LORD LANSDOWNE

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

LORD NEWTON, P.C.

Annotated by Craig W. Thornber, 2025

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The 5th Marquess of Lansdowne had a remarkable career at the pinnacle of the British Establishment. He succeeded to his father's title in July 1866 at the age of 21. His role in government commenced when he served in Gladstone's Liberal administration as a Lord of the Treasury from 1869 to 1872 then as Under-Secretary of State for War from 1872 to 1874. He was selected to be Under-Secretary of State for India in 1880 and, having gained experience in overseas administration, was appointed Governor General of Canada from 1883 until 1888. This was followed by his appointment as Viceroy of India from 1888 to 1894. On returning to Britain, in Lord Salisbury's Conservative administration, he became Secretary of State for War from 1895 to 1900, then Foreign Secretary from 1900 to 1905. In 1903, Lord Lansdowne became the leader of Conservative and Liberal Unionist peers in the House of Lords. The Liberal victory in the general election of January 1906 brought an end to his career as Foreign Secretary but he joined Asquith's wartime Coalition Government in 1915 as Minister without Portfolio.

Lord Lansdowne died in 1927 at the age of 82. Lord Newton's biography was published only two years later and draws extensively on his personal knowledge having become a member of the House of Lords himself on his father's death at the end of 1898. He was well qualified to write on the constitutional crisis of 1910 in which he had played a role, including proposing that the House of Lords be replaced by an elected senate.

The account of Lord Lansdowne's life is enriched by his own words from the frequent personal letters that he sent home from Canada and India. Lord Lansdowne would have written his own official letters at that period; there would not have been teams of special advisors and researchers. They show his mastery of the subject, his analytical powers in perceiving the most pertinent issues and his command of English in setting them out precisely, unambiguously and diplomatically. His letter to Edward VII, pointing out that the king had made an error, is a masterclass in diplomacy. At the end of the book, Lord Newton gives a touching appreciation of his subject and a more intimate portrait is painted in Appendix II by Lord Ernest Hamilton, his brother-in-law.

With the passing of almost a century, we perceive Lord Lansdowne as embodying the end of the tradition of government by the aristocracy in what was to be the penultimate chapter of the British Empire. In examining a biography, one should consider the state of the world when the subject reached adulthood. This was the world that moulded their formative years and which would influence their views for the rest of their lives. Lord Lansdowne reached the age of twenty-one in 1866, the year after the end of the American Civil War. His biographer, Lord Newton, was twelve years younger.

The third quarter of the 19th century saw Britain at the zenith of its power. This was illustrated not only by the geographical extent of its overseas possessions but also in its annual production of coal, steel and ships together with the size of its mercantile and naval fleets. Rapid expansion of German industry, with larger and more modern factories than those employed in Britain, made it a growing competitor.

By the end of the century, Britain had not been in conflict with a European power since the Crimean War between 1853 and 1856. There had been many colonial wars against less developed countries, which had inferior weapons and the succession of British victories had led to a dangerous complacency. Military reforms were slow in coming, in part because of the conservative views of Queen Victoria as described in this book.

The Boer War came as a great shock to British prestige from the defeats and evidence of poor organisation as discussed in Chapter V. What is not mentioned is that a large number of volunteers for the army were rejected on health and fitness grounds. Soldiers were required to be at least five feet three inches tall (160 cm) with a chest measurement of 34 to 36 inches (86 to 91 cm) and to weigh at least 8 stone 3 pounds (52 Kg.). These problems persisted into the Great War and manpower shortages led to the formation of Bantam Regiments for men of smaller stature. The 1851 census was the first to show that more people were living in urban areas than in the countryside. At the beginning of the 19th

century, many young men had outdoor work in agriculture likely to promote strength and fitness. At the end of the century, boys left school at the age of 12 to work long hours in unhealthy conditions in factories. Lord Lansdowne, when Viceroy of India, commented on the contrast in physique between the British soldiers and the military retainers of some of the local rulers that he encountered. This situation was an indictment of the social conditions in Britain engendered by the industrial revolution.

In 1900, almost all the members the House of Lords were hereditary peers. A few lawyers were life peers to increase the legal expertise of the House in its role as Supreme Court. Members of Parliament did not receive salaries until 1912, so it was essential that they had private means. Many came from the landed classes including the sons of peers.

An analysis of the index to this biography shows that the numbers of titled individuals mentioned are as follows: Duke, 12; Marquess, 15; Earl, 38; Viscount, 30; Lord, 79 and Sir, 76. The last figure covers baronets and knights and the title Lord covers Barons. This biography is a *Who's Who* of the British aristocracy of the period. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was not uncommon for cabinet ministers and senior military and naval officers to receive baronies and prime ministers and heads of the armed forces to be granted earldoms. After the Second World War, only Clement Atlee, Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan became earls. Macmillan was the last person to receive an hereditary peerage other than a member of the Royal Family. James Callaghan, Harold Wilson, Theresa May and David Cameron became life peers while Edward Heath, John Major and Tony Blair were appointed Knights of the Garter. Margaret Thatcher's husband, Dennis, received the last baronetcy ever granted, on 7 December 1990. We are now, in 2025, at a point where a bill to end hereditary peers sitting in the House of Lords is progressing through parliament.

When Lord Newton's biography of Lord Lansdowne was published in 1929, readers would have been familiar with the names of many of the people mentioned. Almost a century later this is not the case. I have taken the opportunity to provide an annotated version of the book, with 627 footnotes. Those in Lord Newton's original are identified by the letters (LN). The vast majority of the information has been abstracted from *Wikipedia*, a source that is generally reliable for biographical details and widely available on modern digital devices. Authoritative biographies are available from other sources such as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* but this is less readily available. For each person found, I have quoted the full name and title with their years of birth and death and one or two sentences on their roles. For reasons of space, I have eliminated lists of civil honours. The information provided should prove sufficient for interested readers to find the full article on *Wikipedia* or in other sources.

The introduction of footnotes alters the length of the pages and repagination would require the book to be indexed again. To avoid such an onerous labour, I have set out the text showing the original page numbers and the page headers, which show the subject and year. I have retained the original spellings such as Corea and Kowait and made an explanatory note on their first occurrence. A small number of changes to punctuation have been made where it renders the meaning clearer but the text is unaltered. In the course of pursuing all the named individuals, a small number were found that had not been included in the index and these have now been added in the appropriate place.

Some of the individuals have proved hard to trace as Lord Newton sometimes gave only a surname both in the text and the index. It has been necessary to pursue possible candidates by checking their dates and biographies. I have not attempted to reproduce the photographs in the original book; I have worked from a portable document format (pdf) version of the book which has a resolution suitable only for the text. The photograph of Lord Lansdowne is from a *Wikipedia* article.

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LORD NEWTON'S PREFACE

The long and distinguished public life of the late Lord Lansdowne, which extended over more than half a century, may be divided into two unequal sections, the first comprising his services as Viceroy of two of our greatest dependencies, and the second and more important, his tenure of the War Office and Foreign Office, followed by a long leadership of his party in the House of Lords during difficult and eventful years. A word of justification for compressing so crowded a career within the limits of one volume is therefore perhaps advisable.

No political incidents of much importance occurred between the years 1883-1893 either in Canada or in India, and it has therefore seemed permissible to confine the narrative of this period chiefly to personal experiences and impressions.

As regards the second section, the War Office period, which includes the South African War, has been fully dealt with by previous writers: the Foreign Office period (1900-1905) has been exhaustively covered by Dr. Gooch and Dr. Temperley in their masterly work on the Origins of the War, while all the important events in the Parliamentary period from 1906 to 1927 have been already described by ex-Cabinet Ministers and others. The political biographer of to-day is therefore left with no sensational secrets to disclose, and the utmost that he can expect to achieve is bridging of certain gaps and the throwing of some additional light upon what have hitherto been looked upon as minor political mysteries. Under these circumstances prolixity seems superfluous.

This book, which is an attempt to depict the career of a man whose merits were perhaps inadequately recognised by the public and whose real character was imperfectly understood, has been compiled chiefly from the private papers at Bowood which were placed unreservedly at my disposal by the family, and I desire to express my full appreciation of this mark of confidence.

I desire also to express my thanks for the valuable assistance which I have received in various forms from the present Lord Lansdowne; from Mr. J. S. Sandars; Dr. Harold Temperley; Mr. S. F. Markham; Mr. F. W. Hirst; Mrs. E. Dugdale; and Lord Midleton; while the sympathetic interest of my wife has been an encouragement. I am further much indebted to Lord Ernest Hamilton for an intimate personal appreciation of his brother-in-law, and to the writer of Appendix I.—a recognised authority on all Irish questions—who prefers to remain anonymous.

Lastly, I may add that the work of searching an enormous mass of documents has been much lightened as the result of the careful arrangement of the late Lord Lansdowne's correspondence by his private secretary, Mr. M. Dawkins.

NEWTON.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS..... page. 1

Lineage—Education—Eton and Oxford—Dr. Jowett—Succeeds to title—Failure to obtain a First Class—Visit to Napoleon III—Joins Mr. Gladstone's Government at age of 23—Marriage—Under Secretary for India in 1880 Government—Resignation over Irish Land Bill.

CHAPTER II

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA, 1883-8 page 24

Reluctance to accept offer—Arrival in Canada—Favourable reception—Abortive Fenian plots—Social functions—The Cascapedia river—The Riel Rebellion—Visit to British Columbia—Fishery disputes between Canada and America—Invited to join Unionist Cabinet by Lord Salisbury—Mr. Chamberlain in Canada—Offer of Viceroyalty of India—Hesitation to accept—Return to England in 1888.

CHAPTER III

VICEROY OF INDIA, 1888-94. page 56

First impressions of India—Duties of a Viceroy—Trouble in Afghanistan—Indian Councils Bill—Official tours—Revolt in Manipur—Viceregal Sport—Change of Government at Home—Queen Victoria's opinion of Gladstone—Lansdowne-Kimberley correspondence—Afghanistan again—Opium Commission—Search for a Liberal Viceroy—Mission to Afghanistan—A Burmese tour—Arrival of Lord Elgin—Critique of Lansdowne's Viceroyalty.

CHAPTER IV

WAR MINISTER, page 127

Death of Dowager lady Lansdowne—Honours—War Secretary in Salisbury Government, 1895—Commander-in-Chief question (changes in powers and position)—Action of Queen Victoria—Lord Wolseley appointed—The Jameson Raid—Irish Land Bill—S. African crisis over proposed revocation of Aliens Immigration Act of Transvaal Government—Question of S. African reinforcements and their positions—Kitchener in Soudan and French activities in Central Africa—Khartoum expedition postponed—Opposition of Sir M. Hicks Beach to Reorganisation scheme—Lord Lansdowne's proposed resignation—Fashoda settlement—Commander-in-Chief question revived.

CHAPTER V

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899-1902 page 154

President Kruger and questions of suzerainty and Outlanders—War preparations of Transvaal Government—Opposition of War Office soldiers to employment of British troops from India—War declared by Kruger—General Buller as Commander in South Africa—Colenso—Buller's telegrams—Conduct and conditions of warfare—Cronje's surrender—Relief of Ladysmith and Kimberley—Queen protests against supposed Cabinet interference with S. African generals—Publication of Spion Kop dispatches—Kitchener left in charge—Buller and Roberts return—Reopened question of Commander-in-Chief—Lord Roberts appointed—Prolongation of War—General Election—Unionist majority—

Lord Lansdowne promoted to Foreign Office—Critique of Lansdowne as War Minister—Lord Midleton on the joint work of Lord Wolseley and Lord Lansdowne at the War Office.

CHAPTER VI

THE EUROPEAN SITUATION, 1900-1 page 195

European relations—England's isolated position—Anglo-German relations— Kaiser's visit to England and desire for Anglo-German Agreement—German overtures—Lord Lansdowne's response—King Edward visits Germany—The Bülow-Chamberlain recriminations—Breakdown of negotiations—The Lansdowne-Wolseley debate in Parliament—Anglo-French relations—Nicholas II. visits France—Anglo-Italian relations—Abortive Anglo-Russian overtures.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE, 1902 page 218

Combination of Russia, France, Germany to rob Japan of results of Chinese victory—First unofficial advances made by Hayashi in spring of 1901—Official resumption in autumn—Desire of British Cabinet to extend terms or proposed Alliance—Visit of Ito to St. Petersburg and danger of failure of negotiations—Alliance signed in February 1902—Object and scope defined by Lord Lansdowne—A turning point in British Foreign Policy—Generally approved—Credit due to Lord Lansdowne and Hayashi—No real justification for subsequent abandonment ever put forward.

CHAPTER VIII

PERSIA, 1901-5 page 230

Lord Curzon urges necessity for definite Persian policy and stoppage of Russian encroachment—Proposed loan to Persia from Indian Government falls through—Shah visits London—The Garter Question—Garter Mission to Teheran—End of S. African War—Preparations for Coronation—Resignation of Lord Salisbury—Mr. Balfour Prime Minister—Changes in the Cabinet—Declaration by Lord Lansdowne with regard to Persian Gulf—Sir Arthur Hardinge upon effect of Russo-Japanese War in the Middle East.

CHAPTER IX

ANGLO-GERMAN AND ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, 1902-3 page 246

Unfriendly Anglo-German relations—The Bagdad Railway—Lord Lansdowne in favour of British participation—Cause of failure of negotiations—The Venezuelan Question—Anglo-German association and complications with America—President Roosevelt and Germany—The Venezuelan Arbitration—The Alaska Boundary—Arbitration accepted—Unscrupulous action of President Roosevelt.

CHAPTER X

ANGLO-FRENCH AND ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1902-4 page 267

Disposition of French Government in 1902 to settle outstanding questions—Conversations with M. Cambon in the summer and autumn—Repudiation of Afghanistan engagement by Russian Government and threat of establishment of a Protectorate over Thibet—Effect of Russo-Japanese campaign upon Russian designs—Visit of King Edward to Rome—Success of his visit to Paris in May 1903—Visit of the French President and M. Delcassé to London in July—Progress of the *Entente* negotiations—Views of Lord Cromer—M. Delcassé's obstruction during final stages of negotiations—Agreement signed

April 7, 1904—Credit due mainly to Lord Lansdowne and M. Cambon—Mr. Balfour on an erroneous public impression with regard to the political influence of King Edward.

CHAPTER XI

TARIFF REFORM, 1903. Page 295

The divided Cabinet—Resignation of Ministers—Lord Lansdowne's version of Cabinet meeting, October 17, 1903—Resignation of Duke of Devonshire—Lord Lansdowne become: leader in House of Lords.

CHAPTER XII

TURKEY, 1903-5 Page 301

Intervention of Concert of Europe in Macedonia—Russia and Austria as Reforming mandatories—Miirzsteg Convention— The farce of "Macedonian Reforms"—England the only European country interested in the condition of the Christian races in Turkey—Lord Lansdowne on the absence of any definite Austrian policy in the Near East.

CHAPTER XIII

RUSSIA, 1904-5. Page 307

Conversations at Copenhagen in 1904 between King Edward and M. Isvolsky on the subject of an Anglo-Russian understanding—Lord Lansdowne on a misconception—Sir Charles Hardinge on the Russo-Japanese war and anti-British feeling—Letter from Czar repudiating any suggestion of British mediation—The Dogger Bank incident—A rupture narrowly avoided—Correspondence between the Czar and the Kaiser—President Roosevelt's mediation accepted after Japanese naval victory of Tsushima—Peace signed—The Czar's obstinacy—Renewal and extension of Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

CHAPTER XIV

ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1904-5 Page 329

Complaints of the Kaiser against England—His visit to Tangier—Statements made by him to Prince Louis of Battenberg and to Sir Frank Lascelles—Meeting with the Czar at Björkö and signature of secret treaty—Fall of M. Delcassé—Repudiation of the Björkö Treaty—The Anglo-French *Entente* strengthened—End of Lord Lansdowne's tenure of Foreign Office.

CHAPTER XV

IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9 Page 346

Deplorable position of Unionist Party after general election of 1906—Dissensions over Tariff Reform—First clash between the two Houses—The Education, Plural Voting and Trade Disputes Bills—House of Lords Reform—Appointment of Rosebery Committee—Mr. Asquith becomes Prime Minister—Rejection of the Licensing Bill—The Government alarmed at the threatening attitude of Germany in 1908—Assurance of support received from Mr. Balfour.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET Page 374

Feeling created by its introduction—Conflicting views as to course to be adopted by House of Lords—Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne in favour of rejection—Error in tactics—The debate —Consequence of rejection.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PARLIAMENT BILL Page 384

The General Election of January 1910—Liberal majority dependent upon Labour members and Home Rulers—Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne upon the advisability of resuming question of House of Lords Reform—Resolutions moved and carried by Lord Rosebery—Death of King Edward and resort to a Constitutional Conference—Attempt to arrive at a settlement—Breakdown of the negotiations—Second General Election in December 1910— Situation of parties unaltered—Memorandum by Mr. Balfour on the position of the King—Lord Lansdowne and the King—Belated introduction of a Lords Reform Bill—The Parliament Bill in the House of Lords—Negotiations between leaders with regard to the creation of peers—Meeting of Unionist peers at Lansdowne House followed by split in the party—Action of the so-called Die-Hards—Uncertainty as to their numbers—Unparalleled interest of the debate in the House of Lords—Lord Morley's declaration as to the creation of peers—The Bill passed by means of Unionist votes—Recriminations—Lord Lansdowne's justification of his action.

CHAPTER XVIII

INTERREGNUM Page 432

Resignation of Mr. Balfour in November 1911—The cause—Fresh Tariff Reform dissensions—Difficult position of Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne—Critical situation in Ireland—Failure of the Buckingham Palace Conference in 1914—Outbreak of the War.

CHAPTER XIX

THE OPENING YEARS OF THE GREAT WAR Page 439

Assurance of support given to Mr. Asquith by Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne—Reluctance of Lord Haldane to dispatch the Expeditionary Force—Lord Lansdowne taken into the counsels of the Cabinet—Death of his second son in France—Unionist complaints at ineffective conduct of the war—Lord Lansdowne joins the First Coalition Government in 1915—His appeal to Mr. Asquith in favour of compulsory service—Memo, of November 16, 1916, urging the advisability of re stating the objects of the Allies in order to facilitate peace by negotiation—Fall of Mr. Asquith's Government—Lord Curzon's version—Resignation of Lord Lansdowne and termination of his official career—His leadership in the House of Lords.

CHAPTER XX

THE PEACE LETTER Page 463

Not the result of a hurried decision—Its unexpected appearance in the *Daily Telegraph* —Hostile reception in most quarters and violent abuse in the press—Popular misconceptions as to the proposals—The letter a reasoned and practical statement—Approved in private by many—Formation of a Lansdowne Committee—A second letter to the *Daily Telegraph*—Lord Lansdowne defends his proposals in Parliament—President Wilson's Fourteen Points inspired by them—Statement by Colonel House—Unpropitious moment chosen for appearance of first letter—Opportunities missed for making

a negotiated peace in 1916-1917—Ludendorff's responsibility—Questionable benefit of the knock-out blow.

CHAPTER XXI

CLOSING YEARS Page 484

Failure in health and inability to attend in Parliament for prolonged period—His view that the War might have been avoided if an explicit statement had been made by the Liberal Government—In the country—Love of the classics—Occasional reappearances in House of Lords—Denial that he offered military assistance to France in 1905—Derreen burnt by the rebels in 1922—Joy of return there in 1926—Death while on his way there in June 1927—Summary of career.

APPENDIX I

LORD LANSDOWNE AND IRELAND Page 497

APPENDIX II

A PERSONAL SKETCH, BY LORD ERNEST HAMILTON Page 506

The Marquess of Lansdowne, Governor General of Canada

Photographer: William James Topley (1845–1930)

Ottawa, November 1883

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

(Page 1)

Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquis of Lansdowne, was born on the 14th January 1845. His lineage was a remarkable one, not only on account of its length but from its diverse elements. On his father's side he could trace descent back to Norman times, his original ancestors having migrated to Ireland in the twelfth century. Soon afterwards the Fitzmaurices established themselves in County Kerry and assumed the title of Lord or Baron of that district. Lord Lansdowne was actually the 28th Lord of Kerry in direct male succession, though the original title had long since become merged in more recent creations.

The earlier Fitzmaurices must have been an unruly race; several of them, it appears, met their end at the hands of their heirs-at-law, and one is recorded as having murdered a judge on his bench. It was their boast that they found their wives, not amongst their Anglo-Norman kindred, but in Ireland, and it is perhaps evidence of their matriarchal tendencies that their progeny became *Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores*.[1] Thus in Elizabethan times three successive Lords of Kerry were in open rebellion against the sovereign, and one of them actually had a price put upon his head. The character and remoteness of their place of habitation enabled them to frustrate their enemies; and though more than once their estates were declared forfeited to the crown, they

(Page 2) LORD LANSDOWNE

were always eventually restored. It was then, as it has often proved since, one thing to proclaim and quite another thing to enforce a decree in the West of Ireland, and the Government of the day was generally ready to compromise with the "strongest man" on the spot; it thought that thereby the maintenance of law and order in these distant districts could be ensured.

The Fitzmaurice family thus survived many vicissitudes. It was at a somewhat later period that it received a notable accession of new and perhaps more stable blood by the marriage of the 21st Lord Kerry to Anne only daughter and heiress of Sir William Petty.[2] Petty (1623-1687) is generally remembered as the author of the *Down Survey of Ireland*—the first complete map ever made of that country, though he has a higher claim to fame as the admitted inventor of the Science of Statistics or, as some would have it, the real "father" of Political Economy. We have it on the authority of Lord Shelburne[3] (first Marquis of Lansdowne) that his grandmother Anne,[4] though "a very ugly woman", "had brought into the family whatever degree of sense may have appeared in it and whatever wealth is likely to remain in it. His statement so far proved correct that the extensive Irish possessions with which Lord Lansdowne and his predecessors were associated were all due to this Petty connection, the original Fitzmaurice property in North Kerry having long since passed into other hands. It should perhaps be added that the Lord Shelburne above mentioned was Lord Lansdowne's great-grandfather, while his paternal grandfather was the well-known statesman of the nineteenth century known as the "Nestor of

[1] More Irish than the Irish. (Ed.)
[2] Sir William Petty (1623–1687) was an English economist, physician, scientist and philosopher. He first became prominent serving Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth in Ireland. He developed efficient methods to survey the land that was to be confiscated and given to Cromwell's soldiers. (Ed.)
[3] *Life of William Earl Shelburne* , i. p. 2. (LN). William Petty Fitzmaurice, 1st Marquess of Lansdowne (1737–1805), known as the Earl of Shelburne between 1761 and 1784, by which title he is generally known to history, was an Anglo-Irish Whig statesman who was the first home secretary in 1782 and then prime minister in 1782–83 during the final months of the American War of Independence. He succeeded in securing peace with America and this feat remains his most notable legacy. (Ed.)
[4] Anne Petty (1671–1737), daughter of the scientist and philosopher Sir William Petty and his wife Elizabeth Waller, Baroness Shelburne. (Ed.)

the Whigs". To the Anglo-Irish blood of the male line Lord Lansdowne's mother brought a very different strain. Emily, fourth Marchioness of Lansdowne,[5] was a Scotch heiress and the daughter of a Frenchman. Of her father

(Page 3) EARLY YEARS

Count de Flahault (1785-1870),[6] the trusted aide-de-camp of Napoleon I.,[7] sufficient has been written elsewhere to render further reference unnecessary, but in reviewing Lord Lansdowne's ancestry it must be stated that Flahault was generally supposed to be the son, not of the elderly French noble whose name he bore, but of the more attractive, if less reputable, Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun,[8] whose relations when a young man with Flahault's mother appear to have been notorious. It may be added that the family papers preserved at Bowood all tend to support this view.[9] On her mother's side Emily de Flahault was Scotch. For two previous generations there had been an absence of male heirs in her family, with the result that she eventually became the solitary representative of no less than three Scotch houses, the Nairnes, the Mercers, and the Keiths. The Nairnes of Perthshire left behind them nothing but their tide. They had injudiciously staked their all upon the young Pretender—and lost it in "'45". Through the Mercers of Meikleour, however, she succeeded to the estate of that name, while through her grandfather, Admiral Viscount Keith,[10] she became Baroness Keith and the possessor of a second estate at Tulliallan, near Kincardine-on-Forth.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the subject of this book was in a position to claim that he had in his veins an equal proportion of the blood of four nations, English, Irish, Scotch, and French, the influence of French blood being noticeable in his personal appearance.

During the lifetime of his grandfather Lord Lansdowne was known as Viscount Clanmaurice, while his father bore the name of Earl of Shelburne,[11] which he had assumed in preference to that of Kerry used by an elder brother who had predeceased him. On the death of his grandfather and until his own succession Clanmaurice

(Page 4) LORD LANSDOWNE

became officially Kerry, but the interval was a short one (1863-1866), and it was as "Clan" that he continued to be known to his friends throughout the remainder of his life.

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[5] Emily Jane Mercer Elphinstone Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marchioness of Lansdowne and 8th Lady Nairne (née de Flahaut (1819–1895). (Ed.)

[6] Auguste Charles Joseph de Flahaut de La Billarderie, Comte de Flahaut (1785–1870) was a French general during the Napoleonic Wars, a senator, and later in his life, a French ambassador to the Court of St James's. (Ed.)

[7] Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), later known by his regnal name Napoleon I, was a French general and statesman who rose to prominence during the French Revolution and led a series of military campaigns across Europe during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars from 1796 to 1815. (Ed.)

[8] Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754–1838), 1st Prince of Benevento, then Prince of Talleyrand, was a French secularized clergyman, statesman, and leading diplomat. After studying theology, he became Agent-General of the Clergy in 1780. In 1789, just before the French Revolution, he became Bishop of Autun. He worked at the highest levels of successive French governments, most commonly as foreign minister or in some other diplomatic capacity. His career spanned the regimes of Louis XVI, the years of the French Revolution, Napoleon, Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Louis Philippe I. (Ed.)

[9] The Secret of the *Coup d'Etat*, by Earl of Kerry (Introduction). (LN)

[10] George Keith Elphinstone, 1st Viscount Keith (1746–1823) was a Royal Navy officer, politician and peer who served in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. He was the fourth son of Charles Elphinstone, 10th Lord Elphinstone, and his wife Lady Clementina Fleming, the daughter and heiress of John Fleming, 6th Earl of Wigtown. (Ed.)

[11] Earl of Shelburne is a title that has been created twice while the title of Baron Shelburne has been created three times. The Shelburne title was first created in the Peerage of Ireland in 1688 when Elizabeth, Lady Petty, was made Baroness Shelburne. She was the wife of Sir William Petty. The title became extinct on her death in circa 1708. It derives from Shelburne (Síol Bhroin), a region of County Wexford, Ireland. (Ed.)

The education of the boy followed conventional lines, but he was fortunate in possessing parents who took a genuine interest in his progress, and in being entrusted to masters and teachers who in every case showed not only interest but much common sense.

At the age of ten Clanmaurice was sent to Mr. Nind's private school at Woodcote.[12] Like his brother Lord (Edmond) Fitzmaurice,[13] he had been admirably grounded at home and was at once placed in a class where the average age of his companions was two years higher than his own. "An orderly and agreeable pupil", writes the master; "makes his way well with his school-fellows and is popular". Three years were passed with credit at this establishment. It is worth noting that from the first day that he left home for school he made a practice of writing constantly to his mother, and that from 1855 until her death in 1895, when separated from her, never failed to write at least once a week, and nothing was ever allowed to interfere with this habit. These letters, often written in the midst of great pressure of work, deal with every variety of subject, from high politics to insignificant details of domestic affairs, and convey an impression of a very attractive personality. They reveal not only capacity and a strong sense of duty, but modesty, unselfishness, humour, an almost passionate attachment to home and family life, and a filial devotion which is not always conspicuous in Englishmen, and which may perhaps be traced to his semi-French origin.

At Eton, where he was sent to Mr. Birch's house, his career opened in a promising fashion. He took an excellent place, and his tutor expressed the opinion that

"he is talented without imagination, clear-headed but rather uncertain, able to bear the freedom of his summer half without letting liberty lapse into licence". His progress was so satisfactory and conduct so impeccable that it is almost a relief to discover a slight lapse from grace.

A reference by Mr. Birch to "a severe punishment which he had been forced to inflict" is explained in a subsequent note by the delinquent as being occasioned by "too much champagne and lobster salad on Election Saturday".

Later on, as he rose higher in the school, by a strange coincidence he acquired no less a personage than Arthur James Balfour[14] as a fag. The latter's recollections of his former fagmaster are vague, but his impression is that he was "rather strict". Whatever their relations may have been at Eton, in later life they were those of the closest intimacy and friendship.

But as is so often the case with clever boys, his exceptional ability enabled him to progress with a minimum of work, and the watchful Mr. Birch became apprehensive as to the future. He had got into the "Boats", and this was not conducive to industry. Mr Birch, much to his credit, wrote to Lord Shelburne urging that the boy should be taken away before he became demoralized.

If [he wrote] you wish Clanmaurice to read and be the scholar he may, do not leave him at Eton after Easter. April to September will be lost, and you cannot replace those five months by any future twelve,

[12] This historic family-run prep school that prepared boys for major UK public schools such as Eton and Harrow announced it was to close at the end of the summer term of 2025. It was founded in 1816.

[13] Edmond George Petty-Fitzmaurice, 1st Baron Fitzmaurice (1846–1935), styled Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice from 1863 to 1906, was a British Liberal politician. He served as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1883 to 1885 and again from 1905 to 1908, when he entered the cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster under H. H. Asquith. However, illness forced him to resign the following year. (Ed.)

[14] Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour (1848–1930) was a British statesman and Conservative Party politician who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1902 to 1905, succeeding his uncle, Lord Salisbury. As foreign secretary in the Lloyd George ministry, he issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917 on behalf of the cabinet, which supported a "home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. He was the eldest son of James Maitland Balfour a Scottish MP and Lady Blanche Gascoyne-Cecil, a member of the Cecil family, who was the daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Salisbury. (Ed.)

for in his boating set at that critical time of life he will get a habit of treating work lightly, and pleasure as the main object, which Christ Church will set for good. You have here no ordinary boy to deal with, and I will make bold to predict that if in these coming six months he does not learn to work (which our system cannot enforce upon an upper boy), he will never work at all.

