliament, 487; Canning's opinion of, 487, 490; his colleagues' resignation, 488; Canning and the Whigs, 491; leads House of Commons on Canning's death, 493; Canning's natural successor, ii. 1; mistrusts the King, 2; on Wellington and command-in-chief, 8; the Catholic question—his exclusion from office, 9; correspondence with Dr. Lloyd, 14–17; on the King and Whigs, 18, 22; and Huskisson, 25

1828. His relations with and support of Wellington, ii. 27, 57; takes office under Wellington, 28; his chief confidant, 30; Home Secretary, 32; regrets losing Lord Eldon, 33; his father's congratulations, 33; hints for the address, 34; Home Office work, 35; on Hobhouse's retirement, 36; proposed reforms, 37; Finance and Foreign affairs, 38; London police, 39; Hunton the Quaker—the King's interference, 42; Burke and Hare, 44; Chaplain-General Gleig, 45; Roman Catholic Relief, 46; Clare election, 47; Ireland, 48, 56, 69; transfer of political power, 49; intends resigning, 54, 57, 69; a choice of evils, 55; the Roman Catholic question—his idea of a settlement, 59; prospects in Galway, 63; troops for Ireland, 65; the King's approval, 66; advises Anglesey's recall, 67

1829. Roman Catholic Relief—difficulties with the King, ii. 76–78, 82; will retain office if necessary, 79; measures for Ireland, 84, 116, 122–139; explains to Gregory, 86; to Lord Hotham, 90; to his father, 92; to Colonel Yates, 94; to Sir Walter Scott, 99; reasons for resigning Oxford, 101–103; the Disfranchisement Bill, 104; M.P. for Westbury, 104; on Roman Catholic Relief Bill, 105; his motives, 107; Metropolitan Police Bill, 111–115; Orangemen *v.* Catholics, 117, 120; on patronage, 139

1830. The King and the Royal Academy, ii. 142, 143; the King's health, 145, 152; Jews' Relief Bill, 146; abuse of prerogative of mercy, 147, 150; his father's death, 151; accession of William IV., 153; the King's speech, 155; French Revolution, 157; revolt in Belgium, 159; the demons of Tipperary, 160; working the press, 161; declines Liverpool seat, 162; Whig overtures, 163–166; efficiency of new police, 168; the Ultra-Tories, 170

1831. Parliamentary Reform, ii. 173 *et seq.*; Chatham's, Pitt's, Canning's, and his own views, 174; speech on Reform Bill, 176; his views on Reform, 180, 181, 186, 187, 194, 196; M.P. for Tamworth, 182; 'The Waverers,' 185; reckless example of Ultra-Tories, 186; two sections of Conservatives, 187; second Reform Bill rejected by Lords, 188; popular violence, 189; on counter-associations, 190; wholly unfettered, 194; Hildyard's Bill, 196

1832. His reply to Lord Harrowby, ii. 199; counsels rejection of Reform, 201; strenuous effort to mitigate Reform, 203; Wellington for extensive Reform—Peel against, 205

1833. New rules of political conduct, ii. 209; where should Tories sit? 211; his general line of policy, 212; making the Reform Bill work, 215; malt tax, 216; Irish Church Bill, 217, 220–224; the Coronation Oath, 219; Irish tithes, 220; Whig dissensions, 223; on amendments to the address, 224; supports House of Lords, 225; on Walpole's character, 225, 226

1834. Proposed for Chan-

PEEL

cellorship of Oxford, ii. 228–231; Wellington elected, 231; abated intercourse with Wellington, 232–239; the Duke's declaration, 241; Irish Church Funds—Ward's motion, 243; no union with Radicals, 247; proposed Tithe Commutation Bill, 248; his friends at Blackburn, 250; called from Rome by the King, 251; Premier, 256; overtures to Stanley and Graham, 257–259; 'only the Duke's old Cabinet,' 261; letters as to appointments, 262–268; the Church of Scotland—'The Ten Years' Conflict,' iii. 69

1835. Lord Londonderry at St. Petersburg, ii. 269; his brother's claims, 271; promotions to the Bench, 273; a bold policy of Conservative Reform, 274; Dissenter's marriages, 275; correspondence with the King, 276, 278; the Whigs and the address—Stanley's 'vision,' 278; defends Melbourne's dismissal, 278; Stanley's position, 279; Church Reform, 282-286; second Reformed Parliament—the King's attitude, 287; Lichfield House Compact, 290; calls Hume to account, 290, 291; six defeats in six weeks, 292; governing with a minority, 293; stern unbending Tories, 295; not a reformer at all, 296; Irish tithes, 299–301; resigns office, 303; offers royal bounty to Wordsworth, 304; to Mrs. Hemans, 306; to Professor Airy, 307; to Mrs. Somerville, 308; to James Hogg, 309; to Southey, 310; Municipal Reform Bill, 313–317; Lyndhurst's amendments, 316

1836. On importance of timely consultation, ii. 318; increased intercourse with Wellington, 319, 321; Graham and Stanley, 322; Irish municipal reform, 322; Duke of Cumberland's Orangeism, 324; recess studies, 325; his election and reception as Lord Rector of Glasgow University, 327

PEEL

1837. His address to Glasgow students, ii. 330; congratulations from Mr. Murray, *ibid.*; from Lord Londonderry and Miss Edgeworth, 331; from Mr. Everett, 333; joint generalship, 335; Irish Municipal Bill, 336, 340, 344, 347; Conservatives and Ultra-Tories, 337; faction irreconcilable with *Conservative* opposition, 338; Irish tithes and Poor Laws, 345; re-elected for Tamworth, 350; an insult and apology, *ibid.*; Duke of Orleans, 352; King of Hanover, 353

1838. Revolt in Canada, ii. 355; Molesworth's motion, 356–363, 367; confers with Wellington, 365; registration of voters, 368; Lord Durham and the Whigs, 369; Government and the ballot, 370; a specimen of Irish human nature, 371

1839. At Belvoir Castle, ii. 373; the Duke of Cumberland, 374; Croker and Brougham, 374, 395; keeping the party together, 375; Corn Laws and Canada, 378–382; Irish crime, 383; Lord Roden's motion, 384; Wellington on 'Followers,' 385; Jamaica, 387; sent for by the Queen, 387, 390; timely feminine counsel, 389; forming a Cabinet, 391; the Household question, 392, 396–399, 402, 407; Radical violence, 401; the Queen and the Tories, 405; the great Offices of the Court, 406; the Queen and Prince Albert, 408, 414; suggestions for the coming session, 410; a policy of deficits, 411; cathedral reform, *ibid.*; Wellington's health, 412; party prospects, 415; Wellington's forecast, 417; Graham's views, 421, 427; questions for decision, 424; Wellington's doubts, 426; the Church of Scotland, 430

