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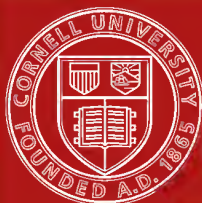
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POLITICAL SPEECHES IN
SCOTLAND.

(SECOND SERIES.)

SOLD ALSO BY

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POLITICAL SPEECHES IN SCOTLAND,

MARCH AND APRIL 1880.

BY

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING ADDRESSES TO THE MIDLOTHIAN ELECTORS,
AND A LETTER TO COUNT KAROLYI.

Revised Edition.

EDINBURGH: ANDREW ELLIOT.

1880.

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P R E F A C E.



THIS second series of speeches is published in order to complete what may justly be called the history of an electoral campaign unequalled in the eloquence and the power of the speaker, but also unequalled in the results he produced. As in the first series, an Itinerary and an Index have been prefixed, whilst an Appendix has been added, to include Mr. GLADSTONE'S addresses to the electors, and one or two important letters bearing upon matters mentioned in the text, but placed at the end of the volume in order to avoid a disconnection of ideas.

To the wide circulation of the former series the Liberal party owes not a little of its present success, and it may be fairly anticipated that a perusal of these later speeches will exercise a similar influence upon the public mind.

J. J. R.

ITINERARY.

TUESDAY, MARCH 16.

Mr. Gladstone left London for Scotland. Enthusiastic gatherings at King's Cross Station, Grantham, York, and Berwick-upon-Tweed. Address presented at Newcastle from the Gateshead Liberals. Reception at Edinburgh.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17.

Speech (fourth) to the Midlothian Electors (Edinburgh District) in the Music Hall.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18.

Speeches (fifth and sixth) to the Midlothian Electors at Corstorphine and Ratho.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19.

Speeches (seventh and eighth) to the Midlothian Electors at Davidson's Mains, and in the Corn Exchange, Dalkeith.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20.

Presentation of Address by the Liberal Electors of Juniper Green, and Reply. Speeches at Balerno and Midcalder.

MONDAY, MARCH 22.

Opening of the Scottish Liberal Club. Mr. Gladstone briefly addressed the City of Edinburgh United Liberal Committee in Queen Street Hall. Speeches to the Electors of Midlothian at Gilmerton and Loanhead.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23.

Speeches to the Midlothian Electors at Gorebridge and Pathhead.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24.

Penicuik—Open-air Meeting. Speech to the Electors.

MONDAY, MARCH 29.

Luncheon at Dalmeny House to the Parish Conveners and Agents of the Liberal Committee. Speech by Mr. Gladstone.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30.

Visit to Stow. Presentation of the Freedom of the Burgh of Peebles. Enthusiastic reception at Innerleithen. Speech to the Midlothian Electors at Stow.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31.

Nomination of Mr. Gladstone. Visit to the Corn Exchange. Meeting with Committee of Scottish Liberal Club. Inaugural Banquet of the Scottish Liberal Club, and Speech by Mr. Gladstone.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1.

Speech to the Midlothian Electors at Bonnyrigg.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2.

Speech to the Midlothian Electors (West Calder District) at West Calder.

MONDAY, APRIL 5.

Election Day. Speech from a balcony in George Street after the Declaration of the Poll.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6.

Mr. Gladstone visited Linlithgow, and afterwards left Dalmeny House for Hawarden Castle, Chester.

SATURDAY, MAY 8.

Mr. Gladstone, having accepted the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and of Chancellor of the Exchequer, was re-elected without opposition.

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I.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 1880.

SPEECH IN MUSIC HALL, EDINBURGH.

MR. GLADSTONE on entering the hall, after acknowledging the enthusiastic greeting there accorded him, took his seat on the right of the chair, which was occupied by Mr. Duncan M'Laren, M.P. Among those on the platform were Mrs. Gladstone, Sir W. Gibson Carmichael, Mr. M'Lagan, M.P., Mrs. M'Laren, Mr. R. A. Macfie of Dreghorn, Professor Hodgson, Messrs. Wm. Carmichael, yr. of Hailes; George Gibson Carmichael, Hailes; J. J. Reid; T. D. Brodie, W.S.; Wm. Hutchison, Carlowrie; Melvin; D. Brand; Hunter, Shields; John Penman, Colinton; D. Nicolson; Ralph Richardson, W.S.

The right hon. gentleman, who on rising was received with great enthusiasm, said:—

Gentlemen,—When I last had the honour of addressing you in this hall, I endeavoured in some degree to open the great case which I was in hopes would, in conformity with what I may call constitutional usage, then have been brought at once before you. The arguments which we made for a dissolution were received with the usual contempt, and the Parliament was summoned to attempt, for the first time in our history, the regular business of a seventh session. I am not going now to argue on the propriety of this course, because, meeting you here in the capital of the county and of Scotland, I am anxious to go straight to the very heart of the matter;

and, amidst the crowd of topics that rush upon the mind, to touch upon some of those which you will judge to be most closely and most intimately connected with the true merits of the great issue that is before us.

At last the dissolution has come, and I postpone the consideration of the question why it has come, the question how it has come, on which there are many things to be said. It has come, and you are about to give your votes upon an occasion which, allow me to tell you, entails not only upon me, but upon you, a responsibility greater than you ever had to undergo. I believe that I have the honour of addressing a mixed meeting, a meeting principally and very largely composed of freeholders of the county, but in which warm and decided friends are freely mingled with those who have not declared in our favour, or even with those who may intend to vote against us.

Now, gentlemen, let me say a word in the first place to those whom I must for the moment call opponents. I am not going to address them in the language of flattery. I am not going to supplicate them for the conferring of a favour. I am not going to appeal to them on any secondary or any social ground. I am going to speak to them as Scotchmen and as citizens; I am going to speak to them of the duty that they owe to the Empire at this moment; I am going to speak to them of the condition of the Empire, of the strength of the Empire, and of the honour of the Empire, and it is upon those issues that I respectfully ask for their support. I am glad that notwithstanding my Scotch blood, and notwithstanding the association of my father and my grandfather with this county, it is open to our opponents, if they like, to describe me as a stranger; because I am free to admit that I stand here in consequence of an invitation, and in consequence of treatment the most generous and the most gratifying that ever was accorded to man. And I venture to assure every one of my opponents, that if I beg respectfully

to have some credit for upright motive, that credit I at once accord to them. I know very well they are not accustomed to hear it given me; I know very well that in the newspapers which they read they will find that violent passion, that outrageous hatred, that sordid greed for office, are the motives, and the only motives, by which I am governed. Many of these papers constitute, in some sense, their daily food; but I have such faith in their intelligence, and in the healthiness of their constitution as Scotchmen, that I believe that many of them will, by the inherent vigour of that constitution, correct and neutralize the poison thus administered—will consent to meet me upon equal grounds, and will listen to the appeal which I make.

The appeal I make to them is this: if my position here is a serious one, their position is serious too. My allegations have been before you for a length of time. I will not now again read to a Midlothian audience the letter in which I first accepted this candidature. By every word of that letter I abide; in support of every allegation which that letter contains I am ready to bring detailed and conclusive proof. Those allegations—I say to you, gentlemen, to that portion of my audience—those allegations are of the most serious character. I admit, as freely as you can urge, that if they be unfounded, then my responsibility—nay, my culpability—before my country cannot be exaggerated. But, on the other hand, if those allegations be true,—if it be true that the resources of Great Britain have been misused; if it be true that the international law of Europe has been broken; if it be true that the law of this country has been broken; if it be true that the good name of this land has been tarnished and defaced; if it be true that its condition has been needlessly aggravated by measures both useless and wanton and mischievous in themselves,—then your responsibility is as great as mine. For I fully admit that in 1874 you incurred no great or special responsibility. You

were tired of the Liberal Government, you were dissatisfied with them. [Cries of 'No, no.'] Oh, I beg pardon; I am addressing my opponents.

You know very well, gentlemen, that the usual differences of party in this country are, after all, differences lying within certain limits. When Lord Russell led one side of the House of Commons and Sir Robert Peel led the other side of the House of Commons, that did not mean that those two distinguished and illustrious men were upon all points at variance. No; it was well known that on things deeply concerning what was vital to the honour and interests of the Empire their minds and hearts were substantially at one. And therefore I am making no great charge against you when I, a little while ago, complained that you sent us summarily about our business when we were endeavouring to do the best we could for you. I reserve just that innocent title to myself; but I make no charge against you. The case is different now. These great issues have been raised, and I am glad that they were raised, fairly enough stated, the night before last in the House of Lords by the highest authority—by the present Prime Minister. You will see by and by what is the nature of the issue as it was stated by him. What I wish to put before you is this, that if our allegations be true, then, pray, recollect that you are now invited to assume for yourselves, each and every one of you, the place hitherto occupied by the responsible Government. The responsible Government, as I have stated from this place, and state again, has been supported by the majority of the House of Commons. That majority of the House of Commons has freely taken over the responsibility, which, in the first instance, was that of Ministers alone; but now it is to come a step farther; it is come to your thresholds; it is going to enter at your doors; and, gentlemen, if you choose to vote for the members of that majority who have taken over that responsibility, and have now to bear the burden of these

charges,—which is a great burden, if the charges be true,—then these charges rest upon you; and it is you—and not the existing Ministry, and not the Parliament now nearly defunct—that must answer your consciences and your country for the ill that has been done.

Scotchmen, I believe, as much as Englishmen, like plain speaking, and I hope I have given you some proof that if that be your taste I endeavour to meet it as well as I can, and I thank you heartily for the manner in which, by your kindly and, I may almost say, rapt attention, you have enabled me to say what I think the truth, whether it be palatable or whether it be not. Now, the great question we have been debating actively for the last three or four years—for I do not carry back the pith of what I have principally to say to the six years of the Government,—is the question of the policy which has been pursued during that time; most especially by far the policy of the last two years, and the effect of that policy upon the condition of the country, upon the legislation of the country, upon the strength of the Empire, and, above all, upon the honour of the Empire. It is a great advantage to have the issue raised from the opposite quarter, and from the very highest point of the opposite quarter. For the first time in my life, on the occasion of a general election, it is attempted by the leaders who are in power, and especially by the very eminent and distinguished man who is the heart and soul and life and centre of the Government, to have this great cause tried, not upon the merits of the Government, but upon the merits of the Opposition. I have never known an instance of that kind before. I have always found that it was considered to be the business of the Opposition to challenge and criticize the Government, and of the country to try the criticisms. But the Government appear to think that that process had better be reversed, and among the long list of innovations which they have introduced, perhaps the latest is this, that

The recent policy of the Government is the question at issue.

it is to be the demerits of the Opposition, not the merits of the Government, which the country is invited to try. It is sedulously endeavoured to put about charges against the Liberals—charges founded upon intentions which are imputed to them, and charges of which I will endeavour to show you the futility. [Some member of the Government—I really do not know who—but some member of the Government has propagated—when I say I do not know who, what I mean is, that several members of the Government, subordinate members of it, are just as free in the use of their tongues, and in the making of charges, as if they were members of the Patriotic Association; and one of those gentlemen has said that it is understood, I believe he said it is confessed, I believe he said it has been alleged by me, that if the Liberals come into power, we shall at once make an end of all the engagements into which the present Government have entered, and relieve the country from the consequences at no other expense than that of its honour and good faith.] Gentlemen, a more baseless fiction never was conceived in the brain of man, for I suppose it was conceived in the brain,—I do not know that there is any other organ that is capable of it,—and never was imputed in words by his tongue or by his faculty of speech. We have no power to relieve you from engagements of honour and good faith entered into by the present Government through a summary process. However we may disapprove them, however we may deplore them, however we have striven to point out,—not to you, for you have not had a fair chance yet, but to that majority in the House of Commons which has been perfectly deaf to our arguments,—however we may have striven to point out to them the mischiefs and the dangers of the course they were pursuing, we must take the consequences; the country must take the consequences. Prudence, care, diligence, may do much in the course of time; but whatever faith requires must be accepted and fulfilled. Allow me, if you please, as I

*However we
may deplore
the engage-
ments entered
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fulfil them.*

believe I am always supposed to be the most guilty among all the guilty members of the Liberal party—allow me to quote an interesting case from my own experience. I first entered the councils of the British Sovereign in the year 1843, —now thirty-seven years ago,—and it was just after there had been performed in India one of those exploits which, in some respects, resemble what you have lately witnessed and heard of—a war had been made upon a neighbouring Asiatic Power, upon the Ameer of Scinde. That war had been conducted with brilliant military skill by Sir Charles Napier; that war had attained not only an apparent and immediate, but, in a military sense, a complete success; that war had added to the Indian Empire a province in respect to which there was not the smallest difficulty in permanently consolidating it with the magnificent fabric of that Empire, and a province which, instead of being a drain upon its resources, was an addition to its resources. Finally, the war of Scinde was one which in no degree tended to raise ulterior dangers or ulterior differences with any of the Powers of Europe. So far that war was satisfactory, and the war party of this country, such as we have known them during the last two or three years, would no doubt have hailed it with unmixed vociferations of joy and satisfaction, and would have glorified the men who had made it, conducted it, and brought it to its conclusion.

Well, I may, and I think I must say, that the first serious deliberation in which, as a responsible Minister, I was called to take part, was a deliberation upon the proceedings of Lord Ellenborough. As Sir Charles Napier was the military arm of the country in that war, so Lord Ellenborough was the inspirer and prompter of the measure, and was one who considered that in performing it he had rendered a great service to his country. Now, I wish you, and I wish my opponents, to consider how the Conservatives of those days looked upon such wars. When that measure

came before the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, do you suppose that that Cabinet was a Cabinet insensible to the honour of the country? do you think that the Duke of Wellington, who was a member of that Cabinet, and whom I had the honour of calling my colleague, was a man insensible to the honour of the country, or was a man upon whom any one would have dared to cast the reproach that he was indifferent to maintaining the unity and the greatness of the Empire? But how did the Duke of Wellington, how did Sir Robert Peel, how did Lord Derby, the last deceased head of the modern Conservative party, the regenerated Conservative party, the educated Conservative party, whose education, or at least the announcement of whose education, began in this city of Edinburgh, how did they look upon the war of Scinde? I am speaking for them, for well do I recollect the unanimous sentiment of that Cabinet. We felt that the acquisition was valuable; we felt that the war was glorious; we felt that the skill was great; we felt that the policy had been perfectly successful. But there was one flaw in the case,—one element it wanted to commend it to the minds and judgments of that Cabinet,—and that was the simple consideration that the war was unjust. That was the uniform, the unanimous sense of the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, including, besides the Duke of Wellington, another soldier who afterwards distinguished himself upon the plains of India—I mean Lord Hardinge, than whom a purer and more honourable man, a man less capable of being dazzled by military glory, never entered into the councils of his sovereign. But did that Cabinet in consequence recede from the possession of Scinde? Nothing of the kind; one and all we felt that the act was an act done. We asked ourselves the question whether by undoing it, as responsible before God and man—the question was asked whether by undoing it we should or should not contribute to the peace, happiness; and prosperity of Asia. Disapproving it and condemn-

The Scinde War in 1843 as an illustration of this principle.

ing it, believing it to be bad from the beginning to the end, yet we saw, and saw plainly, that the attempt to undo it would in all probability plunge Asia into disaster and into conflagration, and therefore the responsibility of governing that country was at once accepted by the Government of Sir Robert Peel.

Now, I use that as an illustration. The war of Scinde, in my opinion, compares very favourably with the war in Afghanistan. Bad as it was, it is not for a moment to be held that it carried as deep a dye of guilt, or that it involved as astonishing a superabundance of folly. In Scinde we invaded no nationality. We did not set ourselves against a nation; we ran no risk,—as the event has proved,—we ran no risk of making ourselves odious and detested for generations by a high-spirited and warlike people. In Scotland you know something, and my ancestry knew something, of what was the spirit of mountain clans. But we have chosen to cast ourselves into conflict with that spirit in Afghanistan. We did it once; we suffered heavily for it; we sowed the seeds of a long hatred; we have now done it again. I do not intend at present to enter upon the details of it, because I want to come to a more general issue; but I think I have shown you my proposition, that Governments of England, even although they may disapprove of measures which have been taken, yet if these measures involved them in moral obligations which they cannot cast aside, they look at no question but this: What is our duty for the happiness of those whom we are appointed to rule, and for the honour of the Empire to which it is our delight to belong? And I hope that I have now sufficiently for the moment disposed of this I must say ludicrous, or even more than ludicrous assumption, which I have taken out of the mouth of one of the members of the Government—that the Liberals, if they come into power, are to begin by repudiating engagements that the present Ministry have contracted.

I go now to what is yet more important, because it is broader; and it is the issue described by Lord Beaconsfield, which I will read to you in the words which purport to be his own. I read them, gentlemen, from the *Times* newspaper, which has the credit of reporting speeches in Parliament as well or better than any other. But I am obliged to say here, what I have often said elsewhere, that, within my experience, there is no reporting of speeches in this country so imperfect as the reporting of Parliamentary speeches. The reporting here, I have not the least doubt, is most admirable. I can only say—and it is a debt I rejoice to pay publicly—that when the speeches made by me were sent to me for correction, I did not find one single error that in the slightest degree imported any defect of faculty or any want of care on the part of any of the reporters. I have endeavoured to ascertain, and I think I may say I have ascertained by referring to a variety of papers, that whatever the particular expressions may be, the purport of Lord Beaconsfield's speech on Monday night is correctly given now. I read you a passage from that speech: 'I maintain that unless we take our place in the councils of Europe in a becoming manner, the peace of the world will be endangered.' [Slight cheers.] Oh, that is perfectly true. I perfectly agree with that. I cannot join with my friends in adopting the same method of testifying my approval. But I quite agree that that is perfectly true and perfectly right. 'I maintain that the best security for possessing general peace lies in increasing and upholding the influence of this country. The opposite system has been tried by the Ministry, of which the noble Lord (Earl Granville) was one of the ablest members, and what was the result? If we have had to encounter trouble and to meet great difficulties in Europe and Asia, those difficulties were the consequence of the policy of those who preceded us. That policy we have not followed. Our policy we have fairly put before the country, and its verdict will soon be given.' Now it is

Lord Beaconsfield's speech.

difficult to praise a passage with the central assertion of which you entirely disagree, but I do praise this passage for the clearness with which it raises the issue. As I have told you, it seems to admit that the state of things is very bad, but it is all the fault of the Government that preceded the present. They did not maintain the influence of the country. They pursued a system the opposite of maintaining and upholding the influence of the country, and the consequence was that when the present Government came into office they found the relations of this country with other countries in a most unsatisfactory state, and great difficulties arose in consequence of that gross abandonment of duty by the former Administration. That, I think, is what it comes to. You have heard the words, probably many of you may have read them in this newspaper or the *Standard*; or in other newspapers, as far as I know, their purport is given in a manner exactly the same.

Now I want, as far as my time goes, and I cannot traverse the whole field to-day, but I want to exhibit and to set before you first of all the question, whether this allegation of the Prime Minister can be brought to a summary and conclusive trial in the course of two or three minutes; and, secondly, I am afraid at rather greater length, to set before you what I think to be a true picture of the manner in which the late Government, and the manner in which the present Government have maintained and upheld the influence of this country.

First of all, I take the summary process to try whether it be true that when we quitted office we left the foreign relations in this unsatisfactory condition, which, according to Lord Beaconsfield, had produced a situation in Europe and in Asia that was full of difficulties,—that we sowed the seed of the deplorable harvest our successors have had to reap. I am going to adopt what I think you will admit to be rather a summary method of dealing with that allegation. I am going to deal with it out of the mouth of the Ministry

Did the Liberals in 1874 leave the foreign relations of this country in an unsatisfactory state?

themselves. I am going to deal with it out of the mouth of the trusted Foreign Minister of that Ministry—out of the mouth of Lord Derby, who all his life long down to 1874, and through 1874, and through 1875, and through 1876, and through 1877, and until he resigned office in 1878, was looked up to by the whole party as their guide in dealing with the foreign policy of the country, and as the man whom they—I have no doubt with perfect sincerity, and, I admit, with a very great deal of truth too—held up as singularly competent to maintain its honour, to appreciate its conditions,

The opinion of the Tory Foreign Secretary on taking office.

and to conduct its foreign relations. Lord Derby took an occasion on the 19th March 1874, almost immediately after he had taken office—when he had been about a month or perhaps six weeks in office, and had had time to survey the state of things in the foreign department; and did he say, ‘I have found in existence a system under which the influence of this country has not been increased or upheld, and in consequence great difficulties have arisen in Europe and Asia?’ That is what you are now told. That is the allegation on which you are asked to vote. Listen to Lord Derby in 1874, speaking as the organ of the Tory Government, and making these two assertions. The first was, ‘There is no State whatever with which our relations are not most cordial.’ Can that allegation be made now? The second assertion he made—because you may say, ‘Oh, no doubt you were very civil, you bowed and scraped to everybody, and therefore individually you did not quarrel with them; but the general state of the foreign relations was bad, because you had not a proper influence in the councils of the world, and it is the general state of foreign relations which might be bad, although your relations with individual powers were not bad’—then listen to the other part of Lord Derby’s allegation: ‘At the present moment the condition of the country in regard to our foreign relations is most satisfactory.’ That is the answer given by Lord Derby, not individually, but on behalf of the Government

to which he belonged ; given in the name of that Government ; given on behalf of Lord Beaconsfield ; given, and not contradicted by Lord Beaconsfield ; given, and never contradicted by any member of this Government, until they had involved themselves and their country in such difficulties and embarrassments, and were so destitute of an apology for having rushed into them, that they were compelled to throw the blame back upon us, and to make us responsible for their mismanagement and their miscarriages. That is my summary method of dealing with these allegations. But I am not satisfied with that. I shall yet tax your patience, because the thing is very important. The thing is most important, and I do not like, having the opportunity of dealing with such a meeting as this—I do not like, so long as I think you can endure it—I do not like to reserve for another place what I think I may properly say here. I say, then, that this allegation that we left the influence of this country abated, that we had miscarried in our view and management of foreign policy, is confuted and destroyed by the authority of the present Ministry itself, after its accession to office in the month of March 1874.

But now I want to put into your own hands the means of judgment upon a broader ground. For I have told you, those of you who are opposed to the Liberal party, that if you return again a member of the majority of the dying House of Commons, however amiable and estimable that member of the majority may be in his own private and personal capacity,—and I have no doubt the members of the majority are all extremely amiable in their private capacity,—that if you return these gentlemen again to do the same work for the next six years, you deserve the consequences. You could not foresee what was to happen when you voted in 1874 ; but now, with experience to teach you, if you choose to have another six years of the like, you must not lay the blame upon anybody else. Take it upon yourselves and not as a

constituency, but as individually, as A, B, C, and D, who each, according to his means and within his sphere, did what he could to perpetuate a system disastrous to his country.

The allegation that the 'Manchester School' is to rule the destinies of this country if the Liberals accede to power.

There is an allegation abroad that what is called the 'Manchester School' is to rule the destinies of this country if the Liberals come into power. I will endeavour to tell you a portion of the truth upon that subject. What is called the Manchester School has never ruled the foreign policy of this country—never during a Conservative Government, and never especially during a Liberal Government. Do not let me be supposed to speak of what is called the Manchester School, or sometimes the Peace Party, as if I were about to cast disrespect upon them. I respect them even in what I think to be their great and serious error. I think it is, I will venture to say, like many errors in our mixed condition. It is not only a respectable, it is even a noble error. Abhorring all selfishness of policy, friendly to freedom in every country of the earth, attached to the modes of reason, and detesting the ways of force, this Manchester School—this Peace Party—has sprung prematurely to the conclusion that wars may be considered as having closed their melancholy and miserable history, and that the affairs of the world may henceforth be conducted by methods more adapted to the dignity of man, more suited both to his strength and to his weakness, less likely to lead him out of the ways of duty, to stimulate his evil passions, to make him guilty before God for inflicting misery on his fellow-creatures. But no Government of this country could ever accede to the management and control of affairs without finding that that dream of a Paradise upon earth was rudely dispelled by the shock of experience. However we may detest war—and you cannot detest it too much—there is no war—except one, the war for liberty—that does not contain in it elements of corruption, as well as of misery, that are deplorable to recollect and to consider; but however deplorable

wars may be, they are among the necessities of our condition ; and there are times when justice, when faith, when the welfare of mankind, require a man not to shrink from the responsibility of undertaking them. And if you undertake war, so also you are often obliged to undertake measures which may lead to war.

I am now going to compare the conduct of the present Government, which is commended to you as masterly in forethought and sagacity, and truly English in spirit—I am going to compare it with the conduct of the last Government, and to lay before you both the proceedings and the results. It so happens that their histories afford a not inconvenient means of comparison. England, as you are aware, has been involved in many guarantees. I said England,—do not be shocked ; it is the shortest word,—Great Britain or United Kingdom is what one ought to say. The United Kingdom—the British Empire has been and is involved in many guarantees for the condition of other countries. Among others, we were involved, especially since the Peace of Paris, but also before the Peace of Paris, in a guarantee for Turkey, aiming to maintain its integrity and its independence ; and we were involved in another guarantee for Belgium, aiming to maintain its integrity and its independence. In the time of the present Government, the integrity and the independence of Turkey were menaced—menaced by the consequences of rank, festering corruption from within. In the time of the late Government the integrity and independence of Belgium were not less seriously menaced. We had been living in perfect harmony and friendship with two great military States of Europe—and I am not now going, pray recollect—and I had better state it now—I am not now going to saddle responsibility definitely on either of them, because my knowledge does not enable me to do it ; but I am going to describe to you truly a certain and a most menacing state of things. We had lived in perfect harmony

A comparison between the conduct of the present and the last Government.

The independence of Belgium was menaced.

with two great military States of Europe—with Prussia and with France. Prussia and France came into conflict, and at the moment of their coming into conflict a document was revealed to us under which the Ministers of those two States had had in their hands—whoever was its author, whoever was its promoter, that is no affair of mine—it is due to Prince Bismarck to say that he was the person who brought it to light—but they had in their hands an instrument of a formal character—still in draft, never led to ripeness, but at the same time an instrument—touching a subject that was considered and entertained. And that bad instrument was an instrument for the destruction of the freedom, independence, and integrity of Belgium. Could there be a graver danger to Europe than that? Here was a State—not, like Turkey, the scandal of the world, and the danger of the world from misgovernment, and from the horrible degradation it inflicted upon its subject races,—but a country which was a model to all Europe for the peaceful exercise of the rights of freedom, and for progress in all the arts and all the pursuits that tend to make mankind good and happy. And this country, having nothing but its weakness that could be urged against it, with its four or five millions of people, was deliberately pointed out by somebody and indicated to be destroyed, to be offered up as a sacrifice to territorial lust by one or other of those Ministers of Powers with whom we were living in close friendship and affection. We felt called upon to enlist ourselves on the part of the British nation as advocates and as champions of the integrity and independence of Belgium. And if we had gone to war we should have gone to war for freedom, we should have gone to war for public right, we should have gone to war to save human happiness from being invaded by tyrannous and lawless power. That is what I call a good cause, gentlemen. And though I detest war, and there are no epithets too strong, if you could supply me with them, that I will not endeavour to

heap upon its head,—in such a war as that, while the breath in my body is continued to me, I am ready to engage. I am ready to support it, I am ready to give all the help and aid I can to those who carry this country into it. Well, gentlemen, pledged to support the integrity and independence of Belgium, what did we do? We proposed to Prussia to enter into a new and solemn treaty with us to resist the French Empire, if the French Empire attempted to violate the sanctity of freedom in Belgium; and we proposed to France to enter into a similar treaty with us to pursue exactly the same measures against Prussia, if Prussia should make the like nefarious attempt. And we undertook that, in concert with the one, or in concert with the other, whichever the case might be, we would pledge all the resources of this Empire, and carry it into war for the purpose of resisting mischief and maintaining the principles of European law and peace. I ask you whether it is not ludicrous to apply the doctrine or the imputation, if it be an imputation, that we belong to the Manchester School, or to a Peace Party—we who made these engagements to go to war with France if necessary, or to go to war with Prussia if necessary, for the sake of the independence of Belgium. But now I want you to observe the upshot. I must say that, in one respect, we were very inferior to the present Government—very inferior indeed. Our ciphers, our figures, were perfectly contemptible. We took nothing except two millions of money. We knew perfectly well that what was required was an indication, and that that indication would be quite intelligible when it was read in the light of the new treaty engagement which we were contracting; and consequently we asked Parliament to give us two millions of money for the sake of somewhat enlarging the numbers of available soldiers, and we were quite prepared to meet that contingency had it arrived. The great man who directs the counsels of the German Empire acted with his usual promptitude. Our proposal went to him

*The action of
the Liberal
Ministry.*

by telegraph, and he answered by telegraph 'Yes' the same afternoon. We were not quite so fortunate with France, for at that time the counsels of France were under the domination of some evil genius which it is difficult to trace, and needless to attempt to trace. There was some delay in France,—a little unnecessary higgling,—but after two or three days France also came into this engagement, and from that moment the peace of Belgium was perfectly secured. When we had an integrity and an independence to protect, we took the measures which we believed to be necessary and sufficient for that protection; and in every year since those measures, Belgium, not unharmed only, but strengthened by having been carried safely and unhurt through a terrible danger, has pursued her peaceful career, rising continually in her prosperity and happiness, and still holding out an example before all Europe to teach the nations how to live.

*The integrity
of Turkey was
menaced.*

Well, as the occasion came to us with respect to Belgium, so it came to our successors with respect to Turkey. How did they manage it? They thought themselves bound to maintain the integrity and independence of Turkey, and they were undoubtedly bound conditionally to maintain it; but I am not now going into the question of right, I am going into the question of the adaptation of means to ends. These are the gentlemen who are set up before you as the people whose continuance in office is necessary to attract the confidence of Europe; these are the gentlemen whom patriotic associations laud to the skies as if they had a monopoly of human intelligence; these are the gentlemen who bring you 'peace with honour;' these are the gentlemen who go in special trains to attend august assemblies and receive the compliments of illustrious statesmen; these are the gentlemen who for all these years have been calling upon you to pay any number of millions that may be requisite as a very cheap and necessary consideration for the immense advantages that you derive from their administration. I want to

know—I have shown you how we set about maintaining that integrity and independence, and how it was maintained—I ask you how they have set about it, and I ask you how they have maintained it? Why, even on their own showing they have been wrong. We have it out of their own mouths. I will not now go to Lord Derby; I will go to the only man whose authority is higher for this purpose than that of Lord Derby—Lord Beaconsfield. He has told you, he has intimated to you plainly, that what the Government ought to have done was to have said to Russia, ‘You shall not invade Turkey.’ Gentlemen, that course is intelligible. It is a guilty course, in my opinion, to have taken up arms for maintaining the sovereignty of Turkey against her subject races, or even to prevent the war which, in the execution of what the Emperor of Russia believed to be a great duty to humanity, was going to apply, as was stated, a remedy to those mischiefs. But Lord Beaconsfield has confessed in a public speech that the proper course for the Government to have taken would have been to have planted their feet, and to have said to the Emperor of Russia, ‘Cross not the Danube; if you cross the Danube, expect to confront the power of England on the southern shore.’ Now, that course is intelligible, perfectly intelligible; and if you are prepared for the responsibility of maintaining such an integrity and such an independence, irrespectively of all other considerations, against the Christian races in Turkey, that was the course for you to pursue. Why was it not pursued? Because the agitation which was called the Bulgarian agitation was too inconvenient for the Government to allow them to pursue it—because they saw that if they did that which Lord Beaconsfield now tells us it would have been right for them to do, the sentiment of the country would not have permitted them to continue to hold their office. And hence came that vacillation, hence came that ineptitude of policy which they now endeavour to cover by hectoring and by boasting, and

*The action of
the Tory
Ministry.*

which undoubtedly, within the last year or two, they have striven, and not quite unsuccessfully, to hide from the eyes of many, by carrying measures of violence into other lands, if not against Russia, if not against the strong, yet against the weak, and endeavouring so to attract to themselves the credit and glory of maintaining the power and influence of England.

Well, they were to maintain the integrity of Turkey, and how did they set about it? They were not satisfied with asking for our humble two millions; they asked you for six millions. First of all they encouraged Turkey to go

*The action of
the Tory
Ministry : its
consequences.*

to war. They did not counsel to Turkey submission to superior force; they neither would advise her to submit, nor would they help her to resist. They were the great cause of her plunging into that terrible and ruinous war, from the consequences of which Her Majesty's speech tells us this very year that Turkey has not yet recovered, and from the consequences of which there is not the smallest apparent hope that she ever will recover. But afterwards, and when the war had taken place, they came and asked you for a vote of six millions. What did they do with their vote of six millions? They flourished it in the face of the world; but what was the practical effect? What have they gained for Turkey? In the first place, they sent the fleet to the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Are you aware that by sending that fleet they broke the law of Europe? They applied for the firman of the Sultan, and the Sultan refused it. They had no right to send that fleet. But however that may be, what was the use of sending that fleet? The consequence of sending it was that the Russian army, which had been at a very considerable distance

*The movements
of the fleet.*

from Constantinople, marched close up to Constantinople. Is it possible, gentlemen, to conceive an idea more absurd than that which I really believe many of our friends entertain, I do not say in Midlothian,—no, but where the level of intelligence is less high, that the presence of the British ironclads in the Sea of Marmora prevented the victorious Russian

armies—perhaps 50,000 or 100,000 men—from entering Constantinople? What could these ironclads do? They could have battered down Constantinople; but what consolation would that have been to the Turk, and how would that have prevented the Russian armies from entering? That part of the pretext that is set up is too thin and threadbare to require any confirmation. But they may say this: The vote of six millions was an indication of the intention of England to act in case of need, and when it was first proposed it was proposed in order to strengthen the hands of England at the Congress. How did it strengthen their hands, and for what purpose was the strength used? I ask you that. The Treaty of San Stefano had been signed between Russia and Turkey; the Treaty of Berlin was substituted for the Treaty of San Stefano; what was the grand difference between the Treaty of Berlin and the Treaty of San Stefano? The worst thing in either of the two treaties was in both of them. There was a portion of Bessarabia especially, gentlemen, which down to the time of the Treaty of Berlin enjoyed free institutions; and by the Treaty of Berlin, and mainly through the agency of the British Government—which pledged itself beforehand, by what is called the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum, to support Russia in her demand for that territory if Russia adhered to it,—by that Treaty of Berlin, England, with the vote of six millions given to strengthen the hands of the Government, made herself specially responsible for handing back that territory which had enjoyed free institutions to be governed despotically as part of the Russian Empire. That was the first purpose for which, as I have shown you, your vote of six millions was available. What was the second purpose? The second purpose was to draw a line along the Balkan Mountains, by means of which Northern Bulgaria was separated from Southern Bulgaria, and Southern Bulgaria was re-named Eastern Roumelia; and it was provided that the Sultan might march his troops into Eastern Roumelia

The retrocession of Bessarabia.

The creation of Eastern Roumelia.

for the purpose of forming a chain of military positions along the Balkans. Well, now, what has happened? The Sultan has not marched a man into Eastern Roumelia. The Sultan cannot march a man into Eastern Roumelia. If the Sultan marched a man into Eastern Roumelia, the consequence would be that the whole of that population, whom the discipline of a few years has converted from slaves into freemen, determined, if need be, to fight for their rights,—the whole of that population would rise against him and his troops, and would be supported by other forces that would be drawn to aid them under the resistless influence of sympathy with freedom. You may remember that three or four years ago, utter scorn was poured upon what was called the ‘bag-and-baggage policy.’ Are you aware that that ‘bag-and-baggage policy’ is at this moment the absolute basis upon which are regulated the whole of the civil state of things in Bulgaria and in Eastern Roumelia? What that policy asked was that every Turkish authority should be marched out of Bulgaria, and every Turkish authority has gone out of Bulgaria. There is not a Turk at this moment who, as a Turk, holds office under the Sultan either in Bulgaria or in Southern Bulgaria, now called Eastern Roumelia. No, not one! The despised ‘bag-and-baggage policy’ is at this moment the law of Europe. And this is the result of it; and it is for that, gentlemen, that the humble individual who stands before you was held up and reviled as a visionary, an enthusiast, or a verbose I forget what, although I believe myself that there was not much verbosity in that particular phrase. It appeared to me the people of England understood it well. Nay, more, the Congress of Berlin even seemed to have understood it, and found that the state of things it recommended was a state of things which had become irresistible, and which now, thank God to say it, is irreversibly established in those once unhappy provinces.

The ‘bag-and-baggage policy’ is now the law of Europe.

We have but one thing more to do in regard to those provinces, and it is this. I urged it at the same time

when I produced this monstrous conception of the bag-and-baggage policy. It was this, to take great care that the majority of the inhabitants of those provinces who are Christians did not oppress either the Mohammedan, or the Jewish, or any other minority. That is a sacred duty. I do not believe it to be a difficult duty, but it is a most sacred duty. And it is for that reason that I said to you just now, if you noticed the reservation I made, that there was not a single Turk just now holding office as a Turk in those provinces. I believe there are Turks holding office. I rejoice to hear it. They hold office by the free suffrage of their countrymen. There are one or more Turks in the Legislative Assemblies of those provinces, and I am very glad of it, and by degrees I hope that they, when they are once rid of the pestilent and poisonous associations and recollections of the old ascendancy, will become good and peaceful citizens like other people; for I believe that the people of Turkey—whatever the Government of Turkey may be—have in them many fine qualities, capable, under proper education, of bringing them to a state of capacity and competency for every civil duty. But it still remains for me to ask you how this great and powerful Government has performed its duty of maintaining the integrity and independence of Turkey. It has had great and extraordinary advantages. It has had the advantage of a support, a disciplined support, from its majority in the House of Commons, which, though I am not making any complaint, our friend in the chair knows, was not exactly the same as used to happen in the days of recent Liberal Governments. It has had an unflinching and an incessant support from a very large majority in the House of Lords. That was very far from being our case. In our day—there is no reason why I should not say it to the House of Lords freely, for it is an historical fact—whenever we were backed at the moment by a very strong national feeling, that it would have been dangerous to confront and to

How has this Government maintained the integrity of Turkey?

resist, then the House of Lords passed our measures. So they passed the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, so they passed the Irish Land Act, and so, I have no doubt, if it please the Almighty, in the course of future years they will pass a great many good measures. But the moment the people go to sleep,—and they cannot be always awake,—the moment public opinion flags, the moment the people become satisfied, and cease to take a very strong and decided interest in public questions, that is the moment when the majority of the House of Lords grows powerful, and then they mangle, then they cut about, then they postpone, then they reject the good measures that go up to them from the House of Commons.

These are great advantages. I will tell you another advantage of the present Administration. They are supported by several foreign Governments. Now, you gentlemen of Midlothian, just think of that. Did you read in the London papers within the last few weeks an account of the energetic support which they derive from the Emperor of Austria? Did you see that the Emperor of Austria sent for the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, and told Sir Henry Elliot what a pestilent person he considered a certain Mr. Gladstone, as a man that did not approve of the foreign policy of Austria, and how anxious he was—so the Emperor of Austria was condescendingly pleased to say for the guidance of the British people, and of the electors of Midlothian—how anxious he was, gentlemen, that you should all of you give your votes in a way to maintain the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield? Well, if you approve of the foreign policy of Austria, the foreign policy that Austria has usually pursued, I advise you to do that very thing. If you want to have an Austrian foreign policy dominant in the councils of this country, give your votes as the Emperor of Austria recommends. What has that policy of Austria been?¹ I do not say that Austria is incurable. I hope some day or

*The approval
of Austria.*

¹ See, in Appendix, Letter to Count Károlyi.

other it will be cured, because it has got better institutions at home; and although its condition is one of much difficulty and doubt, I heartily wish it well in its attempts, if it makes honest attempts, to confront its difficulties. Yet I must look to what that policy has been. Austria has been the steady, *The approval of Austria: its value.* unflinching foe of freedom of every country in Europe. Russia, I am sorry to say, has been the foe of freedom too, but in Russia there is one exception—Russia has been the friend of Slavonic freedom. But Austria has never been the friend even of Slavonic freedom. Austria trampled Italy under foot; Austria resisted the unity of Germany; Austria did all she could to prevent the creation of Belgium; Austria never lifted a finger for the regeneration and constitution of Greece. There is not an instance, there is not a spot upon the whole map, where you can lay your finger and say, ‘There Austria did good.’ I speak, of course, of her general policy; I speak of its general tendency. I do not abandon the hope of improvement in the future, but we must look to the past and to the present for the guidance of our judgment at this moment; and in the Congress of Berlin, Austria resisted the extension of freedom, and did not promote it. And therefore I say, if you want an Austrian spirit to inspire the counsels of this country, in Heaven’s name take the Emperor’s counsel and advice. Lift the Austrian flag when you go about upon your purposes of canvass or of public meeting. It will best express the purpose you have in view; and I for one cannot complain of your consistency, whatever I might in that case think of the tendency of your views in respect of the principle of justice, of the happiness of mankind, or of the greatness, dignity, and honour of this great Empire. But there is still one word more, because I have not spoken of what has been the upshot of all this. There are a great many persons in this country, I am afraid, as well as in other countries, who are what is called worshippers of success, and at the time of the famous ‘peace with honour’

demonstration there was a very great appearance of success. I was not myself at that time particularly safe when I walked the streets of London. I have walked with my wife from my own house owing my protection to the police. But that was the time when all those curious methods of maintaining British honour and British dignity were supposed to have been wonderfully successful.

And now I want to ask you, as I have shown you in what way we went about maintaining the integrity and independence of Belgium when it was threatened by violence from without—I want to ask you what has become of the integrity and the independence of Turkey? These gentlemen, it appears to me, neither know, in the first instance, how to choose the end towards which they ought to direct their efforts, nor, when they have chosen the end, rationally to adapt their means to the attainment of that end. I am not speaking of the moral character of the means, but how were they adapted to the end, and what did the vote of six millions achieve for Turkey? I will tell you what it achieved. It did achieve one result, and I want you well to consider whether you are satisfied with it or not, especially those of you who are Conservatives. It undoubtedly cut down largely the definition of Bulgaria, established by the Treaty of San Stefano. Now, I am not going to maintain that that definition was a right one, for that depends upon a knowledge more minute than I possess. But this I say, that the effect of so cutting it down is perfectly well known. It was, that it put back under the direct rule of the Sultan of Turkey, and in the exact condition in which all European Turkey except the Principalities had been before the war, a population inhabiting the country of Macedonia of about a million people, the vast majority of them Christians. If your six millions' vote produced any two substantive and definite results, I say the two most definite results it produced were these—first of all, that Bessarabia, which had been a country under free institutions, was handed

*Macedonia
restored to
Turkey.*

back to despotism; and, secondly, that I believe a million and a half of people inhabiting Macedonia, to whom free institutions had been promised by the treaty of San Stefano, are now again placed under the Turkish Pashas, and have not received one grain of benefit to improve their condition as compared with what it was before the war. But how, gentlemen, as regards Turkey? I think I have shown you results bad enough as regards freedom; but how as regards Turkey? What did they say at Berlin?

British plenipotentiaries held this language, 'Some people seem to suppose that we have come here to cut and carve Turkey. That is quite a mistake. We have come here to consolidate Turkey,' and some of the scribes of the Foreign Office invented a word for it. They said it was to 'rejuvenate' Turkey. How did they rejuvenate this miserable Empire, this unhappy Government, which they had lured into war, which they had allowed and encouraged to pass into war, because they allowed their ambassadors at Constantinople, Sir Henry Elliot and Sir Austin Layard, to whisper in the ear of the Turk that British interests would at some time or other compel us to intervene and help them? What has been the result to Turkey? I say to you this, that much as the Christian population has the right to complain of us, in my opinion the Sultan of Turkey has a right to complain which is very little less. How stands he in the present state of things? We condescended to obtain from him the island of Cyprus. At the time when Austria was pulling at him on one side, and when freedom was pulling at him at another side, we condescended to take that miserable, that paltry share of the spoil. But that is not all. What is the condition of Turkey in Europe? Why, Turkey in Europe has neither integrity nor independence. The Sultan is liable to interference at every point of his territory—from every Power which has signed the Treaty of Berlin. The Sultan has lost some ten millions of his subjects altogether. Perhaps ten

*The present
condition of
Turkey in
Europe.*

millions more, who remain in some kind of dependence or other, are in a condition in which the Sultan does not know whether they will be his subjects to-day or to-morrow or the next day. Albania is possessed by a league; Macedonia is traversed by brigands; Thessaly and Epirus had, according to the Treaty of Berlin, to be given to Greece; the treasury of Turkey is perfectly empty; disturbances, as you see from the last accounts, have spread through Turkey in Asia. The condition of that Government, whose integrity and independence you were told at Berlin that the peace with honour had supported, is more miserable than at any previous period of its history, and wise and merciful indeed would be the man who could devise some method or other of improving it. Now, gentlemen, to those who talk of the supposed quietism and indifference of the Liberal party, and the great vigour, determination, and success of the Tory Government, I would say, compare the case of Belgium with the case of Turkey. Try them by their principles, or try them by their results, I care not which. Where we had an integrity and independence to support, we knew what we were about. Where they had an integrity and independence to support, they talked, indeed, loudly enough of supporting it, and you would have supposed were about to spend their whole resources upon it; but all their measures have ended in nothing, except that they have reduced Turkey to a state of greater weakness than was known at any former period of her history; whereas with respect to the twelve or fifteen millions of Slav and Roumanian population, they have made the name of England odious throughout the whole of that population, and have done everything in their power to throw that population bodily into the arms of Russia, to be the tools of Russia in its plans and schemes; unless, indeed, which I fervently hope and am inclined firmly to believe, the virtue of liberty and the free institutions which they have obtained will make them too wise to become the tools of any foreign Power, will make them

intent upon doing their own business,—intent upon maintaining their liberties, as becomes a free people, and playing an honourable part in the future history of Europe.

I have detained you too long, but I shall pursue this subject farther. I have shown you what I think the miserable failure of the policy of the Government. Remember, we have a fixed point from which to draw our measurements. Remember in 1876 the proposal of those who approved of the Bulgarian agitation, and who were denounced as the enemies of Turkey,—remember what that proposal would have done. It would have given autonomy to Bulgaria, which has now got autonomy. But it would have saved all the remainder of the shock and all the remainder of the loss and detriment to the rest of the Turkish Empire. Turkey would have had a fair chance in the rest of her Empire; Turkey would not have had the territorial losses which she has elsewhere suffered, and which she has suffered, I must say, in consequence of her having been betrayed into a false and mischievous course through the tempting and seducing, but the unreal and unwise, policy of the present Administration. There are many other matters which must be reserved for other times. We are told about the Crimean war. Sir Stafford Northcote tells us that the Crimean war, made by a Liberal Government, cost the country forty millions of debt, and an income-tax of 1s. 4d. in the £1. Now what is the use of telling us that? I will discuss the case of the Crimean war on a future occasion, not now. But why does he not go a little farther back? If a Liberal Government were so clever that they contrived to burden the country with forty millions of debt by the Crimean war, why does he not go back to the last war before that, and tell us what the Tory Government did with the Revolutionary war, when they left to the country a debt of 900 millions, 650 millions of which they had made in the Revolutionary war? And not only so, but they left you the blessing and legacy of the Corn Laws and of a high protective

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Tory Govern-
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done for us.*

system, and of an impoverished country and of a discontented population ; so much so, that for the years that followed that great Revolutionary war, no man could say whether the Constitution of this country was or was not worth five years' purchase. They might go even a little farther back than the Revolutionary war. They have been talking lately about the Colonies, and that, forsooth, the Liberal party do nothing for the Colonies. What did the Tory Government do for the Colonies ? I can tell you. You must go to the war which immediately preceded the Revolutionary war. The Tory party made war against the American Colonies, and they added to the debt of the country 200 millions in order to destroy freedom in America. They alienated and broke off these Colonies, and they were compelled to bring this country to an ignominious peace ; and, so far as I know, that attempt to put down freedom in America, with those results to this country, is the only very great fact that has ever distinguished the relations between the Tory Government and the Colonies.

But, gentlemen, these must be matters postponed for another occasion. I thank you very cordially — both friends and opponents, if opponents you be—for the extreme kindness with which you have heard me. I have spoken, and I must speak, in very strong terms indeed of the acts done by my opponents, but I will never ascribe those acts to base motives. I will never say they do them from vindictiveness ; I will never say they do them from passion ; I will never say they do them from a sordid love of office. I have no right to use such words ; I have no right to entertain such sentiments ; I repudiate and abjure them. I give them credit for patriotic motives ; I give them credit for those patriotic motives which are so incessantly and gratuitously denied to us. I believe that we are all united—indeed, it would be most unnatural if we were not—in a fond attachment, perhaps in something of a proud attachment, to the great country to which we belong—to this great Empire, which has committed to

it a trust and a function given from Providence as special and as remarkable as ever was entrusted to any portion of the family of man. Gentlemen, when I speak of that trust and that function I feel that words fail me: I cannot tell you what I think of the nobleness of the inheritance that has descended upon us, of the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it. I will not condescend to make it a part of controversial politics. It is a part of my being, of my flesh and blood, of my heart and soul. For those ends I have laboured through my youth and manhood till my hairs are grey. In that faith and practice I have lived; in that faith and practice I will die.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1880.

SPEECH AT CORSTORPHINE.

AT Corstorphine the meeting was held in the Free Church, which was crowded to the doors a considerable time before the hour fixed for the proceedings had arrived. The gallery facing the platform was reserved for ladies, by whom it was speedily filled. Mr. Robert Tod was called to the chair, and introduced Mr. Gladstone, who was enthusiastically received. The right hon. gentleman said :—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, — I am rejoiced to hear that this meeting is not a meeting limited to the members of our own party, but is representative, in a considerable degree, of the various shades of opinion that prevail. And I hardly need repeat or attempt to enforce the appeal that has been so becomingly made by your chairman for a kindly hearing, for I must say that experience has already shown me that at the hands of the Conservative or Tory party in Midlothian at any rate I can reckon upon that hearing, even without asking for it. Most cordially do I re-echo what has been also said by the chairman, and express my hope that at no time and in no circumstances shall we desire to withhold a similar advantage from those who are opposed to us ; but, however strong we may be in any given neighbourhood, we shall never make use of that strength for a purpose so unworthy of Liberal politicians as to check the freest

expression of opinions the most opposed to our own—nay, rather we shall desire that in proportion as they are opposed to our own, the power of expressing them should be large and unrestrained.

When I paid in the month of November and beginning of December last a visit to Scotland, which you perhaps have not forgotten, and which I never can forget, I was under the belief that the time had arrived when a dissolution of Parliament was required by constitutional usage, and to that belief I fully adhere. I will not dwell upon it now. But I was also under the impression that Her Majesty's Government, discouraged by the results of elections, and doubtful as to the effect of their policy, were, through apprehension of the probable result of a dissolution, disposed to postpone it as long as possible. Since that time, gentlemen, in one particular case—I will not say in others, for I doubt whether in others—but in one particular case, the case of Southwark, a metropolitan constituency, they have been considerably emboldened, and they have been—what shall I say?—enabled, at any rate, to pluck up a certain amount of courage. That courage, I must tell you as a Londoner—I will not trouble you with any particulars—that courage is supposed to have been considerably reinforced by fear. You may, perhaps, think that this is odd, but in the strange combinations of the human mind, that is no very unusual junction. Fear of the consequences, upon ten or twelve or fourteen metropolitan seats, of a bill which they have just introduced to supply the metropolis with water, is supposed to have combined with hope founded upon the Southwark election, and the result has been, gentlemen, and I rejoice in the result, that at any rate you have attained the faculty and the opportunity of exercising your privilege as electors at an earlier period than would otherwise have been the case. Now, that opportunity is a most grave opportunity. I dwelt upon it yesterday at some length. I will not dwell on it to-day; but I will venture to say to all of you

The causes which may have led to the sudden dissolution.

who may be attached to the Conservative party in politics, that I hope you will carefully consider your course—that before doing what in you lies to reproduce in the new Parliament the same majority as has taken upon itself the responsibility for all that has happened in the old Parliament, you will well consider the nature of the acts that have been done, and of the consequences they have produced to the country. But as I have referred to the exultation which undoubtedly was produced for a moment by the Southwark election among the Tory party,—I am now speaking especially to the Liberal portion of this audience,—I cannot help reading to you a telegram that has been sent down to me to-day by the secretary of a Liberal Club in Southwark engaged in the preparations for the present election. You remember the division of parties, and the consequent discomfiture that attended that a few weeks ago. The telegram says, ‘The Radicals and Liberals are now united, and hard at work for Cohen and Rogers. Tell our Scotch brethren we are going to achieve a decisive victory in Southwark.’

You will readily understand that where the circle of topics involved in the issue before us is so wide, and where many of these topics are of such vital interest, where our domestic concerns and your domestic concerns, which ordinarily give us quite enough to think of, have been almost for the time overwhelmed, at any rate have had accumulated upon them so vast a weight of Imperial and in many respects foreign questions, it is not possible for me to attempt—it would be absurd to attempt—I should only produce confusion by attempting, to run round that circle upon every occasion. I must therefore proceed as well as I can piecemeal, taking care as far as I can never to lose sight of the general object, and endeavouring upon the whole that in the course of the opportunities that are permitted me I should lay a tolerably complete statement of the case, so far as my faculties permit me, before the electors of Midlothian.

I went, therefore, yesterday as well as I could to the very heart of the matter by observing upon a speech of the Prime Minister in the House of Lords on Monday night, for which speech I feel grateful, because I think it tended to bring out before the country the issue in the clearest form. Now, you have heard it stated constantly, it is repeated from time to time, that nothing except the spirit of faction could have induced us of the Liberal party so steadily to oppose the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government. I am in your recollection, those of you who are Conservative, those of you who are Liberal, you will all alike recollect that it has been constantly urged—nay, more, by a great many people honestly believed—that nothing but a spirit either of faction or of passion, at any rate nothing but an extravagant spirit passing beyond the bounds of reason, could have induced us to offer opposition to the foreign policy of the Government. Of that charge the speech of the Prime Minister on Monday night has, perhaps involuntarily, but, as you will now see, conclusively, and once for all, acquitted us. And why? Because the Prime Minister himself has stated that the foreign policy of his Government is in diametrical opposition to the foreign policy of the former Government; therefore, instead of its being a proof of faction that we should have objected to this foreign policy, which, as he says, was diametrically opposed to ours, it would have been a proof of inconsistency and of cowardice if we had not objected to it. I will not trouble you by attempting to recite the words of the Prime Minister. I find no fault with them; I believe them to be true words. He, naturally enough, thinking his own foreign policy to be honourable, upright, vigorous, successful, appeals to the country upon it, and his doctrine is that the foreign policy of the Government that preceded him was the opposite of all this, and created for him the difficulties with which he has had to deal. Now, he spoke of those difficulties—his difficulties in Europe and difficulties in Asia.

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before the
country.*

*The spirit of
faction.*

He omitted Africa; he did not say we had created any difficulties for him there; but there he has contrived, without, so far as I am able to judge, the smallest necessity or excuse, to spend five millions of your money in invading a people who had done him no wrong; and now he is obliged to spend more of your money in establishing the supremacy of the Queen over a community, Protestant in religion, Hollanders in origin, vigorous and obstinate, and tenacious in character even as we are ourselves — namely, the Dutchmen of the Transvaal.

In striking a balance of the account, I beg you to observe that the Prime Minister does not say we created for him his difficulties in Africa; and yet those difficulties are not inconsiderable. They have been attended by the record of one of the most heroic acts of resistance and defence—I mean at Rorke's Drift—that ever was inscribed even in the brilliant annals of the British army; but they are also attended with the recollection of one of the most painful and disastrous incidents,—that which immediately preceded it,—where the gallant 24th Regiment was almost annihilated by an attack of the Zulus. But I do not dwell upon these things further than to observe that, so far as the serious embarrassments of the present and the heavy expenditure—and not only an expenditure in money, but, I am afraid, a wanton and needless expenditure in human blood—of the past are concerned, there is no allegation that they arose out of the errors of the former Government; but the allegation is that in Europe and Asia the difficulties which were due to our remissness, to our negative course, to our indifference to European and Asiatic interests, have been the cause of the embarrassments which have surrounded the present Government. I do not deny that the difficulties of the present Government at the present moment are great; I do not deny that they are difficulties which probably will not be got rid of in a very short space of time; but I do deny that those difficulties were

*The difficulties
of the present
Government
are of their
own creation.*

handed over to them, and I say that they are of their own creation. I say this, and I say it confidently, and I think I did something to prove it yesterday—I will not attempt to renew that proof—that they never had a difficulty presented to them nearly so formidable as that which was opened upon us when we found that two of the greatest military Powers of the Continent had been entertaining—I do not say they had concluded—a project for the invasion and for the destruction of the free people of Belgium. The European part of the case I argued yesterday, and I say that had the present Administration but been content to work with united Europe for the purpose of telling to the Sultan of Turkey in clear, plain, moderate, and decisive language, that in those provinces, viz. Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were vexed by rebellion that he had shown his impotence to put down, and that in Bulgaria, which he had deluged with blood, and which he had made signal through long years and centuries to come for the record of crimes never surpassed in their intensity and atrocity during the whole lifetime of mankind—there must be an end to existing evils—had they but availed themselves of the concert of Europe to tell the Sultan of Turkey that this should be done in 1876, that might have been accomplished without bloodshed and war, which now, at the cost of bloodshed and of ferocious war, has been done and is in full existence—namely, that Turkish power should cease to administer the government of those provinces. Then, without disturbance, without blood, with united authority, the Powers of Europe would have pointed out to Turkey the duty of conforming to this inevitable result, and all the horrors through which the great boon has been purchased would have been spared, both to the people of Russia and to the subjects of the Porte.

But, without attempting to retrace the ground of yesterday, I am now going to touch more fully upon the other

portion of the allegation which it was impossible for me to include in my remarks at the Music Hall, namely, that difficulties were found according to the view of the Prime Minister—and of course we must consider his voice as the voice of the Administration of which he is the very distinguished head—that difficulties were found, not in Europe only, but in Asia, and that the difficulties which we bequeathed to him in Asia have been the cause, not only of all the bloodshed and all the disorganization that has been produced among the hill tribes, the mountaineer nation of Afghanistan, but of all the unfinished war that we have there upon our hands, and the terrible conflict into which we have entered with the sentiment of a free people. Now, this allegation is very grave—it is that we handed over those difficulties to the present Administration. I wish to call your attention in the most serious manner to the gravity of that allegation, and to the tests which I shall endeavour to apply to it. Gentlemen, among other characteristics of the Anglo-Indian Empire—certainly one of the most remarkable formations, not only in the present condition of political society among mankind, but in the whole history of the world—among the most remarkable characteristics of that Anglo-Indian Empire has been this, that it has proved its capacity to rear, by exercise and practice in great affairs, a distinguished race of statesmen, whom we have been accustomed to call Indian statesmen, and who have certainly not been less worthy of that eminent and illustrious appellation than any of the statesmen whom we have reared at home in the practice of properly British affairs. Now, there was a long series of these statesmen, partly men under military responsibilities and distinguished by their military skill, such as Lord Sandhurst; partly men whose rearing had been in service altogether Indian, such as Sir H. Lawrence, such as Sir H. Norman, such as Sir W. Muir, such as Lord Lawrence, I may say, above all; and partly consisting of Viceroys chosen for the purpose of representing the Crown in

India, many of whom developed in that responsible and elevated office the very highest qualities. A series of those Viceroys had been concerned, for twenty and more years before the recent outbreak in Afghanistan, in the endeavour to efface from the minds of those brave mountaineers the painful and shameful recollection of our first Afghan invasion, which at this moment I believe no man among you, be he Liberal or Conservative, looks back upon as otherwise than a monument both of folly and of guilt. Who were those men? There was Lord Lawrence, there was Lord Elgin, there was Lord Canning,—second to none, and worthy of his illustrious father,—there was Lord Mayo, a political opponent of ours, but as sound, true-hearted, and intelligent a British statesman as ever ruled India,—and, finally, there was Lord Northbrook, who belonged to our party, just as Lord Mayo, if I may address my Conservative friends, belonged to yours; but one and all of the distinguished men I have named, constituting not the whole, but nearly the whole body of weighty Indian opinion, founded upon knowledge and experience, and wholly detached from every secondary motive—it was this body of men that pursued, it was this weight of opinion that sanctioned, what was the established invariable policy of England with respect to Afghanistan for the twenty years, or nearly twenty years, from the year 1855 down to the year 1876, when the change began under the auspices of the present Government. Now, remember who it is that Lord Beaconsfield charges. He not only charges us, which would be a small matter; he not only charges Lord Northbrook, whom, at the close of his career, the present Government made an earl from a baron, in recognition of his distinguished services, which services we are now told consisted in creating the difficulties with which the Government has had to deal; it is the whole of that body of men whose names I have recited to you, who had recognised with one mind and proclaimed with one voice that our policy to Afghanistan ought to be a policy of cautious

abstention, of kindly support, of resolute non-interference, and a policy, above all, of avoiding the fatal error of forcing upon them European envoys, and holding that the wise course was to send to them trusty Mahometan envoys, loyal subjects of the Queen. For do not suppose that the question ever was whether we should be represented in Afghanistan or not; there was no such question; we had excellent Mahometan representatives in Afghanistan perfectly competent to transact their business, competent to transact it without rousing jealousies among the people of Afghanistan or in the mind of the rulers of Afghanistan. These were the principles on which the whole of that body of men proceeded, and these are the principles that are now in 1880 impeached in the late speech of the Prime Minister as the cause of the difficulties with which they have had to deal. But I think I have given you, even in what I have said, perhaps sufficient means of estimating the value of that assertion. Yet even these means do not exhaust what I wish to say, for I have yet to lay before you one declaration so important, so concise, that even if I had had nothing else to allege, I would have been content to take my stand upon it. Observe the statement I am confuting; keep your minds fastened upon that statement; it is the statement that our policy in Afghanistan created the difficulties with which the Government had to deal. I have shown you how the Government treated Lord Northbrook, the agent and instrument of what they do us the honour—for it is an honour—to call our policy.

The present Government came into office in February 1874. Lord Northbrook was their agent till March or April 1876, and at that time he received that acknowledgment of those services which we are now told consisted in the creation and aggravation of those difficulties. But that was not all. It was a long time after the retirement of Lord Northbrook—in the month of July 1877—that a question

was put in the House of Lords to Lord Salisbury, who was at that time the Secretary of State for India. Some intimations of intelligence had reached this country which had created apprehension in the mind, I think, of the Duke of Argyll—at any rate, of one or more than one of the Liberal statesmen in the House of Lords; and consequently he put a question to Lord Salisbury to know whether a change had taken place in the policy of the British Government towards Afghanistan. Remember I am confuting the allegation that our policy had been bad, and that it was necessary to reverse it. Lord Salisbury answered in terms unequivocal, that no material change whatever either had taken place or was intended in our policy towards Afghanistan. And now I must say to you, whatever be your politics individually, I think you cannot help agreeing with me that after these proofs which I have laid before you it is a little too late, when it has been found that the present Government have created for themselves and for their successors nothing but a possession and an inheritance of disaster, difficulty, embarrassment, and discredit—except military discredit—when they have created all this mischief, it is now a little too late to cast back the responsibility on the shoulders of those who preceded them.

I wish to proceed so far as I can in the manner of a man of business, and therefore I will not detain you with details upon the proceedings in Afghanistan. It would require hours to give you them. But I will only tell you this—I will only remind you of this, that the very evil which had happened in 1841 as the consequence of former errors—namely, the massacre of the envoy—the very evil which we predicted as the certain result to follow all attempts to force the residence of a European envoy among a people proud and jealous of its freedom, that very evil we have had to encounter. The consequence has been that the first campaign in Afghanistan has been followed by a second, that

*In July 1877
Lord Salisbury
denied any
change in our
Afghan policy.*

*The consequences of
what really
was done by
the Ministry.*

the second campaign in Afghanistan is now, as it appears, to be followed by a third—that you are, in fact, in conflict with the sentiment of a free people; you yourselves, believing and boasting yourselves to be the standard-bearers of freedom for the world, have gone up among those mountain fastnesses to invade the freedom of others, and from absurd jealousies of your own with respect to schemes from Russia that are impossible and impracticable, you have made the Afghans the victims of those jealousies and of your own visionary dreams, and the consequences are reacting upon yourselves in a war dishonourable to your character throughout the world, and dangerous to your great Empire.