This sound advice was adopted by the sensible parents. The boy was removed from Eton and placed in charge of the Rev. Lewis Campbell,[15] with instructions

to prepare him for Balliol instead of Christ Church.

The premature departure from Eton cannot have been agreeable, but the experiment proved to be completely successful. Under the able tuition of Mr. Campbell the young Clanmaurice became a good classical scholar (although he was much too modest to make any parade in after-life of this accomplishment), picked up a good deal of useful knowledge, even developed a taste for geology and when the formidable Balliol examination arrived, passed with ease "having shown proficiency considerably above the average required for matriculation". Mr. Campbell, in parting with his pupil, expressed exactly the same view as his two predecessors, *viz*. that the only obstacle which appeared likely to prevent success in after-life was a want of imagination".

Balliol in 1864 was ruled by the celebrated Doctor Jowett,[16] who never attempted to conceal the exceptional interest which he took in intelligent undergraduates whose social position might eventually enable them to attain high offices in the public service. Clanmaurice at once made a favourable impression upon him. "I have a very high opinion of your son," Dr. Jowett wrote to Shelburne, in January 1864. "He has a great deal of ability and promise. There are very few undergraduates to whose career I look forward with as much confidence as to his." This confidence was not misplaced, for the young man showed every sign of not wasting his time at Oxford. He possessed the healthy tastes of youth including the love of sport, but was definitely resolved not to allow these to interfere with the main object of University life; and as an instance of his common sense he mentions that he "prefers rowing to cricket, as it interferes less with work".

In 1865 Jowett paid him the somewhat onerous compliment of an invitation to pass the Long Vacation with him in Tummel Bridge, his habitual summer resort, and again expressed strong approval.

> I am surprised at his abilities, which are very good, and he has excellent taste. I have rarely known anyone quicker at apprehending a new or difficult subject. He sees the point of a thing in a moment. Also I find him a most amiable companion. Indeed he is universally liked. May I tell you what appears to me to be his defect? He is wanting in interest in political and general subjects, and this indolence and shyness of mind prevents his doing justice to his abilities, which are really excellent. I want to see him acquire more force and activity such as may enable him to take a distinguished part in life.

In the following year an event occurred which in the case of one less determined might have definitely affected his after-career. His father, who had only recently succeeded to the Lansdowne title, suddenly

[15] Lewis Campbell (1830–1908) was a Scottish writer and classical scholar. Campbell was educated at Edinburgh Academy, the University of Glasgow, Trinity College, Oxford and Balliol College, Oxford. He was fellow and tutor of Queen's College, Oxford (1855–1858), vicar of Milford, Hampshire (1858–1863), and professor of Greek at the University of St Andrews (1863–1894). (Ed.)

[16] Benjamin Jowett (1817–1893) was an English writer and classical scholar. Additionally, he was an administrative reformer in the University of Oxford, theologian, Anglican cleric, and translator of Plato and Thucydides. He was master of Balliol College, Oxford. (Ed.)

died, and at the age of twenty-one the youth found himself one of the great territorial magnates of the country and the inheritor of an historic name and historic possessions.

To many this early succession to wealth and high social position would have been little less than a catastrophe, and the worldly-wise Jowett, passing Lansdowne House, is found commenting on a surprising phenomenon.[17]

> When I pass by your splendid house in London I feel a sort of wonder that the owner should be reading quietly in Oxford. But you could not do a wiser or a better thing. Wealth and rank are means and not ends, and may be the greatest evil or the greatest good as they are used.

This young man, however, who according to his contemporaries possessed rather more than the ordinary share of the "joie de vivre", was of no common type. He continued to lead the ordinary undergraduate's life (incidentally acquitting himself with credit in a town-and-gown fight in company with his friend the late Sir Edward Hope[18]) and amassed, according to contemporaries, a choice collection of door knockers and plates wrenched off various houses. Still bent on getting his First, however, he passed another Long Vacation with

the Sage at Tummel Bridge, and awaited the dreaded examination in the autumn of 1867 full of misgivings.

> Paper work [he wrote to his mother on November 28, 1867] is over at last, and I have had quite enough of it. I have no good account to give you of my performance. I had done fairly until Tuesday evening when I did a shaky paper on a subject I considered myself strong in. Wednesday morning was "Roman History", truly a weak point, moreover I had been stupid enough, thinking that as the end was so near I could last another day, to cram furiously the night before, so that I was not very fit when I woke in the morning. I continued the mistake of further cramming from 12.30 to 1.30, the hour's rest (?) between the papers, and the last paper of all finally settled me. The subject was one I dreaded, my brains were addled, and tho' I didn't lose my temper, I made a very poor exhibition of myself. Still it is pleasant to think that I have no more weary days writing to go thro' and if it had not been for my getting on so ill, I should feel very comfortable. I must stick to the books for ten days more and then I may have a little bit of idleness, which will do me good.
>
> I feel all the better for having had a good gallop with the drag and left them all behind on the little bay horse, who is sound again.
>
> I am to dine on Saturday with Jowett, I believe to meet Mr. Lowe[19]. I wish I could confirm the hopes he holds out, for myself have absolutely no hopes, and I am not a bad judge: it will as you sav be a great thing for me to have got the work done independently of all results, but I cannot help feeling that a very great prize has been almost within reach, and been missed by my own fault. It would have been such a great ending to my life here and I could then have forgiven myself some of the follies which it has contained. As it is I have a feeling that my career at Oxford *has manqué*[20] and I shall turn my back on the old haunts with the consciousness that I might have turned them to better account.

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[17] Dr. Jowett to Lord Lansdowne, April 1867. (LN)

[18] Sir Edward Hopkinson Holden, 1st Baronet (1848–1919) was a British banker and Liberal politician, most notable for his role in developing the Midland Bank (later HSBC) into the largest bank in the world. (Ed.)

[19] Lowe appears in the index for this entry and one on page 13 where he is referred to as Mr. Robert Lowe, identified as living from 1811–1892. He held office under W. E. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1868-1873) and as Home Secretary (1873-1874). He became 1st Viscount Sherbrooke. (Ed.)

[20] Frustrated in the fulfilment of one's aspirations or talents. (Ed.)

I can't look at these sort of things from the point of view of those who when they get their 2nd, pity the poor devils in the 3rd instead of wishing for a place among the lucky dogs in the 1st. My beard is gone, and I look at myself in the glass with surprise and dismay. I have a feeling of nudity about the chin that makes me feel a constant desire to hide it under the folds of a comforter, but my friends approve and I hope you will also.

There is a great ball at Blenheim to-night, the Xtians[21] are

there so I suppose there will be a great function. I am rather sorry to have missed seeing the place.

A week later he wrote:

I am afraid I must have drawn too harrowing a picture of my own grievances in the schools. I wrote in a spirit of indignation against them and the examiners rather than in one of commiseration with myself. I have quite picked up again and am hard at the books, Jowett, Williams and Raper[22] all at work catechizing me on every conceivable subject as a preparation for *viva voce*. The dread events will come off on Tuesday, on which morning Price will consign to their packing-cases—God knows for how long—the volumes which have been staring me in the face for such a time. Poor old books! By the time my first born has matriculated at Balliol they will be out of date and Jowett, Williams and Raper will be ranked amongst the old fogies.

These gloomy anticipations unfortunately proved to be correct, and to his bitter disappointment he narrowly missed his First and had to be content with a Second. Jowett's explanation of the failure was different from his own.

I was very sorry about the Class List, both for your sake and Lady Lansdowne's, and also for the sake of Oxford and Balliol. You failed not from want of ability, but from a certain want of interest and from the cares of this world coming upon you too soon; and I failed in making you understand the amount of interest and of hard work which was required.

But I should be much more sorry if I thought that you were going to settle down "second class" for life. Don't allow yourself to think this for a moment. You have certainly far greater ability than many First Classmen, and by good management, with your opportunities, you may make every year a progress on the one before.

I want you to have objects and dreams of ambition and energy and industry enough to carry it out. A new era of politics is beginning and unless a man would be a cipher or a paradox he should fit himself for it. Time will show him how to shape his course: though always willing to act with a party, he should still keep his mind above party feelings and motives. It does not

do for a young man to begin where an old man leaves off. Knowledge of the world and of political subjects; reticence, self-control, freedom from personal feeling, are the qualities to be aimed at. I don't object to a touch of idealism or speculation also if kept in its proper place. But how few statesmen have these qualities in any degree?

After all, there was no occasion for despondency. The difference between a first and second class is largely sentimental: those who have achieved a first have often been political failures, and one of the

[21] Abbreviation for Christians. (Ed.)
[22] A Fellow of Balliol. (LN).

most brilliant and industrious men of our time, the late Lord Curzon,[23] incurred precisely the same disappointment some years later. In any case there are plenty of compensations in life for a young man endowed with the many advantages conferred by high station and wealth, and who could claim good looks, culture, and a sympathetic personality. Released from work, he spent some time in acquiring a knowledge of his vast estates and in the ordinary amusements of his class; excelled in all field sports, being an excellent horseman, a good shot, a keen fisherman, and also discharged the customary duties of a big landowner in his native county of Wiltshire. About this period he was in the habit of occasionally visiting his French relatives, and in the autumn of 1868 he was invited to Compiègne by Napoleon III,[24] whose guests included several well-known personages identified with the Second Empire, including Marshal Bazaine[25] of disastrous memory. The house party was subsequently joined by the Prince and Princess of Wales.[26] Lord Lansdowne's description of the Imperial Court, then nearing the end of its flashy magnificence, is not without interest.

> I arrived here about 4 yesterday [he wrote to his mother on November 19, 1868]. I came down with the Mouchy's,[27] the Achille Murat's[28] and Henry Standish, all of whom I knew, so I started with the thin end of the wedge inserted. We were let alone till dinner which is at 7, a ridiculous hour, for it makes the evenings so long, especially as dinner is hurried over at a great rate

> As we are 120 at table or thereabouts I can't tell you all the convives. I was introduced to most of them last night, but have hazy recollections of the uninteresting people's names; there are for instance about a dozen Marshals all with grey hair and red ribbons and absolutely no distinguishing marks. Among the acquaintances I found here were the Aguados,[29] Mme. de Lasmarismas, Vte. d'Harcourt,[30] young Aguado, M. Pietri, Mrs. Hervey[31] and her daughters, *etc.*

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[23] George Nathaniel Curzon, 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859–1925) was styled The Honourable between 1858 and 1898, then known as The Lord Curzon of Kedleston between 1898 and 1911, and The Earl Curzon of Kedleston between 1911 and 1921. He was a prominent British statesman, Conservative politician and writer who served as Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905 and Foreign Secretary from 1919 to 1924. (Ed.)

[24] Napoleon III (Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte; 1808–1873) was President of France from 1848 to 1852 and then Emperor of the French from 1852 until his deposition in 1870. He was the first president, second emperor, and last monarch of France. He was the nephew of Napoleon I. (Ed.)

[25] François Achille Bazaine (1811-1888) was an officer of the French army. Rising from the ranks, during four decades of distinguished service (including 35 years on campaign) under Louis-Philippe and then Napoleon III, he held every rank in the army from fusilier to Marshal of France, the latter in 1863. (Ed.)

[26] Albert Edward Prince of Wales (1841-1910) later King Edward VII from 1901 and his wife Alexandra of Denmark (1844–1925).

[27] In 1868 this could refer to the family of Antoine Just Léon Marie de Noailles (1841-1909) 9th prince de Poix, from 1846, 6th duc espagnol de Mouchy, 5th duc français de Mouchy et duc de Poix from 1854, a French nobleman. He was connected to the Murat family through marriage to Anne Murat (1841–1924), daughter of Prince Napoleon Lucien Charles Murat. (Ed.)

[28] These are presumed to be relatives or descendants of Charles Louis Napoleon Achille Murat (known as Achille, 1801–1847) who was the eldest son of Joachim Murat, the brother-in-law of Napoleon who was appointed King of Naples during the First French Empire. (Ed.)

[29] Marquess of Marismas del Guadalquivir is a hereditary title in the Peerage of Spain, granted in 1829 by Ferdinand VII to Alejandro María Aguado, an important merchant banker. Mme de Lasmarismas is mentioned but no Christian name is given for "young Aguado". He could be Arturo Aguado y MacDonell, 4th Marquess of Marismas del Guadalquivir (1845-1894), the second son of the 3rd Marquess (1842-1880). (Ed.)

[30] There are numerous branches of the d'Harcourt family in both England and France. This could be a reference to Emmanuel d'Harcourt (1844–1928), vicomte d'Harcourt, secrétaire général de la présidence de la République (1873–1877), vice-president of the French Red Cross. (Ed.)

[31] In 1868 there was Lord Alfred Hervey (1816–1875) who was known before 1826 as Alfred Hervey, a British politician who was son of Frederick Hervey, 1st Marquess of Bristol. As the text refers to Mrs. Hervey not Lady Hervey, her connection is unclear. (Ed.)

I took Mme. de Mouchy in to dinner and sat next but one to the Emperor which rather awed me. He was very good natured when I was presented before dinner and asked kindly after grandpapa.[32] The Empress[33] was also very amiable and spoke to me for a few minutes after dinner. We (the public) danced in the evening and considering that it was the first and that people are scarcely shaken together yet I thought it seemed to go off very cheerily.

We were to have hunted to-day but it is put off on account of Wales' arrival. I don't know how long he stays. The officials are all very good natured, thanks in great measure to Sammy[34] having recommended me last week.

Price[35] much flabbergasted at the scarcity of the imperial tubs. In reply to a question whether there was not one told off to each bedroom, said, "Not one to twenty, my lord, and I shouldn't say one in forty uses them". He also growls at having no place to clean my tops in. I forget whether you ever heard a report that I was to marry Mlle. d'Albe.[36] You may as well spread it in the neighbourhood.

Three days later he again wrote to his mother:

I dare say you have already wondered at my not writing to you. We have been very busy the last two days and I have had to go to the Empress's tea each evening directly I came in, so that my good resolutions of sitting down to write before dinner were nipped in the bud.

We came here as you know on Wednesday. On Thursday we did nothing in particular, walked about the place, and in the afternoon I went over to Royallier to see Lagrange's[37] yearlings.

On Friday morning the Wales arrived; P. of Wales, Keppel,[38] young Standish and I all sported our pinks, so I was right in

bringing mine. We didn't start till late as breakfast was a long affair. The departure was picturesque, any number of char-a-bancs with four and six horses and postilions, besides outriders and all sorts of swells in cocked hats. The rendezvous was about six miles off in a monotonous part of the forest intersected by endless *allees*. We found at once, and galloped about for some 15 or 20 minutes when Wales came to grief which rather spoiled sport. The accident was a very singular one and as I was next to him at the moment I saw the whole performance. Five deer were coming very fast at right angles to the right and one of them, a largish stag, finding it impossible to avoid the Prince of Wales who was also going at a great rate, made a tremendous leap, attempting I suppose to clear him, or else desirous on national grounds of putting an end to the heir of the English throne. The attempt, whichever it was, failed for instead of clearing H.R.H., the stag sent him and his horse flying five or six yards off the ride into the heather. He got up at once however and, beyond looking a little staggered and

[32] The Comte de Flahaut, grand chancellor of the Legion of Honour, died on the eve of the Battle of Sedan. (LN)
[33] Eugénie de Montijo (born María Eugenia Ignacia Agustina de Palafox y Kirkpatrick (1826–1920) was Empress of the French from her marriage to Napoleon III on 30 January 1853 until he was overthrown on 4 September 1870. (Ed.)
[34] Comte Wells de la Valette, a French relative. (LN)
[35] Possibly Lord Lansdowne's valet.
[36] She may be related to the Duc d'Albe mentioned below on page 12.
[37] Comte Frédéric de Lagrange (1815-1883), 2nd count of Lagrange was a French politician. He was the son of the Napoleonic general Joseph Lagrange and was a noted racehorse owner and breeder. (Ed.)
[38] Indexed as Lieutenant Colonel Keppel so likely to be Lieutenant-Colonel William Coutts Keppel, 7th Earl of Albemarle, (1832-1894), styled Viscount Bury between 1851 and 1891. He was a British soldier and politician. It was his son, Lt.-Col. Hon. George Keppel (1865–1947) who married Alice Edmonstone and she became the long-time (1898-1910) mistress and confidante of King Edward VII. (Ed.)

feeling somewhat stiff, appeared none the worse, but I confess to having been considerably alarmed at seeing the audacious somersault which my future sovereign performed. After this, though we galloped miles and miles we saw no more of the hunt, tho' I believe a stag was killed as we had a *curée*,[39] seeing however that a calf answers all practical purposes for this ceremony, I do not accept the obsequies as a proof of the demise of our quarry. The *curée* was a very pretty scene and we all came out and caught cold on the balcony. In the evening we danced as usual and had a cotillon in which all the ladies laid their bouquets at the Princess's feet until she had an embankment of flowers in front of her.

Yesterday we started at nine for an imperial shoot and an imperial shoot it was, ten guns. Cte. Mercy d'Argenteau,[40] Cte de Moltke,[41] Sir W. Knollys,[42] Col. Keppel, The Prince, The Emperor, Marshal Bazaine, Lord L., Duc d'Albe[43], M. de Bedmar. The total was 1460. Wales topped the score with 270, and I had the bad taste to come within ten of him, principally owing to the enormous quantity of rabbits which I killed, the number was I think 163! I could have killed more pheasants but spared the hens of which there were quantities. I was very well pleased as Marshal Bazaine has no idea of the art and I spent my whole day in wiping his eye so that I got a great deal of his shooting besides my own.

The following is a conversation which was repeated at intervals after the termination of the chasse:

Distinguished foreigner: "*Et vous milor, combien de pièces avez-vous tuées*?"

Milor unassumingly informs him of the number.

Distinguished foreigner: "*Matin*!"

I resume my letter which has outgrown itself. I am just come in—ye gods!—from a paper chase in the forest after the Empress and Mlle. Marion.[44] It rained cats and dogs and I spoiled my only hat and my best coat. We caught her Majesty on the top of a faggot stack at the back of a farm ever so far off. We had a man with a big trumpet with us and went across country like lunatics.

I came in for the latter end of Mass this morning which was going on in a chapel opening into the ante-room in which we assemble. A small bell was perpetually twinkling in the sanctuary while the Voltigeurs[45] were playing Barbe Bleue under the windows of the room in which I stood.

I gave the Emperor your message, it was well received.

[39] Display of parts of a hunted animal. (Ed.)
[40] In 1868 there was Comte Charles de Mercy d'Argenteau (1808-1886).
[41] Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (1800–1891) was a Prussian field marshal. The chief of staff of the Prussian Army for thirty years, he is regarded as the creator of a new, more modern method of directing armies in the field and one of the finest military minds of his generation. (Ed.)
[42] General Sir William Thomas Knollys (1797–1883) was a British Army officer who reached high office in the 1860s. (Ed.)
[43] Given the connection by marriage to Napoleon III, this could be the Duke of Alba, Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart y Ventimiglia, 15th Duke of Alba, (1821–1881, a Spanish nobleman. He was a brother-in-law of Napoleon III through his wife, sister of Empress Eugenie. (Ed.)
[44] This is likely to be a lady-in-waiting attending on the Empress. (Ed.)
[45] French military skirmish units. (Ed.)

> The Prince behaved well and flirted within reasonable limits. The Princess had a great success, which she deserved.

Hard upon the Imperial frivolities followed an important event in his life in the shape of the offer of a small post in the Liberal Government. In those days, as now, there was a shortage of really able Liberal peers in the Lords, hence any young peer who gave any indication of ability was warmly welcomed and almost certain to secure one of those minor Government posts that were habitually filled from the Upper Chamber. The invitation (undoubtedly suggested by Lord Granville[46]) was conveyed in a courteous letter from Mr. Gladstone,[47] offering a Junior Lordship of the Treasury, which was of course accepted. The celebrated Mr. Robert Lowe[48] was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the first communication which Lord Lansdowne received from this Minister might have discouraged the most enthusiastic political neophyte.[49]

> Your business will be of two kinds: the adjudicating on superannuations, the amount and demands of which you will

> soon find for yourself, and the seeing and forming opinions on other business in the office to which there is no other limit that I know of than your own inclinations.

The prospect, too, of explaining in Parliament complicated financial legislation at the age of twenty-four was alarming, although less so in reality than in appearance, owing to the peculiarities of the House of Lords. In that assembly—much the most tolerant in existence—it was and still is customary to entrust bills and questions of minor importance to youthful peers who perhaps hold court posts, and who are occasionally quite devoid of any political knowledge. When the latter are called upon to explain a bill or to answer a question, the Department concerned considers that it has done its duty if it furnishes them at the eleventh hour with a typewritten statement, and when this has been read out, the official spokesman frequently subsides into stony silence, being quite unable to deal with the various criticisms which may arise subsequently from different quarters of the House. If the situation becomes desperate, some experienced debater on the Front Bench hurriedly takes counsel with the permanent official of the Department concerned, comes to the rescue of his embarrassed colleague, and generally succeeds in placating the critics either by adroit explanations or by the promise of "careful consideration".

It was the ever good-natured Lord Granville who extricated the new Lord of the Treasury from his first difficulty.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. London, March 27. 1870

> I have been very busy this week getting Lowe's Coinage Bill thro' the House, the subject was rather crabbed, but beyond old Kinnaird[50] I had very little opposition and it went off smoothly enough. Lord Granville's good nature stood me in good stead on one occasion, I was being worried by Lord K. on a point about

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[46] Granville George Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Granville (1815–1891), styled Lord Leveson until 1846, was a British Liberal statesman and diplomat from the Leveson-Gower family. He is best remembered for his service as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (Ed.)

[47] William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898) was a British statesman and Liberal Party politician. In a career lasting over 60 years, he was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for 12 years, spread over four non-consecutive terms (the most of any British prime minister) beginning in 1868 and ending in 1894. He also was Chancellor of the Exchequer four times, for over 12 years. (Ed.)

[48] Robert Lowe, 1st Viscount Sherbrooke (1811–1892) held office under William Ewart Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1868 and 1873 and as Home Secretary between 1873 and 1874. (Ed.)

[49] Mr. Robert Lowe to Lord Lansdowne, Dec. 25, 1868. (LN)

[50] Arthur FitzGerald Kinnaird, 10th Lord Kinnaird (1814–1887), a Scottish banker and Liberal politician. (Ed.)

> which I was not very sure, when he left his place, obtained the requisite information from the Mint official who was watching the case at the bar, and whispered it to me before K. had done speaking, so that I was able when I got up to give him the right answer without any appearance of communication with a "crammer".

Those of us who have occasionally been rescued from ignominy whilst endeavouring to reply for a Department when insufficiently instructed will be the more ready to appreciate this gratitude to Lord Granville.

Meanwhile his ministerial career might have experienced a slight check through what Dr. Jowett characterised as "a mad freak", but which in reality was a very insignificant escapade. After a somewhat too convivial dinner at Oxford with former friends, he had taken part in a raid on the Dean of Christ Church's garden, and so much indignation was displayed by the University authorities that it was not until several years later that he was able to take his degree. The incident seems to have escaped mention in the press, which would certainly not have been the case now, and imagination gasps at the thought of the heights to which the organs of Lord Rothermere[51] and Lord Beaverbrook[52] would have soared in describing the devastation of a Dean's garden by a youthful peer with a seat upon the Front Bench.

It was in the autumn of 1869 that Lord Lansdowne, then twenty-four years of age, married Lady Maud Hamilton,[53] youngest daughter of the Duke of Abercorn, and a member of a family renowned for good looks, high spirits, and general brilliance. This marriage, the result of an attachment at first sight, which united two great families, proved to be one of ideal happiness, marred by few domestic misfortunes until the Great War deprived them of a much-loved son. Seldom have a young married couple started life under such fortunate auspices; seldom have expectations been more fully realized, and

if Lord Lansdowne represented the best and highest traditions of the British aristocracy, the dignity and charm of Lady Lansdowne were of incalculable value in the discharge of the high offices of state which he was destined to fill.

The brilliant marriage festivities which were the prelude to so much domestic happiness did not render him unmindful of the mother from whom he was now separated.

> I wish [he wrote from Bowood on his wedding day] I did not feel that amidst so much happiness, you have so small a share in it. One cannot write these things, but you will trust me when I tell you that I feel for all you have gone through, for I know what it must have cost you to bear up as you did.
>
> I shall be very happy here, and no one has more to make him so, but I shall miss you and think of you and wish for the day when you will come back—for I know you will. Goodbye, dear dear Mother. I have done so little to repay all your love to me that I sometimes think that you

[51] Viscount Rothermere, of Hemsted in Kent is a title created in 1919 for the press lord Harold Harmsworth, 1st Baron Harmsworth. He was the owner of the *Daily Mail*. (Ed.)

[52] William Maxwell Aitken, 1st Baron Beaverbrook (1879–1964), was a Canadian-British newspaper publisher and backstage politician who was an influential figure in British media and politics of the first half of the 20th century. His base of power was the largest circulation newspaper in the world, the *Daily Express*, which appealed to the conservative working class with intensely patriotic news and editorials. During the Second World War, he played a major role in mobilising industrial resources as Winston Churchill's Minister of Aircraft Production. (Ed.)

[53] Maud Evelyn Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marchioness of Lansdowne, (1850–1932), was a daughter of James Hamilton, 1st Duke of Abercorn, and Lady Louisa Jane Russell. (Ed.)

must be sick of me, and think that there is nothing left in me which is not hard and ungrateful. Try and believe that I am not all bad and love me in spite of my unkindness.

Many of the letters to his mother contain these self-reproaches, for which there was singularly little justification.

As for his official career, it continued to prosper, for he was clearly designed by nature for Parliament, and grappled so successfully with a Coinage Bill and other forbidding legislation associated with the Treasury that in 1872, when only twenty-seven years of age, he was offered and accepted the post of Under-Secretary of State for War.

> Gladstone [he wrote to his mother on April 24] sent for me yesterday and offered me Northbrook's[54] place at the War Office. Altho' the idea was not a new one to me, I had never brought myself to say yes or no by anticipation, and there seemed to be so many reasons for not deciding without careful reflection that I asked leave to consider the offer before accepting it.

> I talked the matter over with Lord Granville, with Mr. Gore[55] and with Edmond, and spent a rather anxious day in trying to make up my mind. I also had a talk with Garrod[56] about my health.
>
> The result of these deliberations is that I told Gladstone that, if Mr. Cardwell[57] did not consider my complete ignorance of War Office matters an obstacle to my appointment, or likely to interfere seriously with the workings of the department, I would accept the post with great pleasure.
>
> I saw Mr. Cardwell this morning and found him very friendly and encouraging, he told me that when he came to the office he did not know a gun from a sword, and that he had no doubts upon the point which I had felt so strongly.
>
> So *me voilà*, very much easier in my mind than I was before it was made up, very much pleased at such a piece of promotion, and very nervous with regard to my powers of using so great an opportunity well.
>
> You will approve, I trust, my decision, and not think me too rash for joining the crew of what I am afraid you consider a *megaera*[58] among governments.

Mr. Cardwell's great work, the introduction of the short-service system and the abolition of purchase, had already been accomplished, and no event of importance relating to the Army took place before the

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[54] Thomas George Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook (1826–1904) was a British Liberal statesman. Gladstone appointed him Governor-General of India 1872–1876. He served as First Lord of the Admiralty between 1880 and 1885. (Ed.)

[55] The Concise Dictionary of National Biography up to 1921 does not have an entry for Mr. Gore. He could be John Ralph Ormsby-Gore, 1st Baron Harlech (1816–1876), a Conservative Member of Parliament who was raised to the peerage in January 1876, a few months before his death. (Ed.)

[56] Sir Alfred Baring Garrod FRS (1819–1907) was an English physician. In 1848, Garrod had discovered an abnormal increase of uric acid in the blood of patients with gout, and was the first to propose lithium as a remedy for the disorder. He is also credited for coining the term "rheumatoid arthritis". (Ed.)

[57] Edward Cardwell, 1st Viscount Cardwell (1813–1886) was a prominent British politician in the Peelite and Liberal parties during the middle of the 19th century. He is best remembered for his tenure as Secretary of State for War between 1868 and 1874 and, with William Ewart Gladstone's support, the introduction of the Cardwell Reforms. (Ed.)

[58] Megaera is one of the three sisters known as Furies. She was the older sister of Tisiphone and Alecto, being responsible for punishing adulterers, oath breakers, and thieves. (Ed.)

Gladstone administration resigned in 1874. For the next six years Lord Lansdowne sat amongst the Opposition and occasionally criticized his Conservative opponents with some of the pitying contempt which usually characterized the attitude of Whigs towards Tories. He found little to approve of in either Lord Beaconsfield[59] or Lord Salisbury,[60] and nothing could have seemed to him more unlikely than that some day he should join a Conservative Administration. The period of Opposition was, however, soon over, and when in 1880 Mr. Gladstone was again returned to power, Lord Lansdowne was speculating as to his own future.

> I shall be glad when the crisis is over [he wrote on April 18, 1880]. I am very anxious to know what is settled as to the leadership. I shall be less surprised than most people if Lord Granville proves to be the man, and although there is no doubt a very

> strong Gladstonite party in the new house, a great many of our people will much prefer following Lord G.
>
> *Quant à moi*[61] I own that I shall be relieved when I know my fate. Up to the present I have not the slightest idea what it is likely to be, but I see that most of the papers send me to Ireland, and I am already receiving applications for court appointments, at which to use old Spencer's[62] expression, "my stomach rises". I should not mind Irish work or living in Ireland, but the flunkeyism and parade would be insupportable. Besides this there are some Irish measures which nothing would induce me to have anything to say to.
>
> I shall not be sorry to have office as I like having regular work to do, and fret less over it than if I have to provide work for myself.
>
> L.s.d.[63] is another consideration, and I am half afraid that Ireland would be a losing affair. I could not do it shabbily and the traditions of the office are horribly extravagant.

It is always a mystery that anyone could be found voluntarily to accept the Irish Viceroyalty, but Lord Lansdowne was not called upon to make the choice, for he became Under-Secretary for India, a post of some importance, as his chief, Lord Hartington[64] was in the Commons. Within a very short time, however, he came to the conclusion that his position as a member of the Liberal Ministry was impossible. He had, during recent years, carefully studied the Irish land question, and had acquired a practical knowledge of it by residence on his Irish estates, and had formed very definite conclusions. The proposals contained in the Compensation for Disturbance Bill filled him with misgivings and two months after acceptance of office he was already tendering resignation.