1840. Wellington counsels delay, ii. 431; Grant for Prince Albert, 432; differences with Wellington, 433; Irish Municipal Bill, 434, 438, 445; the union of the Canadas—his own

and the Duke's views, 435–445; in close alliance with Wellington, 447; France and Louis Philippe, 449; 'my boy William,' 451; Dr. Chalmers' suggestion, iii. 73

1841. France and the peace of Europe, ii. 454, 455; the Household question, 456–460, 463; Wellington's advice and unconditional support, 460–462; his censure of the Whig ministry: Parliament dissolved, 464, 465; the language of thousands, 466; electioneering: verdict of the constituencies, 467, 475; Church of Scotland, 468–474; the Puseyites, 475; Speaker's election, 477; Disraeli, 478, 486–488; an amendment to the address, 479; his second ministry, 481; disappointments were many, 483; Londonderry dissatisfied, 484; Stratford Canning, 485; financial reform, 489–510; inherited deficits, 489; income tax, 490, 491, 501, 502, 506; retrenchment, 492–494; Commission on Revenue Departments, 495; tariff, 496; sugar and coffee, 498; *a property tax*, 499; revision of Corn Law, *ibid.*; Gladstone on income tax, 502, 503; the timber duties, 504; house tax, 505; Herries on income tax, 506; Fine Arts Commission, 509; Feargus O'Connor's reception at Manchester, 510; birth of Prince of Wales, 511; Lord Clare for Jamaica, 512; Gladstone's apologia, 513, 514; Lord Ellenborough Governor-General of India, 575; '*far* the most fit person,' 577; Fitzgerald at the Board of Control, 578; O'Connell and Repeal, iii. 34, 45; supports national education in Ireland, 35; the tone of Eliot's letter, 36: Sir George Sinclair, 74–79; Hope's extreme opinion, 76; Lord Aberdeen's Bill (Church of Scotland), 78, 79; the *liberum arbitrium*, 79; Dr. Cook's advice, 80; on Church patronage in Ireland, 414; Graham on Church patronage in Scotland, 416; Professor Whewell: Dr. C. Wordsworth, 422, 423; his practice in the bestowal of honours, 426–430

1842. Sport in Windsor Park with Prince Albert, ii. 518; Protectionist resignations, 520, 521; rancour of the populace, 522; Cobden on his financial policy—clamour, hostility, and obstruction, 524; reduced protection, 527; his Free Trade convictions, 529; our Ultra friends, 532; education reform, 533, 547; mining reform, 534; Wellington Commander-in-Chief, 535; the Queen's visit to Scotland, 537–545; manufacturing disorders, 540; recess correspondence with Home Secretary, 546–551; activity of Chartists, 546; employment of pensioners, *ibid.*; Ecclesiastical Commission, 547–549; Stipendiary Chairmen, 549; Church Extension, 550; the next change in the Corn Laws, 551; the heavy burden of Indian affairs, 579; the North-West frontier, 580; Macnaghten's murder at Cabul, 581; Afghanistan—his and Wellington's advice to Ellenborough, 583; Ellenborough's hasty action, 586; correspondence with Fitzgerald on Ellenborough, 589–598, 600; General Nott, 591, 592, 594, 600; East India Company *v.* Ellenborough, 596; the Gates of Somnauth, 597–600; congratulates Ellenborough, 600; Ameers of Scinde, iii. 1; a class of Alarmists, 37; Dr. Elrington, 38; mischief of a rupture between Viceroy and Chief Secretary, 40–43; Church of Scotland, 82–90; a policy of reserve, 82–87; the Patronage question, 83–85; Non-Intrusionists, 86; Sir George Sinclair, 87, 89; Convocation of Scottish Ministers—their memorial to, 89; the Queen and the General Assembly, 96; on Bagot's policy in Canada, 380–386; Wellington on Bagot, 382–385; Boundary and other questions with America, 386–

390; the *entente cordiale* with France, 390–392; Goulburn's son, and Croker, on Wilberforce, 416; 'Father Mathew,' 424; his practice in bestowing honours, 431; pensions and the royal bounty, 436; Wordsworth's claim, 437, 438; scientific claims: Forbes, Owen, 445

1843. Drummond's assassination: the Queen's sympathy, ii. 552–555; his speech on manufacturing distress, 556; denounced by Cobden, 557; his reply, 558; Nonconformist hostility, 560; Ashley on 'united education,' 561; Church Extension, 563; his gift to Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 566; Radical obstruction, 568; Custom House frauds, 569; the City election, 570; military expenditure, 572–574; forbids Fitzgerald's resignation, iii. 4; Ellenborough's complaints, 5, 17; Ripon for the Board of Control, 6; Indian questions in Parliament, 7; uneasiness about Scinde, 9; the East India Company *v.* Ellenborough, 10, 11; annexation of Scinde confirmed, 14; Repeal agitation, 46–48; maintenance of the Union, 48; Sugden and Irish magistrates, 51; Lucas, 53, 55; Roman Catholics for office in Ireland, 54, 56–59; de Grey and Eliot, 60; police patronage in Ireland, 61; Irish law officers, 62; Wellington for Ireland (?), 63; force no permanent remedy for Ireland, 65; payment of the priests, 67; revision of Irish county franchise, 68; memorial from Moderator of the General Assembly, 89–91; on Scottish Church patronage, 91; terms offered by the Crown, 94; the Free Church and the Old Church, 99; the Queen's visit to France, 393; official patronage, a public trust, 421; Disraeli's shabbiness, 425; pensions for Robert Brown, Lady Bell, Sir William Hamilton, 447

1844. Ellenborough's complaints, iii. 18–20; the East India Company, 22, 21, 24; Ellenborough recalled, 21; choice of a successor, 23; the Crown and the East India Company, 24, 27; Sir Henry Hardinge, Governor-General, 25, 27, 256; rewards for Ellenborough: the Queen's approval, 28, 33; Ireland, 101–133; Maynooth, 101; education of the priests, 102; Roman Catholic barristers, 104; the warnings of the past, 105; conciliation for Ireland, 106; the Queen's approval of his Irish policy, 108; mistaken for O'Connell, *ibid.*; Wellington uneasy about a lower franchise, 109; on Eliot's proposal to abolish Chief Secretaryship, 111; Fremantle Secretary at War, 113; Lucas resigns: Heytesbury succeeds de Grey, *ibid.*; correspondence with Heytesbury, 114–133; weaning Ireland from repeal, 114; national education, 115, 118; trial by jury, 116–118, 124; patronage and Church preferment, 118–121; deaneries of Killala and Limerick, 121; O'Connell and Repeal: federalism, 122; Mr. Butt, 123; O'Connell's conviction quashed, 124, 125; Charitable Trusts Act, 126–133; our Roman Catholic allies, 133; Bank Charter Act, 134, 143; Disraeli's party allegiance, 144–146; reduction of interest on National Debt, 147; Factory Act, *ibid.*; Baron Brunow, 149; an unambitious budget, 150; sugar duties, 153; Lord Ashley misunderstood, 153, 154; Disraeli's rebellion, 154; Stanley called to the Upper House, 155, 158; Wellington retains lead of House of Lords, 157; Gladstone resigns Board of Trade, 160; on royal guests at Windsor, 162; his guests at Drayton Manor, *ibid.*; defence of Canada, 195; Naval Defence Commission, 196; effect of steam navigation, 199; the royal yacht, 200; Hardinge, G.C.B., 257; Ellenborough's forecast, 258; Hardinge on the