It is these things, and things such as these, that we call upon you to arrest, and you individually must choose whether you will stop them or whether you will prolong them. You have no longer a choice. It was comparatively for you a slight matter so long as those affairs were transacted in the Cabinet of the Queen or within the walls of the House of Commons; but you are the makers of the House of Commons. You are now called upon to make a new House of Commons, and according to the colour which by your individual votes you choose to give it, will be your own individual responsibility, and according to its collective colour, the result of these accumulated individual acts, will be the happiness, and the glory, and the honour, or, on the other hand, the danger, the misfortune, the discredit of the great Empire to which you belong.

Now, I wish to leave that subject; and as it is the fashion to say — and as it is true, I admit — that I have used strong language in describing the acts of Her Majesty's Government, I wish to show you by a specimen that I do not use that language without consideration. I will go back to one particular phrase in the letter in which I originally accepted the unexpected and the almost unprecedented honour that was conferred upon me when I received your

invitation. I then charged upon Her Majesty's Government, with reference to the subject which we have now been speaking of—I charged them in these words: 'That they have embarked the Crown and the people in an unjust war, full of mischief, if not of positive danger, to India; and that by their use of the treaty-making and war-making powers of the Crown, they have abridged the just rights of Parliament, and have presented prerogative to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect, which tends to make it insecure.' I will only now dwell upon one point, in order that I may present it clearly to your minds. It is what I have there said of the treaty-making power of the Crown. This treaty-making power is one of the most peculiar in our constitution. There is no absolute monarch whose power in making treaties is more unrestrained than the power of the constitutional sovereign of this country. That in itself appears to be a great paradox. It is on account not of constitutional principles, but of practical difficulties, that that enormous prerogative is confided to the Crown. I believe I am correct in saying that during the last century it was the constant practice of the Crown, while it was engaged in the preparation of treaties, to make communications to the House of Commons, in order to be certain of carrying along with it the general convictions of the body of the people. At that time, as you are aware, — I am now taking you for a moment upon historical ground,—at that time the House of Commons still maintained the rule, which gradually but not at once became a fiction, that the proceedings in Parliament were secret proceedings, and were to be withheld from the knowledge of the general public. But what I want to point out to you is this, that while during the last century it was possible to make communications to Parliament which Parliament could in some degree keep to itself, that has now become quite impossible. Whatever secrets there may be between the Government and

The treaty-making power of the Crown.

*Its existence
is a necessary
result of our
Constitution.*

Parliament, I am thankful to say there is no such thing as a secret between the Parliament and the country. But observe the difficulty. It is very difficult to negotiate absolutely in the face of day. Even private transactions, as you know very well, often require to be kept until they reach a head, until they come to a ripeness, often require to be kept secret as to their details. Much more is that true of national transactions, where, I am sorry to say, jealousy, selfishness, and pride interfere at every point; desires for ascendancy and such things as these intervene at every point to bewilder the minds of men, and to lead them away from the plain, simple ends of truth and justice. That being so—and I have no scruple in asking your close attention, because this is a matter of deep interest to you and to your children—that being so, it is a very remarkable fact that while our Government in the course of the present century has become in its general strain a much more popular Government than it was a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago, yet at the same time the Crown has obtained a more absolute and exclusive power over the business of negotiation; and it has become the rule of all Administrations, subject, possibly, in certain exceptional cases to variety—it has become the general rule of the Administrations in this country that negotiations are to be kept secret until they are concluded. Well, I do not hesitate to say that, looking at that matter as I have stated it, it represents you as in a position of great danger, because no Administration is infallible; and I have told you fairly that the rule being thus, that treaties are made without prior communications of the details of the several stages until the treaties are accomplished, naturally you say, ‘Then we are in very great danger from a prerogative of the Crown like this.’ Well, now, how has that danger been neutralized? Until within the last three or four years it has been neutralized, as, under the singularly-chequered and singularly-combined institutions of this country, a great many

*The dangers
of such a
power.*

other dangers are neutralized—by the good sense, moderation, *The mode in which such dangers have been neutralized.* forbearance, and constitutional principles which, I do not hesitate to say, have in the main, for the last fifty years, distinguished the Ministries of this country, whether they have carried the name of Liberal or whether they have carried the name of Conservative. My Liberal friends, do not suppose that by what I have now said I mean in the slightest degree to extenuate the great importance of the differences that have separated you from the Conservative party. Far from it. But what I mean to say is this, that in the rear of those differences, above those differences, underneath those differences, there was a base and there was a solid mass of general convictions as to the rights of the Crown and the rights of the people, which in these delicate matters of negotiation sufficed to keep you safe; and the consequence is,—you will bear me out, I am quite sure, those of you who have attended to historical details in our own time,—that there is no instance known to me of a treaty concluded earlier than the year 1878, which treaty was not in conformity, in general conformity, with the known and ascertained wishes of the people; for although the details of the treaty were never made known, yet the wisdom of Governments always made sure that they did not travel into regions entirely new, but they took care to deal only with those subjects on which the public mind had received such a share of general information that they had sufficient indications of the direction in which it moved, of the aims which it entertained, and with these sufficient indications they were able substantially to give effect to your wishes.

Gentlemen, that was the state of things; and as long as Lord Derby was the Foreign Secretary of the country you were safe. I had the misfortune to differ upon one great subject with Lord Derby. I considered it a debt of honour as well as a debt of policy to unite ourselves with Europe in holding determined language to the Sultan of Turkey in 1876. Lord Derby, as I think unfortunately, took

a different view. I am not going to court Lord Derby now simply because later differences, later developed between him and his colleagues, have made him—and I am delighted to say it—have put him in his natural and legitimate place as a distinguished member of the Liberal party. But if you will permit me, I will just illustrate, by reference to a Parliamentary debate, what I have said upon this all-important subject of the treaty-making power. Mr. Rylands, an intelligent and active member of our party, brought on a motion in the House of Commons—this was about, I think, certainly not less than three years ago; it was, unless I am very much mistaken, at the time when Lord Derby was in office, or if it was not, for I will not be quite certain as to the date, it was undoubtedly before his successor had done anything showing an intention to depart from the established principles, but I am pretty sure it was when Lord Derby was in office—Mr. Rylands moved to abridge the treaty-making power of the Crown. Now, I, the factious man that I am, did not support that motion of Mr. Rylands. On the contrary, I followed Mr. Rylands in debate, and I made an argument against his motion; and my argument was this, that however plausible, nay, however solid might be many of his arguments, considered in themselves, however true it was that presumptively great dangers might arise from the uncontrolled power of the Crown in binding the faith of the country to treaties which it had never heard of, yet, notwithstanding all that, in practice when the matter was put to the solid test of experience we found that there was not a treaty upon record, though some of them might be recognised now as unwise—which is quite a different matter—there was not a treaty upon record which had not been, at the time when it was concluded, entirely agreeable to the general sense of the country. I said, therefore, I am content with the prerogative which, whatever dangers under conceivable circumstances, or under, as I then

*Mr. Rylands's
motion to
abridge this
power.*

*Mr. Glad-
stone's argu-
ment in reply.*

thought, inconceivable circumstances, it might entail, yet in such a variety of trials has been proved to work safely, expeditiously, effectively, and without detriment to any of our liberties. That speech of mine procured for me one of the rarest distinctions that ever accrued to me,—it procured for me, I happen to recollect, a panegyric next morning in the leading article of the *Times*. I laid down this principle, that all Administrations were careful to be in possession of the general knowledge and feeling of the people, and took care never to act out of harmony with that general knowledge and that general feeling, and that that was our sufficient security; consequently I was opposed to the motion of Mr. Rylands, and I did what I could to relieve Her Majesty's Government from any embarrassment on account of that motion. Sir Stafford Northcote followed me in debate. Did he differ from the doctrine I had laid down, namely, that it was the duty of the Government never to act except in cases where they were sufficiently informed of the feeling and intention of the nation? No; on the contrary, he said I had stated the view of the case upon the whole in a manner so satisfactory to him that he need hardly detain the House. He accepted that argument of mine, and the record is to be found in *Hansard*, both of the argument itself and of his acceptance of it.

Now, I hope I have conveyed to your minds what I conceive to be the general basis of that question—the title of the Crown, impeachable enough in abstract argument, impossible to defend unless used with consummate caution, but in my opinion used, until within the last couple of years, with very great caution, with sedulous and careful adherence to principle, by all the Foreign Secretaries and all the Ministries that succeeded one another; and so I was content to leave the matter, and so Sir Stafford Northcote commended me for leaving it.

Well, what happened? That in the year 1878 there was

The Anglo-Turkish Convention.

suddenly sprung upon us the mine of what is called the Anglo-Turkish Convention. I am not now going to enter at large upon the dangers, the folly—ay, I will repeat my old word, the word I applied to it at the first moment—I am not ashamed of it now; though it is a strong word, it is the only sufficient word—the insanity of that Convention. I am not going to open up those subjects. That is not the charge which I made in my letter. What I charged was the abuse of the treaty-making power of the Crown; therefore I will only open up one point to you, which is the novelty of all the points involved in that Convention. It did not contain one single provision of which the nation had ever heard. It did not contain one single provision for which the nation was prepared. It burst upon them just with as much novelty as the explosion of dynamite in the Winter Palace of St. Petersburg burst a few weeks ago upon the gallant but unhappy soldiers of the Imperial Guard. What were the provisions of that Convention? They were substantially three provisions. In the

Its provisions:

- (1) *Cyprus,*
- (2) *Turkey in Asia,*
- (3) *Armenian frontier.*

first place, the island of Cyprus was taken over and placed under our responsibility. In the second place, throughout the whole of Turkey in Asia, through Asia Minor, through Syria, through great part of Arabia, through Egypt, which was included in the Anglo-Turkish Convention, we made ourselves responsible for the establishment of good government. And, finally, the third point I will refer to is that we undertook to defend the Armenian frontier against invasion from Russia, without any reference to the question whether Russia might have a good cause or a bad cause for that invasion, and without the slightest reference to the fact that in order to repel Russia we must send our troops by sea some thousands of miles, through the Dardanelles and along the coast of the Black Sea, and then, through a difficult and hardly practicable country, at that enormous distance from their base of operations in England, to meet the solid and massive hosts of that great and populous Empire, acting from

within their own territory, with all their means of military communication safe and easy behind them.

There was not one of these three provisions, gentlemen, with regard to which the people of England had ever had the slightest inkling that it was possible that such burdens might be imposed upon them. These engagements were formed under the letter of the prerogative of the Crown, but in defiance and in breach of the spirit of that prerogative—*A breach of Constitutional practice,* in defiance and in breach of the unbroken practice of every Government of this country; and that Anglo-Turkish Convention now stands upon record as an ill-starred document to which your faith has been bound; because for once a Government had arisen that, though Conservative in name, was the very reverse of Conservative in character,—that cared not what novelties it created, cared not what risks it incurred, cared not what obligations it imposed upon you, provided they might serve to flourish before those disposed to excitement at the moment, and to support what was called their vigorous policy.

There is a class of politicians in this country called Radicals. Most of them, so far as I know, I should say are really rather harmless gentlemen. I am not aware that they entertain very mischievous or destructive schemes, but if I am to suppose that any of them do entertain destructive schemes, I will tell you what, it is not from these Radicals that the constitution of this country is in danger. It is from your Conservatives that it is in danger. It is abuse of the prerogative such as this that the country will not stand. We must have emphatic condemnation of these proceedings. I ask you, the Conservative as well as the Liberal voters of Midlothian, whether you are satisfied to be parties to their continuance and to their renewal? Are you really prepared? Have you really considered the means that you possess of sending vast armies into Armenia to defend the Armenian frontier against Russia? What

would you think of the Emperor of Russia if he undertook to make war against us in Ireland to please the Fenians? But that would be a rational proceeding on his part compared with the proceedings to which we are bound in the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Now, I must say one word more on the subject of that Convention, and it is this: besides being a breach of your constitutional rights to have your convictions and desires carefully considered in the negotiation of international instruments, that Anglo-Turkish Convention was one of the grossest breaches of the public law of Europe that ever has been put upon record. I do not know where to match it in all its circumstances. And now judge whether I use too strong language. My language I know is strong; but see the facts that I bring up in the rear of it to support its strength! It is not the question whether language is strong that you should consider. It is the question whether it is strong in excess of the reasons by which it is justified and maintained.

*and an offence
against the
public law of
Europe.*

Recollect what this Anglo-Turkish Convention was. In two of its three points it took away from Turkey for every practical purpose the island of Cyprus, deprived Turkey of that portion of its dominions, and it assumed the right of intervention between the Sultan and his subjects all over the wide extent of Turkey in Asia. Now, go back with me to the year 1856. In the year 1856, at the close of the Crimean war, was negotiated the great instrument known as the Treaty of Paris. The Crimean war had been brought about for the purpose of repressing what we believed to be a lawless invasion of the public law of Europe. The Emperor of Russia demanded—remember it was no question at the time of the Crimean war between the Sultan and his subjects; there were no Bosnian and Herzegovinian rebellions; there were no Bulgarian massacres; nothing of the sort; it was believed by the best authorities that Turkey was capable of reform; they have proved to be mistaken, but, notwithstanding, it was believed, believed by such men as Lord Palmerston, and believed by

such men as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, — the Emperor Nicholas, a powerful but an ambitious sovereign, demanded of the Sultan that he should enter into engagements with him, which we, in concert with all the other Great Powers of Europe, believed would have given him a right, a treaty right, to interfere whenever he pleased between the Sultan and his subjects. To prevent his taking that treaty right into the hands of a single Power, the war was made, with the full assent, as you will recollect, of the people of this country — the full, cordial, enthusiastic assent. Many of them may have changed their minds—I speak of what happened at the time. Well, when the Treaty of Paris was negotiated, what was the great object which the distinguished men, negotiators of that treaty, took power to unite for? It was to prevent that single-handed interference with Turkey which was the cause of the Crimean war. And if you read the Treaty of Paris— it is not necessary for me to read it; there is no dispute at all about the effect of its contents—if you read that treaty, you will find that every one of the parties to that treaty absolutely and unconditionally bound themselves, each for himself, that they never would do an act interfering with the integrity and independence of the Sultan; and, moreover, they bound themselves that if any such act were done by any one, it should be a subject of general and serious consideration for them all. Now, what have we done? That very thing which we would not allow Nicholas to do, that very thing which we made war to prevent him from doing, that very thing which the British people cheerfully spent eighty millions to prevent him from doing, that very thing which you did prevent him from doing, and which you took security against the doing of by anybody else, has been done by the Government of Lord Beaconsfield since the retirement of Lord Derby. And I do assure you, that although I have been a careful attendant, and an actual participator in, I believe, all the debates in Parliament

We have done now the very thing to prevent which, on the part of Russia, we fought the Crimean war.

upon this great subject, I never heard the slightest attempt made by any member of the Government to show that the Anglo-Turkish Convention could possibly be reconciled with the Treaty of Paris. So that, I believe, I speak with the active assent of all Liberals, and with the passive and tacit acquiescence of all Conservatives, in saying that the Anglo-Turkish Convention, insane in its folly, is likewise guilty in its character of an offence against the public law of Europe. If that is so, pray recollect what that public law of Europe is. Pray recollect that the hopes of mankind for the future depend mainly upon its extension, its consolidation, and upon the careful and faithful respect paid to it by every member of the great family of Christendom.

*The sacred
duty of paying
strict regard to
public law.*

There is no duty so sacred, incumbent upon any Government in its foreign policy, as that careful and strict regard to public law. If I used weak words or equivocal words when endeavouring to drive home the charge of a breach of public law, in proportion as my words were faltering and feeble I should be a traitor in my duties to you. My duty is to bring out the truth. If my words are strong, let those who complain of them show by argument that they are not deserved; but if those who are now Ministers of the Crown are in reality what we called the Emperor Nicholas, justly called him, in 1854, wanton disturbers, by taking into their own private and single hands the authority which is the authority of the united mass of civilised mankind, then there are no words too clear and no words too strong to bring home these facts to your minds, and to make you sensible individually of the vast responsibility you incur if you choose to contribute so much as one grain or one tittle to the continuance of such a state of things. Therefore I return to the words with which I began, that 'by their use of the treaty-making and war-making powers of the Crown, they have abridged the just rights of Parliament, and have presented prerogative to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect, which tends to make it insecure.' To save

that prerogative will, in my opinion, be the work of prudence, caution, of studious reverence for ancient usage, careful respect for the rights of the people. But no repetitions of those strange pranks will, as I believe, be endured by the British nation; they will not consent to have their hands bound by the arbitrary act of a Minister; they will claim to have some share in the direction of the affairs of this great Empire; they will hold that their duties are not merely parochial, municipal, and local duties—that the high functions accorded to the British race are functions which can only be discharged by the free participation of the whole enfranchised people in the direction of the policy of the country.

And now I am going to bid you farewell for the day, and for the day only. If time had sufficed, there is plenty more to be said; but I am in hopes that by my making the best efforts I can, and by the singularly kindly, patient, and intelligent attention which you give me, we are beginning by degrees to understand one another. Nay more, I go a little farther, and I hope that by the invaluable assistance that we derive from those members of this audience who alone are without any political function to discharge, what is said and felt in Midlothian is rapidly passing beyond the bounds of Midlothian, and is making some contribution, at least, to help the people of this country to discharge perhaps the most arduous duties which ever, for at least half a century, have been entrusted to their hands.

Gentlemen, only one word more. You brought me here without the slightest previous expectation on my part. You brought me with a very special purpose. You knew that there were plenty of precedents for calling upon persons not directly connected with the county to represent the county. But at the same time you also knew that in the most distinguished and remarkable of those precedents, such, for instance, as when Lord Brougham was constituted representative of Yorkshire, and as when Mr. Cobden, at a later date, was con-

stituted representative of the West Riding, it was always done with some very special view, and for the support and the illustration of some very remarkable and important principle. My belief, when I received your invitation, was that it was sent and given upon those grounds. I came here with no personal animosity to your—I must still say—present representative. I believe he is a man against whom no human being on the face of the earth entertains, or could justifiably entertain, any animosity at all. As regards his distinguished father, I have had the honour of his acquaintance for a length of time; I have enjoyed his hospitality; I have deeply regretted his latter course in politics. I have most of all regretted that serious error into which he has fallen in the creation of fictitious suffrages—to count upon your register as against the true and local representatives of the county. I cannot forget that his long life has been spent in the most conscientious, laborious, indefatigable endeavours to perform every duty so far as his lights permitted him to discern them—every duty in his family, in his household, in his wide circle of friends, in his high position as a landlord, in the House of Lords, and, in fact, in every relation of life. I would far rather, if I could, avoid entirely and eschew everything like hostile contact with such a man. But what I have to consider is this: if instead of being a nobleman, placed far above me in social position, he were attached to me by the nearest ties, I would still say that the issues now at stake are so solemn that every consideration of flesh and blood must be put for the moment aside so far as it conflicts with public duty. I thought, gentlemen, that if you, in the discharge of a great public duty, invited me to come here, there was a plain and manifest obligation upon me to obey the call. I have come, and I do not repent of having come. I hear from time to time language of confidence from the camp of our opponents; but I hear more frequently of the still whisper, mainly of misgiving, of suspicion, of apprehension that they

will be beaten. The poet Moore, I think, told us of the harp of *Inisfail* which was sometimes tuned to notes of gladness, that yet it 'oftener told a tale of more prevailing sadness;' and what Moore said of the harp of *Inisfail* I say of the anticipations of the Tory party about the result of this election. A tone of more prevailing sadness envelops, enshrouds, and overpowers those artificial expressions of confidence which here and there they contrive to get up. Such is my belief.

If this were a mere issue of party, strongly attached as I am to your party—and every year confirms me in my convictions of its general superiority in its view of what is required by the interests of the country—still, were this a mere contest of party, at my time of life, and nearly counting half a century of service, I would respectfully but firmly have asked leave to retire. As it is, the powers that are in me, which may never have been very great, are naturally approaching at least the term of their exhaustion. Such as they are, I place them at your disposal, not merely because you have a seat in Parliament to give, but because the voice that you are about to pronounce in this county will be symbolical of the triumph of a noble cause; and to you is committed at this very moment the decision on interests deeply connected with the happiness, prosperity, and honour of this country, and even, I may venture to say, with the welfare of civilised mankind.

III.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1880.

SPEECH AT RATHO.

THIS meeting had been summoned for five o'clock, and long before that hour the place was crowded, the audience numbering about 600 persons, including a few ladies. Mr. Gladstone arrived in Ratho a few minutes after the hour, and met with a very hearty reception from the villagers. On the motion of Mr. Watson, Mr. James Melvin, Bonnington, was called upon to preside, and among those present were—Messrs. Peter McLagan, M.P., of Pumpherstons; J. R. Findlay, Hatton House; James Allan, Clifton; J. R. Foreman, Craighpark; G. Watson of Norton; William Dick, Kirknewton; James Brash, Hallyards; R. Young, Ratho; Dr. Sheriff; William Anderson, Norton Mains, etc.

Mr. Gladstone, who on rising was again loudly cheered, said:—

Mr. Melvin and Gentlemen,—Since my arrival on Tuesday night in Scotland I have had an opportunity of applying myself to the consideration of a portion of the topics with which it is my duty to deal before this constituency. In the hearing of two most intelligent and attentive audiences, I have gone into some of the very gravest of those matters which the people have now virtually in their hands to decide. For the circumstances of this election are quite peculiar. We find ample food for discussion, plenty of room

for agreement, and plenty of room, I am sorry to say, also for difference on ordinary occasions—on the occasion of every dissolution of Parliament. Our various views as Liberals or Conservatives have been developed, and we endeavour to fight out in a manly manner those differences. But on this occasion, in the first place, all the domestic questions which solicit our attention seem to be more multiplied and more entangled than ever; and, in the second place, besides these domestic questions, we have got to deal with a multitude of novel methods of procedure in almost all the quarters of the world, which so powerfully affect the state of this country, and come home so much both to our feelings, our principles, and our interests that it is extremely difficult—I may say it is quite impracticable—for us to enter as largely and fully as we should do upon the whole of the topics that are before us for consideration.

I have just been busy in reiterating, and I think supporting against Her Majesty's Government, what I conceive to be some very grave charges, and I have been dwelling, both in Edinburgh yesterday and at Corstorphine to-day, upon a remarkable and eventful fact in this controversy, viz. that the Prime Minister on Monday night distinctly stated that he had reversed the foreign policy which he found in force when he came into office. Therefore he has shown you how broad the issue is which is raised before us. We are no longer, I think, after that declaration of his, liable to the charge that it is from party feeling or from personal feeling we object to the existing foreign policy; because the Prime Minister himself has told us that he has thrown off and repudiated the former foreign policy; that that former foreign policy is bad, and his is good. I am not going to enter into the general case. I am only directing your minds to the fact that this declaration, this intimation of the difference between the spirit of the former and of the present foreign policy, proceeds from the mouth of the Prime Minister him-

Lord Beaconsfield has declared that he reversed the foreign policy in force in 1874.

self; and therefore it is not any wonder that we support, and I hope we shall support with energy, the views we entertain, which are very closely connected with our condition, our prospects at home. But after having dwelt in those two speeches so long upon exterior concerns, I think it is time that I should submit to you that I am aware that there are likewise other questions which cannot escape consideration.

The neglect of domestic legislation.

We think that the last six years have been singularly inefficient in the work of domestic legislation. There never was a Government which had greater advantages from the compactness and the docility of the majority in the House of Commons by which it has been supported, and notwithstanding that great advantage, very little progress has been made—with Scotch questions almost no progress has been made. They have been left very much in the condition in which they were at the accession of the present Government to power. I wish to call your attention to the last and present doings of the expiring Parliament, which touch Scotland in rather a peculiar degree. There are three subjects with which the expiring Parliament is particularly busy. One of them is the question of corrupt practices at elections; one of them is the question of hypothec; and one of them is the question of a new tax about to be laid upon the country by an augmentation of the Probate Duties, which are known to you under the name of the Inventory Duty.

The Corrupt Practices Act, 1880.

With regard to the Corrupt Practices Act, a curious incident has happened. The present Corrupt Practices Act lasts until the end of the year 1881; there was therefore no hurry to deal with it whatever. And the time for dealing with it is the worst and the most absurd, because the moment it has been announced in Parliament that a dissolution is to take place within a fortnight—and that was

the announcement made to us last week—naturally you will conceive that the minds of members are not all of them in that collected and concentrated state which is necessary for legislative business. They have serious affairs to consider and to attend to in the country. The benches of the House of Commons become thin, attention becomes lax, and serious consideration cannot be given. Under these circumstances of hurry and pressure in these matters, Her Majesty's Government have introduced what they call a Corrupt Practices Bill, which is simply a continuing Act, except in one clause. And what is that one clause? In former Corrupt Practices Bills it has been thought material to limit the practice of paying for the conveyance of voters to the poll. It is felt that that is a very heavy tax upon candidates, and every tax upon candidates, like taxes upon other commodities, limits the choice of candidates by the people. You will easily understand that if no man can be a candidate unless he has so many thousands of pounds at his command, the number of men who have thousands of pounds at their command is not so large as that of men who might be perfectly well qualified by education, by character, by everything except money; and, therefore, a tax upon the candidates is really a tax upon the choice of the people. Though it would be absurd to say that the conveyance of electors to the poll was corrupt in itself, yet it was connected with that system of profuse expense at elections which is the root and foundation of corruption, and consequently it was by a former Parliament forbidden in burghs. In counties it has not yet been forbidden. I hope I may see the day when it will be forbidden in counties; but it is not yet forbidden in counties. It is forbidden in burghs; and now, at this last moment, what has the Government done but set about repealing the prohibition; and knowing, as they do, that their own candidates are the richer candidates—for

nobody will deny that upon the whole the Tories have got the long purses — knowing that their candidates are the richer candidates, they are inflicting a fine upon the Liberal candidates throughout the country by altering the law while Parliament is at its last gasp, and restoring the legality of conveying voters to the poll and paying for their conveyance. But I want to call your attention to this. Several Scotch members, in defiance of this disadvantage, protested against the bill, and I have no doubt to your satisfaction Her Majesty's Government have agreed to exclude Scotland from the operation of the bill. So that in England it is to be permitted to pay for the conveyance of voters to the poll, but in Scotland it is not to be permitted. Is not that a very odd proceeding on the part of the Government, to introduce this new distinction between the laws of the two countries? Why have Her Majesty's Government excluded Scotland from the operation of this bill for carrying voters to the poll in burghs? I will tell you why it is, gentlemen; because the Government know perfectly well that in the burghs of Scotland their candidates have no chance whatever, and as they know that a Scotchman would not consent to be conveyed to the poll in a Scotch burgh to vote for a Conservative candidate, they are quite willing to leave him and his laws as they are. But in England, where they think that the power of money is greater, and will be more effective in returning their own friends to Parliament, there the law is to be altered under these circumstances of haste, and I must say not only of haste, but indecent haste. That is one of the subjects with which the dying Parliament is busy.

*The abolition
of Hypothec.*

The next is the Law of Hypothec. When I was here in November, I stated at Dalkeith that in my opinion the Law of Hypothec must be radically altered. It must be altered in such a way as to sweep away bodily, while leaving

to the landlord every fair and effectual security for his rights—it must be altered in such a way as to sweep away the whole grievance of which the tenants of Scotland have been complaining. But what is now doing? I do not believe that our friend Mr. Melvin knows, who understands that subject eminently well, and I frankly own to you I cannot tell what they are doing. I know this, when the bill was in Parliament last year for abolishing the Law of Hypothec, the majority of the members of the Government voted against the bill on the second reading. Five members voted with the Lord Advocate for the bill, and I think that either eleven or twelve members of the Government voted against it. It is delightful to see this conversion of members of the Government from error to truth in the matter of hypothec. This is owing to the impending dissolution. Great terror is felt by the Government about the seats of that minority of gentlemen who support them from Scotland. You know very well that those Tory candidates have had to consent to the abolition of the Law of Hypothec as a condition of having so much as a chance of a seat for a Scotch county; and the Government, not able to dispense, or not willing to dispense, with the services of those gentlemen, wish to give them the best chance they can by now in this hurried manner altering the Law of Hypothec—just as they are dealing with the Corrupt Practices Act, in such haste that it is impossible to trace or to know what they are about. I do not know if you have read the papers. It is impossible to make out from them what is being done. The bill is hurried on from day to day. Instead of having deliberate and quiet legislation, the bill is hurried on from day to day, and it is impossible to know what its exact effect will be. But this I will say, that whether its effect be satisfactory or not, you may depend upon it that that is a subject which, if you return an enlightened Parliament to act for you at St. Stephen's, ought not to bear, will not bear, long delay.

It ought to be dealt with, and dealt with effectually. If I am able to obtain such information upon the particulars of the present measure while I am speaking in Midlothian as will enable me to give a confident opinion upon them, I will do it. In the meantime, I ask you to accept my general view. I consider that the matter is a matter entirely settled in principle; the details I will reserve until I have accurate information—till I know what is now being done. If the thing that is being done is good and effectual, I congratulate you upon it; if, on the other hand, it is insufficient and unsatisfactory, you may depend upon it that a Liberal Parliament will set the matter right.

*The change in
the Inventory
Duty.*

There is another subject, into which I will not enter fully to-day, but I think it very important that I should enter into it with sufficient time, and bring it fully before the constituency, and that is the alteration being made in the Inventory Duty. It is a most remarkable proceeding that, in these last days of the Parliament, one of the most complicated fiscal questions that it is possible to bring before Parliament is passing full gallop through the House of Commons, cannot be touched in the House of Lords, and is intended to lay upon the people a burden of at least from £700,000 to £800,000 a year. That is not the only fact. I mean to show the gross injustice with which this burden is going to be laid. I only mention it now because that is the third case in which this Parliament—attended by a handful of members and nothing else, a handful of members who are thinking a great deal more, very naturally, about the dissolution and their own seats than they are about the subject before them—is dealing with matters of great importance, and dealing with this particular tax in a manner which, I will venture to say, deserves your careful attention and your severe condemnation. It is quite true that it does not touch you individually. It touches your sons. We are all mortal; somebody or other will succeed to what we leave behind us. I conceive it is a

matter of interest to you under what conditions that succession shall take place, and that is the subject which to-morrow I will endeavour to open and to make intelligible to those who hear me.

Now, let me say a few words to you upon the general question of the condition of the agricultural interest. I hold in my hand a list of questions which were proposed to be put to me in Edinburgh yesterday. They are extraordinarily well written out, and as well as I can judge from their exterior features, I think a lawyer has had his hand in them. I am only going to refer to one of them now—‘Do you still adhere to the sentiments which you expressed at Midcalder’—No! not Midcalder; I never was there. (The Chairman—‘It was West Calder.’) It was West Calder; but the lawyer ought to have known that—‘in reference to raising the agricultural interest from its present very depressed condition—viz. a peasant proprietary and the growing of various kinds of fruits, such as strawberries, etc.—notwithstanding the variableness of our climate, and the poverty of our soil?’ Now, you observe how this lawyer insinuates that I stated that agriculture was to be raised from its very depressed condition by the creation of a peasant proprietary and by the growing of strawberries. But I never made any such statement at all. What I did say was this. I could not bring myself to treat the subject of the depression of agriculture merely as a party question or merely as a political question. It is a social question of the greatest interest to us all. I myself, with my family, am principally dependent, as you are, upon the produce of the land. As one dependent on the produce of the land, I look forward without grievous apprehensions to the future. I think that the relation of landlord and tenant will settle itself according to justice; the standard of rents will unquestionably be decided by the real true state of the market. Men will give for land what land is worth. Under current agreements, under current leases, there may be great inequalities, and there may be suffer-

*A peasant
proprietary.*

The true relation of landlord and tenant.

ing under those current agreements, just as when there came a tremendous fall a few years ago in the price of iron, those who had undertaken to make and deliver at certain rates were liable to suffer grievously from the change that took place in the currency of the contract. But what I think is this, that it would be impertinent in me to attempt to instruct practical agriculturists upon the mode in which they are to transact their business. I do not attempt, nor have I time, to enter very fully, very largely, upon the question; but I referred to principles, and I entered upon some suggestions which appeared to me to be matter of great interest. Among these are the two questions here named. They do not embrace the whole subject; they embrace for most of you a very limited portion of the subject; but still they are important questions, and they are most important questions in some parts of the United Kingdom. The question whether it is desirable to give facilities as far as they can be given for the gradual formation of a small proprietary is a question of extreme interest. Many people say that small proprietors are very wasteful and incompetent proprietors. They deliver, I think, very rash and hasty judgment upon very large questions. In Ireland, I have not the least hesitation in saying it is most desirable to encourage the formation of a small proprietary. In England and in Scotland I do not see evidence of a general or extensive desire of the people to become small proprietors. I see great evidence in both those countries of the desire of the people to become proprietors if they can, or virtual proprietors as feuars of their own houses, but that is a different matter. To become small proprietors as cultivators of land is another matter, and I do not see that they have a great desire for it. In Ireland, I look upon it as a very important question. How far it can be extended I cannot say, I cannot undertake to say; but I believe that in Ireland there is an opening. I believe much requires still to be done for the improvement of the condition of the people of that portion of the United Kingdom; and I

am not at all ashamed, notwithstanding that the lawyer may scoff at me, of speaking of this subject of the creation of a peasant proprietary, not as a question of vital importance in Scotland, for I never did so speak of it, but as a question well worthy of the attention of the Legislature, and very desirable to be put forward in all cases where it can be done. Now, with respect to the growing of strawberries. If I recommended the growing of strawberries, it was not an original suggestion. *The growing of strawberries.* There are some tolerably long-headed people in Scotland—I believe even in the county of Midlothian—who have taken it up as a farmer's pursuit; in Perthshire many more have taken it up as a farmer's pursuit; and in Aberdeenshire many more have taken it up as a farmer's pursuit, notwithstanding that this lawyer says that 'the variableness of our climate and the poverty of our soil' are such an objection to the growing of strawberries.

Will you allow me to tell you a fact that is of considerable interest and importance? though, again, do not suppose that I am come among you as a quack doctor with a nostrum in my pocket, and ready to offer it to you as an infallible cure for all agricultural difficulties. But it is this. I hope those who lately visited America on the part of the Scottish farmers—I do not know whether the whole results of their inquiries have been published—but if they had time to pay attention to the condition of the Eastern States—to New England—I have not a doubt that they have brought home information which is of considerable importance to you. The pressure that you are apprehending tells, of course, upon meat and upon corn. Now, I do not attach much value to my own opinion. It has nothing to recommend it except my having paid a lengthened attention to public affairs, and observed what happens to the various interests in this country. I do not think it in the least degree likely that you will ever see the prices of meat reduced in these markets to what they were in the time of Protection, and what they would

Importation tells upon the price of meat and of corn.

have continued to be if the Tories had succeeded in their efforts to keep you under the reign of Protection. For always recollect that those Tories, who always call themselves the farmers' friends, themselves are the men who wanted to perpetuate the reign of Protection; and I ask you to look back to the prices you then got for your beasts and your sheep, and I ask you whether you would exchange even the present prices for such as you had forty and fifty years ago. I dismiss that question, because while, on the one hand, I am very glad to see a great increase in the means of transmitting meat to this country,—for certainly some years ago there were great fears of it becoming terribly scarce,—yet, on the other hand, long observation of the bearings of Free-trade upon animal products convinces me that if only you can keep the people of this country in good condition, the demand for meat will be such that it will ensure you good prices. If you can keep affairs quiet, if you can refrain from disturbing confidence, if you can prosecute the extension of the commerce of the country as it has been extended lately, if the people are secured in good wages, of those wages they will lay out a very large proportion in the purchase of animal food, and you will reap thereof a good price. With regard to corn, there again I must limit myself. Scotland generally, as an oat-growing country, is in a different condition from England. I do not address you in the Lothians as an oat-growing county particularly, but the proportion of oats grown in Scotland is very large. And it is quite evident that the pressure upon grain other than wheat is totally different in its character from the pressure upon the growers of wheat. Since we have had our markets open to the world, the price of barley has risen very considerably; the price of oats is somewhat better than it was in the time of Protection; and it is with regard to wheat that the present question now presses.

Now, it is with regard to that subject that I wish to say one word on the condition of the Eastern States of

America. The Eastern States of America are in the condition of an old country relative to the Western States; they are subject to the pressure of the competition of the Western States. And you have this advantage over them as wheat-growers, that the wheat of the west of America comes into the eastern markets without paying a freight across the ocean. Consequently the farmers of the Eastern States, especially in New England, have felt this pressure even much more severely than you have. And I am told, as a matter of fact, that they have to a very considerable extent met the pressure by changes not merely in the mode of cultivation, but by changes in the articles cultivated; and that transition, in a considerable degree—in what degree I am not able to say—but a transition in a considerable and important degree to a larger growth of what may generally be termed garden produce—vegetables, fruits, flowers of different kinds—this has now become a very considerable resource to the agriculturists of the Eastern States of America.

The cultivation of garden produce in the Eastern States of America.

Again, let me say, do not suppose, in encouraging you to examine this matter when you have the opportunity, that I pretend to say that that is to be a universal receipt, or that I have fallen into the ridiculous mistake—the ridiculous blunder—of saying that this was to raise the agriculture of the country universally from its present depressed condition. No; what you have to look to is, without doubt, to pay a fair value for the land which you agree to cultivate. And I think I did express an opinion—which was a sound opinion, and of which this lawyer has taken no notice—namely this, that even the prudent Scotchman, about fifteen years ago, for the moment forgot his prudence, and that at that time the leases of hill farms—the short leases of your sheep farms—were renewed at such an increase of rent as circumstances did not really justify. I believe there is very little doubt of that. I think, after what has happened of late years, you and your brethren throughout Scotland will be

well on your guard against falling into any error of that description, if such an error was committed.

*What farmers
have to ask
from Parlia-
ment.*

What have you to ask from a candidate, or from a member of Parliament, or from the Parliament itself? You have not to ask from them, or from any but yourselves, that your trade and occupation shall be profitable. It is your own intelligence, care, thrift, and industry which alone can ensure success in the career of life. And if it were possible for you to fold your arms and to throw upon your candidates and your members of Parliament the responsibility of finding you a lucrative occupation, not only would you fail in that end, but you would lose all the masculine qualities which have made Scotland famous, and you would become really unworthy of being the citizens of such a country. What is it, then, that you have a right to ask? I have said before, you have a right to ask perfect freedom in what you buy and in what you sell; and so far, I think, the law has tolerably met your fair and just demands. There is nothing that you buy on which you pay a price enhanced by anything except the real necessities of Government. You no longer pay a price enhanced against you for the supposed interests of particular classes. On what you sell, you are met by no burdens; you have a choice of the markets of the world, if the market of your own country is not satisfactory to you. At any rate, there is nothing in the state of that market which turns it against you by Act of Parliament, or by an unjust desire of the Legislature to create a preference to your disfavour and disadvantage. But there is more behind. You have a right to expect that as cultivators you shall be thoroughly secured in the free use of the land that you undertake to manage. You have a right to expect that that land shall not be laid waste by wild animals for the sport and amusement of the landlord and his friends.

*Perfect freedom
in what is
bought and
what is sold.*

Now, let me say one word as to this. When I was here before, I had so much to say that I passed very lightly over

the subject of the Game-laws, simply because the pressure of *The Game-laws.* other matters was more severe. It has been my happy lot, as a proprietor of land, and witnessing the working of an estate, never to have had a difficulty of any kind with any single tenant upon the subject of game. But, then, every tenant with whom I have had to do knows perfectly well the ground game is entirely at his mercy. I do not speak of winged game now, because the cultivators of the soil have raised no question, and do not appear to think that they have serious grievances, in connection with it. If that question is ever raised, let us then examine it. But I think it a grievous hardship upon the tenant that he should be liable to have his crops laid waste by the ravages of ground game. Well, then, they say the tenant can make his agreement with the landlord accordingly. I am not satisfied with that argument. I am not at all sure that the tenant is strong enough in his position at all times to make his agreement with his landlord accordingly. It appears to me that the subject of freedom of contract is a subject which men treat very differently indeed, according to the position from which they treat it. The Tory party, in particular, boasts of having passed bills about mines, and about workshops, and about factories. Every one of these bills, without exception *Interference with the freedom of contract.*—and I am not condemning them—is an interference, and a violent interference, with freedom of contract. These bills will not allow the labouring population of the country to make their own contracts, but lay down fixed and rigid rules beyond which they may not go—beyond which they may not sell their labour, and determine the conditions of that sale of labour to their employers. Why is not the same principle to be applied to the cultivation of the land? The Tory party trample freedom of contract with very little scruple under foot in the name of humanity and justice when it is a question of dealing with the manufacturing and trading interests; when they come to deal with their

own tenants, suddenly they become alive to the great sanctity of the principle of freedom of contract. I value freedom of contract very much, but in my opinion it should be a real freedom—it should be between parties who meet upon a footing of equality. It would be very absurd if you provided by law that the hosier must sell me a pair of gloves at a certain price. And why? Because when I go into his shop to buy a pair of gloves, he meets me substantially upon a footing of equality. But where the parties do not meet on a footing of equality, there the question of interference with the freedom of contract is one of pure policy and expediency. I am not satisfied that the position of the farmer is one of real equality of footing with the landlord in regard to this question of the Game-laws. It appears to me that there is much to be said for, and I know no sufficient argument against, investing the tenant with a right over the ground game, which right shall be inalienable, and which he shall not be competent to part with. What is to be the position of the landlord in regard to the ground game? I believe that it probably would be most convenient that the landlord should have a concurrent right with the tenant. You understand what I mean; that he also should be entitled to destroy the ground game upon the land. You will say, why should that be so—why should the landlord have any right at all? Now, speaking as a landlord, I should be perfectly content—if I were young enough, to go abroad and enjoy shooting, which is hardly now within my contemplation—I should be perfectly content to take the shooting by the permission of the tenant, perfectly, quite satisfied he would give it me within the bounds of reason. But I will tell you a danger. In England, undoubtedly,—and we are speaking now of the three kingdoms, not of separate legislation for Scotland,—the danger is this, that in England undoubtedly many of the farmers would be themselves, and are themselves, such genuine sportsmen, that they would preserve game upon their own

*A concurrent
right to game
in the owner
and the tenant.*

farms, and if they had the exclusive use of the ground game they would preserve game, and that game would become a nuisance to the farms of others. I know of no way of preventing that mischief except by giving a concurrent right to the landlord. But that is a right of destruction, not a right of preservation; not a right of feeding these animals; not a right of multiplying them, but to prevent a multiplication of these animals to the prejudice of the tenant. My disposition would be not only to give to the tenant a presumption that they are his when he takes the land, but to give him a property in them, incapacitating him from alienating from himself that proprietary right. So far as regards the question of game.

Then comes the question of Improvements. The friends of the farmers have now been in power six years, and what have they done? Well, they have passed a measure which, I am afraid, is a very inefficient measure. The right of the tenant to the improvements which he makes—the judicious improvements which he makes—the improvements which really improve—is, in my opinion, entitled to the full protection of the Legislature. I mentioned when I was here before a particular form of lease, which I believe to be a very good and wise form of lease. It was one intended to give to the tenant the power of practising his own methods of cultivation without injuring in any manner the interests of the landlord. That was a form of lease under which substantially the length of the lease was to be twenty-one years. The tenant would practically pursue with an absolute freedom his own methods of cultivation in all respects—his own methods of disposing of manure, his own methods of treating the soil, until within four years of the end of the lease. And within four years of the end of the lease the tenant should say whether he wished to continue the farm and take a new lease. Whenever the landlord and he should agree to his taking a new lease, then he would start upon a

The right of the tenant to the improvements effected by himself.

new lease with exactly the same freedom over again ; and the same process to be renewed as often as the time came round. But if the tenant said, ' No, I am going to leave this land, I am not wanting to have a new lease,' then undoubtedly I do not think it would be fair or just to the landlord—and I expect that in this you will agree with me—that the tenant should have, during these last four years, the power of taking out of the land whatever he pleased, and that the landlord should have no power to secure that the land should be in a good condition at the end of the lease. I will not enter further into details on that matter. But this I will say, that we legislated for the rights of the farmer in Ireland, and we succeeded in giving to him a perfect practical security for the value of his whole improvements. Happily the circumstances of Scotland are very different from those of Ireland, but I think you may understand that the party which was willing to secure and has secured the improvements of the Irish farmers is not less willing to secure to the Scotch farmer the benefit of his own improvements. Probably in saying that, and in pointing to what has actually occurred in Ireland, I am saying something to you which is better than entering into the details, of which I might not be a master, and detaining you with an exposition which, after all, might appear to be incomplete. Security and a free choice of the means for the prosecution of his business is that to which the tenant is entitled ; the free use of his land, the free purchase of his materials, the free sale of his products—these three are the three cardinal and fundamental principles which on the whole constitute the code of justice as between the Legislature and the cultivator of the soil. Beyond that I will not now go, and with that I am inclined to believe that in principle you will be satisfied. If there is more that you desire to know of me, I shall be perfectly ready to enter upon further explanations with you. You have been detained here long, and I think that for the present I have said to you what at

*The different
circumstances
of Ireland and
Scotland.*

any rate will indicate generally the spirit in which I desire to approach the consideration of every agricultural question. The fact is, gentlemen, that when I come to such a subject I forget that I am a Parliamentary candidate. Interested in the land myself, and living, as I am happy to say we do, in the closest bonds of good-will with our tenantry, our cottagers, and our neighbours—regarding them all as friends united to us by fond recollections as well as by common interests, I feel that the matters in which the interests of landlord and tenant are in apparent conflict are so slight that they vanish out of view when in competition with those matters in which I regard them as one rural community, joined together and assisting one another in the discharge of every good office, with a view to the prosperous and successful pursuit of that which is the most delightful of all the ordinary professions—namely, the cultivation of the soil for raising the food of man. I hope that you will never lose the high position which you occupy in that respect. I do not believe you are likely to lose it. You may have severe competition to meet with, but the resources and skill and ingenuity, and your just disposition to offer no more when you take a lease of land than you believe the land to be worth, will carry you through, provided only the Legislature gives you justice in the fundamental particulars to which I have referred. And that justice I deem it not a burden, but an honour and a satisfaction, to co-operate with you in procuring.

I will not detain you further upon these matters at present. If I am able—and I possibly may be able—to obtain a clearer insight into the nature of the present legislation on the important subject of Hypothec, I will return to it on an early occasion. For the present I will bid you good evening, with hearty good wishes, and express to you the conviction which I have not scrupled to express elsewhere, that I have not come in vain to this county—that you did not invite me in vain to this county. You thought it material that you should make an

effort to place the representation of the county in the Liberal hands, and all that I have seen, and all that I have heard, and all that I have known, well convinces me that you have the strength to carry through your purpose, and that when we arrive at the day of nomination and at the day of the poll, that purpose will unquestionably be attained.

IV.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 1880.

SPEECH AT DAVIDSON'S MAINS.

THE meeting at this village, which is situated in the parish of Cramond, about three miles west from Edinburgh, was held on Friday the 19th of March. Dr. R. Craig Maclagan occupied the chair, and introduced Mr. Gladstone to the audience, by whom he was enthusiastically received.

The right honourable gentleman said :—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I am very glad to meet the electors and inhabitants of this parish assembled in such numbers. You will, I am sure, not estimate the value I place upon your approval and your suffrages according to the necessary brevity of the address I must make to you. You will kindly recollect what is the explanation of that brevity—not only, nor will I say mainly, limitation of strength, for so far as my strength is concerned I have no other desire than to spend it in the cause in which I am engaged, but rather the yet more vital consideration of limitation of time. I necessarily have a large correspondence to carry on, many communications, personal communications, to hold, considerable distances to traverse, and large assemblies to address with the necessity of careful and detailed exposition.

As, however, I wish to give to this meeting a practical turn, I will simply remind you, in very brief terms, of the leading propositions, or some of the leading propositions, which the Liberals of the country seek to make good at the coming election. These propositions are, indeed, of the most serious

character. You cannot be too careful in the strictness with which you examine the evidence to support them; and especially to those of you who have hitherto voted with the Conservative party, or who have not yet declared your intentions, I not only do not deprecate, but I would earnestly enforce the duty of that strict and jealous examination. I must say that that examination is sometimes very superficially made. I have got in my pocket an anonymous letter, signed 'A Converted Liberal,' and this 'Converted Liberal' accuses me of numerous misstatements. I will just mention the misstatements he specifies, in order that you may see with what slovenly carelessness, to say the best, these matters are sometimes managed. He says that I said the other day that the effect of sending the fleet to Constantinople was that the Russian army drew nearer to Constantinople; that they went to the lines called the lines of Tchataldja, which are within a very short distance of Constantinople. This gentleman, totally ignorant of the history of the case, this 'Converted Liberal,' who, from some kind of Liberalism that he does not specify, has been converted to some kind of Toryism equally difficult to understand, and evidently labouring under peculiarities of intellect not common amongst you, reads the matter in a light different from the facts as they are reported by public authority, and alleges that this approach to Constantinople, which is known to have been made upon the approach of the fleet, had been made before the approach of the fleet. His second observation is still more singular. His second observation is this. I had said it was absurd to suppose that an army on land, which I said roughly and approximately might be an army of 50,000, or perhaps 100,000 men, could be deterred from entering Constantinople by the presence of several great ships of war, with possibly 1000 marines, or perhaps 1500 marines—I should say most likely from 1000 to 1500 marines—on board, who could be landed to hold the city against them. I said it was absurd to suppose that such

an effect could be produced, and the misstatement he charges upon me is this, that I greatly understated the Russian army. He says that instead of 50,000 or 100,000, they were 200,000 or 300,000, and he thinks he convicts me of a mischievous misstatement of the case; and the 'Converted Liberal' does not see he gives force to the argument that it was absurd to suppose that 300,000 men were kept out of Constantinople by five or six ironclads in the Sea of Marmora, and by the possibility of landing a few hundreds comparatively of British marines, gallant as those marines are, and efficient in every service they have to do.

The general propositions I have endeavoured to bring from time to time, as clearly as I could, before this constituency, *General propositions.* are rather numerous; they are perfectly intelligible, and they are of great weight and importance. They partly relate to our Government at home; they partly relate to the conduct of the British Government in our foreign relations—in our relations abroad, and in the management of the Indian Empire. In regard to the Government at home, what we have said is this—not by any means that no good measure has been passed during the sway of the present Government. For instance, a good measure was passed when the Artisans' Dwellings Act was passed. But from whence did that good measure come, gentlemen? It came from Glasgow. The Artisans' Dwellings Act was an Act which embodies a plan by means of which the Corporation of Glasgow, representing the inhabitants of Glasgow, taking the initiative into their own hands, made an admirable design for a very large translocation of the population of Glasgow, under provisions which cannot be too much praised, to prevent that inconvenience, nay, that suffering, to the humbler classes of the population which is too often the consequence of our so-called improvements. I do not deny it is a good Act; and there are other good Acts which I might discuss. There was one, for instance, relating to masters and servants. It was an amendment of the law upon

which all parties were agreed. It required careful consideration and investigation, and that investigation became ripe shortly after we quitted office, and it fell to the present Government to pass the Act. But I will say this with regard to these good Acts, that there is not one of them that has not had the cordial support of the Liberal party. Whether that is equally true, or whether it is at all true, of the Acts passed by us, I leave it to you, with your recollection of public affairs, to determine for yourselves. What we complain of, notwithstanding, is this, that the greatest subjects of legislation have been allowed to fall into terrible arrear. I am sorry to say, gentlemen, there are always more or less arrears. Nothing but the greatest diligence can avail to keep abreast of the calls made by the vast concerns of this Empire. But in this particular instance it has been the pleasure of the Government to fill our minds, and to take up our time, with every sort of scheme and of policy all over the world; and, in consequence, a very large and most undue proportion of the time of Parliament has necessarily been diverted from the care of your affairs in order to discuss, and in order to bring within the knowledge of the nation at large, the strange and extraordinary scheme of foreign and Indian policy which has characterized for the first time the history of a British administration. We complain, therefore, that legislation is sadly in arrear. I need not prove it. We are all conscious of it—conscious of it in England, and conscious of it, perhaps even more, but equally conscious of it in Scotland. We complain, gentlemen, that the elementary duty of the Government in the right management of finance has been grossly neglected; that charges which, even if they had been imposed for beneficial purposes, ought to have been courageously met, have been timidly and most improperly and unusually postponed from one year to another, until at length the amount of deficiency thus accumulated is actually eight millions of money; and now at this moment, without the least chance of

We complain
—(1) *That the*
greatest sub-
jects of legisla-
tion have been
neglected.

(2) *That the*
time of Parlia-
ment has been
diverted from
domestic
matters.

(3) *That the*
finances have
been mis-
managed.

adequate investigation, a very partial and insufficient provision is being made to meet part of these charges by the imposition of a new tax, which you have had no opportunity of examining or understanding, but which I hope at Dalkeith this afternoon to make, in its details, pretty well understood. We do submit to you, be you Conservative or Liberal, or be you undeclared, or be you what you may, that you all have a vital interest in this elementary duty of the right management of finance, in the honest payment of public debts, in the maintenance of public credit, which gives heart and confidence to the country, and is one of the great elements of national prosperity. Then, gentlemen, further we say this. When a particular Power breaks up the European concert,—the concert, I mean, of all the great Powers, which alone is adequate to manage a great and difficult subject like what is called the Eastern Question,—the effect of the mischief is not limited to foreign relations. It reacts upon you. The breaking up of that concert led to a terrible and destructive war between a nation of 80 millions and another nation of 40 millions; and you cannot have a war of that kind—a war which involves 120 millions of the populations of the earth, and principally of the civilised populations of Europe, without feeling it most severely in its reacting influence upon trade and employment at home, in slackening of trade, in diminishing of employment, in lowering the rate of profits, in increasing the difficulties of life. So that we complain; and although far from endeavouring to make the Government, as has been ridiculously supposed, responsible for the occurrence of a bad harvest, yet we complain that by that disturbance of confidence and promotion of unnecessary war, great mischief has been done in prolonging and aggravating the distress of the country. When we go abroad, I am sorry to say, the case becomes more painful still. I cannot tell you how dishonouring to England I consider to have been the government of India during the last three years. Why, gentlemen,

The breaking-up of the European concert.

Its consequences.

*The manner
in which India
has been
governed.*

what has been done there? I won't speak now of the Afghan war. It is the crown of the whole thing, and is a mischief of almost immeasurable dimensions. Whether military operations seem at a given moment to drop or not, is a comparatively minor question, because the certainty of their revival unfortunately stares us in the face. I look to the Government of India, and I ask whether if we really value freedom—and we flatter ourselves, whether we be Liberals or Conservatives, we have some value for freedom—if we really value freedom, do we value it for ourselves only, or do we wish others to enjoy it as well? You may not give to India, I admit, an unbounded freedom. I do not say that the vast and miscellaneous Asiatic population is suited for the highly developed institutions that belong to a country like this; but certain freedom, certain franchises, privileges at any rate, we have given to India, certain benefits we have conferred upon India; and what, now, have been the greatest measures that have been taken during the last nearly four years, since the removal of Lord Northbrook? In the first place the expenditure has been very largely increased; and a very large expenditure in India, gentlemen, is far worse than a very large expenditure in England; for if expenditure is felt in this country to be excessive, it is in the power of the people to correct it, and, however great, the mischief hardly can become a political and social danger. But in India, where we have appeared as foreigners, and where we have no other title but our good works to commend us to the affection and to the confidence of the people, there the wanton augmentation of expenditure is a very serious political danger; and the day may come—I must say the acts of the last three years have done much to bring it nearer—the day may come when you will find that to your cost. But that is not all, nor will I dwell upon other measures to which I might refer; but one measure I cannot refrain from mentioning, and it is the measure for limiting, nay, for destroying the liberty

*Its increased
expenditure.*

of the native press of India. Fifty years ago wise men, including Lord William Bentinck and Lord Macaulay, two names ever to be mentioned with honour in an assembly of our countrymen, gave to India the benefits of a free press. That free press worked with perfect security and satisfaction under the reigns of ten or twelve successive Viceroys. Of course it had its occasional and limited abuses, as every press must necessarily have in some degree or other; but it is admitted that the free press, while it gave voice to the true popular sentiment of the country, imported no evil or political danger whatever, and did not deviate into their showing the smallest leaning towards disloyalty. Most unfortunately, gentlemen, I must say most discreditably, that system has been destroyed, and the native press of India has been placed at the mere beck and will of the Viceroy; and not only that, for the Viceroy of India must necessarily, in his judgment of the press, be greatly governed by the knowledge and opinion of subordinate officers, who have no responsibility to us whatever, whose names in many cases we do not know, and if we did know, we should be no wiser than we were. Now, I ask you to consider what it is to give to 240 millions of people the benefits of a system like that which brings the air of freedom into an atmosphere previously stagnant, to allow that system to work for half a century, then by an arbitrary act, passed in obedience to a telegram from England, passed in the course of a single day, before any of us could have an opportunity of giving our sentiments or judgments upon it, rudely to take that gift away. This is trifling with the interests of the Indian Empire. This is not maintaining the greatness of the country. The greatness of the country, the solidity of the Empire, depends on the wise, good, kindly government of those who are subject to it. This is a part of the issue to be decided by you at this election. According to the complexion of the Parliament you determine whether you wish to hold your dependencies in the silken ties of love and

*Its free press
destroyed.*

*Are British
dependencies to
be ruled by ties
of affections, or
force?*

affection, and to have their confidence founded upon the recollection of benefits received, or whether you intend to resort to this high-handed plan of trusting to force as the cohesive bond between you and the foreign dominions which you govern. Now these are very serious matters. I dealt with one of them yesterday, and I think I supplied a demonstration which cannot be confuted—how the sanctity, for I won't give it a lower name, of international law has within the last two years, since the retirement of Lord Derby from the Government, been trampled upon by proceedings such as the Anglo-Turkish Convention, contracted in the dark, obtained by a mixture of wheedling and menace from the Sultan of Turkey, and distinctly violating the great European instrument, the Treaty of Paris, which for twenty years, whatever else may be said of it, gave peace to the East of Europe. But that I will not now enter upon.

*The record of
the Treaty of
Berlin.*

I will deal with one point more. Read the record of the Treaty of Berlin. The Treaty of Berlin has much in it that is good, but I am very sorry to say that everything that is good in the Treaty of Berlin, with very small exceptions, was copied out of the Treaty of San Stefano made by the Russians with Turkey, and was entirely due to the action of Russia, and to her success in the war. There is a great deal of good in it; but read the annals of the Congress which made the Treaty of Berlin. You will find that a multitude of questions arose, involving the interests of freedom on the one side, and the interests of despotism on the other. You will find, I am sorry to say, that in every one of these cases the influence of the British Plenipotentiaries, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, was used against freedom and in favour of arbitrary power. I will make an exception in a matter that was really not unimportant in itself, but that was still relatively of secondary consequence—with respect to some very limited religious sects. That civil equality for these religious sects in the provinces of the Turkish Empire

should be secured was certainly urged by Lord Salisbury very strongly. He himself had done everything in his power in Parliament to prevent civil equality among religious sects at home, but still I admit he supported it at Berlin. But when it came to the question of handing over Bessarabia to Russia, England had pledged herself beforehand to give back that country from free institutions to despotic institutions; when it came to the question of determining the limits of Servia or the limits of Montenegro, when there was a difference of opinion as to whether these countries which were to be free should be smaller or larger, England was always on the side of making the limits not large, but small. When we came to the question of Greece—that most important question—where we had no fears of Russia to distract us, because there is not an inconsiderable antipathy between Greece and Russia, and Slavonic and Hellenic jealousies interpose a gap between them—when we came to the question of Greece, what did we do? First of all, we made a great parade of our desire to bring the Greek representatives to the Congress, and when they came there we took care that all they said should be totally useless. When the French desired to make a liberal arrangement, and to place Epirus and Thessaly entirely in connection with Greece, we opposed it. We induced the French to limit their proposal, and when the French limited their proposal, the English plenipotentiary said that he objected to it, and only consented to it because he would not break the unanimity of the Congress; and he took care it should not be made one of the positive enactments of the Treaty, but that it should be watered down to the form of a recommendation. I ask you all, whether you are Liberals or Conservatives, is this satisfactory to you? Do you wish that our representatives should stand up in the face of the representatives of the autocrat of Russia—shall we undergo the disgrace, for in my mind it is a deep disgrace, that when a question arises, when controversy arises in the councils of

The retrocession of Bessarabia.

The delimitation of Servia and Montenegro.

The Greek frontier question.

Europe between the interests of freedom and the interests of slavery, Russia shall be found taking the side of the free, but that England shall be the mainstay, and the prop, and the hope of the agents of despotic powers ?

I have said enough to show you that we have very serious matters at issue. I will say no more. I might say much more, but I hope what I have said may in some degree open up the extreme gravity of the issues that are before us. For my part, I am of opinion that the character of this occasion is one lifted far above all mere interests of party, and that we who hoist the Liberal flag are now in a special, unusual, and almost unheard-of degree and sense the representatives not only of legislative progress and improvement and of all that tends to the prosperity and comfort of the country, but the representatives of the essential principles of honour and duty, on which the greatness of the Empire in its relation with the world must depend, and which we contend, and we grievously complain, have not had due regard, during the last two years in particular, at the hands of the present Ministry.

V.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 1880.

SPEECH AT DALKEITH.

DELIVERED in the Corn Exchange, Dalkeith, to an audience of between 2000 and 3000 persons. When the enthusiasm that greeted Mr. Gladstone's appearance in the hall had somewhat subsided, Provost Mitchell took the chair, having the distinguished candidate on his right, while Mrs. Gladstone occupied a chair on the left. Among the gentlemen on the platform were—Mr. D. M'Laren, M.P.; Treasurer Harrison; the Rev. Professor Johnston; Mr. Charles Cowan of Westerlea; Mr. John Wilson, Edinburgh; Mr. Thomas D. Gibson Carmichael, yr. of Hailes; Mr. George Gibson Carmichael, Hailes; Mr. T. D. Brodie, W.S.; Mr. George Watson of Norton; Mr. Macfie of Borthwick Hall; Mr. John Tod, St. Leonards; Mr. Alexander Inglis, Rosebery; Sheriff Grahame, and others.

The right hon. gentleman rose and said:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—Very fresh in my recollection is the day when, some three months ago, I had the honour of addressing you from this place. Your respected chairman has adverted to the events of these three months; and for my part, I think he did not overstate the case when he said that my visit to Scotland was laid hold of by the people of Scotland to mark it as a memorable progress, not on account of anything due to me in my own personality, but on account of the great, the broad and deep principles by which we are associated together. Nothing has happened during those three months, I hope, to

change your minds. Nothing, I assure you, has occurred to alter mine.

When I was here in November and December, my heart beat high with expectation that Scotland would discharge her duty when the moment came, and would discharge it in such a manner that the sound of it should ring through England and the world. I have that conviction now; and what I think of Scotland in general, I believe of Midlothian in particular. Nor does a doubt creep into my mind of the issue of this individual contest. When I urge you to exertion, I hope that I practise what I preach, and I hope you will think that that disposition to practise is found in the members of my family. I do not now speak of my wife, than whom there is not one of you who has a more untiring devotion either to the private interest or to the public cause. But I speak also,—I hope you will forgive me for a moment,—I speak also of my sons. As I am contending in Scotland, so they are contending in England. Our name has been chosen as the symbol and the rallying-point of the Liberal cause in three counties in this country, and in each of the three I am glad to say that we appear, not in virtue of any self-seeking intrigue, not in virtue of any gratuitous intrusion, but in answer to the unanimous call of the Liberal party, which has conferred upon us, upon us three, this remarkable honour; and, in particular, in answer to the call of the united Liberal party in the metropolitan county of England, which has invited my beloved youngest son to be the champion of the cause; and I think that they were led into that course, so honourable to them,—so honourable, I think, to us all,—because they were infected by the example that you had set. As you had thought fit, in a metropolitan county, to associate our name with the expected triumph of popular principles, so they likewise, pursuing a similar course, would establish a like association in the hope of attaining to a like triumphant result.