> I think it my duty [he wrote to Mr. Gladstone on June 28 1880] to delay no longer acquainting you that I am one of those who disapprove strongly of the principle involved in the Compensation for Disturbance Bill.

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[59] Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804–1881) was a British statesman, Conservative politician and writer who twice served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, firstly for about ten months in 1868 then from February 1874 to April 1880. (Ed.)

[60] Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (1830–1903), known as Lord Salisbury, was a British statesman and Conservative politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom three times for a total of over thirteen years between 1885 and 1902. (Ed.)

[61] For my part. (Ed.)

[62] The Agent at Bowood. (LN)

[63] L.S.D. is librae, solidi and denarii, literally pounds shillings and pence in pre-decimalisation days. (Ed.)

[64] Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire (1833–1908), styled Lord Cavendish of Keighley between 1834 and 1858 and Marquess of Hartington between 1858 and 1891, was the eldest son of William Cavendish, 2nd Earl of Burlington, who succeeded his cousin as Duke of Devonshire in 1858. (Ed.)

I have some knowledge of districts to which the Bill will apply and I am persuaded that in them it will produce an

(Page 19) EARLY YEARS [1880]

immense amount of mischief while its remote consequences, extending as they will to the whole country and beyond the present time, will be most unfortunate.

I feel that it will be inconsistent with the strength of my conviction not to protest against what I conceive to be an unjust and impolitic proposal. Nor is it in my power to make a secret of my opinions, my position as an Irish landlord and as a member of the Government rendering it impossible for me to avoid the discussion of a matter which engages so large a share of public attention.

Under these circumstances it would be disloyal in me to retain my official connection with an Administration whose policy in this particular I entirely condemn, and I cannot therefore do otherwise than ask you to relieve me of the appointment which by your kind permission I have held till now.

I should have communicated with you sooner, but I deferred writing until I had had time to consider thoroughly the arguments advanced on the part of the Government.

I am sure you will believe me when I say that it is with most sincere regret that I adopt this course.

As might have been expected, Mr. Gladstone, in a deprecating and courteous reply, found no difficulty in suggesting that as an Under-Secretary was in no way responsible for the policy of a Government, he could well continue in office and express his own personal opinions with as much freedom as he considered advisable. This remarkable argument fell upon deaf ears, nor were the efforts of Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, and the Duke of Argyll[65] to retain him in the Government more successful. In August, when the Bill reached the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne gave a full explanation of his resignation and achieved a striking Parliamentary success. Lord Granville, who deeply regretted his resignation, writing to the Queen,[66] admits that it was "owing to most conscientious motives", adding that "he looked upon him almost as a son, and has the highest opinion of his ability". Lord Beaconsfield, also describing the debate to the Queen, writes:[67]

(Page 20) LORD LANSDOWNE [1880]

The debate was worthy of the occasion. Lord Lansdowne especially exhibited qualities which marked him out as one who in due season might be rightly honoured by Your Majesty's highest confidence. His speech, equally poignant and logical, could hardly be surpassed for trenchant argument; voice good, delivery good; and when you take into consideration also his youth, his social position, and his great name—and these are qualities which in public life cannot be disconnected with the individual—it was impossible not to recognise him as one whom Your Majesty has a right to look to for valuable service.

Another distinguished listener to the debate—then Mr. Arthur Balfour, M.P.—has since expressed the opinion that it was one of the most able Parliamentary statements by a young man that he ever heard.

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[65] George John Douglas Campbell, 8th and 1st Duke of Argyll (1823–1900; styled Marquess of Lorne until 1847), was a Scottish polymath and Liberal statesman. He had the title of 8th Duke of Argyll in the peerage of Scotland from his father and became 1st Duke of Argyll in the peerage of the United Kingdom from 1892. (Ed.)
[66] Queen Victoria was on the throne from 1837 to 1901. (Ed.)
[67] Letters of Queen Victoria, 1879-85. (LN)

The resignation of an Under-Secretary is seldom an event of much importance except to the person immediately concerned, and the Lansdowne secession was soon forgotten. Nevertheless, it forms a modest landmark in home politics, for it was the first visible rift in the imposing facade of the great Liberal party: a rift which, within a few years, widened into an irreparable breach, due to Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy. As for Lord Lansdowne, he had gravely imperilled his political future- but no one questioned either his honesty or his capacity, and these qualities eventually reaped their reward. It is worthy of note that while, after his resignation, he remained on the closest terms of friendship with Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, he acquired a distrust of Mr. Gladstone which became more marked from year to year.

An intelligent peer with an inclination to work can always find plenty of occupation in the Lords, and Lord Lansdowne was no exception. He was chairman of the Committee on Irish Jury Laws and of the Joint committee of the two Houses on the Channel Tunnel proposals. In the latter case even his common sense failed to secure a majority. To an ordinary person it would seem incredible that the resources of the military

art should be incapable of blocking a hole of a few yards square, more especially as this orifice was to be commanded by a fort, in which it was intended to place the electric power station controlling the railway. But the so-called military experts of the day based their opposition to the scheme upon the theory that—in a time of profound peace—a large number of "foreigners", disguised as harmless citizens, might establish themselves surreptitiously in Dover, and deliver over the tunnel to a large army awaiting the signal on the other side of the Channel; and, astonishing though it may sound, these arguments actually prevailed. If any of these experts were still alive at the time of the Great War, one wonders what their feelings must have been as they read the daily toll of the submarines. Meanwhile the situation in Ireland was continually becoming worse, and the depressing state of affairs was echoed in his letters.

> The Queen's Co. tenants [he wrote to his mother on December 8, 1880] are obdurate: I wrote them a very conciliatory letter, saying that, though I would not accept Griffith's valuation, I was quite ready to make a reasonable abatement upon a scale to be determined with references to the circumstances of each holding, but they are too far gone, and nothing is left for it but to fight it out. We shall probably single out the two richest men and make bankrupts of them. One of these is a J.P. and pays me £1000 a year in rent. His holding is let far below its value and I have no doubt he would not take £5000 for his interest in it.
>
> Read Judge Fitzgerald's[68] charge to the Munster Grand Jury, and remember that the worst has not come yet. The landlords are holding their hands now, but the collision must come—it will probably take place after Govt. has announced its Land Bill, which, however "drastic", will disappoint and infuriate the agitators. Remember, too, that every hobbledehoy in the country has a gun or a revolver. I take a very gloomy view of the future.

But Irish affairs were only one of Lord Lansdowne's interests. Already his aptitude for foreign affairs was

being noticed, though his speeches did not command any great audiences in the Lords, as may be gathered from the following letter written to his mother on January 29, 1881:

[68] John David FitzGerald, Lord FitzGerald (1816-1889) was an Irish judge and was appointed Lord of Appeal with a life peerage in 1882. (Ed.)

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Bowood, Jan. 29, 1881.

> I said a few words last night about Candahar in the House: they were addressed to an audience of about 10 peers on our side and 3 on the opposite benches. I had rather made up my mind to speak, and having often suppressed a speech owing to the absence of an audience, I determined out of obstinacy that I would not do so on this occasion; but it was very hard work, our people didn't much like what I said, and altogether the effort was a painful one, added to which—owing partly to the big debate which was going on in the H. of C., partly no doubt to my own fault, I was very inaccurately reported. The summary gives a juster idea of what I said than the fuller version.
>
> Gladstone made a rattling speech in the H. of C. I heard it all and was much pleased. He was ceaselessly interrupted by the Irish savages, but it was like a lion surrounded by cur dogs—every time that one came near enough he got a pat that sent him off limping.

In the following months Ireland seemed to be a little more placid to Lord Lansdowne, and it was in an optimistic vein that he wrote to his mother on October 23, 1881:

> I wish you would not attach importance to all the alarmist rumours with which the papers abound. I have already, I hope, said enough to convince you that I shall run no unnecessary risks, and of course if I thought the children were in danger I should not keep them here.
>
> But a general rising is not, I am convinced, an eventuality which we need seriously consider.
>
> As far as one can judge, the action of the Govt. is producing good results, and if once the people get impressed with the idea that Forster[69] is stronger than Parnell,[70] they will soon lose faith in and cease to follow the latter. There will be a sharp fight over the Novr. rents in some places, but it will end in a few of the ringleaders losing their farms altogether, and then the tail will capitulate.

His optimism, however, received a rude shock on

May 8, of 1882, when the news reached Bowood that Lord Frederick Cavendish,[71] the newly appointed Secretary of State, and Mr. Burke[72] had been murdered in Phoenix Park. To his mother he wrote that day:

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[69] William Edward Forster (1818–1886) was an English industrialist, philanthropist and Liberal Party statesman. As a minister in Gladstone's government, he steered through the Elementary Education Act 1870 which was the foundation of compulsory national free education for children in the UK. However his reputation was later tarnished by his policies as minister for Ireland, then in the throes of a struggle for independence. (Ed.)

[70] Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891) was an Irish nationalist politician who served as a Member of Parliament from 1875 to 1891, Leader of the Home Rule League from 1880 to 1882, and then of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1882 to 1891, who held the balance of power in the House of Commons during the Home Rule debates of 1885–1886. He fell from power following revelations of a long-term affair, and died at age 45. (Ed.)

[71] Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish (1836–1882) was an English Liberal politician and protégé of the Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone. Cavendish was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in May 1882 but was killed along with Thomas Henry Burke in what came to be known as the Phoenix Park Murders only hours after his arrival in Dublin, a victim of the Irish National Invincibles organisation. He was the second son of the 7th Duke of Devonshire. (Ed.)

[72] Thomas Henry Burke (1829–1882) was an Irish civil servant who served as Permanent Under Secretary at the Irish Office for many years before being assassinated during the Phoenix Park Murders on Saturday 6 May 1882. The assassination was carried out by an Irish republican organisation known as the Irish National Invincibles. (Ed.)

> You will have been as deeply shocked as we were at this appalling news. It did not reach us till this morning. We are at last face to face with the forces from which Irish agitation derives its fatal strength. Poor Fred Cavendish will not have died quite in vain if his tragical end has served to tear the scales off the eyes of the fatuous idiots who believed so readily in the new millennium.

The repressive measures brought about by the Phoenix Park murders effected some improvement in the situation, but this was merely of a temporary nature, and no intelligent person could be blind to the threatening future of Ireland.

CHAPTER II

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

(Page 24) [1883]

Lord Lansdowne had now reached the age of thirty-eight years—but although still in the thirties he had seventeen years of Parliamentary experience behind him, and had created an impression of ability and tact such as few of his Liberal compeers could boast. But he was gradually drawing away from the Liberal party and tending more to the Conservatives. It was, therefore, somewhat of a surprise to him that early in 1883 Mr. Gladstone offered him the important position of Governor-General of Canada. Mr. Gladstone, it will therefore be realised, deserves the credit of having behaved generously to one who had now practically become a political opponent.

It will probably be a surprise to many persons acquainted with Lord Lansdowne to learn that, so far from welcoming the offer of Canada, he accepted it with considerable reluctance. His love for home, or rather, for his various homes—was so great that it amounted almost to an obsession, and he knew well enough how deeply the separation would affect his mother. These sentiments were so strong that they outweighed the ambition which would have prompted most men, and it was eventually his financial position which turned the scale. It might have seemed incredible that the owner of a palace in London, of such a splendid possession as Bowood, of a large Scotch property, and of immense estates in Ireland, should find himself in

(Page 25) GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA [1883]

pecuniary straits, but such was in fact the case. On his father's death he had succeeded to a debt of £300,000, besides heavy charges on his estate; the Scotch property passed to his mother; the Bowood estate provided practically no net income; while the imposing rent roll of the Irish properties showed signs of an alarming shrinkage, all the more alarming because the Land League had singled him out as an adversary whom it was particularly important to crush. Already he had been obliged to sell some of his most valuable pictures, and was disposed to think that he would never be able to live in Lansdowne House.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Bowood, 18 May 1883

> I have just heard from Lord Derby[73] that my appointment is a *fait accompli*. Even to me the announcement comes like a sort or shock, and I fear that you, who have been clinging to the hope that at the last some obstacle would arise, will feel it as a very heavy one.
>
> There is nothing for it now but to look at the matter with all the courage you can command. I am sure that you will do so, and that at any rate you will try to forgive me for having acted on my own judgment and in the teeth of yours.
>
> The time, be it longer or shorter, is a long one to look forward to, and my heart fails at times when I think of it, but the years will pass by, and when they are gone, I believe we shall all of us admit that it would have been wrong to refuse. Of this I am sure, that if I had refused, I should often have reproached myself for having done so.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Dublin, July 26, '83.

> The nearer I find myself to the inevitable moment when the final separation must come, the more I feel how hard it will be to bear the break of so many loved associations. I know, too,

[73] Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby (1826–1893; known as Lord Stanley from 1851 to 1869) was a British statesman. He served as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs twice, from 1866 to 1868 and from 1874 to 1878, and also twice as Colonial Secretary in 1858 and from 1882 to 1885. (Ed.)

how this thought is present to your mind, and I am worried by the consciousness that you think I have brought all this anxiety upon you gratuitously. You must try to forgive me and to believe that l have done what I thought right. I sometimes fancy you do not realize how much it costs me to turn my back upon so much that I am devoted to.

Before the start, he received various warnings from Sir John Macdonald[74] and others that the Irish-American Fenians would probably make an attempt upon his life, and the ingenious Land League circulated a statement in Canada that none of the Lansdowne tenants could marry without his consent.

> I shall expect to hear on arrival [he wrote to a Colonial Office friend] that I am in the habit of enforcing seignorial rights after the manner of the old French nobles.

Lord and Lady Lansdowne with their four children, and accompanied by a staff which included Lord Melgund,[75] a future Viceroy of both Canada and India, arrived at Quebec in October 1883 and were received with the patriotic enthusiasm characteristic of Canada. Here the new Viceroy was sworn in, in the presence of the outgoing Viceroy, Lord Lorne,[76] and obviously impressed the French Canadians with his mastery of their language.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. 23 Oct., 1883

> Next morning we landed at [Quebec] and drove with an escort of Canadian cavalry to the public buildings, where I was sworn in. The ceremony was not particularly pompous. Some on a sort of dais, I on a chair below, magnificent justices and provincial authorities distributed over different rows of chairs read my commission. I recite a long declaration of fidelity to the Crown, take several impressive oaths administered by the Chief Justice, take Lome's place on the dais and then deliver the great seal to the Secretary of State.
>
> This over, we drove off, still with our escort, to the Theatre, where the civic address of welcome was delivered by the Mayor, a cheery little Frenchman, M. Langelier.[77] This he read first in French and then in English, making a bold attempt to grapple with my numerous English and Irish titles, all of which were recited in the preamble. I made a short reply, first in English and then in French; the audience - almost all French Canadians -

> listened respectfully to the first and cheered some of the passages, but before I had got out half a dozen words of the French reply, the whole audience burst into rapturous applause, which continued more or less until I had finished. I suppose my French was less bad than some to which they have been used; at any rate it pleased the good folk of Quebec.
>
> From the Theatre we drove to the station, where we found a special with several most comfortable cars—in one of which we had a most comfortable hot luncheon, cooked on board and well served up. Nothing could exceed the comfort of these cars and particularly of the little

[74] The Prime Minister of Canada. (LN)
[75] Gilbert John Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, 4th Earl of Minto (1845–1914) known as Viscount Melgund by courtesy from 1859 to 1891, served as Governor General of Canada from 1898 to 1904, and Viceroy of India from 1905 to 1910.
[76] John George Edward Henry Douglas Sutherland Campbell, 9th Duke of Argyll (1845–1914) was known by the courtesy title Marquess of Lorne, between 1847 and 1900. He was Governor General of Canada from 1878 to 1883. He was the husband of Princess Louise, fourth daughter of Queen Victoria.
[77] Sir François Langelier, (1838–1915) was a Canadian lawyer, professor, journalist, author, politician, the tenth Lieutenant Governor of Quebec.

bedrooms provided for the passengers. I had much sooner spend ten days in one than in a stateroom on board the Circassian.[78]

At Ottawa we found a great crowd and a very friendly reception all along our route through the town, which looks very new and uninteresting by gaslight.

Both in Ottawa and Quebec the people seemed well disposed and I did not hear a single Irish groan, although it would not have surprised me if our friends had made a little counter-demonstration. I am told that there is nothing whatever to fear from that quarter, and that the bad feeling which was got up at first against my appointment has very much subsided, if it has not been instrumental in producing a reaction.

This seems to be a very good and comfortable sort of house— some of the furniture is very hideous but the rooms are of good and convenient proportions, and with a little arrangement will do very well—but I will tell you more of this in my next letter.

I am dead tired and must go to bed.

It is not given to many Englishmen to be able to achieve oratorical success in a foreign language, but a striking tribute to the Viceroy's skill appears in the late Lord George Hamilton's[79] book, *Parliamentary Reminiscences*. Lord George, who must have experienced the doubtful pleasure of listening to more speeches in Parliament than almost anyone else, happened to be present when the Viceroy addressed a mixed assembly of boatmen about to proceed to Egypt on the Gordon Relief Expedition.

He gave an admirable address in English to the British boatmen; it was kindly, encouraging, full of sound patriotic sentiment-

(Page 28) LORD LANSDOWNE [1884]

and it was delivered in the strictest gubernatorial style, without gesture or motion. He then turned round to the French Canadians. His speech was in substance much the same, though the sentences were shorter and tenser; but in less than two minutes he spoke with all the animation of a born Frenchman, with all the gesticulation and vivacity of the race, and the staidness of his demeanour entirely disappeared. The genius of the French language had taken possession of him, and he concluded an impassioned oration in the most approved French style, both as regards language and movements.

Lord Lansdowne confessed to his mother on June 3, 1884, that:

I hope you will not detect all sorts of imperfections in my French. I find it almost impossible to concoct a speech in English and then translate it into French, and whenever I have to do anything of the sort in two languages, I write the original in French and render it into English afterwards.

Those who have had the experience in the House of Lords of Lord Lansdowne's exceptionally calm and restrained style will find some difficulty in realizing his oratorical fervour when speaking in French, and he himself was quite unaware of the transformation brought about by a change of language.

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[78] The Circassian foundered off New York in December 1876, with the loss of 28 men, ten of whom were Native Americans from the Shinnecock Nation who had been recruited to help in salvage work. (Ed.)

[79] Lord George Francis Hamilton (1845–1927) was a British Conservative Party politician of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who served as First Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of State for India. Hamilton was the third son of James, Marquess of Abercorn (later the Duke of Abercorn) and Lady Louisa, daughter of John Russell, 6th Duke of Bedford.

One of the earliest incidents after settling down at Ottawa was the arrival at Government House of an infernal machine, which had, however, been so clumsily constructed that its nature was exposed at once. Apart however, from continual warning of Fenian plots in America, the political situation was unexciting. The principal questions of interest were the long-standing fisheries dispute with America; the difficulty of completing the Canadian Pacific Railway; reciprocity with the United States; and a shadowy scheme of federal union with Jamaica, which met with little encouragement at the Colonial Office, then under the control of Lord Derby.

The position of the Governor-General at the period was very different from what it is now that the post

involves little but ceremonial duties, and when residing at Ottawa the visits of the Prime Minister, Sir John Macdonald, to Government House for the purpose of consulting Lord Lansdowne on every kind of political question were continual. Sir John Macdonald, who was Conservative Prime Minister of Canada uninterruptedly from 1878 until his death in 1891, and looked upon as perhaps the foremost politician on the American continent, was generally recognised as a pioneer of the principle of Imperial federation. His relations with the new Viceroy were of the closest and most intimate character, and marked by complete agreement on almost every subject.

The endless social functions, however, in which a Governor-General is expected to take part probably occupied Lord Lansdowne quite as much as his political duties, and he liked them less, for, as he wrote to his mother on January 18, 1884:

> To-morrow we have a Drawing Room; an awful ceremony, but thank heavens there is no kissing. I say that without disrespect to some of the fair Canadians.

In former days the Governors-General of Canada enjoyed one inestimable treasure, in the shape of the Cascapedia River. This stream, renowned as one of the finest salmon rivers in the universe, and now, like many other treasures, the property of American multi-millionaires, formed an ideal summer retreat. Here was constructed a wooden building, to which was given the name of New Derreen,[80] and here the Viceroy passed the summer months, sometimes entertaining English visitors, amongst whom occasionally figured Sir Lionel Sackville-West,[81] at that time British Minister at Washington, and whose official career terminated abruptly in America as the result of a singularly discreditable election trick.

The sport obtained on the Cascapedia was of the highest class. Although the season was short, lasting from the middle of June until the latter half of July, and although every bait but fly was rigidly excluded, the Viceroy and his small party of friends killed during their four seasons 1245 salmon, averaging nearly 24 lb. The nature of the water, a stream running with tremendous force between steep banks covered to the river's edge by an impenetrable forest, made it impossible to cast from land, and it was almost invariably necessary to gaff the fish from the canoe, a difficulty which every angler will realize, and not unattended by the danger of capsizing. Yet from records kept it seems to have been not infrequent for one rod to kill eight or nine fish a day, averaging 25 lb.; and Lord Lansdowne mentions incidentally

[80] Named after Lord Lansdowne's residence in Kerry. (LN)

[81] Lionel Sackville-West, 2nd Baron Sackville (1827–1908) was a British diplomat. He was the fourth son of George Sackville-West, 5th Earl De La Warr, by Lady Elizabeth, daughter of John Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset. He was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, a post he held until 1888, when he retired for writing of the Murchison letter. The Murchison letter was a political scandal during the 1888 United States presidential election between Grover Cleveland, the Democratic incumbent, and the Republican nominee, Benjamin Harrison. It was sent to "Charles F. Murchison", who was actually an American political operative posing as a British expatriate. In the letter, Sackville-West suggested that Cleveland was preferred as president from the British point of view. The publication of the letter two weeks before the election cause Harrison to win and Sackville-West to be sacked as ambassador.

that he once started fishing after 6 p.m. and in less than two hours caught four which averaged more than 34 lb. "This", he wrote subsequently, "I always thought was my best performance as a fisherman, and I have often wondered if it could be capped." Such sport, combined with the magnificent surroundings and the thrills inseparable from its conditions, might have been calculated to diminish the zest for the tamer attractions provided at home, but this was far from the case.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. July 15, 1884

> You say that you are afraid I shall think nothing of the Meikleour[82] fishing after this.
>
> There is an Eastern proverb which runs "Better the crow of one's own country than the phoenix of a strange land". If you knew how often I wish that I could hear the train go shrieking over the Cargill Bridge, or how readily I would take the smallest Tay grilse in exchange for the largest monster of the Cascapedia, you would not say so.
>
> I like to dwell on the sunny side of our life here, but don't imagine that sea sickness is the only sickness which the passage

> of the Atlantic brings to one who loves his home as passionately as I do.

It seems hardly credible, but Lord Lansdowne had not been a full year at his post when he received an urgent appeal to come home and vote on a party question in the House of Lords (the Franchise Bill of 1884).

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Oct. 12, 1884

> By the way, I was very near doing this in all seriousness. Ld. G.[83] telegraphed to me to know whether I would not come over for the division and for a few minutes I felt terribly tempted to say yes. But on reflection I remembered that if I ran over, my holiday would be a mere scramble, as I should have to be back before the end of the year and could not have started till Novr., and moreover it was clear to me that if I went over this year I should destroy, whatever chance I have of getting away in 1886. So I said "no". But it was a tremendous temptation.

It is difficult to understand the frame of mind responsible for a request of this nature, which seems to display an almost unfathomable want of sense of proportion. Obviously it was not Lord Granville but Mr. Gladstone who was responsible, for I can well recollect that when I was at the Paris Embassy, in 1884, the latter did his utmost, fortunately without success, to induce Lord Lyons[84] to come over and vote for this particular Bill. Apparently, at that period, it was a fixed Gladstonian principle that the recording of a party vote outweighed all other considerations, however important. Very different was the action of another Prime Minister in a similar case. The late Lord Cromer[85] once told me that when he was on leave in England, in 1897, Lord Salisbury's Government was in considerable difficulty in

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[82] Meikleour is a village in Perth and Kinross, Scotland. It lies near the confluence of the Tay and the Isla in the valley of Strathmore. (Ed.)

[83] Lord Granville. (LN)

[84] Richard Bickerton Pemell Lyons, 1st Earl Lyons (1817–1887) was the favourite diplomat of Queen Victoria, during the four great crises of the second half of the 19th century: Italian unification, the American Civil War, the Eastern Question, and the replacement of France by Germany as the dominant Continental power following the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. Lord Newton, the author of this work had served under him in the embassy in Paris and wrote his biography. *Lord Lyons: A Record of British Diplomacy* by Thomas Wodehouse Legh Newton, first published in October 1913. (Ed.)

[85] Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer (1841–1917) was a British statesman, diplomat and colonial administrator. He served as the British controller-general in Egypt during 1879, part of the international control which oversaw Egyptian finances after the Egyptian bankruptcy of 1876. (Ed.)

the House of Lords over an Irish Land Bill, and that he, Lord Cromer, although still a Liberal, offered to vote for the Bill. Lord Salisbury, however, declined his

(Page 32) LORD LANSDOWNE [1885]

offer on the ground that it might prejudice his position in Egypt.

In the spring of 1885 there occurred the second rebellion of Louis Riel,[86] a man who had headed a rebellion in 1870.

From Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Ottawa, 26 March 1885

> We have got a disagreeable little outbreak among the half-breeds in the North-West and there may be some trouble before it is put down. The rebels are led by Riel, whose name you will remember in connection with the rising in 1870 and who ought then to have been shot if he had his deserts. The wires are cut and the scene of the outbreak very remote so that our information is scanty, but I suspect a good deal of exaggeration in the reports, and I shall be surprised if there is any hard fighting. We are, however, sending up some troops and Melgund leaves for Winnipeg to-night, to sec if he can be of use, if necessary, in organising some mounted infantry. He commands a crack corps at home and should be the very man for the purpose.

This outbreak, which, had it been successful, would probably have resulted in a wholesale massacre of the scattered European and Canadian settlers, caused considerable anxiety throughout the country, and was suppressed in May through the gallantry of the Canadian local forces commanded by General Middleton.[87] Riel himself was captured and, after trial, sentenced to death. But the sentence gave rise to much agitation in the country, as the French Canadians showed him considerable sympathy, and there was a feeling that there was some foundation for the grievances of his associates. A reprieve was allowed to enable an appeal to be made to the Privy Council, but the sentence was confirmed.

(Page 33) GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA [1884]

From Lord Lansdowne to the Queen. Nov. 1, 1885

> Lord Lansdowne is well aware of the objections to the infliction of capital punishment in the case of political criminals. There are, however, reasons why in this instance it was desirable that the prerogative of mercy should not be exercised. Riel's crime was committed under circumstances of great aggravation.
>
> Lord Lansdowne believes that the grievances of the half-breeds have been immensely exaggerated, and that most of those grievances were of the kind which are inevitable in a new settled country where the population is scattered and where the machinery of administration is as yet in many respects imperfect.
>
> Even, however, if it be assumed that those grievances were more serious than inquiry has shown them to be, it would be wrong to extenuate the guilt of a man who makes them a pretext for bringing upon his country the calamity of a civil war, and above all of a civil war liable to all

[86] Louis Riel (1844–1885) was a Canadian politician, a founder of the province of Manitoba, and a political leader of the Métis people. He led two resistance movements against the Government of Canada and its first prime minister John A. Macdonald. Riel sought to defend Métis rights and identity as the Northwest Territories came progressively under the Canadian sphere of influence. His father was of Franco-Chipewyan Métis descent. I have edited the original wording to remove a derogatory term indicating mixed race but left it in Lord Lansdowne's own letters. (Ed.)

[87] Sir Frederick Dobson Middleton (1825–1898) was a British general noted for his service throughout the Empire and particularly in the North-West Rebellion in Canada. (Ed.)

the horrors and atrocities inseparable from Indian warfare. The isolation and defencelessness of the settlers in these remote districts places them at the mercy of their assailants, and there can be little doubt that but for General Middleton's success at Batoche,[88] the Indians throughout the whole of the N.W. Territories would have risen. Lord Lansdowne believes that if the law is not carried out the effect upon the Indians would be disastrous. They are still in an unsettled temper: they are watching the action of the Canadian Government: they have been told that it does not dare to hang Riel, and they would certainly ascribe the commutation of the sentence to fear or favour, and not to humanity.

There is undoubtedly some feeling, a survival of old race antipathies, among the French Canadians in favour of Riel, but Lord Lansdowne does not consider that it is universal or very deep-seated.

Riel has had a fair trial. After exhausting his right of appeal m this country, he was allowed to address himself to the highest Appellate Court in the realm, and that court has amply confirmed the decision of the Canadian Courts.

To all these considerations must be added the fact that this was the second occasion upon which Riel had promoted an insurrection. He was hanged on November 16, and the execution gave rise to no disturbances,

(Page 34) LORD LANSDOWNE [1885]

In the autumn of 1885 the Viceroy paid his official visit to British Columbia. At this period the Canadian Pacific Railway had not yet been completed, although in 1871 British Columbia had obtained a guarantee that through communication should be established within ten years. The securing by rival companies of charters in 1872, followed by much political intrigue, impeded the work of construction to such an extent that British Columbia actually threatened to retire from the Dominion, and all the efforts of a former Viceroy, Lord Dufferin,[89] to expedite matters proved unavailing.

In 1881, however, Sir John Macdonald signed a contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway to complete the line within ten years, and in spite of serious difficulties, some of which were again due to political intrigue, the work was actually finished five years before the stipulated time, and the first through train left Montreal for Vancouver on June 28, 1886.

The journey across Canada has been described *ad nauseam* by innumerable travellers, but the impressions of a Viceregal tour undertaken nearly half a century ago, when Winnipeg, for instance, was a town with about 20,000 inhabitants, are worth recording.

From Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Oct. 1 1885.