Punjab, 261, 263; home news for Hardinge, 264; the *entente cordiale* with France, 394; French violence in Tahiti, 394, 395; French in Algeria, 395; an Irish bishop's claims, 415; on cathedral preferment, 418; a gross Irish job, 425; sparing in the grant of civil honours, 431; help for Thomas Hood, 442–444

1845. Gladstone's reasons for resigning, iii. 163–169; rearranges his Government, 168; his second Free Trade Budget, 169–171; King Leopold on, 172; Maynooth Bill, 173–176, 179; Inglis on Academical Institutions (Ireland) Bill, 177; Tenants' Compensation (Ireland) Bill, *ibid.*; Fremantle Irish Chief Secretary, 178; Bright on Game Laws, 179; reliance on the ordinary law, 180, 181; a National Gallery, 181; a Roman Catholic Under-Secretary, 183; a Roman Catholic Chief Clerk, 185; Orange demonstrations, 186; Lord Roden's indiscretion, 187; the mania of railway speculation, 188; Wellington urges force for Ireland, 190–192; Croker, Brougham, and Adam Smith, 193, 194; national defence—Wellington's official protest, and Peel's reply, 201–216; his health threatened, 218; the Corn Law question—his changed opinions, 220; growth of his Free Trade principles, 221; a well-timed tribute from Lord Melbourne, 222; potato famine in Ireland, 223; Playfair's and Lindley's reports, 225–227; proposes suspension of Corn Laws, 227 *et seq.*; aid for Ireland, 229; his colleagues' dissent, 231; Lord Lincoln's advice, *ibid.*; correspondence with the Queen and Prince Albert, 234–254; Stanley's opposition, 236, 240; the Queen's appeal to, 239; his resignation, 240–243; farewell to the Queen, 242; Wellington retains command-in-chief, 244; Russell's attempts to form a Government, 245, 246, 248–251; Russell accepts and rejects office, 253, 283, 289, 295; the Queen's kindness to, 255; Graham on Hardinge, 266; the Sikh States, 267, 274, 277, 312; more home news for Hardinge, 269, 308; his financial and Irish policy, 271; false conservatism and true, 272, 273; the quiet and repose of Drayton, 273; Hardinge's Punjab policy, 275, 277–279; the Lahore Government, 277, 279; gives Hardinge his reasons for resigning and resuming office, 280, 295; his resumption of office, 283; Stanley persists in resigning, 284; the Queen's confidence in, 285; Gladstone and Stanley, 286; Ellenborough at the Admiralty, 288; Whigs in Council, 289; reconstructs Government, 291; Gladstone's plea for Lord Lyttelton, 292, 293; orders for a complete Free Trade Budget, 294; Hardinge on the Sikh campaign, 296–300; Aberdeen's formal protest against Wellington's scheme of national defence, 396–398; probability of war with France, 399, 400; Aberdeen's proposed resignation condemned by Wellington, Graham, and, 401–407; Wellington on France and England, 405, 408; Guizot's thesis, 409–411; the Queen's misgivings, 412; the Deanery of Westminster, 417; a reply to Gladstone no Church patronage, 418; deaneries of Peterborough, Carlisle, Wells, Worcester, and Llandaff, 429-421; Charles Buller, 426; Tennyson's pension, 439–442; Roderick Murchison knighted, 446; his letter to King Leopold, 477

1846. His congratulations to Hardinge, iii. 301; Ellenborough's cry of mismanagement: critics at home, 302; Lady Sale's tribute, 303; a vote of thanks to Hardinge, *ibid.*; Sikh overtures, 304; Sobraon, 305; honours for Hardinge and Gough, 307, 308; Lahore, 310–313; Hardinge's summary of results, 313; universal approval

of Hardinge's policy — Peel's tribute to, 318; Hardinge's gratitude, 319; praise and dispraise, 321; Lord Francis Egerton to move the address, 322; disclosures of his policy, 324; confident of success, 326; the Queen's great satisfaction, *ibid.*; Buccleuch and Stanley resign, 327; the rancour of Cobden, 328–330; Miss Martineau makes peace, 330–332; a great statesman, 333; Rous' defeat, 334; regrettable resignations, 335–338; the Queen's tribute to, 338; his speech on second reading of Corn Bill, 339–343; the Assassination Bill, 344; Russell and the Irish Protection for Life Bill, 345, 346; third reading of Corn Bill: Disraeli's onslaught on, 347; the Queen's warm congratulations, 348; organised revenge, 349; the Whigs' dilemma, 352; Lord Hardinge's Bill, 353; Brougham on Protection Bill, 355; the Bentinck episode, 355, 356, 358; Stanley swallows a 'fact' too easily, 357; true relations between Liverpool, Canning, and, 358, 359; Princess Lieven, 360; loss of support in House of Commons, 361; Lady de Grey's canard, 362; a forecast—Wellington's answer, 363, 365; Wellington for dissolution, 367; his reply to Cobden's advice, 367–369; Brougham's counsel, 369; his last speech in office, 370; his tribute to Cobden, 371; '*quod dixi, dixi*,' 372; European opinion, 373; the final struggle to maintain the Corn Laws—Stanley, Bentinck, Disraeli, and Croker, 374; Dean Stanley on his speech, 374; his reasons and explanations, 375; Carlyle's tribute to, 377; Chief Justice Bushe's application, 426; a baronetcy declined by Hallam, 432; baronetcy accepted by John Gladstone, 434; by Moses Montefiore, 435; Faraday, 447; help for Haydon, 448; pension for Sir M. A. Shee, 449; withdraws to Drayton: the Queen's letter, and his reply, 451, 452; Hume's regrets, 453; Rev. Dr. Edgar, 454; Whig overtures declined, 455; a successful career concluded with honour, 456; Wellington and command-in-chief, 457; the Elbing Letter, 459; Whig government of Ireland, 461, 464; Irish gratitude, 463; Whig policy of public works, 465; Graham predicts worse famine for Ireland, 467; Irish expenditure will be frightful, 469; home news for Hardinge, 471-474; his letter to King Leopold, 477