We are coming very near the time of contest, and although an appeal to your feelings is eminently congenial to mine, yet we must conduct and dispose of this matter as men of business. Therefore I wish to go practically, and point by point, as well as I can, round the whole circle of this extended case, dealing with one part of it here and another part of it there, and trusting to your great patience to hear me upon the detail, and to your great intelligence to collect the general result. When I was here in November, I said a word upon a very practical and, in a social point of view, a very important subject, the subject of what is called local option. And a gentleman, who is an elector in the county, has written to me expressing, in terms of great propriety and courtesy, his regret that I did not vote the other night for the resolution of Sir Wilfrid Lawson. What I stated to you in November was, that to the principle of local option I took no preliminary objection, but that I must consider many matters in regard to its application, among which would be a strict justice to the interests which possibly the exercise of that local option might injuriously affect. I could not support the resolution of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, however much I respect his high patriotic motives and his high moral purpose, and however much I admire his abilities and character, for these two reasons—one of them that it contained no recognition of the fair and equitable title of those interests to be heard, and allowed the opportunity of making their case for an equitable compensation, if new principles, fundamentally new principles, were introduced into our legislation which might bear injuriously upon their interests. We have little reason for gratitude, undoubtedly, to that particular interest in England of which I speak; but no man is entitled, because he does not think there is a case for gratitude, no man is entitled on that account to deny or to stint a full measure of justice. But there was another reason which I am wishful to explain to you, be-

cause it affects my general conduct. I have never been in the habit of voting for what are called 'abstract resolutions' in the House of Commons, until I am prepared with a plan to give them effect. I do not blame those who do. Those abstract resolutions are, I am aware, among the means of maturing and forming public opinion. But a person in my situation, who has served in so many Governments, who has passed twenty years of his life as a responsible servant of the Crown, who has even had the honour of filling the office of First Minister of this great country during a period exceeding five years, stands in a peculiar position. And when a man so situated votes for an abstract resolution, those who feel an interest in the subject are entitled to say to him, 'In what way will you now proceed to give effect to that abstract resolution?' Therefore, until I am prepared with a plan, and until I see public opinion reaching such a point that I can make myself responsible for the proposal and support of that plan, I decline to raise false expectations by committing myself to an abstract resolution. My friend says he writes to me as a Liberal, and he says under these circumstances he is afraid that he must be neutral. I have full faith in his honour and in his character; but although he tells me that he is afraid he will be neutral, between ourselves I do not believe it. For if any elector of Midlothian says, 'Though I am a Liberal, though I think the Government has mismanaged domestic affairs, though I think the Government has disparaged and lowered the character of the Empire in foreign affairs, though I think it has laden us with the responsibility of needless and therefore guilty wars, yet I will help to cure none of these things; but because I cannot get my abstract resolution, I will remain neutral'—I do not believe that. There may be places, there may be latitudes, in which possibly such an opinion and such a temperament as that may be found among human beings, but

I do not believe it is the latitude of this county, and I do not believe it is the temperament or the intellect of the men of Midlothian that would subscribe to that opinion. I will do my best, upon every future, as I have done it upon every past occasion, to join in any fair and rational and practicable scheme for the amendment of the Liquor Laws and for the mitigation of the curse of intemperance. But I will neither upon that nor upon any other subject give a promise to this gentleman or to any other man, except such a promise as I am prepared and I believe able to redeem.

I received this morning rather an interesting newspaper from Yorkshire, and it brings me to the point to which I am coming, to quote a few words from the address of a Minister in an important position, that I intend to make the text of my present discourse. I have copied from the address of Sir Stafford Northcote this description of the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government: 'In its domestic legislation it has kept in view the importance of aiming at the general good of the community and of doing strict justice between apparently conflicting interests, without sacrificing the welfare of one class to the claims or the prejudices of another.' There cannot be a fairer or a better description of the principles which ought to guide the Government; and indeed, if you want to find intelligent, clear, equitable, satisfactory accounts of the true principles of English policy,—not, perhaps, upon all questions which touch us as Liberals, but yet generally,—you will be able to find almost all these things admirably set forth in different speeches or writings of Sir Stafford Northcote. I have only one complaint to make, and that is, that when the time comes for putting these declarations to the proof he entirely forgets that he has made them, and he travels in exactly the opposite direction with the same apparent comfort and self-satisfaction as I own I could better understand in more stupid and less intelligent men. But on this occasion Sir Stafford Northcote is not

*Sir Stafford
Northcote's
address to his
constituents.*

merely philosophical; he is also historical; he tells you what they have done. That is the issue to which I want to come. You will be struck, perhaps, by finding this doctrine of the general good laid down with such force, when you recollect that before the accession of the present Government to power, namely, upon the occasion of the last dissolution in 1874, which sent us about our business, the complaint against us was that we had made such a number of harassed interests. It was not so much a complaint that we had neglected the general good; it was that there were various classes up in arms against us. I therefore should have been inclined to say that the pursuit of class interests was the original plague-spot upon this Administration at its origin. You know it was not the public feeling in general,—it was the strong organization and the determined combination of classes, in a large number principally of the boroughs of England, that placed us in a minority, and brought our Administration to an end. Let us see what the consequence has been. Undoubtedly the present Government entered office full of promises to a multitude of classes of the country. The licensed victuallers would not for a moment, the publicans would not for a moment, deny that great promises were held out to them; but there was one interest, larger still, and, I am sorry to say, a suffering interest, which had the greatest reason to expect remarkable results from the action of this Administration—I mean the farming interest. The present Ministers were to be the friends of all the harassed interests—clergymen, church establishments, everybody that was a harassed interest. But, above all, they were to be the friends of the farmer. Now, I want to know, and I will endeavour to supply you with a few facts to assist your judgment—I want to know whether it is or whether it is not true that the interests of the farmer have been effectively, or have really been sincerely and substantially, pursued by the present Administration. I am not a farmer, but I am in

The pursuit of class interests has been 'the plague-spot upon this Administration.'

my small way a landlord,—not a leviathan landlord, not one of those who figure with a tremendous number of ciphers put together to express the total of acres that they hold, but a landlord mainly dependent, myself and my family, on the produce of the land and on the interest of the land. Now, if I am to look at the interests of class, I really do not see that we who are landlords have much cause to complain of the present Government, provided we put out of view the interests of the country, and consider only those matters which bear on our own separate and peculiar interests. What are the principal things that the present Government has done that affect the interests of the landlord? When they came into office there was a great complaint of the insecurity of the capital of occupiers, and they introduced and passed a bill called the Agricultural Holdings Bill. What was the effect of that bill? It was announced, it was heralded as a measure that was to give confidence and satisfaction to the farming body throughout the country. But when the bill was passed, I declare to you that I could not find a farmer who deemed it to be of the value of half-a-crown, or who in the slightest degree desired that his landlord should come under it. And there comes out this Yorkshire paper of which I have spoken; and I have no doubt that when you hear the name Yorkshire, you hear it with respect, because, after all, the men of Yorkshire are not so very different in the fibre and in the quality of the stuff out of which they are made from the men of Midlothian. Well, here, in the paper of Wednesday, March 17, is a meeting of Conservative agricultural electors—of the East Riding of Yorkshire. In the *Hull Daily Packet* I read this: 'Yesterday afternoon a somewhat excited meeting of the East Riding Conservatives—none of us Liberals were there to trouble them—was held in the Cross Keys, to take into consideration the selection of a candidate for the ensuing election. They have been represented by two Tories. One of these Tories

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

passed muster, but grievous complaints were made by the Conservative farmers of the way in which they had been used; and one of the candidates, viz. Mr. Brodley, had his name presented to the Conservative friends gathered together, and the Conservative chairman declared the show of hands, when the motion was put whether he was a fit and proper candidate or not—declared the show of hands to be against Mr. Brodley.’ That is the way in which the farmer is beginning to make use of the light that in England is gradually finding its way into his mind. In Scotland I do not think that the farmer, if he were left to judge entirely for himself, has ever had much doubt about the matter. One of the great hopes held out to the English farmer has been the repeal of the Malt Tax; and when Liberal Governments are in office there is great activity in bringing forward motions for the repeal of the Malt Tax. I see behind me my friend Mr. Charles Cowan. I have no doubt that when he was in Parliament—and I am very sorry we have not got him there now—I have no doubt he has voted with me often on the question of the repeal of the Malt Tax, against one of those sham motions from the Conservative side of the House which were always brought forward under Liberal Governments, that Conservative candidates might be able to go down to their constituencies and say, ‘See what we have tried to do for you; but these hard-hearted Liberals stopped us, and disappointed our expectations.’ Now remember that for six years the Tories have been in office. They began with a surplus of six millions of money—such a surplus as has never been, I think, at the disposal of any Government since the year 1845. They remained six years in office; they did nothing for the farmer with regard to the Malt Tax; and not only so, but they have never even made a motion to help the farmer with regard to that tax. There was, indeed, one motion made at the outset of the Government by one of the impracticable but very straightforward men among them,—I think his name

*The repeal of
the Malt Tax.*

was Fielden,—and I believe only fifteen of them voted with him for the repeal of the Malt Tax. But that was not all. Just as Parliament was going to be dissolved, another great Conservative and great farmer's friend, Mr. Chaplin, forgetting that he had been asleep for six years, gave notice of another motion for the repeal of the Malt Tax. When there was a surplus of six millions, and the question might have been raised, he forgot all about it; but when there was a deficiency of three and a half millions on the income and expenditure of the year, then he gave notice of his motion to repeal the Malt Tax. So much for the Malt Tax.

How have we landlords been treated? I will give you three chapters. In the first place, Her Majesty's Government took two millions off the rates of the country in the three kingdoms, and handed over the charge from the local rates to the Consolidated Fund. Do not suppose me to be endeavouring to persuade you that that was unconditionally a bad measure; there is a great deal to be said upon that; but what I want to point out to you is this, that while the first effect of that measure was undoubtedly to give a serious and sensible relief to the ratepayers of the country, the final effect of the measure is to put money in the pocket of the landlord. Let me suppose that a particular tenant, having a lease for nineteen or twenty-one years, and having rates upon his farm costing him £100 a year, found his rates reduced by that measure to £80 or £90; but if his lease expired next year, I want to know who would get the benefit of that remission? The landlord would get the rent, and the man would give the rent which he could afford to give; and before determining his rent he would deduct the rates, whether they were £100 or whether they were £80; and if they were £80 instead of being £100, the £20 taken away would go into the pocket of the landlord. Therefore, mark my argument. My argument is, that in consideration of this certain and ultimate tendency of the relief

The effect of handing over charges from local rates to the Consolidated Fund.

upon the rate under all new arrangements to find its way into the pocket of the landlord, in consideration of that there was a very strong case for inquiring whether, if the landlord got that relief, who after all had but very little claim to it, something might not have been said as to the justice of augmenting in some other form the direct burden upon his property, in order to restore the balance and leave things between class and class much as they had been.

These are two things. First of all, we have passed an Agricultural Bill, which in the view of the tenant is of no value to him whatever, and leaves the arbitrary power of the landlord, as far as it was arbitrary, almost exactly where it was. For I believe I should certainly not overstate the case—I will not speak as to Scotland, where I do not know the facts—but my full belief is that at this moment, of the entire surface of England, there is not one-twentieth part which is under the operation of that bill, or where the landlords have not exempted themselves with the full consent and hearty concurrence of their tenants. And, secondly, we have relieved the landlords from local taxes to the extent of two millions.

So much for the landlord. So much upon those two heads. But there is a third and very important head that I want to explain to you, if you will give me your kind patience. I want to explain to you, and to others through you; besides these two heads there is another—a necessity for additional taxation—and this additional taxation is now being passed through Parliament under circumstances when it is impossible adequately to test the measure, and to bring the opinions entertained upon it to the issue of any real deliberative consideration, or of any effective division. The Government are masters in the House of Commons at this moment. Members of Parliament are dispersed all over the country. Those who are in office have special duties which detain them for the

*The necessity
for additional
taxation.*

most part in town. They can do what they please, with no power to resist their will in these last few days of the House of Commons. In these circumstances I call upon you to recollect the declaration of Sir Stafford Northcote about the desire, and disposition, and habit of the Government never to sacrifice the welfare of one class to the claims or prejudices of any other, and I am now going to test this by examining a little farther how they have observed that law as between the landlord and the farmer. A very large number of you are not farmers, but as I proceed you will see that in the whole argument I make, if you read shopkeeper, tradesman, man of business, it will be found perfectly applicable, striking out the word 'farmer,' and substituting the word 'blacksmith,' or the word 'baker,' or any other that you please. Here is a measure, then, by which a new tax of £700,000 or £800,000 is going to be imposed upon the country. I want to make an examination of the structure of that tax, and the effect and bearing of that tax, and I want thereby to try the allegation of Sir Stafford Northcote, that the Govern-
The re-adjustment of the Probate Duty.

ment have made it a great point to pursue public interests, and never to sacrifice one class to another. I have shown you the immense benefit that the landlord will derive from the transfer of rating charges to the Consolidated Fund after the immediate benefit reaped for a time by the occupiers has passed by; and I have shown you that there was some claim for an additional charge, perhaps, on the landlord's property in consequence of that benefit. Now, let us see what the Government have done? I do not know whether you are familiar with the mysteries of what we call the Probate Duty in England, and what you call the Inventory Duty in Scotland. But we had introduced into the House of Commons, I think a week or ten days ago, without a word of explanation, a very innocent-looking measure, as we took it to be, because when a new tax is proposed, it is the duty of the Finance Minister fully to explain its character and its bearing. Upon

looking into this measure, I find it to be as follows: We had on Monday night, a great deal too late, a short and jejune exposition of the character of the measure, and a most inaccurate exposition of the character of the measure, given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The peculiar character of this Inventory Duty is, that when you pay it, as I dare say many of you are disagreeably aware—that when you pay it you are obliged to pay it not only upon what you really possess, but upon all the debts that you owe. If you have assets of £5000 and debts of £4000, the Inventory Duty is taken from you, not upon the £1000 which really belongs to you, but upon the £5000, of which £4000 really belongs to your creditors. That is the peculiarity of the tax. It is something like what a monster in nature is—it is a thing that nobody ever saw or heard of anywhere else.

Now, I ask you to consider,—I do not suppose you particularly love the Income-tax,—but I ask you to consider what the Income-tax would be if you had to pay the Income-tax upon your debts instead of upon your net profits—and if you were put off with the promise, which I have no doubt would be given you, that when all those debts were settled, and when you were in a position to come forward with the whole of the vouchers, and to go through a tedious, difficult, and probably costly process, with the aid of your lawyer, in furnishing satisfactory proof of the payment of the debts to the taxing officer, then they would return you the money. Now, this is not the rational foundation for a tax. There were very good reasons why the Probate Duty should be reformed; but it was always felt, until the days of the Beaconsfield Administration, that it was totally impossible to induce any Parliament with a single grain of the reforming spirit in it, to increase the Probate Duty so long as that outrageous practice of levying the duty upon debts continued. The consequence, therefore, was that any reform of the Probate Duty involved, in the first instance, the

loss of revenue, if you were no longer to tax men upon their debts ; instead, therefore, of being considered upon its simple merits as a fiscal question, it had to be considered in conjunction with other claims for remission of taxes, and it may be that there were other taxes—we have been busy very often in repealing other taxes yet more injurious ; and consequently the duty remained as it was. Now, what is done ? Why, a plan is introduced, the general effect of which is to add about 40 per cent.—some people say 50 per cent.—to the amount of Probate Duty, and this outrageous practice of levying it upon the debts is to be continued. I tell you confidently, I have sat in eleven Parliaments of this country, and of all the eleven there is not one that would for a moment have entertained such a scheme, excepting the Parliament which has supported Lord Beaconsfield's Administration. You may think that is not a very civil thing to say of a Parliament ; but I assure you, such was the pressure on my mind, that I said it on Monday night in the House of Commons, as plainly and as intelligibly as I have said it now to you.

But I go on to the next point. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said in this meagre statement of his, ' I am so anxious to relieve the small estates. I relieve everything up to £2000.' I had his figures before me. I looked at his bill, and, after he had sat down, I said, ' But, on the contrary, I find that you increase the tax at £500.' The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not know his own bill. It was very plain, it was the question of a figure. The tax between £500 and £600 was £11, and he made it £13. And now, with all his zeal for the relief of small estates, I see by the paper to-day he thinks that is rather too much,—that those small estates should be additionally burdened,—and so he is going to put the tax where it was, and the relief which the small estates between £500 and £2000 are to receive is exactly equal to what is known as zero. And remember all the time, when we speak of an estate under £2000, we are not speaking

of a property under £2000, we are not speaking of a net result under £2000,—we are speaking of an account in which, perhaps, all except £200 or £300 may be debt, and where the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to continue that extraordinary abuse of levying the tax upon the debt, and in regard to everything above £2000 to levy it at a heavier rate upon the debt.

Now, that is on the general merits of the measure; but I am going to test it in a more particular way, to see what light it throws upon this great question, whether you really have or have not a public-spirited and patriotic Government which never sacrifices the welfare of one class to the claims or prejudices of another.

This Government is a landlords' Government.

Gentlemen, this Government is a landlords' Government—that is my charge—and proceeds in the interests of the landlords. I do not ask you to assent to it at this moment; but that is the charge I make. Now, listen to the facts I give you, drawn from this single source of the Probate Duty Bill, which Her Majesty's Government, without opposition, and almost without discussion, are passing through a dying Parliament, spending the last remains of its breath in assenting to such a measure.

The Probate Duty Bill in detail.

Now, I will just give you a touch, in the first place, of the truth by showing you how they treat large estates and small ones. An estate of £1000 is to pay, under the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Bill, £3, 2s. per cent. in Probate Duty on the debt as well as on the real estate. An estate of £2000 is to pay the same sum—£3, 2s. per cent.; and pray recollect this, gentlemen, that it is only the small estates in which this question of the debts is very important. When you see that some man of great wealth has departed this world, and that his personalty has been sworn under £500,000, or under a million, it never happens, you may say, that the debts form any considerable proportion of that million, consequently the grievance for his heirs is very light; but the grievance for the small

estate is large, because there, very commonly, the debts are a very serious matter, and form a very large percentage of the whole. Yet, notwithstanding that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having undoubtedly before him a scale which was bad, and which offered an opportunity for reform, still leaves you in this condition, that the heirs of the man leaving £1000 are to pay at the rate of £3, 2s. per cent. ; of £2000, still at the rate of £3, 2s. per cent. ; at £10,000, the percentage of the Probate Duty is lowered to £2, 15s. per cent. ; and if he is fortunate enough to have £350,000, and probably no debts at all worth naming, then he gets a little more advantage, and pays £2, 13s. 6d. per cent. That is the mode of dealing of this Government, which is so studious of public interests, and so determined never to favour any class at the expense of another class, in its great reforming measure for dealing with the Probate Duty.

But I have a great deal more than that to say. I call upon you to remember that it is in a considerable degree a question between real property and personal property. For that reason I said this is a landlords' Government. The landlords are they to whom the realty of the country belongs. Now, let us see how real property and personal property are treated by this measure. The great argument which our Tory friends are fond of making is this—they say, if you have money in funds you do not pay rates, but if you have money in land you have to bear all the burden of local rates. Well, that argument would require a great deal of cross-examining before it is admitted ; for, gentlemen, let me take the case of the railroads. There are, I suppose, at this moment £600,000,000 at the very least, perhaps more, of railway property in this country which is all personalty, and the whole of which not only pays rates, but is supposed and believed by many to pay them in a degree that is above what fairness and justice require in relation to other properties. I pass on from that. As they say, their argument is that realty pays rates

and personalty does not. I will test the pretensions of this Government, which boasts of its fair dealing, by trying to show you the incidence of this measure of the Probate Duty upon two pieces of property which pay rates exactly in the same manner and degree. One of them shall be a freehold house, which is realty; the other shall be a leasehold house, which is personalty. And now I will tell you how this just Government, this impartial Government, is going to handle the law. Already the law is exceedingly unequal. Our Parliaments have been too much landlords' Parliaments. I myself have laboured hard to do something towards redressing that evil. We introduced, under the Government of Lord Aberdeen, the Succession Duty in 1853. Before that the land paid nothing at all when it passed by death. It pays, gentlemen, exceedingly little now. The state of things which Sir Stafford Northcote found was a state of things that ought to have excited in the mind of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who never prefers the interest of one class, but always looks straight at the public,—it ought to have raised in him what some eloquent writers call the enthusiasm of humanity—namely, a chivalrous desire to rush in upon this unjust state of things, and to rectify the balance of the scales as between realty and personalty, which at present is cast with such gross inequality. I will tell you how this stands. I suppose myself to die, being the owner of a freehold house of the value of £200 a year, and I take the net value of that freehold to be £5000, the net rent being £200 a year to me, the owner of the freehold. Now, my son succeeds me at forty years of age,—I take that because it is at about forty years of age that a very large number of successors come in, and when they have to pay a great deal more than they would pay if they were older. Coming in at forty years of age, he pays, not upon £5000, but upon a computation of the value of his life. I have made that computation. He is charged upon a sum of £2975 of his £5000. Following his father, he is charged

The incidence of the burden upon realty and upon personalty.

An illustration.

at one per cent. upon that sum. That duty comes to £29, 15s.; but lest that should be too severe a charge upon him, he is allowed four years in which to pay the money; and, again, as it may be convenient to pay it at once, he is allowed a discount if he pays it at once, and this discount comes to £2, 10s. upon his £29, 15s. And so the owner of the freehold house, the landlord, as I call him, proper, is charged with the duty—and that is all that accrues upon the death—he is charged with the duty of £27, 5s.; not a duty very ruinous, and a scale of duty that makes me say that those of us who are in the landlord class have very little reason to complain of the manner in which the Government have studied our interest.

But now let me make my comparison, which shall be strictly accurate, excepting that in very small sums I use round numbers for your convenience, instead of troubling you with fractions. Let me suppose that instead of being a freeholder the man is only a leaseholder, and is in the same way possessed of a value in his leasehold of exactly the same amount—namely, £5000. Well, in that case, the leasehold of course is not worth so many years' purchase as the freehold. I take it that the leasehold might be worth twenty years, while the freehold is worth twenty-five years, and consequently he would have an income of £250 a year; and each of these worthy men dying in the course of nature is succeeded by his son at forty years of age. Now you have seen how tenderly the owner of the fee is treated. How do they treat the leaseholder? I must tell you this, that I was so struck with the injustice of the leaseholder's case that, although I could not rectify it altogether, we gave him a considerable advantage at the time when we passed the Succession Duty in 1853. But I will tell you how he stands. His income is £250 a year. He is charged under the Legacy Duty; he also is charged upon a life interest. And he is charged upon a life interest in £250 a year. For that he is liable to £34. So far there is no very great

difference between him and the freeholder. Well, I believe he gets the benefit of the discount also, and therefore perhaps I ought to say that he is only charged about £31, 10s. But he pays Probate Duty, and the Probate Duty which he now pays, before Sir Stafford Northcote's bill, is £100 upon this same subject, this same value of £5000, exactly the same as paid £27, 5s. in all when it was freehold. He pays, therefore, I said, £31, 10s. for Succession, £100 for Probate Duty—that makes £131, 10s., or about five times as much as the heir of the freeholder pays on the passing of the same amount of property. Pray, understand me; that is the present state of the law, that is the inequality now existing; and, as I say, a Chancellor of the Exchequer given to the public interest, and to rectifying and putting down the claims and the prejudices of classes,—yes, there are very strong prejudices in favour of paying less than your neighbour,—he ought to have put down and rectified this state of things. What has he done? He has aggravated it materially. I will tell you how the case stands. His bill will be law within a week; and if any of your heirs come in, as I hope they will not, in the course of the week following, they will then pay under the bill of Sir Stafford Northcote £31, 10s. Succession Duty as before; but instead of paying £100 Probate Duty, they would pay upon precisely the same value £140 Probate Duty; that would be £171 in all, or six and a half times as much as the owner of the freehold. That is the way in which this Government makes good its pretensions, which Lord Beaconsfield with great sagacity in his electioneering address has not set up at all. He passed by the matter in silence. Sir Stafford Northcote has rashly set them up, and that is the way in which they are made good when the Acts come to be examined. Well, now, it will not do to say that this charge is made out of party feeling. I am giving you the driest facts. I have used very few epithets. Epithets are not necessary. The facts themselves are the severest condemnation.

The new Act has aggravated the inequality between the two classes.

Now, I will give you another case. I have taken two parcels of property, equally paying rates. Now, I will take two parcels of property equally exempt from rates, and the kind of property that I will take which is exempt from rates—I will not speak of your feu-duties, because I am not conversant with the working of the Scotch law; I do not know whether feu-duties are liable in rates or not, it is not material—is the great mass of the properties in England. I frankly own I have England in my mind, not you who can look after your own affairs, but those Yorkshire farmers and the farmers all over England; and I wish to afford them some assistance in examining this matter, and in considering how they have been served by this dispassionate and impartial Government, which, if it had any partiality at all, if it could deviate from the strictest lines of justice, of course would take care never to deviate in the interests of the class to which it belongs, but would cause the scale to incline in favour of its old friends the farmers, whom it has been protecting so long—whom it protected formerly by making the rest of the community pay dearer for the bread they ate, and whom it protects now, of course, to the very best of its ability through all available means that offer. Now, I am going to take two parcels of property which are exempt from rates, and I will show you there again how the owner of realty is to be treated under this reforming law by the bill that is about to receive the Royal assent in a few days. I will say that I have an actual case in my mind,—rather a remarkable one,—but I shall not state it. It is quite immaterial. It is not the least necessary to mention any name; I shall state it to you in a manner which you can judge, and with strict accuracy. It is partly a real case, but I have altered it so far as to adapt it to an illustration of the general argument. Two parcels of property, then, we have to deal with, neither of which pays rates, you understand. Remember the argument—the landlord's argu-

Another illustration taken from property exempt from rates.

ment—is that he ought to have favour in certain respects because he pays rates. Now, I am going to take a landlord who pays no rates, and those landlords are what in England are called ground landlords. The ground landlords in London are many of them men of enormous income; ay, and some of them, I am thankful to say, men who use an enormous income very well. I am not finding fault with the way any man uses his income. I have nothing to do with that. I am going to show you how the Government, when it sets about what it calls the work of reform, deals with the law, and how it distributes and metes out justice between the different classes of the community. Well, a man of high rank dies, and he has an estate in London of £120,000 a year, subject to no deductions or calls whatever. If he employs an agent I presume he must pay him; but no man is obliged to employ an agent; if he chooses to collect his own rents he can put every shilling of that £120,000 in his pocket without any deduction whatever. Under the father's will, not immediately upon his death, but some time after his death, this sum of £120,000 a year is divided among three children. These three children are old. They average seventy-five years of age. Now let us see what they pay upon their succession. The property passes to them for life, and they pay as follows: The value of the property of those ground rents in London cannot be taken lower than at thirty years' purchase, because they are property of the most advantageous description, and not subject at all to the charges incident upon land; therefore the value of the property is £3,600,000. The value of the lives would be somewhere about seven years, and the value of the lives being about seven years, the entire Succession Duty chargeable upon that succession of £3,600,000 would not be more than £8400. Then comes in again our old friend the discount to alleviate the too severe incidence of this burden upon heirs who come into the property. That is £600, and the whole sum they pay is £7800 on a succession of £3,600,000.

Now, let me suppose that instead of being £3,600,000 in ground rents, it is a value of £3,600,000 in the funds or other securities. In many of these securities, as I have shown you, it would be liable to rates, which the ground rents are not ; but suppose it is not liable to rates, suppose it is in the funds, let us see what they will pay. The value is the same as before, but the Succession Duty on the £3,600,000, instead of being £7800 is £36,000, and the old Probate Duty as it is at this moment is £52,500, so that, under the law Sir Stafford Northcote has undertaken to reform, the persons succeeding to this large sum, if they come to it in the shape of personalty, pay £88,500 instead of £7800, which is all they would have to pay if they were landlords and paid upon the realty. I multiplied it, and I find that they pay under the present state of the law eleven times as much as the landlord. I should have thought that that was a state of things which would have satisfied every lover of inequality, and would have a good deal shocked every lover of equality—and the Government must be lovers of equality, for Sir Stafford Northcote has assured you of it.

Now, let us see what Sir Stafford Northcote has done. The owner of personalty under the present law pays eleven times as much as the owner of realty, where the subject is of the same value, and where no rates are paid by the one or by the other ; Sir Stafford Northcote comes in, and, instead of the old Probate Duty—the Succession Duty remaining as before—instead of the old Probate Duty of £52,500, he introduces a new Probate Duty which is £88,750, and makes a total for the owner of the personal property to pay of £124,750, against the £7800 paid upon the same value by the owner of realty. Not being satisfied when he finds the owner of the personalty paying eleven times as much, he makes him pay very nearly sixteen times as much.

I have still to open a touching chapter of this subject—that chapter which deals with the best feelings of our nature,

*The effect of
the new Act
upon farmers.*

because I am called upon to open up all that affectionate tenderness and regard which the present Government feel for the farmer; and now I will show you how they deal with the farmer. The farmer in this country particularly has some value very often in farming stock; but upon that farming stock I am afraid his successor is under the sad necessity of paying both Legacy Duty and likewise Inventory Duty. Now, I will show you how the matter comes out. I shall show you it in two cases. Neither will take more than two or three minutes, and either will convey ideas sufficiently clear. I take the case of a landlord with an estate worth £100,000, whose income is £3000 a year. I am going to take the case of the landlord who owes nothing; if I take the case of the landlord who is mortgaged, then the inequality I am going to represent would be much more gross; but I do not require to avail myself of all the heightening circumstances; the case speaks for itself—it is plain and intelligible enough as it stands. I take again the son, coming in both to follow the farmer and to follow the landlord at forty years of age, and the Succession Duty is to be paid upon this £3000, based upon a calculation of a life worth fifteen years' purchase. Well, the Succession Duty, I believe, would be £450 at fifteen years' purchase on £3000, which, alleviated by the gracious concession of the discount, is brought down to £414, and that is the whole sum which the landlord's heir is called upon to contribute to the necessities of the country that he loves so much, and to which he pays so little, on the melancholy occasion of the decease of an actual holder and the arrival or succession of another. £414 is the modest charge of the Treasury against the owner of the £100,000. Now, I will not take the case of a farmer with £100,000 in farming stock, because that it might not be very easy to find; therefore, that I may preserve equalities of value, I must give you a large number of farmers and club them together until I get an equal value of property, because it is the property that

ought to pay according to the rules of equality and justice. Therefore I take twenty farmers, and I give these twenty farmers—supposititiously and hypothetically give them; I do not mean I have the power to confer it, but I assume that they have £5000 each. That makes £100,000 in all. What do they pay? The owner of the £100,000, on succeeding to his father's estate, pays £414. Each of these gentlemen, under the present law, succeeding, not to £100,000, but to £5000, and being farmers, mind, and the peculiar objects of the affection of the Government—each of these gentlemen pays in all, under the old Probate law, £50 of Legacy Duty, and £100 of Inventory Duty. That is £150 each of these farmers pays upon his £5000, against £414 paid by the landlord upon his £100,000. That is the old Probate Duty, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whom I must never forget to do justice, comes in with a new Probate Duty; in his reforming zeal he raises the old £100 to £140. Each of those farmers, instead of paying £150, is now to be privileged to pay £190, and the heirs of the twenty farmers, who, taken together, inherit an equal value to the heir of the landlord—while the landlord, who has been labouring as a member of Parliament, and otherwise, for the interest of the farmers for such a length of time, pays £414—those twenty farmers will have to pay on the same value £3800—under the benignant legislation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who cannot bear the idea of serving one class at the expense of another.

I take once more a very simple case. I take a single farm, because that brings the thing into a small compass—a single farm, of the value of £20,000, of which the rent is £600 a year. Upon such a farm as that, you will agree with me, I am not very far wrong if I say that in this country, where we have good and efficient farming, where the value of the farm is £20,000, I am not very far wrong if I take the value of the tenant's working capital at £5000. Well, the landlord dies. The son succeeds. The son pays, again, upon fifteen

years' purchase of £600—upon £9000—one per cent., or £90. But then there is the discount, and that discount reduces it to £33. Now, let me see the case of the tenant's son upon the very same farm—coming into possession of the farm, inheriting the lease from his father—we will say at the same time, to make the thing a little more picturesque, as the landlord's son comes into possession of the fee. Well, as the law now is, while the landlord paid £83 upon his value of £20,000, the tenant's son, on his value of £5000, pays, not £83, but £150. That does not suit the lovers of equality and the haters of class prejudices. The new Probate Duty, as I have told you, is raised from £100 to £140, and that £140, with £50 of Legacy Duty, makes a hard total of £190; so that with one-fourth of the property, one-fourth of the proprietary interest, the farmer, legislated for specially by the farmer's friends, is now to be called upon to pay, not a little less than double the duty, as it was before, but more than double the duty; that is to say, if you equalize the sums, to pay at more than nine times the rate at which the landlord pays. I have done with that part of my business, and I hope I have made the matter intelligible to you.

But I must amuse you for one moment after having detained you with such a dry discussion. And I will amuse you by telling you the answer which was made, on the part of the Government, when my very able friend Mr. Childers and myself, on Monday night, endeavoured to open up a portion of the case. Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, a man very much respected in the House of Commons, and now Secretary of the Treasury, came gallantly to the assistance, as he was bound to do, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he said it was very easy for us to make electioneering speeches in the House of Commons. Well, it seems to me that the more electioneering speeches that are made the better, when there are such facts as these to disclose. He said it was very easy to make those electioneering speeches, but there is nothing in it after

all, for if the farmer has got land, he will pay what the landlord does, and if the landlord has got stock, he will pay what the farmer does. That is to say, if the landlord and the farmer were to change places, if the landlord were to come down from his elevation and put on the hob-nailed shoes and learn the art of agriculture, and put the farmer in his place, then, says Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson—and I entirely agree with him—the landlord would pay nine times what the farmer does, instead of the farmer paying nine times what the landlord does.

Now I will not enter to-day upon the other great topics, for it is absolutely necessary to divide this case, but I hope I have redeemed the pledge with which I began, that I would by facts and figures, and not by vague declamation, not by empty, and what I must call windy, assertions, test this extraordinary statement of Sir Stafford Northcote, that Her Majesty's Government never sacrifices the welfare of one class to the claims or to the prejudices of other classes. Why, what am I to say of the substance and solidity and trustworthiness of assertions such as these? Well, I will not call that a house built upon the sand, because in the case of the house built upon the sand, the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew before it fell down; but the assertion of Sir Stafford Northcote is no house at all, except it be a house of cards; and the moment you touch it, it is shattered into fragments. Remember this, it was not a common assertion, it was one of the assertions which Sir Stafford Northcote thought it worth while to put into his electioneering address; I have no doubt, before this time, it has been copied by a hundred Conservative candidates at least. And I cannot much complain of them when they make assertions that are totally untrue and even ridiculous. Much allowance is to be made for them; what other things have they got to assert? It is a homely proverb, I believe Scotch as well as English, that there is no

making a silk purse out of a sow's ear; and with such a case as Her Majesty's Government have got in their hands, I defy them to find any stock-in-trade on which to go to the country, except assertions about as valuable as that which I have now been examining.

Casting aside all criticism, of which there might be much, upon the time of the dissolution and the circumstances of the dissolution, I rejoice that the dissolution has come. I rejoice that now we have another tribunal to appeal to—a tribunal, I think I will venture to say, of larger hearts and of larger minds—a tribunal from which I expect more solid and more intelligent judgment than we have been able to get out of the Parliament that is now expiring, misguided as it has been by the influence of the Administration. Gentlemen, the Ministers now come before you, and they bring their titles in their hands. What are those titles? Neglected and stagnant legislation, confused and broken-down finances; the law of Europe in several instances, as I have shown, trodden under foot; even the statute law of this country, as I think we have proved in Parliament, set at nought by the high-handed action of the Government. We have found these things in their action at home; what have we found abroad? We have found wars stirred in three quarters of the globe, every one of which, I am firmly convinced, might have been prevented had there been but common prudence, had there been but a spice of moderation, had there been the old and temperate spirit of all former Administrations in rejecting false glory and false pretence, and attending to the real honour and real interests of the country. So in our foreign relations we are menaced with new dangers, loaded with impracticable engagements, our hands full of quarrel and of war, and of the prospect of war. All this is the inheritance with which the Government of the next few years will have to deal. Really, looking back upon what has been done—looking back at the state of things that has prevailed in Europe, I am afraid far

as yet from being effectually tranquillized ; the state of things that now prevails in Asia, where blood, as we believe, is at this moment flowing ; the state of things that has recently prevailed in Africa, and that may be too soon renewed,—one might almost be tempted to use, in addressing the present Administration, the fine lines which Tennyson puts into the mouth of his King Arthur when he speaks to Guinevere—

‘ The children born of thee are sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws.’

Gentlemen, do not suppose that I mean to insinuate that ruin has overtaken your country. There is yet time for you to interfere, and to re-establish the conduct of affairs upon a sound and solid basis, more agreeable to the Liberal—ay, and more agreeable even to the Conservative—traditions of your forefathers. The fabric of your institutions, the mass of your prosperity, is too great and too solid to be picked to pieces in three or in six years by a rash and an intemperate Government. But it is for you to neutralize the dangers through which we have to pass. It is for you to make a return to sounder and more sober methods of proceeding. It is for you to do this by your exertions and by your votes in the coming election. I rejoice to see that everywhere over the land there are the auspices and the omens of effort and exertion worthy of a great and free people ; and that great and free people, once aroused to the sense of its duties, never will fail of attaining the goal.

V I.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1880.

SPEECH AT JUNIPER GREEN.

IN the course of his drive to Juniper Green, Mr. Gladstone was met at Curriemuirend by Mr. Young, the manager, and a number of the people employed in Sir William Gibson Carmichael's quarry of Hailes, who asked leave to take the horses out of the carriage and draw it to the place of meeting. Mr. Gladstone, though he declined this honour, bade the coachman drive at a foot pace while he conversed for a minute or two with the people who had offered it. At the outskirts of Juniper Green the right hon. gentleman was presented with an address by the Rev. C. M'Neil in the name of the Liberal electors of the district. At the meeting which followed immediately, Mr. John Usher, Woodhall, was called to the chair, and briefly introduced the right hon. candidate, who spoke as follows:—

Gentlemen, if I were a man of the coldest and the most phlegmatic disposition, which my opponents are not apt to assert about me, I do feel that some vital warmth would have been instilled into me, even at my years, by the reception I meet everywhere in Scotland. The warmth of the Scottish heart communicates itself to everything that comes near it; and I am sensible of a stock of animation and determination when I come among you, which, although I have had much to do, and may yet have much to do, gives me the hope that I shall not fall short of your expectations, and that I shall not altogether fall short of the duty

incumbent upon me, which is, by taking piecemeal one part of the subject after another, to convey distinctly to the minds of the electors of Midlothian the nature of the question, as I conceive it to stand, which they will have presently to decide. Gentlemen, I have just been visiting that remarkable quarry in your neighbourhood, where I found that, while I was seeking to pay a note of respect to the workers of that quarry, they, on the other hand, in their friendly feeling, had left the ground and had come to form part of this crowded and intelligent meeting. I went there treading in the steps of Lord Dalkeith; and when I am put in competition with Lord Dalkeith, allow me to say that I do not advance myself in opposition to him on the ground of any local or personal claim. I make no such claim upon you—none whatever. I am come here entirely for a public issue. I would not think of asking you to set me up against him or against any gentleman of your county, any elector, any fit person of your county, whom I might find in possession of the seat. It is the public issue that is to be decided. I have no complaint to make against Lord Dalkeith but one, and that is that he is a member of that majority of the House of Commons which by its votes has not only supported, but has even encouraged and stimulated the Government in all the worst things that they have done; so that, instead of being a check upon the Government, its members have continually incited them to go on in that career. Their worst inspirations have been derived from the House of Commons. The House of Commons has not been, as it ought to be, a control upon the Executive for the people. It has been, on the contrary, a House of Commons inflaming whatever was dangerous, whatever was perilous, whatever was anti-popular in the disposition of the Executive. Of that majority Lord Dalkeith is a member, and that majority I call upon you to send to the right-about, and to fill the next House of Commons with men of a different stamp and quality, if you want the

It is a public issue that is to be decided.

Government of this country to be carried on in the paths of peaceful progress and reformation at home, and if you want the character and honour of the country to be maintained by observing the principles of justice and liberty abroad. That is the nature of my complaint. It is that circumstance which has led me to feel that I have been warranted in accepting the invitation I have had the honour to receive from the Liberal party in Midlothian, and in coming among you to be your agent and your instrument in fighting this battle as a local battle; which, however, is no mere local battle, for, gentlemen, the eyes of all Scotland, and the eyes of all England, it is not too much to say, are upon you. I understand that from the interest this contest excites, a great London journal complains they have not space to report the speeches of other people—that it is our battle which draws the attention of the country; let us endeavour, then, to carry it on, to fight it out as it ought to be fought. Now, gentlemen, my maxim in this matter is this: I think it absurd, when great issues are raised, to speak of them and to affect to treat them as if they were small and insignificant issues. I think it absurd when deeds that in your heart you believe to be bad, and perilous alike to the interests and the honour of your country, have been done—I think it absurd to speak of such deeds as if they were matters of trumpery and trivial account. My maxim, in these things, is to speak out. My maxim is, as well as I can, to hit hard; but I qualify that with one reservation, and it is, while I hit hard I hit fair. There is such a thing as hitting foul. That is a word well known in the pugilistic contests for which this island has been somewhat famous, and it is a practice that excites the repugnance of the people, and the repugnance of every right-minded man. I think that our opponents are very much given to it at present, and in one point of view it appears to be a satisfactory sign. It is a satisfactory sign, because I think it a sign of increasing misgivings and of approaching despair.

Gentlemen, it is some part, I think, of the duty I have to perform, to deal with the strange charges that are made against the Liberal party and against myself. The principal part, undoubtedly, is to deal with what we think to be the delinquencies of the present Administration; but for the present on this occasion, if you will allow me, I will call your attention to the modes of warfare that are at present pursued by our opponents. The examination of them throws a great deal of light on the question at issue. I do not hesitate to say that, so far as I am able to judge, their principal modes of warfare—the great stay and prop upon which they lean—are, first, to make use of a mode of what I shall call—I will explain it directly—intimidation; and, secondly, to make large use, I am very sorry to say, of fabrication. Now intimidation is my theme for the remarks of a short period. I do not mean the old intimidation, which was better known before there was given to you the protection that is undoubtedly afforded to the individual voter by secret voting. That intimidation, thanks to the practice of secret voting, is practically at an end. The voter is entitled, if he thinks fit, to keep to himself the manner in which he votes; and if he keeps it to himself, I do not believe it is in the wit of man to discover it. He is the proper judge whether he shall tell it or not. If he chooses to make it secret, no man has a right to penetrate that secret. That protection was given, gentlemen, by what is called the Ballot Act. And, gentlemen, in passing, I must say a word to you as to how that Ballot Act was treated. In the first place, it was met with every cavil and every obstacle in the House of Commons, raised upon points of detail, that the wit of man could devise. In consequence of the ingenuity with which these pleas were urged, and of the time that the discussion took, we were not able to send it to the House of Lords until the very end of the session—I do not recollect now whether it was one of the last days of July or of the very first days of August. The

The charges made against the Liberal party.

The intimidation employed.

The security afforded by the Ballot Act.

House of Lords had little to do with the Ballot Act. Their business was simply to say whether they would consent to secret voting. They were neither the proper nor the competent parties to consider the details; but they availed themselves of the paltriest and most transparent pretext that was ever palmed upon the country, and they said they had not time to consider it; and they threw out that bill, and cost us another half-session in maturing another, and carrying it through the same obstacles and obstructions, because they availed themselves of the pretext that it was too late to consider it. Too late to consider it, gentlemen—see what the House of Lords has done when it has a Tory Government in office! You will find that it did not signify then how important was the bill that came up in the end of July or the beginning of August; they had plenty of time to consider it when it was for the convenience of a Tory Government. However, we are bound to respect the constitutional privileges of the House of Lords, whether they are always well used or whether they are sometimes very badly used. But, proceeding with patience and firm intentions in the early part of the following session, we were able to pass that Act, and you are now secured—little thanks to the House of Lords—you are now secured against one kind of intimidation.

*Another kind
of intimidation.*

The kind of intimidation I am going now to say some words about is of a different character. It is not the intimidation that is commonly practised upon men. It is the sort of intimidation that is sometimes practised upon children. That is what the Government and the friends of the Government are endeavouring to do with you. I will give you a story, though it a little reflects upon myself. I remember when I was a boy at Eton—I am sorry to say that English boys, and perhaps Scotch boys too, are sometimes very wanton and inconsiderate in the tricks they play. I remember perfectly well that the lady in whose house we were boarded—we called her the dame—had one or two little children, and I am

ashamed to say that we got possession of the housemaid's brush with which they swept the floor—we held that brush upside down, we clothed the shoulders of the brush with a very large cloak, and we mounted over the shoulders a most hideous mask, and having thereby constructed a very formidable figure, we paraded this figure in the face of the little children of the dame, and you may judge that they were horrified. That is the intimidation, gentlemen, that is now being practised upon you, about which I am going to say a few words. A Conservative demonstration is to be held next Tuesday evening in Cambridge Hall, Southport, on behalf of Colonel Blackburn and of the Right Hon. Mr. Secretary Cross. And how do you think it is that the adherents of these gentlemen now encourage the Conservatives of Lancashire to come and vote for them? What pleas do they put forward? Why, they put forward this plea,—‘Electors, attend and support the candidates who will maintain one Queen, one Parliament, one Empire.’ Therefore, gentlemen, you are to be intimidated by being told that the Liberals of this country are not people who will support one Queen, or one Parliament, or one Empire. Now, gentlemen, when I consider what Scotland is, what has been the attachment of Her Majesty to Scotland, and what has been the attachment of Scotland to Her Majesty, how fondly her name has been and is revered and loved under every roof-tree of the land, I think that that item of the account may be speedily passed by. He does not tell us, the writer of this admirable placard, whether it is that we want to have several Queens, or whether it is that we want to have no Queen at all. I think the one charge is about as worthy of notice as the other; and that when they call upon people to attend the meeting of Mr. Cross on the ground of supporting one Queen, they might just as well recommend them to attend the meeting of Mr. Cross because Mr. Cross thinks there ought to be one head upon one pair of shoulders. But, gentlemen, there is a little more. That is not a very substantial count of the

*‘One Queen,
one Parlia-
ment, one
Empire.’*

‘One Queen.’

indictment. There is a little more in the other two—‘One Parliament and one Empire.’ Now, what is meant, gentlemen, by the one Parliament and the one Empire? What is meant by the one Parliament is this: that there is a movement in Ireland for what is called Home Rule, and that it is intended to insinuate into the minds of the electors by those who write placards of this character—it is intended to insinuate that the Liberals of this country are disposed to break down the authority of the Imperial Parliament, and thereby to destroy the unity which binds together the three kingdoms, united under the sway of Her Majesty. Now, in the first place, I say that there is not a shadow of evidence to be produced in support of this charge. In the second place, I say that if there are men who have tampered with this question and dallied with this question, if there are men who have been willing to stimulate what was called the Home Rule movement as long as it served the purposes of their own party, these men are not the Liberals, but they are the Conservatives of the country, and I will point out to you, gentlemen, what it is that has really taken place. I will begin from the date of the Reform Act, now, we will say, nearly fifty years ago. For forty years after that Reform Act, Ireland steadily supported Liberal principles of Government, and the Irish Liberal members, though returned by Roman Catholic constituencies, and in a great proportion themselves of the Roman Catholic persuasion, yet formed an effective portion of that Liberal phalanx to which you are indebted for nearly all the good laws that have been passed. About some ten years ago there began to appear—or not quite so much, I had better say about seven years ago—there began to appear among the Irish members a disposition to separate action, to detach themselves from the general mass of the Liberal party; and the Tory party, seeing the enormous advantage of breaking the Liberal party into fragments, or of detaching from it one important section of its members, undoubtedly were not

‘One Parliament.’

The history of the Home Rule agitation

unwilling to give encouragement to this Home Rule movement, which they now are denouncing in terms the most violent and extravagant, under the notion that we, forsooth, the Liberals of England, are about to destroy or impair the authority and the supremacy of Parliament. I will give you two incidents in proof of it. One is this. I visited Ireland about a couple of years ago, and when I was there, finding that I was received with great kindness in the city of Dublin and elsewhere, and having occasion to address a popular audience in the city of Dublin, I ventured to expostulate with them upon the policy they had adopted. I said, 'It is a lamentable thing, in my mind, that you have separated yourselves from the general interests of the Liberal party, with which interests yours have been bound up, and which party, by separating from them, you have reduced to a condition of much less capacity than heretofore to defend their principles effectually in Parliament;' and I went so far—at least I was reported to have gone so far, whether the exact word was used or not I am not quite certain, but I have no doubt I said something to that effect,—I said, 'I will take the liberty of saying that the present state of the representation with this formation of a Home Rule party is deplorable.' Well, gentlemen, will you believe that I was absolutely taken to task for that in Parliament by a Secretary of State? The gentleman who is now Secretary of State for the Colonies, when I had described this formation of the Home Rule party as deplorable, he, as of course he was entitled to do by the laws of debate, referred to the speech I had made in Dublin, and said it was all very well for us to call the Home Rule movement deplorable, as it weakened us, but for his part he saw in it a proof of the independence and healthiness of the Irish representation, and that the complaints I had made were not for a moment justified. Nor was that all. There arose from time to time, of course, vacancies in the Irish representation. There came to be a vacancy, I think, for the County

Sligo, and a gentleman named Mr. King Harman was proposed for the county of Sligo as a Conservative Home Ruler, and had the support, as a Conservative Home Ruler, of all the Conservatives of the county, and was sent as a Conservative Home Ruler to Parliament; and, gentlemen, those who sent him as a Conservative Home Ruler to Parliament were the same people who are now calling upon the electors of Lancashire to support them as the only defenders of one Parliament. Nor was that all. After the vacancy in the representation of Sligo, there came a vacancy in the Lord-Lieutenancy of the county of Roscommon, and that office, which constitutes the Lord-Lieutenant as the immediate and permanent representative of the Sovereign for purposes of defence in each county of the country—that high office was conferred by Lord Beaconsfield upon Mr. King Harman, the Conservative Home Ruler. So that, as they now tell us that Home Rule means the destruction of the supremacy of Parliament and the dismemberment of the Empire, this charge of attacking the supremacy of Parliament, this charge of dismembering the Empire, is a charge that we hurl back upon the opposite party, and say, if that be the true meaning of the words, why did you, Ministers of the Crown, why did you make Mr. King Harman, the Home Ruler, Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Roscommon? Now, I think I have shown you that this phantom, at any rate, is not of more value than was the cloak that we mounted upon the shoulders of the brush, and surmounted with the ugliest mask we could find to frighten the little children at Eton. I anticipate the failure of that attempt.

Besides the one Parliament which the Tories are afraid about, *'One Empire.'* they are also afraid about one Empire. What is the meaning of that phrase? The meaning of that phrase is that they have thought fit to circulate, without any foundation whatever, rumours that the Liberal party of this country are not disposed to maintain the Colonial Empire of the country. Gentlemen;

in the address which I issued to you last week, I have mentioned some patent facts, some salient facts to the contrary, and one of them is a fact in which I had myself a marked share. It occurred during the Ministry of Lord Palmerston. At that time, whether with or without cause, there was considerable alarm in Canada in connection with the great war that raged in America. There was apprehension that Canada might be attacked by America, because America at that time thought she had cause of complaint against us, and the Canadians applied to the Government of Lord Palmerston to know whether he should defend them; and the answer which we made—you may perhaps think even that it was a rash answer, but it certainly was a most decisive answer, and embraced the whole case—the answer made on the part of Lord Palmerston's Government, and the persons specially employed to frame it were Mr. Secretary Cardwell and myself, with one other Minister—the answer made was that it would be the duty of Great Britain to defend Canada against external aggression with the whole strength of the Empire. You may judge, therefore, what sort of ground, or colour, or decency even there is in a charge of this character. But I am not satisfied with that. I am going to show you what the character of the two parties has been with respect to the important subject of colonial government, and I may best do it by referring to the time when Tory rule pre-eminently prevailed in this country, which was down to 1830, and to the time which has followed 1830. Now, I will tell you the method in which the Colonies were governed before 1830. There were few of them where there were representative assemblies at all, and where representative assemblies existed they had no power of influencing the choice of the Executive Government. While they were thus limited and hampered in point of political privilege, they were at the same time placed under the severest restriction as to their trade by the clauses of the Navigation Act, and therefore, both in their material

*Colonial
government.*

*The action of
the Tory party.*

interests and in their political interests, they were denied the full privileges of British freemen as long as Tory Governments prevailed. And what, gentlemen, was the consequence? I remember it well, for very early in life I was connected with colonial subjects. It is now forty-five years since I was myself Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, and what was the state of things in the Colonies under this system of Tory rule? Why, it was this, that in every Colony, in Canada, in Nova Scotia, in New Brunswick, in New South Wales—I might go through the list of our Colonies—in every Colony which aspired to freedom there was what was called the British party, and on this British party the Tory party relied. And what was the bond of union for this British party? I will tell you what it was. It was the distribution of patronage. The British party was held together by a monopoly of the public offices. Think of the unnatural state of things in which, in colonies of this Empire, there is a party which is British and a party which is not British. The party which was British was a handful—it was the official clique, it was a limited body of men gathered round the official clique; and the non-British party consisted of the mass of the population of the colony. I am now speaking not the language of declamation or rhetoric. I am speaking the language of history, and those who are old enough to remember the time to which I refer, and who have had cognizance of colonial affairs, know that what I report is the strict truth—except thus far. Do not let me exaggerate in anything when I said the non-British party was the whole population of the colony except this little clique. Do not suppose I intended to say that they really were non-British, but the whole population of the Colonies were systematically represented as being anti-British by this pretended British party, which enjoyed the favour of the Government and the monopoly of public offices, and which, gentlemen,—just look what has been going on here in this country for the last three or four years,—which declared

that it was the only party that was possessed of the virtue of loyalty and the virtue of patriotism. That was the state of things with the Colonies so long as Toryism prevailed—that is, down to the epoch of the Reform Bill. From the time of the Reform Bill a new and a better spirit found its way into colonial administration; and, gentlemen, when I speak of Toryism, I am bound to say there is Toryism and Toryism. The thing that calls itself Toryism at one time is not the same thing as that which calls itself Toryism at another time. Looking back to the time when I was associated with men like the Duke of Wellington, Lord Aberdeen, Sir Robert Peel, I can see many errors of judgment into which I fell. I can see many faults that were committed; but this I must say, that as regards honour, freedom from all base aims, and a general sense of the true interests of the country, especially in foreign relations, I see nothing to find fault with in the conduct of those statesmen. But I am now describing; I am not charging home this or that upon individuals. I have pointed out to you what was the system of colonial government so long as Toryism was in full possession of power, and before the reforming spirit which the Reform Act brought into the Government of this country had begun to act upon the complexion of the Tory party itself, and to improve the course of its policy. That state of things in the Colonies, gentlemen, before 1830, was a state of things dangerous to the union of the Empire. It was very dangerous when the administrations of this country sought to hold the Colonies not by the general and free assent of the community, but through the separate action of a limited section of the community at variance with the mass. Since the Reform Act great changes have been made. About the year 1838 or 1840, when Lord Russell was Secretary of State for the Colonies, there was introduced into Canada what is called responsible government. That phrase, gentlemen, is a phrase full of meaning. It meant this—that from that time, just as

*The action of
the Liberal
party.*

in this country, the constituency has the power of determining who shall be the Ministers—the power that you are now called upon in your share and place to exercise, so in the Colonies the Executive Government, the Ministers of the day, should be responsible to the Colonial Parliament of the day, and should cease to hold their offices when they ceased to possess the confidence of that Colonial Parliament. Now, gentlemen, that change—you will perceive—was a peaceful revolution in colonial policy. And what took place along with it? So much as to their political privileges; but what as to their material interests? Now, I do not know whether there are any gentlemen present—there cannot be many—who remember the old controversies on the Navigation Act. The purpose of the Navigation Act was to drive the trade of the Colonies exclusively into England—to make it a monopoly for England. Some small relaxations by degrees crept in, but that was the principle of the Navigation Act. Well, of course I need not tell you that that was a method of treatment most odious to the people of the Colonies. The people of the Colonies wanted their trade to be driven for their own benefit, and therefore they required that they should have a free choice as to the countries to which they should send their produce, and as to the countries from which they should buy the produce they wanted, and as to the ships in which it should go, and as to the course which these ships should take in traversing the ocean. Well, gentlemen, that was a just claim. But who were the supporters of the Navigation Act, and by whom was it repealed? It was repealed by the Liberal Government of Lord Russell in the year 1849, and it was repealed in defiance of all the placards of this kind that were then published; for then we were constantly told that the Navigation Act—told by the Tories, the Liberals denying it—that the Navigation Act was the foundation of British greatness and British glory, and that if it were repealed there would be an end to the unity and

*Responsible
government in
the Colonies.*

*The Naviga-
tion Act.*

*Its repeal by
the Liberals.*

strength of the Empire. Well, so we went on, and by that great process of justice, by that establishment of real freedom in the Colonies, by recognising the full title of the colonists to have privileges as full and unrestrained as are yours, and by setting free their trade from all restraint, and investing them with liberty which even possibly they might in some instances misuse, but which they were entitled to possess—by these means the whole tone of colonial opinion has been changed. The old British party has ceased to exist. It has died a natural death. The patronage of the Colonies was given to the people of the Colonies. The Ministers of the Colonies were chosen by the Parliaments of the Colonies, and the Parliaments were elected by the people. The Governments of Australasia, which at the time I speak of, under the Tories, were managed from Downing Street, received, one after another, free and large constitutions with ample popular privilege, and every one of those changes has had the effect that there is now no distinction between a British party and a party lying under the imputation of not being British ; but the whole colonial community with one heart, one mind, one soul, has proclaimed, in terms that cannot be mistaken, its undying loyalty to the Crown and to the Empire. And yet the very representatives of the party who endangered the connection of this country with these Colonies, the representatives of the party that kept the mass of the people of these Colonies in at least partial alienation of feeling from the Crown and institutions of Great Britain, these very men are the men who now have the face to come forward and to say that the Liberal party, forsooth, who have knit together the whole of the members of this Empire in the bonds of loyalty and love, are going to be the destroyers of that Empire which they have done so much to consolidate, and with regard to which those who make the charges against them have nothing of a similar character to plead on their behalf. Therefore it is not necessary for me to go farther

back ; but if I were to go farther back, the case would be more ugly still, because I should be obliged to tell you that Toryism is not a new invention on the face of the earth. Toryism was rampant in this country a hundred and a hundred and twenty years ago. The present Lord Beaconsfield as a literary man is very fond of referring to the Tories of the last century. He is a great admirer in particular of Lord Bolingbroke, and I believe also he is a great admirer of Lord North. Let us ask them what Lord North did in his day to maintain the principle of one empire. Gentlemen, you know very well that the Tories of that day did what they could to destroy the British Empire. They carried you into a mad and a foolish war with the colonies of America. They persisted in that war long after it had become distasteful to the people of England, who, I am sorry to say, were at first inclined to support it. The spirit of what is called Jingoism existed in that day, and they talked a great deal about glory and about not giving in, and about the British lion and the rest of it ; but with the sad experience of disastrous years of warfare, and by degrees, one after another, they put their tails between their legs, and came, though I must say by a most unsatisfactory process, to a better mind. I say a most unsatisfactory process, for what I complain of—one complaint I make at least of this spirit called the Jingo spirit is this, that with great readiness to go into a quarrel it does not always combine equal resolution to carry it through. Now, the advice of Shakespeare is the good advice, to beware how you enter into a quarrel, but being in, to bear yourself so that the other man may have cause to recollect that he had better not quarrel with you again. The people of England, in the American war, by degrees found out their mistake. Everybody found it out, except Lord North and the Tories. They could not find it out, nor could George the Third, who was the head of the Tories, and in some respects one of the most creditable Tories ever known in this country. They could not find it out, and

at last nothing but the resolution of the people, who had seen the gross error that was being committed, drove those Tories out of office, and substituted for them better men. It was too late, indeed, to save the Colonies, but at any rate they laid to heart, under the teaching of Mr. Burke, under the teaching of Mr. Fox, and of the great Liberals of that period, the lessons of experience, and similar follies never have been again, and I hope never will be committed. But recollect that these Tories that we are now dealing with are the lineal and political descendants of those Tories, and if they have come to a better mind it is because the progress of affairs generally, a clearer atmosphere, more light in the public understanding, has made it impossible for them to cling to those superstitions—and I grant and I rejoice that they have abandoned them; but I think it is a little hard that they who draw their political lineage from the perpetrators of all these acts, they who down to 1830, so long as they had the Government in their hands, maintained systems of administration in the Colonies that undoubtedly impaired the full action of loyal principles in the breasts of the colonists, that they now have the face to cast upon the Liberal party, who alone have earned real triumphs in the field of colonial policy, the charge that we, forsooth, are likely, or that if we get into office we intend to disintegrate this great and glorious Empire.

I hope I have sufficiently dealt with those charges, and I will not enter at large upon any other subject, because, as you are aware, the duties which it gives me pleasure to discharge among you I must also endeavour to discharge elsewhere among your brethren. But I say here, gentlemen,—I repeat that which I believe I expressed to you when I began,—that when I find accusations so absurd and baseless—nay, so ridiculous and preposterous—singled out by the writer of the placard I have referred to, as the best title of appeal he can make to the country, I derive great consolation from this circumstance, because I really believe that if the man had

really anything better to say he would have said it. It is possible they may get somebody or other to believe it, even in the county of Midlothian, but they will be a minority. Of that I have no doubt at all. I believe—and every day I gather further evidence in support of my conviction—that we are united, that we know we are united, we feel we are united, on a great public patriotic cause. Scotland will be on this occasion a pattern to the United Kingdom, as I am firmly persuaded Midlothian will be a pattern to Scotland.

VII.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1880.

SPEECH AT BALERNO.

MR. GLADSTONE again in this village found himself the object of popular enthusiasm, and his reception was not less hearty than on any previous occasion. Dr. W. Smith was called to the chair.

Mr. Gladstone who on rising was again lustily cheered, said :—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I would almost venture to say that, great as is my pleasure and satisfaction in visiting other portions of Midlothian, I have a very peculiar pleasure in coming to a parish and a neighbourhood associated with a name that has been famous in Scotland—the name of Sir James Gibson-Craig. I well recollect the day when that eminent gentleman was, one may say, the backbone of the Liberal party in Scotland. He had lived through days when, gentlemen, you had no franchise at all, for the representation of Scotland down to 1830 was a nominal representation, and you well know how fierce a struggle was waged by the party which then considered itself the loyal and patriotic party to keep the people of the country out of the dangerous power of choosing their representatives in Parliament. That was the state of things with which Sir James Gibson-Craig had to contend ; and owing to him, and owing to men like him, and owing to Earl Grey, and Lord Russell, and Lord Althorp, and the Liberals of England, you have passed into a very different state of things.