On the 25th we started early on horseback from Lethbridge for the Reserve of the Blood Indians, a numerous and powerful tribe who conducted themselves well during the recent troubles. On our way we saw a "round up" of some three or four thousand head of cattle which had been driven together for our satisfaction. The cowboys who manage these great herds are wonderful fellows and splendid horsemen. They gave us a capital exhibition of "roping", riding out a particular bullock which they wanted to catch and then lassoing him at full gallop and

[88] Batoche, Saskatchewan, which lies between Prince Albert and Saskatoon, was the site of the historic Battle of Batoche during the North-West Rebellion of 1885. The battle resulted in the defeat of Louis Riel and his Métis forces by Major General Frederick Middleton and his Northwest Field Force. (Ed.)

[89] Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (1826–1902) was a British public servant and prominent member of Victorian society. In 1872 he became Governor General of Canada, bolstering imperial ties in the early years of the Dominion, and in 1884 he reached the pinnacle of his official career as Viceroy of India. (Ed.)

eventually turning him head over heels on the grass. After this was over we rode on towards the Reserve and were met at the border of it by Red Crow[90] and his principal Chiefs, all on horseback in full costume.

(Page 35) GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA [1885]

After fraternizing with Red Crow we all galloped on together across the prairie, and I think our motley cortege would have made you laugh. On arriving at the Reserve my formal interview or "Pow-wow" with the Indians took place. I sat in our arm chair with my little staff and the Police Officers round me and an interpreter by my side, with Red Crow and his Chiefs opposite in a semi-circle. The conversation lasted some time and we discussed sundry Indian grievances which I need not recapitulate to you.

At the conclusion my presents were produced—a silver medal and a pair of field glasses for Red Crow, with pipes, knives and tobacco for the minor notables. We all parted excellent friends, and in the evening we camped at a very pretty spot on the other side of the river, where our tents had been pitched. The night was cold but fine and I slept comfortably rolled up n my blankets. I rode about 35 miles this day.

We found the little place (near Calgary) full to overflowing with cowboys who had gathered in for a Prairie Race Meeting on the following day. A hind quarter of beef was lying beside the back door of the house, and the cook of the establishment was busily engaged in cutting chunks off this and frying them for each lot of hungry guests as they came in. We got our turn with the rest, and I must say that although you would probably not have thought the surroundings of the feast very appetizing, we did thorough justice to it. After supper we made friends with the cowboys and had some songs and swallowed a great deal of bad tobacco smoke. The night was very cold and it rained hard during the early part of it, but our tents kept dry.

You will observe from the above that if I have grown old I have not become infirm, and I think I did more riding than any member of the party, most of whom were ready enough to take an occasional rest in the police waggons which accompanied us.

I had a capital old horse to ride and never felt sick or sorry from the time I got on his back to the time I parted with him. The prairie pace is a very slow canter at a rate of a little more than six miles an hour. When horse and rider get used to this, it is possible to go "loping" along, as they call it, for a great length of time without feeling any fatigue.

On the 30th we travelled by train eastwards to Blackfoot Crossing in order to meet the Indians of that name. Their Chief, Crowfoot,[91] is the most influential Indian of the whole lot, and we were anxious to be as civil to him as possible. Crowfoot and several hundred of his people met us at the station and followed us on horseback towards the Reserve, into which, however, they

(Page 36) LORD LANSDOWNE [1885]

allowed us to precede them, they themselves halting about three-quarters of a mile off. After half an hour's delay, we saw the whole body moving down towards us at a gallop, the whole

[90] Red Crow (c. 1830–1900), also known as *Captured the Gun Inside*, *Lately Gone* and *Sitting White Bull*, was a Kainai leader. He succeeded to the chieftainship in 1870 after the death of his father from smallpox. He was a signatory to Treaty 7 in 1877. In the period after the treaty was concluded, he led the development of agriculture on his reserve. (Ed.)

[91] Crowfoot (c. 1830–1890) or Isapo-Muxika was a chief of the Siksika. His parents were both Kainai. Crowfoot was a warrior who fought in as many as nineteen battles and sustained many injuries, but he tried to obtain peace instead of warfare. Crowfoot is well known for his involvement in Treaty Number 7 and did much negotiating for his people. (Ed.)

crew finally charging down upon us at a furious pace and firing their guns and rifles, loaded with ball cartridge, in-every direction and in unpleasant proximity to our heads and those of their neighbours. One or two of them were absolutely naked with the exception of a waistbelt and a few feathers with which their long black locks hanging nearly down to their saddles were ornamented. I never saw a wilder sight.

We had a very successful Pow-wow at the conclusion of which there was the usual distribution of presents, Crowfoot receiving a large silver medal, and a silver bell something like that which the President of the French Assembly uses when he wishes to call the members to order. I think the old fellow was rather taken with this. These Indians are extraordinarily eloquent, and although one cannot understand a word they say, their gesticulations and the wonderfully mobile expression of their features go far towards telling you what they are driving at. The effect is, however, a good deal marred by the translation of their fervid declamations into Cowboy English by the interpreter.

Crowfoot came back to the cars and saw me off with many protestations of friendship. Hope and Melgund made sundry more or less successful attempts to buy tomahawks, gun cases and other articles of the Indian wardrobe. Some of the Chiefs were fine looking fellows in spite of their tawdry finery which together with the absurdity of their names rendered it a little difficult to keep one's countenance with becoming gravity. When a gentleman rejoicing in the name of "Bad Dried Meat", "White Pup", or "The Louse", decorated with perhaps an old soup plate out of which the centre has been carefully cut so as to admit of its being turned into a necklace, or wearing as a coiffure a stove pipe hat brushed the wrong way with a magnum bonum steel pen mounted as an aigrette, comes forward and shakes you fervently by the hand for five minutes with many unutterable groanings and profuse gesticulations, one's sense of the ridiculous becomes almost irresistible. I believe however that I was fairly successful in behaving myself.

We got to Calgary in the evening and I had time for a short drive round the place with a charming old French missionary whose acquaintance I had made at Ottawa, and who is doing a great deal of good among the Indians.

(Page 37) GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA [1885]

We resumed our journey that night and stopped at a place called Canmore so as not to lose the fine scenery. This morning we found ourselves in the middle of the mountains and have been travelling through the grandest scenery I ever saw in my life.

We are now in British Columbia travelling slowly down a terrible gradient of 232 feet in the mile. On each side of the track the mountains rise sheer above us in the wildest and most beautiful shapes. The high peaks mostly covered with snow with here and there a glacier—while below our feet the Kicking Horse River is tearing away towards the Pacific. The timber too is fine. Altogether it is a grand and wonderful sight and it is the more impressing after the dreary flatness of the Prairie scenery. I have not a word to say against the soil of the prairie or against its prospects as a great wheat growing or cattle raising country, but nothing would induce me to live there. No one who has not done it can realise the monotony of an interminable expanse of brown grass land reaching as far as the horizon and unrelieved save by the bleaching bones of the buffaloes which once swarmed upon it but which are now virtually extinct.

I am told that the scenery lying before us is even more beautiful than that which has been interrupting me every five minutes while writing this letter.

We shall have one more day in the Cars, and then a march of two or three days across the mountains where the line is not finished before we rejoin the Railway on the British Columbian Coast.

On the 2nd October we travelled from the "summit" of the Rockies (*i.e.,* in railway parlance the point where the railway begins to go down hill), to the end of the track. Breakfasted in the Car at 7.20, and took ponies to resume the journey, rode about 18 miles over fearful ground, but thro' the grandest possible scenery to a railway village called Farwell where we camped very comfortably in tents provided by the Railway people.

Oct .3. Address (as usual) at Farwell presented by the stipendiary magistrate and a rough crowd of miners and navvies of all nationalities. The main street very gay with rough decorations and mottoes in half a dozen different languages. The village was burned right out six months ago but has grown up again since. Rode thence 18 miles more, partly along the track,

partly over old trails to camp on shore of a pretty lake surrounded by stupendous timber. I had no idea of the size trees could grow to till I saw these giants—mostly Thuja Gigantea which you have seen in the Pinetum at Bowood—but 200 feet high and many girthing 25 or 35 feet. Interspersed with these a good many splendid hemlocks, also of gigantic dimensions. We camped in a grove of the Thujas (cedars they call them here) and I shall never forget the sight of their huge grey stems lit up by the blaze of a camp fire constructed in proportion to its surroundings and towering up into the darkness above. Slept warmly and comfortably but our baggage stuck in the mud and we had to roll up in our blankets without changing our things.

Oct. 4. Rode on to beginning of Western section of the Railway 10 miles—country becoming easier and more open. Then 17 miles by rail. Then on board steamer sent to meet us by the Railway people on the Shushwap lakes. We steamed down these during a lovely October afternoon surrounded by snow peaked mountains clothed with Douglas fir. Slept on board after spending a couple of hours watching the Indians spearing salmon by torch light in their canoes. The salmon were ugly black brutes but the scene was a very lovely one.

Oct. 5. Arrived at Kamloops and received usual address. In the crowd discovered a Wiltshire parson, old hunting acquaintance and now in holy orders and looking after the settlers also a son of Buck who keeps the Public House at Cherhill[92] and was my Serjeant in the Yeomanry.

Thence by rail along the canon of the Frazer river—an *awful* place, the line curling and curving round all sorts of corners, and a sheer precipice with a boiling muddy river at the bottom. We are now entering the 4th great range, having crossed the Rockies, the Selkirks and the Gold range This last range is known as the Coast Range and is a continuation of what you will see marked on the maps as the Cascades in the U S. The scenery became very grand towards the afternoon and one really wondered as each valley was entered how on earth we were to get out again. We stopped for the night at Yale at the American contractor's house, a very snug little box where we dined and washed most comfortably. Yale is a lovely little village facing the Frazer with splendid mountains on every side.

Oct. 6. Yale to Port Moody, travelling at an awful pace over a very dangerous line for almost 70 miles. Head railwayman both yesterday and this day very bosky and bent on showing what he could do—a very unpleasant ride. Reached Port Moody

About 11. Two addresses. Then on board Govt, steamer to Victoria, a 9 hours' sail over smooth land-locked waters the peacefulness of which was delightful after the rough rattling we had had

[92] A village in Wiltshire. (Ed.)

in the cars. Such a sunset—such a panorama of mountains and bays and rocky promontories, and beyond all Mt. Baker, white with snow towering up 13000 feet high in the rosy sky.

We dined on board and went up to Govt. House quietly in the evening. Cornwall,[93] the Lt. Governor met us on the pier, a very good fellow, a Gloucestershire man, his mother a Kingscote. He and his brother came out here as boys and he has a nice place on the Frazer River which we passed on the way down.

Oct. 7. Formal entry into Victoria. We returned to steamer in the morning and came into the harbour with proper pomp and circumstance—landed at pier and drove through the town to the carrefour in the middle of it, where the address was presented. Victorians very loyal and friendly and a tremendous lot of bunting flying and streets full of people. In the evening dinner and party at Govt. House.

Oct. 8. Drove out 12 miles to outlying settlement and opened small agricultural show—agricultural speech. Dined on board flagship with Admiral, Sir Michael Culme Seymour[94]—good dinner and pleasant party.

Oct. 9. Deputation from Board of Trade and speech on commercial subjects. Spent afternoon in the town going the round of factories *etc.*, with the mayor and notables. Nice new theatre of which the architect[95] proves to be a son of old Apponyi's, a queer fish: I should fancy a scape grace—very glad to see me. Dinner at Govt. House.

Oct. 10. In the morning visits to graving dock. Ran out along the new island railway. Luncheon with Admiral after official visit to flagship. Visit to naval yard, football match, *etc.* In the evening, public banquet in my honour—100 guests— proceedings begun at 9 and lasting until 12.30—longish speech from the G.G. of which I will send you the report. Dinner good but interminable. Party good-humoured and friendly. To bed very tired.

To-day I have kept pretty quiet and enjoyed my Sunday.

To-morrow we go to Nanaimo, then to New Westminster whence we start on our long homeward journey. I fear I shall have a good deal of talking to do in Manitoba where I left some unfulfilled engagements.

This province pleases me better than anything I have yet

seen. The climate is delicious. The scenery marvellously fine. I wish you could see the huge Douglas firs—some they say 250 feet high. 1 here are also many good shrubs—notably an arbutus (a procera) which grows almost to a tree and is quite beautiful. They have no severe winter and a moderate rainfall, and miles of quiet water which no gales can reach. If I had to live on this continent I should pitch my tent here.

[93] Clement Francis Cornwall (1836–1910) was a Canadian parliamentarian and the third Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. He was born near Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, England in 1836, son of the Reverend Alan Gardner Cornwall, the Anglican rector of Owlpen and Newington Bagpath. (Ed.)

[94] Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, 3rd Baronet (1836–1920) was a senior Royal Navy officer. At this point in his career he was the was commander in chief of the Pacific squadron. (Ed.)

[95] Charles E. Apponyi was an architect and from Lord Lansdown's comment he may from the Hungarian noble family of Appony.

Soon after this expedition he received the news of the engagement of his sister, Lady Emily Fitzmaurice,[96] to Colonel Everard Digby, a family event which gave him the keenest pleasure.

> Your telegram [he writes to his mother] has made a happy man of me. Why can't I rush round and give you a hug? How often you and I have wished for such an ending! It was only three days ago that I told you how much I liked the Digby's and if we had wished to pick out a good husband for her, we couldn't have gone to a better quarter. The longer I live the more firmly do I believe in blood and breeding. Although this sounds like the stables; and there is not one of the Digby's that would not trust and put my faith in. Good-bye, you are very near me today in spite of 3000 miles of sea. 7

His belief in the virtues of breeding, which lasted throughout his life, was accompanied however by a gloomy view of the future of his class.

> Many of us are poor, a good few disreputable, plenty idle and without sense of responsibility. It is not much of an army, and under the present Commander-in-chief is not likely to fight

Preference for his own order appears also in another letter, in which he expresses the hope that Kerry[97] (his eldest son):

> will not choose me a daughter-in-law from the brood of Princesses that is growing up on every side.

In 1886 the difficulties between Canada and the United States over the fishing dispute had become more acute. The essence of this highly complicated question seemed to consist in the definition of the word

bay, and in the interpretation of old Treaties. The 1886 dispute became still more acrimonious when American fishing vessels were seized in the early summer, and finally the American Government proposed a commission of enquiry. H.M. Government showed signs of a somewhat lukewarm support of the Canadian case and Lord Lansdowne pointed out the consequent danger.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Granville. May 18, 1886.

> There is a good deal of bitter feeling in the Maritime Provinces, and it is was supposed that the Ottawa Government was likely to sacrifice their interests, Sir J. Macdonald would not get a vote at the next general election, which cannot be far off. I need not say that there would be general indignation throughout the Dominion if the Imperial Govt, was to show itself too pliant in the face of the American demands.
>
> I cannot help hoping that now that this issue has been raised, negotiations will be opened for a final and complete settlement of all the matters in dispute. We on our side have always expressed our readiness for such a settlement, either in regard to the Fisheries or in regard to commercial relations generally. Reasonable public opinion on both sides of the frontier is, I am convinced, in favour of this course.
>
> I think I have already told you that any suggestion for a solution of all these difficulties would stand a better chance of success and be more acceptable here if it came from the Imperial Government.

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[96] Lady Emily Louisa Anne Fitzmaurice the daughter of Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 4th Marquess of Lansdowne (1855–1939) married Col. Hon. Everard Digby (1852–1915) a son of the 9th Baron Digby. (Ed.)

[97] Lieutenant-Colonel Henry William Edmund Petty-Fitzmaurice, 6th Marquess of Lansdowne (1872–1936), styled Earl of Kerry until 1927 when he succeeded his father as Marquess. He was a soldier and politician. (Ed.)

A lively exchange of notes continued between the Canadian and American Governments during the ensuing months with little result.

> Having sent off the final edition of our report on the Fisheries question [Lord Lansdowne wrote to Lord Granville on June 13, 1886] from the Cascapedia river, I have come down here to study another branch of it *in situ*. Curiously enough it is complicated, even in this comparatively remote corner, by the propensities of the Americans who have succeeded by a liberal

> expenditure of money and of intrigue in acquiring some of the best pools in the river.
>
> The events of the last fortnight have I think rather improved the outlook. We have knocked on the head the obnoxious Amendment Bill and given a hint to our officials that we do not want any more seizures for insignificant contraventions of the law or of the Treaty. In the meanwhile, as I have told you, we are quite ready to negotiate for the re-establishment of improved commercial relations.
>
> If matters settle down, as I venture to hope they will, I should very much like to come over to England in August. I shall not apply for leave yet, as I wish to see what turn things take.

He was able to come home for a short time in the autumn. The Gladstone Government had been heavily defeated in the meanwhile, and Lord Salisbury was in power. Lord Granville had been replaced at the Colonial Office by Mr. Stanhope,[98] but the latter showed little disposition to show a firmer front to America over the Fishery question than his predecessor, and it was in vain that the support of some gunboats on the fishing grounds was asked for.

> What we want [the Viceroy wrote to Mr. Stanhope at the end of October 1886] is an announcement from you that you will not leave us in the lurch. We do not expect you to do police work for us in our bays and harbours, but the presence of one or two gunboats with instructions to watch the three-mile limit would be sufficient. To speak quite frankly, I don't quite like telling my Ministers that although I have been pressing various points for nearly three months, we are still as far as ever from a decision.

The position was unchanged when he returned to Canada in November, but some hope of an eventual favourable settlement was raised by the Presidential Message in December, which was of a far more conciliatory character than had been anticipated.

At the beginning of the new year Lord Lansdowne was called upon to take an important decision. Lord Randolph Churchill's[99] resignation had rendered a re-construction

[98] Edward Stanhope (1840–1893) was a British Conservative Party politician. In 1875, he became Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, and in 1878 moved up to Under-Secretary of State for India, where he was a key assistant to India Secretary Lord Cranbrook. He was Secretary of State for War from 1887 to 1892. (Ed.)

[99] Lord Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill (1849–1895) was a British aristocrat and politician. He became Secretary of State for India, and later was Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1886 he risked a tactical resignation as Chancellor to try to secure his position on armed forces expenditure, but the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, accepted his resignation and replaced him, effectively ending Churchill's career. (Ed.)

of the Cabinet necessary, and a telegram arrived from Lord Salisbury offering him in flattering terms either the War Office or the Colonial Office! Acceptance of this offer was strongly urged upon him by his Liberal Unionist friends, Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen.[100]

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Ottawa, Jan. 6, 1887.

The last three days have been very anxious ones for me. On Tuesday I received telegrams from Lord Salisbury, Goschen and Hartington pressing me very strongly to come into the Govt. The offer was in some respects a very tempting one. I should like to find myself inside the Cabinet and to re-enter political life at home - besides this I am much drawn towards Goschen and should have liked to serve with him and meet his wishes—and above all this rose the prospect of finding myself once more in your midst sooner than I could have ventured to hope.

My first impulse was to say "yes" and to begin to pack my trunks, but reflection brought hesitation and finally an adverse decision. We are on the eve of a dissolution here. Sir John has lost heavily in the provincial elections, and although he may come back from the country with a majority, it will I suspect be a reduced one, or, worse than all, we may have an even balance of parties. The country is not at all in a satisfactory state, there is more bitterness of race and religious antagonism than we have a for a generation, both sides have taken advantage of it and will do so in the coming struggle. In the middle of all this there is our quarrel with the States about the fisheries, a matter which I have rather taken in hand and about which I know a good deal. A new Governor General coming out now might find himself before he had been three weeks in the country, face to face with a serious crisis, obliged very likely to call in new advisers, who would be as ignorant as himself about many of the matters with which they would have to deal. It is very important that nothing should be done to discredit the office which I hold and 1 believe that if I had suddenly bolted out of the country under the circumstances which 1 have endeavoured to describe, the effect produced here would have been very bad, and the consequences perhaps unfortunate.

These are Canadian considerations—looking at the other aspect of the question, I had to bear in mind that I was in complete ignorance of the policy of the Govt, on many important points—notably as to Ireland. What would have been my position if, after abruptly "scuttling out" of this country, and crossing the floor of the House of Lords, probably alone, I had found that I disagreed with my heterogeneous colleagues? I might have had to choose between resignation, which would have been bad for me and not good for the Govt., or the retention of office under circumstances thoroughly distasteful to me, and perhaps detrimental to my political prospects.

If I had been at home—unemployed and able to communicate with Lord Salisbury and Goschen and to satisfy myself on these points—the case would have been very different, but I was asked to give up an honourable position prematurely in order to take this tremendous leap in the dark.

I am most anxious to know what you think—I am disposed to anticipate that you will regret my decision—but I am conceited enough to believe that your judgement will be a little warped by your wish to get me back. Maud says you will on the contrary approve of what I have done. I trust that it has been for the best. The 12 hours which I took to consider were terrible.

[100] George Joachim Goschen, 1st Viscount Goschen (1831–1907) was a British statesman and businessman. He was initially a Liberal, then a Liberal Unionist before joining the Conservative Party in 1893. While Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1888, he introduced the Goschen formula to allocate funding for Scotland and Ireland. (Ed.)

Most men would probably have accepted this offer with alacrity, and Lord Lansdowne's political value was already evident to both parties, for Mr. Gladstone made no secret of his desire to recover his support, and had remarked to Lord Granville in 1886 that: "If we could get Lansdowne to join us, the Parnellites would now be climbing up the backstairs of Lansdowne House".

No events of much political importance occurred in Canada during 1887; the enthusiastic celebration of the Queen's Jubilee showed that there was no desire for separation, and the popularity of the Viceroy continued to increase. The latter result was partly due to an ill-advised expedition undertaken by Mr. O'Brien, M.P.,[101] with the object of discrediting him as an oppressor of the Irish race. The O'Brien crusade proved a complete failure; at Toronto he barely escaped with his life, and the only result of his appearance was to

produce an extraordinary outburst of loyalty to the Crown wherever he went.

These demonstrations of loyalty evoked a letter from the Queen in which her opinion of Mr. Gladstone is expressed with much candour.

The Queen to Lord Lansdown. June 3, 1887.

> The Queen must congratulate Lord Lansdowne on the triumphant reception he has met with everywhere, and on the great loyalty displayed by her Canadian subjects on the occasion of O'Brien's treasonable attempts to rouse the people to open rebellion.
>
> The Queen fears Lord Lansdowne must have had many troubles to contend with, including those in his own Irish property. He will have followed with interest and disgust the accounts of the debates on the Crimes Bill and the language and conduct of the Irish, and not only of them, but of Mr. Gladstone and a few others. It is dreadful to see a man who was three times Prime Minister fall so low! But fortunately his influence has greatly diminished, and especially in this country there is a great change.

Mr. O'Brien, M.P., had been one of the founders of the Plan of Campaign, and as has already been stated, that organisation had selected Lord Lansdowne's estate at Luggacurran as a special object of attack, the fight raging not over the inability of the tenants to pay their rents, but upon their right to determine the amount payable. The Luggacurran agent, the well- known Mr. Townshend Trench,[102] was spending a small fortune in bailiffs and lawyers, and virtually recovering no rents.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. March 23, 1887

> Trench cables that he has just evicted our ringleader at Luggacurran. We are in for a bitter fight there and the expense will be enormous. The papers too are full of telegrams copied from the New York journals with every sort of disagreeable

[101] William O'Brien (1852–1928) was an Irish nationalist, journalist, agrarian agitator, social revolutionary, politician, party leader, newspaper publisher, author and Member of Parliament. He was particularly associated with the campaigns for land reform in Ireland during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as well as his conciliatory approach to attaining Irish Home Rule. (Ed.)

[102] John Townsend Trench (1834 -1909) was the second son of William Steuart Trench (1808-1872). His mother, Elizabeth Susanna, was a daughter of John Sealy Townsend, of Myross Wood, Co. Cork. Like his father, John Trench was a land-agent. (Ed.)

innuendo about me, so that I shall have an unpleasant time of it for some months to come—ouf!

N. Derreen. July 31, 1887

> We are holding our own vigorously in Queen's Co., but the expense is enormous—horses, cattle, labourers, agricultural machinery, provisions brought from a distance. Trench tells me that our decided action on the spot and O'Brien's failure, which is quite realised, have produced a great impression and that the tenants are sick to death of the struggle. In the mean time I see that the League, with which we really have to deal, is building huts for the evicted families. The time after which the tenants will be unable to redeem their holdings will expire, I think, in September, so they will soon have to shew their hands. I hear privately that John Dunne,[103] the largest tenant, is likely to redeem.
>
> The Queen's Co. estate has a rental of about £10,000. The usual income was £6,000 in good years and £5,000 in ordinary years. Last year I received £2,500 and this year nothing!
>
> And the falling off everywhere is alarming. I wish I could get a tenant for Lansdowne House. I sometimes think it would almost be wiser to look for a purchaser.

Cascapedia River. Aug. 16, 1887.

> Thanks for *Chez Paddy*.[104] I had seen it. It is amusing and contains some shrewd observations, but a good deal of it is ridiculous. I wish T. Trench would not always show off before strangers, but he cannot resist firing off revolvers and paradoxes whenever a new listener appears on the scene. Did you see the illustration intended I suppose to represent him?

It so happened that I had an opportunity of verifying these statements, as I visited the Luggacurran estate whilst the fight was at its height in company with the late Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P.[105] As a young M.P., who had never been in Ireland before, I was naturally fair game for Mr. Trench, a volatile gentleman who seemed to have stepped straight out of one of Charles Lever's novels.[106] Mr. Trench flourished revolvers, drove me at a break-neck pace over shocking roads, and predicted that we should be shot at whenever we approached a corner. I may have quaked inwardly but contrived to maintain an impassive exterior, whereas

Mr. Russell, renowned in Ireland as a Temperance advocate, was excited to a frenzy of indignation at being offered whisky. Not the least humorous incident in the visit was the firm impression of the evicted tenants that I was a Gladstonian M.P., who sympathized with their cause; and from their confidences it very soon became evident that they were heartily tired of the struggle into which they had been forced by the League.

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[103] The late John Dunne is mentioned in *Hansard* in 1908 as a tenant evicted from the Lansdowne estate. (Ed.)

[104] *Chez Paddy* is a novel written by Edmond Mandat-Grancey in 1887. The book follows the story of a young Frenchman named Louis, who travels to Ireland to study English. While there, he meets a group of Irish people, including a man named Paddy, who becomes his friend and guide to the country. Through his interactions with Paddy and the other Irish characters, Louis learns about Irish culture, politics, and history. (Ed.)

[105] Sir Thomas Wallace Russell, 1st Baronet M.P (1841–1920) was an Irish politician and agrarian agitator. Born at Cupar, Fife, Scotland, he moved to County Tyrone at the age of eighteen. He was secretary and parliamentary agent of the Irish temperance movement and became well known as an anti-alcohol campaigner and proprietor of a Temperance Hotel in Dublin. (Ed.)

[106] Charles James Lever (1806–1872) was an Irish novelist and raconteur. (Ed.)

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Ottawa, 13 Oct, 1887

> You ask me about Luggacurran. The time for redemption has expired, and as the tenants have not thought fit to redeem in time to enable them to take advantage of the new land act, I presume they mean to *resist à outrance*.[107] I am sorry as the anxiety and expense are great—on the other hand I am now completely master of the situation and can dictate my own terms should the tenants show signs of repentance. I fancy that most of them would have redeemed but for direct intimidation by the League, against which Govt. seems to be making little or no headway. I hope that the ultimate solution of my difficulties and those or the landlords generally may be found in the transfer of our property to the tenants upon terms stopping short of confiscation. It would be an immense relief and there is no other way out.

At last a practical step was taken in the autumn of this year towards a settlement of the Fisheries dispute. A new fisheries Commission was agreed to by the governments concerned, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain[108] agreed to act as First British Commissioner. The announcement of his appointment gave much satisfaction, but endless discussions took place with reference to the composition and functions of the Commission, and a further complication was caused by the introduction of the question of Commercial Union.

> You will I think [Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir Henry Holland[109] on November 24, 1887] find that our people—or the

> great majority—are not disposed to be unreasonable in regard to the settlement of the Fisheries dispute: we certainly do not wish "to plunge the Mother Country and other colonies into war with the U.S." on account of some trivial difference with that power. What we are afraid of is that matters which are of vital importance to us may seem trivial to you, and that in your desire to avoid trouble and complications you may call upon us to abandon rights which are undoubtedly ours, and of which you can from a distance scarcely realise the value.
>
> My own impression is that the chances of "war" are not worth mentioning, and that if—which is quite possible—Congress proves to be in an unaccommodating frame of mind, the temporary failure of the negotiations would not be such a serious calamity as some people suppose. We had very little trouble over the fisheries last season, and I anticipate very little in the future: there was sure to be some blundering and irritation on both sides at first. If we can 'rub along" and quietly hold our own until the Presidential election is past, a much better opportunity for a general and satisfactory settlement may present itself. Please do not however understand me to be indifferent to the result of the Conference. 1 am as anxious as you can be for its success, but its temporary failure has not such terrors for me as it may perhaps have for you.
>
> I am glad to be able to tell you that Chamberlain has produced an excellent impression upon the Canadian contingent. Thompson,[110] our Minister of Justice, who is a very shrewd and

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[107] Resist to excess. (Ed.)

[108] Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914) was a British statesman who was first a radical Liberal, then a Liberal Unionist after opposing home rule for Ireland, and eventually was a leading imperialist in coalition with the Conservatives. He split both major British parties in the course of his career. He was the father, by different marriages, of Nobel Peace Prize winner Austen Chamberlain and of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. He made his career in Birmingham, first as a manufacturer of screws and then as a notable mayor of the city. (Ed.)

[109] Colonial Secretary (subsequently Viscount Knutsford). (LN) The Viscountcy was created in 1895 for the lawyer, Conservative politician and former Secretary of State for the Colonies, Henry Holland, 1st Baron Knutsford (1825-1914). (Ed.)

[110] Sir John Sparrow David Thompson (1845–1894) was a Canadian lawyer, judge and politician who served as the fourth prime minister of Canada from 1892 until his death. He had previously been fifth premier of Nova

temperately minded man, is delighted with him and full of admiration for his sagacity and determination. He, Thompson, is quite satisfied that the British team is the strongest.

A week later Lord Lansdowne wrote to his mother:

> I cannot yet make any plans for my return. Beyond the immense happiness of getting back to you all, there is not much to attract me at home. The political outlook is unpleasant. I am not over well pleased with either side. If my Luggacurran tenants do not come to terms I shall have to continue a state of siege there for an indefinite time, and if Rosebery[111] gives up Lansdowne House, I really don't know where the sinews of war are to come from, and there will have to be another raid upon the pictures. As things stand now, I am half afraid it will end in my remaining out here for six years. To come home next summer in order to live in a corner of the house at Bowood as the Suffolks do at Charlton[112] would be a dreary reinstatement.