1847. Hardinge's Punjab settlement, iii. 475; the Government as weak as water, 476; another letter to King Leopold, 479; the King's reply, 480; famine in Ireland, 481; his advice to the Whigs, 482; on the administration of justice in Scotland, 483; his son William, 484; declines to stand for City, 485; his Tamworth letter, 486; Peelite successes, 488

1848. New Year wishes from Prince Albert, 490; reviewing the past with Graham, 491; declines Presidency of Royal Society, 492; Sidney Herbert on diplomatic relations with Rome, 493; his generous offer to Louis Philippe, 495; records of Cabinet Councils, 496

1849. Whig overtures to Graham, iii. 500; distress in Ireland, 502, 509; repeal of the Navigation Laws, 503; his aid invoked, 504; defends Lord Gough, 505; his sympathy with German aspirations, 505–507; his son Frederick's brilliant maiden speech, 508; his latest counsels for Ireland: proposed Commission, 509, 513; Encumbered Estates Act, 515; Mr. Caird and Irish agriculture, 517; a National University for Ireland, 519–521; Disraeli's protectionist motion, 522; protection or no protection, 523; reaction against Free Trade, 525

1850. His letter to the Drayton tenants, iii. 528; rack rents,

PEEL

529; 'What a cutting rebuke to protection!' 531; debate on agricultural distress: Disraeli's motion, 532; his private declaration against protection, 534; Palmerston's and Aberdeen's foreign policy, 535–540; Palmerston's coercion of Greece, and its result, 541; his last speech, on Palmerston's diplomacy, 542; his fatal accident, 544; and death, 545; tributes of sorrow in Lords and Commons, 546; the Queen's and Prince Albert's grief, 547; letters of condolence from Prince Albert, Queen of France, Emperor of Russia, and others, 548–559; the Queen's offering to Lady Peel, 558; a summary of his life by his grandson, Hon. George Peel, 561–621; Karslake's lines on, 622

Peel, William (brother), ii. 23, 24, 106, 152, 271; iii. 337

Peel, William, i. 8, 10, 12, 16, 21, 26, 194; M.P. for Tamworth, i. 269; seconds address, i. 303; declines Under-Secretaryship of State, *ibid.*

Peel, William (son), ii. 451, 452; iii. 483

Peerages and baronetcies, Peel's practice and motives in bestowing, iii. 426–435

Pemberton, Mr., iii. 481

Pennefather, Mr., iii 62, 184

Pensions and royal bounty, i. 100, 275; iii. 436–444

Pepys, Dr. Henry, Bishop of Worcester, iii. 420

Perceval, Mr., i. 28; makes Peel Under-Secretary for War and Colonies, i. 30; assassinated, i. 31, ii. 219

Périgord, i. 130

Persiani, Madame, ii. 569

Peshawur, importance of, iii. 274; Sikh garrison at, iii. 312

Philip VII. of France, ii. 158

Phillips, Peel's Under-Secretary, ii. 37

Phillpotts, Dr., Bishop of Exeter, ii. 265; iii. 422

Pitt, and Parliamentary Reform, ii. 174

Pitt, Miss, ii. 403

Pittacus' letter to the 'Times,' ii. 478

PUSEYITES

Pius IX., Pope, iii. 493

Planta, Canning's Under-Secretary, i. 491–493; Secretary to Treasury, ii. 139, iii. 359

Playfair, Lord (Dr. Lyon), iii. 162, 225, 226, 280

Plunket, Mr., i. 75, 138, 223, 298; Attorney-General for Ireland, i. 302, 354, 355; prosecutions, i. 368; Catholic Relief Bill, i. 372

Plymouth, defences of, iii. 203, 400

Pole, Hon. W. Wellesley, i. 76 *et seq.*, 89, 277

Police Act (Ireland), i. 143 *et seq.*

Police, Irish, ii. 121; iii. 61

Police, London, i. 432; Peel's reform of, ii. 39, 111; their efficiency, ii. 168, 540

Pollock, General Sir George, ii. 586, 588, 593, 597, 599, 601, 602; iii. 125, 257

Pomare, Queen of Tahiti, iii. 394

Ponsonby, William, ii. 176

Poor Law Commission, ii. 545, 548

Poor Laws, Ireland, ii. 116, 162, 345; iii. 502

Poor Relief Act, i. 244

Porter, Thomas C., ii. 162

Portsmouth, defences of, iii. 198, 203, 400

Potato famine in Ireland, iii. 223, 280

Pottinger, Sir Henry, iii. 23

Pozzo, ii. 377

Preston, Chartists at, ii. 538

Pringle, Alexander, ii. 495; iii. 86, 425

Pritchard, Consul-missionary, iii. 263, 394

Property tax, i. 210, 216; ii. 499–502, 506

Protection of Life (Ireland) Bill, iii. 344, 345, 348, 349, 351, 614

Protectionists, ii. 476, 559; iii. 169, 171, 218, 220, 222, 345, 347, 348, 351, 357, 367, 464, 471–473, 479, 488, 523, 526, 532, 534

'Protest and Declaration of Right' (Scottish Church), iii. 89–96

Protestant Charter schools, i. 263

Protestants *v.* Tractarians, ii. 474

Punjab, the, iii. 258–260, 274, 278, 279, 311, 312, 475

Pusey, Dr., ii. 561; iii. 162, 418

Puseyites, ii. 475, 561; iii. 271

QUARTERLY

Quarterly Review, ii. 409

Rae, Sir William, Lord Advocate, Scotland, ii. 267; iii. 76, 428
Railway speculation, iii. 188
Rajpoots, iii. 263, 305, 313
Redesdale, Lord, i. 221, 224; iii. 124
Reform Bill (England), ii. 180, 182, 188, 196, 208
Reform Bill (Ireland), ii. 180
Reform riots, ii. 189
Regent, Prince. *See* George IV.
Registration of voters, ii. 368
Repeal of the Union, agitation for, ii. 161, 453; iii. 34, 46, 47, 49, 272
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, ii. 142
Ricardo, Mr., iii. 220
Richards, Captain ('Pelorus'), ii. 38
Richmond, Duke of, Viceroy of Ireland, i. 33; Catholic question, i. 71, 75, 82; Pole's speech, i. 78; Irish education, i. 93; Pension Fund and patronage, i. 100, 101; retires from Lord-Lieutenancy, i. 101; Sir H. Montgomery's attack on, *ibid.*; Prince Regent, i. 106, 107; Peel and Catholic question, i. 248; resigns, ii. 247; declines Privy Seal, ii. 519
Ripon, Lord, ii. 47, 247, 394; Board of Trade, ii. 482; on Revenue deficit, ii. 496; Peel on finance, ii. 498; Corn Laws, ii. 505; timber duties, *ibid.*; Gladstone on Corn Laws, ii. 520; on Ellenborough, ii. 577; Board of Control, iii. 6; the Scinde Ameers, iii. 9, 10; the East India Company and Ellenborough, iii. 10–13, 15, 17, 20–24, 26; Peel's instructions, iii. 19, 21; Hardinge Governor-General, iii. 24–26; Peel on Crown and East India Company, iii. 24; Ellenborough's vindication, iii. 262; Ellenborough's attack on Board of Control, iii. 265; state of Ireland, iii. 480; repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 504
Robinson, Hon. F. *See* Goderich, Lord
Roden, Lord, ii. 384
Roebuck, Mr., ii. 363, 530