The spirit that opposed your original emancipation is a

*The spirit of
privilege.*

spirit still at work. It is the spirit of privilege ; it is the spirit of monopoly ; it is the spirit of mistrust of the people ; it is the spirit of fear of the people ; it is not the spirit of that far-sighted prudence which looks into the future ; it is not the spirit of that generous faith which considers that intelligent and educated men will govern themselves better than if they are treated as serfs and slaves, and deprived of

*Emancipation
and enfran-
chisement.*

electoral privileges. Emancipation and enfranchisement have been the mottoes of the Liberal party ; progress qualified by prudence ; trust in the people above all, qualified only by that avoidance of violent change, that avoidance of ill-considered change, which is really necessary in order to give due effect to the principles of Liberalism, and to ensure safety in the work of progress. It is the old story that we are here to tell ;

it is the old battle that we are here to fight ; not personal, not local ; but this I must say, that while it is the old story, and while it is the old battle, never was there an occasion when the principles at stake were brought more clearly into view, when deeper issues were presented to you, or when a more solemn responsibility devolved upon you. I am here

*The charges
against the
Tory party.*

to make charges, not against individuals in their personal character, but against public men for public acts. I have been busy for years past in impugning and impeaching, as well as I could, what I thought the dangerous, and the worse than dangerous acts, the acts unfavourable to the character of the country, which have been done by the Government. But I

am here now upon an altered ground ; I am no longer to impeach the Government ; I am to impeach the majority of the House of Commons, and not the majority as an abstraction, but the majority in the individual men of whom it is made up. The work done by the Government is now their work ;

it is now the work of those individual men who were their supporters ; and I must say here, in justice to the Government, that I have not known a single occasion on which they have been checked in their unwise career by that majority. I have

known many occasions when, from the benches behind them, *The conduct of the majority in the House.* men have risen up and endeavoured to goad them on to measures yet more violent, yet more imprudent, yet more inconsistent with the faith, honour, and character of the country. The majority is no better than the Government; in a political sense, it is worse than the Government. The Government is responsible. The members of that majority are those who have not only not given a reluctant, but have given an ardent and ungrudging support to the Government, and have encouraged them in all that was evil in their ways. That is the issue that is now to be tried. If, as some think, the Government has been a very good Government in its acts, if the affairs of the country have been well and prudently and wisely and honourably managed, then all that I have said of the majority ought, as it were, to be turned inside out, for the merits of that majority then are very great indeed. If it was a wise thing to break up the concert of Europe in 1876, to decline to act with the other Powers in calling upon Turkey to do that justice to her subjects which she might then have so cheaply done, and so greatly to her own advantage in comparison with the miserable and mangled, the effete and inanimate condition to which she is now reduced—if that was a wise course, then great are the merits of the majority, great are the merits of the members of that majority; and I have to exhort you, instead of sending me to Parliament as your representative, to vote for my noble opponent. But if, on the other hand, it is a sad and a terrible thing to look back upon what has taken place in Europe, and upon our part in it, then I ask your suffrages; and I ask the suffrages of those of you who are Conservatives, gentlemen; and if you are bound to public duty, I am entitled to ask those suffrages. I say that the occasion carries me and carries you above every personal and every local consideration. You are bound to the welfare of your country; you are bound to prosecute that welfare; you are bound to sustain that honour; you are bound to

How has the character of the country been maintained?

sustain that character. How have you been maintaining it? What has taken place in the east of Europe? A great work of liberation, gentlemen, has been achieved. Ten millions of men at least have been set free who were in political servitude of various degrees, and with whom political servitude was not a mere abstraction, but was associated with daily insecurity in all the most essential conditions of human life,—insecurity of life, insecurity of property, insecurity of liberty, insecurity of honour, insecurity of honour in that sense in which it is dearest of all, the honour of the women of the land. This state of things, a state of things painful and horrible to behold, has been put an end to. But it has not been put an end to by your agency. You have done nothing to help it; you—I am not addressing you individually; I am speaking of the Government of the country; I am speaking of the majority who supported that Government—you left it to Russia; you left it to a despotic Power; you broke up the concert of Europe; you would do nothing except use idle words and representations which you knew very well from long experience to be a mockery; you would do nothing to stop the horrible state of things that prevailed in the Turkish provinces; you left that to Russia. The work of emancipation has been achieved, and you have been deprived of the honour of it. You have failed to fulfil those traditions of liberty which belong to the history of this country and the character of the people. And as to prudence, if we are to look at it in that light, what have you done? You are jealous and fearful of the influence of Russia; you think her a dangerous Power; you think her inspired with ambition; and so, because she is dangerous, and because she is inspired with ambition, you have studiously made yourselves odious to the whole of the Christian races who inhabit the east of Europe, and have taught them to look to Russia as their friend, and have made them, as far as in you lay, the instruments and the tools of her ambition. I do not believe they will be her

To Russia was left the work of emancipation.

instruments or her tools. I have faith in freedom, and believe that, as free institutions have been given them, they, knowing the blessings of freedom, will have the good sense and the courage, I feel the utmost confidence, to maintain it for themselves. But I am speaking of the tendency of your policy; you left it to Russia alone to befriend them; you impressed upon their minds the conviction that they were to expect nothing from you in relieving them from the yoke of most cruel and debasing despotism; so that, as far as in us lay, we have cast them into the arms of Russia—into the arms of the very Power of whom we professed to be so dreadfully afraid.

Well, gentlemen, that is one specimen; I will look at present at a different aspect of this case. I have been dealing elsewhere with one aspect of the case which we cannot possibly exclude; for although I say our business here is to try the Government upon its merits, yet as the friends of the Government find it convenient to draw off the mind of the country, as far as they can, from that on this occasion, by setting up charges against the Opposition, it is our duty to meet those charges. Undoubtedly it is a very important matter for your consideration in the issue before you if the Government can show that, whether they be worthy of confidence or not, we are not worthy of confidence. Now, I am going to test a portion of that allegation, and I shall test it by raising a grave and grievous complaint. I complain that the methods of political warfare that are being pursued are not fair methods, and that one of the great instruments used against us is pure fabrication. I am very sorry to say it, but it is pure fabrication. It is to me astounding. I have never known it in the whole of my long political life until the crisis in which we are engaged. I am not now speaking of violence; I am not now speaking of misapprehension; I am speaking of pure fabrication. Why, I find sometimes published in the Tory papers forged letters, with my own signature attached to

The unfair methods of political warfare.

The fabrication of falsehoods.

them. Very likely there are others which I never heard of; but that is an instance. I detest this business of contradicting the falsehoods for several reasons. One of them is that you never know how many falsehoods there are not brought under your notice, and consequently which you cannot contradict; and, secondly, I dislike it because I have other things to do. But I have thought it right, in deference to you here in Midlothian—if I do not attach too great value to these things—I have thought it right to contradict them on two occasions. I have addressed letters to the *Scotsman* and *Daily Review* newspapers in Edinburgh contradicting, on one occasion, twelve of those falsehoods told about myself, and on another nine. Well, these twenty-one were all gathered and circulated, besides I know not how many more that never came to my knowledge, in the course of ten weeks—about two a week—and I think that shows a very great briskness in the manufacture of those fabrications in one of its branches. But as to those underhand methods, I cannot help telling you of a case just made known to me. I have cut from the *Liverpool Mercury* of Thursday something that refers to the borough of Leicester; and there is a fine specimen of the manner of carrying on political warfare. The borough of Leicester is represented by two steady Liberals. The Tory party have not, as it is called, a leg to stand upon in the borough of Leicester; but the Tory party know enough of arithmetic to be aware that if you can cut up a majority into several minorities it is possible that a Tory may be brought in, even where the majority of the constituency is strongly Liberal. And here is a most extraordinary tale, with the names given, and the original letters and documents. I do not know the individuals; but the account given is this, that a Tory emissary had been sent down to Leicester to address a Mr. Simpson, and invite him to come forward as an independent Liberal candidate, and to offer him £400 if he would do it. But, unfortunately, the Tory emissary got hold of the wrong

man. Mr. Simpson seems to have been really what the Tory emissary wanted him to pretend himself to be, namely, an independent Liberal with some sense and right feeling in his mind ; consequently, Mr. Simpson brought this man to grief, and here are his letters and his operations, which I won't trouble you with now, but which are a specimen of modes of warfare, I am sorry to say, that receive too much countenance in the present crisis.

I am going now to touch some of the allegations which would be important if they were true—some of the allegations which are made against me ; and here I have got seventeen of them. I have cut them from the *Largs Advertiser*, and they form an advertisement addressed to the electors of North Ayrshire. They are anonymous, and so far that shows there is some glimmering of sense in the mind of the man who produced them. The last of them is this. He says, 'Mr. Gladstone's recent achievements in the way of fallacy and fury are too fresh to need recapitulation.' My last achievement in the way of fallacy and fury, or at least the last to which I need refer, was at Dalkeith yesterday, and the principal part of it related to a subject that was not at all particularly favourable either to fallacy or to fury. It was a close and minute examination of the Probate Duty Bill that is now passing through Parliament, and is going to be made law in this country ; and as I found a passage in the address of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which he said that a great distinguishing principle of his Government had been that they never pursued the interest of class, but always looked to that of the public at large, and equality of dealing between the several portions of the community, I tested the assertion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not with fallacy and fury, but by the hard dry test of the manner in which they are going to increase the taxes of the country under the Probate Duty, or, as you call it, the Inventory Duty Bill. But what was the result I found ? I found that there was a class in this country called the landlords,

Class legislation in favour of the landlords.

The relief of the rates.

and that, as regarded the landlords, what the Government had done was chiefly to be summed up in three things. First of all they had taken two millions off the rates and put them upon the Consolidated Fund, the great labour fund as well as property fund of the country—I mean the fund supported by the labour of the country just as much as by the property—the Consolidated Fund, the public revenue. The rates, on the other hand, are upon property, and although they bear upon the occupier,—very often, and especially when they are in a state of increase, they bear severely upon the occupier,—yet, when new covenants come to be made for the occupation, then the burden passes to the landlord. Consequently I felt that, as a landlord, I was extremely obliged to the Government for having taken two millions off our property and put it on the Consolidated Fund. That, it appeared to me, was rather a reason why the landlords should be called upon possibly to bear some moderate equivalent burden in some other way, because I do not see that the landlords of the country are the class of people who have the greatest claim to have public relief administered to them at the public charge. It seems like a kind of inversion of a poor-law. I understand the landlords of the country to be the wealthiest and most powerful class, and I object to establishing a system of public relief for landlords to be operated through the medium of Parliament. It is one of the things this Parliament has been about, and one of the things upon which you, Conservatives as well as Liberals, are to be called upon, I hope in about a fortnight or less, to give your judgment. Well, that is one thing they have done for the landlord. Another thing was this. There had been a great outcry, and a just outcry—a great desire expressed, and justly expressed—for greater security for the occupiers of the soil, and better defence against the possible exercise of an arbitrary power by the landlord. Well, the Government had passed a bill upon that subject, which was so void of efficacious character

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

that none of the tenantry of the country, as far as I have been able to hear—and I have made very extensive inquiries in England—I won't speak of Scotland, because I do not know so much of what has happened there—none of the tenantry found it to be of any value to them at all; and the consequence is that most of the landlords, with the consent of their tenants, gave notice that they would not come under the bill at all; for there was an option to come under it or not. Besides these two favours, there was a third, and it was this, that although they had been lightening the burdens on my property by relieving the rates and giving me an ultimate benefit, yet when, in consequence of their extravagant expenditure and management of finance, it became necessary to impose a new tax, they brought in this Probate *The Probate Duty Bill.* Duty Bill in the last days of an expiring Parliament. I examined that bill, and what did I show? I proved, and I defy disproof, that even under the present state of things, the burden of what are called the death duties—the Succession Duties, the Legacy Duty, and the Probate Duty—even under the present state of things before the bill now passing shall become law, nearly the whole burden is imposed upon personalty, and a very large portion of it upon small personalty. The point at which it is felt is upon personal property, and real property has a very small and disproportionate share of this tax. And what did I find? I found that the Government, still faithful to the landlords, had brought in a bill under which very large additions would be made to the burdens that fell upon personal property,—that is to say, upon the stock in the shop of the tradesman and the stock on the farm of the farmer. A large addition will be made to the duty which the sons of the tradesman and the sons of the farmer will have to pay when they succeed to the farm or take the shop; and not one shilling is to be taken from the pocket of the landlord. Well, that is one of the last performances of my fallacy and my fury,

which the electors of the northern division of Ayrshire are advised to take note of. I hope they will take note of it, with all my heart. Some of those seventeen allegations are pure fabrication and untruth. A great many others are not pure fabrication and truth; they are partially true, but are so put as to produce the effect of untruth.

Here is a statement which is a pure untruth:—‘Mr. Gladstone has had the Income-tax as high as 1s. 6d. per £1.’ That is totally untrue. I never had the Income-tax as high as 1s. 6d. per £1. I was obliged in the Crimean War to propose great elevation of the Income-tax to meet the expenses of that war, because, unfortunately, I, gentlemen, as Minister of Finance, had an idea which has been utterly rejected by the present Government, and that was that when you incurred charges for the public you ought to find money to pay them. It was a very unenlightened and barbarous notion that dwelt in my mind, but one that has been quite dispelled by the superior intellect of the present Government, whose principle is just the contrary—that you may incur charges as largely and as rashly and as mischievously as you please, provided you never ask the people, as long as you can avoid it, for any tax whereby to defray them. I will show you how this worthy composer of the seventeen charges bears out that principle.

False accusations--(1) As to the Income-tax under the Liberals.

(2) As to unnecessary taxation.

Just after he has said untruly that I had the Income-tax as high as 1s. 6d. per £1, he says: ‘Mr. Gladstone levied in the course of his Premiership 17 millions of unnecessary taxation.’ Now, I know that is totally untrue; but at the same time I know what he means. He means this—that whereas the present Government has had to cast up the annual account six times, and the general upshot is that, for what is called the annual surplus and deficiency, their deficiencies for the last four years have come to 8 millions, and after crediting them with surpluses of former years and sums paid in the name of sinking fund to the debt, still they

have 4 or 5 millions of those deficiencies,—that is, they have levied less than was required to pay the expenses of the years by 4 or 5 millions; we, on the other hand, in the course of our four or five years' government levied in the shape of annual revenue 17 millions more than was absorbed by the expenses of those five years, and this gentleman says that was levying 17 millions of unnecessary taxation. Well, what does he mean? That 17 millions, every shilling of it, of course, was applied for the reduction of your public debt; but he, proceeding upon the enlightened Conservative principle—that no debts ought to be paid as long as you can possibly shirk paying them—very naturally, and speaking the language of the tribe to which he belongs—it is no more a reproach to him than it would be to a Kaffir to speak the Kaffir language, or to a Hindu to speak Hindustanee—he complains that this was a most outrageous proceeding, to pay off 17 millions of debt, and that we levied therefore 17 millions of taxation which ought to have been left in the pockets of the people.

But he says many more things than these; he says:—^{(3) As to the creation of household suffrage.} 'Mr. Gladstone opposed the extension of the suffrage to householders till 1867, when Mr. Disraeli carried it.' Now, what really happened? This is a question of very great interest. What happened was this—that Liberal Governments made several ineffectual efforts to enlarge the franchise established by the Act of 1832. They were perhaps premature in some of their efforts, for they tried in 1851, they tried in 1860, and again they tried in 1866. The only one of those efforts with which I was importantly connected was the effort of 1866. We brought in a bill for the enlargement of the suffrage; but we knew perfectly well that we should have to encounter the determined opposition of the Conservative party; and, I am sorry to say, the opposition, with the Conservative party, of a very small outlying wing of the Liberal party, made a most formidable combination, and, therefore, as men of prudence, we proposed

a very moderate bill. We did not propose household suffrage. We proposed, I think, what was called the £7 franchise; but moderate as our proposition was, it was encountered with so determined an opposition, and so subtle an opposition, pursuing such devious ways and paths against us, that we utterly failed, and we resigned our offices. And that is what this writer calls opposing household suffrage—that we reduced our demand to make it moderate and conciliate our opponents, and that our opponents would not be conciliated, and defeated our project. Well, what followed? Our opponents took our places; but when they had taken our places they found that reform was a necessity; and then came a most curious specimen of reform. There were three different plans launched by the Government in the course of, I think, less than six weeks. With regard to one of the plans they proposed, which was in a bill, a member of the Cabinet, now called Lord Hampton, then Sir John Pakington, told his constituents in a speech in an unconscious moment, that it was a bill which one day in the Cabinet they framed in ten minutes. From that it came to be called the ten minutes' bill. But that bill came to grief when published—it was so feebly put together—came to grief, not from the Liberal party, who were quite willing—for I was the leader at the time, and we said we were quite willing to take it and improve it and make it into a good measure—but from the Conservative party, who would not allow it to be proceeded with. Then was produced what was called the Household Suffrage Bill; and here is a very curious bit of history I must mention to you—it won't take any length of time. A broad difference exists between the law in Scotland and the law in England—at least I am not aware that you have in Scotland the same system, at any rate to anything like the same extent, which prevailed in England. This Household Suffrage Bill, which is said to have been carried by Mr. Disraeli, gave the franchise in boroughs to persons, holders of houses, pro-

The true history of the household suffrage.

vided they paid their own rates. But there had grown up in England a system under which, for all the smaller houses, not in every town, but in the large majority of the towns, the rates were paid, not by the tenant, but by the landlord; and therefore there was a state of things in which it was perfectly possible to propose a Household Suffrage Bill, and yet to confer upon the people the smallest possible extension of the suffrage. And that was the effect of the bill of the Government of 1867 as it was introduced. I will venture to say, and I have stated it in the House of Commons without contradiction, that that bill, as it was introduced, would not have extended the borough constituency of England by as many as a hundred thousand voters; which is an extension so small, in a country with twenty and odd millions of people, that it was insignificant, and almost contemptible. What we said was this—it is absurd to pass a bill of that description; in a few towns where the rates are all paid directly it will amount to universal suffrage, as it does practically, or very nearly, in such towns now; but, on the other hand, in all the other towns of the country, where the landlord pays the rates, although the tenant really pays them in his rent to the landlord—the landlord does not pay them out of his own pocket, but gets so much the more rent—in all the other towns the franchise will be extremely limited, and a new inequality must be introduced. Therefore we said—It would be very much better to give an even boon; reduce the franchise to £5 or what you like, but give it evenly, and let us have a rational state of things. The House of Commons was not inclined to entertain that idea; and what did the Liberal party do then? They said this—If you choose to have a household suffrage, it shall be a real household suffrage; we will have none of this nonsense—about payment of rates direct, and payment of rates through the landlord; we will not consent to draw the ridiculous distinction that the man who pays his rates directly shall

have a vote, but the man who pays them in his rent to his landlord shall have no vote. We insisted, that whether they paid through the landlord or directly, they should all have votes. We voted in that sense. We supported every amendment on the measure to bring it to that sense. We succeeded to a great extent in bringing the bill to that form as it passed through the House of Commons; but when the Liberal Government came in at the end of 1868, we found that, from the manner in which the bill had been framed, there were still remaining a very large number of householders who paid their rates through their landlords, and who would not be enfranchised by the bill. In 1869 we introduced a bill to make the measure complete, and now every householder, whether he pays through his landlord or whether he pays himself, has the vote. Do not let me say that Mr. Disraeli conferred no service on the public on that occasion. I am sorry to describe what the service was, because there may be two opinions about the propriety of rendering such services; but he did confer what proved to be a very great service, for he completely blinded and hoodwinked his party. He persuaded his party—he called it educating his party—he said they required a great deal of education, and what he did was this—he introduced his Household Suffrage Bill, and he told his party, and told them truly, that they would get the credit of announcing a broad principle, and at the same time would have the advantage of conferring a very narrow enfranchisement, and they were sufficiently weak and silly to believe it. But when they came to deal with the matter practically, the broad principle remained, but the narrow enfranchisement disappeared. The broad principle was broad enough and strong enough not to consent to remain in the condition of an imposture, in which it was first introduced, but to make itself a reality; and the enfranchisement, instead of being narrow and shabby, became an enormous enfranchisement. There is the history of the Household Suffrage Bill, of the manner in

which the Tory party were led to give countenance to that bill by the promise that it should be totally ineffective, of the efforts of the Liberals to make it effective, and how the Tory party found, when this was done, that it was too late, that they were committed to their Household Suffrage Bill and their broad principle; and so it was that the people of England unexpectedly came into rapid possession of the advantages of household suffrage.

Well, gentlemen, I am told here that I opposed the dis-^{(4) As to} establishment of the Irish Church down to 1867. That, I ^{alleged opposi-} am sorry to say it—that is totally untrue, absolutely untrue. ^{tion to Irish} I made, certainly, in 1865, an extremely strong speech in the ^{disestablish-} House of Commons against the Irish Church, root and ^{ment.} branch; and that speech cost me my seat for the University of Oxford, where I was replaced by the present Lord Cranbrook in the autumn of 1865. Not only is what I have now said true, but this also is true, that in 1847, when there was no apparent chance of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, I was first elected as member for the University of Oxford, and being then challenged by some of the constituency to say whether I would support the Irish Church, I in 1847—thirty-three years ago—said I saw no likelihood of present measures affecting it,—nor did I,—but I told them I would give no support as on abstract principle to the Irish Church; I would not commit myself to maintain it.

Again, you are told here, among my many misdeeds, and to show my total untrustworthiness, that I opposed the repeal of^{(5) As to} the Corn Laws until Sir Robert Peel repealed them in 1846. ^{opposition to} Gentlemen, that likewise, as far as it has any truth in it, is ^{the repeal of} told in a manner to produce the effect of an untruth. The ^{the Corn Laws.} meaning of the words is, that you are desired to understand that I was really opposed to the repeal of the Corn Laws, but that, not thinking fit to give up my office, or for some purpose of that kind, I obeyed Sir Robert Peel when he commanded that they should be parted with. The real truth

is this,—and I mention it now as it is a very old story,—I never had occasion in my early life to give study to the question of the Corn Laws till Sir Robert Peel, in the year 1841, recommended Her Majesty to make me Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and thereby made it my duty to enter upon a careful study of that question. I did study it as hard as I could, and the consequence was that I became aware in the course of a few months that it was totally impossible in practice to maintain the Corn Laws. I do not think it would have been fair, in the state in which the Corn Laws then were, to abolish them at a moment's notice,—that is quite another matter,—therefore I quite agree that I was willing that gradual changes should be made with a view to getting rid of them. But as this is told of me, I will tell you what is the fact. It became first my duty to study the matter in the autumn of 1841. In January 1842, Sir Robert Peel introduced a measure for the mitigation of the Corn Laws; and when he prepared that measure I respectfully said to him that I thought that measure so very far short of what the justice of the case required, that I should be greatly indebted to him if he would permit me to resign my office. That was the communication I made to Sir Robert Peel, and I have not a doubt that that communication exists in writing to the present day. I did not resign my office. Sir Robert Peel represented to me, in the manner he was quite entitled to do, that I might do serious public mischief by giving scope to my own opinion, and relieving myself from my connection with him. I was greatly attached to him; I thoroughly respected him; I confided in his high character, his real patriotism, his superiority to all the tricks that have been in vogue. I was therefore rather disposed to defer, and willing to defer, the broader application of principles of reform to the Corn Laws. I do not say whether I was right or wrong; I tell you the thing as it occurred; but I must say that I was convinced of the unsoundness of the principle of the

Corn Laws, and was disposed to travel forward towards their abolition more rapidly at that moment than even Sir Robert Peel. Now, gentlemen, these are purely historical matters ; but still, as the electors of Scotland are treated so largely to banquets of this kind with seventeen dishes, they require some notice, and I think what I have said will justify me in submitting to you a general request that you will be kind enough, when you hear assertions made about me, to be exceedingly reserved in according to them your acceptance, unless clear proofs are advanced along with them, or till you have had an opportunity of examination.

I will not detain you longer, excepting to thank you for the great kindness with which you have heard me. You, sir, were good enough, at the commencement of our meeting, to make an appeal on my behalf, and most becoming and proper was such an appeal ; but I am bound to say that I find such to be the patience and kindness of every audience in Midlothian, whether there be an appeal or not, that I am perhaps disposed to confide too much in your indulgence. I know by experience that everything that is to be laid before you will find its way to your minds, and will have the great advantage both of a patient hearing and of a full and intelligent trial. And again let me insist upon it, this is a serious matter for us in point of character, and of honour, and of duty—a serious matter for us who are here as candidates, and a very serious matter for electors too. Are you a self-governing nation or are you not? You consider yourselves to be a self-governing nation. For six years you have not had the opportunity in this matter of expressing an opinion on the manner in which you are governed. You have now to consider the grave and heavy charges which have been advanced against the Government. You are bound to try them as seriously and earnestly as if you were jurymen sitting in the box, and as if the Government were a panel at the bar. You are bound to try them with reference to your conscience, with reference to your

Is this a self-governing nation or not?

duty to your country. You have no right to allow personal regards to station, or to wealth, or to property, to determine your votes. Your duty is to your country. If what we allege be untrue, then reject us; return, as I have said in my address, another Parliament which will give you six years more of similar management of finance, of similar embroilment abroad, of similar results in creating alienation and estrangement from many millions, ay, many scores of millions, of the people of Europe and of other parts of the world. These results you can achieve by returning another majority such as the last. But if you wish to see this country governed as it has been governed in other days, as it has been governed in the main even by a Conservative Government like that of Sir Robert Peel, and as it has been usually governed by Liberal Administrations, then I can only say I shall feel that when I have done what in me lies to lay before you the real merits of the case, my conscience will be relieved; but, gentlemen, for those who fail in their duty, the constituents of the country, should they fail in their duty, their consciences will be burdened. I do not expect that result; I believe that the mists and clouds which have overhung political questions, all the vainglory which has been preached and propagated, all the appeals to passion, pride, and selfishness, have exploded and have evaporated. We are bringing ourselves really to a close account upon the state of affairs. We are now asking whether it is reasonable that we should enter into all those engagements which have been framed; whether it is reasonable that we should restrict the functions of Parliament, and take discretion, an arbitrary discretion, into the hands of the Government, as it has been taken during the last two or three years; whether it is well that the work of legislation should be stopped; whether it is well that the order of finance should be disturbed; whether it is well that, when a tax is laid on in order in some degree to supply the public wants, it should be framed in the scandalously unequal manner which I proved at Dalkeith yester-

day to be the case in regard to the Inventory Duty Bill. These questions, gentlemen, are grave and serious matters. Our duty is to lay them before you to the best of our ability. With you lies the ultimate responsibility. Grieved indeed should I be if I thought you would not answer to the call. Every circumstance that surrounds me, every piece of evidence that comes before me, induces me to feel convinced that you are alive to the gravity of the issue, that you will do your duty as you have done, as Scotland has usually done on former occasions, when the matter comes to be decided at the poll.

VIII.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1880.

SPEECH AT MIDCALDER.

THE right honourable candidate drove from Balerno to Midcalder, where a meeting had been convened for six o'clock in the Public Hall, which was crowded by an enthusiastic assemblage numbering over 600 persons. Mr. M'Lagan, M.P., was called upon to preside, and introduced Mr. Gladstone to the meeting, by whom he was received with the greatest enthusiasm, the whole assemblage springing to their feet. Silence having been restored, the right hon. gentleman said:—

Mr. M'Lagan and Gentlemen,—I think it a great advantage on the present occasion to address a meeting called under your auspices, because during the years while you have sat in Parliament it has been to me a signal pleasure to find myself acting in accord with you; and we have rendered a common testimony by our votes and speeches in the House of Commons to the principles which we are now recommending in Midlothian. I quite enter into the spirit of the few words that you have spoken on the subject of disestablishment. In the main, I have sufficiently declared my own opinion on that subject on the occasion when, in November last, I had the honour of visiting Scotland; but I have promised likewise to say another word upon some objections that have been taken, upon some attempts that have been made to inspire mistrust and misapprehension, of course from the camp of our opponents—I have undertaken to say a word on Monday upon

that subject, and therefore I will now pass it over. I pass it over, however, gentlemen, with this remark, that it is the first time I can recollect a case where the opponents of a certain change are incessantly talking about that change, and the friends of the change are quite content to be silent. The fact is, gentlemen, that all these questions that are put about disestablishment are mere manœuvres. They are simply intended to do with the Church of Scotland what has been done with the Malt Tax, what has been done with a multitude of subjects—to use it as a party instrument for gaining a party triumph, or for trying in vain to avert the triumph of the opposite side, with, really I must say, a great recklessness as to the interests that are thus put in question.

Now, I feel it to be my duty on this occasion to resume one of my charges against Her Majesty's Government, and to endeavour to put it in a form which, I think, will effectually illustrate before you the gravity of the issues now raised. I ventured, sir, to say in the letter in which I accepted the flattering invitation of the Liberal party of Midlothian, among other things, 'that the present Administration had abridged the just rights of Parliament.' Now that is a statement which it really would not have been reasonable or, I may say, possible, to make against any former Government that I have known in this country within my time, whether Liberal or Conservative. I frankly own I have only known on the part of all previous Governments a constitutional regard for the just rights of Parliament—plenty of contest within the walls of Parliament upon particular questions, but a general accord as to the authority and privileges and powers of Parliament, and never any manifestation of a disposition to invade or curtail them. Now, I make the charge on this occasion that there has been that disposition to invade and to curtail them—a most serious charge, a charge that no man ought to make unless he believes that he is provided with the means of proving it to be true. If it be true—if it be true that the

'The abridgment of the just rights of Parliament.'

rights and privileges of Parliament have been compromised by the action of the Government, and if that invasion, instead of being resented by the majority of the House of Commons, has received their direct sanction and countenance, then the issue is grave indeed; then it is not too much to say, even in this happy country, with regard to which we believed that long ago its liberties had been established and consolidated, then it is not too much to say that on this occasion our liberties are in question. The last time, gentlemen, that such a statement could have been made was at the period of the contest of the great Reform Act in 1831 and 1832—half a century ago. You may remember, perhaps, a speech of Lord Beaconsfield's, in which he stated—perhaps not reflecting how much of his inner mind he was revealing by the phrase, when he said that ‘the world was governed by sovereigns and statesmen.’ Well, to that statement I demur. I think there are some other people that have to do with the matter, for I will add to statesmen Parliaments, and I will add to Parliaments nations. You are congratulated from time to time on the privilege of being a self-governed country. Let us take care that we recognise the fact that we are a self-governed country, and that we refuse to be governed by any of those who will not recognise that fact, nor act upon that principle. It has been said long ago, and with profound wisdom, that ‘the liberties of this country never can be put in danger, except from within the House of Commons.’ That is profoundly true. There is no power, external to the House of Commons, that can endanger your freedom or tamper with your rights. The House of Lords has not the strength. The Sovereign, if the Sovereign were so minded—and there have been in other days Sovereigns who were so minded—the Sovereign has not the power. There is no power in this country that can put your rights in prejudice except the House of Commons itself. The House of Commons can do it by suffering the Executive to invade them, and that is the very charge which I make

against the House of Commons now dying, that it has suffered the Executive to invade them—it has suffered the Executive to perform acts in disparagement of its just and constitutional rights—it has supported the Executive when those acts have been challenged—it has encouraged the Executive to repeat them by the impunity and even applause with which it has greeted them. That majority is now called before the bar of the nation, and much depends upon the result of that call; for if the nation, having that majority at its bar—and the meaning of that is—since the nation does not vote in one mass, and the majority does not stand in one mass—the meaning of that is—if the constituencies individually, having the members of that majority individually at their bar, shall affirm, by their approval and by again sending them to Parliament, the acts that have been done, then your liberties are in danger, for they have been tampered with by the House of Commons itself, and it is the House of Commons alone, whose duty it is to defend them, which has it in its power to disparage and to impair them. Is that charge a true charge and a just charge, or is it not? Now I will refer to three heads under which, in my opinion, that charge is made good and supported, and on one of them I will not dwell, but will only refer you to a recent speech, delivered the day before yesterday, in which I think I made it good. It had reference to what is called the ‘treaty-making power.’ The treaty-making power is an unlimited power in the hands of the Sovereign of the country, acting under the advice of Ministers. There is no covenant, however monstrous or however ludicrous, however unwise or however impracticable, of which it is not abstractly in the power of the Crown to bind the faith of the country—that is to say, your faith and mine. That, strange as it may sound, that strange paradox which I have just delivered is unquestionably true, nay, it is a commonplace of our parliamentary life. But the sting is taken out of it, and the folly is taken out of it, when we recollect that

The House of Commons has suffered the Executive to invade its rights.

(1) *As regards the treaty-making power.*

treaties have never been made until within the last two or three years—treaties have never been made within my recollection in any single case, excepting with the full and sufficient knowledge on the part of the Government that the matter to which these treaties refer had been within the cognizance of the nation, and that the course which they were taking, and the engagements which they were contracting, were agreeable to the general convictions and the general desires. But under the present Government, gentlemen, suddenly, upon a given day, without notice, without the possibility of having entertained the idea of such a strange result, we found that we had undertaken, by what is called the Anglo-Turkish Convention—we had undertaken not only the government of the island of Cyprus, inhabited by the Greek race, to whom we are strangers and foreigners, and who have recollections of an ancient civilisation of their own, but that we had undertaken to be responsible for the government of the whole of Turkey in Asia, including a very large part of what were in ancient times the most famous countries of the world, and that we had likewise undertaken to meet on the Armenian frontier the armies of Russia, with its 80,000,000 of people, and to repel those armies from the Turkish soil, whatever might be the cause, for there was no condition as to the goodness of the cause or the badness of the cause, but whatever might be the cause of bringing Turkey into a war with Russia. I am not going now to dilate on the nature of these conditions in themselves, but I am going to point out to you that whatever else they are, they are of the most enormous magnitude, and of the most vital consequence to your interests and mine, to the interests of every Briton, to be pledged to establish a good Government in the Turkish Empire, throughout the Mohammedan races of Turkey in Asia,—among races like the Kurds, for instance, who are amongst the greatest barbarians and the most ungovernable pirates upon the face of the earth—among other races little

less formidable than these, and entirely without the first elements of civilisation—to become pledged to apply principles of law and order in a foreign country, not by our own agency over our own people, which we sometimes find difficult enough, but through the agency of a foreign Government, and that a Government known to be in all its branches and all its members thoroughly corrupt, and which has proved itself in all ages, even when at its best, to be incapable of learning the lessons of civilisation. That engagements like these should be undertaken would, indeed, have been a tremendous matter even if it had been done with the cognizance of the people; but it was done without the cognizance of the people. It was done without the knowledge of Europe; it was done at a time when we had a right to say no such thing could be done, for it was done when the Powers of Europe were assembled in Congress at Berlin to settle the grave affairs of Turkey in Europe. And it was a fraud upon those Powers, too, as well as upon you, to enter into those extraordinary engagements at a time when they had, with the united authority of the civilised world, taken in hand the settlement of Turkey. But I now wish to bring your attention to bear not upon the entire question, but upon this—You knew nothing of this; Parliament knew nothing of this, for it is the Government who exercise that unlimited treaty-making power, which never can be safe except by the well-understood rule that treaties are not to be made except upon matters where the public are sufficiently informed, and where the Government knows it is acting in conformity with the general convictions. The treaty-making power used without that safeguard leads to a gross invasion of the privileges of Parliament. And therefore it is that I tell you that the House of Commons which now exists, having acquiesced in that invasion and approved that invasion, places your liberties in danger, and gives to this contest that we are now engaged in a new character, as a real contest not merely for this or that particular improvement—not merely

against this or that particular failure in the practical duties of administration, but gives to it the character of a contest for liberty. That is the first head—the head of the treaty-making power, under which the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government have abridged the just rights of Parliament; and the Parliament having acquiesced in that abridgment, and having approved, ay, and glorified that abridgment, it now remains only for you to judge whether you are willing that the functions of your House of Commons shall be thus invaded by the Executive Government, and that your representatives, instead of being the primary, shall become a secondary and a subordinate power in the country.

I will now go to another point; for I am desirous not to burden your memories too heavily, and so large and copious is, unfortunately, the inventory of misdeeds with which the memory of the Parliament now on its death-bed will be loaded for many a long year, that the only course I can rationally pursue is to adhere to the method of selection, and out of many to present to you a few, but to present those which are among the most considerable, and which are also capable of being made readily understood. The next of the heads under which the just rights of Parliament have been abridged relates to the use of the military forces. Now, gentlemen, you are aware that upon no subject whatever were our ancestors more jealous than in regard to the maintenance and the use of military forces. They provided, by what may be called fundamental laws—laws, at any rate, so lustrous that they have occupied a special and exceptional place in our history—they provided that no standing army could be maintained without the consent of Parliament; not merely that it could not be paid without the consent of Parliament, but that it could not be maintained without the consent of Parliament. This doctrine was sufficient, and this enactment was sufficient at the time it was made, nearly 200 years ago. We had even then become possessors of dominions in the East Indies, but

(2) *As regards
'the use of
the military
forces.'*

we had not become possessors of an East Indian Empire. Gradually we became possessors of the East Indian Empire; but that East Indian Empire was under a form of government peculiar and unexampled in the history of the world. It was governed, not primarily nor directly by the Crown, but by a mercantile company. By degrees that mercantile company was brought under the control, and not the control only of the negative power, but likewise of impulsion or positive power of the Administration. Still, while the East India Company subsisted, it was a check, to some extent, upon the power of the Crown. It was privy to everything that was done; and the strong position of the East India Company, in case anything important and, in its view, mischievous was done, was a great check upon the power of the Crown. Still it was found, and found to our great disgrace and our great misfortune, in 1839 I think, that by the agency of the Governor-General, and under the orders of the Crown, wars most injurious to the interests of India, very menacing, therefore, in their ultimate consequences to your greatness and to the solidity of your Empire—utterly unsound on the principle on which they were founded—might be made without the concurrence of your representatives, without even the prior knowledge of your representatives. It was without the concurrence of Parliament that the war of 1839–40 in Afghanistan was made. That being so, it had become evident that there was in the Empire a very powerful army, which could be used for the purposes of war without constitutional control; in fact, there was a great gap in our constitutional guarantees, which it was requisite to fill. I had the honour of exerting myself, in the year 1858, to prevent the repetition of any such mischief, and I owe it to the late Lord Derby, who was at that time Prime Minister of the country, and to the present Lord Derby, who was at that time Secretary for India, to acquaint you that I had their cheerful and ready concurrence. There were some variations in the form of the

*The East
India
Company.*

*The Afghan
War, 1839-40.*

provision, which I need not state to you, but I must remind you that that was the year in which the East India Company was finally extinguished, and the government of India was handed over absolutely to the Crown. That being so, the shadow of restraint which had formerly subsisted in the shape of the East India Company was removed, and I was very strongly of opinion, and I think those distinguished persons agreed, that it was necessary to make some further provision in that behalf to prevent the absolute and arbitrary use of the Indian forces by the Executive Government independent of the control of Parliament. And so what was done was this—it was provided that, except in cases of invasion, or sudden and urgent military necessity—and you never, as you are very well aware, can limit the discretion of the Executive Government in cases like these—it can only be limited by the necessities of the case—except in these cases, none of which have arisen, it should not be lawful for the Government to employ the forces serving in India beyond the frontiers of that country, or to pay them out of the revenues of India, without the consent of Parliament. Now, what was done in the case of this last Afghan war? The forces of Her Majesty were employed beyond the frontier of India. There was no invasion; there was no sudden and urgent military necessity. They were paid out of the revenues of India, and because of the miserable pretext that it was the intention of the Government to ask the Parliament to repay them, that breach of the law was perpetrated by the present Government, and was afterwards covered by the doctrines that I am going to bring under your notice. It was actually held by some that they were not paid—that it was only an advance, and not a payment. An advance, gentlemen! Well, if it had been the intention of the Ministers to repay that advance out of their own pockets, over which they had a control, there might be something to be said for it. It would be still, I think, a very insufficient argument; but there might be something to say

*The present
Afghan war.*

for the argument when their intention was to ask Parliament to repay. But surely the asking of Parliament to repay does not compel Parliament to repay in principle, or, if it does, your liberties are in greater danger than even I supposed them to be. That was a plain breach of the statute law of the country. Being a breach of the statute law of the country, it was likewise an invasion of the privileges of Parliament, because this was a portion of the statute law of high constitutional aim in its character, and inserted into the statute law for the purpose—the direct and exclusive purpose—of securing the power of Parliament—the power of Parliament to be exercised on your behalf by Parliament as your trustee, that you might not be subject to the arbitrary and uncontrolled action of an Administration. Now, let us consider the doctrines that were held. This doctrine was held, and held by the persons who were the highest authorities on the part of the Government with regard to a constitutional question—viz. the law officers of the Crown, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General,—and I will refer particularly to the Attorney-General, because he is the first law officer of the Crown. I speak of him with great respect, because he appears to me to be a very sound and able lawyer. He was once led inadvertently into making a most rash and violent statement, as I thought it, against me; but upon being challenged, he did that for which I feel grateful to him—he made an explanation and an apology perfectly satisfactory to me. When that takes place, not only ought not malice to be borne, but you should feel that the occurrence of a little brush of that kind really constitutes a tie of kindness between you and the man with whom it has occurred. I am not now speaking against the man, but against his doctrine. The Attorney-General laid down this doctrine, that Her Majesty—*The payment of the troops engaged.* that means, that the Minister of the day had a perfect power, except in the United Kingdom, to employ any troops he could get, and to pay them in any way that he could get them paid,

provided he did not pay them out of the British Treasury ; for which, we know very well, we need not render any thanks to the Attorney-General, because they would not dare to pay them out of the British Treasury without the assent of Parliament. I will take a case now. Recollect, it was said that the payment out of the Indian revenues was not a payment out of the Indian revenues, but only an advance ; secondly, any of those troops, and there are 200,000 of them in India, might be employed in any way that the Minister chooses. They took great credit for bringing a handful of them to Malta, 5000 or 6000 men ; in principle they might just as well have brought 50,000 or 60,000 men ; they might have paid them out of the Indian revenues—always in the way of an advance ; they might have used them for purposes of war ; they might have made war with those troops—for the Crown's power of declaring war is undoubted ; they might have carried it on with those troops ; they might have concluded it with those troops ; and provided there were an ultimate intention of asking Parliament to pay the bill at some time or other, that time not being defined—and probably, if I am to judge from experience in the case of the present Government, they would have done what they have done several times—that is to say, they would have handed over the payment of the bill to their successors ; but according to the Attorney-General, all this would have been perfectly within the lines of the constitution, subject only to this one restriction, that they could not make war within the United Kingdom. Now, when you recollect that there has been no such thing as a public war in the United Kingdom for many centuries,—we have had rebellions in the United Kingdom, but we have had no public war with a European power in the United Kingdom for many centuries,—therefore I do not think you will attach any very great value to the concession of the Attorney-General, that Her Majesty cannot make war in the United Kingdom with any troops belonging to her, either Indian or other. We have

made gigantic wars ; we made the great Revolutionary war from 1793 to 1815, which, although there have been very costly wars since, — viz. the Franco - German War and the American Civil War, — yet, if its importance is measured by its cost, was the greatest ever made in the world. But that war was not made in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the doctrine to which I want to direct your attention is this—the Queen has an enormous Empire ; the raising of troops in the Colonies really depends, as it ought to depend, not practically on the consent of our Parliament, but on the consent of the Colonial Parliaments ; but it is very important to us that we should control the action of the Executive at home with regard to such troops. We would not consent, I think, to have such wars made, by any troops whatever, without the consent of Parliament. The doctrine laid down is, that provided you don't make the war in the United Kingdom, and provided you don't use English money, which you cannot use, for paying the troops, it is perfectly constitutional for the Queen to employ what troops she pleases, and to make what wars she pleases, without any control from the popular and, as we believe, self-governing institution of this country. Now, when I tell you that it has been the purpose of our Parliamentary liberties above all to control the military action of the Crown, and to take care that whatever the abstract theory of the constitution be as regards the declaration of war by the Crown, yet, practically, no wars shall be carried on by the British nation, and the blood of the British nation shall not be shed, excepting with the consent of the British nation through its representatives, I ask you whether I exaggerate the matter when I point out to you the conduct of the Government in the case of the recent Afghan war, and when I quote to you the doctrines with which that conduct has been covered and sustained—the doctrine of the Attorney-General, as the first law officer of the Crown, concerning the right of the Crown to employ troops, except in the United Kingdom,

without the consent of Parliament. I think I have given you a pretty good and a pretty strong instance of the invasion of the rights of Parliament—invasion of which, mark me, I do not say that the main blame now any longer rests upon Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues, but rests upon the members of the majority that supported them; and when Mr. Cross, when Sir Stafford Northcote, when any of those gentlemen have to answer for those acts, as they will have to answer in the course of the next two or three weeks, in my opinion, I lose sight almost of their character as Ministers of the Crown, so entirely do I feel that as Ministers of the Crown they were under the absolute control of the House of Commons. The House of Commons could have stopped this by lifting up its little finger. The House of Commons would not stop it, approved it, sanctioned it, confirmed it, stamped it in your name, and gave all the encouragement in its power to the repetition of such acts in future times.

I have spoken of the treaty-making power, and I have spoken of the military title of the Crown to employ troops; I will yet give you one more instance, and it is this,—and this also has received the approval of the House of Commons,—the Parliament has been kept in ignorance, at the most vital periods of the last two or three years, of information absolutely necessary for a right decision upon the great questions which it has been called to debate. I think you will agree with me that that is a pretty formidable head of the indictment that I am bringing. It is the third—the abuse of the treaty-making power, the abuse of the war-making power, and the suppression, the holding back from Parliament of necessary information. With respect to this last charge, my only difficulty is that I could only adequately prove it in a speech the setting out of which would require two or three hours, from the multitude of its details; but I will give you, and give you very briefly, references to one or two instances in which it has happened. Now, at the time that the new policy with regard

(3) *As regards
'the holding
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liament of
necessary
information.'*

to Afghanistan was founded by Lord Lytton, in defiance of such an array of authorities of Indian and British statesmen as never have been accumulated upon almost any question—at that time the object pursued by the new policy was, as you recollect, to force upon the Ameer of Afghanistan the reception of a British envoy; and the plea for that policy was, that the Ameer of Afghanistan was dissatisfied with the relations that existed, wished to draw them more close, and that to draw them more close had become essential to the safety of the Empire. That he was dissatisfied with the relations that existed, and would not consent to allow them to continue—that was substantially the case laid before you. In the month of March 1877—I think March or April—solemn conferences were opened at Peshawur between the Minister of the Ameer and the representative of Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India. *The conferences at Peshawur.* In those solemn conferences it was proved, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that although the Ameer of Afghanistan, like other Asiatic potentates, and, I am afraid, like other European potentates, was very desirous of getting as much out of us as he could, and therefore had presented some grievances and subjects of complaint to which he wished to give value in our eyes, yet when he was pressed by the British representative with this necessity of receiving British envoys in Afghanistan, he at once cast to the winds the little frivolous demands that he had been making, and not less than eleven times over, his representative, almost on his knees, besought the representative of Lord Lytton to let the Ameer alone, to let Afghanistan alone—to let Afghanistan continue as it was in the relation with England, which he declared to be perfectly satisfactory. That document was a document of the most vital importance. If that document had been published, the making of the Afghan war would have been totally impossible. The document was composed—it is a long series of documents—these documents were composed in the spring of 1877; they were kept in the closets of the India Office. In the summer of

1877, Lord Salisbury said that no material change was intended in the policy to be pursued to Afghanistan. Not only was knowledge withheld, but language was used which went to mislead the Parliament. Suspicion in that way was lulled asleep. The matter went on, and in 1878, before we knew that these documents existed, we were informed that war with Afghanistan had been begun. So it was that the knowledge was held back from the Parliament, and the information which was vital to our comprehension of these subjects, and which never was placed in our hands until the issue had been decided for us without our cognizance. And I must frankly tell you that I doubt very much whether the Emperor of Russia, who rules the most despotic State in Europe, and is supposed to have that people in a condition nearest servitude—I doubt very much whether the Emperor and Government of Russia would have dared to make such a war without the knowledge and cognizance of their people, as the war that has been made by the Ministers of England in the name of the Queen of England. Now, gentlemen, instance the second. In that year 1878, new intelligence of the most startling character was continually sprung upon us. The House of Commons—not the House as a whole, but the minority of the House—was sensitive and alarmed. The House came near one of its vacations, I think its Easter vacation; the question was put—there was so much uneasiness in the public mind—that the question was put to Her Majesty's Government, whether they contemplated any new measure of an important kind, because, if they did, it was better for the House not to separate. Sir Stafford Northcote, on the part of the Government, said there was no reason in the world why the House should not separate, as nothing was likely to occur of a novel or startling character. The House separated, and it was within a day or two after the House separated that the most novel and the most startling of all the proceedings, except the Anglo-Turkish Convention, of this Government

*The history of
the bringing of
Indian troops
to Malta.*

was announced to the world—viz. that the Indian forces, which we believed to be confined to the empire of India and to operations in the neighbouring countries, had been brought to Malta for the purpose of taking part, if needful, in European war. Such was the way in which Parliament was treated, when it had no power of expressing an opinion, of offering a remonstrance upon this most important and vital measure, until the thing was actually done, and when remonstrance had become perfectly idle and futile. Well, in the beginning of that year 1878, the Russians had obtained complete military success over the Turks. As far as the public were aware, there was nothing to prevent them from pushing on without limit. It was not believed that Constantinople had the means of resistance. The public mind got into a very susceptible state, a state of alarm, because we were not aware of any engagements of the Russians not to enter Constantinople. In the meantime the Russians were making their treaty with the Turks. It was known, or it was believed, that in that treaty the Russians would do what the Germans did with the French—that is to say, would require what is called a war indemnity, and some alarm went abroad lest they should require this war indemnity in the shape of a great slice, or an important portion of the territory of Turkey. Some alarm went abroad. On the 28th January the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a speech which went directly to stimulate that alarm; and he said we don't know what the Emperor is going to do in the matter of the indemnity—he might ask for Smyrna or ask for Salonica—the importance of that being that he might ask for ports by which he might at once outside the Bosphorus establish himself as a naval Power in the Mediterranean. Well, that was exceedingly alarming—alarming, I think, to any rational man, certainly alarming to all those who were disposed to be excitable upon such subjects. Well, gentlemen, at that very time, while that language was held by the Government, the Government had in their

*The pledges
given by the
Emperor of
Russia.*

possession the most solemn pledges given by the Emperor of Russia, and recorded in written documents, given by and through Lord Augustus Loftus, our ambassador at St. Petersburg, given to Colonel Wellesley, who was the British envoy in the Russian camp—in which the Russians declared and bound themselves to this, that they would ask for no territory whatever from Turkey with two exceptions—with the exception of Bessarabia, on the Danube, which they have got, and with the exception of a fraction of Armenia, with the port of Batoum, which they have got also. Now, it was known that this was what they would ask for; but all these alarms were allowed to go abroad, and the public mind to be excited, Parliament to be bewildered and disquieted; and when the Government had in its possession the information which would have allayed those fears, they talked about the demand of ports for Russia on the Mediterranean—which demand they must have known to be impossible and absurd, and which demand, if it had existed, would undoubtedly have given them a cause of war beyond all dispute against the Emperor of Russia. That information, gentlemen, was kept back from us. Gentlemen, then came another thing—Lord Derby resigned. When Lord Derby resigned I myself was in the House of Lords, and I heard what passed; and he said that he resigned—he maintained a reserve most studiously considerate to his late colleagues, which could not be too highly commended, though perhaps it would have been better for the public, as matters turned out, if he had had a less delicate sense of forbearance towards them; but I commend his conduct—and he said he had resigned on account of measures which had appeared to him likely to lead us into war—in any case to disturb the public mind, and therefore to be mischievous, and he could be no party to such measures. When he sat down the Earl of Beaconsfield rose, and, after describing the great pain with which he parted from Lord Derby, he proceeded to say that the allusion of Lord Derby to those measures was

rather enigmatical, that there was great mischief in anything that looked like concealment, and consequently he had better make it known at once to Parliament that Her Majesty's Government intended to call out the military reserves—a body of 30,000 or 40,000 men. That was rather an alarming and a very important piece of intelligence. A similar declaration was made by Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of Commons, and we were led to believe, gentlemen, that that measure was the only measure. Judge, then, of our astonishment when after this Lord Derby came down to Parliament and declared that that was not the only measure; that the plan of bringing the Indian troops to Europe, that the plan of seizing some point on the coast or in the Turkish Empire in Asia were measures that were then entertained by the Cabinet, and that formed part of the cause of his resignation. It was most vital if we were to discharge our duties to the country that we should know these things, and it was not agreeable with any principles with which I am conversant, or which I could approve, that this measure with regard to the reserves should have been announced to Parliament as if it had been the sole measure, because concealment was a thing so bad, when at that very moment other measures were concealed, and Parliament was not allowed to be acquainted with them. I really need not perhaps further detain you with instances of this kind, so numerous are the cases that might be quoted, but I will yet give you one more, and you will at once see the bearing of it. As I have told you, gentlemen, while the Congress was sitting at Berlin in 1878, the Anglo-Turkish Convention was made. The Anglo-Turkish Convention gave to Great Britain what may be called an exclusive protectorate over the whole of Turkey in Asia. That, of course, included Syria. Now, if you go back to the prior history of France, you will find that France had always had a peculiar jealousy with respect to her influence in Syria. At the time of certain disturbances in the Lebanon, during the Government of Lord

*The calling
out of the
reserves.*

*France and
Syria.*

Palmerston, France had taken the leading part, and had been the first to tell the Porte that unless the Porte agreed to the measures that were demanded, they would land their troops in Syria, and I rather think, if I am right, they did do so at that time. But historically, and from the time of the first Napoleon, France had always shown an extraordinary jealousy with respect to Syria—perhaps it would not be too much to say an ambition either that she should herself exercise an influence in Syria, or at all events that no such influence should be exercised by any other Power. Now, under these circumstances you will observe, when we were called upon to pass judgment on the Anglo-Turkish Convention, which gave to England treaty rights in Syria, over all Syria not possessed by France, it was most important, nay, essential, for our discharge of our duty that we should know whether France had or had not expressed dissatisfaction with the Anglo-Turkish Convention, because of those rights given to us in the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean. You will see my point. Well, what happened? Not a word was said to us upon the subject before we debated the Anglo-Turkish Convention and the Treaty of Berlin. I myself saw plainly this political danger—I saw that whereas we had no right whatever to make this Convention—for it was a gross breach of the Treaty of Paris—that is to say, of the international law of Europe; that it likewise was open to this special objection that it tended to embroil us with France, and in the course of a long speech which I made in the House of Commons on that occasion, I argued strongly and fully that it tended to embroil us with France, and must do mischief in the mind and feeling of France. But I felt the weakness of my argument. I felt that my argument was like a shot fired into the air, because Her Majesty's Government had laid before us the documents relating to the Anglo-Turkish Convention as I believed, and the documents relating to the Treaty of Berlin. There was not a word about dissatisfaction from France, and I was in

the ludicrous position of being reproached, or open to be reproached, with being more French than the French themselves—of raising on the part of France a cause of complaint which France had never raised for herself. I felt the weakness of that position; notwithstanding that, I felt the strength of the historical argument in itself, and I did not recede from it. What happened? The debate passed; we were of course beaten by one of those magnificent majorities of which we have heard a good deal. The Parliament separated; we went to our recess. About the month of October the French Government prepared and produced for its Chamber of Deputies the communications that had taken place upon this subject, in which it appeared that at the very time when the Anglo-Turkish Convention became known to them the French had remonstrated against it, and had treated it as a Convention that went to disturb the good understanding of the two countries. And then, when the French had published this information—then for the first time it was made known to England. But we debated it, we went through the whole discussion upon the question, we came to our decision upon it, and the information essential to an appreciation of the merits of the case was kept by the Government in its own possession, concealed from us, and we, your representatives, had to decide matters involving your vital interests without the information needed for that decision.

Now I go no farther, my charge is that the rights of Parliament have been abridged in respect of the abuse—the unwarranted, unprecedented use of the treaty-making power; abridged in respect to the rights claimed and the rights exercised in making war without the consent of Parliament; abridged in respect of the decisions of Parliament itself, which Parliament has been called upon and compelled to take, while the information necessary for the purpose was deliberately withheld, either at the time of the decision, or, at any rate, until events had been carried so far as to deprive the decision

of all practical importance. That is the evidence I lay before you, and that evidence proves that this invasion of Parliamentary right has taken place by the sanction of the House of Commons,—that is, by the sanction of the majority of the House of Commons,—by the sanction, I am sorry to say it, among others, of your own member, for no man has been more docile to the Government than the noble Earl who now represents you in Parliament; and you, gentlemen, have got to decide whether you will make yourselves parties to this invasion of Parliamentary right. Remember the saying with which I began, and with that saying I will close. Your liberties I won't say are in danger, for my faith in the nation is utterly unshaken; but your liberties have been attacked, your liberties have been undermined, your liberties have been to a degree impaired. They have been impaired, in the first instance, by a Minister, but in the second instance, and more importantly—for the Minister could have been easily dealt with—in the second instance, by the majority of the House of Commons; and, gentlemen, it is a true word and a lasting word of constitutional doctrine, that, except from within the precincts of the House of Commons itself, except by the action of such a majority as that on which you are now called upon to pass judgment, there never will be danger to the liberties of the people of Great Britain.

IX.

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 1880.

MEETING AT GILMERTON.

MR. GLADSTONE came from Edinburgh by special train, and the meeting took place in the schoolhouse, Mr. Black being called to the chair, and introducing the right hon. gentleman, who said:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I am very glad to meet this parish of the constituency, and I am especially not without satisfaction that I should meet them in the schoolroom; for the schoolrooms of Scotland are very closely associated with the Liberal cause. I do not mean that Acts relating to education are passed with political or party views. Very far from it. They are passed without drawing any distinction of that kind. But I am of opinion, and possibly you may agree with me, that I am, notwithstanding, quite justified in saying that the schoolrooms of your country are indissolubly associated with the Liberal cause. For what is it that has given to Scotland its deep, unconquerable attachment to the Liberal cause? It is the education of the people; it is the habit of thought and discussion and responsible judgment which they have formed—partly, perhaps, in connection with their ecclesiastical history, but also to a great degree in connection with the peculiar progress which popular education has for some generations made among them.

I shall pass to the theme suggested by the epithet I employed, namely, your ecclesiastical history, because there are members of this constituency who, as might very naturally be expected, are desirous that there should be no misunder-

The ecclesiastical history of Scotland.

standing between us upon the important subject of the position in which the national religious establishment of Scotland is to stand, so far, at least, as my appreciation of that position goes, in reference to the Parliament about to be assembled; and on Saturday, to a question put to me, I answered, in conformity with what I understood would be rather for the general convenience, that I would say the little I had to say upon that subject in the parish of Liberton. Now, I would, in the first place, repeat what I have had occasion to say in many places, that never have I known a case in which the multiform controversies, if I may so say, and the numerous issues that are naturally the product of our varied and intense political life, were so much summed up in one great issue. It would hardly be too much to say that in the main this coming election is a question of a vote of confidence, as we call it in the House of Commons, or a vote of no confidence in the existing Administration. For you are well aware that the most self-governing country cannot govern itself by itself. It must govern itself through the instrumentality of a representative body. But neither can that representative body in the nature of the case be so constituted as to conduct the work of executive government. The highest function that that representative body can exercise on your behalf, and the function through which your solid convictions are made to take effect in the main in the government of the country, in all normal and ordinary circumstances, arises in this way—that the representative is in a condition to determine the choice of the Ministers of the Crown. Therefore, it is not in the slightest degree that I want to blink the importance of this or that particular question; but to you, as men of sense and men of business, I wish to observe that you cannot possibly settle, through the medium of an election, how every particular bill shall be dealt with, how every particular measure shall be treated. What you can settle is this, that those in whom you have confidence shall be returned to Parliament, in order

The question for the election is one of confidence in the Government.

that they may when in Parliament so discharge their duty as to give to the Sovereign the benefit of such advice as you think will be governed, not only by motives of patriotism, but by enlightened and progressive views. For that reason it is that I have said that your main subject—the subject which really must occupy the mind of every man—is the question who shall be the Ministers; and the process we are about is this. We are not, in my opinion, passing direct judgment upon the conduct of the Ministers at this moment so much as we are passing judgment—that is, I am calling upon you to pass judgment—on the conduct of the majority of the House of Commons, by whom that Ministry was made, and by whom that Ministry has been supported. I am bound to say that every question that we may wish to promote, that we may have the nearest to our hearts, the whole work of legislative progress and improvement, has been cast greatly into the rear as the result of the last Parliament. There is hardly a great subject upon which any material advance has been made: and by the confusion that has been introduced into finance, and the complication that has been introduced into foreign policy, by engagements and quarrels and disturbances in three out of the four quarters of the globe, your coming representatives, and the coming Ministry of the Crown, have been supplied with a mass of work to do, urgent and immediate, with which it is absolutely necessary for them to deal before they can really and effectively resume the peaceful work of legislative improvement.

With that preface, I will say a few words on the subject of the Scotch Church Establishment, which, it appears to me, I must confess, is, at the present moment, largely made use of by our Tory friends as an instrument for promoting their purposes. I hear wherever I go a great deal said about the question of the Church Establishment in Scotland; but I do not hear it from Free Churchmen; I do not hear it from United Presbyterians; I hear it from the mouths of

*It is the Tories
who seek to
raise the
Church
question.*

Tories and through the channel of Tory newspapers, and it appears, gentlemen, that the Tories are using the question of the Established Church of Scotland exactly as upon former occasions they have used other questions. Take one that is familiar to all who know the history of the time. After the repeal of the Corn Laws, what did the Tories do? The Tories represented that the country was ruined—ay, ruined; not damaged only, but ruined by the repeal of the Corn Laws, and consequently they formed their party upon the basis of restoring Protection. The farmers, good easy souls in England, naturally believed what they said, and returned large numbers of them to Parliament in order that those gentlemen might set about restoring Protection; and I believe that if the Tories had never come into office, they still would have been preaching exactly the same thing, and inducing all the English farmers—not many, I think, of the Scotch, but the English farmers, to a great extent, to return them to Parliament to restore Protection. Then every man was an untrustworthy man, a disloyal man, an unpatriotic man, who was not ready to restore Protection. That was the doctrine they then held. What did we do? We got them into office in 1852, and from the moment they got into office not a word more was heard of Protection. It is exactly the same story. A few Liberal Churchmen—not Tory Churchmen—of the Scotch Church will stick to the Tory party. I cannot doubt that some of them will do that—perhaps many of them will do that; but Liberal Churchmen would fall into the veriest trap that ever was set for the minds and consciences of enlightened men, were they not to observe this method of action of the Tory party—that is to say, of using subjects as means to create alarm in the public; to trade upon that alarm, and to obtain seats in Parliament through that trade; and then, when the time comes, to pitch overboard, without a moment's hesitation or a moment's compunction, the very subject out of which they have made such a large and profitable trade.