> Chamberlain has made himself very agreeable to us all, and we are well pleased with the manner in which, officially, he has handled our case. He is a pleasant member of society, light in hand, a good talker, and as far as one can judge very frank and outspoken. Radical as he is I would a 1000 times sooner have to deal with him than with Gladstone. I am very glad to know him better than I did. The party leaves tomorrow for Toronto and will probably be snowed up *en route*.

After much hard work, Mr. Chamberlain signed a Treaty with America on February 15, 1888, and had good reason to believe that it would remove a longstanding cause of irritation as well as pave the way for more complete intercourse of all kinds between the two countries. Negotiators of Treaties are frequently disappointed in their expectations. The Treaty, although reasonable in its provisions, met with a cold reception in Canada, where it was regarded as an American victory, and although vigorously recommended by President Cleveland[113] was ultimately rejected by the United States Senate.

By this time, Lord Lansdowne's tenure of the Governor-Generalship was coming to an end. In home political circles he was now regarded as a Conservative, but even so he was surprised to receive early in January 1888 a somewhat singular letter from Lord Salisbury, written on December 31, 1887, dealing mainly with the Irish Land Question, but incidentally offering him the highest administrative post in the Empire—that of the Viceroyalty of India.

> May I now turn sharply from a question of Irish Land to the question of administration? Dufferin has informed me that he intends to come home in January 1889. According to the usual practice I ought now to begin taking measures to supply the vacancy. Your name is naturally the first that occurs to me —there is no other that can in the least compete with it from our point of view. That is not only my opinion but that of the Queen, who originally suggested

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Scotia for a brief period in 1882, and as of 2024, is the only prime minister who was previously a provincial premier. (Ed.)

[111] Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, 1st Earl of Midlothian (1847–1929) was a British Liberal Party politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from March 1894 to June 1895. Between the death of his father in 1851, and the death of his grandfather, the 4th Earl of Rosebery, in 1868, he was known by the courtesy title of Lord Dalmeny. (Ed.)

[112] A Jacobean mansion in Wiltshire. The house was begun in the 1560s by Henry Knyvet, whose wife Elizabeth Stumpe had inherited the manor. In 1598 the manor passed to their daughter Catherine, wife of Thomas Howard, who was created Earl of Suffolk in 1603, and the estate continues to be the seat of the earls.

[113] Stephen Grover Cleveland (1837–1908) was the 22nd and 24th president of the United States, serving from 1885 to 1889 and from 1893 to 1897. He was the first Democrat to win the presidency after the Civil War and was the only president to be elected to serve non-consecutive terms until Donald Trump in 2025. (Ed.)

it, and of Smith[114] and Goshen, to whom had mentioned my intention of sounding you upon the subject.

(Page 50) LORD LANSDOWNE [1888]

Of course, I have no means of knowing what your private views may be—or how far such a proposal is likely to be agreeable to you. It would, of course, involve your coming home next autumn, as some intermediate preparation would be necessary. I hope you may see your way to accepting the proposal, for the post is a very difficult one to fill adequately and yet it is the most vital post of all.

If the idea is entirely unwelcome to you, drop me a line (cypher) by telegraph, so that I may make other inquiries.

The engaging informality of this offer, which reads rather like an invitation to a week-end visit, is in refreshing contrast to the elaborate pomposities which usually accompany similar communications. It was not, however, accepted without some searchings of heart, which Lord Lansdowne explained to his mother in a letter dated February 8, 1888:

I am almost afraid [he wrote] that before this letter reaches you, you may have heard from others the news which I have to tell that I am to be Dufferin's successor in India. I can imagine to myself the effort which it would have cost me to say this to you, if I had been at home. I can almost picture to myself your reproachful face and your dismay at the step which I have taken. And now, writing to you as I am from a distance, I feel that I have little chance of convincing you that I have not done a wrong to you and to others, or that there are any reasons worth considering upon my side. Even if I could hope to convert you I have no heart to argue, for I can think of nothing but your sorrow and disappointment, and of the demolition of the hopes and expectations which we have both been nursing for so

I have however been obliged to look the position closely in the face. I am offered a magnificent post, the most responsible and honourable in the service outside England. It is placed within my reach while I am still comparatively young at a moment when, if ever, I ought to have some work in me. As between this appointment and the chances of office at home I should scarcely hesitate. I am not over well pleased with either side of domestic politics, and the fact of being an Irish landlord is a terrible embarrassment whenever Irish questions are being dealt with. If I can do reasonably well in India I shall at all

(Page 51) GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA [1888]

events have something to my credit when I have to give an account of my stewardship.

But over and above all this the other inducements are very great. India means saving Lansdowne House for the family. I should be able while there not only to live upon my official income but to save something every year. If I can let L. House, I might by the time I came home have materially reduced that load of debt which has been so terrible an incubus to us all, and in the mean time I should be doing useful work for my country and improving the prospects of my children, instead of living in a corner of the house in England, perpetually worried by financial trouble, and perhaps increasing instead of diminishing the family liabilities.

[114] The index lists Smith on page 49 as Rt. Hon. W.H. Smith. William Henry Smith, (1825–1891) was a bookseller and newsagent who expanded the firm and introduced the practice of selling books and newspapers at railway stations. He was elected a Member of Parliament in 1868 and rose to the position of First Lord of the Admiralty less than ten years later. In the mid-1880s, he was twice Secretary of State for War, and later First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons, among other posts. He became a yachting companion of the Prince of Wales. (Ed.)

I need not tell you what a blow it is to me to feel that instead of coming back for good next year—instead of dropping back into my place amongst you all—I am to begin another term of banishment—but I have made up my mind to face it, and if I could only believe that you would forgive me, I would face it with a comparatively light heart.

After all, I shall only be doing what all those have to do who arc soldiers or sailors or diplomatists, and who have to take their turn of service abroad as an inevitable incident of their profession.

I have stipulated that I am to come home for a good long holiday before I start—what I want to do is to put off my departure for India till the beginning of 1889 and to come back to England in August, but I am afraid that this will not suit the Foreign Office, and that I may have to start in Novr. In this case I should leave Canada probably in June. It is at any rate pleasant to think of this, although there will be a cloud hanging over us when we meet, we must not forget that, but for this change in my plans, I should have stayed out here till nearly the end of 1889, by which time (if I go to India in Nov.) I shall have upon it, cut short very promptly.

There will be endless complications as to the children, and particularly the boys. When they are a little older we may perhaps have them out with a tutor, but we can decide nothing as to this till we come home. Evie[115] would I suppose go with us. I am not sure whether Bertie is quite old enough yet. I can fancy your comments upon all this, and I dread your first letter more than I can say, but I know that you will try to judge my action

with forbearance, and that when I come back to ask you for forgiveness you will not refuse.

A telegram from Ld. Salisbury has just come in, and I learn, much to my annoyance, that my appointment is to be announced at once. I have therefore sent a cable message to you, or rather to Aunt G., asking her to tell you this dreadful piece of news, with which I should not like to wake you up perhaps in the middle of the night. I have been communicating constantly with Lord S. by cable during the last few days, but did not like to broach the subject to you until it was clear that we were likely to go.

And now I must end this wretched letter. I know you will think me very heartless and ungrateful for all your love and kindness, and I have been oppressed with this conviction ever since I saw what was coming.

PS.—1 have just received your cable, and it is a comfort to me to feel that we have spoken to each other about that which is uppermost in my thoughts. Yes, we must both of us think as much as we can of the meeting this summer, and—I will not say as little as we can, but as bravely as we can, of the parting which lies beyond. I sometimes try to console myself by the reflection that during the last four years—in spite of 3000 miles sea - you and I have really been less divided than we supposed, we have had no secrets or reservations and I do not think that a week has passed in which each did not know what the other was about. But this is not the same as being able to lay my bald old head upon your shoulder.

The effect of the change was to bring Lord Lansdowne's stay in Canada to a premature conclusion, and during the short period which elapsed before his departure no events of importance occurred, but there was ample evidence of the great popularity which he and Lady Lansdowne had won throughout the Dominion. The Canadian Parliament, in an address, assured the Governor-General of its sincere regret at his departure and the various party leaders expressed in the warmest terms their high appreciation of

[115] Lady Evelyn Emily Mary Petty-Fitzmaurice (1870–1960) married Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire. (Ed.)

the active interest which he had shown in the constitutional and material progress of the country. At a farewell banquet at Ottawa—one of many functions of a similar nature

(Page 53) GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA [1888]

the retiring Governor-General summarized his official experiences in a speech marked by much common sense and friendly feeling. The years, he said, which he had spent in Canada had been upon the whole years of peaceful progress during which the country had progressed in industry, education, and art, as well as in all the conditions essential to the well-being of a great and prosperous community. As for the Fisheries Treaty, whatever might be the action of those with whom its fate now rested, no miscarriage could possibly put matters back where they were before the meeting of the Plenipotentiaries. Referring to the proposed Commercial Union with the United States, he expressed serious misgivings as to whether the public sentiment of the British democracy would stand the strain which the adoption of such a policy by the Dominion would impose upon it, and whether the moral affront would not be even more serious than the national injury. Discussing the subject of more intimate relations between the Colonies and the Motherland, he thought that there was room for great improvement in the matter of Imperial Defence, but that he would sooner trust to the spontaneous action of Canada to provide an adequate number of men than to secure a couple of regiments by forcing a hard-and-fast bargain upon the Dominion. In dealing with the problem of Imperial Confederation, his tone was warning rather than encouraging. It was a magnificent experiment, the results of which could not be proclaimed with confidence at present, and he counselled, in preference, concentration upon the internal development of the country.

It should be remembered, in connection with the above opinion, that in 1888 the great possibilities of our oversea possessions had scarcely been realized by British statesmen. The doctrines of the Manchester school were still in vigour, and 1 can well remember hearing, a few years earlier, a well-known politician,

(Page 54) LORD LANSDOWNE [1888]

who at one time had been Colonial Secretary, assent to the opinion that Colonies were expensive luxuries which only a rich country could afford.

Lord Lansdowne had been fortunate in arriving in Canada at a propitious moment. Business was prosperous, and no serious political dangers threatened the country. He experienced the satisfaction of witnessing the opening of the great transcontinental railway during his term of office, and of the knowledge that it was largely through his consistent support that the great work had been completed in advance of the stipulated date. He must, too, have been conscious of the fact that his service as an intermediary between the Home Government, the American Government, and the Canadian Government had been of inestimable value, but what must have afforded him more satisfaction than anything else was that he had obviously won the confidence and esteem of the Canadians themselves. Doubtless this was due not only to his political sagacity but to the fact that he had identified himself with the life of the country, and as a cultured man taken a genuine interest in its educational and scientific institutions, in its literature and art, and had joined in its national sports. To this should be added a wide and generous hospitality, the charm of which was enhanced by the grace and tact of Lady Lansdowne.

During the past half century we have been represented in Canada by many distinguished men, some of whom were remarkable for exceptional personal charm, but it may be confidently stated that not one of them left a more enduring memory of respect and affection amongst the Canadian people than the occupant of this office from 1883 to 1888.

In a letter to his mother towards the end of 1887, Lord Lansdowne had anticipated that the following year would be the happiest in his life, since it presumably meant the permanent return to his home, and the

prospect of living quietly at Bowood. But owing to a change in the plans of the departing Viceroy, his stay in England was cut short, and his financial position was such as to render another term of service abroad less unpalatable than would otherwise have been the case. The rental from the Kerry and Queen's County estates, nominally £23,000, had sunk to £500, and he was further embarrassed by the termination of Lord Rosebery's lease of Lansdowne House. He was seriously contemplating the sale of the latter, and it is possible that he was only dissuaded from doing so through the strong opposition of his mother. Before proceeding to India, he was able to visit Ireland, and actually received a hearty welcome from his Kerry tenants.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Derreen, Kenmare. Aug, 10, 1888

> Fancy the tenants here in these days having had the audacity to march up to the house yesterday morning 120 strong and to present me with a cordial little address acknowledging that they had always been fairly dealt with, and expressing their pleasure at seeing us back amongst them again!
>
> I doubt whether there are many, or any, estates in Kerry where such a thing would be possible just now. There was a feeble little cheer for Parnell on the pier at Kenmare while our boat was lying off it on Monday, but our tenants were all on the other side of the water, and the cheer was I believe started by an evicted tenant on Hickson's little estate and only taken up by 10 or 12 corner boys.
>
> Weather very fine and enjoyable, and 1 hear good reports from Bowood.

After a series of the complimentary banquets and meetings which, accompanied too by much advice from high authorities, usually fall to the lot of newly appointed Viceroys, Lord Lansdowne left Ireland in November, for another quinquennium of exile from his beloved Derreen and the not less beloved Bowood.

CHAPTER III

VICEROY OF INDIA

(Page 56)

Lord Lansdowne, accompanied by Lady Lansdowne, his two daughters, and some of his staff, which included Sir John Ardagh[116] and Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace,[117] arrived at Bombay on December 3, 1888, to take up the post of Viceroy. That day he wrote to his mother:

> We landed at 8.30; the sun was just beginning to get hot, but the view of the harbour and surroundings was very fine.
>
> There was a considerable concourse on the "Apollo Bunder" where we were received by the Duke of Connaught[118] and other notables, and where I had to make a short speech in reply to the municipal address. Then we drove off escorted by strange cavalry soldiers to Malabar Point, on which this house, or group of houses, stands. Palms, bougainvilleas, crotons, frangipanni on all sides, black policemen with yellow turbans, natives of all complexions, in all manner of garbs, chocolate coloured babies with no clothes and pot bellies, dignified old gentlemen with black skins apparently walking about in their night gowns— these were some of the fleeting impressions which remain in my mind from our morning drive.
>
> Poor Maud[119] is very tired: I have just left her extended on a sofa in a sort of half-open verandah with not much more clothing on her than the black babies above referred to, and being fanned by a black female with a ring in her nose, one of several who have been sent all the way from Calcutta together with a small army of formidable looking warriors in red dressing-gowns with "a big, big D" embroidered on them.[120] The black female is already

(Page 57) VICEROY OF INDIA [1888]

> on the best of terms with the "Lady Sahib", and has told her that she is much too thin!
>
> Poor Lady Sahib! She put on a lovely white frock with all sorts of embroidery on it for the landing, and just as we started the steam launch snorted and so to speak blew its nose all over us, covering the white frock with a mixture of coal dust and steam which ruined the frock hopelessly in two seconds!
>
> I wish I could describe this house, or these houses, for we have all got houses of our own and meet in the central one for meals, but I have no time. The whole thing, surroundings and all, feels as if it was inside a huge conservatory, and I keep looking up for the glass roof, and expecting that 1 shall find my way into the fresh air presently. I hear Calcutta is much less

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[116] Major-General Sir John Charles Ardagh (1840–1907) was an Anglo-Irish officer of the British Army, who served as a military engineer, surveyor, intelligence officer, and colonial administrator. He had many postings and in October 1888 he became, with the permission of the War Office, private secretary to the Viceroy of India, the Marquis of Lansdowne. (Ed.)

[117] Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1841–1919) was a Scottish public servant, writer, editor and foreign correspondent of *The Times* (London). He was Private Secretary to Lords Dufferin and Lansdowne, in India. (Ed.)

[118] Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn (Arthur William Patrick Albert; 1850–1942) was the seventh child and third son of Queen Victoria. He served as Governor General of Canada, the tenth since Canadian Confederation and the only British prince to do so. (Ed.)

[119] Lady Lansdowne. (LN)

[120] Probably a D for Dufferin, the departing Viceroy.

stuffy. I am glad of it, for if it were like this I should give up writing as a hopeless job, one's hand will not travel along the paper at any price. I began this letter in the afternoon, since then I have received a visit from H.R.H. and returned it, interviewed a distinguished Parsee lawyer, the Chairman of the Corporation and a leading Mahometan, all three interesting and agreeable people—visited the school of art and "said a few words" to the students, and driven back through the native town. This is very picturesque, and there were crowds of people, such as I never saw before, all along our route. They received me very well for whatever that is worth. To-night there is a huge dinner and a reception.

Bombay is really a very beautiful place and the colouring is magnificent. I fancy Calcutta is much less striking.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Calcutta, Dec. 10, 1888

The Dufferins left this morning and I am fairly face to face with my new charge.

Our journey from Bombay was long and wearisome but less so than I expected. I found unceasing amusement in looking out of the windows—scenery, trees, crops, people, animals, birds, all were new and interesting. I was almost as delighted as Bertie[121] when we suddenly found ourselves alongside of a troop of real wild monkeys promenading themselves close to the line.

Besides this as soon as we had crossed the Ghats the climate became delightful, the air light and clear and the heat never insupportable, while the nights were actually cold. We travelled

in great luxury, big roomy cars with good beds. Maud and I had one each (I mean a car each as well as a bed each), to say nothing or a full-sized bath. Then there was a dining car with a kitchen and a posse of black (and perspiring) cooks who produced elaborate repasts to which we had to invite the local officials, heads of police, railway dignitaries, and so on, rather dreary entertainments.

We reached Calcutta at 4.30 on Saturday and drove straight to this house. It was Saturday afternoon and there were lots of people about—the streets were lined with troops and there were some good decorations here and there. At Govt. House I was received at the *foot* of the famous steps by the Lt. Governor of Bengal, and at the *top* by Dufferin, after which I held a sort of extemporized *levée* for a few of the native grandees and high officials. The whole thing was imposing and would have been amusing if I had been there as a looker on.

In the evening a man dinner of 80—soon over and not unpleasant.

On Sunday, Maud and I went to the Cathedral where we sate by ourselves in a thing somewhat like an auctioneer's rostrum in full view of the congregation, whose devotions did not prevent their taking stock of us to their hearts' content.

I spent the whole afternoon with Dufferin talking over Indian business. Nothing could have been kinder or more thoughtful than he had been and I have really learned a good deal from him in a short time.

The two staffs dined together quietly that night.

[121] Lady Beatrix Fitzmaurice (daughter), now Lady Osborne Beauclerk. (LN). Beatrix Frances Beauclerk, Duchess of St Albans, Marchioness of Waterford (1877–1953), born Lady Beatrix Frances Fitzmaurice, a daughter of the 5th Marquess of Lansdowne and his wife Maud. (Ed.)

This morning I marched into the throne room at 9 and had my warrant read in presence of the high officials and a few native notables. This was the beginning of my reign. As I walked down the passage in the procession I found myself close to Lord Canning's[122] picture and wondered what he would have said if he had been told that the urchin after whom he used to enquire so affectionately was one day to fill his place.

After the ceremony we drove with the Dufferins to the station and saw them off: she was very low, poor woman, and it was altogether rather trying for everyone, for of course we felt in the way when everyone was shedding tears at their departure.

Since then I have done several hours' work, and had an evening ride on a very nice little Arab horse to the Lt. Governor's house, which is a much more attractive residence than ours.

Words cannot describe the hugeness of this place or the utter absence of anything like homely comfort. My study is tolerable;

it is business-like and fairly cheerful, but oh! the bedroom with its height and cold distempered walls, and colossal bed large enough for half a dozen couples and enveloped in a vast tent of mosquito netting running all the way up to the ceiling which is so far up that one can scarcely see it. Then the crowd of black servants oppresses me. I told them to go to bed (if they ever do such a thing) an hour ago, but I know I shall find the whole gang outside my door including a six-foot-four specimen who is always there standing at attention, and who I am beginning to think is stuffed, for he never moves or changes his position, whereas Gholam something or other (who is my personal attendant) and his myrmidons think it necessary to salaam and play other heathenish antics every time I go by. I have come across the remains of a corkscrew stair (now disused) from this floor to that above, which was I am convinced contrived by one of my predecessors with the sole object of escaping from Gholam the all-pervading.

As had been the case in Canada, Lord Lansdowne was fortunate in arriving at a moment when conditions in India were generally peaceful. The firm and statesmanlike rule of Lord Dufferin had done much to calm the agitation and ill-feeling caused by what has been termed the sentimental ignorance of his predecessor, but although Anglo-Indians and the more enlightened sections of natives felt the highest admiration for him, it would be idle to pretend that the class represented by the National Congress regretted his departure. Lord Dufferin's main achievements in India were the temporary settlement of the North-West Frontier question and the annexation of Burmah, and these operations, in addition to small punitive expeditions and to remissions of taxation by Lord Ripon,[123] had brought about financial difficulties and consequent discontent. Shortly before relinquishing office, Lord Dufferin had made a striking and unanswerable speech, in which he exposed relentlessly the hollowness of the native demand for self-government, and the so-called reformers were foolish enough to imagine that by adroit flattery of Lord Lansdowne

[122] Charles John Canning, 1st Earl Canning (1812–1862) was also known as the Viscount Canning and Clemency Canning, was a British statesman and Governor-General of India during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the first Viceroy of India after the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown of Queen Victoria in 1858 after the rebellion was crushed. (Ed.)

[123] George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquess of Ripon (1827–1909) was styled Viscount Goderich from 1833 to 1859 and known as the Earl of Ripon in 1859 and as the Earl de Grey and Ripon from 1859 to 1871. He was a British politician and Viceroy and Governor General of India who served in every Liberal cabinet between 1861 and 1908. (Ed.)

they would succeed in persuading him to disavow the action of his predecessor. Needless to say, this attempt failed completely, and the new Viceroy showed his good sense by refusing to express any opinion on contentious subjects.

In those days the task of governing India presented far fewer dangers and difficulties than is the case now, but one difficulty—that of the growing interference of the House or Commons—was becoming more and more evident. The following letter from Sir John Gorst,[124] M.P., deals ably and lucidly with the question, although it could hardly have been a welcome communication to any Viceroy whatsoever.

India Office, November 23rd, 1888.

As it is probable that I shall be responsible for fighting the battles of the Indian administration in the House of Commons during a great part of your period of office, I hope you will allow me to call your attention to a few points, in reference to the relations between the Government of India and the House of Commons, which seem deserving of your consideration.

1. The House of Commons is likely to devote more attention than heretofore to Indian affairs.

For this there arc many reasons, of which the following are some:

(i) The British public takes more interest in India, and clever men are therefore beginning to regard Indian questions as a promising field for earning Parliamentary distinction.

(ii) The Indian Congress party has formed relations with several prominent Members of Parliament, such as Mr. Bradlaugh,[125] who will seek to bring forward some at least of their projects in the House of Commons.

(iii) One Native State (Hyderabad) has succeeded this session in getting into direct contact with the House of Commons. It now keeps a permanent envoy in London to promote Parliamentary action, who has earlier and better information as to affairs in Hyderabad than the Secretary of State. Other Native States will try to follow this most unfortunate precedent.

(2) The great difficulty with which those who represent the Indian administration in Parliament have to contend is, that the attack is almost always better instructed than the defence.

To some extent this may be unavoidable; but I have observed a disposition on the part of the Government of India to keep the Secretary of State in the dark, a reluctance to afford information, and an impatience when it is asked for, which is much to be regretted. It is impossible for the Secretary of State to defend the Government of India effectively against attack, or to guide the formation of public opinion in this country on Indian questions, unless he is supplied with speedy, full, and candid information.

(3) The Government of India cannot retain the confidence of the House of Commons unless it keeps up its character as a progressive and reforming Government.

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[124] Under Secretary of State for India. (LN)

[125] Charles Bradlaugh (1833–1891) was an English political activist and atheist. He founded the National Secular Society in 1866, 15 years after George Holyoake had coined the term "secularism" in 1851. In 1880, Bradlaugh was elected as the Liberal MP for Northampton. His attempt to affirm as an atheist ultimately led to his temporary imprisonment, fines for voting in the House of Commons illegally, and a number of by-elections at which Bradlaugh regained his seat on each occasion. (Ed.)

It should profess the utmost readiness to investigate and rectify anything which is wrong in its administration; and it should show a readiness to promote wise and gradual development, so that the progress which is from time to time achieved may not bear the appearance of having been extorted as a concession to agitation. There is, I am aware, another extreme to be avoided. Nothing could be more mischievous than the crude application of British democratic maxims to India, which was the unhappy policy of one of your Lordship's predecessors. But between Scylla and Charybdis there is a safe passage, avoiding on the one side stupid resistance to all change, and on the other weak surrender to fantastic theories.

(4) The House of Commons, when it finally pronounces, is irresistible.

Most people in India affect to believe that it would be better for that country if there was no House of Commons, and if the administration of the Government of India were uncontrolled by a popular body in this country. I am not myself of that opinion; but I admit that the House of Commons is often ignorant and sometimes mischievous. Still the potential control of that ignorant and mischievous assembly, as Indians would call it, is one of the conditions under which the Government of India has to be carried on. You can no more free yourself from it, than from war, famine, pestilence, fall in the value of silver, or any of the other evils with which you have to cope. If the Secretary of

State is left uninstructed or misinformed, the administration of the Government of India is at the mercy of any ignorant impulse which may seize upon the House of Commons at any moment, and your policy is liable to be interrupted and reversed when you least expect it. The catastrophe which befell the Indian C.D. Act, and the Indian Cantonment Acts and Rules this session appears to me to be pregnant with warning. As soon as we were driven to confess that the information which we had, on the authority of the Government of India, furnished to Parliament, as to the mode in which these Acts and Rules were administered, was wholly incorrect, the Cabinet found itself so discredited by this confession that it was unable to keep up any further resistance. Professor Stuart[126] and his fanatical friends were free to formulate a resolution, condemnatory of the whole action and policy of the Government of India, upon a matter on which they and most people in this country were profoundly ignorant; and the Government of India has had, in reference to this difficult question, to submit to the dictation of the House of Commons, to the serious danger and detriment, as many people think, of the Indian Empire. The same catastrophe that happened in the case of the C.D. Acts may befall any branch of Indian administration upon which Parliament or the British public may chance for the time being to focus their attention; and, however ignorant and ill-considered the action they resolved on might be, it would have to be adopted. I am not so vain as to suppose that we can always avert such dangers by instructing public opinion and persuading Parliament to accept our views. But we have succeeded in doing this on some recent occasions when we have been properly informed; and we have at least some chance of coping successfully with difficulties in the House of Commons, if the Government of India will treat us with confidence and candour.

It is a curious circumstance that Sir John Gorst, who was a very clever man, should, little more than a year after writing this letter, have made a speech in Parliament which seriously embarrassed both the Home and Indian Governments.

In April came the move to Simla: a move which Lord Lansdowne thoroughly appreciated, as is evident from his letter to his mother dated April 11, 1889, written during the journey:

[126] This could be Professor James Stuart (1843–1913) who was a Cambridge academic and politician. From 1885 to 1900, he sat as a Member of Parliament for the Hoxton division of Shoreditch. (Ed.)

We got under way next morning about 9, after taking affectionate leave of the Commander-in-Chief, a splendid old Sikh warrior, with beautiful manners, but no English. You would have been amused at our procession, headed by Maud and myself in a small landau and consisting of two more landaus and four or five "tongas", (these are two-wheeled conveyances, drawn by a pair, without traces and fastened to a curricle bar). We changed ponies every four miles, and did the whole distance, about 60 miles, in about 8 hours, wonderful going, as most of it is a steady climb, but the pace we went, whenever a down-hill bit presented itself, would have appalled you. The road winds through a maze of mountains, and traverses I should think 2 or 3 miles for every one of the distance as the crow flies. The hill sides are brown and stony and the streams all dry or nearly so—no level meadows or running rivers suggestive of trout or salmon, but narrow ravines, the sides of which are terraced wherever cultivation is possible. In places there were shrubs and trees—notably wild pomegranates and a yellow berberis-like flower—also lots of white clematis, like a small Jackmannii. As we got higher, we came to pines and ilex and tree rhododendrons. The day was luckily dull, and we had some showers which laid, or helped to lay, the dust. Of this there was plenty, for some troops were on the march, and, although the course was kept clear for us, we passed numbers of bullock trains halted at roadside stations and strings of ragged dusty looking camels. The people all along our route were very strange and interesting to me. Many splendid looking Punjabis, with Jewish features and coal-black hair and beards, and now and again some hill men shorter of stature and yellower of skin. Sixteen or seventeen miles before you reach it, Simla suddenly confronts you, and your first impulse is to ask yourself how it got there. Figure to yourself a large number of houses, mostly bungalows, but some of them large buildings (a town hall, public offices, Government House), not on the side of a hill 3000 feet high, but on the top of it. It is as if you were to look up at Duniat as you approach Stirling and to see houses (like innumerable Tullybeagles[127] lodges with a few Meikleours thrown in) hanging on to the very tops. The road winds gradually up to the summit, through thickets of ilex and tree rhododendrons with a few pines and deodars, and you find yourself on the "Mall", the famous promenade of this place. Leaving this, you take the new approach and drive up to this house. We did so and found a

guard of honour, all the notables, military and civilian, and the municipal corporation with an address of welcome. This was read with great effect in the hall at the foot of the staircase, but our solemnity was rather interfered with by a loud shout of exultation from Streatfeild[128] junior who was up in the gallery and who took the opportunity of announcing in tones much more audible than those of the reader of the address that he saw Clan. After these formalities we were left to ourselves and took possession of our new home and the girls. We found these the picture of health and as jolly as possible. Little Harry's cheeks, which had got very pasty at Calcutta, are like two *pommes d'api*, Bertie's nearly as rosy.

I have said nothing all this time as to the change of climate, but oh! the joy of feeling the cool pure air entering one's lungs again and the emancipation from ceaseless perspiration and thirst. I cannot persuade myself that I am still in India, and there are moments when I fancy I am back in Ottawa again.

[127] Tullybeagles, a shooting lodge near Meikleour (a village 12 miles north of Perth in Scotland). (LN)

[128] Colonel Sir Henry Streatfeild (1857–1938) was an Army officer and courtier who served as the commanding officer of the Grenadier Guards, and was Equerry to Edward VII from 1908 until the King's death in 1910. He was then Private Secretary and Equerry to Queen Alexandra from 1910 until her death in 1925. In 1883, he was appointed an aide-de-camp to the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Landsdowne, and in 1885 he was appointed Landsdowne's military secretary when the marquess became Viceroy of India. (Ed.)