ROYAL

Rogers, Samuel, iii. 433, 440
Roman Catholic Association, i. 345 *et seq.*, 357, 410, 416, 424, 429; Wellington's views on, ii. 71, 74; Peel for suppression of, ii. 82, 103
Roman Catholic Board, i. 118, 134 *et seq.*
Roman Catholic Emancipation (the Catholic question), i. 66; Canning's views, i. 67; Lords Liverpool and Wellesley on, i. 68, 69; Duke of Richmond and Peel, i. 71, 72; Grattan's Bill, i. 73, 76–85; proposed securities, i. 84, 422; amended Bill and priests, i. 85; proposed interference of Spain and Portugal, i. 103; petition rejected, i. 184 *et seq.*; Catholic schism, i. 224 *et seq.*; the King's views, i. 349, 370; convention, i. 369; Relief Bill, i. 372, 451; Duke of York on, i. 373; Derry proceedings, i. 391; religious animosities in Ireland, i. 410; Irish priests, i. 416, 418 *et seq.*; its probable consequences, i. 422
Roman Catholic question, iii. 563–567
Roman Catholic Relief, ii. 46 *et seq.*, 579, iii. 563–567; Peel's idea of a settlement, ii. 59; opposed by King and Church, ii. 76, 77; Bill passed, ii. 104–106; its good effects, ii. 144
Roman Catholics and Orangemen, ii. 118; support Repeal, iii. 46; their claims for Crown patronage, iii. 53 *et seq.*; their objects in Ireland, iii. 119; Charitable Trusts Act, iii. 126–133; Peel zealous for, iii. 182, 183
Romilly, Sir S., i. 150
Rosslyn, Lord, ii. 29, 263, 482
Rothschild, Baron, ii. 570
Rothschild, Lionel, ii. 571
Rothschild, Mrs., ii. 570, 571
Rothschild, Mrs. Lionel, ii. 571
Round, Mr., iii. 337
Roundell, Mr., i. 14, 17
Rous, Admiral, iii. 308, 334
Royal Academy, the King's proposed reform of, ii. 142
Royal bounty and pensions, i. 100, 275; ii. 304–310; iii. 436–444

ROYAL

Royal Exchange, opened by the Queen, iii. 264
Royal Society, the, i. 387; Peel declines Presidency of, iii. 492
Runjeet Singh, iii. 259, 314
Russell, Lady John, iii. 344, 347
Russell, Lord John, the Catholic claims, ii. 52; his objection to Reform, ii. 176, 381, 385; Peel's retort, ii. 195; for alienation, ii. 223; Irish Church revenues, ii. 242, 247, 254, 246, 291; Lichfield House Compact, ii. 291; Home Office, ii. 312; *v.* ballot, ii. 360, 370; concession to a majority, ii. 363; Corn Laws, ii. 380, 489, iii. 220, 281; state of Ireland, ii. 383; the Bedchamber question, ii. 399–401; for Peel's protection, ii. 401; terms of his resignation, ii. 422; defence of the Government, ii. 465; fixed duty on corn, ii. 467; tries to force Peel's hand, ii. 489; obstructs direct taxation, and adjustment of Corn Laws, ii. 524, 525; censures Ellenborough, iii. 6; the Crown and East India Company, iii. 31; a commission for Ireland, iii. 104; votes for income tax, iii. 169; sent for by the Queen: attempts to form Government, iii. 241, 245, 246; Wellington and the command-in-chief, iii. 243; interview with Graham, iii. 244; his scruples, iii. 248–251; accepts and rejects office, iii. 253, 283, 289, 295; on Ellenborough's recall, iii. 269; losing ground, iii. 308; 'in simple toga,' iii. 334; on Irish Protection Bill, iii. 344, 349, 351; O'Connell's praise of, iii. 352; Villiers on, iii. 352; Lady Lyndhurst's canard, iii. 362; overtures to Wellington, iii. 454; his new Cabinet, iii. 455; advises postponement of Royal visit to Ireland, iii. 463; Graham on, iii. 463; Jew Bill, iii. 485; his overtures to Graham, iii. 500; Frederick Peel's maiden speech, iii. 508; his Irish policy, iii. 511; Poor Law charges for Ireland, iii. 516; the economical ague, iii. 516; Irish education, iii. 520; rumours about, iii. 523;

SCOTLAND

and Palmerston, iii. 534; Lady Peel declines his offer of a peerage, iii. 551
Russia, Emperor Alexander of, i. 129
Russia, in Central Asia, iii. 258; relations between England and iii. 261; jealous of our Punjab policy, iii. 276; Palmerston's abuse of, iii. 378
Rutland, Duke of, ii, 6, 20

St. Germans, Earl (Lord Eliot), Irish Chief Secretary, iii. 34, 36; on Dr. Elrington's promotion, iii. 38; *v.* Solicitor-General Jackson, iii, 39; his relations with de Grey, iii. 40–44; Peel on Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary, iii. 41; Repeal agitation, iii. 48; Lucas' resignation, iii. 111; declines Secretaryship at War, iii. 112; *v.* O'Connell, iii. 123; the Roman Catholic hierarchy, iii. 132; Peel's tribute to, iii. 178; Postmaster-General, iii. 288; Peel on Sugden, iii. 428; Peel on Sir W. Hamilton, iii. 447; Navigation Laws debate, iii. 505
Ste.-Aulaire, iii. 392
Sale, Lady, ii. 583, 592; iii. 303
Sale, Sir Robert, ii. 584, 586
Salisbury, Lord, his creation of peers, iii. 426
Salomons, Sir David, iii. 508
Sandford, Sir Daniel, ii. 327
Sandon, Lord, ii. 531; iii. 150
Saunders, Mr., ii. 549
Saurin, Right Hon. William H., Attorney-General for Ireland, i. 45; Catholic claims, i. 72; Catholic Board, i. 139; Irish law officers, i. 164; Peel and O'Connell, i. 195; removed from office, i. 307; treason in Ireland, i. 308; Peel's explanation, ii. 88
Saxton, Sir Charles, i. 37, 41, 46, 189; Peel and O'Connell, i. 190, 198; duel with Lidwill, i. 201
Scinde, annexation of, iii. 1, 7, 14; the Ameers deposed, iii. 2, 19; Peel on, iii. 17; Ellenborough's forecast, iii. 259; Hardinge on, iii. 274
Scotland, Church question in, ii.