*An illustration
from the Corn
Laws.*

It is right, perhaps, that I should explain to you some particular cases that have been laid before you as reasons why you should mistrust me. I think it was Lord Salisbury—I do not know whether he has favoured you with a visit in Scotland, or whether he thought you were a little too far north for him, but he did appear somewhere or other, and he laid down this doctrine. He said Mr. Gladstone is the man who said, in 1865, that the Irish Church question was beyond the range, I think, of practical politics, and who, in 1868, moved resolutions to destroy the Irish Church, and, in 1869, carried a bill through the House of Commons for that purpose. Well, *The history of the Irish Church Dis-establishment.* now, I will tell you the exact truth of that matter. It is perfectly true that in 1865 I said—and I fully believed it—that the Irish Church question was out of the range of practical politics; by which I meant—it was the occasion of an election, and when at an election you say a question is out of the range of practical politics, you mean that it is not a question likely to be dealt with in the Parliament you are now choosing. That is the meaning of it. My belief at that time was this—the Irish Church had been suffered to go on without being a subject of agitation for twenty or thirty years since the time when its concerns had been actively discussed, and, according to all appearances, it seemed that it might so go on for a considerable number of years. It would not at all have surprised me, according to the opinions I then entertained, if it had gone on for five, ten, or fifteen more years from that date. Then came that which is now cited in order to work upon your alarms. It is said, and truly said, that in the year 1867 there happened certain crimes in England—that is to say, a policeman was murdered, in circumstances of riot and great excitement, by a Fenian crowd in Manchester; the wall of Clerkenwell Prison, London, was blown down in a very alarming manner; and it is said that it was in consequence of these things that I completely changed my mind about the Irish Church, and proposed the disestablishment of it. Now,

gentlemen, what I have said, and what I repeat about those charges is simply this, that the matters referred to had the effect of drawing the attention of the people of this island to the Irish question, they had nothing to do with the merits of the case. But pray consider this; pray consider how all of you have your hands full; how all of you have the duties of life to perform. You are all citizens of an Empire with a multitude of varied calls all over the world; and there are, no doubt, many questions requiring attention which are in sharp competition one with another, and to the whole of which it is not possible to give all the attention they deserve. Now, the case of the Irish Church was a very urgent case, and there are a great many more very urgent cases which at this moment receive no attention. Can there be a more urgent case than this? In 1835 it was thought vitally necessary, and it has been of immense advantage to the country, to change the whole municipal government of the country. It had formerly been a close government; it was made a popular representative government. But at that time the city of London was excepted; it was supposed they would do it in 1836 or 1837; and nothing has been done to the present hour. Well, that is a very urgent question indeed, for we have four millions of people gathered together in the metropolis of this great country without the advantages of municipal government,—many of their arrangements in a state most inefficient, some of them really almost scandalously inefficient,—because the pressure of the concerns of Government is such that it has not been possible to give attention to that matter, and create a sufficient public feeling and impetus to overcome the obstacles which always require to be overcome where the interests of local bodies, and a great many prejudices, and a great many, perhaps, even selfish interests have to be overcome.

Now, it is alleged that I have said that the Fenian outrages were the cause why the Irish Church was disestablished. That

statement is as far from the truth as is possible. I will give you a little illustration of that. Suppose it is Sunday morning, and I have got up and have had my breakfast, and perhaps I am reading a book in which I am interested,—let us hope it is a proper and becoming book for the day,—and I am not thinking of going to church at the moment, because I am so interested in the book that I am not conscious of the exact time, when suddenly I hear the church-bell. Well, the church-bell reminds me, and I put my book down, put on my hat, and go to church. Would you say the church-bell is the cause why I go to church? Not in the least; it is not the cause why I go; I go to church because I believe it to be my duty to go to church, and I wish to go to church; but the church-bell is that which draws my attention to it, and that is the important function it performs. You are told it only requires some Fenian outrage to have the Church of Scotland disestablished. Why, a Fenian outrage in Scotland might draw my attention to the Fenian outrage; but the Fenian outrages in England made the people of England and of Scotland think of the Irish question; and when they thought of the Irish question, they saw there was a great, scandalous, and shameful grievance in Ireland; and, therefore, they determined to remove it. But it was only attention that was called; and when our attention is called to the case of the Scotch Church, what do we find? We find a large portion of the people of Scotland who are severed from that Church, and a large portion who are very desirous it should be disestablished. We find another large portion who are very desirous it should continue established; and no means have yet been taken to ascertain, by a full and adequate discussion, which of those portions really expresses the entire mind or general mind of Scotland. But those portions would both of them agree that there is no analogy whatever between the case of the Church of Scotland and the case of the Church of Ireland. There is nothing disgraceful to the Government of

*The effect of
the Fenian
outrages.*

*There is no
analogy
between the
cases of the
Churches of
Ireland and of
Scotland.*

this country, or to the members of the Established Church and the class who support it in Scotland, in the history of the Church of Scotland. The question of the Church of Scotland, if it ever comes to be fought out, will be fought out honestly and in good temper, and upon grounds of general expediency and principle ; but not by keen and bitter reproaches, and not under the smart of burning recollections and galling recollections, such as those that attended the whole history of the Church of Ireland. It is monstrous to attempt to create this analogy. Just let me remind you of some of the points. I do not want to go back upon these things. The Established Church of Ireland is now a Voluntary Church, working its own way, and I thank God it is ; but I am compelled by the injudicious efforts of that party who always supported it, to point out how ludicrous it is to make a parallel between it and the Church of Scotland. The Church of Ireland was an alien Church. It was planted by foreign force. It was the foreign force of England that made the Church of Ireland. The Established Church of Scotland grew out of the soil, and instead of being forced upon the people, was forced by the people. It was the efflux of the mind of the people ; it gave expression to the convictions of the people ; and not only was it not like, but at every point it was in diametrical opposition and contradiction to the deplorable case of the Church of Ireland. The Church of Scotland was loved by the people ; the Church of Ireland was hated by the people. It was associated with all the memories of their degradation. The people recollected that they were compelled out of their miserably scanty means to subscribe funds for the maintenance of the Church in Ireland down to the year 1833 ; and they were at the same time precluded from exercising any vote in the vestries, by which those funds were levied. The Church of Scotland, on the other hand, was historically dear to the people. The Church of Ireland always represented what may fairly be called a

*The Church of
Scotland is
indigenous.*

miserable minority of the people—represented one-ninth or one-tenth part of the people ; but the Church of Scotland down to 1843 unquestionably represented a very large majority of the people. Before the Disruption, it is not too much to say that the Church of Scotland had the warm and enthusiastic attachment of perhaps three-fourths of the people, those who are now the United Presbyterians being the chief fraction of the other fourth. The Church of Scotland was the Church of the people—a great deal more than the Church of the rich and the wealthy and the noble ; but the Church of Ireland was the Church of the wealthy and the noble and of nobody else—excepting a few parishes and a few neighbourhoods. The Church of Scotland was a Church in which all the means that it possessed were carefully husbanded, so that every kirk should be tolerably supplied with the means of supporting a minister ; while, on the other hand, there were no great accumulations of unnecessary wealth in the case of a few individuals. The Church of Ireland was full of the grossest and most monstrous abuses, enormous episcopal revenues, accumulations of parishes made to create great revenues for parish clergymen ; every sort of irregularity, non-residence, pluralities, every abuse that it is possible to conceive. Such was the heap of blotches and of deformities presented by the Established Church of Ireland in the time of its prosperity. But, as I have said, when the question of the Church of Scotland comes to be discussed, it will be calmly discussed, with reason and good temper, by men of principle and character, accustomed to respect one another, and meeting upon a footing of perfect civil equality.

On the other hand, recollect this — what has created alarm in some has been that we have said it is to the sentiment of the people of Scotland that we must look for the decision of this question when it comes to be discussed. In the case of Ireland, it was not the decision of the people of Ireland that led to the destruction of the

Established Church. The people of Ireland had borne it so long, had been so accustomed to the work of submission, that they hardly stirred upon the subject. It was—and I can say this as one knowing the facts of the case—it was that the mind and conscience of England and Scotland had been effectually awakened when once they gave attention to the subject, and they felt that it was necessary to remove the Established Church of Ireland from its position as an establishment in order to apply a remedy to a gross public wrong that offended the conscience and sense of the country, and that degraded the character of the country all over the civilised world. What has been said about the Church of Scotland is this, that the question raised about it is evidently a question for the people of Scotland. In my opinion it is a question which never can be decided satisfactorily except it be, whichever way it be, by some clear and strong and decided manifestation from the people of Scotland. When I am asked whether I anticipate any such manifestation now, and especially such manifestation in a negative sense, my answer is that, so far as I have seen, this question has not been before the people of Scotland during the proceedings, thus far, of the present election. I, for my part, see no likelihood whatever that it will be; and I certainly should be a party objecting strongly to any attempt to filch an advantage, to take an advantage, against the Church of Scotland, or against anything else that is Scotch, from an accidental circumstance. It is the people of Scotland to whom it has been referred. That reference must be a real reference; there must be a real consideration in order to a real decision. Nay, the decision must not only be real; in my opinion it must be a manifest and pointed and undeniable decision, in order to bring about any fresh issue or any great change in regard to the National Church.

The Church question in Scotland is one for the people of Scotland.

That is what I have to say on the subject of the Scotch Church Establishment; but I will refer to one or two other matters, because some of the kind correspondents who favour

me with their views individually, and very often say things that are useful, say—We want to know what you say ought to be done—not merely what you object to, but what ought to be done in a new Parliament? I have formerly pointed out to you the obstacles which the action of the present Government has interposed to the speedy and immediate progress of useful legislation. I think the Parliament of 1868, though perhaps I ought not to say so, inasmuch as I am deeply interested in its character, has left behind it a reputation that will long remain honourable in the minds of the people of this country. I think very differently indeed of the Parliament now expiring, and, in fact, in regard to that Parliament, for the sake of good manners I would rather not say what I think. But I have little hope that the next Parliament will be able to serve you as effectually and as palpably as did the Parliament of 1868. What I hope is that it will serve you in the same spirit, and that it will do all that different circumstances permit to make that service as wide and as effectual as possible. But, when I am asked what I think ought to be done, I really should be ashamed to read you the list of the things that I think ought to be done, because I have in my hand here a little tract of which I am the author. It was written two years ago, and it was called 'England's Mission;' and in a note to that tract I have put down together, without including what may be called secondary questions, a list of two-and-twenty great subjects, with respect to which, as I consider, almost the whole public opinion of the country is fixed in the idea that they ought to be dealt with. Here they are. I begin with London municipal reform; my second is county government; my third, county franchise; my fourth, the state of the liquor laws; and so I go on, but I won't read the whole of them; it is a budget which would almost stun and stupefy you. However, what I will do will be this. Three of those two-and-twenty are subjects, in regard to which the present

*England's
Mission,*

Parliament has acted since that tract was written. Then there remained, you may say, only nineteen; but, unfortunately, it is not so, because while in one of the three questions with which they have dealt they have made some progress, the other two they have made a great deal worse than they were before. Therefore I consider that the whole action of the present Government, taking the three together, amounts to nothing, or perhaps less than nothing. They have made progress in the Irish University question. A very insufficient and meagre bill was passed; but still it was a bill that the Irish under the pressure in which they felt themselves accepted. The Liberals did all they could to promote the passing of it, taking a little good when they could not get a great one. So that I put down as so much to the good and to the credit of the present Parliament. But as to the two others, what has the present Parliament done as to corrupt practices at elections? It has not been satisfied to leave things as they were. It was not only determined not to go forward for the repression of corruption, but that which had formerly been stamped by the law as a dangerous, if not a corrupt practice, and as tending to corrupt practice, if not actually corrupt practice—viz. payment in boroughs for the conveyance of voters to the poll—that which the law had previously prohibited on the grounds I mentioned, this Parliament, in a manner I must say the most hasty—so hasty that it deserves to be called indecent—in the last week or ten days of its existence, has had a bill brought in to repeal the prohibition and to re-establish that bad practice in favour of the rich candidate against the poor candidate, in favour of reaction against reform, in favour of practical mischief, and against practical improvement. The other question with which they have been dealing is the Probate Duty—your friend the Inventory Duty. I had the audacity to detain a large audience at Dalkeith the other day in handling the subject of the Inventory Duty, and I set forth results which were

*The Irish
University
Act.*

*The Act for
legalizing the
conveyance of
voters in
boroughs to the
poll.*

*The new
Inventory
Duty Act.*

patiently followed and perfectly comprehended by my audience, and which, I think, excited their astonishment, when they found the gross partiality shown to the real property of the country, that is to say, to the landlords of the country—of whom I confess myself one—in imposing the taxation so as that it shall pass by the landlord, and shall light upon the personal property of the country. Gentlemen, on that day I made statements which were so striking that I really would not have ventured upon them if it had not been that I had gone carefully into the figures and had satisfied myself as to their truth; and there is not one of them that can be shaken. When I first began to examine this bill of Sir Stafford Northcote I was astonished, and having occasion to attend a meeting in London in the borough of which I am an elector, I wanted to sound an alarm. I determined to be within the bounds of truth, and I think what I said in London was this, that whereas personal property now pays three or four times as much as realty upon a succession by death, they have brought in a bill at this last moment, when it cannot be discussed or examined, to make it, instead of three or four times, four or five or six times as much. That, I thought, was not stating it very strongly, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer found fault with me, and said I had been endeavouring to inflame the public mind against this bill in Marylebone. In my place in the House of Commons I said, ‘I have, and I will—I have spoken of it in Marylebone, I will speak of it elsewhere; and I will endeavour to make it well understood, not with exaggeration, but according to the facts.’ Now, I showed at Dalkeith that if you take the case of a farm worth £20,000, and of a farm tenant whose stock upon the farm is worth £5000, supposing the landlord dies and supposing the farmer dies, and the landlord and the farmer are both of them succeeded by their sons, the farmer’s son coming into his stock worth £5000 would have to pay more than twice as much Probate Duty as the landlord’s son

coming into £20,000. That is to say, instead of being four or five times, as I had put it in Marylebone, it was nine times worse. And not only so, but recollect this, that the plea and pretext set up by these people is that personalty ought to pay, because the land pays the rates. But I ask if the farmer does not pay the rates, if the shopkeeper does not pay the rates, who has got the stock in his shop, and whose heir, when he dies, has to pay five or six, or perhaps eight or ten times as much as the son of the landlord in coming into his great landed estate. Well, that is the mode of progress, and that is the catalogue of work that this Parliament bequeaths to those who are to succeed it, and that this Government bequeaths to those who are to take up its work, when, as I hope, a new Parliament, expressing the sense of the people, shall have put an end to its miscarriages and misdeeds in the discharge of the high office it now fulfils.

*Proximate
subjects of
legislation.*

But if you will allow me, I will tell you what I think to be the proximate subjects of legislation. I have told you that in my opinion Church establishments are not at all proximate subjects of legislation. I am not speaking of my wishes, because there are a great many things I wish heartily to see done and which I have no hope of seeing; but when I speak of proximate subjects I mean those most urgent, and I will tell you what I consider the most urgent. They come under these three heads—the head of finance, the head of land laws, and the head of local government. When I look to finance, I say that things have been allowed to get into such a state that we have come to about £8,000,000 of deficiency; and as to the remedial measure, such as it is, which has been adopted by the present Government, by means of passing this most unjust and outrageous Inventory Duty Bill—for I cannot call it by a weaker epithet than that—all my statements in regard to it have really been very much within the mark, as I will show if I have occasion to return to the subject in detail. In respect to finance, the only provision

(1) *Finance.*

that has been made is a provision by which it has been indicated that the next five years shall pay £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 of the deficit that has been contracted in the last five years. That is the way that this far-seeing Government, this Conservative Government, provides for the future of the country — that is to say, by handing over to it the burdens which they have entailed upon finance. The condition of finance is a subject of many branches, and won't bear treatment in detail without a great expenditure of time; but I am satisfied now to note it as one of what I think three subjects likely to vindicate their claim to be immediately and seriously set about by any right-minded Parliament. If you return a Parliament like this, I won't promise you that your finances will be dealt with at all. I think it is very likely there will be more hectoring, and more bragging, and more contracting of engagements and making of secret treaties; that there will be more pretences of extending the Empire, more running into collision with the sentiment of other people, and endeavouring to put them down by force and violence, and, I am afraid, in some cases, even by cruelty, as we have been doing in Afghanistan. I won't answer for what will happen if you return a Parliament of the wrong kind. If you return a Parliament of the right kind, finance is one of the first subjects that must receive careful and close attention. The next (2) *Land laws.* subject I will refer to now is the state of the land laws, and in that single phrase I include a great many subjects, because all the laws which touch the cultivator of the land are land laws. I won't there again attempt to go into detail now, but it embraces the subject of hypothec, it embraces the subject of game, it embraces the subject of adequate security for tenants' improvements in regard to all they put into the land, it embraces the subject of the state of the law in respect to the inheritance of the lease of the farmer, as the lease of the farmer in Scotland is a heritable property, but as that

law appears to be in a state that requires some enlargement, and some greater liberty to the farmer as to the manner of disposing of his lease; it embraces the law of the transfer of land, a subject of the greatest importance; it embraces the law with respect to entails and settlements, which is also a subject, in my opinion, of very great importance for the welfare of the country. Of all those subjects, gentlemen, I do not think there is one that does not require to be dealt with. The dying Parliament has been dealing with the question of hypothec—as to the extent I do not know yet—for the purpose, I suppose, of improving the prospects of certain candidates in Scotland. If that has been the purpose of the measure, I greatly doubt whether that practical aim will be attained. But if good is done by it, we shall be all heartily glad to see it, and very glad to see it, and very thankful to accept it. The third question, which I think requires very serious consideration, is that of local government. You are aware what the conduct of Parliament has been in regard to local government. They have simply played with that question. As we stood seven or eight years ago, there was a general feeling that there ought to be considerable aid afforded to the local rates from the Consolidated Fund, and it was also felt that when that aid was given, it would be an excellent opportunity for rearranging the local government of the country. The local government of the country, gentlemen, requires rearrangement on more grounds than one. It requires to be greatly developed and greatly strengthened, on the ground that the present Parliament is totally overloaded and overworked, and that in consequence your affairs are in a state of deplorable arrear. They are in a state of such arrear as no well-constituted private establishment would tolerate for a moment, if it were found that the concerns of any mercantile or manufacturing undertaking had got into such a state of confused arrear as the affairs of the country have now got into—not through the indolence of Parliament—for

(3) *Local government.*

whatever I may say even of the present Parliament, it has not been indolent—it has worked hard enough, if it had worked in the right way. But such is that arrear that it has become of the utmost importance to devise means of local government which shall be sufficiently strong and powerful in themselves to deal with questions of considerable interest and moment in different parts of the country, making a judicious division between the offices of these local bodies and the offices which Parliament shall retain to itself—the local bodies, of course, doing whatever they do under the authority of Parliament, because the maintenance of the supremacy of Parliament is the maintenance of the unity of our national life; without it our national life would be broken up and dissipated. But there is another reason besides the necessity of devolution, and the great advantage of allowing probably many classes of Scotch measures to be dealt with by a separate agency peculiarly Scotch, of the nature and formation of which I need not now speak,—the same possibly for Wales, the same possibly for Ireland, the same possibly for sections of England; besides all that, there is another reason which is of the most urgent character, in my opinion, for giving early attention to this great question of local government, and, gentlemen, it is this, that both in England and in Scotland our local government is not constructed upon British or upon constitutional principles. It is rather in the nature of an arbitrary system. It is carried on by gentlemen who are nominated, and not elected authorities. We proposed, as a Government, in the year, I think, 1870, we proposed a bill of rather a comprehensive character, under which the whole nature of our local government would have been changed. Of course I do not speak of the towns in what I have just said; in the towns the popular principle has obtained scope, but remember not in London. In London the forms under which it appears are most intricate and most feeble, and in London, with its four millions of people, the popular principle is most

feebly and inadequately represented, whereas in all the counties throughout the three kingdoms the popular principle can hardly be said to exist at all. Here, then, comes the question in regard to the proper adjustment of local burdens. Now, in my opinion, the question of the proper adjustment of local burdens is a very serious one indeed. You are aware that in England the occupier pays the whole of the rates. You know that in Scotland you have a better system, under which the rates are divided; but it is a very serious question whether, even in Scotland, the system is perfect, and whether the method of arrangement which you have introduced into certain parishes, and which draws distinction between the payments levied upon agricultural land and the payments levied upon house property, ought not to receive a further extension. But the true mode of meeting all those difficulties is not merely the alteration of details, but the introduction of the representative principle. When once the representative principle is introduced, you will find a solution for them. It is by means of the representative principle, as it acts in the Parliament of the country, that we are enabled to adjust and settle the competing or even conflicting interests of different classes. There is the same virtue in the representative principle for local purposes as there is for central purposes, and consequently I certainly say to you that the question of local government, both for relieving Parliament and making the general working of the constitution more effective and more harmonious, and for the purpose of giving the popular control in matters of detail throughout the parishes of the country, was one of the most urgent questions, and the most necessary for us to take up. If I were to make an addition—perhaps it is rather dangerous, because no man can judge absolutely beforehand, whatever aid a long experience may have given him in estimating the relative claims of public questions—it is perhaps rather dangerous for me to go farther, but I own, according to the impression made upon my mind, if I were

(4) *Cheapening the cost and simplifying the procedure at elections.*

to select another question as one of the most urgent for those who value the liberties of this country, I should be disposed to select the cheapening of the cost of elections, and simplifying the procedure connected with them. I am quite sure there is nothing more dangerous to the due growth and exercise of popular privileges than costly elections. You might just as well call it a fine upon the free exercise of the judgment of the people—it would be much nearer the truth than merely to call it a lavish expenditure at elections. Lavish expenditure at elections is a fine imposed upon the free choice of the people among the different candidates, because we do not believe that the virtue of a man varies with his wealth. We do not believe that the capacity of a man to serve his country is measured by the number either of hundreds or of thousands a-year that he may possess. What we do believe is this, that it is of great importance to the country for all classes to be freely and adequately represented in Parliament, and that the best way to give them that free and adequate representation is to allow them, not in theory only, but in practice, a free choice among the candidates who are willing to serve them. And if that choice is to be free, it is idle to call it free if you have loaded their shoulders with the burden of an immense expenditure—to some of them it being possibly a mere trifle, not worth consideration, but to others being an absolute prohibition to enter the door of Parliament.

Now, I have made to you a speech, as far as I have been able, bearing upon subjects in which you feel a very great interest, all of them being branches of the one great subject that we have to consider, namely, the question whether you are satisfied, or whether you are not satisfied with the manner in which—the general manner in which—the Government of the country has been carried on for the last six years. If you are generally satisfied with it, undoubtedly, in my opinion, it is an odious and offensive office to be what is called picking

holes in the conduct of men who have in the main been both desirous and able to serve their country. You never can have any Government in the country which will not make errors, and which will not be liable to criticism, or even, in certain cases, to condemnation. But it is the general issue to which we look. It is a large and a broad question which we have to consider. The attempt which I have made whenever I have had the honour of appearing before an audience in this county, or before any other political audience which I have a title to address, has always been to open up the whole subject freely, and to endeavour to enable those who heard me, so far as lay in my power, to embrace the whole of its manifold and diverse bearings. We have thought that neither at home nor abroad has the conduct of the Government been such as deserves the approbation of the country. If we are wrong in that, you have the most easy means of declaring us to be wrong by simply returning all the gentlemen who have constituted the majority in the dying Parliament. That is a perfectly simple process, and will no doubt succeed in again securing for you great and needless expenditure—what I must really call shuffling expedients of finance—for, as I have shown in Parliament, the whole stock in trade of the present Government with regard to finance has consisted in what Sir Robert Peel, in his place when Chancellor of the Exchequer, called ‘financial nostrums’ which he said it was unworthy of a great country to make use of. In legislation I don’t expect that marvels will be done, but we do think that some rational and tolerable progress should be made, and, above all, I condemn such extraordinary proceedings as those I have mentioned to you to-day, about the Corrupt Practices Bill and the Probate Duty Bill, where, not satisfied with allowing an imperfect law to continue imperfect, they have really, and that while endeavouring to pass by and escape all public discussion, determined to aggravate that imperfect law, and make its

‘It is the general issue to which we look.’

imperfections much worse than they were before. So much for legislation. As to the character of the country abroad, that I have spoken of elsewhere, and shall speak of again; but one point I must beg you to lay to heart. It is for every man to consider whether he desires, or whether he does not desire, that the name of England, wherever it is carried into a question, the name of Great Britain, our name of Britons, wherever it is carried into a discussion of foreign policy—it is for you to consider whether you desire that that name shall be found upon the side of freedom, or upon the side opposed to it. In the days of the Tory Government of Lord Liverpool and Lord Londonderry, unfortunately, as you know, it was very often found on the side opposed to freedom. When Mr. Canning became Prime Minister of this country, a better state of things arose, and he became known throughout the world as a great advocate of freedom; and, gentlemen, he created in consequence great horror and alarm, and extraordinary aversion to himself in the court of Austria, and in some other places where, as you know, there is at present a very strong alarm and great suspicion of another individual. Mr. Canning left behind him Lord Palmerston as his pupil, and it was the happy lot of Lord Palmerston to associate himself in many of the countries of Europe with the promotion of constitutional government and freedom, and with sending forth the doom of bad, corrupt, and arbitrary governments. We have now lived into a state of things when, on the contrary, at the Congress of Berlin, upon every case of any importance that arose where there was discussion and difference of opinion in the Congress, in every case you found the plenipotentiaries of England arrayed on the side of arbitrary power. If you desire that, gentlemen, return again your old majority to Parliament. If you do not, then send the members of that majority about their business, to reap in study and by reflection the harvest which perhaps inquiry may secure

for them, to improve their minds and enlarge their views; and send to Parliament those from whom, at all events as far as concurrence with your general principles is concerned, you may expect better results than have been yielded to you by the now expiring Parliament in the course of the last six years.

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 1880.

SPEECH AT LOANHEAD.

ON the afternoon of Monday the 22d of March, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone drove into Loanhead from Gilmerton at five o'clock, and proceeded at once to the place of meeting. The chair was taken by Mr. William Tod, who introduced the right honourable gentleman to the audience, by whom he was most enthusiastically received.

Mr. Gladstone said :—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—In your kind address you have adverted to the fact that there may be present here many who profess what are called Conservative opinions in politics. I am afraid that it is not possible for me to hold out to them the inducement that what I say will be altogether agreeable to them. I could only purchase their sympathies at the expense of my own honesty. I have come here to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best view that I can obtain of it; and the only compensations that I can offer to my Conservative friends are these :—In the first place, that I am perfectly aware my views of what is true and what is false in politics may be entirely wrong; in the second place, that I will charge upon them nothing dishonourable to their motives or their characters; in the third place, that I conscientiously believe, however strange it may sound in their ears, that the cause which they have been supporting for the last six years is not Conservative in the best sense of the word, but that it is destructive in the worst sense of the word.

Further, I think that the policy called Conservative has been distinguished by a greater number of innovations, and more causeless innovations, in the course of the last six years, than I have ever known before in more than forty years of public life. And, moreover, I will say here what I have said without contradiction in the House of Commons. I suppose Sir Robert Peel was a Conservative, for the Duke of Buccleuch sat in his Cabinet. I suppose the Duke of Wellington was a Conservative. I suppose the Earl of Aberdeen was a Conservative. I have had the honour of sitting in Cabinet with all these three distinguished persons. With Sir Robert Peel and with Lord Aberdeen I lived for many years on terms of the closest intimacy, and perfectly convinced am I that if the law of nature had permitted those distinguished individuals to be amongst us to-day, they would have been the foremost to reprobate the policy which I am here to reprobate, and to support the policy I am here to support. Well, now, I will endeavour to go to a central part of that policy, which touches it at the heart; for, after all, don't let us disguise it from ourselves that the main agency relied upon by the Conservative party, as it is called, though I call it so only under protest, at the present election is, first of all, to stir up mistrust, and even something more than mistrust, even animosity, against one in particular of the Powers of Europe—namely, Russia—and having done that, to propagate the suspicion that the Liberal party of this country have entirely forsworn and forgotten the land of their birth—that they are a sort of monsters in nature who are willing to lift their hands against the parent from whose womb they sprang, and that the interests of Russia are the interests that they are given to promote. That suspicion is really the main agency to which, as far as I am able to judge, the Tory party look in the coming election. Now, I will adhere to what I have said in speaking plainly and speaking out; and I tell you plainly that I am not satisfied to deny this charge about Russia. I will deny it, but I

won't stop with denying it. I certainly never will charge upon my opponents what they have charged upon us. I have been called myself by a man of great rank 'an agent of Russia'—a man of high rank, a Duke—not the Duke of Buccleuch. I am quite sure the Duke of Buccleuch would not go to those lengths under the influence of any political feeling. But I will make no offensive imputation of that kind. All that I will speak of is acts, and results of acts. Far be it from me to believe, but, on the contrary, I renounce utterly, and I repudiate with indignation for any Englishman—be he Tory, Whig, Liberal, Radical, or what you like—I utterly repudiate the notion, and I should be ashamed of myself if I could entertain it for a moment, that he was capable of preferring the interests of a foreign country to his own. We all start on one and the same ground—the battle between us is a fair battle to be fairly fought—what is the true way to promote the interests of our country? But it will not be denied that there has been carefully propagated this belief, that the policy of the Liberal party, and, indeed, many have said the intention of the Liberal party, or of some of the Liberal party,—for instance, my own,—has been to prefer Russian interests to British interests. Now, the one question of which I want to speak is this—Who is it that for the last few years has been engaged in procuring—not consciously, not purposely—but, in fact, procuring aggrandizement for Russia?

*The policy of
the Liberal
party.*

Let us start, if you please, from the autumn of 1876. At that period great disturbances had broken out in a portion of Eastern Europe. Two of the provinces of the Turkish Empire, known as Bosnia and Herzegovina, were in a condition of rebellion, which, after long effort, the Turkish Govern-
*The Bosnian
and Bulgarian
insurrections,
1876.*

ment found itself totally unable to put down. Besides those two provinces in a condition of rebellion, and with their population to a great extent exiled, and, I am sorry to say, to no small extent starved through the general disturbances of the country—along with these there was a third province

which had witnessed scenes yet more horrible—namely, the province of Bulgaria, where a rising of no great account had been made the pretext by the Turkish Government of sending into the country not only its regular troops—and they were, I am sorry to say, sufficiently disgraced by what occurred—but along with them others who were not under the discipline or partial discipline of regular troops, known by the name of Bashi-Bazouks—a general name which covered a sort of tumultuary force totally exempt from all restraints of humanity, decency, moderation in any form, and given over to the dominion of the most horrible passions and excesses of lust and cruelty. That was the state of things, gentlemen, which we all agreed in viewing with horror. The question was, how was it to be dealt with? I shall place before you two policies—one the policy of the present Government, which was pursued, and the other the policy recommended by the opponents of the present Government, and especially, perhaps I may say, recommended by myself, on whom, at a given moment, it devolved—some say, from the most corrupt and wicked motives, but with that I won't trouble you nor myself—at a given moment it devolved upon me to endeavour to stir up the mind of the people of this country with regard to the condition of Bulgaria, and to indicate to them the course which ought to be pursued, both with the view to the general tranquillity, and in order to maintain the honour, character, and interests of our own country.

The two policies.

The policy contended for by the Liberals.

Now, I will point out to you first, the policy which I contended ought to have been pursued. The Powers of Europe in the course of 1876 had shown a great and general desire to meet the necessities of the case in the East, to stop the excesses and abuses which had led to the rebellions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and likewise to take effectual securities against the repetition of those horrors—and no weaker word is in the slightest degree adequate to the case—those horrors which have covered with everlasting infamy the name of the

Turks in Bulgaria. The Powers of Europe, I say, were disposed to act in concert together; they had shown themselves, by framing various documents, and proposing to present them to the Turkish Government, and not only proposing to present them, but to signify to the Turkish Government that if the Turkish Government did not act upon them, further measures would be taken—in fact, they had indicated very distinctly their intention to say to the Turkish Government, ‘You *must*.’ That is one word, an intelligible word, and carries with it a good deal. The Turk knows what it means as well as anybody else, and he is not so destitute of sense that when a case is presented to him clearly he cannot appreciate the consequences, and judge what the necessities of the case require. Now, what I presumed at that time to teach, and what was very generally and largely taken up by the people of the country at the time, and by the Liberal party, but not by the Liberal party exclusively—at that time was this, that what is called autonomy—self-government, practical self-government—ought to be given to those provinces—to two of them in which the Turkish Government had shown its inability to put down rebellion; and to the third, in which the horrors perpetrated upon the unfortunate population had left behind them memories absolutely indelible, and memories of such a character as to render it totally impossible that the powers of government could ever be exercised with satisfaction or with the chance of bringing tranquillity within those limits by the Turks. It did not imply that what is called the integrity of the Turkish Empire was to be impaired, so moderate was the policy which was recommended. The Sultan might have remained as the head of the Empire containing these provinces. He might have received from them by arrangement, effected under the sanction of Europe, most liberal contributions towards the expenses of his Government; but the essential part of it was this, that the people should have, not the management of the affairs of the Turkish Empire, but the

management of their own local affairs—that when they knew what they were to pay they should themselves raise it and themselves pay it—that they should themselves regulate their own police, instead of having the corrupt police, who were worse than bandits, of the Turkish Government distributed over their country—that they should themselves, in the main, appoint their own magistrates and their own governors, instead of having among them a set of men who existed there only to violate laws which were their business to maintain, and to indulge passions and lusts in themselves which it was their duty to punish in other people. Local self-government was what was asked for these provinces. It was not the first time it had been conferred in the Turkish Empire. What were called the Danubian Principalities, now united in the State of Roumania, and, again, the Principality of Servia, had earned this privilege for themselves, and had prospered, thriven under it—given no trouble to Europe, had become the seat of contentment and tranquillity simply by the granting of this concession. We contended that if Europe—united Europe—told Turkey you must act up to this point; you must give to Bulgaria, to Bosnia, to Herzegovina what you have given to Servia, what you have given to Roumania, that the Turk would have done it. And why do I say that? There are those who say, Oh no, the Turk would have resisted, and would have raised a most bloody war. That is nonsense; that is pure nonsense. And I will tell you why I say so. Because there is not a case upon record, in which united Europe having made up its mind to tell the Sultan of Turkey what must be done, in which the Sultan of Turkey has not had the good sense to do it. Why, see what power, what command we had over the condition of Turkey. In the first place, Turkey was an empire dependent for, I think I may safely say, three-fourths at the very least of her soldiery upon Asia; we had only to say no troops, no guns, no munitions of war shall pass by sea between Asia and Europe in order to

reduce the Turkish Government to terms, if indeed she had ever carried it to that length—which she never would have done. Well, you tell me, Oh, but the Turks had a very good fleet, and could have made resistance by sea. Yes, gentlemen, the Turks had a good fleet—a fleet built and equipped with the money obtained in the Western countries of Europe, on which she does not pay a shilling of interest; she had a good fleet; but how was that fleet navigated? who were her engineers? who were the men that worked the machinery of her ships? They were Englishmen and Scotchmen, and the Queen had only to issue the proclamation requiring all those Englishmen and Scotchmen to quit their employment—in order to make it unlawful for them to continue—in order to bring every one of them out of the Turkish fleet, and to leave the Turkish fleet water-logged upon the sea. And therefore, gentlemen, the fact is this—never were the means of peaceful and bloodless coercion so fully and indisputably in the hands of any Power, or collection of Powers, as were then in the hands of the European Powers applicable against Turkey, had Turkey been obstinately determined to persist.

Now, therefore, remember that was the policy, and see what Turkey would have lost. Turkey would undoubtedly have lost the power of appointing pashas and governors and policemen in those three provinces. Instead of perpetuating danger, bloodshed, disquiet, and disgrace, she would have had peaceful relations with them—she would have had relations of respect and relations of goodwill. Ceasing to suffer from her, they would have ceased to entertain hostile sentiments to her, and, in fact, although giving up a portion of the despotic power which she might abuse, she would have retained all that was valuable to her, and would have made the populations of those provinces feel that to be under the Sultan was to give them a kind of shelter for the growth of their local and practical liberties, so that every man might live in peace upon his own land under his own roof-tree, enjoying the admirable soil and

*Consequences
of this policy
to Turkey.*

the blessed climate with which it has pleased Providence to endow those countries. That was the prospect opened to Turkey by the policy that was then recommended. What would have been the consequence of that policy so far as Russia was concerned? Simply this, that Russia would have acted as one of the six Powers of Europe; that, great as would have been the boon conceded to the populations of the three provinces, they would have received that boon from the hands of the six Powers without distinction. Whatever gratitude they felt, whatever sentiments of dependence might be in them, would have been a sentiment directing itself towards those six Powers alike. Russia, as Russia, would have gained nothing by the transaction; Turkey, as Turkey, would have avoided the terrible loss she has incurred.

*Consequences
of this policy
to Russia.*

*The policy
adopted by
the Tories.*

Now let us recollect what happened. This policy which I have described to you was discarded with contempt as a visionary scheme invented by the enemies of Turkey, and so the 'friends of Turkey' got the upper hand, and what did the 'friends of Turkey' do? They stood by and they encouraged her by side-long representations given by ambassadors in Constantinople. I believe notwithstanding the declarations, which, I have no doubt, were perfectly honest—the declarations of Lord Derby, that they would give no support to Turkey, no physical support to Turkey, Sir Henry Elliot, and after him Sir Austin Layard, were insinuating into the minds of the Turks that our whole interests were so bound up with Turkey that interfere we must. So we encouraged her to rush into that terrible war with Russia. Now, as I told you, the 'friends of Turkey,' as they called themselves, had the upper hand, and what have they done for her, and what are the proofs of friendship they have left her? Why, they have left her mangled and mutilated, bleeding, disturbed, invaded on every side, with the Powers of Europe now, under the Treaty of Berlin, all entitled to interfere in the concerns of Turkey between the Sultan and his subjects. They have left her

deprived of all those three provinces that I have described— that is to say, deprived of what would have been taken from her under the other policy. But that is not all. She has lost six millions of people—ay, seven millions of people in Roumania, and in Servia, and in Montenegro, over whom she claimed sovereignty, are completely separated from her as much as we are. That is one of the results the friends of Turkey brought about for her. The Roumanians and Servians used to pay tribute to Turkey, and nobody proposed to interfere with it; but the friends of Turkey managed it in such a manner that now those countries are free. It is admitted on all hands that never was Turkey reduced to so miserable a state of weakness; so that when we compare the two policies, I do not think anybody can doubt for a moment, or will presume to argue, that the policy actually pursued has not turned out—as was foreseen—infinately worse for Turkey than the policy which was recommended in the autumn of 1876.

But I have still to draw your attention to the other subject—the aggrandizement of Russia. We have not yet looked at the matter from that point of view. Now, recollect—as I pointed out to you plainly, and as I think indisputably—that if the Powers in 1876 had acted together, and had together obtained from Turkey certain boons for the inhabitants of those three provinces, while the concessions of Turkey would have been limited, the boon would have been given by the six Powers of Europe, not by one of them in particular. But that concert of Europe was broken up, and Russia found herself in the condition of considering whether she should make solitary war upon Turkey or not. It is not for me to decide whether Russia was right or wrong in making that war. She did make war upon her own responsibility, not upon mine—she made the war, and you know the result of it. Now, I wish to point out to you that by the result of that war Russia has obtained a great aggrandizement. I admit she has obtained it at the cost of suffering. If it is any

*Its actual
consequences
to Turkey.*

*The aggran-
dizement of
Russia.*

satisfaction to you to think that probably 100,000 or 150,000 Russians bit the dust in the course of that war, of the population of 80,000,000 belonging to that Empire, that satisfaction may be enjoyed. But I do not imagine any one will say that. In every other point of view, Russia has obtained great and serious aggrandizement. In the first place, she has so completely conquered the military power of Turkey that it is hardly possible, in the nature of things, that Turkey should ever make another serious military struggle against her. In the second place, Russia has obtained military fame by that war, the amount of which no man can reasonably undervalue. The crossing of the Balkan mountains in the middle of winter by the Russian army was probably the most extraordinary military operation performed in the world since the time of the Great Napoleon, and it is the performance of those great military operations, gentlemen, with success that tends undoubtedly very much to enhance the military reputation of a Power. We gave Russia the opportunity of obtaining that enhancement of military reputation; but that was not all. We have also given her territory. Russia has got territory now that she did not possess in 1876—territory which has brought her again to the bank of the Danube—it having been from the first one of the main objects of the Crimean war to drive her back from the bank of the Danube. At the time of the Crimean war, it was felt that the presence of Russia on the Danube enabled her to interfere with the navigation of the river, in which she could scarcely be said to have a legitimate interest, while Austria and the upper countries had the most vital interest in that navigation. Russia was then driven back, and the part of Bessarabia which bordered on the Danube was taken from her. That part of Bessarabia has been given back to her. I ask whether that is not the aggrandizement of Russia? I ask to whom is due that aggrandizement? I ask, is it due to the men who in 1876 wanted to settle this Turkish

In military reputation.

In territory.

question without giving to Russia any opportunity of acquiring upon any pretence one inch of territory; or is it due to the men who rejected that settlement, and who negotiated with Russia upon this subject, and who, by what was called the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum, undertook on the part of England that if, when they came to the Congress of Berlin, they could not by their eloquence convince the Russians and induce them to give up their claim, they would support that claim and seal that conquest, and hand back from freedom and free institutions that portion of Bessarabia *Bessarabia.* to be placed under the despotic Government of Russia? Why, gentlemen, that concession I view with indignation. I have not known any deeper disgrace upon the name of England in all my life—I have known nothing, I think, to match with it for a moment—than this, that the Foreign Secretary of England, in the dark, meets the Ambassador of Russia, and agrees with him that at the Congress of Berlin, in a certain event; he will be ready to announce the adhesion of England to this plan, under which a free country is to be made part of the subjects of a despotism, and England is to be the main agency in bringing it about. And that is the policy which you are called on to sanction and support by sending back to Parliament that majority by whose active approval this policy has first of all been made practicable, and has subsequently been supported and approved. Well, further aggrandizement of Russia I won't dwell upon so much, and for this reason, that I won't say that it moves my indignation in the same way, but it was aggrandizement of Russia. The port of Batoum in the Black Sea, the fortress of Kars in *Batoum and Kars.* Armenia, other fortresses in Armenia, and a considerable portion of Armenia were in the same manner secured to *Armenia.* Russia as the results of this war, which we left to Russia the opportunity to make because we refused to act in concert with the rest of the Powers of Europe in telling Turkey what she must do. The Armenians probably are better as

regards the primary conditions of life—they are probably better governed now than they were under Turkey, and therefore I do not speak of that as a great calamity or a great mischief, handing over that territory to Russia. But I speak of it as an aggrandizement of Russia brought about by the policy of the present Government; and aggrandizement which would have been entirely avoided and kept out of the way if the opposite policy which they rejected had been followed. There is one other aggrandizement more formidable still, and it is this. There are 20 millions of Christians inhabiting European Turkey—what was European Turkey—most of them Slavs, but a large portion of them Roumanians of the Wallachian race—not the Slav race, but living under much the same conditions as the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula.

Now, in my opinion, it is quite right—although I utterly renounce the absurd old woman's jealousy and fears about Russia with which our brave politicians are very often perplexed, yet I think it is quite right that we should regard Russia in the East and towards the Black Sea with jealousy; because I have always said—I do not want to reproach them in particular; but I am quite sure that if England were in that position we should have great inclination to extend ourselves southwards: therefore I think it possible that the Russians may have a similar disposition. Now I am myself deeply anxious, and always have been so, to check that extension by legitimate means—not by violence, but by legitimate means. In my opinion, there is one means of checking it which is legitimate, and which is effectual; and that is, to grant to the inhabitants of these provinces what the Roumanians and the Servians have now got, and what I admit Bulgaria has now got practically—power of self-government; under which, instead of holding life, liberty, property, and everything that is valuable upon earth at the mercy of a lawless superior, they might have the means of securing for themselves the

*The true mode
of checking
Russian
aggrandizement.*

blessing of law and order, and passing their lives in peaceful industry. If you do that, that is the true way to exclude Russia. If you give those people freedom, and the benefits of freedom,—the peace, the order, the prosperity that follow upon the granting of freedom,—and there are no people in the earth more orderly, or better disposed to govern themselves quietly than these—that is the way to make a barrier against despotism. I hope you agree with me in that. Fortresses may be levelled with the ground; treaties may be trodden under foot—the true barrier against despotism is in the human heart and in the human mind. Give to people that inestimable boon of the reasonable liberties which will enable them to secure the main purposes of life, then you may trust them to defend those liberties; and in those people you will have a far more effectual ally against the aggressive tendencies of Russia, of Austria, or of anybody else, than in all the treaties and all the fortresses in the world. But what have we done? We left those people to their fate. After the horrors that were enacted in Bulgaria, we allowed the Bulgarians to understand that we were willing to write on their behalf any number of idle remonstrances, but that to use the peremptory language which united Europe was justified in using was a course we could not join in, and, on the contrary, that we disapproved of it. That being so, we left to Russia the place of the saviour and deliverer. Russia stepped into that place, and by stepping into it, achieved, at great cost to herself, the deliverance of those provinces; and, you cannot conceal it from yourselves, she has won the affections of those provinces. The name of our free country has become odious in those provinces. For them it is associated with the maintenance of tyranny. Its character has been belied; it has been presented to them under false colours; it has not earned, and it did not deserve to earn, the smallest jot or tittle of their gratitude; but you left it to Russia to attract to her the affections of the people of those provinces. And then those

who have done it are not ashamed to cast upon their opponents, whose policy would entirely have prevented it, the charge of aggrandizing the Russians. One moment more, gentlemen; there is a story—I hope I shall be able to convey my meaning clearly—there is a story curious in politics. In the time Lord Palmerston directed the foreign policy of this country, there grew up a very small sect of men, several of them clever, but known very much by the name of their leader—Mr. Urquhart. They were called Urquhartites; and their favourite doctrine was this, that Lord Palmerston had been bribed by Russia to support and promote the interests of that Empire. I do not know if you remember it. It is now thirty years ago since that story was in vogue, but I refer to it as a historical fact well known at the time—that Lord Palmerston, forsooth, had been bribed to support and promote the interests of Russia! Now, that story was characterized by two qualities—first, it was false; secondly, it was absurd. But supposing the same story were to be invented and circulated against the present Government, I tell you what I should say: It was just as false as in the case of Lord Palmerston, but it was by no means so absurd, because, whereas the motives, I have no doubt, on both sides were English and patriotic motives, the results were totally different. When Lord Palmerston had an object in view, he knew how to go about it; and the acts of Lord Palmerston resulted in the repression, and not in the aggrandizement of the Empire of Russia; and therefore this story with regard to him was not only false, but it carried the proof of its falseness on the face of it. If it were said of the present Government it would be no less false,—just as false as with reference to Lord Palmerston,—but on the face of it there would be rather some presumptions of its truth; and I recommend those who are very jealous of Russia,—and I don't deny that jealousy of Russia is a principle which, within the limits of justice and fairness, ought to be entertained,—I recommend those who

are very jealous of Russia just to consider in what manner they will set about framing an argument to disprove the allegation that I have made that the policy of the Government has ended in the aggrandizement of Russia.

I read yesterday a short passage in the last volume of the *Life of the Prince Consort* that has just now come into the hands of the public, which runs as follows. He writes it in 1860, at a time when great uneasiness had been excited with respect to France on account of her plans for the annexation of Savoy, and the Prince Consort is speaking of this uneasiness—his words are these: ‘I cannot, however, say that any other Power is trusted, or that they mutually trust each other; and this will continue to be the case so long as no common accord is established, and that is only to be achieved under the guidance and fostering care of England.’ Those words of the Prince Consort are, in my judgment, most true and most wise words. Their substance consists in these two principles—first of all, that our main hope for putting down disturbances, aggrandizements, and selfish schemes in Europe depends upon maintaining the ‘common accord,’ or what is commonly called *The ‘common accord’ of Europe.* the concert of Europe; and, secondly, that the high office of bringing Europe into concert, and keeping Europe in concert, is an office specially pointed out for our country to perform. But why is it pointed out for our country to perform—why is it that we should hope so far to disarm jealousy, so far to inspire confidence into the general mind of Europe, as to induce the inhabitants and Governments of the various European countries to accord to us a kind of moral leadership, a kind of precedence, in working for the general good,—the power of marshalling the other States for ends and aims beneficial to them all? Why are they to accord to us that advantage? Gentlemen, they never will accord to us that *The duty of Great Britain.* advantage until they see that we are free from selfish aims in Europe; and when I speak of Europe, I speak of the whole of the European quarter of the world, including the Mediterranean.

That freedom from selfish aims in Europe has usually been accorded—we have usually had credit given to us for it by the other nations of the Continent. The happy conditions in which we live as an island, large enough for power, but safe from territorial contact with those States, and therefore under no fears of suffering mischief from them, and tempted by no hopes to do them mischief,—that happy condition, so long as we are believed to be disinterested in Europe, secures for us the noblest part that any Power was ever called upon to play—a part far lifted above all selfish aims and objects—a part blessed in its origin, worthy of our Christianity, worthy of our religion, bearing upon it the stamp of that religion, for it is the work of peace and the work of goodwill among men. But how can that part be performed by a Power which pursues selfish aims in the dark?—nay, which in domestic politics founds its title, as the party in power found their title to approbation upon having pursued these selfish aims, and having realized their results? I understand and I believe much has been done to encourage that absurd idea. About two years ago a notion widely prevailed that Her Majesty's Government by their schemes had secured to this country the ultimate domination of Asia Minor, and they showed that they had got for us the worthless dominion of Cyprus. But these are selfish aims, and the Power that entertains and prosecutes these aims must for ever renounce and forswear all hope of rising to the noble function that the Prince Consort pointed out for them—the bringing about the 'common accord' of Europe, embodying in one organ the voice of civilised mankind in the acting and fostering care of England.

Now, gentlemen, I hope I have presented to you, with clearness and plainness of speech, what I mean. These are the deep convictions of my heart. My duty is done when I have laid them before you. It is for you, the electors of the country, in your several constituencies, to judge in this great issue; and I trust, in the name of your duty to God, and in

the name of your duty to men, that you will, in exercising that judgment, cast aside every human and personal respect, and recollecting the high position of your country, and that you must either rise to great destinies or else disgrace yourselves by falling short of them, that you will endeavour to raise up your motives to the elevation which the case demands, and will be enabled to impress upon the policy of this country that regard to faith and honour, to peace and justice, to liberty throughout the world, which is the noblest characteristic that can attach to the honoured and historic name of the race to which you belong.

XI.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1880.

SPEECH AT GOREBRIDGE.

MR. GLADSTONE addressed the electors and non-electors of the district at Gorebridge. Mr. D. J. Macfie of Borthwick Hall was called to the chair.

Mr. Gladstone, who was received with hearty cheers, said:—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—Addressing myself in the first instance to that portion of the human race among whom the chairman believes that we are weakest, I must say that I, at least, have no reason to complain of the treatment that I have received from the ladies of Midlothian generally, or from the ladies of this particular place. I have been crowned by them with gifts of flowers, which I accept as a sign of their kindness, and as an omen of what is to come. Mr. Chairman, you have spoken of the protection afforded by the law of secret voting; but for my part I do not believe that intimidation, as practised by the ladies, would have been so formidable as to render that secret voting necessary. In fact, I am afraid that, secret voting or no secret voting, the ladies will contrive in some way or other to discover the intentions of their husbands or brothers; and I am not at all afraid of the result. Nowhere have I received more cordial and enthusiastic support than from the ladies of Midlothian. But, sir, you have spoken of the protection generally afforded, and undoubtedly I am very glad that that protection exists. It appears to me that, whether from a system of personal visits or whether from a system of personal questioning, there

is more attempt made in Scotland to reduce secret voting to a nullity than is commonly made in England. It is in constituencies of moderate magnitude like this that such a process may best be carried on, and it does appear to me that it is carried on with considerable energy. There is a degree of pressure, there is an amount of questioning, which makes it extremely difficult for an elector to withhold the communication of his intentions. Now, the principle of the law of secret voting is this, that the elector is entitled to make known his intentions if he likes, but he is also entitled to keep it to himself if he likes. As you recollect, there was a time not very long ago when the law relative to undue solicitation brought to bear by the workmen belonging to trade unions upon those who are not inclined to go with the union was investigated and considered; and it was held to be an offence, though no violence was used—it was held to be an offence against the law of the land if, by constant solicitation, by following about, and by indirect communication, their conduct was attempted to be influenced. And I must say that when I hear of the pressure brought to bear upon many to lead them to disclose their vote, I begin to think that after all there is no inconsiderable resemblance between the Tories and the abuses—not the reality, or the essence, but between the Tories and the abuses that have sometimes been practised by injudicious members of trade unions. However, I believe in the sufficiency of that protection which is afforded by the law, and which, I need not remind you, you do not owe to those who are now so assiduous in paying you personal visits. The Tory party and the House of Lords did its best to defeat the effort of the late Government to grant to the electors the protection of secret voting; and not only did they oppose that law by direct means, but by indirect means, when it was thrown out of the House of Lords at the close of the session of 1870, upon the poor, thin, paltry pretext that they had no time to consider it, when anybody who watches the proceedings of

Attempts made to nullify the benefits of the ballot.

the House of Lords must be perfectly aware of this, that while the House of Commons frequently spend many days, ay, and sometimes even many weeks, in examining and determining the details of a bill, the measure, be it what it may, may pass through the Committee of the House of Lords in the course of a single evening.

The spontaneous invitation to contest Midlothian.

You receive me here, as indeed I have been received elsewhere, with a warmth of kindness which is very significant of the state of things at present existing amongst us. The truth is, that it is your reception and those manifestations which have been undeniably made by the population of the county at large that constitute the promised pledge to carry through this election to a successful issue. You are aware that I am not here in consequence of any endeavour or action of my own. It would have been presumption on my part—it would have been officious impertinence had I dreamed of coming within the confines of the county on the score of my own wish or of my own merits. I am here as your instrument—your chosen instrument—for giving effect to your principles and your desires. You may have formed your judgment in part upon what you have heard from me during the election, but you had formed it in the main before you invited me to come here. You are aware that it was by the united action of your party that I was invited; and it was remembering that united action, and ascertaining as best I could—I thought it very sufficiently done by myself and through judicious friends—what the strength of your party was, that I obeyed the invitation. I saw on your part the evidence of a determination which was sufficient for me; and upon every day and on every occasion that I have met portions of the constituency, or that I have traversed districts of the county, that evidence has been multiplied and accumulated upon me. And while I may say, on the one side, that after the manifestations we have made, we should be in a position almost ridiculous if you failed to carry this election, on the other

hand, I will say that I do not think it necessary to take that contingency into view, because the most conclusive indications that reach me from every quarter convince me that carried it will be. And now I will tell you—for it is matter, I think, of general interest—that I never have been more struck than by the indications of the last ten or fourteen days,—not in Midlothian, but beyond its precincts. In Midlothian the enthusiasm of the community at large had risen to such a point in November last that it could hardly be surpassed. If anything could surpass it, it has been surpassed on the present occasion; but in the country at large, and south of the Tweed, there were no certain or uniform evidences of such enthusiasm. But I assure you that day after day, and increasingly upon each successive day, the proofs that reach me from the whole country of the growing vigour and determination of the Liberal movement are such as fill my heart with joy and satisfaction. A very large correspondence—too large, I am sorry to say, for me to treat every individual correspondent with the full respect that he deserves—a very large correspondence serves to me for a very trustworthy notice of the state of public feeling; and this very day I have had from more than twenty constituencies assurances of this progressive state of Liberal determination and Liberal enthusiasm. The strongest and most remarkable proof of all is this, that I have found Liberal candidates coming forward even in those districts of England, and especially in some of the small boroughs of England, which had been thought to be virtually close boroughs,—such, for example, as the little town of Stamford, which I think has once before this provided a seat for a Lord Advocate, who could not get any burgh in Scotland to return him. Even these inaccessible fortresses of Toryism are being vigorously assailed, and assurances grow day after day that there is good hope of storming them. I must speak the truth to you, and I must confess that I am sorry that, notwithstanding this great outburst of enthusiasm, we have not in all quarters, although

The signs everywhere of the growth of the Liberal movement.

A reference to Stamford.

we have in a great many, made that progress which is desirable in the prudence which is the better part of valour, in the discretion without which enthusiasm won't always avail. There are, I grieve to say—I will even go a little farther, and use the expression that I blush to say—that even in Scotland there are cases where there are more Liberal candidates standing than there are seats to be bestowed.

*The want of
Liberal union
in 1874.*

In the last Parliament, where the present Administration had a majority of fifty, it is a positive fact that about one-half, or very close upon one-half, of that majority was given to them by members who were returned by minorities of the different constituencies. How was it, you will say, that minorities of the constituencies were allowed to return Conservative members where the majorities of the constituencies were Liberal? The explanation is the simplest in the world. There was a Liberal majority in the constituency; but as with a knife two candidates coming forward cut that majority into two, and these two, when it was cut in half, were both of them minorities; therefore the larger minorities, prevailing over the smaller minorities, furnished Her Majesty's Government with one-half of that firmly-disciplined phalanx which has been supporting them in all their proceedings, and which now stands for trial individually at your bar. This knocking together of our own heads one against another is a process utterly deplorable. In vain do we talk of progress and superior light, if we have not yet learned the elementary rules by which men of sense, having a certain end in view, adapt their means to the attainment of that end. Not only do we carry over to our opponents advantages to which they have no fair claim,—at least no fair claim till we give it them by our own folly,—but we make ourselves ridiculous in the sight of the world. We behave like children, except that we are in appearance full-grown men, when those follies are committed. Even now in some very sound portions of the metropolis, and particularly in the borough of Lambeth, which, I believe, has

never yet returned a Tory member, and which, therefore, may vie with your Scotch town constituencies—even now there is an attempt made, by running a greater number of Liberals than there are seats to be occupied, to make what in navigation is called a kind of lubber's hole through which a Tory may illegitimately creep in. I have been reading an admirable letter of our patriotic friend Mr. John Bright, who, in his manly, straightforward tone, casting aside all reserve, brands the men who make those divisions among us, and thereby expose at once the interests of the country and our own character for even a decent share of common sense, and says they should be men marked among the Liberal party as those who lifted their hands against it, and inflicted upon it a most cruel injury.

Now, having said that, and having laid down to you what some of the constituencies—some few of the constituencies—do not appear to have yet sufficiently learned, though I greatly hope that they will learn it between this time and the day of the polling, let me go one step farther, and say that I am very far from holding that in the choice of a Liberal candidate, or in assuming a man to rank as a Liberal candidate, we should insist upon his agreeing with our own views of things. That is another error into which we Liberals are too apt to fall. It is incidental to the character of our party and our principles to feel very keenly upon public subjects, and in feeling very keenly upon them, not always to preserve the balance of their relative importance—to exact sometimes too much attachment to this or to that particular aim; and in the really beneficent and philanthropic anxiety to gain that particular aim, to forget the importance of the general aim, which is what we ought, especially on this occasion, to keep in view. Now, for my part, it appears to me that though the number of questions for consideration at the present time is more extended than I have ever known it, and though these questions are more diversified, and some of

*The broad issue
to be kept
always in view.*

them by no means easy in their nature, they all run up into one question; and my effort for, I may say, years, has been to impress that doctrine, and to make it intelligible, that in one question they are all gathered and summed up, namely, the question whether you do or do not approve the method in which the country has been governed,—whether, looking to the course of the country's legislation, looking to its finance, looking to its taxes, looking to its credit abroad as well as its expenditure at home, looking above all to the part which this country has taken under the present Administration in opposing the interests of liberty abroad and in supporting the interests of arbitrary power, you are or are not satisfied with that method of government; and therefore, gentlemen, I for one, so far as I have ever been called upon to advise my fellow-countrymen, or have any title to do so in any part of the country, have done that which I know it is not necessary to do here. But you are not here for a merely local election. You are here for the assertion of great principles in a manner which shall strike the whole of Scotland and the whole of these islands; and therefore I am not ashamed to speak to you of weaknesses which you do not feel, and to offer to you admonitions which personally you do not require. But to others I have ventured to say, this question is one whether you approve, or do not approve, the manner in which the country has been governed at home, and in its interests and relations abroad; so I mean to inquire,—not what the sentiments of candidates are upon this or that secondary matter,—but are they disposed to change the method in which the country has been governed, by the only mode effectual for the purpose, namely, changing the men by whom it is carried on? As my desire and hope, gentlemen, has always been to close, if I could, my severe labours with this great occasion, I may make that recommendation with greater disinterestedness, perhaps, than many might do whose age and whose unexhausted strength warrant them in looking

forward, like Lord Hartington, to a long and distinguished career of service. I give you an example. The other day, in passing through Newcastle-on-Tyne,—where there has been some dissension among the Liberal party in consequence of a course deemed peculiar that was pursued by Mr. Cowen, one of its members,—being called upon to say a few words to that constituency, I took occasion to express my great regret that Mr. Cowen, a very able gentleman, and a gentleman of unimpeached character, who some years ago was pleased to express a full and rather peculiar confidence in myself as well as Mr. John Bright, had latterly seen cause to withdraw that confidence, and, I believe, to deliver severe criticisms and censures upon my conduct. But I said to his fellow-citizens at Newcastle: Don't allow that to influence you for a moment; look simply at the question whether he is at this moment, and for the Parliament that is coming, heartily along with you in the Liberal cause; whether he is prepared to change the Government of the country with a view to placing power in the hands of men more alive to what we think its true interests and its true honour; and, not regarding what he thinks of me, or what he thinks of persons more important than myself, support him, and support him heartily, and send him back to Parliament to pursue the larger interest of his country. Now, that is the mode in which, speaking generally, I think that, as practical men, we ought to view the present crisis.

And now, if you will allow me, I will advert to certain matters which have been brought before us, which come materially before me, in the course of our proceedings in Midlothian. Not all of those matters, because I am going elsewhere this afternoon to enter upon the consideration of various important questions affecting the farming class of this country; but here is a question which has been proposed to me, with perfect single-mindedness, I have no doubt, by various gentlemen among my correspondents. They have said that in 1874, when I held the joint-offices of First Lord of the

Treasury and of Chancellor of the Exchequer, I issued an address in which I recommended the country strongly to return a Parliament which would effect what I thought a gigantic,—that word savours too much of affectation,—a very extensive, I would say, and a very valuable financial reform, in parting with the Income-tax. The occasions are rare when that recommendation can be made. I won't now enter into the grounds of it in detail, but I will tell you in the fewest possible words what some of them were. One of them was that the Income-tax entails upon those who pay it, and especially upon the less wealthy of those who pay it, an enormous amount both of vexation and of inquisition, and of actual loss in the shape of time and trouble, which do nothing for the Treasury, but form a serious burden on the payers of the tax. Another strong reason for desiring to have it abolished, is that it is full of what I call conscience traps. It is continually soliciting men to refrain from stating the whole truth, to make claims in excess of what is just, or to withhold the full statement of liabilities which the letter and spirit of the law would require. I won't enter into detail; but many cases of that kind—and I must say, not among the lowest range of the payers of Income-tax, but very often among persons of considerable wealth and property—have been explained at various times; and it is known that the Income-tax solicits, as it were, the moral sense of each man to deviate somewhat from the truth for his own pecuniary advantage; and when that solicitation is addressed to large numbers of men, it is to be feared that many of them may be tempted to deviate somewhat from a strict integrity. But there is a particular reason which I am extremely desirous to make understood by the people of this country, and which I do not think they at present understand so well as it must and ought to be understood by one who, like myself, has had long and close experience of the working of our financial system. I think it very possible that most of you, or that nearly all,

*The abolition
of the Income-
tax.*

or perhaps absolutely all of you, are of the opinion, which I certainly for one am inclined to hold, that the expenditure of this country has for years past been unnecessarily large. I do not say that it is possible now, with the extended wants of the country and its immense population, to go back to the moderate scale of expenditure which was in force thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. But I do say this, that there has been a tendency to undue and to unnecessary profuseness in dealing with the proceeds of those taxes which are taken from the pockets of the people, and the levying of which goes to abridge the comforts—ay, in many cases the necessary comforts, I may say—of human life. That, in my view, gentlemen, is a very great evil. I am one of those who agree with Mr. Cobden in one of the many useful sayings which that eminent and admirable man delivered for the benefit of his fellow-men. It was this, that public economy was public virtue. That it was not merely the saving of so many pounds, shillings, and pence,—and don't by any means suppose he was so irrational as to say that all public virtue was summed up in it,—no, but that public economy was closely associated with public virtue; and that if you wanted to have a full and healthy tone in the public health of the country, a perfect integrity and absolute superiority to all except public principles in the motives of those who carry it on, it is very difficult to have that unless in a state of things in which public economy is highly prized and carefully and faithfully followed. Now, I tell you, as a practical matter in dealing with finance, that nothing has done so much to enlarge the expenditure of this country as the existence of an Income-tax, and the facility with which, upon causes comparatively slight, that Income-tax could at any time be raised. We left the country in 1874 in a condition in which the Income-tax, which was then 3d. in the pound, might have been entirely abolished. Undoubtedly it would have been absolutely necessary to have considered the case of those who did not pay the Income-tax, and we

*Public economy
is public
virtue.*

were prepared to make great changes in our fiscal system for their benefit also. But observe what has happened. The present Government came into office; they had six millions to dispose of—a prospective surplus of six millions; they were compelled to do something with the Income-tax with that money we handed over to them; they reduced the Income-tax to 2d. What has happened since? They have raised it to 5d. in the pound. Ay, gentlemen, and if Lord Dalkeith and the members of the majority who have done all these things, and have sanctioned all the worst deeds of the Government, are returned again to Parliament, and another six years of such proceedings are witnessed, the Income-tax won't stop at 5d. in the pound, but will ascend higher by one of those turns of the screw which are so easily administered to that very powerful financial engine. And not the Income-tax alone, but in other forms likewise—both the personal property of the country will be greatly affected, as it is at this moment being affected by a bill which, I believe, on this very day will, most improperly and illegitimately, become the law of the land in relation to the Probate Duty, and affecting every one of you who leaves behind him at his death anything in value more than £100; and not only so, but likewise in regard to articles of consumption, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer some time ago thought it necessary—and it was necessary, with his scale of charges—to increase the tax upon tobacco; so likewise in other articles of consumption, with this policy that has prevailed, with this disposition to vaunt and brag, and make military displays most needlessly and mischievously in various quarters of the globe, and to multiply the quarrels of the country; if you like to revive the commission given to that majority, and send them again to work their will for another six years, you must be prepared to see the cost of such a policy assert itself in the shape of augmented taxation.