The house is a fine building and stands magnificently on the very top of the ridge, on every side a wilderness of mountains stretches towards each point of the compass; those on the N. side are fairly wooded, on the others, they are much denuded and look brown and dried up. In the distance the snowy ranges are clearly visible and look very grand, altogether the *coup d'oeil* is a striking one, whichever way you direct your eyes. An attempt has been made to lay out our ridge into a sort of garden, but the capabilities are not great; it is a narrow hog's back and they have had some difficulty in making a couple of tennis courts.

Inside, the house has many good points; there is a fine dining room, and Maud's sitting room is quite charming, with wonderful views towards three points of the compass—but the whole arrangement of the rooms and "anatomy" of the building tell a tale of amateur architecture with its inevitable faults! Waste of space everywhere, absence of sufficient accommodation for guests in spite of the palatial dimensions, rooms in the wrong place considering the purpose for which they were built. I am afraid I must add that much of the furniture is quite deplorable and that there are contrasts and combinations which would make you shudder. The carpets are mostly hideous, and why have got them from Maple's when such lovely ones are made here? This is quite incomprehensible to me. The dining room, which really is a fine apartment, is spoiled by a very second rate Brussels carpet too light in tone for the walls, and

as all the carpets are shaped like oriental carpets with broad borders and a margin of wood, one is reminded at any moment that they are only a counterfeit.

I am sure that £1,000 could have been saved on the furnishings and a better job made.

But after all, it is an English house and not an Indian residence, and we shall feel more at home than we have yet felt.

The electric light is charming. When we went to bed last night I could not find the button which extinguishes the central burner, and after half an hour's hunting I had to go out and catch a *chuprassi*[129] who went and caught an underling belonging to the premises and this individual had to be brought (regardless of convenances) into Maud's bedroom where the button was finally discovered, so artfully concealed in a corner that I should never have found it.

We are settling down in our new abode. With all its faults, this house has a great many good points and words cannot describe the magnificence of the views in every direction. Maud's room is one of the nicest I ever was in, with a look-out towards three points of the compass. The snowy range this morning was wonderful.

There is some rough ground along the ridge on which we stand that might I think be made something of by a little planting and path-making. English flowers seem to grow well and I see lots of roses in other people's little gardens. I generally ride with Evie in the afternoon, 4.30 to 6.30, but of course it is all road, and most of it up and down hill, the precipices would make you shiver. The air is wonderful, but the change is almost too abrupt and I believe everyone feels a little queer for a day or two, but my finger joints which were becoming very painful and rheumatic at Calcutta are already better.

Nothing could be more interesting or picturesque than the people here. The regular Punjabis are splendid fellows; handsome, manly, dignified, and most friendly. Then there are numbers

[129] A Chuprassi is a term commonly used in South Asia, particularly in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, to refer to a lower-level government employee or office attendant who carries out errands and performs basic tasks such as delivering messages, serving tea. The term is often synonymous with "office boy." (Ed.)

> of Thibetans, Ladakis[130] and hill people of all sorts; little strong folk with coarse Mongolian features and some of them very wild in appearance. They are great carriers of burdens and you meet them with loads which an English navvy would not think of picking up. Their women are very funny, with peg-top trousers and huge rings through their noses and ears: now and again you see a pretty one, but most of them look and are mere drudges.

(At this point the original book has a photograph entitled The Viceroy's Council, Simla, 1889 which shows a group of men with the following caption: Seated: Sir Philip Hutchins,[131] Sir Andrew Scoble,[132] Sir Frederick Roberts,[133] Lord Lansdowne, Sir George Chesney,[134] Sir Charles Elliott,[135] Sir David Barbour.[136])

(Page 66) LORD LANSDOWNE [1889]

As the question of the Simla Exodus has for many years provided a never-ending topic for argument, the views formed by Lord Lansdowne on the subject may possess some interest, more especially as owing to extreme conscientiousness he was, in after years, considered to prolong unduly the stay of the Government at Calcutta. The conclusions which he arrived at were that nobody except the Calcutta people cared whether the Government remained there or not: that although there might be a certain number of idlers at Simla, the amount of work done there per month was greater than at Calcutta, and that although the hot season there might be tolerable in offices and private residences equipped on a hot-weather footing, the migratory part of the official population was lodged on a cold-weather basis and consequently suffered acutely during the few weeks of the early hot weather. There were, of course, the usual run of official balls and receptions at Simla—one of which had to be postponed. As Lord Lansdowne wrote to his mother on May 30, 1889, the reason was an unusual one:

> We have got our big ball to-morrow. It was to have been to-night, but we had to put it off in consequence of the discovery that to-day was Ascension Day! A military officer of high rank was, I believe, under the impression that it was the anniversary of the Queen's accession, and couldn't make out why the ball was not allowed to take place!

But Simla was by no means solely devoted to gaiety: hard work was still the Viceroy's lot, and his duties were not rendered easier by the storm clouds that appeared to be hovering over Afghanistan. British relations with the Amir Abdurrahman,[137] who had by this time established his rule firmly over

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[130] Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory and constitutes an eastern portion of the larger Kashmir region that has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and India and China since 1959. (Ed.)

[131] Sir Philip Perceval Hutchins (1838–1928) was a British lawyer and civil servant who served as a member of the Madras Legislative Council and the Imperial Legislative Council of India. (Ed.)

[132] Sir Andrew Richard Scoble (1831–1916) was an English lawyer, politician and judge. (Ed.)

[133] Field Marshal Frederick Sleigh Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts (1832–1914) was a general who became one of the most successful British military commanders of his time. Born in India to an Anglo-Irish family, Roberts joined the East India Company Army and served as a young officer in the Indian Rebellion during which he was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry. He was then transferred to the British Army and fought in the Expedition to Abyssinia and the Second Anglo-Afghan War, in which his exploits earned him widespread fame. Roberts would go on to serve as the Commander-in-Chief, India, before leading British Forces for a year during the Second Boer War. (Ed.)

[134] Sir George Tomkyns Chesney (1830–1895) was a British Army general, politician, and writer of fiction. He is remembered as the author of the novella *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), a founding work in the genre of invasion literature. (Ed.)

[135] Sir Charles Alfred Elliott (1835–1911) was a Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. (Ed.)

[136] Sir David Miller Barbour (1841–1928) was a British writer and civil servant in British India. He was a Financial Member of the Indian Viceroy's Council under Lord Lansdowne. (Ed.)

[137] Abdur Rahman Khan (born between 1840 and 1844 and died in 1901) also known as The Iron Amir. He was Amir of Afghanistan from 1880 to his death in 1901. He is known for perpetrating the Hazara Genocide, but also uniting the country after years of internal fighting and negotiation of the Durand Line Agreement with British India. Abdur Rahman Khan's rule was termed by one British official as a "reign of terror", as he was considered

Afghanistan, were far from satisfactory, and were the subject of much correspondence with the India Office. Amirs of Afghanistan have always occupied the delightful position of being able to blackmail the Indian Government, and have seldom

neglected an opportunity. At this particular moment, Abdurrahman was giving it a great deal of trouble over the railway at Chaman, and the Secretary of State, Lord Cross,[138] was evidently rather nervous at the idea of irritating him, whilst Lord Lansdowne, as is evident from his letter to Lord Cross of April 2, 1889, was in favour of stronger measures.

> My letter of last week [he wrote] will have given you a general idea of the situation at Chaman. On receiving your despatch on this subject, I decided to withhold the communication which I had intended to make to the Amir. The position is a difficult one, and you are evidently impressed with the danger of any action which might irritate His Highness. I need not tell you that I had considered the question from this point of view. The conclusion to which I had come was, however, that the case was one in which we ought to leave the Amir under no misapprehension as to our intentions. If we commence negotiations with him it is impossible to say how much they may be protracted or what terms he may not exact from us in compensation for the right of constructing over half a dozen miles of absolutely valueless desert a line of railroad which will be as useful for the defence of his possessions as for that of our own. The only grounds on which the Amir can claim compensation are that we shall probably find it necessary to intercept for the water supply of our station some springs which have their origin upon our territory, but which are made use of by the Afghan villages below. We might deal liberally with the Amir in regard to these if he is reasonable and accommodating, but I am strongly of opinion that we should stand no nonsense from him. I am inclined to think that we have hitherto treated him too much as a spoilt child. If we are to give him subsidies, to grant him supplies of arms and ammunition, to guarantee his territory against external attack and to allow him, as we do, complete freedom of action within his own territories—a freedom of which he takes advantage in order to imperil the peace of the Indian Empire by his wrong-headedness and indiscretion—to say nothing of the abominable cruelties and acts of oppression of which he is guilty—it is surely not too much to insist that in a matter like that under discussion, he should withdraw his obstruction and facilitate a work the construction of which has been deliberately undertaken and which must be completed

> unless the safety of our frontier is to be endangered. You will no doubt instruct me further as to this, and in the meanwhile I shall hold my hand.

In the same month (April 20) he wrote to Sir Alfred Lyall:[139]

> I am keeping my eye upon the Amir's proceedings. I am far from satisfied as to our relations with him. We have given him an immense amount of assistance; we have assumed heavy responsibilities, I will not say entirely for his sake but to his advantage, and it appears to me

despotic and had up to 100,000 people judicially executed during his 21 years as Emir. Thousands more starved to death, caught deadly diseases and died, were massacred by his army, or were killed during his forceful migrations of tribes. (Ed)

[138] Richard Assheton Cross, 1st Viscount Cross (1823–1914), known before his elevation to the peerage as R. A. Cross, was a British Conservative politician. He was Home Secretary from 1874 to 1880, and from 1885 to 1886. (Ed.)

[139] Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall (1835–1911) was a British civil servant, literary historian and poet. During a long career in India, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of North-West Provinces, and Chief Commissioner of Oudh (North-West Provinces) from 1882 to 1887. He also founded the University of Allahabad and became its first chancellor. (Ed.)

that we get very little in return. He is perverse and intractable, refuses us the means of keeping ourselves informed as to what is passing within his dominions, and misgoverns these in a manner which fills me with indignation. He gave us, as you know, a very *mauvais quart d'heure* while he was engaged in "restoring order" within his Turkestan province; and, in spite of his professions, I have little doubt that he did use intemperate language about the Russians, and that he was, to say the least of it, incautious in his communications with sympathisers on the other side of the frontier. As for his cruelties, which are horrible, I entirely share your opinion that we must regard ourselves as in some measure answerable for them. I had occasion to write to him the other day, and I drafted a very strong rebuke upon this subject, but, on consideration, we thought that the moment was inopportune for administering this, and that it was not likely to have much effect in so far as the particular atrocities then in progress were concerned. You may, however, rely upon my returning to the charge, if necessary, and in the meanwhile I have given instructions for the preparation of a kind of dossier of the Amir's proceedings upon which I may found my admonition.

Altogether the Amir is a very unsatisfactory neighbour, and, although his death might give us all trouble, I am not sure that we can look forward to establishing better relations with his successor, whoever that may be.

The cruelties perpetrated by Abdurrahman upon prisoners taken after an unsuccessful rebellion in Turkestan, and which were reported upon by a Captain Griesbach,[140] formerly in the service of the Amir, were of the most appalling character. Men were blown from guns, burnt alive after being smeared with petroleum,

tied naked to posts during snowstorms and left to die of cold; others were starved to death or blinded, and tortures were inflicted indiscriminately upon women as well as men. These atrocities never became publicly known in this country, where we at the time were engaged in denouncing Abdul Hamid[141] for his comparatively tame Armenian massacres; but Lord Lansdowne, although receiving little encouragement from home, did eventually send a very strong remonstrance to the bloodthirsty Amir, feeling, naturally, that it was impossible for us to sit still while such enormities were being perpetrated by a man who owed his position entirely to our support.

The Amir, it may be added, never forgave this reproof, which had, however, the effect of restraining his brutalities to a slight extent.

The summer closed without any great improvement in Anglo-Afghan-relations, and it was therefore not surprising that Lord Lansdowne, in the succeeding autumn, decided to make a tour of the North-West Provinces. This was his first official tour of any importance.

Early in November he arrived at Peshawar, a city which is in reality more Central-Asiatic than Indian. Here he met Sir Frederick Roberts (afterward Field-Marshall Earl Roberts) and Lord Lansdowne's description of Peshawar and the Khyber deserves to be quoted.

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[140] Carl Ludolf Griesbach (1847–1907), was an Austrian palaeontologist and geologist who worked in East Africa and India. He was part of the Afghan Boundary Commission between 1884 and 1886. (Ed.)

[141] The Armenian massacres of 1894-6 occurred under the Ottoman Empire rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The number of victims has been estimated as between 88,000 and 300,000. Abdul Hamid II (1842–1918) was the 34th sultan of the Ottoman Empire, from 1876 to 1909, and the last sultan to exert effective control over the fracturing state. He oversaw a period of decline with rebellions (particularly in the Balkans), and presided over an unsuccessful war with the Russian Empire (1877–78), the loss of Egypt and Cyprus from Ottoman control, followed by a successful war against the Kingdom of Greece in 1897, though Ottoman gains were tempered by subsequent Western European intervention. (Ed.)

I am happy to say [he wrote to his mother on November 2, 1889] that 1 was none the worse for the long ride, or for the innumerable cups of tea which the tribesmen insisted upon my swallowing during the course of my progress through the Kohat Pass. On the evening of our arrival we had a big dinner party followed by a numerously attended levee, which was succeeded by a Khuttak[142] sword-dance in the Commissioner's Compound.

Next morning I drove into the city and met the Municipal Committee, who presented me with a Persian address of welcome, the contents of which I had to take upon trust. This little

ceremony took place in a sort of whitewashed pavilion in the centre of the city, under a fierce sun, which made the ordeal rather a trying one. After this we visited some Native Schools, where I was presented with another address, which was followed by some recitations given by the boys, a strange-looking lot of lads, many of them Afghans. The performance began by a rendering of the Hubert scene out of King John, which, I remember, was almost the first piece of Shakespeare which I ever had to commit to memory. I could not help laughing when I heard it recited by two wild-looking Pathan youths whose belongings would probably think it the most natural thing in the world to put out the eyes of anyone who incurred their displeasure. It is, in fact, a form of punishment much in vogue in Afghanistan at this moment, and I am afraid to say how many of his enemies the present Amir has not turned out sightless into the world.

In the afternoon we went all over the Fort with Sir Frederick Roberts, who joined us on that day. In the evening another dinner party, followed by a ball at the Club, at which, however, we did not stay very late.

On the 30th we started at 7 a.m., for the Khyber, driving the first 20 miles over a somewhat heavy road to Ali Musjid, the Fort in the middle of the Pass which, you will remember, played so conspicuous a part before the outbreak of the last war. At Ali Musjid we breakfasted and rode forward at a rattling pace to Lundi Kotal, 12 miles further on. Here we ascended a low hill at the Afghan end of the Pass, and looked right over Jelalabad (now Jalalabad. Ed.) into Afghanistan. The view was a striking one, and it interested me very much to find myself face to face with a country about which I had read so often. We hurried back, still on horseback, to Ali Musjid, which we did not reach till nearly 4 o'clock.

A good many of the Afreedee[143] tribesmen turned out to meet us, mostly fine-looking men with long beards, Hebraic features, and excellent manners. They have been admirably managed by Colonel Warburton,[144] the Political Officer who has charge of the Pass. The road, for such a road, is kept in very fair order, and the caravans pass through it in safety. It is, moreover, clearly understood that on our road, or immediately adjoining it, the peace is not to be broken, and we were consequently confronted with the edifying spectacle of gentlemen, who if they met each other on the mountain would most assuredly interchange shots or endeavour to stick a knife into one another, standing shoulder

[142] The Khattak tribe are a prominent Pashtun tribe located in the Khattak territory, which consists of Karak, Nowshera, Kohat districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. (Ed.)
[143] The Afrīdī are a Pashtun tribe present mostly in tribal areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. (Ed.)
[144] Colonel Sir Robert Warburton (1842–1899) was a British soldier and administrator. Half-Afghan and proficient in both Farsi and Pashto, he served for many years as British political officer in charge of the Khyber Pass, a region of strategic importance to British India. He helped maintain peace with the Afrīdī s, who rose in revolt eighteen years after his retirement. Robert Warburton was born in a Ghilzai fort between Jagdallak and Mak on 11 July 1842, the only son of Lt. Col. Robert Warburton (1812–1863), of the Royal Artillery, by Shah Jahan Begum, niece of the Amir Dost Mohammed of Afghanistan through a marriage of forced abduction at gunpoint during the British occupation of Kabul. (Ed.)

to shoulder in the most amicable manner in order to make their "salaam" to us.

Human life is held very cheap in this part of the world.

There were few of the notables who had not been concerned in a murder or murders of more or less atrocity. They all carried most villainous-looking knives, of which one or two were given to me as a souvenir. I inspected the Khyber Rifles, or at least a part of them, for about half the regiment were stationed all along our route on rocky eminences to see that the coast was clear. They are a wonderful body of men, recruited from the wild Afridis in this neighbourhood and not overdone with military training. On the other hand, some of them did excellent service in the Black Mountain Expedition, for which they volunteered.

We had rather a tragical occurrence while we were at Ali Musjid. We had just sat down to breakfast, when a rifle shot was heard close to the tent. It happened in this wise: Several of the tribesmen, most of them, as usual, carrying rifles, were sitting on a bank not far from us, when one of them, observing the muzzle of his neighbour's gun inconveniently near his own legs, gently pushed it back. The movement of the weapon over the rough ground unluckily brought the hammer into contact with a stone and discharged the piece, the bullet passing right through the poor fellow's ankle, which, I am afraid, it shattered all to pieces. He was a magnificent gray-bearded man of over 60, and although the perspiration was pouring off his face, he never winced or murmured, and turned round to salute us, when we came to inquire after him, with the manners of a Spanish grandee. I made one of the staff ask him whether he was suffering much pain, upon which he rolled up his shirt sleeve and pointed to a horrible scar on his forearm and another on his shoulder, in order to show me that this was not his first acquaintance with a bullet wound. It was certainly hard on him to lose a foot, which he probably will do, in what must have seemed to him so inglorious a manner. He had to be carried all the way from Ali Musjid to Peshawar, 20 miles, in a broiling sun.

On the morning of the 31st we had a very good parade of about 7,000 troops, including two Irish and one Scotch Regiment and some magnificent native cavalry and infantry. The sight was a very striking one and I have, as yet, seen nothing like it in India. When one sees these grizzled warriors, many of them 6 ft. high and splendidly built, with the carriage and demeanour of a ruling race—men by the side of whom our red-coated Tommies

look plebeian and insignificant—one cannot help wondering at the manner in which we have conquered and held this country.

The next day he wrote from Attock:

We sailed yesterday morning at daybreak, our flotilla numbering 23 barges of various sizes—my ship is about 70 ft. long and very comfortably fitted up. We drop lazily down the stream except when a rapid has to be negotiated. Then there is frantic yelling all along the line as the heavy craft swing about through the eddies in unpleasant proximity to the great rocks which jut out along our course. Ardagh's boat had a bad "scrunching" yesterday and leaks in consequence. We have two small galleys in attendance, which bring us our early breakfast from the kitchen about 7 a.m., so as to avoid stopping the procession, which is a serious business. We breakfast and luncheon all at once about 11.30, and halt for the night about 6.30, tying up to one of the innumerable sandbanks which skirt the river. The whole cortege is most picturesque and the life very quiet and pleasant. I have got through some of my arrears of work and a lot of letter-writing. The scenery is not interesting, rocky cliffs and sandbanks, with no vegetation to speak of. Very little life of any kind but there are, I am told, plenty of crocodiles.

P.S. The Indus is very well, but I wish I was dropping down to Isla Point

After dropping down the Indus, the tour was continued as far as Quetta, where an important Durbar was held, and a military display, which took the form of an attack upon the Quetta works. One impression left upon the Viceroy, who had been accompanied throughout the tour by the highest military authorities, was that Nature had provided India with wonderful defences at no cost to the taxpayers.

In the winter he was back in Calcutta, and endeavouring, without much success, to induce the home Government to pass an Indian Councils Bill. This measure had been promised by Lord Dufferin, and the native press had persuaded itself that he had recommended that it should be of an extremely liberal character. Lord Lansdowne, ever since his arrival in

India, had not ceased to press this question, and had suggested that the Bill should include the adoption of principles of election within carefully restricted limits. This suggestion, however, found little favour at home. Lord Cross had showed alarm and as Lord Lansdowne wrote to Lord Herschell[145] "would have none of it–even at homeopathic doses."

The opposition of Lord Cross might perhaps have been overcome, but the *coup de grace* for the time being was administered by Lord Salisbury.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne. June 27, 1890

> I wish we could give you a better account of the prospect of the Indian Councils Bill. But it is threatened both by general and special symptoms, and its case is almost desperate. The general symptoms are those with which you are well acquainted, though they have become much worse since you left England. Passing Bills will soon be a lost art. The explanation always given is the blundering of those who have the management of the House. But during the last fifteen years no one has succeeded who has not had an overwhelming and homogeneous majority, and no majority, even much more homogeneous than ours ever was, has stood the disintegrating influence of four years' existence. Under these circumstances the block in Parliament is getting more and more hopeless, and a Bill like the Indian Councils Bill, which has some enemies and no ardent supporters, has little chance of forcing its way through. Unfortunately, there is also a special cause. The votaries of popular government in India intend to have their say, and on India men do not speak concisely.
>
> I do not think, therefore, that the Bill can live. It then becomes a question whether an attempt to pass it, which only succeeds in producing a series of inflammatory speeches, will be a judicious step. We may be certain that opinions will be hazarded, it may be, by men with great names, which will be taken up in India, and will give an idea that an Indian revolution is impending. You best know what such a belief may produce. My idea—it is only that of a distant observer—is that the only question an average native asks himself when he becomes

[145] Farrer Herschell, 1st Baron Herschell, (1837–1899), was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain in 1886, and again from 1892 to 1895. He graduated in Greek and Mathematics from University College and was regarded as the best speaker in the university debating society. After a career in law he entered parliament and was appointed Solicitor General in 1880 by Gladstone. As Solicitor General, he drafted multiple bills, most notably the Irish Land Act 1881, the Corrupt Practices Act 1883, the Bankruptcy Act 1883, the County Franchise Act 1884. In February 1886, he became Lord Chancellor and was sworn of the Privy Council. He was also elevated to the peerage as Baron Herschell of the city of Durham. (Ed.)

aware that a struggle is going on, is not "Which ought to win?" or "Which should I wish in my own interest to win?" but "Which is likely to win?" and with the probable victors he will range himself as far as his opportunities go. I dread the impression that the Raj of Governors-General is nearing its end, and that under a new regime there are good things to be had for those who are its earliest partisans.

To speak plainly—and asking your pardon if I wound any political sympathies—I dread this question being discussed while Mr. Gladstone is still a political force. He has, to my eyes, so entirely lost all sense of responsibility, while retaining much of his old authority and all his old mastery over vague philanthropic phraseology, that it would be a capital danger to the Empire if the language he is sure to use is taken as a watchword by the innovators in India. There is no other statesman near him or in sight who could effect a tenth part of the evil which will be caused by a few of his phrases of gorgeous reckless optimism.

I shall, therefore, though regretting your disappointment, still think it has been fully repaid if by it we can avoid a speech from Mr. Gladstone on the rights of the Indian people.

As I suppose that in India you do not care about Heligoland, you ought to like our West African agreement. As far as I can judge, it is likely to be carried out without serious hindrance.

Those who sat in the Parliament of 1886-92, when a majority depended upon Liberal Unionist votes, will endorse Lord Salisbury's view as to the difficulty of passing Bills, and he was probably quite correct in the diagnosis of his hypothetical native, but his dread of a speech from Mr. Gladstone seems unconvincing. If the latter wished to make trouble in India, he could have done so quite easily without reference to this particular question. The Indian Councils Bill, which had passed through the House of Lords, was abandoned in the autumn.

The official autumn tour of 1890 comprised the Punjab and Rajput States, and visits were paid to Patiala, Alwar, Ajmere, Oodeypore, Jodhpur, Jeypore and many other places. The tour was brought to a close at Agra, where a Durbar was held for the Chiefs and notabilities

of the North-Western Provinces, and here the Viceroy acknowledged the loyalty to the British Empire displayed by all those with whom he had been brought into contact. Those who have visited India will appreciate the discouraging effect which Durbar audiences must exercise upon those who are called on to address them, and Lord Lansdowne was not exceptional in this respect.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Agra, 27th Nov. 1890

On the 27th I had first to receive some native notables; then to visit the Agra College, where an address was presented to me and I made a speech under considerable difficulties, owing to the fact that while half of my audience was in front of me and in the College Hall, the other half was in the garden behind my back, and insisted upon applauding at the most inopportune moments, generally when I was in the middle of a sentence, which under the circumstances it was not easy to finish. After this function, I hurried back to the Racecourse, in time to see my Staff beaten by the Raja of Dholepore's team in a well-contested game at polo. After dinner we all went off to the Taj, where we were entertained by the officers of the Garrison. We had a full moon and the beauty of the scene was indescribable. I do not know that my enjoyment of it was increased by the music of three massed military bands, which played the most festive and unsentimental airs throughout the evening. The 200 or 300 people who were present counted for nothing on the broad marble terraces and we wandered about a good deal by ourselves. Emmy will, I have no doubt, tell you all about this.

Continuing his letter from day to day he wrote:

> On the 28th we began the morning at the Jail, where we saw some very lovely carpets. Then I started off by rail for Bhurtpore. The Maharaja, who is very keen about his troops, dragged me off from the station to see his cavalry go through the lance exercises, after which we were taken to the house in which we were lodged for the night—only, however, to remain there for an hour, as we had to drive up to the old Palace to dine with His Highness. The Palace was not interesting, but amongst the

> European rubbish with which it was decorated there was a lot of really good Worcester china and some rather nice old engravings. After dinner there was the usual display of fireworks.
>
> Next morning I was up early to inspect the Maharaja's two selected regiments. I brought my own horse to ride, and perhaps it was as well that I did so, for as soon as we had marched through the gates of our own Compound, Ardagh shot past me like an arrow out of a bow, and disappeared in the distance.
>
> Fortunately, there was plenty of room for a runaway, but it was some time before he came back from the gratuitous expedition. I saw one or two other members of my staff in similar difficulties.
>
> Back to breakfast, after which I started for Deeg, a distance of about 24 miles. There are some rather curious palaces here which I should have liked better if the Maharaja had not stuffed many of the rooms full with the most deplorable Tottenham Court Road furniture.
>
> On Sunday 30th we had another luncheon party, after which we started in our big char-a-banc, drawn by 6 artillery horses, for Futtehpore Sikri—a wonderful creation of Akhbar's, full of the most marvellous buildings, mostly in red sandstone which might have come out of Gourdie Hill, but I am afraid of better texture than your stone, as much of the carving is as sharp to-day as when it was executed 250 years ago. Most of us were in tents, but I slept in a rather vault-like red sandstone building. After dinner we wandered about by moonlight amongst the old courts and quadrangles, and very beautiful they looked. I stayed out later than most of the party and on my return found the camp in a state of great excitement owing to the fact that Emmy's[146] tent had been invaded by a porcupine! The animal effected its escape in spite of the combined efforts of the A.D.C.'s.
>
> We were up early the next morning and explored the Palace by daylight. Later in the afternoon we saw the natives of the place jumping feet foremost into a deep and most unsavoury-looking well. They stand upon various projecting points, the highest about 80 ft. above the level of the water, and jump in with the utmost *sang-froid*.
>
> Tuesday, the 2nd, was a busy day, only relieved by the arrival of the mail which brought me your letter. In the afternoon we had a dreary little function at the opening of another new Dufferin Hospital, and I made a speech to an audience consisting mainly of photographers and cameras. Fortunately, I am getting a somewhat hardened sinner in the matter of such performances,

[146] Emmy is his sister, Lady Emily Digby. (*See footnote on page 40*.)

but you cannot imagine how depressing it is to speak to a gathering half of which consists of native gentlemen who do not understand a word of what is being said, while the other half is mainly composed of ladies, who, I always think, are a most aggravating audience to speak to.

During the whole proceedings the photographers never ceased aiming their horrible machines at Maud and myself, with what results remains yet to be seen. When this was over, we hurried back to camp to give a garden party without a garden, but we had three bands and our elephants all drawn up to the right and to the left of the main entrance. A party of travelling Yankees turned up in the middle of it and I offered a lady a ride on one of the animals. I need not say that she jumped at it—I mean the offer, not the animal—and the example thus set was followed, and presently we had half a dozen elephants stumping about the camp, each with a party on board, as if we had been in the Zoological Gardens at home.

To-day (Dec. 3rd) I have got to open the new water works and to go to a tea party at a place 7 or 8 miles from here, before finally leaving for Benares in the evening. You will see that we have not had much time to spare since our arrival.

In the course of the year, various visitors had appeared at Calcutta and elsewhere, some of them Royal, semi-Royal, or official; others were personal friends and members of his own family, amongst them his sister, Lady Emily Digby, with her husband, and his eldest son, the present Lord Lansdowne. One who must have provided Government House with a mild sensation was the "Amban", a high Chinese official, who had been deputed to sign a treaty with reference to Sikkim, a State with regard to which the Chinese Government advanced some shadowy claims.

From Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Barrackpore. March 16 & 18, 1990

We have been entertaining the Chinese "Amban"—he came to our concert on Thursday and dined with us on the following day. He is a most amiable person, a "Mantchou" or Tartar rather than a true Chinese, and, Maud says, the image of Lady X.

At the concert, what struck him most was Mackenzie's[147] violin-playing, not, as far as I can make out, on account of the beauty of the sounds which the Baronet's brother produced, but because "he marvelled at the nimbleness of the gentleman's fingers"—so said the interpreter. At dinner he got on well. He seemed puzzled by a piece of dry toast which the *kitmagar*[148] thought it necessary to give him, and which he evidently took for a separate plat—and a very nasty one.

The big asparagi were a stumbling-block to him—first he tried to keep the silver tongs as a weapon to be used for the purpose of conveying them to his mouth; then, when he had been deprived of the tongs, he boldly seized the vegetable by the head and proceeded to eat it from the stump backwards with apparently some gusto.

After dinner I proposed the health of the Emperor of China, which toast was acknowledged by Sheng-tai in four words of one syllable each, which the interpreter rendered into a neat little oration of four or five minutes.

To-morrow we sign the treaty with considerable formalities.