SCOTLAND

418, 423, 429, 430, 467–474, iii. 54, 69–100; the Queen's visit to, ii. 537–545; law reform in, ii. 572; the Patronage question, iii. 69, 72, 85, 415; relations of Church and State, iii. 69–71; Dr. Chalmers on the 'call,' iii. 70; General Assembly, iii. 71, 72, 80, 84, 85, 91; Convocation of Ministers, iii. 88, 90–98; Free Church and Old Church, iii. 99; Peel on administration of justice in, iii. 483
Scott, Sir Walter, i. 318; Peel's portrait, i. 365; small notes in Scotland, i. 398; congratulates Peel, ii. 97; his lines on Pitt, quoted iii. 546
Scott, Sir William, i. 226, 250
Scottish 'Confession of Faith,' iii. 70
Scully, i. 133, 134
Seaton, Lord, ii. 437, 441
Sepoys, iii. 268, 314, 320
Seymour, Dr., iii. 541
Shaftesbury, Lord, his *Life*, cited, ii. 474
Shah Soojah, ii. 580, 583; iii. 1
Shannon, Lord, i. 58
Shaw, Charles, ii. 385, 510
Shea, Sir George, ii. 62
Shee, Sir Martin Archer, ii. 143; iii. 449
Sheerness, defences of, iii. 198, 203
Sheil, i. 345, 427; ii. 161; iii. 39, 46, 52
Shere Singh, iii. 270
Short, Rev. Thomas, i. 22, 24
Shuttleworth, Dr. Kay, ii. 541
Sicily, King of, iii. 372
Sidmouth, Lord, i. 34, 36, 87, 132; ii. 227
Sievrac, i. 407, 408
Sikhs, the, iii. 263, 266, 267, 270, 274, 277–279, 296, 310, 474
Simla Proclamation, the, ii. 601
Sinclair, Sir George, iii. 73–79, 87
Sinclair, Sir John, i. 408
Singleton, Archdeacon, ii. 351
Skelmersdale, Lord, ii. 277
Small Debts Bill, ii. 35
Smith, Adam, ii. 556; iii. 193
Smith, Goldwin, i. 23
Smith, Mr., of Deanston, iii. 162
Smith, Sir Culling, iii. 494
Smith, Rev. Sydney, i. 400, 402; ii. 21

STANLEY

Somerset, Lord Fitzroy, ii. 72, 184
Somerset, Lord Granville, ii. 330, 366, 495; iii. 327
Somerville, Mrs., ii. 308
Somerville, Sir William, ii. 355
Somnauth Gates, ii. 597–600; iii. 3, 6
Southey, Robert, *Madoc*, ii. 97; his portrait, ii. 100, iii. 433; offer of baronetcy to, ii. 304; his gratitude to Peel, ii. 310
Spain, protective for prohibitory duties, iii. 373; Peel's counsel to, iii. 390, 391
'Spectator,' the, ii. 399
Spencer, Lord, ii. 26, 103, 176, 216, 222, 246–249, 252, 253, 506; iii. 170
Spring Rice, Thos. *See* Monteagle, Lord
Stafford, Lord and Lady, ii. 165
'Standard,' ii. 96, 218, 260
Stanley, Dean, iii. 374
Stanley, Mr., ii. 180
Stanley, Lord, Whig overtures, ii. 163, 165; Whig disunion, ii. 221, 223, 337; and Lord Althorp, ii. 246; resigns, ii. 247; Irish Church revenues, ii. 242; Peel's overtures to, ii. 257–259, 274; the old leaven (?), ii. 266; on Lord Londonderry, ii. 269; visions of the helm, ii. 277, 280; supports Peel, ii. 289, 298, 322, 400; on municipal reform, ii. 312; on Peel, Lord Rector of Glasgow, ii. 327; an extraordinary conversation, ii. 335; a non-content, ii. 337; the Government and Canada, ii. 355; on Molesworth's motion, ii. 358; Brougham, ii. 360; 'cautious abstinence is best,' ii. 362; Lord Durham and Canada, ii. 370; on Peel's Cabinet, ii. 392. 394. 482; a word for Ripon, ii. 394; concurs with Wellington, ii. 425; iii. 155; Peel on Stratford Canning, ii. 485; *v.* income tax, ii. 493; the Revenue Commission, ii. 495; Peel on Lord Clare's appointment, ii. 512; increase of army, ii. 573; Irish national education, iii. 35; conciliation to Catholics, iii. 60; the Maynooth grant, iii. 66; education of Catholics in Ireland, iii. 107;

STANLEY

called to the Upper House, iii. 154–159; and Wellington, iii. 155; on Peel's Budget speech, iii. 170; Tenants' Compensation Bill, iii. 177; Peel on national defence, iii. 195, 196; Wellington on national defence, iii. 202, 206, 207, 216; Lord Metcalfe's despatch, iii. 216; opposes Peel's Corn Law proposals, iii. 231, 236, 240, 327; his loss felt in House of Commons, iii. 269; persists in resigning, iii. 284; on Gladstone and Buccleuch, iii. 287; Peel on his position, iii. 309; too credulous, iii. 357; Peel's advice on Canada, iii. 379, 383; Wellington's comments, iii. 382–384
Stanmore, Lord. *See* Gordon, Sir Arthur
Steel, Mr., ii. 70, 73
Stephenson, Colonel, i. 339, 340
Stephenson, George, iii. 162
Stewart, Patrick, ii. 473
Stipendiary Chairmen, proposed appointment of, ii. 549
Stockmar, Baron, ii. 281; iii. 329, 547
Stopford, Mr., iii. 39
Stowell, Lord, ii. 139
Strafford, Lord, ii. 226; iii. 504
Strahlenheim, Baron de, ii. 353
Strangford, Lord, ii. 268
Strathbogie Presbytery, iii. 71, 75, 82, 85
Stuart, Lord, ii. 156, 157
Sturt, Mr., iii. 335, 337
Sugar duties, ii. 497, 498, 503; iii. 150, 153, 171, 270
Sugden, Sir Edward, Irish Lord Chancellor, iii. 34, 48–51, 53, 55, 187
Sumner, Holme, i. 334
'Sunday Times,' i. 336
Suppression Bill (Ireland), ii. 103
Sussex, Duke of, ii. 101
Sutlej river, the, iii. 258, 259, 267, 274, 297, 305, 307
Sweden, iii. 373
Sweden, Crown Prince of, i. 128
Switzerland, iii. 69
Symonds, Sir W., iii. 200