*The position
of our finances
in 1874 was
very different.*

But my friends who have written to me say: You promised in 1874 to repeal the Income-tax. I did promise; and would

have done it, and other taxes with it—we were in a condition to do so. But they say, If the Liberal party comes into power again, will you call upon them to do it? No, I won't, gentlemen; I certainly won't. It required a margin of six millions to the good to set about the great operation, which would have included, along with other changes, the repeal of the Income-tax. If my friends will give me the six millions to the good, the matter might be entertained. But the majority thought otherwise, and they said I had made a base endeavour to bribe the country. To bribe the country? Well, as I understand bribery, if I were to come—which God forbid—to bribe one of you, a very hopeless undertaking, I should endeavour to do it by taking some of my own money out of my pocket and offering it to you. But in this case of 1874, I offered to the people of the country no money except their own money; and if a method can be invented for bribing men with their own money, my fear is, whether the people like it or not, that this new sort of bribery will multiply in practice very greatly. The people who talk that nonsense show their total ignorance of the history of their own country. What was the first privilege that the people of England and the people of Scotland obtained in the development of constitutional liberty? Why, the A B C of the constitutional liberty of the country consisted in this, that the taxes were not to be levied except with the consent and by the concurrence of the men whom they sent up to Westminster, and again, in Scotland, whom they sent up to Edinburgh to vote these taxes. Therefore, so far from considering myself to be discredited by having, on the occasion of a general election, distinctly laid before the people the merits of a great financial scheme, which would have tended powerfully to the public benefit, I hold that there was no subject so fit and proper, according to constitutional tradition, as well as to sound reason, to be submitted to the judgment of the nation. But, thinking that, I will hold out no false promises. The Income-tax cannot be repealed

after the extravagance of the last six years. The man whom they should ask in Midlothian whether he will repeal the Income-tax is not myself, who have objected to all that extravagance,—it is Lord Dalkeith, who has supported it. Ask him if he will repeal the Income-tax; and ask him what he has done with the six millions that was left in his hands, and which has now vanished into very thin air indeed. No; a time may come possibly again when the Income-tax can be repealed; but it will require a long course of steady application in economy at home, and in the avoidance of unnecessary theatrical and mischievous pretensions abroad, to put you in a position to look for anything of the kind. Forty years ago that would have been an observation without any bearing upon party, because the Conservative party of that day was just as economical as the Liberal party; indeed, I do not know that Sir Robert Peel was not even more economical than the Liberal party of his own day. At that time the whole nation was united in the desire to see the government of the country economically carried on for the benefit of the people. The principle held was, that the taxes were after all money taken out of the honest earnings of the people, and that no money ought to be taken out of the honest earnings of the people except under a strong public necessity. That was the admitted principle of both parties. I am sorry we have become much more lax in the experience of late years; and especially now, so far as the Conservative party generally is concerned, I do not see that you have any hope of public economy from them. Except this, gentlemen,—I have observed it frequently: Your Parliaments, as you know, last, if they run their full natural course, for a good many years—say for six years. Well, during about the first four or five of those years, I find that the tendency of Tory Governments is always greatly to raise the public expenditure. I know not why it is,—perhaps you can tell,—but in the sixth year, or what is believed to be the last year of the Parliament,

suddenly they take an economical turn. Perhaps you may think that is connected with the possibility of an immediate dissolution, so that they may be able to say, 'See in what a sound direction we are travelling.' You will find, if you look at it now, that the estimates they have presented this year are more moderate than those that they have presented in some former years. But what you have to do, is rather to compare them with the estimates as they were at the beginning of the Parliament; and I am sorry to say, if you take the expenditure now and compare it with what it was then, you will find it has undergone a large increase.

I will now pass from that subject; but there is another subject I wish to mention, because I was guilty rather of an omission yesterday, in speaking, at Gilmerton, of the three very important questions which seemed to me perhaps to be likely to have the first claims in the new Parliament, upon the attention, the vigilant attention of any wise and right-minded administration. These three questions were—first, finance; second, the whole of the laws connected with land, both as to the owning of land, the devolution of land, the transfer of land, the occupying and cultivation of land, and the rights of the occupier, and the devastation of land, I may say, by the keeping of game; and the third subject was the very great and important question of local government, into which we want to introduce the effective working of popular and representative principles, by which alone, in my opinion, the question of local rating and the incidence of rates upon the different classes of the people can be permanently dealt with in a satisfactory manner. I mentioned these subjects, and I said there is a fourth subject that I hope will attract very early attention—it is the question of the expenses of elections, which expenses are in many places a great grievance and great scandal; and I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that this dying Parliament, in its last days, has been labouring to increase them, because the prohibition which formerly existed,

The new Act legalizing the conveyance of voters in borough elections.

which I believe till this very day has existed in the law against the conveyance of voters in boroughs to the poll at the expense of candidates, is being repealed by the present Parliament, and, therefore, these expenses are being increased. I mentioned the reduction of this expenditure as a matter of very great public interest, not to candidates, but to those who are to choose candidates, who ought to have the free choice of candidates, and who cannot have the free choice of candidates if they cannot have a candidate without his being subjected, or their being subjected on his behalf, which is much the same thing, to enormous and unreasonable cost in conducting the election. I ought to have mentioned in connection with this what really was in my mind, and it is this. We shall have, I hope, before long an extension of the suffrage. It is, in my judgment, most unreasonable that the very class of men who, if they reside within the limits of Parliamentary burghs, are deemed competent, and have shown themselves to be competent to exercise the suffrage, if they happen to live beyond these limits within the districts of the county, are denied that suffrage, and are excluded from all direct influence upon the policy and government of the country. That subject I only mention without arguing it here. It really requires very little argument. The present inequality is so gross, it is so impossible, I think, to show that the possession of the electoral franchise ought to be determined not upon internal capacity of brain, of heart, of mind, of character, but upon an accident of residence, upon the accident of employment in a town or employment beyond the limits of a town, that I only name the subject in order that it may be understood that I certainly myself conceive that it ought to attract, and I hope will attract, not perhaps the very first, but yet the early attention of the Parliament that is now about to be elected.

The assimilation of the county and burgh suffrage.

Before I close I must speak to you of the extraordinary methods, for really they are most extraordinary methods, that

are adopted on this occasion by many of our opponents. I have been involved, I have had a practical share in no less than eleven general elections anterior to this. I have sat in eleven Parliaments, and now I am a candidate for a seat in a twelfth; and I have been, therefore, in the party contests of all that time; but never have I known a period when carelessness, when ignorance, when gross and culpable neglect, nay, when absolute fabrication was at work to the extent that it is now at work for the purpose of bewildering the minds of the electors. I must solemnly tell you this, that if we, the Liberal candidates of the country, made no allegations, no arguments whatever, advanced no accusations against others, offered no defence or apology for ourselves, but simply left our opponents to place their allegations in your hands, and it was possible for you to give the time and care necessary for examining them, such mines would you open up of concealment, misstatement, garbling, and, as I have said, absolute fabrication, that you yourselves would judge them out of their own mouths, and would say they were not the men of whom Parliament ought to be composed. Here is a curious case that came to my knowledge only this morning. Two or three days ago I was exposing certain portions of the allegations contained in an anonymous advertisement, referring to matters of great public importance, in which I had been concerned. In an anonymous advertisement, published in the *Largs Advertiser*, I found seventeen of these allegations, and I exposed some of the gross untruths and gross misapprehensions that they contained. Well, that was an anonymous advertisement, but to-day I received from a friend—I received from some gentleman, not known to me, but of friendly disposition, a speech of a certain Captain Burnaby, who is a candidate for a division of the county of Leicester; and to my astonishment my friend spoke so strongly of this that I thought I would look at it and see what it was like. Well, I looked at it, and I found that, according

The careless and ignorant statements, and even absolute fabrications of the Tories.

to report, this Captain Burnaby, whether from a lack of brains in his own head or whether from an indisposition to take the necessary trouble to make a speech for himself, read out as the result of his own researches, and as his own deliberate convictions, this list of seventeen allegations, which I had found anonymously published in the *Largs Advertiser*. I think that was a very strange state of things. Many of those things are absolutely untrue, and many of them, where they are not totally untrue, are such as simply to mislead the country. There is one of them which is an allegation of great importance; and that you may understand whether I am justified in what I say or not, and in my disposition to point out the strange conduct of a man seeking a seat in Parliament, who comes before a constituency and reads out as a speech of his own the whole contents of an anonymous advertisement, and founds his claims to the suffrages of those he addresses upon such a basis as that, I am going to read now one of these allegations—one of the best, perhaps, of these allegations. And it is this—‘Mr. Gladstone insulted the House of Lords, and incurred its just censure, in consequence of using the Royal prerogative to carry an Army Bill which has revolutionized the service, and necessitated the appointment of a Royal Commission to put matters on a more satisfactory footing.’ That which here is called an Army Bill was a bill for the abolition of purchase. You are perfectly aware that under the system of purchase the army was the property not of the nation who paid it, but was the property of those gentlemen with long purses who were able to purchase promotion in it; and we introduced a bill, gentlemen, for the purpose of destroying that system, and of taking care that if there was to be an army, it should be an army open to all the subjects of the Crown, where men should be promoted not according as they were rich, not according as they were poor, but according as they had capacity to serve their country. Well, this is not as to the merits of the

*The abolition
of purchase in
the army.*

bill. I need not dwell upon them ; but I will just say this, and I say it to his credit, that Mr. Hardy, who held in this Government the office of Secretary for War, when he became Lord Cranbrook and went to the House of Lords, declared, like a man, that the reforms of Lord Cardwell had immensely improved the condition and the efficiency of the British army. The point which I am going to explain to you is this—‘ Mr. Gladstone,’ it is said, ‘ insulted the House of Lords, and incurred its just censure, in consequence of using the Royal prerogative to carry an Army Bill.’ Gentlemen, what happened was this—we spent in the teeth of the most obstinate opposition, in the teeth of an opposition, I will venture to say, quite as obstructive as any that any Irish member has made use of, we spent one-half of a session, night after night, without any other Government legislative business of great importance, in carrying our Army Bill through the House of Commons. We took it to the House of Lords. The House of Lords introduced a demand upon us that we should tell them at what rate, if our bill was passed, gentlemen would retire from the army. Not having, gentlemen, the gift of prophecy, and not being able to look into the future, we declared our incapacity to see at what rate they would retire. The House of Lords in consequence of that declined to proceed with our Army Bill ; and what, gentlemen, did we do ? It is quite right this matter should be examined, because one of my chief charges against the present Administration is that they have strained the prerogative of the Crown. What did we do, gentlemen ? We used the prerogative of the Crown to put an end to purchase ; and the question is, whether that was straining the prerogative, or whether it was a legitimate use of the prerogative. I think I will give you in a moment the means of judging which of the two it was. The system of purchase was of this peculiar and extraordinary character. It was regulated by law, and the law fixed certain amounts, comparatively small and

*Its true
history.*

moderate amounts, which might be paid for acceding to each of the grades in the service. A man might purchase, for instance, a captaincy for a few hundred pounds, and the office of major for perhaps a couple of hundreds more, and so on. That was the law, and the law strictly and absolutely forbade the giving of one single farthing beyond those sums; and, notwithstanding that law, and notwithstanding, I believe, that there were some very awkward declarations made to me by the authorities about their obeying and adhering to that law—a matter I won't go into—notwithstanding that, along with the regulation price, not once, nor twice, nor twenty times, nor fifty times, but habitually and regularly and ordinarily, and as matter of course, there were paid other sums much larger than the regulation prices, which grievously aggravated the system of purchase, coming very often to three, four, or five times the regulation price, and in absolute breach of the law of the land. When the House of Lords refused to go on with that measure, we had before us this fact, that there had come out in the face of Parliament and of the world this gross, monstrous, habitual violation of the law of the land by the payment of extra regulation prices. We found also that the Queen had a distinct, unquestioned power in her hands, a full legal power, as legal and as unquestioned as her power to dissolve Parliament, by which she could put a stop to purchase; and we put a stop to purchase in order to put an end to those daily and gross and unpardonable offences against the law of the land. We used the prerogative of the Crown for the defence of the law of the land, and if we had not so used it, we should have become parties and accomplices with our eyes open in the continuance of this most mischievous, but above all this grossly illegal practice. And it is for having so vindicated the law, which the House of Lords would not assist us to vindicate, by the use of the unquestioned power given to the Crown by the constitution, that we are told that I insulted the House of Lords by using

the prerogative of the Crown to carry an Army Bill. I think you will say that if upon any occasion the use of the prerogative is justified—and by prerogative I mean the defined, known, and unquestioned prerogative—it was when a practice existed which was in conflict with the law, and which the Crown had power to put down. Now, perhaps you will say—and it would be a very fair question—if you had that right, why did you carry the Army Bill into Parliament at all? why did you not proceed by the power of the Crown originally? I will tell you why we did not proceed by the power of the Crown originally. We might have done it beyond all question. There is no doubt at all about it. But the reason why we did not was because we desired to make Parliament our partner in conferring a great boon upon the country, without pecuniary loss to individual officers of the army. We went to the House of Commons, and we found a majority of the House of Commons most anxious to enter into the matter in that spirit, and to provide the funds. We found a minority, of whom I am sorry to say that Lord Elcho in the neighbouring county was a most prominent and active member—we found a minority undoubtedly opposed to us; still the House of Commons passed our bill. The House of Lords entirely declined to pass our bill, and left us, as I have told you, only with the alternative of either becoming knowingly accomplices in the continuance of this grossly illegal as well as most mischievous practice, or else of using the unquestioned power of the Crown for the purpose of putting a stop to it.

Now, perhaps most of you have heard a good deal about the unity of the Empire; and I have endeavoured to make out that that which has consolidated the unity of the Empire is the Liberal policy. I have shown that in the days of Tory policy you had the American War; and the mode in which the Tories of that time dealt with the unity of the Empire was to drive out of unity with the Empire the American

*'The unity of
the Empire.'*

colonists, who were most anxious to remain as its loyal and affectionate members. The Tories denied them their just liberties, and in consequence they broke this great Empire into twain. But now again the very same party is raising the very same charge. I received this morning, among other telegrams, a telegram which I will now read, and which I have answered. It came from Plymouth. It came from the Rev. William Sherman, 20 Headland Park, Plymouth. I don't know Mr. Sherman, therefore you must take it as you get it; but the nature of the telegram is such that I feel confident it must substantially represent the truth; if it does not, that we shall in due time hear. This is the telegram—'Sir Hardinge Giffard, Solicitor-General, asserted last night in my hearing that, some years ago, you were in favour of giving back Gibraltar, and that you entered into negotiations for its surrender'—this is to sustain the charge of breaking up the unity of the Empire—'If you can spare time to telegraph denial, you will help the Liberal cause in the West.'

*The story about
the cession of
Gibraltar.*

I cannot more concisely state my answer to this than by reading the telegraphic words of my reply. They are these—'Not a syllable of truth in it'—that is the first part of the reply; the second part of it is, 'Call for proof;' and the last part of it is, 'Errors pardonable in private persons are scandalous in Solicitors-General.' Now, I am giving you instances of the sort of weapons which our opponents are using; not, I am bound to say, men like Lord Dalkeith—I am perfectly certain that Lord Dalkeith would view with disgust the use of such weapons, and that he would not soil his fingers by touching these modes of warfare; but I am sorry to say that those with whom he is associated do not appear to be so fastidious. But now, I think, you will a little understand, so far as one or two specimens can convey the truth to you, what I said a few minutes ago, that if we were to hold our tongues, and say nothing at all, but leave it to our opponents to assert what they

pleased, and if you had time to examine their assertions to the bottom, you would judge them out of their own mouths, and would say that the persons who made use of such weapons as these to maintain their cause, were not worthy to be representatives of the people of Great Britain.

XII.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1880.

MEETING AT PATHHEAD.

THIS meeting was held for the parishes of Cranston, Crichton, Fala, and the eastern district of Borthwick.

Viscount Dalrymple having been moved to the chair, briefly introduced Mr. Gladstone, who said :—

Lord Dalrymple and Gentlemen,—I hope that I do not go beyond my proper province on this occasion in commencing what I have to say by tendering a tribute of my cordial thanks to you, my lord, for your great kindness in suspending the arduous labours in which you are engaged for the purpose of lending a helping hand to the efforts of the Liberal constituency of this county. I feel deeply your kindness, and I think that the sentiment of the meeting as it has now been expressed shows that the feeling is shared by all who hear me. And for my part I presume to say that whatever may be the satisfaction and the victory to which we are looking forward in this county, and whatever may be the pleasure with which we may see Scotland in other quarters rousing herself like a giant refreshed with sleep to shake off the incubus of her Tory members, yet I shall feel that pleasure will only be complete if the county of Wigtown shall, as I fervently trust, return your lordship as its member.

It has been signified to me, my lord, that it would be convenient or agreeable to many of those who are assembled here—where I have no doubt that the agricultural pursuits of the county are considerably represented—if I were just to run

over the points interesting to the farmers of Midlothian which have been at various times raised, or that may be raised in the course of our present communication. And I will take them from a paper which presents them succinctly, and thereby I shall, I hope, gratify the wish that has been expressed to me. The first question on which I am desired to say a word or two is whether I was disposed to do my utmost to secure the tenant-farmers compensation for their unexhausted improvements. The law in Scotland, I am sorry to say, remains unamended in that respect. I hope that it will be amended, and I hope it will be amended with an amendment more effectual than that administered in England. When I last spoke I was not quite clear in my recollection as to the case of Scotland in regard to this matter. The bill for England having proved to be what may be called a delusion, I really did not remember whether you agriculturists in Scotland had been treated to a similar delusion or not; but I found there is no such delusion, for nothing at all was done. A bill was introduced, but it was withdrawn—it was not satisfactory either to the landlord or tenant. Undoubtedly I think that there are good reasons why effectual provision ought to be made in this respect. The first is that it is agreeable to the principles of justice that the land being entrusted to the tenant to cultivate, his improvements—not his fanciful or unreasonable or useless measures, but the measures he takes which really improve the soil, add to its value, and make it more efficient for the production of the food of man—these ought to be secured him, and, under the name of unexhausted improvements, what is left in the soil when he quits the land he ought to be compensated for. That is the principle on which we legislated for the tenants in Ireland; and though the Irish Land Act, I am happy to say it, having been adapted to a peculiar state of affairs, does not in all respects form a precedent for Great Britain, yet, undoubtedly, it was framed on the principles of justice, and I hope the law of Scotland

The period of notice to quit.

will in like manner be amended. Well, the next question put to me is this, whether I am disposed to give at least a year's notice to quit, and require a year's notice to quit? Well, in respect to that, I have only to point to my vote on the Agricultural Holdings Bill in England. When a motion was made for the purpose of securing a year's notice to quit in England, I voted for that notice. We did not succeed in carrying it, but that was owing to the present Parliament, and, I am sorry to say, the county of Midlothian, by her representative, contributed to swell the majority against it. I need not say I should act upon the same principle for Scotland as for England, although in Scotland perhaps it is probably of less importance, because there are generally long leases, whereas in England the tenantry generally hold from year to year. My past conduct would be the measure of my future conduct in that respect. The third question is, whether I will vote for the reform of the laws affecting the ownership and transfer of land? Well, this question refers, I imagine, first to the devolution of land—the question of entails and settlements, and secondly, to the transfer of land, a different subject—a subject of greater importance than that of the devolution of land. Now, with regard to the transfer of land, I do not know whether we shall ever arrive at the state of things in which it is said that a landed estate ought to pass with the same facility as a £5 note. As to that, all I can say is this—that in my opinion it will be extremely desirable to arrive at that state of things; and if we cannot arrive at that state of things, then my wish would be to attain to it as nearly as we could. It is quite evident that to give the greatest facility possible for the transfer of land is a great benefit in the first place to the community, and in the second place to the landlord. There is not the smallest doubt that every burden upon the transfer of land is a tax on the landlord, and causes him to receive a smaller price if he sells his land. Besides that, in a country like this the quantity of land is exceed-

Reform in the laws affecting the ownership and transfer of lands.

ingly limited. If I had a wish for my country, if it were possible to hope it could be gratified, it would be the extension of its surface. There has been great growth in the amount of wealth that is in the land, though its distribution might be a little more equal than it is; but I do feel very much the narrowness of the surface of this country, and nothing to me is of more interest than to hear of land being taken back from the sea, that the sea has robbed from us, wherever that is practicable. I do not know any greater benefit that can be conferred on the country than by increasing the quantity of land by such additions as have been made, and as I trust will yet be made in several of the firths and bays of this island. But that being so, I think it is exceedingly desirable, where the land is in itself scarce, that no artificial obstacle should make it more scarce. Freedom of circulation in all commodities has something of the effect of the increase of the quantity of commodities,—that they are accessible has something of the effect of increasing the quantity; and if we cannot increase the quantity of land, we may make it as accessible as we can.

I am also asked if I am in favour of the abolition of the law of distress and hypothec. Well, in reference to the question of distress, that is an English law, and the farmers of England, the occupiers of England, have not, I think, matured their views upon it to the same extent as it has been done in Scotland: therefore I do not think it will be well for me to introduce that subject for discussion here. With respect to hypothec, I think we may consider that there was an actual assent from the representatives of Scotland to the abolition of that special privilege of the landlord—of course leaving the landlord, as he ought to be left, some effectual means of recovering the rent which the tenant has covenanted to pay. I am not here to promise anything, and I am sure none of you are here to ask for anything which would in any manner impair the legal means of giving effect to the just rights of

*The law of
hypothec.*

the landlord in the recovery of his rent; but the special, exceptional privileges injurious to others are privileges which undoubtedly have been condemned by the public voice of Scotland, and which have only been maintained by the votes of the Tory majority in England. The Scotch Tories have been allowed to vote against the law of hypothec in order to conciliate the Scotch constituencies—that has been allowed subject to the perfect knowledge that the Tories in England would come down and neutralize and overpower those Scotch votes; and so the law has been amended under the immediate pressure of the dissolution, but I must say in a way which is hardly compatible with the decencies of deliberate proceedings. Some bill has passed through the House of Commons and through the House of Lords to improve the chances of the Tories in Scotland—that is the history of this method of transacting business. Why was not the law of hypothec allowed to go forward under circumstances in which adequate consideration could be given to its principles? Instead of that, the noble lord the Earl of Redesdale, who is the principal authority upon all matters of order in the House of Lords, has found it necessary, although a Tory, to protest against the proceeding of the Tory Government as one inconsistent with the proprieties and decencies of deliberation. If it is not a good bill it will remain for a better Parliament—I hope it will be a very great deal better than the present

The game laws. Parliament—to make it a good bill. Then I am asked whether I am desirous to obtain for tenant farmers an indefeasible right to kill the ground game on their farms. On that subject I won't detain you. I spoke of it pretty fully at Ratho the other day, and I will only say that I am strongly of opinion that the preservation of ground game has in many cases led to great abuse, that the tenant ought to be provided with an effectual means of keeping ground game down, and as at present advised, I do not see how you can have an effectual means of putting it down unless you give him an

indefeasible right. I am not disposed to be withdrawn from that purpose by the plausible doctrines advanced about freedom of contract by the Tory party. The Tory party are not the natural defenders of the freedom of contract. Freedom is no doubt a fine thing in contract as in everything else; but I do not find the Tory party at all sensible to the beauties and advantages of freedom, except when it happens that the argument is susceptible of being turned in a perverse direction, and when this supposed freedom of contract means the preserving of a state of things in which the landlord can bring undue influence to bear on the tenant, and through the medium of his supposed freedom can make him not really free, and can morally and virtually bring him into covenants which, if he were really free, he never could adopt. I am asked whether I would give compensation for damage by the over preserving of winged game. Well, that is a simple matter. I certainly am of opinion that there should be compensation.

The next question is: Would I support a measure for securing the representation of ratepayers on county governing boards? *Representative county boards.* Gentlemen, there is no question—what shall I say—there is no question upon which I feel greater or more lively interest; and I have already stated, without any question being put to me on the subject, in various meetings with the people of this county, that I look upon this great subject of local government, and of the introduction of the representative principle into the machinery of local government, not only as a thing that ought to be done, but as a very great and important thing that ought to be done; and not only is it a very great and important thing that ought to be done, but undoubtedly it is possessed of one of the very first claims in point of time upon the care and attention of the new Parliament. We endeavoured to introduce the principle into local government in 1870, but, like other men, we were under limitations of time and strength. I appeal to the annals of the late Government to show that we were never idle. We

should have been able to do a great deal more if it had not been for the obstruction that was offered to us by the House of Lords, and by the minority in the House of Commons, upon certain subjects, not upon all—upon some they behaved with very great fairness. We were not able to do all that we wished, and when, for example, it is said, why did we not meet the wants of the Scotch farmers with regard to compensation for improvements, with regard to the law of hypothec? that is simply my apology. My answer to you is, look at the years during which we held office; look at the statutes that we added to the statute-book during these years. All that you ask from workmen is that they shall render you a fair day's work; and I ask you whether we did not always do a fair day's work—ay, and a fair night's work, too. And you may be assured that the same disposition still exists in the Liberal party, the same desire to meet to the best of its power the reasonable wants of the country. One word more. I cannot part from that last subject without speaking of the vote of Lord Elcho on the subject of hypothec. And I am not going to pronounce a censure upon that nobleman. I am sorry Lord Elcho disapproved of the bill for altering the law of hypothec; I am sorry for it, but I respect his manliness in giving a vote agreeable to his conscience. He disapproved of it, and gave his vote bravely, when all the others went right-about-face; and I always, I honestly tell you, have a greater respect for a man who gives an unpopular vote according to his conscience, even though the vote, besides being unpopular, happens to be wrong, than for those gentlemen who, out of mere considerations of political or party necessity, are willing to consent to the passing of a measure, though it may be a good measure, which they do not in their consciences approve. Another point on which I am questioned is, would I endeavour to obtain a fair apportionment of the burdens between landlord and tenant? In my opinion, the way to settle all these questions of local burdens is to do what I have

The apportionment of local burdens between landlord and tenant.

already described. I am not able myself to point out how these questions ought to be settled; but I have faith in the representative principle, and if it is in our power to frame a measure in which the several divisions of the country shall be put under local institutions, thoroughly popular and representative in their character, that will bring into view the fair claims of all classes. These claims will adjust themselves under careful and temperate consideration, according to the habits of this country; and the questions of local burdens between landlord and tenant will adjust themselves thereby among the rest. There is one further subject mentioned to me, which is the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. And it has been stated that some of our friends in the opposite camp have been representing that the Liberal party was opposed to the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. Now, I draw a distinction. Mr. Forster, who is a distinguished member of the Liberal party, was vice-president of the Committee of the Council on Education, and was the person responsible for applying the law in regard to the importation of animals from abroad in such a way as to prevent the importation of disease, and it was his duty, therefore, to take a leading part in the House of Commons in dealing with the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. That bill, so far as it was a bill for preventing the importation of disease, had the cordial support of the Liberal party. But that, gentlemen, is not the whole story, and I will tell you what happened. One of my complaints against Her Majesty's Government in respect to its foreign policy is that it had on various occasions broken the treaties which form the international law of Europe, and had placed the action of this country in conflict with that law. Now, it so happens that in this Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill, whether they intended it or not, they were doing the very same thing. They drew a distinction in this way—they said animals may be introduced from America without being liable to certain forms of restraint, but from many of the countries

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Diseases
(Animals)
Act.*

of the Continent they may not. Now, unfortunately, it happened that with those very countries which they were proposing thus to restrain—and they did not say diseased animals shall not be imported from them, but no cattle were to be allowed from those countries—it so happened that with those countries they had treaties which bound them to give to the commerce of those countries what are called ‘the privileges of the most favoured nation.’ That is to say, the best terms you give to the commerce of any country—whatever that may be, these countries shall be entitled to enjoy; and yet they were proposing to give, in regard to the introduction of cattle, a privilege to America which they were denying to those countries. It was undoubtedly a flat breach of treaty, and undoubtedly we opposed the Government upon that subject, and insisted that they should put those countries upon an equal footing, according to their treaty. And what happened? Why, the law officers of the Crown, who are the most accommodating law officers of the Crown I ever heard of, boldly got up and declared there was no treaty at all. We persevered; we repeated our arguments. We were a minority, it is true, but we stuck to our arguments; and such was the force of the arguments that the law officers and their opinions were overturned and rolled in the dust—the Government was compelled to accommodate its law to the arguments we had made and the treaties that they had got with other countries, and that is the opposition, gentlemen, which we are charged with offering to this Contagious Diseases Bill, when we saved the faith and honour of the country, and not only so, but the interests of the country, by preventing a controversy with other Powers which might have ended in disaster.

Now, I have gone through a list of subjects, but I have still one or two more before I part with you. I have been, I am still, obliged to reiterate complaints from time to time of the strange and monstrous allegations that are made by our opponents, but I have always urged that charge against them with

a liberal allowance—a sort of discount to the charge—because I make confession freely on their behalf that it is no wonder they make those strange and monstrous allegations, for if they did not make those allegations they would have nothing to say against us. Here is one of them (showing a small hand-bill). It came to me along with, I am sorry to say, very many more this morning. It is a Scotch communication; it is from Sanquhar. It is a printed paper, circulated in the interests of the Conservative party, and headed Conservative and Liberal Administrations. Here is the fourth statement: ‘The Liberal Government discharged large numbers of workmen from the arsenals and dockyards, and kept down the war supplies, utterly regardless of the requirements of the country or of the efficiency of the army or the navy.’ Upon the dockyard question I will not say much. You are not blessed with dockyards here, and somehow or other you manage to get on tolerably well without them; it is a matter of importance to dockyard towns, but it would be irrelevant, I think, to introduce it here. I pass that by; but here is a charge I will speak of: we ‘kept down the war supplies, utterly regardless of the requirements of the country or the efficiency of the army or the navy.’ Now, what is my assertion? My assertion is that the army and the navy of this country, when we handed them over to our successors, were handed over both in better circumstances and in a better state of efficiency for defence than as they had ever passed from one Government to any other Government since the battle of Waterloo. Perhaps you may ask me can I prove that assertion. To prove it in detail might require me to go through a very wide field, but I can give you some salient facts on the subject. When, in 1878, Her Majesty’s Government were desirous of making what we thought a very mischievous use of their power, just at the time of the resignation of Lord Derby, when they were desirous of making a parade of military force, they were enabled to send throughout the land a message

The charges against the Liberals relative to the efficiency of the army and navy.

which in the course of three or four days—a few days, at any rate, but I believe I am right in saying three or four days—added from 35,000 to 40,000 men to the available immediate efficient strength of the army. Now, I want to know this—was there ever a time before the time of the late Government when that could have been done? The system of reserves, which is an admirable system, and peculiarly qualified for adaptation to the military wants of this country, was a system which was principally established by the measures of Lord Cardwell, and the effect of these measures was to leave that system in such a state that for the first time a very large body of men could at a moment's notice be added to the efficient strength of the army. That is one of the multitude of ways in which the condition of our army establishments was improved. In the time of the late Government, under the able administration of Lord Cardwell, it would be admitted beyond a doubt that the whole country was for the first time organized in a military sense. The auxiliary forces were for the first time brought into regular connection with the regular forces. The entire strength of the country for the purposes of defence, instead of being under different authorities who might be in conflict one with the other, or who were under no regular system of union, was made strictly a unity for the purposes of defence. As to the number of men available for the service of the country, I have told you the addition that was made to them; while, on the other hand, the abolition of purchase, the improvement of military education, and the consequent improvement of the quality of the whole system of promotion in the army, made the officers of the army more fit and more worthy to command the gallant men placed under their control than they had been at any former period. And, moreover, I can say that this statement is substantially borne out in the main by the declaration of Lord Cranbrook, the recent Secretary for War, when, shortly after his accession to the House of Lords, the subject was raised in that assembly,

and, acting with fairness and equity to his predecessor, he gave a highly favourable account of the condition to which the army had been brought. The army is interesting to us all, but I am now going to speak of that which is more interesting still—more interesting because more closely and essentially associated with the peculiar recollections of an insular people—I mean the British navy. Here is the statement: ‘They are regardless of the country and the efficiency of the army and navy.’ Well, now, as to the efficiency of the navy, that matter has been discussed in the House of Commons very lately, and it has been contended, and, I think, shown on the Liberal side of the House, that so far as regarded the great fighting ships of the navy, the late Government did quite as much and more than the present Government towards advancing the condition of these fighting ships towards a state of thorough efficiency. But independently of the fighting ships, gentlemen, there is another branch of the naval service that is not less important. Both are really vital to the efficiency of the British navy, and I do not disparage the one by setting up the importance of the other. That other branch of the British navy is the portion of the navy which would be employed for the protection, in time of war, of British commerce. You know very well to what an extent the prosperity of this country has grown. Probably the whole of the income of almost every man in this assembly, at least to a large extent, depends upon the maintenance of British commerce. To maintain that commerce, and to protect it in time of war, has at all times been a most arduous operation, but practically it now will be an operation more arduous than ever. Happily our means of protecting it have increased with the necessity, because we have acquired a command over the shipping of the world for the protection of that shipping, and we have acquired an actual property—a share of that shipping, such as we never acquired before.

Now, consider the meaning of what I have just said. In proportion as we have an enormous mass of shipping belong-

ing to us, to that extent will this country have an opportunity of selecting from among all those ocean-going steamers those steamers which are most suited by their rapidity and their good build to be used for the protection of commerce. And why, why is it that we have obtained this enormous share of the commerce of the world? Why is it that the tonnage of this country is now by far the largest and by far the most efficient, and has undergone the most essential expansion within the last thirty years? Why is that? Because, gentlemen, we have abolished the Navigation Law. And who abolished the Navigation Law? The Liberal party abolished the Navigation Law. And who opposed the abolition of the Navigation Law?—the Tory party. Every man of the majority of this present now dying Parliament that was in Parliament thirty years ago—certainly Lord Beaconsfield, who was at their head—were indeed the keenest opponents of the abolition of the Navigation Law? And how did they oppose it? They did not oppose it merely as they opposed the abolition of the Corn Laws, by saying that it would ruin the shipping, as they said that the abolition of the Corn Laws would ruin the land and farming interest. They did not merely say that it would injure the country by destroying the shipping interests of England. What they said was this, that the abolition of the Navigation Law is no mere question of free trade, but is a mortal blow directly aimed at the greatness of the country, it is a great constitutional question, a great national question; and, gentlemen, they called upon every patriot to maintain that measure. But their definitions of patriotism were as bad and rotten definitions then as they are now. We did not listen to them for a moment. The Navigation Law was abolished, and the effect of abolishing that Navigation Law and taking away the monopoly of protected interest, and of opening the ports of this country to all the shipping of the world, has been that you are now getting a share of the carrying trade of the world such as you never

*The abolition
of the Naviga-
tion Law.*

possessed before. The carrying trade of America, which, under the Navigation Law, was your most formidable rival, and seemed likely at one time to take away the best of your business, has become perfectly insignificant; and America, with her vast resources, is now obliged to look to the shipping of England, with the Navigation Law abolished, for carrying on the trade on which she depends. So much for the Navigation Law. I will now give you more direct, more specific proof as to this question of the best mode of obtaining large command of ships for the protection of your commerce in time of war. The abolition of the Navigation Law in that sense is the very best thing that ever was done for the naval defence of this country. But quite independent of that law, let me look more specifically at what has been done by the direct action of Boards of Admiralty. Here I am going to ask you to refer, if you have the opportunity, for the purpose of informing yourselves, or for the purpose of checking what I am now going to say—to refer to an article in a monthly review, well known under the name of *The Nineteenth Century*, an article which is by Sir Spencer Robinson, on the present state, the present strength of the navy in available ships. Sir Spencer Robinson is a man of great professional eminence. For a long time he was the gentleman principally responsible at the Admiralty for directing the construction of our vessels of war. His reputation in that respect has always been of the very first order. You know, as they say, doctors differ, and so do constructors of ships differ also. But still, allowing for differences of opinion among individuals which always more or less prevail, I am strictly accurate in saying that he is a man of the very highest reputation as an authority upon the strength and efficiency of ships. Sir Spencer Robinson is likewise by no means prejudiced on behalf of the late Government, for this reason, that, unhappily, he was in conflict with a very eminent gentleman who was First Lord of the Admiralty under the late Government. Consequently, if Sir Spencer

Robinson says anything which indicates favour to the late Government, he cannot be supposed to be a prejudiced witness in their favour. I have no doubt, however, he would say what was right and honourable independent of all prejudices. Well, after treating of the state of what I may call our 'fighting navy'—that is to say, our navy which in the regular course of things will be in line for action—he goes on to consider the condition of this other vital branch of the navy, the new class of ships intended for the protection of our commerce; and what, gentlemen, does he say upon that subject? He says that at one time we were greatly behind in this important class of ships. He says we laboured onwards to improve ourselves for a series of years—that in the year 1866 we had attained to such a possession of ships of this class that the condition of our navy might be considered in that respect thoroughly satisfactory. He says it so continued till the year 1874; but that since the year 1874 the matter is most gravely altered, and our condition has seriously gone down. And yet, while that is the case, we have our Tory friends coolly circulating these placards, and I have no doubt succeeding in inveigling, hoodwinking, and blinding a great number of innocent electors by that, I must say, most brazen-faced assertion, that we were utterly regardless of the requirements of the country or the efficiency of the navy.

*Sir Spencer
Robinson on
the present state
of the navy.*

Now, I will yet trouble you upon a matter of great importance which has recently been brought under my attention. I am sorry, indeed, that it should become a thing of contention between parties in this country, for it is one of the subjects on which it has been believed that we had some time ago attained unity of opinion. There is a body in this country, known to you all by name, which is called the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. You know that society is not properly a political society. It is a body associated together, just as if it were a religious community, for the attainment of a special and important object, which is deemed to be of

*The British
and Foreign
Anti-Slavery
Society.*

the greatest significance for the benefit of mankind. It was composed very largely, and received its first inspiration and direction from a most admirable body of men, less known in Scotland than in England, namely, the Society of Friends—men popularly called ‘the Quakers’—who, you know, set up objects of benevolence and philanthropy as being purposes of a higher order than matters commonly disputed between political parties. But the Anti-Slavery Society have thought it their duty at this time to publish a circular, in which they, still disclaiming everything except the interests involved in the great question of slavery, have referred, in the first place, to an Admiralty circular with respect to the delivering up out of British ships, in foreign parts, of fugitive slaves who had taken refuge on board these ships. They refer to a motion made in 1876 by Mr. Whitbread, that all slaves admitted to the protection of the British flag should be treated as free. They have likewise published the state of the division on that motion, from which it appears that 248 members voted for it, and 293 voted against it, and the motion was lost. I am sorry to say the county of Midlothian voted in the majority of 293, which the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society deems to have been so injurious to the interests of the Negro race. However, I pass onwards from that, and the paper I hold in my hand is quite open to your inspection, with the names of those who sign it—Mr. Gifford, Mr. Sturge, and Mr. Allen, officers of the society. They make a charge graver still, and that is a charge with respect to the conduct of the British Plenipotentiaries at Berlin. Now, in all the political questions raised in Berlin, which bore upon the territorial distribution and the emancipation of the subject races of Turkey, I have with much pain, but, no doubt, again and again pointed out that in every single case when the matter came up to be decided, the British Plenipotentiaries took the side opposed to the side of freedom. But here is a new chapter, and the statement of the Anti-Slavery Society is this: that whereas

*Its allegations
against the
present
Ministers.*

during the Tory rule of Lord Liverpool the greatest efforts were made by the British Government for measures for the suppression of the slave trade, they go on to say, that all this was reversed at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. To declare slavery to be piracy—which was strongly urged, and was nearly carried, by the Duke of Wellington at Verona, and which the leading Plenipotentiaries of Europe were prepared to support at Berlin—received from Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury neither countenance nor support. It has been with the greatest pain I have read that statement. It is a matter that ought to be brought to the notice of the world. If the statement of the Anti-Slavery Society can be confuted, let it be confuted; but here is their allegation—the allegation of a non-political body—and they go on to follow this statement which I have already made with further statements that the Government have made a treaty with Turkey for the suppression of the slave trade, of which, as you know, Turkey is the great effectual supporter, and has been for many years. They have framed a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade with Turkey, to which they consent themselves. The treaty has at last been signed, but it is a treaty containing clauses which render it as worthless for the suppression of the slave trade as the paper on which it is written. I won't speak in detail from memory, but I believe that these are clauses which import that where ships are taken having slaves on board, instead of being referred, as they were under the old slave treaties, to the cognizance of mixed tribunals, so that we could always have the security of honest views on the bench, by the clauses of this treaty they would be referred to authorities—Turkish authorities in many cases—perfectly untrustworthy, and therefore, if so, so far justifying the statement that this treaty is 'as utterly worthless for the suppression of the slave trade as the paper on which it is written.'

I am going to trouble you with one other subject. Some

time ago I read in a Tory paper—not in a Liberal paper, but in a Tory paper—I read an account, which appeared to me a very strange account, of some proceedings that had taken place at Vienna with the British ambassador—Sir Henry Elliot—who was supposed to act, not for this or that party, or this or that person, but on behalf of his country. This British ambassador had had an interview or conversation with the Emperor of Austria, in which the Emperor of Austria had been pleased to pronounce extremely severe censure upon myself, as a most dangerous politician, and to express his hope that such a politician would not be allowed to influence the councils of his country. Well, I feel no resentment on that account—none whatever. But I feel a duty on that account. The reason of that disapproval is, that in whatever I have done in foreign policy, and in most important questions, I have generally found myself, if liberty was concerned, in direct conflict with the Government of Austria. The first occasion on which I was called to take an active and responsible part in an important subject of foreign policy was in the year 1850—now thirty years ago—when I went to Italy quite innocent of political intentions. I went on account of the health of a child, and simply for that purpose. If I had any other thought I am afraid it was that of enjoying the country, which is the most enjoyable, perhaps, in the world. When I came to Naples I found a state of things prevailing there which was so detestable, so corrupt, so distressing and pernicious in the eyes of men, that at last there grew upon me the conviction that I could not see these things without being bound to do what little I could to expose them to the condemnation of the world. Therefore, gentlemen, I bethought myself of this. The Governments of Italy at that time were entirely under the control of Austria, and it was under the control and sanction of Austria that these practices were pursued. Well, I knew that my friend—I will say my dear friend—and a dearer friend I never had, nor one whom I

*The tendencies
of Austria.*

more loved and respected—Lord Aberdeen—had considerable influence with the Austrian Court. I begged Lord Aberdeen to allow me to address to him a letter on the subject of these proceedings, and to use his influence with the Austrian Court to get them amended. Lord Aberdeen did so, though he was rather inclined to be Conservative in his foreign politics, perhaps more so than I myself. Yet he was a generous, noble-minded, true-hearted man. He did me the honour of giving me the countenance of his name and authority, and did everything in his power to induce the Austrian Government to interfere. I totally failed to induce them to interfere, and they did not care more for Lord Aberdeen than they did for me. The consequence was that I found myself undoubtedly in direct conflict with them; and so it has been upon every subject that I know of in Europe. Unhappily, it has been the fate of Austria and the policy of Austria, in the case of Greece, in the case of Italy, in the case of Belgium, wherever she had anything to say, her influence has been unfortunately used on behalf of arbitrary power, against freedom and against good government in the States. Probably it is no wonder that the Emperor of Austria should disapprove of my proceedings, because I consequently happened to disapprove very much of the proceedings of the Austrian Government. I told my audience in Edinburgh the other day that, in my opinion, we were bound to watch the Austrian Government just as we were bound to watch Russia, and to take care that whenever and wherever the Austrian Government interfered, and attempted to put down freedom in the Balkan Peninsula, and substitute its own influence and powers for the free governments that are gradually rising up in that peninsula under the recent arrangements, we should appear, so far as we had a right to be heard, as the opponents of that policy. I have cut out this from the *Standard* of yesterday—an excellent authority. This is from the capital of Hungary, from the papers of Sunday night:—

'All the papers here resent in most indignant terms Mr. Gladstone's attacks upon Austria and the Austrian Empire, and are unable to comprehend his views of the oldest and truest ally of England.' Now, gentlemen, if these Hungarians are desirous to shut my mouth there is one way in which they can do it perfectly well, and that is by simply ceasing to cherish claims adverse to the freedom of other people. I have no antipathy, God forbid, to any Power in Europe. My desire is to see Great Britain live upon terms of friendship with them all. I have always insisted that we should recognise the equal rights of them all, and to maintain a good understanding with them I think one of the highest and noblest duties of a British Ministry. I include Austria in that statement as much as any other country. But I say this, the moment we detect them in schemes of aggrandizement, the moment we detect them in conspiracies against freedom, the moment we find them endeavouring to invade the dwellings of other people, and set up their own power in defiance of the will of the inhabitants of the country, that moment, I care not what be the name of the State, I for one become as a British citizen, in my own humble capacity, their resolute and determined opponent. And no amount of indignation, either in the capital of Hungary or in any other capital, will in the slightest degree restrain me from endeavouring to work up my countrymen to a similar state of mind. Without asking them to attempt any undue interference, for my faith in moral force is great—without asking them such a thing, I should endeavour to work them up to the same frame of mind, and to take care that, whatever happens, the voice of Britons, who boast for themselves that they 'never will be slaves,' shall invariably be heard in the assertion of the sacred principle for others, and that nowhere shall despotism, nowhere shall violence, nowhere shall oppression stalk abroad in the world with the sanction or even the silent connivance of this country. One word more upon that subject. I rejoice to say

that so far as regards the internal government of Austria, very favourable changes have taken place. The representative principle has been introduced, and what would have been true of the Austria of Metternich would not be true of the Austria of the present day. In Russia great changes have taken place in the internal government of the country, in the emancipation of the serfs, and in many other things. But in Austria more progress yet has been made towards the establishment of constitutional freedom. But it does not follow, if you observe the lessons of history, that when a country adopts constitutional government, it immediately alters the tone of its policy abroad. If you will observe our own history, you will bear in mind it was not in the time of the Stuarts, when despotism prevailed, that we provoked America to rebellion. It was after we had matured to a great degree our own Parliamentary system. I most earnestly hope that the Austrian policy will in time become a policy more favourable to freedom in foreign countries. But we have been told of late, and many declarations even by Her Majesty's Government go to insinuate the fear, that Austria is cherishing schemes for the establishment of her authority in countries which do not belong to her, which form part of what is called the Balkan peninsula. What I say is this, by all means let Austria show us that this is false.¹ Why don't they do so, instead of talking about their indignation? Why don't they say, 'We have no scheme of establishing ourselves in those countries. We respect their freedom; we wish them to enjoy it as we enjoy it ourselves.' It would be infinitely better to hold language of that kind rather than talk about indignation against one who will not quarrel with Hungarian or Austrian or anybody else until they begin to quarrel with freedom, but who when they begin to quarrel with freedom, will quarrel with them to the best of his power. You are engaged, as I think, in a battle of freedom here. I can see that the freedom of this

¹ See Letter to Count Károlyi in Appendix.

country, which we hope to see secured here and imitated and extended elsewhere—the freedom of this country is, I hope, safe in your hands; but in my opinion it has not been safe in the hands of the Executive Government, and not safe in the hands of those gentlemen who formed the majority of the Parliament which is to be dissolved to-morrow. It is to you, gentlemen, that it is to be referred to establish the guarantees of that freedom by returning to Parliament those who are inclined to defend and maintain it. The chapters of the indictment that I have laboriously endeavoured to unfold are very various. I won't enter further upon them now, but this I will presume to say, that the cause we have in our hands is more than a national cause. It depends in the main upon the mass and body of the people.

I do not forget the fact that I have the satisfaction of speaking in the presence of the representative of a very distinguished house. I rejoice to say that there are still, and I trust there will ever be, within the lines of the peerage of England, friends of popular right and constitutional freedom as sound, as true, as earnest, as warm-hearted, as enlightened as are to be found in any class of the community. Those families, and they embrace many of the oldest houses and the most illustrious names of the country—those families are the salt of the peerage, those families are the security of that portion of our institutions. But I am obliged to say to you, gentlemen, that the spirit of true, genuine, informed, enlightened Liberalism does not tend to spread among the peers or gentry of this country. With regret and pain I make this affirmation, that never did the peers of this country, and never did the gentry of this country, rally round the Conservative party, in the days when that party was led by Sir Robert Peel and by the Duke of Wellington, with the same degree of zeal, or with the same overwhelming preponderance as that with which they now rally round Lord Beaconsfield. That is, in my opinion, a very grave state of matters, and what lesson does

it teach? It teaches us this lesson, that we must fall back upon the broad, the incorruptible power of national liberty; that we decline to recognise any class whatever, be they peers or be they gentry, be they what you like, as entitled to direct the destinies of this nation against the will of the nation. If the liberties of the nation are to be narrowed, or if they are to be sacrificed, let it be by the act of the nation itself. The nation itself, at the moment which has now nearly arrived—the moment marked by this dissolution—has the power to determine the great question for itself. I beseech them, whatever the just and salutary respect for station that prevails amongst us—and I yield to no man in my respect for it—whatever be that just respect, to remember that there are higher duties and higher considerations that must guide our conduct in the great crisis of our country's history; and that we must look, not to what will be said, and not to what will be recommended by this man of title or by that man of title, by this possessor of broad acres or by that, but to what is required, and what is recommended by the national honour, the national sense of freedom, and the national welfare and prosperity.

XIII.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1880.

SPEECH AT PENICUIK.

AMONG the gentlemen who occupied places on the platform were—Messrs. James Cowan, M.P.; John James Cowan, Edinburgh; Charles W. Cowan, Valleyfield; Provost Mitchell, Dalkeith. Mr. Gladstone on entering was received with immense enthusiasm, the greeting being renewed with hardly less warmth when, after some appreciative remarks from Mr. Charles Cowan, who occupied the chair, the right hon. gentleman rose to deliver one of the most telling addresses he has made in the course of this memorable campaign. He said:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—Sir, it is to me a very great satisfaction, in the absence of your respected brother, that I am able to address you as the chairman of this meeting, and I, too, have been favoured with a communication from that gentleman, in which he assures me that although it is at a great sacrifice of personal feeling that he remains absent from this most interesting and somewhat important contest, yet that he has no other cause of regret in connection with that fact, because such is his conviction of the thorough sense and intelligence of the electors of Midlothian, of their comprehension of the points at issue, and of the impossibility to divert them from the perception of the true issues by the raising of false issues, that he feels certain the victory will be achieved without him, as easily and as surely as it would be were he upon this platform.

Gentlemen, this is not my first visit to Penicuik. I am

obliged to confess that the interval since the former visit is rather a long one. I place it, gentlemen, at about forty-five years. At that time I was the guest of the Sir George Clerk of that day, a man greatly respected, I believe, as a neighbour, as a landlord, as an elder of the Established Church of Scotland, and in all the capacities of life in which he was known. But I can tell you one more circumstance with regard to that Sir George Clerk. He was attached in politics to the person and to the opinions of Sir Robert Peel; he was a thorough-paced Free-trader, and accompanied Sir Robert Peel in the great work that he achieved. I can go beyond that, and tell you of my own knowledge that in the Ministry of Lord Aberdeen, Sir George Clerk was prepared to go to the borough of Liverpool, and to contest the borough as the representative of the Liberal party in support of the Government. Some cause, which I do not recollect, quite extraneous to the political merits of the case, either stopped the vacancy or prevented the fulfilment of that intention; but the account that I give you of the political sentiments of Sir George Clerk, with his long experience at that period, is an account true within my own personal knowledge.

There are two subjects which I will very briefly touch before I go to other matters, on which I will detain you a little longer. One of them is that every day I receive from various parts of the country an expression of apprehension in the mind of a certain number of the electors that the secrecy which the law purports to confer on the voter is not a real secrecy. Let me assure you, that if a voter does not himself forego the privilege which the law gives him, and does not by his own free choice, or by his own inattention, suffer himself to be wheedled out of the knowledge which the law gives him a right to, the law itself is perfectly effectual for the purpose of securing his liberty, without the inspection of his landlord, or of his employer, or of anybody else, his liberty in giving his vote. He has only

*The absolute
secrecy of the
Ballot.*

himself to thank if that liberty is lost; and if a man cannot trust himself, I must own that in this free country I have no remedy to supply by which his want of courage and manhood can be made good. I say this, not really for the sake so much of the electors in Midlothian, as for the sake of others whose nerves, perhaps, are not so well fortified on these occasions as yours are, and who make known to you to a considerable extent their fears and apprehensions.

The other subject that I will notice in passing is the subject of finance. I am delighted to see that Sir Stafford Northcote has been addressing a letter to Lord Dalkeith. That is, in the first place, a confession that the case is rather lame, and wants a little help. It is not a common thing for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to address a long letter to a particular candidate in reference to a speech made by the opposite candidate. I did make a speech in Dalkeith last week, not on the subject of finance at large. Upon that, if you please—on the question of surplus, on the question of national debt, and so forth—I propose to dwell in the course of a few days, when we are to have a large meeting at Stow; but I did enter upon one subject—I entered upon the subject of the Probate Duty. I showed you that upon the death of those who may be possessed even of moderate properties, taxes that are already unjustly and unequally large are now about to be heavily aggravated by the action of the Tory Government. I showed how that was about to be done without having allowed any fair opportunity of deliberation and discussion. I showed how the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself did not understand his own measure, did not know the particulars of it, and from not knowing the particulars, grossly misstated them in the House of Commons, and had to be corrected by myself as an independent, unofficial member. And having done so, aided by the patience of a large auditory, I went through a multitude of cases, and showed, in the first place, how great was the inequality of the present law, and, in the second place, what

*The letter
addressed by
Sir S. North-
cote to Lord
Dalkeith.*

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large additions were going to be made by the action of the Tory Government to that gross inequality. And I am pleased to see the letter of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I must own so strange were the figures that I gave, so difficult was it to believe that such aggravations of such inequalities could be proposed and perpetrated in the year 1880, though I had taken all the pains in my power, I had some fear that in some point or other I might overstate the case. You may read, if you like, the letter of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. You will find he does not challenge one of my statements. My statement—the general effect of it—was that inequalities of three or four times as between real and personal estate were going to be aggravated to five or six times, and that inequalities of six or eight times as between the landlord and farmer were to be aggravated to nine or ten times; and every one of those statements is literally and exactly true.

*The Paper
Duty.*

Now, sir, I must say a few words on the subject on which you have favoured us with some remarks—viz. the subject of the Paper Duty. It may be said, Why talk about the Paper Duty; that is a matter past and gone? I tell you why I talk about it. There are some persons who have written to me that complaints are made that we do not make a sufficiency of promises as to what will be done by the Liberal party in the next Parliament. Now, I have never been, as a politician, very fond of promising. Promises lie in the future, acts lie in the past; and though you may tell me that this question of the Paper Duty is a question that has passed by, what I say is this—that if you are wise, prudent, long-headed Scotchmen, in my opinion you will feel that the acts of men in former times are a far better guide to their real intentions and their real capacity to serve you than any amount of promises which they may give. If they show a great inclination to promise, it is very often a cover for a less favourable inclination to perform. I must say in the parish

of Penicuik—I hope you will not think me too bold, but I really think that I have some sort of title, so far as personal interests may be allowed to enter into public questions, and that is a matter on which I should speak with great reserve—I have some sort of title, at any rate, to a fair consideration of my claims by those who are connected with the paper trade. I rejoice to hear that, as I expected, and as I foretold in the year 1860, the paper trade of this country has, in consequence of the repeal of the duties, both of customs and excise, been enormously extended. I rejoice to think that the means of employment have been immensely enlarged, and the rates of wages for employment have been considerably and sensibly raised. This I must tell you, that that result was not achieved without some cost of care and of anxiety. I have been through many political struggles. Never have I gone through one so severe as the struggle to attain the repeal of the Paper Duties. Now, you may ask me—and here it is I come to what I think the instructive part of the case—you may ask me, why was the struggle so severe? I will tell you. First of all, it was severe because the Tory party have a habit of promising things before they know they will or can perform; and, secondly, because wherever there is a discounted or alarmed interest which thinks that injury is about to be inflicted upon it, the Tory party on every occasion since the death of Sir Robert Peel—in his time it was a different matter—the Tory party is always ready to join hands with that alarmed interest—for the purpose of intercepting and defeating the measures most beneficial to the country. It has been my lot to have a much larger experience of legislative changes affecting commerce than, I believe, ever fell to the share of any other man. In the year 1842 I was Vice-President of the Board of Trade under Sir Robert Peel, and it was my duty and arduous work, but yet a cheerful work, because I was sustained by his advice, encouragement, and powerful support, to carry through

*The history of
its repeal.*

12. 7. 1842

Parliament what was called the new tariff of that year. In that year, 1853, and again especially in 1860, as well as in many other years, it was my fortune to be brought gradually, and one by one, into intimate contact with nearly all the important interests of the country, and invariably what was found was this, that as the principle of Free-trade was applied to each one of these trades one by one, the members of that trade generally, not uniformly but generally, the members of that trade held this language. They said Free-trade is an excellent thing in itself, but it is not applicable to our particular pursuit. Each of them honestly, as I believe, entertained that persuasion, and they acted upon it. Now you will say, that being the case, how was it that the Legislature was able to overcome these difficulties? I will tell you how it was. It was in this way—that so long as the Tory Government, the Conservative Government, of Sir Robert Peel was in office, they had no fear, when they applied these principles to particular interests for the benefit of the people, because the Liberal party which was in opposition gave them their support. But when we come to the year 1860, we come to a time when there was a very different state of things. Then, although every trade in the country upon which we had operated singly since the year 1842, with perhaps—I will not say whether actually or not—but possibly with the exception of the silk trade, which has always been a somewhat sickly plant in this country, every trade in this country which we had exposed to competition, had flourished under that competition, and had been enormously extended, the paper manufacturers generally at that date—doubtless with some enlightened exceptions—the paper manufacturers set up the old cry. They said, Free-trade is a fine thing for other trades, but there are peculiarities in our trade. Every trade, gentlemen, I believe, has peculiarities—I never heard of the trade that had not; but they said, our trade has peculiarities, and in consequence of these peculiarities you ought

not to apply to it those principles which have governed you in the general liberation of commerce.

Now, we could have dealt with the paper trade and the paper manufacturers very well if we had had nobody else to deal with; but the Tory party, with Lord Beaconsfield at their head and with Sir Stafford Northcote, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all the rest of them, came in, and with an extraordinary tenacity met and intercepted us, and, as I have told you, made it the greatest struggle of my life to carry through that beneficial change. They brought the House of Lords into the field, and as the chairman has justly said, the House of Lords took a course most unconstitutional; because when we had sent to the House of Lords a bill for the repeal of the paper tax, the House of Lords took upon it to maintain that tax which the representatives of the people had repealed. The House of Lords took very little benefit by that proceeding, because the consequence was, that though they gained their object for the moment, the very next year we brought in a measure which provided that the whole of the changes affecting supply and ways and means from year to year should be sent to the House of Lords in one single measure, which we knew they would not dare to throw out; and the consequence has been that from that time onwards the House of Lords has, I may say, never opened its mouth upon the finance and taxation of the country. That is the way in which, when patience and moderation are observed, the popular cause wins at the last; and depend upon it, whether in this crisis or in any other, you want nothing but moderation and resolution, together with the disposition to accord to your opponents the same freedom of speech which we enjoy among ourselves—you want nothing but that to ensure the attainment of the objects which the nation has really at heart.

One other point I must tell you in the conduct of the Tory party, because I deem it my duty to act on the prin-

*Conduct of the
Tory party.*

inciple I have laid down, and to say that the conduct of parties is not to be estimated so much by that which they may promise, at a given moment, as by that which they have done in the past. What have the Tory party done with regard to the Paper Duty? In the year, I think, 1858, or in the year 1859—I will not say which—in that year a resolution was brought forward promising the repeal of the Paper Duty; and the Tory party voted for the repeal in that resolution. They knew perfectly well that it cost them nothing to vote for the repeal of the Paper Duty in a resolution, because a resolution had no more effect of repealing the Paper Duty than the speech I am now making to you would have had. They did that in 1858 or 1859; but when in 1860 we, the Government of Lord Palmerston, brought forward the repeal of the Paper Duty, then the Tory party joined hands with the paper-makers, and rendered our task one of almost insuperable difficulties. That day has gone by. The repeal of the Paper Duty has proved to be an unmixed blessing to the country, and has opened the way not only I believe to a vast actual extension of the trade, but as I believe, sir, as I am sanguine enough to believe, to a great number of developments in that trade which will advance from year to year, and many of which are as yet completely in their infancy. I quit the subject by saying that if you agree with me that the past conduct of parties is the best test of what they are likely to do in the future, then I must mark and stamp upon the Tory party this note, that on every occasion when there was the smallest chance of defeating a measure for the liberation of commerce,—which means in other words a measure for the improvement of the condition of the people and the strength of the Empire,—whenever there was such an opportunity, the Tory party joined hands with the private opponents of that measure, whose prejudices and alarms were perhaps perfectly excusable, and endeavoured

to turn these prejudices and alarms to the promotion of the miserable interests of party.