[147] He may be the brother of Sir Alexander Mackenzie noted on page 87.
[148] A male servant, with responsibility for waiting at table. (Ed.)

The expansionary powers of well-trained interpreters are well known to those whose duties take them to international gatherings, and it is understood that the representatives of the Great Powers at the Peace Conference at Versailles were much astonished at the richness of some of the lesser-known European tongues when translated into the official language of diplomacy.

Amongst the foreign visitors were some Russian Grand Dukes, who incurred unpopularity by "shooting pigs in a pig-sticking country",[149] and the late Emperor of Russia, at that time the Cesarevitch.[150] This visit perturbed Lord Cross — a very insular statesman who probably entertained a firm distrust of all foreigners. "I do not at all like this tour of the Cesarevitch", he wrote, and his suspicions were increased by the presence in the Russian suite of M. Onon,[151] a well-known diplomatist, it is always somewhat of a mystery that the visit of a Royal personage to a foreign country should arouse so much suspicion, since it is probably far easier for an

individual of humbler rank to obtain information which may be considered inadvisable to disclose; but official fears were allayed by attaching to the Cesarevitch's suite two distinguished Englishmen, Sir Arthur Hardinge[152] and the late Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace,[153] who were both well acquainted with the Russian language. The home Government had never clearly indicated whether this visit was official or private, and one of the consequences was that M. Onon, a hardened bureaucrat of the old type, took it much to heart that the Governor of Bombay appeared upon one occasion in "yellow boots", an incident which was subsequently distorted by rumour into a phantasy that he had received the Cesarevitch in cricketing costume. The visit, in spite of M. Onon's attempts to demonstrate that the Indian authorities were giving the Cesarevitch less than his due, was completely successful.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross Jan. 28, 1891.

> The Cesarevitch was received with every mark of respect. The roads were lined with troops throughout, and guards of honour placed at the station and at his house. 1 gave him the right-hand seat in the carriage. There was an immense concourse of people in the streets and H.R.H. was cordially welcomed.

[149] Jodhpur, the Leicestershire of India. (LN)
[150] Nicholas II (Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov (1868–17 July 1918) or Nikolai II was the last reigning Emperor of Russia. He and his family were assassinated at Yekaterinburg during the Revolution. (Ed.)
[151] This may well be C. Onou, who served as Counsellor of the Russian Embassy and Chargé d'Affaires in Washington at about this period. Discovery of this information is down to the AI programme, *Claude*.
[152] Sir Arthur Henry Hardinge (1859–1933) was a senior British diplomat. He was the son of General Hon. Sir Arthur Edward Hardinge (1828–1892) Commander of the Bombay Army and later Governor of Gibraltar, and a grandson of the 1st Viscount Hardinge. Sir Arthur was fluent speaker of Spanish and French. He accompanied the Russian Tsarevich on his trip to India 1890–91, and was then acting Consul-General in Cairo, Egypt, in 1891, under Sir Evelyn Baring. (Ed.)
[153] Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1841–1919) was a Scottish public servant, writer, editor and foreign correspondent of *The Times* (London). (Ed.)

In the evening we had a state dinner of nearly 100 guests, after which H.R.H., at his particular request, proposed the health of Her Majesty. I then proposed the health of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Greece,[154] and then, after a pause, the health of the two Princes.[155]

After dinner we had a numerously attended party, at which a large number of natives were present. I presented H.R.H. to most of the notables. He is natural and unaffected in his manner and contrived not to look bored, and to find a few words to address to most of the persons whose acquaintance he made. Altogether he has created a favourable impression.

Prince George of Greece is a great good-humoured-looking

lad, with a pleasant countenance, and, I should think, the best of spirits. I am , told by Sir Donald Wallace that the two Princes and Bariatinsky[156] are very much pleased with all that has been done for them, and I have received a telegram thanking me, in the name of the Emperor and Empress of Russia, for the kindness which has been shown to their son.

It was subsequently ascertained that even the querulous Onon had felt compelled to telegraph to Petersburg that the reception had been *parfaite*.

An intimation that a third Royal visit to India was possible aroused some perturbation.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross. (March 11, 1891)

I see it stated that the Shah[157] is likely to visit India next winter. I devoutly hope that this rumour is unfounded, and, even if the question has been discussed, I trust you will discourage the idea. We had the Duke of Clarence's[158] visit last cold weather; this winter we have had that of the Cesarevitch, and I need not tell you that a third Royal invasion, without any breathing time, would be most inconvenient to everyone. A visit from the Shah would, moreover, probably involve the Government of India in considerable expense.

When I was in Barackpore on Sunday, I inspected the elephant which we are about to send to the Sultan of Morocco . He is a very fine beast, measuring almost 10 feet, with magnificent tusks.

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[154] Greece did not have a royal family during its time in the Ottoman Empire from the mid 15th century so on achieving its independence in 1821, it sought one from the Royal Houses of Europe. George (1845–1913) was King of Greece from 30 March 1863 until his assassination on 18 March 1913. Originally a Danish prince, George was born in Copenhagen, he was only 17 years old when he was elected king by the Greek National Assembly, which had deposed the unpopular King Otto. He was the second son of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg and, through is son Andrew (1882–1944) was the grandfather of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (1921-2021). He changed his surname to that of his mother, Princess Alice of Battenberg, which was Anglicised to Mountbatten. (Ed.)

[155] This may refer to the two eldest sons of the then King of Greece, who were Constantine (1868–1923) and George (1869–1957). (Ed.)

[156] This cannot be Prince Aleksandr Ivanovich Baryatinsky (1815-March 1879) as he had died only recently. It could refer to Prince Vladimir Anatolyevich Baryatinsky (1843–1914) cousin of the aforementioned. (Ed.)

[157] In 1891 the Shah was Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1831–1896) and he was the fourth Shah of Qajar Iran from 5 September 1848 to 1 May 1896 when he was assassinated. (Ed.)

[158] Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale (1864–1892) was the eldest child of the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra). From the time of his birth, he was second in the line of succession to the British throne but he died before both his father and paternal grandmother Queen Victoria. (Ed.)

P.S. - A terrible piece of news has just reached me. It turns out that the elephant is blind in one eye. The question of substituting a glass one has been seriously discussed, but the chances of detection are too great, and I am afraid we shall have to substitute a new elephant.

In the autumn of 1890, a revolution had broken out in the small hill State of Manipur: the Maharajah had been deposed by his brother, the Senapati or Commander-in-Chief, a cruel scoundrel who had been in

exile for murder, and a Regent placed on the throne. The Regent proved to be quite incompetent, but the Government of India decided to recognize him, while insisting that the Senapati should again be exiled, as it was felt that to allow him to enjoy the fruit of his rebellion would mean the toleration of anarchy in Native States. The Chief Commissioner[159] of Assam was therefore ordered to proceed to Manipur with a force of 400 men in order to carry out the official decision. After a conference between the Chief Commissioner and the Political Agent,[160] it was arranged that a Durbar[161] should be held, at which the Regent should be called upon to banish the Senapati. The latter was ordered to attend the Durbar, and as he was a man of violent character, preparations were made to arrest him if necessary. The Senapati refused to obey the order, and the unsuccessful attempt to seize him in his Palace led to open hostilities, which resulted in the British troops being forced to withdraw into the grounds of the Residency. After the fighting was over, Mr. Quinton and some British officers were inveigled into entering the Palace on the pretext of a conference, and were then treacherously assassinated at the instigation of the Senapati. A punitive expedition was thus inevitably forced upon the Government; resistance was soon overcome, the capital of the State was occupied; the ringleaders were captured, and the Senapati and other persons implicated in the murders were tried and sentenced to death.

Lord Lansdowne had naturally made the closest enquiry into the facts.

> As far as I can make out [he wrote to his mother on April 15, 1891], Quinton relied on Grimwood, the Resident, who was a friend of the Manipuri Commander-in-Chief (a great scoundrel). Grimwood evidently thought that his personal relations with this man would ensure the whole party against harm; the result was that they took no precautions, gave the Manipuris time to

> organise their plot and, when the time came for attempting to arrest the Senapati, dispersed their little force in all directions, so that it had no chance of successful resistance.
>
> Grant's performance with 80 men—which number sufficed to hold the greater part of the Manipuri army at bay for upwards of a week—shows what might have been done with 500 Gurkhas.
>
> On the Kohat side we shall have some stiff fighting about Sunday next—I fear we may lose some men.

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[159] Mr. Quinton. (LN). James Wallace Quinton (1834–1891) was a British colonial administrator who served as Chief Commissioner of Assam from 1889 until his death. He was murdered by a hostile crowd whilst trying to impose British rule in the sovereign state on Manipur.(Ed.)

[160] Mr. Grimwood. (LN). Frank Grimwood was the British representative in Manipur. His wife, Ethel St Clair Grimwood, (1867–1928) became known as "the heroine of Manipur". Frank Grimwood was speared to death, Quinton was detained and beheaded along with other British officers. Realising their precarious position the surviving officers abandoned the Residency and led a retreat back to British-held territory, accompanied by Ethel. Although distraught at the loss of her husband, Ethel showed great strength of character and was instrumental in guiding the retreating party as she was the only person familiar with the terrain. (Ed.)

[161] A ceremonial gathering held by a ruler in India. (Ed.)

Three days later he wrote:

> We are still full of cares, but—since we have known the worst about poor Quinton—things have gone on pretty much as they should.
>
> We shall have no difficulty in making an example of the Manipur folk. What I am most afraid of is that the real culprit may escape to the hills, and that our troops may allow their wrath to lead them to over-severe reprisals. I am still in hope that we shall find that the captives were not mutilated *before* death. Mutilation after death is *dans les moeurs*,[162] and follows as a matter of course.
>
> We have just heard that Lockhart[163] has had a successful fight on the Kohat side, losing very few men, but we don't know what punishment he has inflicted on the enemy. Their attack on our working parties was horribly treacherous and they deserve to be well chastised.
>
> In addition to these little affairs we have had an ugly riot at Benares and a bad murder of a high native official at Rampur.

As is unfortunately so often the case, the Manipur proceedings were at once seized upon by the Opposition at home as a providential occasion for an attack upon the home Government, and the Viceroy had good reason to complain of the very lukewarm attitude of Lord Cross. The latter, whose political experience had been entirely domestic, was, of course, completely ignorant of Indian conditions, and imbued with an overwhelming fear of the House of Commons. Lord Lansdowne made no secret of his attitude, as may be gathered from the following letter written to Lord Cross on May 6, 1891:

From Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross. Viceregal Lodge, Simla, May 6, 1891.

> We are now receiving the English newspapers containing the first comments upon the Manipur disaster. I should say that it produced greater consternation at home than it did here. In this country the murder of Quinton and the officers with him gave everyone a painful shock, but there never was any serious apprehension as to the ulterior consequences, or any doubt as to our ability to re-establish order in Manipur. Some of the English papers seem to have completely lost their heads in writing about the subject. I am glad to find that you are of opinion that we were right in advancing to Manipur with a force sufficiently large to render successful resistance impossible.
>
> I have been a good deal exercised in my mind by your telegram of the 29th April, and still more by the account given by Reuter of your statement in the Lords, in reply to Lord Ripon, with regard to the intended arrest of the Senapati. It is quite clear to me that there has been a good deal of misapprehension in regard to the circumstances under which the Senapati was summoned by Quinton to attend the Durbar. That Quinton's action should have been compared to that of one who asked a man to dinner and had a policeman in the house to arrest his guest shows how completely the situation has been misunderstood. Quinton's proceedings were all above-board, and he is certainly not open to the charge of having acted treacherously for having summoned the Senapati to his presence in Durbar with the intention of arresting him, either then and there, or immediately afterwards, and removing him from the State. It was, as I have explained in my telegram, not a case of alluring the representative of an independent State to a friendly meeting for the purpose of making a prisoner of him. The Senapati was ordered to present himself, and, as a subject of a subordinate State, it was his business to obey the

[162] Customary. (Ed.)
[163] General Sir William Stephen Alexander Lockhart (1841–1900) was a General in the British Indian Army. (Ed.)

summons. The Government of India had a perfect right to expel him from Manipur as a rebel and conspirator. If you have looked at the papers, to which I have referred in my telegram of the 30th, you will have been able to form an opinion of the Senapati's character and antecedents. I am very glad to observe that, in your private telegram of the 3rd May, you admit that there is "no question whatever as to the right to arrest and remove Senapati from Manipur for sufficient reasons of State, such as you have already given". The moment that this is understood, it seems to me quite immaterial

(Page 84) LORD LANSDOWNE [1891]

whether the arrest took place in Durbar or not, and I think there is a good deal to be said for the view, apparently held by Quinton, that the arrest could have been best made, *coram publico*,[164] in Durbar. . . .

I trust that you will be able, in fairness to Quinton, and in justice to the Government of India, to make this view of the matter intelligible to the public at home.

A week later he again wrote to Lord Cross:

Some of the Indian newspapers have taken up the point dealt with by Lord Ripon in the question which he put to you on the 1st instant in the House of Lords, and I am anxious to lose no time in giving publicity to the facts as they occurred. It is impossible to judge of the purport of a statement in Parliament unless one has the actual words, but it struck me, and several of my colleagues have expressed the opinion, that some of your expressions, in replying to Lord Ripon, were capable of being used for the purpose of giving colour to the charges which have been made against Mr. Quinton. The case seems to me to be one which admits of being very simply stated. You have yourself admitted that there is no question whatever as to our right to arrest and remove the Senapati from Manipur for sufficient reasons of State, such as those which we have already given you, and, if this be conceded, it appears to follow that Quinton had a perfect right to order the Senapati to appear before him wheresoever he pleased, and either then and there, or at any other time, to place him under arrest and remove him from the State. There was of course no question of sending him to the Andamans.

As a matter of fact, Quinton, having failed to obtain the Senapati's attendance in Durbar, did what the critics would apparently have had him do. He allowed the Senapati to become aware of the intention to arrest him, whereupon he (the Senapati) left his house and proceeded to organise the outbreak which led to the massacre. If a justification of Quinton's intention was required, no stronger one could be produced than that which is to be found in the results which followed from his failure to give effect to that intention.

On May 19th Lord Lansdowne wrote to his mother:

You will have read our Manipur papers. I see the English press is treating the question somewhat on party lines. I suppose that if the public has got it into its head that there was treachery,

(Page 85) VICEROY OF INDIA [1891]

nothing will remove the impression. I hope you will read what I said on this in my long telegram of May 11th. There are some things to which we cannot refer; *e.g*. the manner in which the case was prejudiced by Grimwood's intimacy with the Senapati.

[164] In view of the public. (Ed.)

His wife told a friend of mine that at one time she used to go out riding with him every morning! Grimwood was a great sportsman, this was a bond of union between the two men, and Grimwood actually went out shooting with the Senapati on March 17th, *after* he had been made aware of the decision of the Govt. of India to remove him from the State. It is my conviction that it was Quinton's knowledge that Grimwood was "in with" the Senapati and would be a reluctant interpreter of the orders issued, that made him (Quinton) so reticent, and it was this reticence that frightened the Manipuris and paved the way for the disaster.

Twelve days later he again wrote:

After a very hard week's work I have shirked church and find myself in possession of a quiet morning.

We were invaded yesterday by a plague of locusts. I had never seen a real swarm before at close quarters. You have no idea what it is, the trees are smothered with them, the grass in front of the house, in spite of a gang of "beaters", was covered. On Maud's veranda they were as thick as sardines in a box. There seemed to be no end to them and, as far as the eye could reach, the air was full of the reddish haze due to their presence. Fortunately they did not stay long, and to-day there are only a few stragglers about, but if they do elect to remain on our hill we shall not have a leaf or a blade of grass left. They have done terrible mischief in the Punjab, and in some districts we are actually giving relief.

I hear that the Manipur debate is to come on next week. I hope the Govt. will stand up for us, and will not throw poor Quinton over. We shall soon have the result of the military court of enquiry, and I fear that it will be discreditable to those concerned; the only consolation will be that, should it turn out that a disaster might have been avoided if the troops had been better handled, we shall be more than ever justified in our contention that Quinton's escort was sufficient. The point is one which concerns us only in a secondary degree, because we gave Quinton virtually *carte blanche*, and if he had asked for double the number he would have got them.

I see the English papers harp on upon the idea that a Durbar

is "invested with the character of a sanctuary" (*Standard newspaper*). This is pure moonshine—the contrary is notorious. The weak point in *this* case is that Grimwood's demeanour (and perhaps Quinton's to some extent, though we don't know this for certain) gave an appearance of friendliness to the particular Durbar which it was desired to hold.

Lord Lansdowne was now become somewhat anxious as to Lord Cross's attitude, and, as will be gathered from the following letter, written on June 3, endeavoured to convert him to his own view of the Manipur disaster:

You must pardon me for telling you frankly that your telegrams in regard to the execution of capital sentences at Manipur occasioned me a great deal of anxiety. We had, as you know, at first given the tribunals the power of passing death sentences, subject to confirmation by General Collett.[165] When we found that there was no prospect of further resistance in Manipur, and that it was consequently open to us to act deliberately, we decided, of our own motion, that

[165] Sir Henry Collett (1836–1901) was an English soldier and botanist. He joined the Bengal Army on 8 June 1855, rising through the ranks to become a lieutenant colonel in 1879. In the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80) he acted as quartermaster general on the staff of Frederick Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts. He was promoted colonel in 1884, made KCB in 1891, and from 1892 to 1893 he commanded the Peshawar district with the rank of major-general. He retired from the army in 1893.

capital sentences, even if confirmed by General Collett, should not be carried out without previous reference to the Government of India, and we have already, in two or three cases, called for full particulars of the facts proved against persons whose sentences General Collett has confirmed. The only case in which we have yet allowed a capital sentence to be carried out was that of Grimwood's murderer. The accused stabbed Grimwood in the back outside the Durbar Hall.

In this there was no question of an execution under the orders of a superior authority, and the case was, in all respects, a perfectly straightforward one. I confess that it was with the greatest surprise that I read your telegram of the 27th, in which you informed me that your telegram of the 10th was intended as an intimation that all capital sentences were to be referred to you.

In justice to myself, I must say that I do not think anybody could have read your message as conveying such an intimation. The message runs as follows: "Your telegram as to the arrest of Regent received. Congratulate you. After formal trial, you decide. You will consult me as to punishment by telegraph." Is there a word in this suggestive of the idea that capital Sentences, other than that which might be passed upon the Regent, were to be referred to you? I am quite willing to admit that, in view of the amount of attention which the Manipur affair has attracted

in Parliament, it is desirable that you should be made fully aware of a decision to execute the Regent, or the Senapati, although, even in such a case, I should hope that you would be content to accept our conclusion unreservedly. But if, in the case of ordinary criminals—men who have been convicted upon the clearest evidence of the murder of British officers by a competent Court, whose sentences have been confirmed by General Collett, and afterwards submitted to the Government of India, which, as you have reminded me in your telegram, has the best legal assistance—you had insisted upon our referring to you for instructions before the law was allowed to take its course, you would have struck a blow at the authority of the Government of India more severe than any which it has sustained for many years past. To compel the Government of India to refer all death sentences passed in Manipur to you, would be to withhold from the Governor-General in Council powers which are habitually exercised by the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

I am deeply sensible of the expressions of personal confidence contained in your private telegram, and I have always appreciated the support which you have, personally, been able to give me on this and other occasions; but these assurances covered in a private message which will never see the light, absolutely unavailing to neutralise the effect which would undoubtedly have been produced upon the public mind when it became known that Her Majesty's Government would not trust the Government of India in such a matter as the execution of an ordinary rebel, taken red-handed, and unable to plead any extenuating circumstances for the offence which he had committed. It was consequently with feelings of the greatest relief that I learned from your telegram of the 31st that you were prepared to accept my proposal, and to allow us to deal upon our own responsibility with all ordinary and straightforward cases.

I am afraid that the public at home has been utterly misled in regard to the question of arrest in Durbar. I see, for example, that the *Standard* spoke the other day of "a Durbar, which, according to Anglo-Indian notions, is invested with the character of a sanctuary". I should like to know what Anglo-Indians have supplied this information, and I will venture to lay before you, herewith, the opinions of two distinguished Anglo-Indians, which have reached me within the last few hours, and which were given without any solicitation on my part. The writers are

Sir Alexander Mackenzie,[166] the Chief Commissioner of Burma, and Sir Robert Sandeman,[167] the Agent to the Governor-General

Baluchistan. I enclose with this letter extracts from those which they have written to me upon the subject.

These letters, as Lord Lansdowne observed to his mother, contained much plain speaking: perhaps plainer speaking than any Secretary of State was to meet with until the arrival of the late Lord Curzon; but in addition to an irresolute Secretary of State, an insubordinate Under-Secretary (Sir John Gorst) had also to be reckoned with.

Lord Cross to Lord Lansdowne. June 19, 1891

The paper about annexation is most interesting, and the reasons which you state against such a policy are most forcible.

The Queen makes many communications to me as to the fate of the Princes. She is evidently very much averse to the execution of a Prince, and would greatly prefer his banishment and internment, or imprisonment for life.

I hope that you will be satisfied with the general tone of the debate in the Commons, especially with the speech of Mr. Stanhope. I do not at all understand how it came to pass that my Under-Secretary made the speech which he did make. He to my mind, struck the wrong key-note, and he has been called to account by all the Press. His statement as to the practice of the Govt. of India to put aside anyone on account of ability is quite untrue, and has given great offence, and I fear that it will do harm in India. His explanation at the end of the debate was not received at all well. You may rely upon my following very closely the arguments in your telegram so far as you are concerned.

Of course I will defend Mr. Quinton against treachery, but I must express my disapproval of the practice, and this was one or the main reasons against publishing that long telegram, as in the latter part of it, in your very laudable anxiety to maintain the honour of Mr. Quinton's memory, you went far beyond what was necessary to defend him from treachery.

The speech by Sir John Gorst, who was a much abler man than his official chief, caused much criticism

and fault-finding in political circles, but it was not without advantages, since his cynicism served to divert attention from weak points in the Government case, the truth being that Sir John Gorst was beginning to tire of his association with the Conservative party. As a very well-informed correspondent wrote to Lord Lansdowne at the time:

Gorst is, in many ways, a capital colleague, or, rather, he used to be: but of late he has had so many irons in the fire that we have not profited much by his abilities. But the fact is that he is

[166] Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1842–1902) was a British colonial official in India, who served as Chief Commissioner of the British Crown Colony of Burma from 1890 to 1895, and as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from 1895 to 1898. (Ed.)

[167] Sir Robert Groves Sandeman, (1835–1892) was a British Indian Army officer and colonial administrator. He was known for his activities in Balochistan, where he introduced a system of "tribal pacification" that endured until the partition of India in 1947. He was the son of General Robert Turnbull Sandeman. He was educated at Perth and University of St Andrews, and joined the 33rd Bengal Infantry in 1856. (Ed.)

too big a man for the place; he is very discontented at being left out of the Cabinet, and he is now beginning to kick over the traces. Last night he helped to inflict upon the Govt, a nasty defeat over the Factories Bill; a misfortune in which no one will sympathise with them, least of all those who have had occasion to study their conduct with regard to the Indian Factory Bill.

Notwithstanding a vacillating Secretary of State, an erratic Under-Secretary, and Royal disapproval of princely executions, the Government of India eventually got their way, and the culprits underwent the fate they so richly deserved. As Lord Lansdowne wrote to his mother on August 6, 1891:

> Lord Cross has accepted our recommendation as to the Manipur sentences as it stood, and the Senapati and the Tongal General will hang. Ld. C. was terribly irresolute, and up to the last I feared that he would raise difficulties, or occasion delay. I had to tell him very plainly what I thought. It will not be necessary now to annex the State; we shall probably put up a boy and manage everything for a few years. We shall also I think revoke all former grants and concessions, and re-grant only a limited amount of independence, subject to our own terms and conditions.

The Manipur incident, however, did not close without a word of warning from Queen Victoria, who had conceived quite erroneous notions with regard to the character and methods of the British officials placed in charge of native States, as the following letters show.

The first is from Lord Lansdowne to Lord Cross, dated September 15, 1891:

> You may assure Her Majesty [he wrote] that I am as anxious as she can be to place in charge of the native States men who are conciliatory and tactful, as well as firm. Her impression that many of our Residents are rude and overbearing is, I cannot help thinking, a mistake. If she could be induced to mention to you any examples of her meaning, I should be better able to meet the charge.
>
> In the meantime, I regret that H.M. should have formed what seems to me an unjust opinion of our Residents as a class, and I think that she should be cautioned against accepting *ex parte*[168] statements upon this subject. In the case of Manipur, our choice is very much limited, as there are few men available who know that part of the country, which differs as widely as possible from other parts of the Indian Empire.

Lord Cross's reply, dated October 15, 1891, runs as follows:

> I quite approve your settlement of Manipur. Last night, however, the Queen said she had grave doubts as to the wisdom of appointing as Resident one who had been so actively employed in capturing the Senapati as Major Maxwell[169] had been, and she desired me to telegraph her own views at once, which of course I did. I leave the matter in your hands. It will probably have been all settled before my telegram reaches you.
>
> I gave her in very distinct terms the assurance that you were quite as anxious as she could be herself to place in charge of native States men who are conciliatory and full of tact as well as firm. I know not where she got the impression that many of our Residents are rude and overbearing, and I took the opportunity, afforded by seeing her constantly here, of pressing for any instance that had been brought to her notice, but I could get no specific case. My own

[168] With respect to or in the interests of one side only or of an interested outside party. (Ed.)
[169] Lieutenant Colonel Henry St. Patrick Maxwell (1850-1928) features in the Manipuri writer Binodini's Sahitya Akademi Award Winning historical novel *The Princess and the Political Agent*, which tells the love story of her aunt Princess Sanatombi and the British representative of the Tibeto-Burman kingdom of Manipur. (Ed.)

private opinion is that her Indian Munshi[170] tells her that there is in India the greatest devotion to herself and all her family, but at the same time distrust and dislike of the Government, and that the native chiefs think that the Residents are rude and overbearing. I have done my best to disabuse her of this feeling. 1 did not like to mention any case in which General X's name was concerned, as he is coming here as

groom-in-waiting to-morrow. From further conversation with her, however, I cannot help thinking that the names of Sir Lepel Griffin[171] and Sir A. Colvin[172] find no favour in her eyes.

As Lord Cross was always specially honoured with the confidence of Queen Victoria, it is more than likely that he was correct in his suspicions of the Munshi, who was no doubt utilized by discontented native potentates for the purpose of intriguing against the Indian Government. Lord Lansdowne, who had always expressed his desire to investigate any specific charges, was never provided with any definite information on the subject.

The official tour of this autumn included Bhopal and Indore. Lord Lansdowne arrived at Bhopal on November 20, 1891, where he met the only woman ruler of an Indian State, the Begum.[173] Two days later he wrote to his mother, from Bhopal:

We arrived here on the 20th. The Begum received me at the station completely enveloped in a pale "greenery-yallery" kind of domino, and moreover concealed from the public gaze by a sort of hoarding covered with brilliant *teintures*.[174] When she had paid her respects she slipped off to her carriage, in which she followed mine as far as this house. Arrived there, she took leave of me through her carriage window, in which glass was replaced by the thinnest gauze, and oh! rapture! behind this was the royal countenance, uncovered and plainly visible. She is a determined-looking little lady, not disagreeable to look at, and young for her age (52). She is in great good humour, as this is the first time a Viceroy has been to Bhopal in her reign.

Then I had visits from no less than five minor chiefs, followed by a bouquet of ten or a dozen local magnates who came in a bunch.

In the afternoon (6.30) I drove to the Palace to return H.H.'s visit. The city was brilliantly illuminated and the Cour d' Honneur at the Palace was really a fine sight. At the foot of the steps was my hostess, more like a green chrysalis than ever. We toiled up the staircase and through long corridors, hand in hand, to the Durbar room, which was bright and pretty. Gorgeous gold-embroidered carpets, the finest 1 have seen yet. We had

[170] Mohammed Abdul Karim (1863—1909), also known as "the Munshi", was an Indian attendant of Queen Victoria. He served her during the final fourteen years of her reign, gaining her maternal affection over that time. Munshi is a Persian word, originally used for a contractor, writer, or secretary, and later used in Mughal India for native language teachers, teachers of various subjects, especially administrative principles, religious texts, science, and philosophy and were also secretaries and translators employed by Europeans. (Ed.)

[171] Sir Lepel Henry Griffin, (1838–1908) was a British administrator and diplomat during the British Raj period in India. He was also a writer. Katherine Prior, the author of his entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, describes that, "He was a dandyish, Byronic figure, articulate, argumentative, and witty. Anglo-Indian society was at once both dazzled by and scornful of his languid foppishness and irreverent tongue". (Ed.)

[172] Sir Auckland Colvin (1838–1908) was a colonial administrator in India and Egypt, born into the Anglo-Indian Colvin family. He was comptroller general in Egypt (1880–2), and financial adviser to the Khedive (1883–87). From 1883 to 1892 he was back in India, first as financial member of council, and then as Lieutenant-governor of the North-West Provinces (as his father had been) and Oudh. (Ed.)

[173] A Muslim woman of high rank. In this case it refers to Shahjahan Begum (1838–1901) who was the Nawab Begum of Bhopal (the ruler of the Islamic principality of Bhopal in central India) for two periods: 1844–60 (her mother acting as regent), and secondly during 1868–1901. (Ed.)

[174] Coloured dyestuffs on fabric. (Ed.)

a very friendly conversation, and then came the usual anointment with nauseous attar of roses, followed by garlands, very splendid. Then she and I walked downstairs again, I holding tight to her tiny little hand, lest she should trip up over her draperies and roll down to the bottom in a bunch. The little hand in question was encased in a green silk glove, with the fingers much too long.

In the evening we had the State banquet here in the big tent, 60 Europeans in all. At dessert, in came the Begum, her face still invisible, stood up boldly at the head of the table, and, quite unabashed, proposed the Queen's health and then mine in a very loyal little speech, which was translated by the Resident. It was really a very courageous performance on the little lady's part, and there was, in spite of the grotesqueness of the costume, a certain pathos and dignity about the whole proceeding. The worst thing about her is her voice, which is shrill and unpleasing.

I forgot to tell you that she paid Maud a private visit after hers to me in the morning. I also did not say that I began the day (like an idiot) by getting up at 6.30 to shoot snipe. There were no snipe to shoot and I should have been better in bed.