TAHITI, iii. 218; French violence to British consul-missionary, iii. 394

ULTRA

Talbot, Lord, Irish Viceroy, i. 266, 383; ii. 193, 197, 217, 227, 541, 549; iii. 41
Tamworth manifesto, ii. 274
Tavistock, Lady, ii. 460
Tavistock, Lord, ii. 244, 247
Taylor, Mr., ii. 43, 44
Taylor, Sir Herbert, i. 435; ii. 3, 153, 155, 179, 279–282; iii. 497, 498
Templemore, Lord, ii. 321
'Ten Years' Conflict,' iii. 70, 94
Tenants' Compensation Bill (Ireland), iii. 177
Tennent, Emerson, ii. 394
Tennyson, Alfred, iii. 439–442
Thames, defences of, iii. 198, 201
Thiers, M., iii. 408
Thompson, Poulett, ii. 441
Thornhill, Rev. Bache, i. 20
Thursfield, J. R., his *Peel*, quoted, iii. 139
Tierney, i. 64, 289; ii. 3, 12, 20
Tillotson, Dr., *Sermons*, ii. 43, 44
Timber duties, ii. 505
'Times,' the, ii. 478; iii. 356
Tindal, Chief Justice, iii. 124
Tipperary, state of, ii. 64, 125, 132, iii. 190; the demons of, ii. 160
Tithe Bill (Ireland), ii. 220, 299–301, 345
Tithe Commutation Bill (England), ii. 248
Tocqueville, M. de, ii. 333
Tollemache, ii. 409
Tomlinson, Dr., Bishop of Gibraltar, iii. 545
Tone, T. Wolfe, i. 82
Townsend, Lord John, i. 269
Townshend, Captain, R.N., ii. 350
Townshend, Lord, iii. 558
Tractarians *v.* Protestants, ii. 474
Trench, Hon. and Rev. C. Le P., i. 232
Trevelyan, Sir Charles, iii. 469, 481, 482, 512
Trial by jury in Ireland, iii. 161, 124, 272
Trinity College, Cambridge, ii. 283
Tucker, Mr., Director East India Company, ii. 580; iii. 11
Turkey, and Greece, ii. 34
Turton, Dr., Dean of Westminster, iii. 417

ULSTER Presbyterians, ii. 67
Ultra-Protectionists, iii. 193

ULTRA

Ultra-Tories, ii. 170, 186, 337, 532
United States. *See* America

Van Mildert, Dr., Bishop of Durham, i. 20; ii. 77
Vandeleur, Right Hon. J. O., i. 279
Vansittart, Mr., i. 211, 216, 251, 290; Chancellor of Exchequer, i. 336
Veto Act, iii. 71, 92, 94
Victoria, Queen, her accession to the throne, ii. 348; sends for Wellington and Peel, ii. 388, 390; the Household question, ii. 392, 396, 456, 485; her opinion of the Tories, ii. 405; her engagement, ii. 408, 414; her letter to Lady Tavistock, ii. 460; yields to Melbourne, ii. 464; birth of Prince of Wales, ii. 511; business in Parliament, ii. 525; visit to Scotland, ii. 537–545; on the recent tumults, ii. 541; Drummond's assassination, ii. 552, 559; on obstruction in House of Commons, ii. 568; her relations with Peel, ii. 584; Peel defends Ellenborough, iii. 5; Ellenborough appeals to, iii. 16; on Ellenborough's recall, iii. 22; on Hardinge's appointment, iii. 26; determined to prevent Repeal, iii. 50, 51; Church in Scotland, iii. 96; praises Peel's Irish policy, iii. 109; Peel on finance, and on Factory Act, iii. 147; the Budget of 1844, iii. 150; the sugar duties, iii. 153; on Stanley, iii. 159; her Royal guests, iii. 161, 162; second Free Trade Budget, iii. 171; King of Belgians on Peel, iii. 172; Maynooth Bill, iii. 173, 176; proposed visit to Ireland, iii. 181; correspondence with Peel on his resignation, iii. 234–254; Wellington and the command-in-chief, iii. 243; Peel's farewell to, iii. 243, 253; Russell's proposals, iii. 245; opens Royal Exchange, iii. 264; on Hardinge, iii. 266, 273; Peel Premier, iii. 283, 284; her cordial letter to Peel, iii. 285; honours for Hardinge and Gough, iii. 307;

WELLINGTON

satisfied with, and confident in, Peel's Free Trade policy, iii. 326, 338, 339; Peel's Corn Bill speech, iii. 340; analysis of the division, iii. 342; Sir R. Inglis, iii. 343; visits France, iii. 392, 393; her misgivings about Wellington and Ellenborough, iii. 412; Wilberforce, Dean of Westminster, iii. 417; John Peel, Dean of Worcester, iii. 420; her deep concern at losing Peel's services, iii. 451; Peel's gratitude, iii. 452; grants Peel's request, iii. 453; on Peel's death, iii. 547; her offering to Lady Peel, iii. 558
'Victoria and Albert,' royal yacht, iii. 200
Villiers, Charles, ii. 382; iii. 221, 336, 352, 371
Vyvyan, Sir R., ii. 170

Wade, Marshal, iii. 514
Wakefield, Gibbon, iii. 44
Waldemar, Prince, iii. 298, 314
Wales, Prince of, ii. 511; iii. 431, 452
Walpole, Spencer H., iii. 550
Walpole's *History*, ii. 189, 214, 226
Ward, Mr., ii. 242, 244, 247; iii. 173
Warren, Mr., iii. 43
Warrender, Sir George, i. 295
Watson, Sir Frederick, ii. 147
'Waverers,' the, ii. 185
Webber, Mr., i. 226, 246
Webber, Rev. James, i. 18
Wellesley, Marquis of, i. 44, 45 Catholic question, i. 69; Irish Viceroy, i. 302; on Peel as Home Secretary, i. 306; treason in Ireland, i. 310; at issue with Goulburn, i. 354; marriage, i. 378; Catholic Association, i. 431; Insurrection Act and Orange processions, i. 495 *et seq.*; his esteem for Peel, ii. 32; his Commission of Captain-General, ii. 578; iii. 301
Wellington, Duke of, Catholic question, i. 83; Vittoria, i. 102; Waterloo, i. 180; advice to Canning, i. 336; fears civil war in Ireland, i. 348; the King and