Now, gentlemen, I am going to turn to another class of subjects. I am compelled to have regard as I go through the county of Midlothian, I am compelled to have regard, not only to what I have still got to say, but to what I have recently said. For I am glad to say to you, gentlemen,—indeed you already know it,—that our proceedings here are not confined to the county, but find their way throughout Scotland into England, across the Channel and through Europe. And, knowing as I do know that your interest has been profoundly moved and stirred on behalf of those who, unlike yourselves, have been debarred the privileges both of political freedom and even of security of life and property abroad, I have been obliged to make, and must still make the foreign relations of the country the frequent subject of reference among you. And here I have one word to say—hardly more than one word—on the subject of a reference I recently made to the Austrian Empire, and the foreign policy of the Austrian Empire. I had occasion to state, on

*The reference
to the foreign
policy of
Austria.*

the authority of a Tory newspaper, the contents of which must have been known in Vienna, for the document came from their correspondent in Vienna—I said on their authority that the Emperor of Austria had in conversation with Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador, expressed a severe condemnation of myself—not personal condemnation, for of me he knows nothing, but of the policy with which my name has been associated. And to-day, gentlemen, I read again in a Tory newspaper—for if I said a Liberal newspaper I should expose myself to suspicion, but I read in the *Edinburgh Courant*,—I must say I do not hear much of it in the political world at large, but in the *Edinburgh Courant* I read a telegram from Sir Henry Elliot. He has lost no time at all; the telegraph is always very ready to be used for purposes of this kind, and Sir Henry Elliot telegraphs from Vienna to say that the Prime

Minister of Austria is extremely anxious that there should be some contradiction in Parliament or through the press of the language attributed to the Emperor of Austria by Mr. Gladstone. Now, with regard to that language, as I have told you, what I said was stated from a Tory newspaper called the *Standard*, a paper of great respectability, and very large influence and circulation; but Sir Henry Elliot, instead of calling it the language attributed to the Emperor of Austria by the *Standard*, calls it the language attributed to him by me, and contradicts it accordingly; and then he goes on with a lengthened telegram, which might very well have been abbreviated, and with regard to which, though I have paid to it all the attention in my power, I am perfectly at a loss to make out what it was that the Emperor of Austria did say, and what he did not say. Therefore, that there may be no obscurity or no mistake on this side of the water, I will tell you what I said about Austria. Towards Austria and every other country I wish to pay due and equal respect, recognising its rights as equal with our own, and never ascribing to it misdeeds except in consequence of evidence such as carries with it reasonable presumption of certainty; and further, I have never reproached Austria during the speeches I have made in Midlothian on account of its internal government, for this reason, that I know that the internal government of Austria has been very greatly improved, and I rejoice in it. How far it has been improved I am not precisely able to say, and I have avoided that subject altogether. I have condemned the foreign policy of Austria. I have said that outside of Austria, making no reproach as to what is inside of it, that outside of Austria the name of Austria has, upon all occasions known to me, been the symbol of misgovernment and oppression in other countries. That neither in Germany, nor in Belgium, nor in Greece, nor in Italy, where most of all she was concerned, for she was the virtual mistress of Italy till

Italy was made a kingdom,—in no one of these is her name known, except in conjunction with the promotion of what you and I believe to be wrong, and the repression of what we believe to be right. That is my charge. What is the case at the present moment? I do not wish to insist on the misdeeds of former years, provided, of course, that they are not going to be repeated; but we have had the most menacing signs that the Austrian Government of to-day, and especially the Hungarian portion of its subjects, for those are the portion out of whose minds and inclinations these schemes will arise, if they arise at all—that the Austrian Empire, too much influenced by them, is engaged in schemes for repressing and putting down the liberty of the lately emancipated communities in the Balkan peninsula, and for setting up her own supremacy over them whether they like it or not. Well, I have read, and you may have read, that this statement of mine has caused great indignation, but instead of indignation, let them simply say we have no such intention. If the Emperor of Austria and the Prime Minister of Austria like to send communications to us, let them make a communication which is to the point. Let them say we abjure, we repudiate all such schemes against the property and the races, many millions of them, who inhabit the Balkan peninsula; and from that moment I will become the foremost in my respect and regard for the Austrian Government.¹ They will have no reason to complain of me; and if they complain of me now, it is because I was called to speak of schemes which are in themselves schemes both mischievous and guilty. So I hope that Sir Henry Elliot, if he meddles any more in this matter, will not talk in the general and vague terms which he uses in to-day's *Courant*, but let him tell us whether or not it is true that Austria has schemes for establishing her own power in the Balkan peninsula, even against the will and inclination of the emancipated people.

¹ See Letter to Count Károlyi in Appendix.

Now, I have had one letter upon this subject from an Austrian gentleman in England, and I must say I never received a more reasonable letter. He thought I had been referring to the internal government of Austria, and he most justly represents how much is to be said on the matter of that internal government; but with regard to what I said as to its foreign policy, he says that he had read my speech with great pain, founded in great measure upon his consciousness that the censure which I had delivered was in great part deserved.

Cyprus.

I now turn to a subject which it is impossible for me to overlook upon the present occasion. I have avoided it in the various addresses I have delivered in Midlothian since arriving here last week; but it is too important to be kept altogether out of view. The island of Cyprus is not a very large island; but it is an island with respect to which most important proceedings have taken place, and with respect to which it is very desirable, and even necessary, that the people of Great Britain and Ireland should come thoroughly to understand their position. Let me remind you what took place with regard to the island of Cyprus. I have already spoken in the face of the people of Midlothian of the means by which possession of that island was attained; and if the possession had been the most precious and the most important in the world, these means are in themselves so dishonouring to the character of this country, and were in such flat violation of the law of Europe,—viz. the Treaty of Paris, which was an essential part of the international law of Europe,—that nothing could have induced me to acquiesce in the result on account of its gainfulness. But instead of being gainful, it is nothing of the kind. That does not excuse our proceedings in the slightest degree. If a man picks the pocket of his neighbour, believing the purse to be filled with sovereigns, and if, instead of being filled with sovereigns, he finds that it is filled with forged coin, the act of the man is not one whit less guilty, and it is not to be less severely con-

demned in a moral point of view than if every sovereign had been true metal. Now that is to us the case of Cyprus. Can you carry back, amidst the incessant shocks and surprises that have been administered to public confidence in every few months or few weeks for several years past,—can you carry back your recollection with me to the middle of the year 1878, and can you allow me to refer to the suppressed but manifest exultation with which, on the part of the Government, the present Home Secretary announced in the House of Commons, and in my hearing, that the possession of the island of Cyprus had been acquired by the Anglo-Turkish Convention. You know very well how that exultation was reflected, and the sound of it was re-echoed by the Tory press of the metropolis and of every part of the country. I have no doubt that if you were to go back to the pages of the *Edinburgh Courant* of that time, you would find that they were greatly eloquent upon this particular theme, pointing out how magnificent an addition had been made to the strength and the resources of the British Empire. I must say, however, the part was well played and well sustained, as long as it could be played and sustained at all. We were even promised, such were the commercial capabilities of the island of Cyprus, that its acquisition was to be the means of a great revival for the trade of the country; and there were some gentlemen—some scheming gentlemen—who founded limited liability companies, with very limited liability indeed, and these companies went to work in Cyprus in hope of inducing others to buy shares, and to maintain this delusion for a while in order to enlarge their own private profits. Gentlemen, all that folly has passed away like an idle dream. These companies in general came to grief; and it is well known that although Cyprus is an island of very considerable natural capabilities, yet you cannot, by merely laying hold of an island, apart from all circumstances, at once transmute the whole character of its material condition, and treat it as if it possessed the secret of converting bad times

into good ones. But it was not the commercial prospect that was kept in view. A very favourite doctrine of the Tory party is that they profess to soar above the commerce of the country; the mere question how the fathers of families in England are to get the best wages for the support of their wives and children is a question of too inferior an order for the contemplation of those great statesmen. You are appealed to in the name of the glory and the unity and safety and strength of the Empire. Now, I want to try the acquisition of Cyprus by that test, and to ask you what it has done for the glory, or for the strength, or for the safety of the Empire. As to the glory of the Empire, I know nothing that it has done but this, that it has associated the name and the character of England with one of the most discreditable transactions of the nineteenth century, namely, the negotiating—negotiating in the dark, by bringing a most illegitimate pressure to bear upon Turkey—the negotiating in the dark of an international instrument which was in violation of international law, and which was carefully kept back from the knowledge of all the Powers of Europe then assembled in Berlin. So much for glory. If glory be independent of honesty, then there may be something to examine; but if honesty be the necessary foundation of all true glory, never let the acquisition of Cyprus be mentioned in any association with that word. Let us look at it from another point of view. We were told upon the highest authority that Cyprus was to become an arsenal, with a naval harbour,—a great naval harbour,—and it was to be what was called ‘a place of arms’ of the very first class. It was even promised us that it would be, if possible, better and more valuable than Malta.

I will first try that allegation—the first of the allegations. We have now been for two years in possession of Cyprus; nothing has been done to make Cyprus in the slightest degree resemble Malta, and nature has not given to it the advantages which it has given to Malta. At one point of the coast of the island, at the town of Famagusta, there

The mode of acquisition.

A ‘naval arsenal.’

is a long strip of narrow anchorage, defended to a certain extent by a reef running at a short distance from the coast; and, as far as it goes, that is of some value to Famagusta, but to talk of that as constituting a naval arsenal is ridiculous. In a naval arsenal you want above all things to repair your ships. A naval arsenal is a place with powerful works on the outside of those ships which you are repairing, intended to defend them from any attack of the enemy. No ship can be brought to Famagusta for repairs, for a ship repairing there is open to be fired into from any vessel passing along the sea by simply directing the guns at point blank along the surface of the sea. There is nothing approaching to the character of a naval arsenal at Famagusta. No doubt you might there, as you may elsewhere, build your works into the sea, and thereby at an enormous cost create a defensible harbour; but the very first thing that is necessary, if you dream of attaining such a result, is that you should be prepared to produce some millions. Nothing else would do for the purpose of executing those great modern and military works. So then, as regards the naval arsenal and the defensive harbour, where your ships are to be repaired in security, there is not a word of truth or substance in the promises that have been held out.

Well, now, next as to the place of arms, a place where you may gather together large numbers of soldiers with great advantage. What has happened? This has happened—that a very considerable number of soldiers were sent to Cyprus in 1878, when it was the fashion of the day to dazzle the eyes of the country by something of military display and parade, and so at once some 5000 or 6000 men were sent to Cyprus; but after a few weeks it began to be found that the sick-list of these regiments became an exceedingly long and grave one, and that there was healthy ground in the island, but the healthy ground was on the top of the mountains, whereas the troops, if they were to be there for any use in con-

A 'place of arms.'

*The sanitary
condition of
Cyprus.*

nection with the arsenal, must be down upon the coast. Now, what is the character of that coast? I am going to quote to you a most remarkable pamphlet, very short, very simple, perfectly unprejudiced. It is a pamphlet called 'Cyprus as a Naval Station and a Place of Arms,' written by Admiral Sir W. Fanshawe Martin—a very distinguished British naval officer, of Tory politics—an enlightened man, I believe, and an excellent man in every other point of view, but, as far as politics go, a gentleman of Tory politics. You were promised that this was to be a great place of arms, where troops could be gathered together and got ready for action. Admiral Sir W. Fanshawe Martin observes with regard to those healthy spots upon the mountains, that the Blue Mountains of Jamaica are sufficiently healthy, but that does not make the coast district of Jamaica healthy, and nobody in his senses would ever dream of so describing it. In fact, you probably are aware that so injurious were the ports of the West Indies, notwithstanding the Blue Mountains, found to the health of our troops, that it was necessary to organize one or more regiments of negroes in order that they might be able to stand the climate. Now, these 5000 or 6000 men that were sent to Cyprus, as a kind of beginning towards making a place of arms, have all been withdrawn; they have disappeared, they could not be kept there, such was the sickness and such the uselessness of the troops; and there are now—I am not sure what the exact number is, but in this great place of arms, which was to make us so famous and so strong in the Eastern Mediterranean, I doubt whether there are at this moment more than a couple of hundred men. 'The naval'—I am now quoting the words of Admiral Sir W. Fanshawe Martin—'the naval establishment of Cyprus and the garrison must be at Famagusta; it is with the pestiferous condition of that place that we have to deal'—he says the condition of this place which has been pointed out to us as a great place of arms is a

pestiferous condition—‘lest,’ as he says, ‘another Port Royal’—quoting from Jamaica—‘another Port Royal should be created.’ Then he goes on to give us a little more description. He says, ‘Mr. Thomson said of Larnaca, not very far from Famagusta, that windows are protected by venetian blinds, and have close shutters, opening inwards. These are closed at night, even during the hottest months, to exclude the malaria wafted from the marshes.’ These are the sanitary *The climate.* conditions of this great place of arms. But that which I have just quoted is about Larnaca, not about Famagusta; let us, then, make our comparison between Larnaca and Famagusta. ‘Famagusta,’ says Sir W. Fanshawe Martin, ‘is at a short distance from Larnaca, and of Famagusta Captain Rawson in a very recent report says, “Many suffer from fever, a larger number from ophthalmia, and some from cataract of the eyes;” but, all around, he does not consider it much worse than Larnaca.’ That is the condition of the climate in which you are invited to place your troops, in order to maintain the unity, strength, glory, and prosperity of the Empire.

But another reason was given: we were told that this possession of Cyprus was to guard the road to India. Well now, in the first place, the position of Cyprus is 250 miles away from the road to India. The road to India is from Malta direct to the Suez Canal, and Cyprus is in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, far enough away from the road to India. Quite independently of that, and if it had been on the road to India, there is no greater folly than to suppose that it is by multiplication of your garrisons and of your islands that you guard the road to India. It is not the possession of land that guards the road to India; it is supremacy at sea. Napoleon, with overwhelming military power, planted himself at the end of the last century in Egypt. You drove him out of Egypt, not by superior military power, not by taking possession of the country in which he was placed, but by defeating and destroying his fleet—that is to say, by your supremacy

*‘Guarding
the road to
India.’*

at sea. You did that at a time when you did not possess Malta, and he did possess Malta. And having turned him out of Egypt by our supremacy at sea, although he was there to, what was called, safeguard the road to India—having done that, we afterwards proceeded to turn him out of Malta by precisely the same instrument, namely, our supremacy at sea. More double-distilled nonsense could not be administered to a set of idiots. It is this doctrine which leads you to suppose that it is a wise thing for us, with our enormous Empire and the multitude of points we have to defend, to go on multiplying those points, to go on creating new and fresh necessities for the increase of our garrisons, when we have but one serious want and danger, and that is the fewness of our men in proportion to the great extent of the Empire. The gross impolicy of such a course is only equalled by the utter folly of keeping out of view this supremacy at sea, which is the mode of guarding the road to India, and not the multiplication of those posts.

I am very sorry to say that those are not the only objections to the possession and occupation of Cyprus. What is going on there? You are free men; your mission is to spread freedom in the world, is it not? I want to know—I should like to know the opinion of the Duke of Buccleuch and the Earl of Dalkeith on that subject—whether our mission is to spread freedom or to spread despotism in the world; because in Cyprus you are doing a little stroke of work, as they call it, in the way of spreading despotism in the world. We have gone into Cyprus, which is inhabited by a most peaceful and industrious people, with none of the habits or passions of barbarians, and over those people we have established a pure military despotism. I am not impeaching the characters of the gentlemen who have been appointed. I believe the present Chief Commissioner is an able and a good man, and it is sometimes said that when you get a good despot he will do a great deal of good to those under him.

But that does not satisfy or make us lovers of despotism, for many reasons, but mainly for this, that you cannot always be sure whether the despot will be good. But, however good the despot is, I am not willing to have the name of England associated with the exercise of despotism over Christian and civilised people. A law has been passed in Cyprus, under which it is in the power of the governor of that island to banish from the island anybody he pleases, with the advice of the Cabinet or Council appointed by himself—to banish them from the island for any time he pleases, for any cause he pleases, without setting forth that cause, and without any legal trial or judicial proceeding whatever. In my opinion—I have said it before—in my opinion such a law is a disgrace to this country, and the only apology I can hear for such a law is this, that there was a law passed of somewhat the same kind, but, I think, only for a limited time, in consequence of its peculiar nature, in Singapore. Well, but Singapore is not in the slightest degree like Cyprus. It is a place inhabited not only by a multitude of promiscuous and many very lawless people, brought by sea from all parts of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, but it is likewise a place largely infested by pirates, who abound in that part of the world. Therefore, I will not say now, for I really am not able to say, whether such a law is justifiable in Singapore or not; but I say it would be no more a reason, even if it be justifiable in Singapore, for establishing it in Cyprus than it would be a reason for establishing it in England. It is said by Admiral Fanshawe Martin, and very truly, that there is no doubt, under the British Government, the material condition of the inhabitants of Cyprus will be decidedly improved. I have no doubt of that whatever; but experience shows us that mankind are not governed solely by what relates to their material condition. There is something else in the breast of man that is not satisfied by a mere reference to such considerations, and it is vain, therefore, to say, as has been

*Our despotic
rule in
Cyprus.*

said, that by giving them the advantage of better roads and better communications, and more equal laws, which I have no doubt will follow in time the British occupation, gratitude and attachment will come from the people.

*The case of
the Ionian
Islands.*

Now, we have got a case which is almost exactly in point. We became in 1815 protectors — Great Britain acquired the protectorate of the Ionian Islands, scattered round the western coast and southern parts of Epirus and of Greece. We did much good in these islands. We improved the roads; we improved the police; we promoted equal laws. We favoured religious toleration. We did many things that were right, but yet the people said to us, ‘This may be all very well; but we are Greeks, and we want to be united to the people of our own blood.’ And, therefore, instead of gratitude and attachment, a condition of things most disgraceful and painful arose in the Ionian Islands; and in the Ionian Islands this shameful power of banishing men without trial, for any cause approved by the head of the British Government, was, unfortunately, to our great disgrace, very long in use. It was abandoned, I am happy to say, a short time before we gave up that protectorate; but what I want to point out to you is, that these national affinities inspire feelings which are part of our nature, which are a good and an honourable part of our nature—that it is natural, legitimate, and right for people of a given race to be associated with their brethren of that race. And if such a thing were possible as that a portion of this island could be occupied by some foreign Power which, being extremely clever in administrative government, could manage it better than we do, that would not satisfy the inhabitants of that portion of the island. They would say, ‘We are Englishmen or we are Scotchmen, we want to be united with our brethren of our own race, and we want you, the foreigner, to go about your own business.’ Now the bulk of the people of Cyprus are Greeks; and rely upon it that if matters continue as they are, Greek sympathies, with

*The bulk of
the Cypriotes
are Greeks.*

the opening and extending emancipation of the East of Europe, —Greek sympathies will prevail in the island ; and instead of earning, even by the benefits you may confer upon them, far less earning by ordinances such as I have described, gratitude and attachment in the form of a disposition to continue in political connection with you, the more you improve their condition the quicker will be the development of this strong sentiment of nationality, and the more earnest the desire of the Greeks of Cyprus to be united with the free Greeks of the rest of the world. Now I have gone sufficiently, I think, into this one chapter of the case, and a very important chapter, indeed, it is, which relates to the possession of Cyprus. You were told it was to contribute to your safety, by being an admirable place for creating a defensive harbour like Malta, and for collecting a considerable portion of your military forces. You have not been able to keep your military forces there. You have done nothing to make it a place of naval defence and naval action, and you can do nothing unless you are prepared to expend millions upon millions for the purpose. You were told it was to make safe the road to India. The road to India is perfectly safe, gentlemen, so far as human power can make it safe, while you retain the command of the sea ; and if you had not the command of the sea, though there might be islands dotted at every twenty miles or every fifty miles upon the road, the road would not be safe, if the garrisons in those islands were confined within them, without your possessing supremacy at sea. Then, with regard, again, to the internal condition of Cyprus, you have gone there, not as the missionaries of freedom, but as the missionaries of absolute and despotic government—of that form of government which is odious to ourselves, and which, under no circumstances, amongst civilised and Christian races, ought we to be the instruments of imposing upon others.

I will say a few words before I close upon the most painful subject, perhaps, of all those that present themselves to us—I

*The war in
Afghanistan.*

mean the war in Afghanistan, that most unhappy, mischievous, and guilty war, which has gone through its first campaign, and its second campaign, and is now, apparently, to pass through its third campaign. I will ask you what you think of that war in point of right. We made a treaty in 1857 with the Ameer of Afghanistan, in which we bound ourselves not to enforce upon him the presence of a European Resident. Why was it that the Afghans were so jealous of the presence of a European Resident, which we think innocent enough? Because they were conversant with our practice in India, and because they knew that in India, wherever a European Resident was established, he was not a mere ambassador, but became the instrument through which the independence of the State was destroyed, and the supremacy of Great Britain over it established. Whatever the Afghans may be, they are freemen like you; they value their freedom as you do; they gave their lives for their freedom as you would give your lives for yours. And though we should have been very glad if they had been willing to receive a European Resident, I for my part think that it was a most guilty act, as well as a breach of faith, to force it upon them; more especially when we had it in our power, with their perfect goodwill, to secure, as we did secure, every practical purpose of communication, by sending to them loyal, intelligent, faithful Mohammedan subjects of the British Crown, brethren in religion to the Afghans, able to acquire their confidence, and carrying with them none of the apprehensions that attended the arrival of a European Resident. But now I ask you what has been the policy of this wretched war, and there I quote to you three lines that are not my own. They are three lines written by General Roberts, in a defence which he has sent home, with reference to a matter on which he has been severely charged, and on which, I am very happy to find, he has much to say that is of considerable weight in his defence. Here is his description of the condition in which you have placed yourselves in Afghanistan.

Listen to these words; they are very short: 'In addition to the natural hatred'—this is Sir Frederick Roberts' description—'in addition to the natural hatred which every Afghan feels towards a foreign invader, there is a strong underlying current of fanaticism, which, unless promptly checked, becomes at times, and especially as against a Christian enemy, uncontrollable.' There is a description of the position in which, through the action of the present Government, supported by a majority of the House of Commons, and uniformly supported by Lord Dalkeith, we have placed ourselves in Afghanistan. What are the two most powerful motives that act upon nations? The one of them is religion, and the other is patriotism, and Sir Frederick Roberts, recognising, as an able and intelligent man—no less than he is a skilful and vigorous general—recognising these two great principles, tells you that every Afghan regards you—the invader—with a natural hatred; and that besides that natural hatred, there is a current in him of religious fanaticism, which from time to time breaks out, and may even become uncontrollable. Is it right, or is it not right, that the Government of a country which calls itself Christian, and believes itself civilised, should be carried on upon principles like these? It is for you to decide. The whole matter has now come into your hands. It is no longer by Ministers, it is no longer by the Parliament—that, I believe, was dissolved this afternoon—that these things will be done. Your approval is to be signified by your votes for the members of the majority—asking to be again returned to Parliament. Your condemnation is to be signified by your returning men who have been in opposition to that majority. So much, gentlemen, for right; so much for the policy of your proceedings.

I want to know, in the point of view of glory—as we hear a great deal about glory—I want to know what glory has attended these operations. In 1878, before the war was made, the Emperor of Russia proposed to send a Russian Embassy

*The glory to
England.*

to Cabul, and the Ameer of Afghanistan said, 'I do not wish to receive that Russian Embassy.' The Russian Emperor said to him, 'You must, I will force you.' The Ameer of Afghanistan had been previously told by Lord Lytton that he was to be cast off by England; he knew that he was weak, he knew that Russia was strong, and with many a wry face, gentlemen, he refrained from resisting this Russian Embassy; and as he received it, naturally he received it with courtesy, as was wise on his part, desiring to get rid of it as soon as he could. Then we said to him, 'You shall receive an English Embassy.' He was asked to say ay or no. He had been compelled to receive the Russian Embassy, because we had not promised him support against Russia. He had no power to keep out the Russian Embassy. The Emperor of Russia could easily—far more easily than we could—have forced a way for his Embassy to Cabul. It was Russia who had promised not to exercise political influence in Afghanistan; it was Russia who, on account of her quarrel with the British Government, made this poor, miserable Ameer her victim, and, to create alarm in England, sent her Embassy to the Ameer. Now, supposing you had cause to complain of the Ameer for receiving that Embassy—and I do not admit you had any cause—you had much more cause to complain of Russia, for it was Russia that forced him; and if a wrong thing is done under compulsion, the man that compels is a great deal worse than the man who is compelled. But what did you do in your pursuit, forsooth, of glory under your Tory Ministry? You passed by the Emperor of Russia and exchanged with him civil words, accepted from him plausible excuses that meant nothing, and you poured forth the whole of your strength upon the head of this petty sovereign, who you knew had no power to resist you. It is not by proceedings such as that that glory is acquired. It was a mean, a paltry, and a shabby proceeding, as much as it was a cruel and an unjust proceeding. Do not suppose that you can come through these things without some suffering

yourselves. Here is a description of the state of your own soldiers marching back from Afghanistan after their experience of the severe climate and hard conditions under which warfare had there been carried on. I quote from a summary of the official narrative of the return march of the Peshawur Valley field force, which appeared in the *Times* of September 18, 1879, and here are their words: 'In the appearance of these gallant men as they made their final marches, their distress was very apparent. Their clothes were stiff and dirty from the profuse perspiration and dust. Their countenances betokened great nervous exhaustion, combined with a wild expression difficult to describe. The eyes injected, even sunken; a burning skin, black with the effect of sun and dirt; a dry tongue, a weak voice, and a thirst which no amount of fluids seems to relieve. Many of those men staggered rather than marched into their tents, and threw themselves down utterly incapable of further exertion until refreshed by sleep and food.' Well, these are things which our soldiers ought to be prepared to bear when they bear them in a good cause and from a real necessity, but it is a cruel thing to our gallant soldiers that these sufferings should be inflicted upon them for the purpose of giving effect to a wild, a wanton, and a guilty policy, reacting in nothing but mischief and dishonour to the country.

But now let us look at it again—let us look at the question *The cost.* in the light of economy, because we were told that this war was to be made in Afghanistan for the purpose of relieving our own military expenditure in India. It was said they must extend the frontier; but the frontier, when extended, would be so easily defensible that a smaller force would suffice, and consequently that there would be a great economy effected. What is the result?—that last summer, after the first campaign, before the second, the Under Secretary of State for India told us that he could not tell us what the amount of additional expenditure inflicted year after year upon India would be in consequence of this extended frontier, but he hoped it would

be moderate. He did not know what it was, but he hoped it would be moderate. I hope it will be moderate. I hope that you who are farmers will have a delightful season this year for your harvest. Whether you will have it or not I cannot tell, and the Under Secretary of State was exactly in the same position as to telling us whether this cost would be moderate or not. The economy, gentlemen, is gone, and what do you think now is the state of this cost? Upon the best authority, I believe I am justified in saying that not less than from 50,000 to 55,000 men are engaged in Afghanistan and near the frontiers of India, with the view of operations in that country, who are the very flower of your Indian army, and who are a number of men greater than you ever had in the Crimea to carry on the war against Russia. So much for economy.

The cruelty.

But do you attach some value to mercy? What measures does this war entail upon your generals and your soldiers? It entails such measures as these,—that when in January 1879 they were making war among the mountain-tops of the passes between India and Afghanistan, the tribes who inhabited them, naturally and not wrongfully, issued forth from their villages to resist. And where they had so issued forth, the villages were burned to the ground, and the women and the children, by natural and necessary consequence, driven forth to wander and to perish in the snow. These things, in my opinion, are horrible to the last degree. I am far from saying that they entail blame upon your military commanders. They obey the necessity of the case. The guilt lies with those who imposed upon them that necessity. The responsibility lay, first with the Indian Government; it lay next with the English Government who sanctioned the acts of the Indian Government; it lay next with the majority of the House of Commons who sanctioned the acts of the British Government; it will lie last with you, the people of Penicuik, and the rest of the people of the country—and with every one among you who gives by his vote his sanction to proceedings so dishonourable to the British name.

I will only mention one other point. You are told *The aggrandizement of Russia.* it is very imprudent to aggrandize Russia, and I have pointed out elsewhere how the policy lately pursued has tended to aggrandize Russia. This policy is the aggrandizement of Russia. What was our position in regard to Russia in India? We had between us two barriers; one was a barrier of mountains, the other was a barrier of men. Had we never invaded these mountain tribes, had we never instilled into their minds towards us that natural hatred which Sir Frederick Roberts so justly describes—we should have had the benefit of this double obstacle to defy the armies of Russia and all her might, had she been mad enough to make the attempt. But what have we done, gentlemen? The physical barrier which remains we did not make, and, happily for us, we cannot remove; for such seems to be our folly, that verily, if we could do it, I do not know but some Viceroy of India would not make the proposal. The physical barrier we cannot remove. The physical barrier is still in the way of Russia; but everything that we could do to open for the Emperor of Russia a path to the Afghan heart, and to provide that that natural hatred felt towards us should have its natural counterpart in attachment to Russia, we have done, and have striven all that was in our power, by means the most illegitimate, to effect the end the least desirable—namely, the aggrandizement of Russia.

I asked you what you thought of the quality of mercy. I quoted one instance. I may give you another. General Roberts has sent home an account of the Afghans whom he has executed, and I find among these Afghans that some were executed for the offence of inciting their fellow-countrymen to resist; they are not merely slain in action, but they are executed for that offence. I am not going to censure General Roberts. Such is the necessity of his position that I will not take into my hands the office of judging him. But I say, is not this monstrous, that we should place our-

selves in such a position that when the Afghan discharges the first duty of a patriot—namely, to endeavour to bring his countrymen to resist the foreign invader—that is to be treated as a sin, and is to be visited not merely by the chances of war, but by an ignominious death, even after resistance has ceased? I know not, I cannot answer for the interior of other men's minds, but I have striven and will strive to lay these things before you as I see them, and I will close by saying, what was the profession with which the Government entered upon this war? They said that they wished to have Afghanistan independent, strong, and friendly. As to the independence of Afghanistan, Afghanistan has forfeited, by treaty extorted by necessity from its ruler, all independence; for the whole of its foreign relations, under the treaty made last year at Gandamak, are given over into the hands of England. As to its strength, it was a country, it was a nation, it was a unity; it is now a chaos. One sovereign has been driven out of it, to perish by disease and anxiety; another sovereign is a prisoner in our hands; and there is no ruler from one end of the land to the other that can call it his own. So much for the strength of Afghanistan that you said you desired; so much for the independence of Afghanistan that the Ministers said they would secure. As to the friendliness of Afghanistan, carry away with you from this room, this night, the recollection of the burning words of General Roberts, that every Afghan regards with natural hatred the foreign invader of his native land.

XIV.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 1880.

SPEECH AT STOW.

THE pavilion specially erected in view of this meeting was packed with an audience numbering 3500 persons. Among the gentlemen on the platform were—Mr. Charles Tennant of the Glen; Mr. George O. Trevelyan; Sir Charles Farquhar Shand; Mr. Brown of Galahill; Mr. George Riddell of Corshope; Mr. Thomas Gibson, jun., Ferniehirst; Mr. Richard Lees, Galashiels; Mr. Walter Mercer, Stow. On the motion of Mr. Mercer, Mr. Macfie of Borthwickhall was called upon to preside.

Mr. Gladstone, who was most enthusiastically received, said:—

I am disposed to commence with a remark, perhaps trivial, upon the few words, sir, that fell from you. You stated that our friends, Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Cowan of Edinburgh, Mr. Charles Cowan, and others had wished to be here, but were not able in consequence of their engagements. Now, glad as we should have been to see them, at the same time there is another side to the question; for, upon my word, if they had been here I do not know where you would have put them. We have assembled at the extremity of the county, at the point farthest from the heart. It is a very good sign when the blood circulates as freely and warmly at the extremities as it does in the centre. And I think that if any man wished for satisfaction, if he had a doubt upon the question how the Liberal blood circulates in the county

of Midlothian, I would advise him to come down to Stow-to-day. We are here quite at the extremity of the county, and it is not for me to speak, in fact it would be ungracious and officious to speak, of the affairs of other counties. Notwithstanding, I have a suspicion that there may be gentlemen from neighbouring counties in this room. And if it be so, I hope, without any impertinent interference in their matters, it may be permitted me in one word to express my conviction that we are all fighting a common battle, and that we all hope, intend, ay, all believe, that we are to carry it to a triumphant issue. I congratulate you, gentlemen, you of the surrounding counties, upon the prospects which I find to be entertained among the whole of them—prospects which the most sanguine Liberal would not have ventured three weeks ago to present to his own mind. The only gentleman with whom I am disposed to condole is my friend Mr. Trevelyan. If he is to have a contest, I really believe that it is a contest which is so ridiculous that I am afraid he will find his election rather dull. We cannot complain of that in Midlothian, nor in any of the surrounding counties; and a great testimony is rendered to us by the manner in which the eyes of the country generally—we may say it without vanity—are fixed upon what is here taking place. We may be assured—we who are struggling for the Liberal cause in those counties—that we struggle not only for the particular seats to which our efforts have reference, but that we are struggling for a good and a great cause, and the sound of whatever we are able to perform will echo and re-echo throughout the land.

Finance.

You have come here, gentlemen, with some notice, I think, that I propose to address you on a subject not always interesting—a subject involving, more or less, a reference to figures—the subject of finance. But it is a subject which we cannot afford to drop. It is very far indeed from being the whole, I will not say even that it is the most important

part of the great case which we have in hand, and yet it is a vital and an essential part. And it is shown to be a vital and essential part by the pains which the opponent has taken to caricature and misrepresent the case. I do not use these words lightly. I myself will venture to assure you that in all that I have said, whether upon this department or upon any other department of a subject too wide for exhaustive treatment—for that really is the case in the controversy of the present election; for do what one will, one cannot satisfactorily overtake the whole—but I venture to assure you with regard to every portion of it, that I have laboured to the uttermost to attain in every point to strict and conscientious accuracy. And therefore it amuses me considerably when I read in some of the Tory papers, at the head of an article, ‘Inaccuracies of Mr. Gladstone.’ The last of them that I read was, ‘Inaccuracies of Mr. Gladstone on the Probate Duty.’ Well, I bethought myself, What are these inaccuracies? I will look into the article, for I am rather curious to know. I read the article—that is no small achievement—and will you believe, not only was there no proof of an inaccuracy in it, but there was not the slightest reference to any allegation of inaccuracy! The conclusion is evident—when the man put ‘inaccuracies’ at the head of his article, he knew his readers, his Tory readers, would never read his article. And consequently they would go away piously persuaded that I had been guilty of misstatements about this important question, and would report it in their neighbourhood, and induce the Tories of their neighbourhood to go with a better conscience to the poll in consequence of those inaccuracies which did not exist, and which are not to be found in the article. I will venture to tell you this: The whole defence set up by the Tories on the subject of finance depends upon the abuse of Parliamentary language, upon twisting into new senses words with which every member of Parliament who is well

informed is perfectly familiar in the old and usual sense, and upon adopting new methods of computation entirely unknown to the traditions of Parliament, for the purpose of giving a better colour to the case. I make that charge now; you shall judge by and by for yourselves whether I sustain it or not. But there is another charge that I made at the Corn Exchange in Edinburgh three months ago—that I made in a conditional and hypothetical form, because I was in hopes that I should be contradicted. The charge that I made was the foundation of an argument which I put in this form,—That bad as may be the figures presented by Her Majesty's Government, we never can be sure that we know the worst. And in support of that charge, I advanced what had taken place ten years ago with regard to the Abyssinian Expedition, when the Parliament and the country were told by a Tory Government that the charge of the war was five millions, and when we never discovered till after the election, and then discovered in a single moment, that the charge was not five millions, but nearly nine millions. I challenged the Government in the most distinct manner for an explanation of that very strange combination of facts, in order to remove the presumption which arose out of the facts, that the concealment had been an intentional concealment. Now, shortly after that speech of mine the Chancellor of the Exchequer took occasion to refer to many things that I had said, in a very lengthened speech at Leeds; but both at Leeds and ever since he and every other member of the Government have avoided that subject, and have declined to offer any explanation whatever of those formidable facts which I alleged—namely, that they told Parliament the charge was five millions; that they kept back the whole case until after the election; that, as it now appears, they studiously refrained from sending for any official information till the election was over; and when the election was over, then they sent their letter for information, knowing perfectly well what the infor-

*'We never can
be sure that
we know the
worst.'*

mation would be, because that is a matter of certainty; and then, the country was at length informed that it was nine millions. Consequently I cannot tell you, bad as is the state of things with respect to the finances of the country and with respect to the finances of India—after a case like that of the Abyssinian war, and the consideration of the fact that they kept back information which, substantially, there could not be a doubt they knew; after that, I cannot now say that we know the worst. Let us proceed, however, upon what we do know.

About ten days ago, I thought it my duty to point out to you in what sort of work the then expiring Parliament was engaged, and I told you that they were dealing with a law known in Scotland as the law of the Inventory Duty. I made these charges with regard to the Inventory Duty—first, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not know, and in consequence of not knowing it, most seriously misstated and misrepresented his own measure. Secondly, that he was passing that measure, which happened to be a most difficult and delicate subject—he was passing that measure at full gallop in the last days of an expiring Parliament, when it was totally impossible for Parliament to give it a just attention. Thirdly, that when he professed to reform the abuses of the law,—for he brought forward his measure as a measure of reform, while it places £800,000 a year in his pocket,—while he professed to reform abuses of the law, he not only did not reform, but he did not even make an allusion to the grossest and most burdensome abuse of that law, viz. that under it the successors of a man who has died are compelled to pay Probate Duty in the first instance not only upon their property, but upon their debts, and that they must take their chance of being subsequently able to convince the Inland Revenue that those debts have been ascertained and paid before they get a return of the duty, having been kept out of their money very probably and very usually for a number

*The Inventory
Duty Act.
The charges
made against
the Chancellor
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Exchequer.*

of years. Fourthly, that he not only left that abuse in existence, and said nothing about it, while professing to reform the law, but that he enormously aggravated that abuse, because he raised the rates of duty, and in raising the rate of duty raised it not only upon the property of the man deceased, but also upon that which was not his property, namely, his debts; so that in a number of cases, ay, and very generally, where a man formerly paid £10 of duty, we will say, upon his debts, which he ought not to have paid at all if that law were wisely constructed, and if it were found practicable so to construct it—where he formerly paid £10 on his debts, he would now pay £15 upon his debts. My next charge was, that while he professed to make the scale a just scale as between smaller and larger properties, he left a very considerable remaining inequality, which, when he was amending the law, he ought to have removed; but above all, and most of all, what I pointed out was this, that the law of Probate or Inventory Duty was already, before he meddled with it, a most burdensome and most unequal law as regarded personal property in comparison with realty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had, on behalf of the Government, assured the country in his address that they had never looked to the interest of any one class in preference to that of another class; and, therefore, I said to him, Why is it that, when the law is already most unequal in its bearing upon the class who own personal property in comparison with those who own real property—why do you come in and, seeing you never prefer class to class, pass in the dark—for I may call it in the dark—another law greatly aggravating this inequality, taxing afresh, and taxing heavily, the possessors of personal property, and leaving real property alone? To no one of those charges has the slightest answer been given. Other things have been answered that I never said. But I confess to you that when I gave my figures at Dalkeith, so startling were they that, though I had taken the best pains in my

*Not one of
these charges
has ever been
answered.*

power, yet I had a misgiving lest I should have made some mistake. Not the slightest fault has been found with any of them, and therefore I will give you them now in summary, that you may understand what is the way in which this Parliament, now, I am thankful to say, gathered to its forefathers, and never to rise again—what is the way in which this Parliament spent its last hours—a manner, I must say, tolerably worthy of the manner in which it had spent all the hours before. I took four cases. I took the case of two properties, both of them liable to the payment of rates, but one of them real, and the other personal property. Observe my charge is the gross and unjustifiable aggravation of the inequality between the taxes on personal and the taxes on real property. I took the case of two properties, both of them paying rates, and therefore equal in that respect—because that is the plea that is sometimes made by those who favour real property unjustly—that real property pays rates and personal property does not, which is very far indeed from being true. I took this case, and I found that of those two properties, both of them paying rates under the old law, when the owner of the personal property died, his successor would pay five times as much as the owner of the same amount of real property. Now, I must say I think that ought to have satisfied any landlord. But the Government and the Parliament, who never are favourable to one class as compared with another, stepped in, and, not satisfied with the five times rate put upon personalty, raised it to six and a half times.

The second case I took was the case of two properties, one personal and one real, but neither of them paying rates, and therefore exactly in the same position in that respect; and I found there that under the old law in the case of the personal property not paying rates, upon the death of the owner his heir was called upon to pay in the name of death duties eleven times as much as the owner of the same amount in real property. ('Shame.') Ay, shame! but that was the old

inequality. That was the inequality with which, if they meddled with it at all, they ought to have dealt in such a way as to diminish, if not remove, the anomaly. But, instead of that, this Government, which thinks of the public and never thinks of classes, and, above all, never thinks of the landlord—this Government, finding the inequality to be at the rate of eleven times, raised it to the rate of sixteen times; and sixteen times the tax paid by the incoming owner of the realty is that which in this particular case, which I then fully explained, is the tax to be paid by the incoming owner of the personalty.

Well, then, thirdly, in order to make my case more intelligible, I took the case of a landlord and his tenant. It would be very much the same thing in a case where a shop-keeper or tradesman has a house which he does not own, but only rents—if I had compared his case with that of his landlord, it would have been just the same as if I had taken the farmer; but as the Government has been particularly the farmers' friend—and that has been their most brilliant distinction all along—I thought I would show how the farmers' friend used the farmer. And there I found that if I took the case of a landlord owning a certain amount of money, and the case of a farmer owning the same amount of money, and both dying, under the old law the heir of the farmer paid seven times as much as the heir of the landlord; and this reforming Government, this impartial Government, that is entirely above considering the interests of class, was not satisfied with seven times as much, and has altered the law, so that under the new law, under which possibly some of us may be coming at this moment, they will pay nine times as much. I illustrated that, again, by the case of a landlord with his own tenant. Suppose the landlord of a farm worth £20,000, and suppose the stock of the tenant of that farm to be worth £5000. The landlord and the tenant both dying, the son of the tenant, when he comes in and takes £5000 worth of property, under

the old law would have paid about half as much again for his £5000 as the landlord paid for his £20,000. They were not satisfied with that, and now, under the new law of Sir Stafford Northcote, the son of the tenant will pay more than twice as much duty in succeeding to his father's £5000 as the son of the landlord will in succeeding to the £20,000. Now, of all things, that which I most abhor—I will not say regret—would be to be to you the vehicle of false information upon any subject; but I am now in a condition to say, inasmuch as those figures of mine have been scrutinized all over the country, and inasmuch as Sir Stafford Northcote himself has written a long letter to Lord Dalkeith to endeavour to patch up the case—I am now in a condition to say to you that those figures may be taken by you as certainly and exactly true. If they are true, I need not say to you how important they are, and what a light they cast upon the manner in which this Government has been proceeding all along as a Government of classes, a Government of interests, a Government that was always ready to prefer any class or any interest to the interest of the public at large.

Well now, gentlemen, I pass from that law, and the next subject that I will refer to is a subject about which a great number of Liberals here and there scattered over the country have been sadly perplexed by the sophisms, cobwebs of sophism, that have been ingeniously woven for them by the Tory spiders that are busy at work, and that want to induce them to go into the cobweb, and there get eaten up. Now, will you allow me to tell you what in Parliamentary language a surplus is, because all sorts of darkening phrases have been used where, in truth, the thing is as clear and as distinct to any one acquainted with Parliamentary usage as it can possibly be? A surplus, in Parliamentary language in this country, means one of two things. It means a surplus upon time gone by which is actual, which has actually been received; and it also means, and is even more commonly

What a 'surplus' means.

used to mean, a surplus which has not yet been received, but which is reckoned or calculated upon the income of the coming year. And that kind of surplus, estimated on the income of the coming year, is in reality the basis of our whole financial legislation. Whatever financial legislation is undertaken in this country, or has been usually undertaken—if this Government should continue in office I cannot tell you what innovations they may introduce in that or any other particular, but the surplus estimated or reckoned for the coming year has been the basis of our financial legislation. With regard to what is called the realized surplus, gentlemen, that is a different matter, and you will see yourselves how wise it is that we never should have a large realized surplus. What would be the meaning of it? Some people say, ‘Oh, the six millions was not in the treasury!’ That is what they allege. Most certainly not. Would not it have been great folly to have six millions in the treasury bearing no interest and doing no good? The law of this country does not allow unnecessary money to accumulate in the Exchequer, any more than any rational man among you would allow his balance at his banker’s to accumulate and to remain at a figure totally beyond his probable wants. Therefore the law of this country is this, gentlemen, as to realized surpluses—for I greatly doubt whether the Tory writers even know the elementary facts of the case—but the law is even this—this is perhaps a curious matter, and not without interest—the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the close of the financial year presents the year’s account. Suppose it is a very good account—not such accounts as we have been seeing lately, but such as we have known in other times—he says, ‘My income has been £75,000,000, my expenditure has been £73,000,000, therefore I have a surplus of £2,000,000.’ He says that; everybody takes that as true; they know the meaning of it. The meaning of it is that the charge of the year is £2,000,000 less than the revenue of the year. But he has not got that

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surplus even of £2,000,000; and why? Because the law provides that the actual surplus or deficiency, as the case may be, shall be ascertained, not once a year, but four times a year; and four times a year, at the end of each quarter, the surplus of the twelve months then preceding shall be laid out in the reduction of the National Debt. Consequently, cast aside all this nonsense that you are told about realized surpluses. There is no realized surplus at any time in the Exchequer of this country, excepting at intervals of three months and three months; and the real question is, first of all, that you shall know how you have been doing for the year that you close, and that you know by comparing the expenditure and the charge, though you may have disposed, and wisely disposed, of the money that constitutes the difference between them. That is the first thing that is necessary. And the second is that you should know what are the probable incomings and outgoings of the year that is to come. Now that, I think, is clear enough to gentlemen like you; and as I go on I will apply that principle, and then you will see how utterly futile are the attempts that have been made by our adversaries to darken this question, to keep the truth, which is a very ugly truth, from coming into your view.

Well, there is one other absurd method of speech used by the adversary which for a moment I must expose, and it is this. I have no doubt you are all familiar with it, for every day of my life I get statements of it. They say, 'Ah, don't look at the taxation at this particular moment; consider the average taxation.' And they say, 'If you will look at the average taxation of the present Government and of the late Government, you will find that they are very much the same.' I rather think they show in the case of the Income-tax that what they call the average Income-tax of the late Government was rather more than the average Income-tax of the present Government. Now, suppose the case of a landlord with an agent who manages his

The 'average taxation.'

The fallacious arguments founded upon this method of speech.

estate. He has got a very embarrassed estate, and he gets an exceedingly good agent ; and the agent goes patiently to work and gradually brings round the concerns of the estate for a period of five years, so that, whereas he had no net income at all at the beginning of the five years, at the end of the five years he has got a net income, we will say, of £5000 a year. Well, that is the state of things for the five years of that agent's labours. But the agent dies, and the landlord chooses another agent, and the other agent finds an income of £5000 a year, and he is a very bad manager of the estate, and every year, instead of further increasing the £5000, he diminishes it by £500, so that the first year he only raises £4500, the second year he only raises £4000, the third year £3500, the fourth year £3000, the fifth year £2500, and the sixth year £2000. The landlord finds this out. He does not like it at all. He says, ' I had an agent before who gradually cleared my affairs, who did not in any way oppress my tenants, but, without in the slightest degree pressing upon them, he raised my income from nothing to £5000 ; and you came in, and what have you done for me ? Sir, you found an income of £5000 ; you have been here six years, and instead of increasing it, you have reduced it to £2000.' Yes, but what does the agent say ? The agent says, ' My dear sir, that is a fallacious way of looking at it.' He says, and it is quite undeniable, ' If you will look, sir, at the average which you received—at the average which you received under the former agent, it was only £2500 a year ; if you will look at the average which you have received under my agency, it is £3250 a year. Therefore, I am the good agent, and that fellow, who is now happily dead, was the man that was deceiving you. He was—what does Mr. Cross call him in Lancashire ?—one of the most dangerous of men. Whatever you do, you should never entrust the care of your affairs to any fellow such as that.' I am glad if this relieves for a moment the dryness of the subject, and entertains you ; but it is strict and literal

fact. It is just as literal fact as any column in any ledger in the country.

Well, now, there are two other subjects to which I must refer. The first of these subjects is the payment of the National Debt of the country. We are told that a great deal has been done by the late Government—I beg pardon—the present Government—I am premature in calling it the late Government—a great deal has been done in the payment of the debt. Sir Stafford Northcote says in his address that he has paid eighteen millions of money, and I rather think that he has amended that in consequence of his having forgotten for the moment—which is a perfectly natural thing—I mean seriously, it is a thing that might happen to any one—it does not show carelessness—I believe he would amend that, and would say that they had paid twenty millions of debt. Now, it is necessary here also that I should trouble you with an explanation, and it is very important to the merits of the case on hand. We have in this country, and we have had for a long time, in operation two modes for the payment of the debt—two methods, I will say two machines or instruments, for the repayment of the National Debt. Between them both we have done but little; I am often ashamed to think how little it is when we look across the Atlantic to our Republican and Democratic cousins on the other side; and though we suppose that a Democratic Government is a Government that never looks to anything but the interests of the moment, I blush up to my eyes when I see that under that Democratic Government the people have been patiently bearing the most grievous and harsh system of taxation for a long time in order to relieve their posterity of the heavy debt incurred during the Civil War. However, what little we have done—and it is a poor affair taken together, whether we consider the best or the worst of us—is done in two ways.

*The reduction
of the National
Debt.*

One of those ways is, as regards the Government of the day, perfectly compulsory. They have no more means of escaping

The compulsory method by terminable annuities.

from it, gentlemen, than one of us has—they have no more means of stopping the process by which that compulsory payment of debt is carried on than any one sitting in this room has. The other method is voluntary. The compulsory method is carried on through the medium of what are called terminable annuities—annuities sometimes given for lives and sometimes given for terms of years, but always given by law, so that the payment of the annuity, which is partly a payment of interest and partly a repayment of capital, is a legal claim upon the Government, and were the Government to refuse it, the courts of law would compel them to pay. Therefore it is a purely automatic, a purely involuntary process as far as the Government is concerned. The other method is the voluntary method, voluntary on the part of the Government, and that is by always endeavouring to have—and where the endeavour is honestly made it usually succeeds—always endeavouring to have, and usually succeeding in having, a revenue for the year which shall more than cover the whole charge, so that the difference between the two may be applicable for the payment of the debt. Now, you will see at once that the amount of debt that has been repaid by the compulsory process, although it may be a matter very important for ascertaining the condition of the country, is a matter of no importance at all for ascertaining the merits of the Government, because the Government cannot help paying the money unless they repeal the law. They cannot repeal the law except by the co-operation of the Parliament; and I am bound to say that, weak as the Liberal party were in the last Parliament, I believe we were strong enough to have prevented such a financial revolution as would have been the repeal of the laws under which terminable annuities are paid.

In former times our forefathers, our immediate forefathers, men of forty, fifty, or sixty years ago, when the members of the Government spoke of paying off debt, never dreamt of referring to what they had paid in the shape of

terminable annuities—they only spoke of what they had paid by actual surpluses of revenue over charge. I believe I was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer who brought into use the method of reckoning the decreased value of terminable annuities. You will see that it is important, if you are every year paying off, in the shape of annuity, a portion of your debt—it is important, to know your real condition, that you should know how much you have paid off in that way. I will give you an illustration now of the importance of that process. It is always said that at the close of the Revolutionary war the debt of this country was eight hundred millions; but, gentlemen, that is not so. The debt in perpetual annuities was eight hundred millions, but besides the perpetual annuities there was another hundred millions standing to be paid in the form of terminable annuities. Consequently, I brought in this method of reckoning the value of terminable annuities—not in order to glorify the Government for paying what they could not help paying, but in order to let the country know exactly where they stood. That was the history of the change. Well, I think that when a Government, as was the case with the Government of Sir Robert Peel, and as I will presume to say on behalf of my colleague, Mr. Lowe—whose name is very seldom mentioned, at least in any Tory assembly, except for some taunt or skit—when a Government make great efforts to keep the charge within the revenue, and in consequence are able to show considerable surpluses of revenue over charge, all that goes to the payment of debt, and for that description of debt the Government may fairly take some credit. It is no easy matter to secure those surpluses—it is only to be done by care, and vigilance, and economy; and so far they are entitled to credit; and no doubt in giving information to the country, the Government that has done that may very well add what it has paid in the compulsory way, but that compulsory payment is not a matter which in any way redounds to their credit.

But what are we to say of the present Government, which has not nearly succeeded in keeping the annual income of the country up to the annual charge? All that they have paid out of the annual income towards the reduction of debt has been four millions. The deficiencies that they have incurred have been eight and a quarter millions; consequently they are four and a quarter millions to the bad upon the only account which, in the slightest degree, touches or involves their financial merits. If they have paid twenty millions, not only is it true that every farthing of those twenty millions has been paid by operation of law which they had no power to suspend, but this also is true, that twenty-four millions have been paid by operation of law which they had no power to suspend, and that out of that twenty-four millions, against that twenty-four millions, they have reborrowed four millions in order to cover their own deficiencies. That is the fashion in which the financial statements of the Government are made up. I think I can illustrate the merits of Tory finance by reference to another finance that has become very famous of late years, as many of the subjects of Queen Victoria know to their cost—I mean Turkish finance. Now the Turks have not been able to levy a revenue equal to the charge and expense of their Government; and they say, as Sir Stafford Northcote says, they are very reluctant to tax the people. Therefore they have not levied a revenue equal to the charge of their Government, and of their ordinary creditors not one has received a shilling in the way of interest upon the Turkish debt for now a good many years—I think some five or six years. But there is a portion of the Turkish debt where the payment of the interest fortunately does not altogether depend on the will of the Turkish Government. It was called the Egyptian Tribute Loan; and the Turks had provided, in order to give satisfaction to their creditors, that the Egyptian tribute, instead of being paid into the Treasury at Constantinople, should be paid direct into the Bank of England. That was a

The reductions of debt by the Tory Government have been entirely under this head.

An illustration from Turkish finance.

very different story. I will not trouble you with the details; there was some part even of that Egyptian tribute, of what was due to the creditors, which the Turkish Government contrived to finger. But in the main the Egyptian tribute loanholder has been paid the interest on his portion of the Turkish debt, while the ordinary creditor of the Turkish Government has been paid nothing. Now you will see the analogy I am going to draw. The Egyptian tribute loanholder is in the condition of the terminable annuity—that is to say, he gets his payment by a process completely independent of the will of the Government. But the ordinary Turkish creditor was in the position of one dependent entirely on the will of the Government. If the Turkish Government had levied a surplus, then he would have had a claim to be paid out of that surplus, but as it was he got nothing. The other got something. What would you have thought of the Turkish Government if they had come forward and taken credit for the money paid to the Egyptian tribute loanholder, which did not depend on their will in any degree? He got it without their will; he got it because it never went near the Turkish treasury; and in exactly the same way the twenty millions of debt paid off by the present Government have been paid off because they had no power to stop it—because it passed through their Treasury, but went out of it as it came into it, by the operation of law, without being touched in any degree by their discretion. Now I have said that the whole payment of debt, whatever it is, has been an involuntary payment on the part of the present Government; and having said that, and having said that upon the account, when the balance is cast of annual surplus and deficiency, they are four and a quarter millions on the wrong side—having said that, I will venture to say for the late Government, and not in the slightest degree claiming any merit for it at all, but simply stating the fact that our opponents may shake it if they can, that by that optional action, dependent entirely

upon the measures of the Government and the assent of Parliament, and upon the free will of those parties, the last Parliament but one secured the application of seventeen millions of money in the shape of annual surplus of revenue over charge to the reduction of the debt of the country, instead of falling short of the charge of the country on the annual account, and thereby adding to the debt of the country. Well, there is a great deal more of complication that has been introduced into this matter with which, I think, I need not trouble you. A practice has arisen of late years for which the present Government are in no way to blame, of lending out very largely the public money; and the consequence of that is, that while the public is debtor to a very large amount, it is a creditor to a large amount; and Sir Stafford Northcote has, for the first time, adopted the practice, which was never done before, of reckoning against the public debt all the assets that he thinks he possesses. Well, it is not here that such a matter as that—a question of practical finance—should be discussed. All that I will say is this, that in comparing the action of the present Government with that of the last Government, it stands thus: If you choose to reckon the assets of the public to the credit of the Government, we reduced nearly twenty millions more of debt in our five years than Her Majesty's Government have done in their six years. If you leave out the assets, it comes to the same thing. We reduced twenty millions of money and more; they reduced nothing at all.

But that is not all; for this Government when they began got, as it is called, upon the high horse. They said, 'We are not satisfied with those petty, trivial modes that have been in operation for paying off the National Debt.' They said, 'We must have something larger, more comprehensive and more permanent—more worthy of a great country.' So they introduced what is called a sinking fund—and a sinking fund, indeed, it has been, for it has sunk very nearly down to nothing at all. This sinking fund was to have

done great things somewhere about the year 1905, I think. I think that there was a prospect given to us that from two to three millions a year would be steadily applied under it to the reduction of the debt. And what do you think is the sum applicable to it for the year 1880-81, according to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? What is the amount of his sinking fund? Not two millions, nor three, nor one and a half, nor one—it is £174,000. He proposes, with a sinking fund of £174,000, to pay off a debt which amounts to seven hundred and seventy millions of money. I, being rather fond of these computations, have just reckoned, as well as I could, how long he would be about paying off the National Debt; and I found that if you will only continue him and the Tory party in office long enough, there is a probability that, with their sinking fund of £174,000, they would pay off the National Debt in the moderate term of 4500 years. Well, I have done with the National Debt, and I congratulate you upon that fact—at present done with it, I mean, as far as discussion is concerned; we have not done with it in any other shape. On the contrary, I am afraid that our long acquaintance with it is one which will be handed down to various generations yet to come, and that the line of those generations who are still to know of our National Debt will be longer or shorter in proportion to the greater or less disposition which the nation may show to continue a Tory Government in office.

Now with regard to the question of deficit, gentlemen. At the time when I had the honour to visit Scotland in November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told us that there had been gross exaggeration about the deficit, and that some had even said it would be nine millions; that these exaggerations were absurd, but that it would be about six millions of money. Well, now, it was true that some gentlemen, not having the means of official information, had said—I was not one of them—had said that the deficit would probably be about nine

The deficit and its amount.

millions at the end of the financial year, which closes to-morrow, March 31; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer had all the means of financial information, and in the month of November last he ought to have been able to tell us within a very moderate sum what the deficit would be at the end of the year. He told us that it would be six millions; and what was it? I now give it you,—not as it is, for I do not know, but as he told us three weeks ago. At the beginning of the month of March—only four months after he had told us it would be six millions, he had to stand up in his place in the House of Commons and say that it was eight and a quarter millions; so that actually those unofficial prophets, without any official aid for estimating the revenue and charge, were a great deal nearer to the point—for they were only three-quarters of a million wrong—than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was wrong by two and a quarter millions.

Well, now, about this deficit of eight and a quarter millions. Let us see now how the present Government deal with it, and how Tory and Liberal Governments as they succeed one another deal with one another in the matter of finance. We handed over to the Tory Government a surplus approaching six millions of money. I have told you how that was a surplus unrealized, and why it was unrealized. It was the calculated surplus for the coming year, and it was known beforehand to be practically certain. Events showed that the calculation was perfectly correct. That was what was handed over to the present Government. What did the last Government receive from their predecessors? Instead of receiving from their predecessors—the former Government of Lord Beaconsfield—a surplus of either six or any other number of millions of money to dispose of, we received four millions of charge for the Abyssinian war, which had been kept back from the notice of the public until the election was over and the Liberal Government came into power. We handed over, as I say, a surplus approaching £6,000,000. What do we get now? I

What did the Tories receive in 1874 from their predecessors?

What did the Liberals receive in 1868 from their predecessors?

have told you that the deficits were eight and a quarter millions of money. Of these deficits the Chancellor of the Exchequer has charged about one and a quarter million upon the year 1881, and the other £7,000,000, gentlemen, are a present which the Tory party and the Tory Parliament of 1874 generously, loyally, magnanimously bequeath to the coming Liberal Parliament of 1880. So that the state of things which is proposed is this, that when a Tory Government comes into office it shall amuse you with tales about glory, and greatness, and extension of empire, and spend your money, and go out of office, leaving the bill to be paid by their Liberal successors. Seven millions of debt is the bequest which is thus to be handed over.

Now, I want to go into one thing more upon this subject of finance, and it is this. You read the address of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and you found in it that he has paid £18,000,000 of the National Debt, and you hear nothing to the contrary. He says that is the reduction of the debt. Well, now, there was a former case—some of you are old enough to recollect it; I am as familiar with it as if it were yesterday—in which a Liberal Government had been practising, unfortunately, a lax finance. It was the weak point, undoubtedly, in the constitution and practice of a Liberal Government—the Government of Lord Melbourne—which, I think, in every other chapter of public action was an excellent Government, and which left behind a multitude of monuments of its enlightened views and its assiduous and successful labours. But its finance was bad, gentlemen; and the bad finance of that Government, if you recollect, was in great part the ruin of that Government. It discredited the Government so throughout the country, that in the year 1841, in a very great degree upon that ground, Sir Robert Peel overcame the Liberal Government and came in with his followers, of whom I was one, in the month of September 1841, with a majority of eighty or ninety at his back. But if the Liberal Govern-

*The Tory
method of
computing
the reduction
of debt.*

ment of that day had been as clever as Sir Stafford Northcote, if they had chosen to reckon the compulsory payment of National Debt, and to set it against the deficiencies they had created, they would have made out exactly the same case as Sir Stafford Northcote's in principle. Sir Stafford Northcote says he has been paying off debt—he does not mention the, as I think, rather important fact that he could not help paying it, and that he has not paid a shilling he could help paying; and that, on the contrary, he has gone £4,000,000 to the bad, wherever his will and option were concerned. But the deficits of the Melbourne Government, adding them all together, were a little less than those of Sir Stafford Northcote. His are eight and a quarter millions; theirs were seven and a half millions. But against their seven and a half millions they had paid off nearly thirteen millions in terminable annuities. Therefore, if that Government had been as clever as Sir Stafford Northcote, they might have gone to the country in 1841 and said, 'Do not believe those who say we have been mismanaging your finances. The National Debt is really £6,000,000 less than it was when we came into office.' But this I must say, I do not think it was want of talent on the part of the members of that Government or their party that prevented them resorting to such a plea. I think it was because they would not condescend to such a plea. They had not managed well or successfully the finance of the country, and, having failed in that particular of their duty, they did not choose to cover the failure by the invention of a plea which is totally void of all solidity and relevancy in regard to the merits of the administration.

In these matters of finance I am anxious above all other things to leave clear impressions, and therefore I will give you in three sentences a summary such as I think you will understand. The Liberal Government of 1868 inherited a charge for Abyssinia of from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 against them. During their existence they imposed £3,000,000 of

taxes. During that same existence they remitted £15,400,000 ; the balance of remissions was £12,400,000. The Tory Government, instead of beginning with a charge of £4,000,000 handed over to them, inherited a surplus of over five and a half millions. They remitted about £5,000,000 of taxes ; they imposed £6,550,000 ; so that they imposed a balance of £1,450,000 instead of remitting £12,400,000. If we take away from the credit of their account, as we are entitled to take away, their inherited surplus, then the account stands thus. They remitted £487,000 — I will call it half a million, very willing to make them that small present for the purpose of keeping them in good humour under present circumstances—they remitted half a million ; they imposed six and a half millions ; the real balance of taxation imposed by the present Government is a balance of six millions of money against £12,400,000 remitted by the last Government. That is the state of the case as respects the finance of the two Governments. I ought to tell you that I have pursued all through the method of round numbers, because, in truth, if one gives long lists of ciphers it makes the thing unintelligible, and substantial accuracy may be had, and I venture to assure you has been attained by me in the statements that I have laid before you.

Now, relieving you now from further financial discussion, if I may still detain you for a few minutes, I will say a few words upon a subject to which our opponents are very fond of referring. They appear to think that it will be in their power to persuade the people of England to vote for them by showing that various foreign newspapers, and possibly one or two foreign Governments, think that Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues ought to be retained in office. I do not in the slightest degree wish to overvalue or to undervalue foreign opinion. In my view, foreign opinion ought never to direct the opinion of the people of this country. But I think that wherever foreign opinion is impartial opinion,

*The Govern-
ment quote in
their defence
the opinion of
other nations.*

there it ought to have some weight with us in the formation of our judgments, when it is addressed to criticizing acts we have done or omissions we have made. I make these remarks upon the conduct of the Tory party in this respect. They cite various newspapers from France, from Germany, and from Austria. I do not admit the opinion of the people of these countries, possibly excepting one—I do not admit the opinion of the people of these countries to be adverse to us—I mean to the Liberal party. I do not admit that the people of these countries have disapproved of the conduct of the Liberal party. I believe, for example, that in Austria, where there are very influential portions of the people, particularly the Hungarians, the Magyars, who have violently disapproved of the conduct of the Liberal party—I believe the whole Slavonic, or nearly the whole Slavonic population of Austria, which is twice or three times as large as the Magyar population, has sympathised with or approved of the conduct of the Liberal party. What I wish to observe is this, that even though it were true that the people of France, Germany, or Austria disapproved of our course, there are some other countries in the world besides these. I for one cannot think it a fact wholly unimportant, and I am afraid it is indisputable, that the conduct of Her Majesty's Government has utterly alienated from the people of this country the feelings, not of the Russian Government, to which I should attach very little consequence, but the feelings of eighty millions of people who form the Russian nation. They have certainly estranged twenty millions of Christians of the Turkish Empire, in whose ears the name of England, which they would have embraced, which they would have almost worshipped, would we but have given them fair play,—in whose ears that name is now little less than odious, as associated with the maintenance of a cruel, wanton, and debasing tyranny over them. I have never heard it said that the 30,000,000 of Italians disapprove of the conduct of the Liberal party; and my

The foreign nations who have been estranged from us.

Russia.

Christian Turkey.

belief is that the Italians—who have been long themselves engaged in the struggle for freedom, at length satisfactorily attained—remember that they received important aid from the Liberal party, with Lord Palmerston at its head, in the achievement of that great consummation; but that the party with Lord Beaconsfield at its head, and in his own person particularly, was always adverse to the freedom of Italy. But there are another set of States in Europe to whose opinions I for one attach considerable importance. *The smaller free States.* They are the smaller free States of Europe—Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal. I have never seen one single citation, I have never heard one single reference to the opinions of the twenty millions of Europeans inhabiting those smaller States as having been favourable to the policy of the present Administration. But take one other step across the Atlantic, go to the great country America, with her eight-and-forty millions of population, our own kith and kin—to that country which will always have some predisposition to view the course taken by an English Government with favour on account of the blood relationship between us. *The opinion of America.* The opinion of America I have had some means of estimating and of knowing, and I affirm confidently—and I believe that the opinion of those who have intercourse with America will sustain me—the opinion of America, as far as it has been expressed upon European controversies, has been distinctly favourable during these years to the action of the Liberal party; so that, if it were a question of numbers, the enormous majority of the people of Christendom have favoured the action of the Liberal party, and not disapproved of it. But it is not a question of numbers only, and I should wish you to consider for one moment what is the value now of the foreign opinion favourable to English policy. That is a question of very great importance. I will presume to give you my own view of it. When I am told that a British Administration has got a hold

upon the opinion of foreign countries, and I am asked to congratulate myself upon that fact, before I give myself any congratulations whatever, I must ask another question—In what light does that country look at Great Britain? Is that country impressed with the belief that Great Britain, on account of her detachment from narrow and selfish interests in European questions, can be trusted to do justice, can be looked to as an umpire among contending nations? If it is so, then I say that it is impossible for us—impossible for any Government, in my opinion, to receive, even from the perfection of prudence, a higher honour than the confidence and the approval of foreign States. But that unfortunately is not always the case. It sometimes happens that a foreign Government is not admiring Great Britain for her impartiality, is not looking to her as an arbitrator, is not trusting her as a friend of peace and freedom, but looking to her as a possible partizan who may join in the schemes that that country may entertain of aggression and aggrandizement. And if there be any country whose Government is, or is suspected of being, engaged in those schemes of aggression and aggrandizement, and I regret to say that at this moment such countries may perhaps be found, then I say that the approval of the Ministerial press of such a country as that for the policy of an Administration here, so far from being a title to your confidence, ought to be, on the contrary, a signal for your jealousy, if not a word of command for your condemnation.

You are sometimes told that Liberal Governments abstained from all concern in foreign affairs. A more gross and a more ludicrous untruth never was propagated either in this or in any other country. But I will tell you this, that I would far rather abstain from foreign affairs altogether than have gnawing at my heart the conviction that the approval we got on the Continent, and the flattery we got on the Continent, and the courting of official presses or of official men, was only due

to a belief entertained that we were weak enough to hold ourselves ready to be drawn into Continental quarrels for the purpose of promoting the selfish aims of this or that particular Government. If, on the contrary, you tell me that Great Britain is in a condition to assert and exercise an enormous moral influence in the transactions of Europe, I heartily agree with you; and I will give you an example of the way in which that principle has been acted upon by a Liberal Government. I will give you the latest example, that of one who is now dead—of my late friend and colleague, Lord Clarendon. When Lord Clarendon came into office in 1868, various questions in existence over the Continent and in Asia appeared to him to admit of friendly intervention on the part of the Government of Great Britain. Unhappily his career was cut short by death after a period of only eighteen months; but in that time he had settled a serious and menacing difficulty between the Turkish Empire and the Persian Empire upon their borders; he had settled a very difficult and likewise a menacing question that had arisen between France and Belgium in respect to the control over a railway which was believed to be not only a commercial, but a military and strategical controversy. He had addressed his mind to the question whether it was possible to induce the two great States, the Empire of France as it was then, and the Empire of Germany as it is now, to do something for the cause of peace by the reduction of their armies. He did prevail upon the French Government to make an offer of a limited but still a certain amount of disarmament, which would have been a beginning in the right course. He did not prevail upon the German Government. The German Government answered—and I am far from presuming to condemn them—the German Government answered that their army was less than that of others, and that it was not possible for them, therefore, to make a corresponding reduction, as they might have done if their army had been equal. But

The moral influence of Great Britain.

How this was used in 1868 by Lord Clarendon.

I am only showing you what numbers of opportunities offer without noise, without ostentation, without vainglory, in the common course of affairs, which necessarily brings up, from time to time, sources of difficulty and of danger between States — what multitudes of cases there are in which the unostentatious interference of England may contribute to the good of Europe and of the world. Having therefore expressed my belief that, in a position of impartiality and of unselfishness as to European questions, we have entrusted to us a mission by which, in our foreign policy, it is in our power to effect very great good for mankind, for the cause of justice, of freedom, and of peace, I will say that, apart from such a course of proceeding as that, I am jealous of all those references to foreign opinion with which the Tory papers are now so full. I have known such cases happen before. I remember very well that in 1834, when Sir Robert Peel came into office, some of his friends injudiciously attempted to work upon the mind of the English people, and produced a reaction unfavourable, and even unfair to him, by showing how, in the foreign capitals of the north, the accession of a Tory Government to power was hailed by the press representing the foreign Governments.

But I remember the same thing happened in 1850. Lord Palmerston was assailed by a formidable combination in connection with his conduct in the affairs of Greece. I was one of those who, like Sir Robert Peel, disapproved of that conduct, and I took my course accordingly; but what I am going to say has no reference to the affairs of Greece. There was an attempt made upon broader grounds to cover Lord Palmerston with suspicion and with discredit because the foreign press were adverse to him. Why, gentlemen, those who are now quoting the foreign press for their own benefit are sometimes apt to tell us that they are great admirers of Lord Palmerston. I want to know what British Minister ever was the object of so much obloquy in this same foreign press as

was Lord Palmerston ? And what happened in that debate ? Member after member appealed to Vienna, to St. Petersburg, to Berlin, for authority to condemn Lord Palmerston ; and Lord Russell made a reply which I well remember, and which deeply impressed me at the time. He said : ‘ All these references to your foreign newspapers and foreign opinion, what do they show ? They show that my noble friend has not been the Foreign Minister of Austria, has not been the Foreign Minister of Russia, has not been the Foreign Minister of Prussia, but has been the Foreign Minister of England.’ I care not whether it be language of intimidation, language of censure, language of flattery, to one and all I am absolutely deaf. No foreign press, no foreign declamation, be it what it may, should induce us to deviate one inch from the path which is a path of regard—steady, unflinching regard—to the interests of our own Empire ; and above all, which is a path of undeviating respect for its duty and its honour.

XV.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1880.

SPEECH AT WEST CALDER.

DR. YOUNG of Lymeſield was called to the chair and introduced Mr. Gladſtone, who was received with loud cheers. He ſaid :—

Dr. Young, and Ladies and Gentlemen,—I believe that about three hours have paſſed ſince our political opponents held a meeting in this place. I rejoice to hear that the proceedings of that meeting were perfectly orderly, and that all that they had to ſay was liſtened to with kindly attention by the people of Weſt Calder. And what I hope is that, while your zeal and enthuſiaſm are certainly not inferior to thoſe of any other portion of the county, ſo you will, to the very end of this conteſt, emulate the reſt of the county, as in your determination ſo likewiſe in your patience, and your thorough undeviating regard for legality and order.

Now, I need not ſay that I am not pleading on my own behalf, becauſe my recollection of the hearing which I had in Weſt Calder in the month of November laſt is a great deal more than enough to relieve me from any apprehenſion on that ſcore, that either your intelligence or your endurance might give way under any infliction I might be tempted to impoſe upon you. So I go ſtraight to the point. This is the laſt occaſion, and therefore in one ſenſe the moſt ſolemn of all occaſions, on which I ſhall have an opportunity of addreſſing this conſtituency before the

election arrives. I will therefore pointedly call your attention to the situation in which we stand. A great State trial is proceeding. That State trial is the trial of the majority of the late House of Commons at the bar, not merely of public opinion, but at the bar of this nation, legally and constitutionally assembled in its several constituencies to pronounce judgment of acquittal or condemnation on the members of that majority. Perhaps it may be a little interesting to you that, before I go into other matters, I should report to you briefly—as I have had excellent means of information thus far—the formal progress which has been made in that remarkable State trial. And, first, I hold in my hand the latest telegram from a metropolitan borough, the election in which had a great effect in emboldening the present Government to dissolve the Parliament—the election, I mean, in the important borough of Southwark, where, you will recollect, they gained by a small majority an important triumph in the month of February last. Here is the result, gentlemen, of the Southwark election which took place yesterday, with much larger numbers at the poll:—‘Southwark election. Result—Mr. Cohen (Liberal), 9693—Mr. Thorold Rogers (Liberal), 9521—Mr. Clark, the victor on the former occasion, 8163—Mr. Cattley, the colleague of Mr. Clark, 7674.’ Now, there are some most remarkable and interesting particulars in the elections, as they have thus far proceeded. Three large towns have gone over from us to our adversaries. But we may derive some consolation from the fact that twenty-one larger towns have come over from the adversary to us. And every one of these, remember, is in England, in that one of the three kingdoms where Her Majesty’s Government believed that their strength would lie. The three towns which have gone over to our adversaries are inhabited by 436,000 people; the twenty-one towns which have come over to us are inhabited by 1,462,000 people.

This is a State trial of the majority of the House of Commons at the bar of the nation.

The result of the elections thus far.

As to the general result — the general result is this — without any reference to Home Rulers — that, upon the first two days of active polling, 273 elections to the new Parliament have taken place, and thirty seats have been gained to us out of these 273 elections. The simplest way of presenting the matter, and I am now dealing with it purely as matter of business, is this—I look at these 273 seats as they were before the dissolution. They were very narrowly divided; they were—Liberals, 137; Conservatives, 136—a Liberal majority of one. They are now—Liberals, 167; Conservatives, 106; majority, 61. That serves to illustrate to you the nature of the operation that is now going on and the verdict that the people have thus far been inclined to give on this great question, whether the system of government that has been in practice for some years is a good system or a bad one; whether the majority of the House of Commons by whom that system of government has been carried on has deserved well or has deserved ill of its country.

And now, let me say this. I am anxious to remind you of it. Much as I have criticized and censured the Government in my place in Parliament and elsewhere, I have said, and again would say, that the Government is out of our view. Those with whom you have to deal are not the members of the Administration, but the members of the majority. It is by disposing of the majority that you will dispose of the Government. It is by returning that same majority again—though I think it is rather late to think of that now — but, if it were possible, it would be by returning that same majority again that the Government would be kept in office. You have to deal with the majority; you have to deal with the individual members of that majority; you have to deal with the particular individual who has represented Midlothian, and of whom I regret to say that there is no man who is more deeply tinged

The country has to deal with the individual members of the majority.

with the responsibility of all that has been done, because in the whole of the faithful and docile ranks which rallied to the call of the Minister upon every occasion, there was not a more faithful or a more docile retainer, I was going to say—or, at any rate, follower—than the Earl of Dalkeith. And this I must say for Her Majesty's Government. Not only have they been supported by the majority, but I am convinced, from observation, that they might, if they had pleased, have gone a great deal farther in the same course of mismanagement and misconduct than they did, and still have had that support just as unbroken as it has actually been. On no single occasion has the voice or action of the majority checked the Government in its career; on many occasions have speeches and discussions, got up among the majority, egged on the Government to farther and yet farther deviations from the path of right and justice. If the responsibility of the Government be great, the responsibility of its followers is, if possible, greater, and that is a statement which should be kept carefully in view of the people of the country, now that they are called upon to give their decisive verdict.

Now, gentlemen, there is one point that I would very easily and simply get rid of, which is not immaterial. I have observed that there has been a great tendency, on the part of the friends of the Administration, to change the nature of the issue that is before the country, and to make out that it is not the merit or demerit of the Government that you are to try, but the merit or demerit of the members of the Opposition that you are to try. If the members of the Opposition should come into the Government, and if they misbehave themselves, why, then, gentlemen, turn them out and send them about their business; but those whom you now have to deal with are the possessors of office, the advisers of the Queen, the representatives of the United Kingdom in the Councils of Europe. But not only have they shifted the issue by discussing or attempting to discuss the conduct

The attempt is made to change the nature of the issue before us.

of the Opposition, instead of the conduct of the Government, but they have narrowed it a great deal more, and in a manner that seems to me ridiculous; for it is a positive truth that, as far as I can make out,—and my means are pretty large through correspondence and otherwise,—they do not think it worth while, apparently, to discuss anybody's conduct except that of the individual who stands before you. I have received every day, from different parts of the country, large blue placards—they come from the remotest quarters of England—and these, as the colour indicates, are intended to rally the Conservative party to great efforts in this election. And when I open these blue placards I always see Mr. Gladstone is the man who did so and so, and so and so; and then a long list of crimes and misdemeanours, of which you have heard on former occasions, and with the particular discussion of which I am not going to trouble you. For what I am going to say is this. I would try, if I could, to make a bargain with our Conservative friends; I would say, 'My dear friends, the question that I am urging is not whether I am going to be brought into power or not. Neither directly nor indirectly have I insinuated to the electors of Midlothian, or anybody else, that I had come here as the agent of a party, or that the return to office at my time of life was the object of my desire.' And if our Conservative friends would accept this compromise, that I should quietly walk out of the way and let a good Liberal Government come in, so far from objecting to that arrangement, I would say, 'My friends, I join hands with you on that ground. That of all arrangements is the one that would be most convenient and agreeable to me.'

But at any rate I am not going to trouble you with discussions upon my conduct. A few words, however, I must say in regard to that pregnant sentence which you laid before us while modestly disclaiming the function of a public

orator, when you stated that you had on a former occasion explained what were the grievances of the people in the time of your youth, and how, during the last half-century those grievances have been mitigated or removed. I ask you, gentlemen, whose work has been the mitigation and the removal of grievances? It has not been in all cases the work of Liberals, but in every case where it has been honest and effectual, it has been the work either of Liberals or else of Tories like Sir Robert Peel, repudiated by the Tory party because they removed your grievances. And, therefore, I treat that removal as a Liberal work—and how great a work it has been! The Liberal body in this country, of which I am a humble member—that Liberal party has striven for equality of civil privilege irrespective of religious profession; and that equality of civil privilege has in a multitude of points, which I need not enumerate, been attained wholly and solely by their action. Why, the very last, and one of the greatest points of it—the removal of the disabilities of the Jews—which was urged so strongly, you will remember, at Berlin by the British representatives upon the people of the emancipated States of Turkey—that very removal of the civil disabilities of the Jews had been obstinately resisted to the last by the party that sent these representatives to Berlin, upon the miserable plea that if Jews were admitted into Parliament, the State would be no longer Christian. The inequality of political rights is that upon which I need not detain you, though I will detain you for one moment further upon what is scarcely less important—equality of access to employment. Who has brought that about? Who was it that opened the high grades of the army by abolishing the system of purchase, and insisting that merit, and merit alone, irrespective of birth and irrespective of money, should open the way to military distinction? Who was it that opened the civil service of the country, and provided that the whole of the civil service should, in its lower

Whose work has been the removal and mitigation of grievances?

The removal of Jewish disabilities.

Equality of access to employment.

The abolition of purchase in the army.

*The competi-
tive system.*

grades, be converted into a great endowment for the benefit of the people, an encouragement to education, a stimulus and incentive to the young by offering to them an honourable means of subsistence, to be attained not by creeping and cringing at the feet of the great, but by merit, and by knowledge, and by character alone? Who was it that in a like manner opened the splendid service of India to competition—in which Scotland has, I believe, sustained her high place? Who was it—again I am putting a question of most vital consequences, though more in England than in

*The Indian
Civil Service.*

*The reform of
the Poor Laws.*

Scotland—who was it that abolished the degraded system of poor relief that was demoralizing and grinding down the whole peasantry of England, as well as eating up the produce of the soil fifty or sixty years ago? It was the Liberal Ministry of Lord Grey, of Lord Althorpe, and Lord Russell.

*The removal of
restrictions on
labour.*

Who was it that has removed all restrictions upon labour, and altered those parochial laws—again I speak generally of England—which bound a man down, by exclusive rights of relief, to a particular spot, to give his labour in a particular spot, and therefore forbade him the open resort to and use of the open market of the land? Why, that also was the work of a distinguished gentleman, my own colleague at the time—Mr. Villiers, the member for Wolverhampton. Education is dear to the people of Scotland. I am sorry that they have had to pay a great price; I hope it has been, and I believe it has been, in the purchase of a good article. What may be done in that way I will not say; but we are here as promoters of education. The Education Acts of the country were among the many labours which it was the duty, and which it has also been the happiness of the Liberal party to achieve. Well, gentlemen, the Liberal party, in one of its last operations, gave to you that which is undoubtedly a valuable possession in a country like this, where occasionally at the hands of an excited local populace,—occasionally, but very rarely, of an excited local

*The promotion
of education.*

populace,—and far more constantly from the silent pressure of indirect and illegitimate influence from persons of wealth and standing, the independence and free choice of the voter in his solemn duty of selecting the best man to represent him was liable to be interfered with and be virtually nullified until the Ballot Act became the law of the land. *The security of the ballot.*

Well, gentlemen, while the political party is worked in this sense and in this direction within the land, what has it done without? What has it done with regard to foreign relations, to colonial relations, to foreign trade? It has virtually reformed, it has nearly abolished, the Customs tariff of the country; for although that Customs tariff now produces more than it ever produced in the time of Protection, yet it produces that result from the taxation of ten or a dozen articles alone, and leaving everything else free; whereas, so long as the rule of Toryism and Protection was in force, there were 1200 articles liable to taxes, many were absolutely prohibited, and the result was a much smaller revenue than we draw at the present moment. That party gave you, gentlemen, along with freedom of general commerce—it gave you freedom of navigation, and by that freedom of navigation, obtained through the abolition of the Navigation Act—though in despite of all menaces of opponents, who declared that the Navigation Act was the basis of the maritime greatness of the country—by the repeal of that Act they have given for the first time to the shipping of this country an undisputed pre-eminence over the shipping of the whole world. *The reform of the Customs tariff.*

Not only so, but the creation of a mercantile navy has been brought about, such in the character of the commanders, of its crews, such in the structure and power of its vessels, that in the unfortunate event of a formidable war, your mercantile navy would become a principal element of your naval, and not merely your commercial strength. They have improved—I do not mean to say they have worked alone in that, far from it—but they cer-

The abolition of the Navigation Act.

*The reforms
in the army
and navy.*

tainly have been the great improvers of your defensive services. Those reforms in army and navy, which have greatly raised the character both of the soldier and of the sailor, and which, I hope, will yet do much to make those services—and I speak especially of the military service—more attractive to the better-minded—I will say even to the best-disposed young men of the country—I fearlessly claim that those reforms have been in the main the work of the Liberal party.

*The self-
government of
the Colonies.*

Well, gentlemen, as to finance, I think I need not dwell upon that subject. But in regard to the Colonies—and you sometimes hear of the decomposition of our Colonial Empire—in regard to the Colonies, I will only remind you that fifty years ago the Colonies of this country were in a state of chronic and habitual discontent. I don't hesitate to say that of the whole of your free Colonies. Throughout the free Colonies—which were principally those, in the first place, of North America, in the second place, of Australia—a small and narrow party possessed of patronage and acting in the spirit of monopoly, claimed, as somebody else claims now, a monopoly of patriotism and loyalty. The people of these Colonies were totally dissatisfied, and it was by bringing about a radical change in that method of government, and giving to them the privilege of influencing the choice of Ministers, making Ministers responsible to them instead of being responsible to a gentleman sitting in Downing Street—it was by that operation that the Colonies became contented, loyal, and affectionate; and that operation was effected by Earl Russell, when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies.

In foreign matters—to which I will refer in another view—I shall content myself at present with stating that I think that the general aim of the Liberal party has not been the absurd aim sometimes ascribed to them, of shutting their eyes and shutting their ears to all that takes place

throughout the world, but has been that of establishing a general sympathy with orderly, but with real and constitutional freedom throughout the world as the best security for peace and justice, and as the best guarantee and preservative against the violence of lawless revolution.

The support of the cause of freedom in our foreign relations.

Well, as we are so much challenged upon the doings of the Opposition, as we are forced almost to speak of what has been effected by the Liberal party in former years, I have thus briefly referred to it. But I am not going to detain you longer upon these subjects; I hold—and I hold firmly—that our business is not to consider primarily the acts of the Liberal party, who are not in power, and who have not been representing the country, but the acts of those who are in power, and who have not been representing the country, and who now, as the representatives of the country, ask you for a renewal of your confidence, which, for the electors of Midlothian, means simply the question whether they shall or shall not vote for the re-election of Lord Dalkeith. That is the whole matter. Those who approve of the policy of the present Government will naturally vote for that re-election; those who are dissatisfied with it may, I think, be inclined to take a different course.

Now let us see—and I will put them very briefly as I run from point to point—let us see what have been the exploits of the present Government. I beg your pardon if I say ‘present Government,’ it is really the effect of habit; please understand me to mean the late Parliament—because it is with me a main point to throw the responsibility, which was originally that of the Government, upon the Parliament: it no longer belongs to the Government; it belongs to those who supported the Government, encouraged the Government, stimulated the Government, and took on themselves the whole responsibility, and have now got to answer for it before you. As to the exploits, then, of the late Parliament. The late Parliament came into existence—it was

What has the late Parliament done?

born—in the month of February 1874. It found the most flourishing revenue ever handed over in this country by a Parliament to its successor. I do not believe that I exceed the truth in using that bold epithet. The surplus of six millions, or nearly six millions, estimated on the revenue of the coming year, and proved by the result to have been moderately estimated, was the handsome compliment given by way of a christening gift by the old Parliament to the new. Well, that new Parliament became old—its hairs grew grey—it has gone down to its grave. And what kind of a legacy does it leave to the Parliament that is to come? It consumed that surplus of six millions; it has increased the taxes—even after allowing for all the taxes that that surplus of six millions enabled them at once to reduce—it has increased the taxes, and it hands over to the coming Parliament, by way of paternal benediction, a deficiency of eight millions and a quarter, the result of its extravagance and its blind mismanagement.

The financial legacy it received and leaves.

Gentlemen, the matter of legislation is too large to treat in detail; but I think it is not too much to say, when we recollect what the Parliaments of this country have achieved under better circumstances—I won't speak now of the Parliament of 1868, in which I perhaps had too close a personal interest, but when I go back to Parliaments and Administrations which we can judge more impartially; when we take the Conservative Administration of Sir Robert Peel in 1841 and his Parliament; when we take the Liberal Parliaments of Lord Melbourne in 1835 and 1837; ay, and second to none of them, perhaps before them all, when we take the Liberal Parliament of Lord Grey and Lord Althorpe in 1830—I say that when tried by these standards, which after all are human standards, and have nothing in them but what zeal and ability and straightforwardness might have equalled, the performances of the last Parliament are miserable in comparison with any one of them. Legislation, therefore, I treat simply as having been left not entirely in abeyance,

for I am thankful to say that in the detail of the Government of this country, whatever may be the sense of an Administration or a Parliament, yet in the detail of the Government of a well-ordered and well-organized country, with its excellent civil departments, there is always a great deal of good, at any rate of a secondary order, that is quietly going on. But I go to what is more positive: and then, what do we find? We then come across that most formidable list of charges which, in the main, the Liberal party is making all over the country at this moment, and has been making with good effect—those charges which I endeavoured to sum up when I had the honour to be invited to become a candidate before this constituency; which I endeavoured in the first place to enumerate in brief but pregnant terms, and in the second place to sum up in the saying which I now reiterate, that, taken altogether, the conduct of Her Majesty's present advisers implied a change—ay, and something in the nature of a radical change, in the method and spirit of our Government—a new system dangerous to liberty, dangerous to right, dangerous to peace, dangerous to honour. And it is that new system of government which is now, gentlemen, on its trial before you, and before the nation, through the medium and in the person of the members of the late majority. That is a most solemn subject. No man ought, without questioning himself again and again, to advance against a Ministry that it has invaded the rights of Parliament, and against a Parliament that it has suffered, tolerated, encouraged, and rewarded that invasion. And yet that is the work of the late Parliament.

It is no vague, general charge. A severe charge it is. It is one that cannot be conveyed in slight or in secondary language. You must find for it forcible and stringent terms. But follow it into its detail, scrutinize it to the very root, and you will find that in points almost without number it is too grievously made good, and that the late House of Commons, which is the proper guardian, and the only effectual guardian

*The system
dangerous to
peace and
honour intro-
duced since
1874.*

of British liberty, has not performed its trust, but has been content to see those liberties impaired and compromised in the shape of aggression and trespass upon the privileges and prerogatives of the Parliament itself.

Now, I have charged at various times what I think an essential count in this indictment—that intelligence had been kept back from Parliament. Intelligence necessary to full understanding and to competent discussion has been withheld from Parliament at the very time of that discussion. I have shown various instances; I might show more. But I will name now only very briefly that remarkable case of the Afghan war. We were carried into that war, gentlemen, as you will recollect, without any previous notice or preparation. No papers had been laid upon the table to enable us to judge of the state of our relations with Afghanistan. Some suspicion had arisen, and a question had been put in the House of Lords; and the answer had been that there was no change of policy, or no sensible and serious change of policy towards Afghanistan intended. At that moment there were in possession of the Government—and for twelve months after—papers of the most vital consequence—what are called the conferences at Peshawur—opening up the whole case in every one of its aspects; and the Government, with these papers in their hands, kept them back for eighteen months, until they had hurried us into this deplorable, and I must say into this guilty war. The island of Cyprus was taken; responsibility of governing Asia Minor was assumed; a *quasi*-territorial supremacy was asserted over Syria in common with the rest of Asia Minor, which was a matter with respect to which we knew very well that the jealousies of France were sure to be aroused; but we were called upon and compelled, gentlemen, to discuss that matter, I think, in the end of July 1878, at the celebrated epoch of ‘peace with honour’—we were called upon to discuss that matter in total ignorance that France had remonstrated, that France had complained; and

*Intelligence
has been kept
back from
Parliament.*

*The Afghan
War.*

*The acquisition
of Cyprus.*

*The pro-
tectorate of
Asia Minor.*

the Government never let drop in the debate the slightest intimation or inkling that such was the case. We had to debate, we had to divide, we had to take the judgment of Parliament, in utter ignorance of the vital fact that great offence had been given to a faithful and a powerful ally by the steps taken by the Ministry; and it was only when the papers were laid, two or three months after, by the French Government, before the French Chamber, that we became aware of the fact that these papers were presented to us. How is it possible for any House of Commons to perform its duty if it consents to be treated in such a way,—if it consents not only to exercise every patience and forbearance, which must often be the case before intelligence can be produced, but if it consents to be dragged through the mire by being set to pronounce formal judgment upon national emergencies of the highest import, and to do that without the information necessary for a judgment; and when it is believed that information has been withheld, no notice whatever is taken of the fact, and perfect satisfaction is felt by the members of that majority whom you are now called upon to try?

The remonstrances of France were never hinted at.

Well, that is the withholding of information, gentlemen; but there has been even worse than that—(laughter)—worse, I am grieved to say it. I cannot help saying it without being in a condition to trace home the charge if this was thought needful, and I am very unwilling to fasten it upon any one without that full and demonstrative evidence which the case hardly admits of; but I will say this, that news—that intelligence has been falsified to bewilder and mislead to their own peril and detriment the people of this country. You remember, gentlemen, what happened at the outbreak of the great war between France and Germany in 1870. At that time there existed for a few days a condition of things which produced in that case excitement of expectation as to the points upon which the quarrel turned; and you remember that a telegram was sent from Berlin to Paris, and was published in

The falsification of news.

Paris, or rather, if I recollect aright, it was announced by a Minister in the Chamber, stating that the King of Prussia, as he was then, had insulted the ambassador of France by turning his back upon him in a garden, where they had met, and refusing to communicate with him. The consequence was an immense exasperation in France; and the telegram, which afterwards proved to be totally and absolutely false, was a necessary instrument for working up the minds of the French people to a state in which some of them desired, and the rest were willing to tolerate, what proved to be a most disastrous war. That war never was desired by the French nation at large, but by false intelligence heat was thrown into the atmosphere, party feeling and national feeling to a certain extent were excited, and it became practicable to drag the whole nation into the responsibility of the war. I remember well at that time what passed through my mind. I thought how thankful we ought to be that the use of methods so perilous, and so abominable—for the word is not too strong—never could be known in our happy country. Yes, gentlemen; but since that time it has been known in our happy country. Since that time false telegrams about the entry of the Russian army into Constantinople have been sent home to disturb, and paralyze, and reverse the deliberations of Parliament, and have actually stopped these deliberations, and led experienced statesmen to withhold their action because of this intelligence, which was afterwards, and shortly afterwards, shown to be wholly without ground. Who invented that false intelligence I do not know, and I do not say. All I say is, that it was sent from Constantinople. It was telegraphed in the usual manner; it was published in the usual manner; it was available for a certain purpose. I can no more say who invented it than I can say who invented the telegram that came to Paris about the King of Prussia and the French ambassador; but the intelligence came, and it was false intelligence.

(1) *As to the entry of the Russians into Constantinople.*

That was not the only, nor was it the most important case. You remember—I am now carrying your recollections back to the time of the outbreak of the war with Afghanistan, and if you recollect the circumstances of that outbreak, at the most critical moment we were told that the Ameer of Afghanistan had refused to receive a British Mission with insult and with outrage, and that insult and outrage were represented as at once enlisting our honour and reputation in the case, as making it necessary to administer immediate chastisement. I do not hesitate to express my full belief that without that statement the war with Afghanistan would not have been made, would not have been tolerated by the country; but it was difficult, considering the nature of our Indian Empire, considering how it is dependent upon opinion in Asia, and upon the repute of strength, it was difficult to interfere strongly—indeed, Parliament was not sitting—but it was difficult even by opinion out of doors strongly to protest against military measures taken in a case where the authority of the Crown had been insulted, and outrage committed upon it by the Ameer of Afghanistan. That intelligence was sent. We were never undeceived about it until we were completely committed to the war, and until our troops were in the country. The Parliament met; after long and most unjustifiable delays the papers were produced, and when the papers were produced and carefully examined, we found that there was not a shred of foundation for that outrageous statement, and that the temper and pride of the people of this country had been wrought up, and the spirit of wrath fomented and kindled in their bosoms by intelligence that was false intelligence, and that somebody or other—somebody or other having access to high quarters, if not dwelling in them—had invented, had fabricated for the evil purpose of carrying us into bloody strife.

(2) *As to the insult offered by the Ameer to our Mission.*

All these are among the acts which I am sorry to say it is my business to charge upon the majority

of the late Parliament, and upon every member of that majority; and all these are the acts which those who are invited to vote or who intend to vote for my noble opponent—whatever may be his personal claims, all these are the acts, the responsibility of which they are now invited to take upon themselves, and the repetition of which, by giving that vote, they will directly encourage.

*The breaking
of laws.*

The next charge is the charge of broken laws. We have contended—it is impossible to trouble you with argument—but we have contended, and I think we have demonstrated, in the House of Commons, sustained by a great array of legal strength and bearing, that in making that war in Afghanistan, the Government of this country absolutely broke the laws which regulate the Government of India. I do not say they admit it; on the contrary, they deny it. But we have argued it; we believe, we think we have shown it. It is a very grave and serious question; but this much, I think, is plain, that unless our construction of that Indian Government Act, which limits the power of the Crown as to the employment of the Indian forces at the cost of the Indian revenue without the consent of Parliament—unless our construction of that Act be true, the restraining clauses of that Act are absolutely worthless, and the people who passed those restraining clauses, and who most carefully considered them at the time, must have been people entirely unequal to their business; although two persons—I won't speak of myself, who had much to do with them, but two persons who next to myself were most concerned, were the present and the late Lord Derby, neither of them persons very likely to go to work upon a subject of that kind without taking care that what their hand did was done effectually.

*The breaking
of treaties.*

Now besides the honour, if it be an honour, of broken laws, the Government has the honour of broken treaties. When I discussed the case of broken laws, I told you fairly that the Government denied the breaking of the laws, and

make their own argument to show—I suppose they think they show—that they did not break the laws. But when I pass to the next head of the broken treaties the case is different, especially in one of the most material points, which I will state in a few words, but clearly. The first case which we consider to be that of a distinctly broken treaty is that of sending the warships of England through the Dardanelles without the consent of the Sultan of Turkey. We believe that to be a clear breach of the Treaty of Paris. But that also, if I remember aright, was argued on both sides, and, therefore, I pass on from it, and I charge another breach of the Treaty of Paris. That famous Anglo-Turkish Convention, which gave to you the inestimable privilege of being responsible for the government of the island of Cyprus without deriving from it any possible advantage; that famous Anglo-Turkish Convention, which invested us with the right of interference, and caused us to interfere both as to the integrity and as to the independence of the Sultan by our own sole act; that Anglo-Turkish Convention was a direct and an absolute breach of the Treaty of Paris, which, bearing as it did the signature of England, as well as the rest of the Powers, declared that no one of these Powers should of themselves interfere in any matter of the integrity or independence of Turkey without the consent of the rest. And here I must tell you that I never heard from the Government, or any friend of the Government, the slightest attempt to defend that gross act of lawlessness, that unpardonable breach of international law, which is the highest sanction of the rights of nations and of the peace of Europe.

It is not, however, in matters of law only. We have been busy in alienating the sympathies of free peoples. The free Slavonic peoples of the East of Europe—the people of Roumania, the people of Montenegro, the people of Servia, the people of Bulgaria—each and all of these have been painfully taught in these last few years to look upon the

*The alienation
of the sym-
pathies of free
peoples.*

free institutions of this country as being for them a dream, as being, perhaps, for the enjoyment of this country, but not as availing to animate a nation with a generous desire to extend to others the blessings they enjoyed themselves. In other times—it was so when Mr. Canning was the Minister of this country, when Lord Palmerston was the Minister of this country, when Lord Clarendon was the Minister of this country at the Foreign Office—it was well known that England, while regardful of her own just interests, and while measuring on every occasion her strength and her responsibility, yet was willing to use and willing to find opportunities for giving cordial aid and sympathy to freedom; and by aid and sympathy many a nation has been raised to its present position of free independence, which, without that sympathy, would probably never have attained to such a height in the order of civilisation. The sympathies of free people ought to be a dear and precious object of our ambition. Ambition may be a questionable quality; if you give a certain meaning to the phrase, it ill comports with the Christian law. But there is one sense in which ambition will never mislead men; that is the ambition to be good, and the ambition to do good in relieving from evil those who are grievously suffering, and who have not deserved the evils they endure; that is the ambition which every British statesman ought to cherish. But, as I have said, for the last two years especially—and even for more than two years—more or less, I think, during the whole active period of the foreign policy of the Beaconsfield Administration—the sympathies of these now free peoples of the East have been constantly more and more alienated; and except, perhaps, in a single case which I am glad to cling to—the single and isolated case of Eastern Roumelia—except this case, the whole strength of England, as far as they have been conversant with it, has been exercised for the purpose of opposing their best interests.

*The exception
of Eastern
Roumelia.*

Well, gentlemen, while free peoples have been alienated, *The aggrandizement of a despotic Power.* a despotic Power has been aggrandized through our direct agency. We have more than any other Power of Europe contributed to the direct aggrandizement of Russia and to its territorial extension. And how? Not by following the counsels of the Liberal party. The counsels of the Liberal party were the concert of Europe—the authoritative declaration of the will of Europe to Turkey. Had that authoritative declaration been made, we believe that it would have been enforced without the shedding of a drop of blood. But even suppose there had been bloodshed—I am not now speaking of that, I deem it too absurd a supposition; but suppose that force had required to be used, that force would not have given to Russia, or to any other Power, a claim to territorial extension. We chose to cast upon her the responsibility; and she, making great exertions and great sacrifices of blood and treasure, advanced this claim to territory, the consequence of which is that she has received by that a great access of military reputation, and likewise an enlargement of her borders, which we have been the main agents in bringing about.

Now I think I anticipate your feelings when I say that although we, and all of us, say that the rights of a Power, the rights of a nation, ought not to be invaded because it happens to have the misfortune of a despotic Government, yet none of us would wish that the agency of England should be gratuitously and wantonly employed in extending the limits of that despotism, and causing it to exercise its power where that power had not before prevailed. In truth, as you know, the case is even more gross than I have supposed it, because the most important case of this extension was that in which a portion of Bessarabia was handed back to *The retrocession of Bessarabia.* Russia. That portion of Bessarabia had been under free institutions—perfectly free representative institutions. It was handed back to Russia, and placed under despotic institutions, and it was so handed back under an arrangement made

between Lord Salisbury, the Minister of England, and Count Schouvaloff, the Minister of Russia. They agreed beforehand that this should be done at the Congress at Berlin, with this reservation—Lord Salisbury said, ‘Unless I convince you by my argument that you ought not to do it.’ You may attach what value you please to the reservation, but I think I can illustrate without much difficulty the effect of that promise made beforehand. You remember, perhaps, that in the year 1871 the Russians demanded that the Treaty of Paris should be altered, and that the restriction should be removed upon their right to build ships in the Black Sea. The whole of the Powers of Europe met in London by their representatives, and they agreed to that change, and the charge, gentlemen, has been laid upon the British Government of having made that change; and not only so, but I read in one of the blue placards this morning that Mr. Gladstone removed the restriction from the Emperor of Russia. Now I repel that charge. What we did was—we considered the matter with the other Powers of Europe; we required Russia to admit that she had no power to make the change except with the consent of the other Powers. The other Powers could not deny that the change was in itself not unreasonable, and so the change was made. But I want to know what people would have said, supposing, in the middle of these deliberations, somebody had produced a Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement. Supposing he had produced a memorandum signed by Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary of England, and Count Brunow, the Ambassador of Russia, and supposing in that memorandum Lord Granville had, before the meeting of Europe in congress, pledged himself to give this concession to Russia unless he could convince the Russians by his argument, I want to know what then would have been our responsibility? Gentlemen, I would not have been the man, under circumstances like those, to deny

for one moment that virtually and practically the whole responsibility of the treaty rested upon our shoulders; and so I say now the responsibility of handing back free Bessarabia to despotic Russia rests upon the Cabinet that is now in power, and on the majority that is now soliciting your suffrages for re-election.

I cannot go through the whole of the matter; yet, at the same time, it is desirable that you should have it in your minds. But while we thus handed over a free representative country to despotism, we likewise handed over a liberated country to servitude. We recollect the vote for six millions was taken in order to act upon the Congress at Berlin. It was taken in order to show, as was so much boasted of at the time—to show that we were ready to support in arms what we recommended at the Congress at Berlin. And what did we recommend, and what was the great change made at the Congress of Berlin, in deference to our representations—that is to say, what was the great change purchased by your six millions? I will tell you what it was. The Treaty of San Stefano had relieved from the yoke of Turkish administration four and a half millions of people, and made them into a Bulgarian province. With regard to one and a quarter millions of those people who inhabited a country called Macedonia, we at the Treaty of Berlin, by virtue of your six millions—see how it was used to obtain ‘peace with honour!’—we threw back that Macedonia from the free precinct into which it was to be introduced for self-government along with the rest of Bulgaria, and we put it back into the hands of the Sultan of Turkey, to remain in exactly the same condition in which it had been before the war.

We handed back Macedonia to despotism.

Well, gentlemen, I won't speak of India. I have spoken of India elsewhere. I won't speak of various things that I might enter upon, but one thing I must mention which I have never taken the opportunity of mentioning in Scotland, and that was the manner in which those proceedings are justified. I am

*The mode in
which these
proceedings are
justified.*

going now to refer to a speech of the present Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Lord Salisbury. He was meeting an allegation some opponent had made, that it was wrong to take the island of Cyprus; and he justified himself by an appeal to history for once, which is, however, a rare thing with him. But he made out his case in this way: 'Take the island of Cyprus? Of course we took the island of Cyprus. Wherever there is a great European controversy localized in some portion of the great European region, we always step in and appropriate some territory in the very heart of the place where that controversy raged.' 'Why, dear me,' he said, 'in the time of the Revolutionary war, when the Revolutionary war turned very much upon events in Italy, we appropriated Malta. At a previous time when the interests of Europe had been concentrated a great deal upon Spain, at the time of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV., we stepped in and appropriated Gibraltar.' And this is positively advanced as a doctrine by the Secretary of State, that wherever there is a serious conflict among the European Powers or the European peoples, we are to step in, not as mediators, not as umpires, not as friends, not to perform the Christian and the truly British art of binding together in alliance those who have been foes, but to appropriate something for ourselves. This is what Ministers have done, and this is what the majority have approved. Ay, and if, instead of appropriating Cyprus only, they had appropriated a great deal more—if they had taken Candia too, if they had taken whatever they could lay their hands upon—that majority, equally patient and equally docile, and not only patient and docile, but exulting in the discreditable obedience with which it obeyed all the behests of the Administration—that majority never would have shrunk, but would have walked into the lobby as cheerfully as it did upon the occasions of which you have heard so much, and would

have chuckled the next day over the glorious triumph they had obtained over factious Liberalism. I have done with these details, and I will approach my winding up, for I have kept you a long time. I have shown you—and I have shown you in a manner that our opponents will find it very difficult to grapple with, though I have stated it briefly—I have shown you what your six millions were used for; and I say without hesitation that the main purpose for which your six millions were used—the main change which was effected—was to throw a million or a million and a quarter of people inhabiting Macedonia, who were destined by the Treaty of San Stefano for freedom and self-government, back under the lawless government of Turkey.

All these things have been going on. I have touched some of them in detail. What has been the general result, what is the grand total, what is the profit, what is the upshot, what is the balance at the end? Worse than ever. When Her Majesty's Government came into office their Foreign Secretary declared that the state of our foreign relations all over the world was thoroughly and absolutely satisfactory; and what is the declaration of the Prime Minister now? He says this is one of the most formidable crises ever known, and that unless you keep the present Government in power he cannot answer for the peace of Europe or the destinies of the country.

That is the report solemnly made by the head of the Government upon the state of things, which is as different from the state of things he found when he came into office as is the deficiency of eight and a quarter millions that he hands over to the new Parliament, from the surplus of six millions which the former Parliament handed over to him. I cannot, I think, state the matter more fairly than that. You are—deluded I was going to say, but I could not make a greater blunder, for deluded you are not; and deluded the people of England are not, and the people of Scotland will

*What is the
upshot of all
this?*

not be ; but you are flattered and inveigled by compliments paid to the existing Administration in various newspapers abroad. Is not that a fine thing ? Never mind your finances ; never mind your legislation, or your interests, your characters, or anything else. You have only to look into some paper ardently devoted to the Government and you will see that a paper in Vienna, a paper in Berlin, or even sometimes a paper in Paris has been saying what very fine fellows these present Ministers are, how well they understand the interests of the country, and what a pity it would be if they were to be displaced. I will give you a sound practical rule upon this subject. It is totally untrue and absurd to suppose that there is a general approval by the foreign press. I see that Lord Dalkeith is reported to have said the other day that everywhere except in Russia the press was in favour of the present Government. Well, I think I know a good deal of the foreign press, and I will give Lord Dalkeith this challenge—I defy him to produce Italian newspapers, that have any circulation or influence in Italy, in favour of the policy of the present Government. I defy him to produce a newspaper in the Greek tongue, representing the Greek people, either in free Greece or beyond it, that is in favour of the policy of the present Government. I defy him to produce a paper in the Slavonic language that is in favour of the policy of the present Government. Oh ! you say, the Slavonic language—that means Russia. It does not mean Russia. It means in part Russia ; but there are twenty, ay, and nearer thirty millions of Slavonic people outside of Russia in the east of Europe ; and I doubt if you could produce a single paper in the Slavonic language in favour of the policy of the present Government. I say to him, go to the small States of Europe—go to Belgium, go to Holland, go to Denmark, go to Portugal—see what their press says. Gentlemen, I mistrust the press, and especially the official press, of foreign capitals, whether it be St. Petersburg, Vienna, or Berlin. When I see

those articles I think that a large experience enables me tolerably well to understand their purpose. If they are vehemently praising the British Ministry—mind, not praising the British nation, not praising British institutions, but praising a particular British Ministry as opposed to some other possible Ministry—I know the meaning of that to be that they regard that Ministry as admirable instruments for the forwarding of their own purposes, and making the British nation, through their medium, both dupes and victims.

Now, gentlemen, I go back to the foreign policy of the Liberal party, and I ask, what has that done? I do not think that any party is perfect in its foreign or any other policy; but I prefer the policy of the Government of Mr. Canning, and the policy of the Government of Lord Grey, and the greater part of what was done by Lord Palmerston in foreign affairs, and by Lord Russell in foreign affairs, to that which is now recommended to you. But they did not earn any praise at the hands of the press at Vienna or Berlin. There was no man more odious, no man more detested by the Continental press of those capitals than Mr. Canning, unless, possibly, it may have been Lord Palmerston. He did not seek honour in these quarters; and seeking honour there is not a very good sign. But the praises of the Liberal party, if they are to be sung, are sung elsewhere; they are sung in Italy, which had its hearty sympathy, and its efficient though always its moral aid. They were sung in Spain, when Mr. Canning, though he was too wise to undertake the task of going single-handed to war for the purpose—when Mr. Canning firmly and resolutely protested against the French invasion of that country under the Bourbon restoration. They were sung in Greece, when he constituted himself the first champion of the Greek regeneration, which has now taken effect in the establishment of a free and a progressive country, with, I hope, a bright future before it. They were sung in Portugal, when Mr. Canning

What the foreign policy of the Liberals has done.

In Italy.

In Spain.

In Greece.

In Portugal.

sent the troops of England to defend it against Spain. *In Denmark.* Nay, even poor Denmark, unhappy as has been its lot, does not owe the unhappiness of that lot to England, for the British Government of Lord Palmerston, in which I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, did make a formal offer to France that we should join together in forbidding the German Power to lay violent hands upon Denmark, and in leaving the question of Denmark's territorial rights to be settled by a process of law. We made that proposal to France, and the reason that it was not acted upon was that, most unfortunately, and, I think, most blindly, the Emperor of the French refused it.

The Liberal party has eschewed an ostentatious policy.

These are the acts of the Liberal party. The Liberal party has believed that while it was the duty of England above all things to eschew an ostentatious policy, it was also the duty of England to have a tender and kindly feeling for the smaller States of Europe, because it is in the smaller States of Europe that liberty has most flourished; and it is in the smaller States of Europe that liberty is most liable to be invaded by lawless aggression. What we want in foreign policy is the substitution of what is true for what is imposing and pretentious, but unreal. We live in the age of sham. We live in the age of sham diamonds, and sham silver, and sham flour, and sham sugar, and sham butter, for even sham butter they have now invented, and dignified by the name of 'Oleo-Margarine.' But these are not the only shams to which we have been treated. We have had a great deal of sham glory, and sham courage, and sham strength. I say, let us get rid of all these shams, and fall back upon realities, the character of which is to be guided by unostentatiousness, to pretend nothing, not to thrust claims and unconstitutional claims for ascendancy and otherwise in the teeth of your neighbour, but to maintain your right and to respect the rights of others as much as your own. So much, then, for the great issue that is still before us, though I rejoice to think

how many of our fellow-subjects in England have acquitted themselves well and honourably of their part in the fray ; and I rejoice—I will not say much more because here my expectations were so high—but I rejoice not less when I think how extraordinary has been the manifestation thus far of Scottish feeling in the only three contests that have taken place—in the city of Perth, in the city of Aberdeen, and in the city of Edinburgh, where we certainly owe some gratitude to the opponent for consenting to place himself in a position so ludicrous as that which he has occupied. But at the same time we are compelled to say, on general grounds of prudence and of justice, that it is a monstrous thing that communities should be disturbed with contests so absurd as these, which deserve to be censured in the old Parliamentary language as frivolous and vexatious.

One word upon your past. I have no doubt the great bulk of you are Liberals, but yet I shall be very glad if some of you are Conservatives. Are Conservatives seriously considering with the gravity which becomes the people of this country—the responsible people of this country—what course they shall take upon the coming occasion? Great things have been done in the last three days, and these things are not done in a corner. The intelligence, limited, but, I think, intelligible, has been flashed over sea and land, and has reached, long before I address you, the remotest corners of the earth. I can well conceive that it has been received in different countries with different feelings. I can believe that there are one or two Ministers of State in the world, and possibly even here and there a sovereign, who would have eaten this morning a heartier breakfast if the tidings conveyed by the telegraph had been reversed, and if the issue of the elections had been as triumphant for the existing Administration as it has been menacing, if not fatal, to their prospects. But this I know, among other places to which it has gone, it has passed to India—it has before this

time reached the mind and the heart of many millions of your Indian fellow-subjects—and I will venture to say that it has gladdened every heart among them. They have known this Government principally in connection with the aggravation of their burdens and the limitation of their privileges. And, gentlemen, I will tell you more, that if there be in Europe any State or country which is crouching in fear at the feet of powerful neighbours with gigantic armaments, which loves, enjoys, and cherishes liberty, but which at the same time fears lest that inestimable jewel should be wrenched out of its hands by overweening force—if there be such a State, and there may be such a State in the East and in the West—then I will venture to say that in that State, from the highest to the lowest, from sovereign to subject, joy and satisfaction will have been diffused by the intelligence of these memorable days.

The great trial, gentlemen, proceeds. It is a great trial. You have great forces arrayed against you. I will not say, ‘You;’ if you will permit me to identify myself with you, I will say, We have great forces arrayed against us, and apparently we cannot make our appeal to the aristocracy, excepting that which never must be forgotten, the distinguished and enlightened minority of that body of able, energetic, patriotic, liberal-minded men, whose feelings are one with those of the people, and who decorate and dignify their rank by their strong sympathy with the entire community. With that exception, in all the classes of which I speak, I am sorry to say we cannot reckon upon the aristocracy. We cannot reckon upon what is called the landed interest, we cannot reckon upon the clergy of the Established Church either in England or in Scotland, subject again and always in each case to those most noble exceptions—exceptions, I trust, likely to enlarge and multiply from day to day. On none of these can we place our trust. We cannot reckon on the wealth of the country, nor upon the

rank of the country, nor upon the influence which rank and wealth usually bring. In the main these powers are against us; and there are other powers against us, for wherever there is a close corporation, wherever there is a spirit of organized monopoly, wherever there is a narrow and sectional interest apart from that of the country, and desiring to be set up above the interest of the public, there, gentlemen, we, the Liberal party, have no friendship and no tolerance to expect. We must set them down among our most determined foes.

Above all these, and behind all these, there is something greater than these — there is the nation itself. This great trial is now proceeding before the nation. The nation is a power hard to rouse, but when roused, harder still and more hopeless to resist. I believe there are indications, that crowd upon us from hour to hour, that it is now roused. It is impossible for a nation—for the mass of a community—to make politics its daily task. It can be but occasionally and rarely that you can afford to draw aside your minds from the pursuits and exigencies of life, and to concentrate them upon public interests. But one has arrived of those great occasions on which it is alike your interest, your duty, I would even say your necessity, to concentrate your attention, now where this great trial is proceeding, in which I figure to myself those who have constituted the majority of the late House of Commons as the persons arraigned, and the constituencies of the country as those who are called together in the solemn order of the Constitution to hear the evidence, and to pronounce the verdict. That evidence has been pretty largely given. That verdict we await. We have none of the forms of a judicial trial. There are no peers in Westminster Hall, there are no judges on the Woolsack; but if we concentrate our minds upon the truth of the case as apart from its mere exterior, it is a grander and a more august spectacle than was ever exhibited either in Westminster Hall or in the House of Lords. For a nation, called to undertake a great and responsible

duty,—a duty which is to tell, as we are informed from high authority, on the peace of Europe and on the destinies of England,—has found its interests mismanaged, its honour tarnished, its strength burdened and weakened by needless, mischievous, unauthorized, and unprofitable engagements, and it has resolved that this state of things shall cease, and that right and justice shall be done.

A P P E N D I X.



I.

ADDRESS ISSUED BY MR. GLADSTONE TO THE ELECTORS OF MIDLOTHIAN.

GENTLEMEN,—I heartily rejoice that the time has at length arrived when you will be called upon to declare by your votes whether you approve or whether you condemn the manner in which the Government of this great Empire has during these last years been carried on. This, gentlemen, is well; although by a striking departure from established practice, which must cause great inconvenience, a session opened by Her Majesty, with the regular announcement of its annual work, is, without the occurrence of any Parliamentary difficulty, for the first time in our history to be interrupted after a few weeks by a dissolution.

In the electioneering address which the Prime Minister has issued, an attempt is made to work upon your fears by dark allusions to the repeal of the Union and the abandonment of the Colonies. Gentlemen, those who endangered the Union with Ireland were the party that maintained there an alien Church, an unjust land law, and franchises inferior to our own; and the true supporters of the Union are those who firmly uphold the supreme authority of Parliament, but exercise that authority to bind the three nations by the indissoluble tie of liberal and equal laws.

As to the Colonies, Liberal Administrations set free their

trade with all the world, gave them popular and responsible government, undertook to defend Canada with the whole strength of the Empire, and organized the great scheme for uniting the several settlements of British North America into one Dominion, to which, when we quitted office in 1866, it only remained for our successors to ask the ready assent of Parliament. It is by these measures that the Colonies have been bound in affection to the Empire, and the authors of them can afford to smile at baseless insinuations.

Gentlemen, the true purpose of these terrifying insinuations is to hide from view the acts of the Ministry, and their effect upon the character and condition of the country. To these I will now begin to draw your attention. With threescore years and ten upon my head, I feel the irksomeness of the task. But in such a crisis no man should shrink from calls which his duty may make and his strength allow. At home, the Ministers have neglected legislation, aggravated the public distress by continual shocks to confidence, which is the life of enterprise, augmented the public expenditure and taxation for purposes not merely unnecessary but mischievous, and plunged the finances, which were handed over to them in a state of singular prosperity, into a series of deficits unexampled in modern times. Of these deficits it is now proposed to meet only a portion, and to meet it partly by a new tax on personal property, and partly by the sacrifice of the whole Sinking Fund, to which, five years ago, we were taught to look for the systematic reduction, with increased energy and certainty, of the National Debt.

Abroad they have strained, if they have not endangered, the prerogative, by gross misuse, and have weakened the Empire by needless wars, unprofitable extensions, and unwise engagements, and have dishonoured it in the eyes of Europe by filching the island of Cyprus from the Porte under a treaty clandestinely concluded in violation of the Treaty of Paris, which formed part of the international law of Christendom.

If we turn from considerations of principle to material results, they have aggrandized Russia, lured Turkey on to her dismemberment, if not her ruin, replaced the Christian population of Macedonia under a debasing yoke, and loaded India with the cost and danger of a prolonged and unjustifiable war, while they have at the same time augmented her taxation and curtailed her liberties.

At this moment we are told of other secret negotiations with Persia, entailing further liabilities without further strength; and from day to day, under a Ministry called as if in mockery Conservative, the nation is perplexed with fear of change.

As to the domestic legislation of the future, it is in the election address of the Prime Minister a perfect blank. No prospect is opened to us of effectual alteration in the Land Laws, of better security for occupiers, of the reform and extension of local government throughout the three kingdoms, of a more equal distribution of political franchises, or of progress in questions deeply affecting our social and moral condition.

It seems, then, that as in the past, so in the future, you will look with more confidence to the Liberal party for the work of domestic improvement, although the inheritance which the present Administration will leave to its successors threatens to be one of difficulty and embarrassment without parallel. It is true that you are promised the advantage of 'presence, not to say ascendancy,' in the councils of Europe. The word ascendancy, gentlemen, is best known to us by its baneful connection with the history of Ireland.

I must assert the co-equal rights of independent and allied Powers. But in the mouth of the present Ministry the claim is little less than ridiculous. You may judge of our present ascendancy in Europe from our ascendancy in the councils of Turkey, where we recently demanded the dismissal of a Minister, who has not only been retained in office, but selected for special honours.

There is, indeed, an ascendancy in European councils to which Great Britain might reasonably aspire, by steadily sustaining the character of a Power no less just than strong; attached to liberty and law; jealous of peace, and therefore opposed to intrigue and aggrandizement, from whatever quarter they may come; jealous of honour, and therefore averse to the clandestine engagements which have marked our two latest years. To attain a moral and envied ascendancy such as this, is indeed a noble object for any Minister or any Empire.

You have, then, gentlemen, great issues before you. The majority of the House of Commons, and all the members of that majority, have, by their unqualified support of the Government, fully taken over upon themselves the responsibility of its acts. If the constituencies are well pleased with the results which after six years have been attained, they have only to return again a similar majority, which will do its best to secure to them the like for six years more. But let no individual voter who supports at the election a member of that majority conceal from himself the fact that he is taking on himself both what has been done already, and what may be done by the same agency hereafter.

I have not a doubt that the County of Midlothian will nobly discharge its share of the general duty, and I have the honour to remain, gentlemen, your most obedient and faithful servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

LONDON, *March* 11, 1880.

II.

MR. GLADSTONE'S ADDRESSES ON ELECTION AND RE-ELECTION.

THE following address was issued by Mr. Gladstone upon his election :—

TO THE ELECTORS OF MIDLOTHIAN.

GENTLEMEN,—Contending against many influences which we think misguided, and against the illegitimate influence of spurious votes, you have, by your spontaneous efforts, more than fulfilled all the expectations with which you invited me to come among you, and have achieved a victory which had already told by anticipation, and which will now further tell by direct example, upon the course of the elections.

That course, however, has from the first day of the contests been unambiguous; and the party, which termed itself the Constitutional party, the patriotic party, the country party, and the national party, has now seen the NATION rise up and shatter at a stroke the fabric of its power.

There is yet, indeed, much to complete. The constituencies generally, and those of Scotland in particular, will, I am persuaded, end in the same spirit as that in which they have begun.

On the whole, however, gentlemen, and as to the main issue, the country at large has already spoken; the fight is fought and won.

Since this is so, I gladly, and as far as depends on me, once for all desist from any further reference to that indictment against the policy of the existing Administration which,

encouraged by your patience, I have laboriously endeavoured to place before you. To arrest mischief has been my only object. We can well dispense with exultation in the hour of victory. Personally long engaged in the hottest of the conflict, I rejoice not only in the prospect of good to be accomplished by the accession of the Liberal leaders to power, but in the cessation of a controversy always on the verge of bitterness.

The efforts of the party, which now seems likely to attain the full measure of its predominance, will, I trust, be steadily and temperately addressed towards establishing the external policy of this country upon the lines of peace, justice, equal right, and sympathy with freedom; and towards the direction of its internal Government and legislation in the methods and the spirit which, during the last half-century, have done so much to relieve the people, to gain respect for the laws, to strengthen the foundations of the Throne, and to consolidate the structure of this great and noble Empire.

To assist in this work to the utmost of my limited power will be, gentlemen, the best and only return that I can make for the confidence which you have given me with a generosity I never can forget, and amidst tokens of enthusiasm which have made this election memorable even in the annals of Scotland.—I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your faithful and grateful servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

EDINBURGH, *April 5, 1880.*

MR. GLADSTONE issued the following address of thanks for his re-election:—

TO THE ELECTORS OF MIDLOTHIAN.

GENTLEMEN,—I offer you my grateful thanks for that renewal of your confidence which you have been pleased to signify by my re-election to Parliament.

Your electoral victory is now completed by the accomplishment of that change of Ministry which has been consequent upon the General Election. Looking back upon the means by which the triumph was achieved in the metropolitan county of Scotland, I desire to render an emphatic testimony alike to their purity, their efficiency, and their completeness. The Parochial Committees, themselves the result of spontaneous and energetic conviction, and taking account of the known opinions of the electors in preference to building upon supposed promises, the doubtful fruit of importunity, ascertained the ground with an extraordinary accuracy, and made clear to us from the first what our opponents only discovered when too late. I have therefore great pleasure in interweaving with my thanks to the constituency at large my special and warm acknowledgments for the generous and confiding address which has been presented to me by the Executive Committee. The members of that committee will agree with me that the time for words has gone by, and the time for the beginnings of action is now come.

Of the political professions which I made among you before the General Election, I have only to say that they have now become, in their general sense and spirit, honourable engagements, which I shall do my best, as occasion offers, to redeem.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient and grateful servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,
May 8, 1880.

III.

MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER TO COUNT KAROLYI.

Earl Granville to Sir H. Elliot.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 6, 1880.*

SIR,—I forward to your Excellency, by Mr. Gladstone's request, a copy of a letter written in consequence of previous oral and written communications with Count Karolyi.—I am, etc.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

ENCLOSURE.

Mr. Gladstone to Count Karolyi.

LONDON, *May 4, 1880.*

DEAR COUNT KAROLYI,—I thank your Excellency for your letter, which, uniting frankness with kindness, renders my task an easy one.

Without discussing the accuracy of certain expressions in the report you have forwarded, I proceed at once to the subject. At the moment when I accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an Administration, I forthwith resolved that I would not, as a Minister, either repeat or even defend in argument polemical language, in regard to more than one foreign Power, which I had used individually when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.

Two points have been raised by your Excellency. I will

dispose of the first by expressing my regret that I should even have seemed to impute to His Imperial Majesty language which he did not use.

Your Excellency says that His Imperial Majesty expressed, in conversation with Sir H. Elliot, 'his deep regret at my hostile disposition towards Austria.' Permit me to say I have no such disposition towards any country whatever, and that I at all times have particularly and heartily wished well to Austria. In the performance of the arduous task of consolidating the Empire, I feel a cordial respect for the efforts of the Emperor, and I trust that their complete success may honourably and nobly mark his reign.

With respect to my animadversions on the foreign policy of Austria in times when it was active beyond the border, I will not conceal from your Excellency that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan peninsula hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations, and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan. These apprehensions were founded, it is true, upon secondary evidence; but it was not the evidence of hostile witnesses, and it was the best at my command.

Your Excellency is now good enough to assure me that your Government has no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights it has acquired under the Treaty of Berlin, and that any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary.

Permit me at once to state to your Excellency that had I been in possession of such an assurance as I have now been able to receive, I never would have uttered any one of the words which your Excellency justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it was my misfortune or my fault that I was not so supplied, I will not now attempt to determine; but will at once express my serious concern that I should, in default of it, have been led to refer to

transactions of an earlier period, or to use terms of censure which I can now wholly banish from my mind.

I think that the explanation I now tender should be made not less public than the speech which has supplied the occasion for it; and as to the form of such publicity, I desire to accede to whatever may be your Excellency's wish. I have only to thank your Excellency alike for the matter and the manner both of your oral and of your written communications. —With, etc.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

MORRISON AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