WELLINGTON

Catholic question, i. 350; plots in Paris, i. 359; O'Connell's prosecution, i. 368; Roman Catholic bishops *in pontificalibus*, i. 378; bimetallism and small-note currency, i. 394, 395; Irish affairs, i. 417; Commander-in-Chief, i. 433–437; claim on premiership, i. 452 *et seq.*; resigns command-in-chief, i. 482, 492, ii. 2, 32; on the press, i. 484; King's attitude towards, ii. 4, 6; resumes command-in-chief, ii. 7, 534–537; at Windsor, ii. 18, 26, 70; his relations with Peel, ii. 27, 186, 232 *et seq.*, 317, 319, 321, 365–367, 387, 433, 442, 448, 460, iii. 291; forms Cabinet, ii. 29; on King and Duke of Clarence, ii. 42; the Galway election, ii. 62, 63; Lord Anglesey's recall, ii. 66, 68, 70; on Roman Catholic Association, ii. 71, 74; on O'Connell, ii. 74, 462; urges Peel to keep office, ii. 80; Metropolitan Police Bill, ii. 115; on Duke of Cumberland, ii. 118, 323; Roman Catholic aggression, ii. 119; strong measures for Ireland, ii. 121; Government patronage in Ireland, ii. 139, 140; Jewish disabilities, ii. 145; on the King's illness, ii. 149, 153; Reform, ii. 166, 185, 203, 207; Reform riots, ii. 169; resigns, ii. 170; Peel's Reform speech, ii. 177; Irish Church Bill, ii. 218; Chancellor of Oxford, ii. 227–231; his *Speeches*, quoted, ii. 235; a locum tenens, ii. 252; Peel on diplomatic appointments, ii. 268; on retrenchment, ii. 275; on Peel's position, ii. 296; the Government defeats, ii. 302; municipal reform, ii. 313; Irish Municipal Bill, ii. 338–344; Peel on Canada, ii. 355; no concert with Radicals, ii. 358; Molesworth's motion, ii. 363; Brougham, ii. 369; Lord Durham, ii. 370; Lord Grey, ii. 375; Croker, ii. 376, 412, 414; Corn Laws and Canada, ii. 378–383, 443, 444; Lord Roden's motion, ii. 384; on 'followers,' ii. 385; sent for by Queen, ii. 388; accepts

WELLINGTON

Foreign Office, ii. 391; the Queen's Household, ii. 397, 417; Radical threats, ii. 401; Irish representative peerage, ii. 413; party prospects—a forecast, ii. 415–419; questions for decision—navy and army, Ireland, Scotland, education, ii. 418, 419; the address, ii. 425; doubts and difficulties, ii. 426; Scottish Church, ii. 429, iii. 90; a deficient revenue, ii. 431; a doubtful supporter, ii. 444, 445; his deafness, ii. 450; the Government in difficulties, ii. 451; his advice to young William Peel, ii. 452, iii. 483; France and the peace of Europe, ii. 454; the approaching crisis, ii. 461; Aberdeen's Scottish Church Bill, ii. 468; Peel on election of Speaker, ii. 476; Fine Arts Commission, ii. 510; on Hardwicke and Buckingham, ii. 521; the Queen's visit to Scotland, ii. 539; increase of army, ii. 573; Ellenborough, ii. 576, 582, 594, 599, iii. 23; military measures in Afghanistan, ii. 582; Scinde, iii. 14; *v.* repeal, iii. 47; a Commission for Ireland, iii. 63, 64; Irish franchise, iii. 109; Stanley's removal to the Lords, iii. 156; Gladstone's retirement from Board of Trade, iii. 168; Tenants' Compensation Bill, iii. 178; force for Ireland, iii. 190; on arming merchant ships, iii. 196; national defence—his official protest, iii. 198, 201–207; progress of steam navigation, 'bridges across the Channel,' iii. 199, 203; Peel's reply, iii. 207–215; potato crop in Ireland, iii. 225; supports Peel's Corn Law proposals, iii. 236; retains command-in-chief by the Queen's desire, iii. 243; Peel's resumption of office, iii. 285; zealous for Peel, iii. 291; Peel's Free Trade policy, iii. 326, 522; Assassination Bill, iii. 352, 353; Hardinge's Annuity Bill, iii. 353; the cabal against Peel, iii. 361; his comments on Peel's forecast, iii. 364, 365;

WELLINGTON

resignation of Government, iii. 367; Bagot's Canadian policy, iii. 382, 385, 386; our relations with France, iii. 390, 404-408; Aberdeen's protest, iii. 397, 404; his creation of peers, iii. 426, 427; on Royal Bounty, iii. 436; Russell and the Whig overtures, iii. 454; for repeal of Navigation Laws, iii. 504; Peel's powerful and able speech on Free Trade, iii. 522; his tribute in House of Lords to Peel's memory, iii. 546
Welsh, Dr., iii. 95
Wemyss, Earl of (Hon. F. Charteris), iii. 337
Wesleyan Methodists, iii. 271
Wesleyans, ii. 560
West Indies, ii. 497, 503
Westbury, Peel M.P. for, ii. 104
Westmeath, Lord, iii. 510
Westmorland, Lady, iii. 351
Wetherall, Attorney-General, ii. 106
Wharncliffe, Lord, ii. 185, 191, 193, 194, 576; iii. 287, 508
Whately, Dr., Archbishop of Dublin, ii. 101
Wheatstone, Professor, iii. 162
Whewell, Dr., Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, iii. 422, 423
Whigs, weakness of, ii. 373; the Jamaica question—fall of the ministry, ii. 388; their policy of deficits, ii. 410; alliance with O'Connell, ii. 454; *v.* Peel, ii. 524; their failure to govern Ireland, iii. 461-470, 501
Whitworth, Lord, i. 57; Viceroy of Ireland, i. 101, 128, iii. 41; Catholic Board, i. 138; Peel and O'Connell, i. 189, 195
Wilcox, chief magistrate (Ireland), i. 152, 419

YOUNG

Wilkie, Sir David, ii. 143
William I., of Germany, iii. 505-507
William IV., his accession, ii. 153; his impromptu speech, ii. 154; approves Peel's police scheme, ii. 169; on Reform Bill, ii. 178, 203; on dissolution, ii. 193; sends for Lyndhurst, ii. 203; limits of Coronation Oath, ii. 218; sends for Peel, ii. 251; dismisses Melbourne, ii. 253; Peel Prime Minister, ii. 256, 263, 264
Willoughby, Sir H., ii. 222
Wilson, Sir Robert, ii. 449
Wilton, Lord, ii. 313
Winchilsea, Lord, iii. 271
Wintle, Mr., ii. 229
'Witness,' the, ii. 470
Wood, Ellis, i. 11
Wood, R., Hardinge's A.D.C., iii. 299
Wood, Mr., ii. 266
Wood, Sir Charles, iii. 481, 504, 507, 526
Wordsworth, Dr. Christopher, iii. 423
Wordsworth, William, ii. 304; iii. 433, 437, 438
Würtemberg, King of, iii. 373
Wynn, Hon. C. W. W., i. 342
Wynn, Mr., ii. 483
Wynne, Charles, ii. 185
Wynne, John, iii. 510
Wyse, Thomas S., iii. 110

YARMOUTH, Earl of. *See* Hertford, Marquis of
Yates, Colonel, i. 287, 326; ii. 94
Yeomanry Cavalry, ii. 540
York, Duke of, i. 373, 433
Yorke, Right Hon. C., i. 247
Young, John, iii. 464, 480, 481, 525, 532

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