We start to-night for Indore, and shall reach Calcutta on Saturday to begin our *fourth* season there.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. 25 Nov. 1891

Our Indore visit has gone off well. Holkar[175] has a bad reputation, and is at times very eccentric and hard to manage. I suspect however that those entrusted with the task have not always set about it quite in the right way. Nothing could have been better than his behaviour on this occasion. He is a huge creature, tall, and weighing I should think 20 stone, tho' still quite young: talks English fluently, and on the whole well, but not always with an exact appreciation of the value of words. He has been worried by his relations, a man here may have any number of stepmothers; and by the low native press. He came to me this morning and poured all his griefs into my ear, and I think I comforted him a little, and convinced him that if he would run straight we would support him loyally.

We had a terrible day yesterday. Visits and return visits from 11 a.m. till dusk: but see as to this the printed paper enclosed. For the return visits the minor Rajas had established themselves each in his own durbar tent on the open ground behind the Residency, which looked like a huge circus. I drove in a carriage and pair from tent to tent, "touched and remitted" little bags

full of gold mohurs[176] in cash, was presented all over again to the retainers who had already been presented to me in the morning, was garlanded and smeared with their horrible attar of roses some half a dozen times—all this while each Raja's band was playing what purported to be ''God save the Queen" in a different key, and the salutes overlapped one another and completed the confusion. After all this we had a mild little garden party at the Residency. Then we drove off (nearly 4 miles) to dine at the Maharaja's Palace—where a motley collection of 170 convives were gathered. After dinner came the usual speeches, and after the verbal

[175] This is probably a reference to Maharajadhiraja Raj Rajeshwar Sawai Shri Sir Shivaji Rao Holkar Bahadur XII (1859–1908) who was the Maharaja of Indore (Holkar State) belonging to the Holkar dynasty of the Marathas. His father had died in 1886 (Ed.)

[176] The Mohur is a gold coin that was formerly minted by several governments, including British India and some of the princely states which existed alongside it, the Mughal Empire, Maratha Empire, Kingdom of Nepal, and Persia (chiefly Afghanistan). It was usually equivalent in value to fifteen silver rupees. (Ed.)

fireworks, a good *feu d'artifice*, the only drawback of which was to be found in the fact that the rockets and other aerial pieces were directed towards us, and burned holes in the ladies' frocks. Holkar assured Maud that it was all right, *ce qui n'empêcha pas*[177] her gown from having several holes burned in it. By the way, he told me that Maud's pearl necklace was one of the best he had seen, not on account of the size of the pearls, but because of their "light". I thought this rather discriminating, as most of the chiefs affect huge yellow things like turnip radishes. To bed, well tired out.

The close of 1891 was marked by a somewhat depressing correspondence with Lord Salisbury relating to the protection of Persia against Russia, the defence of the North-West Frontier against that Power, and the construction of strategic railways. It was agreed on both sides that the only encouragement which would be of any value to Persia would be support in troops and in munitions of war, but how this support was to be provided was not evident. The home Government was apparently under the impression that the task would be undertaken by India. The Viceroy explained that it was beyond the power of India to send troops to Persia unless large reinforcements were sent out from home, but he was told quite plainly that nothing of the kind could be expected. The problem was precisely the same with regard to the general question of North-West Frontier defence. Sufficient troops could not be provided to hold the proposed line in sufficient strength for defensive purposes, and at the same time to suffice for

the safety of India itself, unless adequate reinforcements from home could be counted upon, which was emphatically not the case. As for the contemplated strategic railway from some inland point to the sea, the Viceroy's final impression was: (1) "That we cannot provide the money; (2) That you are not likely to provide it; (3) That if it were provided, the outlay would be un- remunerative".

A more unsatisfactory problem it would be difficult to conceive, but fortunately we were never called upon to face it.

Back in Calcutta, the usual round of social functions recommenced, and amongst other august guests figured the French Governor-General, accompanied by a rather remarkable lady.

From Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Barrackpore. Jan. 10, 1892

The French Governor-General (of Pondicherry, Chandanagore, and one or two more ridiculous little French scraps of territory) is in Calcutta, and we have been firing salutes in his honour and otherwise showing him the *régards* so dear to foreign officials. Yesterday he paid me his official visit and we had the bodyguard out, and all the staff in full uniform at 1.0, the hour appointed, to say nothing of myself in my best frock-coat and star. But the minutes passed, and at 1.20 no Governor had arrived. It turned out that Beresford[178] had offered to send them our carriage (perhaps in his best French), and that the Consul-General (in his best English) was understood to have refused, and so it came to pass that while I was waiting for M. Clement Thomas,[179] he was waiting for my barouche! But all came right in the end, and we had a friendly interview of a few minutes at 1.45. To-morrow I dine him and the French *men* of the Calcutta

[177] Which did not prevent. (Ed.)

[178] Lord William Beresford, V.C., Military Secretary, who had held this post under previous Viceroys. (LN) Lieutenant-Colonel Lord William Leslie de la Poer Beresford VC (1847–1900) was an Anglo-Irish soldier. He was the third son of the Church of Ireland minister John Beresford, 4th Marquess of Waterford. His eldest brother, John Beresford, became the 5th Marquess of Waterford and his second brother, Admiral Charles Beresford, became the 1st Baron Beresford. (Ed.)

[179] Clément Léon Émile Thomas was Governor General for various colonies in the Second French Colonial Empire, notably that of Senegal from 1888 to 1890] and French India from 1891 to 1896. In 1893 he was made an honorary Knight Commander of the Indian Empire by the Government of British India. (Ed.)

colony. It was to have been a mixed dinner, but Maud has withdrawn owing to Lichfield's[180] death, and only the gentlemen are to be asked.

One of the ladies we shall not regret. We had included

(Page 95) VICEROY OF INDIA [1892]

amongst the invitations to the dinner and the ball, at the special request of the Consul-General, one Mme. A. B., who had moreover fortified herself with letters of recommendation from the British Embassy and other sources. This lady came to the ball apparently under the impression that a liberal covering of paint made amends for a corresponding deficiency in the matter of clothes, and never, in or out of good society, have I seen a more extraordinary exhibition. A murmur ran round the room as she was led up to me by the Consul-General. Calcutta society is not inordinately squeamish but it draws the line somewhere, and that somewhere is considerably above the level of the B. Maud's (Lady Lansdowne) face of mingled disgust and indignation was worth anything.

The lady squirmed beneath her gaze, and looked as tho' she would have given a great deal to make herself smaller and her clothes larger. We saw her no more, and the French Consul-General said she never ate supper.

Next day that official confided to Beresford that even he had been shocked by the appearance of his fair compatriot: "Que voulez-vous", she had been recommended to them as interested in hospitals and zenanas,[181] *etc.*, but, added the little man, "Did you see the eye of the Marquise?"

Lady Lansdowne left India for England in March in order to attend the marriage of her eldest daughter to Mr. Victor Cavendish, the present Duke of Devonshire,[182] and the Viceroy, who had accompanied her to Bombay, took the opportunity of seeing something of that city. It may be noted that owing to the long periods during which Indian Viceroys were cooped up at both Simla and at Calcutta they really got little opportunity, except when on an annual official tour, of obtaining a general impression of the country.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Bombay. April 5, 1892

I am at the end of my Bombay visit, and shall not be sorry to turn my back on the place to-night. The work has been hard, and the climate trying.

(Page 96) LORD LANSDOWNE [1892]

After saying "goodbye" to Maud on Saturday, I started off in a steam launch to inspect one of the steamers which carry the Mahometan pilgrims to Mecca. There has been a good deal of discussion about the treatment of the pilgrims, and I thought I would take the opportunity of seeing for myself. There were over 1000 on board, and the space allowed is 6 ft. by 1½ ft., or 9 square feet per head, not a very liberal allowance, but I am afraid that, owing to the manner in which the ship is measured, and owing to the fact that every pilgrim carried his own baggage and provisions with him (or her), the actual space available is considerably less. The whole ship, on deck and between decks, was packed with the poor creatures, men and women, old and young, coming from all parts of the country—there they lay, with their bags, bundles and bones so mixed up, and so close together, that I had to pick my way on tiptoe, putting my foot wherever I could find room for it among the confusion of limbs and bodies. It was a blazing

[180] This would be Thomas George Anson, 2nd Earl of Lichfield (1825–7 January 1892), known as Viscount Anson from 1831 to 1854. He was the eldest son of Thomas Anson, 1st Earl of Lichfield. (Ed.)
[181] The part of a Hindu or Muslim dwelling that is reserved for the women of the household. (Ed.)
[182] Victor Christian William Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire (1868–1938), known as Victor Cavendish until 1908, was a British peer and politician who served as Governor General of Canada. (Ed.)

hot day, and although the ports were open, the smell was enough to make one sneeze. I tried to picture to myself the scene below in a gale of wind with everything battened down. I asked the officer who showed us round what happened when there was a row. He said there never was a row, and I daresay he told the truth, the patience and gentleness of these people is beyond belief. As for their faith—well, show me 1100 Englishmen who would brave the journey across India and the horrors of that emigrant ship in order to save their souls alive. We have done something to protect the poor wretches, who used to be ill-used and robbed at every stage, but I fear not enough.

Then we went to the Elphinstone College,[183] where I had, in spite of promises that there was to be no speechifying, to say a few words to the students. We finished with a review of the troops, after which we got home in time for a dinner of 50 in this house.

On Sunday I had a succession of callers all the morning, and in the afternoon visited the leper asylum: a very sad sight, 250 poor things all dying by inches. There was a little girl of 4 or 5 who pulled up her nether garment to show us with childish pride the white patch upon her brown thigh which meant that her doom was sealed. For the rest, there was the usual ghastly array of noseless faces, and feet and hands without toes and fingers. We finished at a veterinary college and hospital. What with emigrants, lepers, and glandered horses, I ought to pick up something unpleasant as a souvenir of my visit.

To-day, I began at 7 with a Technical College. Then callers

all the morning, and in the afternoon a visit to a colossal cotton mill, one room turns out 45,000 yards of cloth per day, and a silk factory owned by the Sassoons.[184] Machinery in motion, hot engine-rooms and an atmosphere of fluff are not conducive to happiness with the thermometer at 90, and I don't think I should have had the courage to begin writing if Fenn had not brought me in a jorum[185] of sherry and quinine.

To-night I sleep in the train 80 miles inland, so as to get away from this stuffy place. The climate is indescribably damp and enervating, and the breeze dies away at night.

The Bombay visit was followed by a short shooting expedition, and as many erroneous ideas prevail with regard to official sport in India, the following unvarnished account written by Lord Lansdowne to his mother on April 10, 1892, may dispel some illusions: We have quite a large party, my host the Chief Commissioner, a fat Colonel and a fat General, two forest officers, one of the secretaries to the Local Govt., a policeman, and my party, Fenn, Harbord,[186] and Pakenham.[187]

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[183] In 1827, a resolution was passed that an institution for the promotion of education should be established under Bombay Native Education Society and be designated as "Elphinstone College" (distinct from High School). This was named after Mountstuart Elphinstone, the departing Governor of the Bombay Presidency, who was responsible for beginning higher education in the city. Established in 1856, it is one of the oldest colleges in Mumbai. (Ed.)

[184] The Sassoon family were a wealthy Baghdadi Jewish family dynasty, associated with finance, banking, capital markets, the exploration of oil and gas, Judaism, Conservative politics, and philanthropy. Their principal vehicles, Sassoon & Co. and J. Sassoon Financial Group LLC, are domiciled in Europe, Asia and North America. The family's businesses in China, India, and Hong Kong especially, were built to capitalise on the opium trade. Many members of the family As family members gravitated toward London, they became prominent in England. (Ed.)

[185] Jug for serving drinks. (Ed.)

[186] This could be Frank William Harbord, born in 1860, who was appointed Metallurgical Chemist to the Government of India at the Royal Indian Engineering College, Cooper's Hill. No Christian name is quoted in the index. (Ed)

[187] Col. Hercules Arthur Pakenham (1863-1937) was the son of Lt. General Thomas Henry Pakenham. He held posts as aide de camp to the Governor General of Canada from 1886 to 1888, and to the Governor General of

We began on the afternoon of our arrival by starting in pursuit of a tiger which had killed a bullock "close by", and we were assured that a couple of miles would take us to our places. We had, as a matter of fact, 1½ hours stiff clambering over very rough ground, and reached the ridge which we were to command in the last stage of exhaustion, the fat general collapsed altogether half way up, and was only revived by having iced soda water poured into him and over him. The feature of the place is soda water; wherever one goes, there goes also a small regiment of coolies staggering under a load of green bottles and lumps of ice carefully rolled up in blankets. The fat general and colonel drink a dozen and a half a day. I am content with about half that amount, and feel like a "*ballon captif*".

Our sport has been little so far. We found one tiger on Friday and heard him running about and swearing close to us, but he discovered an unprotected corner, and escaped without being shot at.

Yesterday we toiled all day and got one small sambur—all we saw. Verily the game is not worth the candle. These wild ravines must however be beautiful when the trees are better clad. It is very curious to sec bare and wintry looking boughs with such a climate as that in which we are living.

(Page 98) LORD LANSDOWNE [1892]

To-day being Sunday, I have refused to go out *par égard*[188] for Mrs. Grundy,[189] a personality which includes Exeter Hall, the Queen, the Bishop of Calcutta and yourself! Some of the younger gunners have disappeared and are I suspect quietly poaching on their own account.

I do not think I shall try any more shooting of this kind. It nearly always ends in a fiasco. Too many guns, too many beaters, too much row and disturbance of all kinds. The game finds out long before we reach the ground that something is up, and migrates elsewhere.

Perhaps fortunately for us the opening of the great Chenab weir in the Punjab has been put off, owing to cholera. This saves us about 24 hours of hot travelling. I shall I confess be very glad to find myself once more in a cooler climate and under my own roof.

The postponement of Kerry's arrival is a blow to me. I doubt its being worth his while to bring out a tutor now, and I have suggested that he should read in England for six weeks in the Long Vacation, and then come out tutorless.

12 April

Our yesterday's shoot was not much better than its predecessors: two long beats and two sambur[190] for the total bag, neither of them good animals—I got one—my only shot. My old jamadar,[191] who is becoming somewhat decrepit, climbed up a tree in order to keep out of harm's way, and tumbled out of it, spraining his ankle in the descent. On return to camp, I found my bearer much elated over the capture of a poisonous snake in or near the bungalow. Consumption of soda water unabated.

India from 1888 to 1893. The following year he was promoted to captain. He was a member of the Pakenham family headed by Lord Longford (Ed.)

[188] In deference to. (Ed.)

[189] Mrs. Grundy refers to a person who is extremely conventional or prudish, often embodying the tyranny of societal propriety and moral standards. The term originated from a character in the 1798 play *Speed the Plough* by Thomas Morton. (Ed.)

[190] The sambar is a large deer native to the Indian subcontinent, South China and Southeast Asia that is listed as a vulnerable species on the IUCN Red List since 2008

[191] An officer in the army of India having a rank corresponding to that of lieutenant in the English army (Ed.)

> Our last two days' shooting brought us no better luck. We got nothing but a scorching, and a final beat for the tiger yesterday showed us only a few footprints in the sand.
>
> We rode in to Pachmarhi early this morning, starting at 6 and getting to this house at 8.30. I am very sorry for my host, who imagined that in order to make sure of any number of wild animals, he had only to give orders for their collection in this particular corner of the forest. As for myself, I am a disbeliever in Viceregal battues,[192] and don't much care if I never take part in another.
>
> I have stood the heat fairly well, but I have never had such a grilling before.

(Page 99) VICEROY OF INDIA [1892]

> I am almost afraid we shall be in for another row in the Black Mountain! The outlook is not pleasant whichever way one looks, at home or abroad.

Those who have had experience of a somewhat similar nature will be disposed to agree with Lord Lansdowne. The proceedings are conducted in a blaze of ceremonial publicity which cannot be congenial to anyone who is not possessed of an ostentatious temperament, and least of all to a man whose chief enjoyment consisted in tramping the bogs and hills of Kerry after snipe and infrequent grouse. The Viceroy, Governor, Royal Personage or whatever he may be, sets forth, saluted by the strains of the National Anthem (from which indeed he never escapes), and accompanied by an escort and a vast crowd of officials and heterogeneous followers, proceeds, as often as not, to a kind of glorified opera box, where selections of rifles are handed to him as they may be required, by obsequious attendants. Then at a given signal, a huge horde of beaters is let loose, and amidst a terrific din an attempt is made to drive the game, tigers, deer, pigs, *etc.*, past the great man, which not infrequently is unsuccessful. In fact, the elaborate preparations to do honour to the distinguished guest must occasionally be responsible for failure. I remember taking part in a big partridge drive organised for the benefit of a Governor, and hearing the Maharjah make profuse apologies for not possessing sufficient stock of scarlet cloth with which to festoon each of the numerous butts.

In the early summer of 1892, a general election brought about a change of Government at home and Mr. Gladstone embarked upon his last and short-lived administration, and judging by the following letter from Queen Victoria to Lord Lansdowne, dated August 12, 1892, to no one could the advent of a Liberal Government have been more unwelcome than to Queen Victoria:

(Page 100) LORD LANSDOWNE [1892]

> The Queen-Empress has to thank the Viceroy for his letter of the 27th June.
>
> She feels more than ever at this painful, anxious moment— when, by an incomprehensible, reckless vote, the result of most unfair and abominable misrepresentations at the elections, one of the best and most useful Governments have been defeated— how important it is to have so able and reliable a Viceroy in India.
>
> The Queen-Empress can hardly trust herself to say what she feels and thinks on the subject. Apart from the pain of parting from some great personal friends and people whom she can trust and rely on, the danger to the country, to Europe, to her vast Empire, which is involved in having all these great interests entrusted to the shaking hand of an old, wild, and incomprehensible man of 82½, is very great! It is a terrible trial, but, thank God, the country

[192] A method of hunting in which the game is driven from cover by beaters toward a point where the trophy hunters are in wait. (Ed.)

is sound, and it cannot last. The Gladstonian majority is quite divided, and solely depends on the Irish vote.

The Queen-Empress feels anxious about Afghanistan.

Lord Lansdowne, who naturally had felt much anxiety as to who was to be his new chief, was much relieved to find that the choice had fallen upon Lord Kimberley,[193] whose training and experience rendered him a more suitable occupant of the India Office than his predecessor. Such, however, was not the opinion of the Queen. On August 20, Lord Lansdowne wrote to his mother from Simla:

I am pleased at getting Kimberley at the I.O., and he sent me a friendly telegram to announce his appointment, but I have yet to see whether he and his colleagues will support me in the Afghan imbroglio, which is daily giving me more anxiety. No one who has not gone thro' it knows how much the telegraph wire adds to one's troubles. In an affair of this sort, after having convinced my Council and got everything into shape, I am liable to find the whole arrangement upset or spoiled by a half-hearted alteration prompted by some Whitehall official without recent knowledge of India or the slightest idea of the look of the case as it now stands.

Then the Russians are, as usual, behaving crookedly, and

what with their crookedness and the Amir's, it is not easy to keep things reasonably straight.

Poor old Bob Lowe! He was my first political chief, and always friendly and pleasant to work with. Few spectacles have saddened me more than his breakdown in the House of Lords. His warnings have been only too well fulfilled, and we are but at the beginning of the triumph of democratic principles.

Three days later Lord Lansdowne wrote to Lord Kimberley:

I wish I could congratulate you on having taken charge of the India Office at a time when the prospect was unclouded. 1 am afraid, however, that you will find a good many troublesome questions undisposed of, and that we are both of us like have our hands full during the next few months.

We sent you, by last week's mail, a long despatch upon the subject of our relations with the Amir. I thought it desirable to examine these in some detail, because it does not seem to me possible to arrive at a conclusion with regard to the proper manner of dealing with His Highness's recent acts, unless they are considered in connection with his conduct towards us since the time of his accession. I have very little to add to what is said in the despatch. The Amir's hostility to us is, of course, explained in different ways by different persons. I am sometimes told that it is due mainly to the activity which the Government of India has shown for some years past in cultivating closer relations with the frontier tribes, in opening up the Passes by which their territory is traversed, or in the extension of our Railway system to the Afghan frontier. I have no doubt that His Highness regards such proceedings with a jealous eye, but I doubt whether he would have been our friend, or at all events a trustworthy friend, if none of these things had been done. Again, I believe the Amir's friendship to be, under any circumstances, such an uncertain quantity in the calculation that would not, for the sake of obtaining it, neglect any measure which I considered of first-rate importance for securing our

[193] John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley (1826–1902), known as the Lord Wodehouse from 1846 to 1866, was a British Liberal politician. He held office in every Liberal administration from 1852 to 1895, notably as Secretary of State for the Colonies and as Foreign Secretary. He held office also as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (Ed.)

frontier. Our despatch shows, I think, that he has never been really our friend, and that there has been no time when we could safely depend upon his good-will. Whenever his hands have not been occupied by internal troubles, he has sought to make mischief against us. My impression is that he has got it into his head that we dare not break with him, and that he, therefore,

(Page 102) LORD LANSDOWNE [1892]

supposes that he is in a position to dictate terms to us. We have been in the habit of addressing him too much in the language with which European diplomats are familiar. We have protested and remonstrated, but we have not convinced him that our advice should be followed.

Another explanation of his attitude is to be found in the fact that, although he took over from us, in the first instance, only Kabul Province, to which we subsequently added, as a matter of grace, other large slices of territory, he has always nursed the project of placing himself at the head of a great Mahometan Kingdom, and bringing under his dominion all the tribes and chiefships of Afghanistan. For this reason, he bitterly resents our action in maintaining the independence of Bajaur, Chitral and Waziristan. He knows, moreover, that a settlement of this frontier is inevitable, and he probably considers that it will be to his advantage if, when the time comes, he is found in occupation of as many points as possible withing the debatable region.
I have also heard on excellent authority—that of two Englishmen who have passed a considerable time at Kabul—that the Amir has never forgiven me for the remonstrance which I addressed to him in 1889 on the subject of his horrible cruelties. It has always been a wonder to me that attention has never been called to these in Parliament, and I own that I do not see how it would have been possible for us, in view of the atrocities continually reported to us by our Kabul Agent, to justify the support which we have given to Abdur Rahman. I endeavoured to put this point to the Amir in the most friendly and considerate manner, but I believe he bitterly resented what he no doubt regarded as an uncalled-for interference with his private affairs.

I sent Lord Cross by the last mail a set of our draft letters to the Local Governments as to the measure to be taken in order to give effect to the Councils Act.[194] I shall be glad to hear as soon as possible whether you approve the general lines upon which we are working. It is necessary to give the Local Governments a pretty strong lead in order to prevent them from adopting widely divergent lines of action. X, for example, dislikes the whole thing, and would do as little as possible, while

(Page 103) VICEROY OF INDIA [1892]

Sir C. Elliott[195] and Sir Auckland Colvin recommend very elaborate schemes of territorial representation. A question in which I am very specially interested is the selection of Lord

[194] The Indian Councils Act had been passed before the General Election took place. (LN)
[195] Sir Charles Alfred Elliott (1835–1911) was a Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. He had been a member successively of Lord Dufferin's and then of Lord Lansdowne's executive councils. On the retirement of Sir Steuart Bayley, Elliott, although he had never served in Bengal, became lieutenant-governor of that province, holding the post, save for a short leave in 1893, until 18 Dec. 1895. (Ed.)

Roberts successor. I am told that the Duke of Cambridge[196] would like to send us Buller,[197] but I fancy it is doubtful whether he would care to come. He would, I have no doubt, do the work well, but the Buller-Brackenbury[198] combination would be wanting in special knowledge of India, and Brackenbury seems to think that it might be desirable for him to resign, on public grounds, if Buller came. I feel no doubt myself that White[199] would be the best man for the post, and, as far as I can make out, the only objection to him is founded upon his want of seniority, but he is 57 and has plenty of experience. The case seems to me to be one in which Horse Guards' prejudices ought not to prevail. The Duke of Cambridge has been a terrible obstructive as regards Indian military reforms, and I am not without hopes that you may encourage me to return once more to the charge as to the Presidential Army system, to which you referred in the House of Lords.

There are two troublesome frontier questions, the one concerning the Burmo-Chinese, and the other the Burmo-Siamese frontier.

The Currency question is becoming more serious every day. My own impression is that there is practically no chance of the double standard finding acceptance. I see nothing for it but a gold standard, with, of course, a currency mainly of silver. There is an impression in this country that H.M.G. will not allow us to do anything, and this idea is creating a great deal of mischief. The discontent in the service is becoming very formidable, and it will be absolutely necessary to take some steps to meet it before long. It is not only that the men who are in the employment of the Govt, of India are suffering cruelly, but we shall, unless I am mistaken, find that, as time goes on, we cannot get the same class of men to enter the service, and that its reputation for character and integrity will cease to be what it has hitherto been. Moreover, the men now in the service will be tempted to take their pensions as soon as they can and clear out

of the country. The outlook is altogether a very alarming one, for we shall have great difficulty in avoiding a deficit next year. We were abused because we did not take off taxation in 1890-91 and 1891-92; the result, however, has amply justified us: how foolish we should have looked now if we had reduced the Salt Duty, or raised the level of exemption from Income Tax, when we were pressed to do so.

I will say nothing about the Opium question to-day. You will probably be able to give me a hint as to the Parliamentary exigencies of the case. Lord Cross mentioned to me the idea of appointing a Royal Commission. This might be the best way out of the difficulty, and if I were

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[196] Prince George, Duke of Cambridge (George William Frederick Charles; 1819–1904) was a grandson of King George III and cousin of Queen Victoria. The Duke was an army officer by profession and served as Commander-in-Chief of the Forces from 1856 to 1895. He became Duke of Cambridge in 1850 and field marshal in 1862. Deeply devoted to the old Army, he worked with Queen Victoria to defeat or minimise every reform proposal, such as setting up a general staff. His Army's weaknesses were dramatically revealed by the poor organisation at the start of the Second Boer War. (Ed.)

[197] General Sir Redvers Henry Buller, VC (1839–1908) served as Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in South Africa during the early months of the Second Boer War and subsequently commanded the army in Natal until his return to England in November 1900. (Ed.)

[198] General Sir Henry Brackenbury, (1837–1914) was a British Army officer who was assistant to Garnet Wolseley in the 1870s and became part of his 'Ring' of loyal officers. He also wrote several books of military history and memoirs. He became Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India in 1880, acted as British Military attaché in Paris between 1881 and 1882, and then became assistant Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. (Ed.)

[199] General Sir George White, who subsequently received the appointment. (LN) Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, VC (1835–1912) was stationed at Peshawar during the Indian Mutiny and then fought at the Battle of Charasiab in October 1879 and at the Battle of Kandahar in September 1880 during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. He went on to command a brigade during the Third Anglo-Burmese War in 1886 and became commander of Quetta District in 1889 in which role he led operations in the Zhob Valley and in Balochistan. (Ed.)

quite sure that the Commissioners would be properly selected, I should have no great objection, but I will reserve what I have to say on the subject.

The reply of the newly appointed Secretary of State was not particularly reassuring. He was evidently disposed to consider that it was dangerous to hurt the Amir's feelings; declined to commit himself over the Indian Councils Act or the Currency question; and intimated that the Government Parliamentary programme would not be likely to afford room for any Bill dealing with Presidential Armies. There was no danger, he remarked, of his forgetting opium, for now that a Liberal Government was in power, anti-opium memorials were arriving in increasing numbers.

Official visits were made in the winter to Hyderabad, Mysore, and Madras. On November 7, he wrote from Hyderabad to his mother:

> On Friday we had a State visit from the Nizam,[200] followed by formal visit from the Minister and three other nobles. After luncheon, return visit to Nizam; road lined with (very) irregular troops: there is a brigade of Arabs, the greatest ruffians I ever saw. Sun furiously hot; I nearly died of it at the Palace. In the evening a banquet at the Palace, followed by a business speech, which was tiresome to make and, I have no doubt, to listen to. The dinner was well done; the ladies were amused at being presented with a sort of wafer dumplings, each of which contained a little live bird. The poor things enjoyed their emancipation and fluttered all over the place, into the ices, and

> sometimes, I fear, into the candles. Illuminations and fireworks very good indeed. The night was lovely and the huge quadrangle of the Palace with throngs of brightly dressed people looked well. To bed very tired.
>
> Saturday, review of 5,000 troops at Secunderabad at 7.30, very successful, no dust. After breakfast, long private visit from Nizam; real business this time.
>
> Then luncheon (250) with the Minister, very long and tiresome. Then tea with a toothless old noble of high rank. Then a dinner of 60 here. Another hard day.
>
> On Sunday, in a virtuous fit, I went to early church, and had an interminable sermon and four long hymns—back to breakfast in a very unchristian-like frame of mind. Day quiet. In the evening drove out on coaches to the old fort at Golconda and had tea on the top of the keep. Some of the fat nobles were done to a turn by the time we had got there.
>
> The Nizam is a pleasant little man, with much good in him. We are trying hard to bring him out and make him assert himself. The State is a hot-bed of intrigue and villainy, and I am sorry to say that a good many fellow-countrymen of ours are fattening upon it.
>
> The city is not particularly interesting, rather cheap and nasty, and very large. The crowd bright and picturesque, but the individuals who comprise it unattractive. The stone of the country is all granite, so there is no carving, and I miss the beautiful red sandstone tracery of Upper India.

A week later he wrote to his mother from Mysore:

[200] Nizam of Hyderabad was the title of the ruler of Hyderabad State which is now part of the Indian state of Telangana, the Marathwada region of Maharashtra and the Kalyana-Karnataka region of Karnataka. (Ed.)

Yesterday there was the Maharaja's[201] visit to me, followed by mine to him. He received us in a very quaint old Palace containing some beautiful and a great many unlovely things. You cannot imagine the incongruity of the objects which these Rajas collect. Priceless jewels, wonderful doors of ivory carved in high relief, old Sanskrit manuscripts, ancient arms and armour, side by side with cheap plaster casts, mechanical toys, musical boxes, orchestrions, telephones.

After we had wandered about the Palace, we looked at some wrestling from a very picturesque wooden balcony, and then at a wild sort of dance performed by mountaineers from a distant part of the State. Then home to dress, and off again almost immediately to another Palace, where we were entertained at the inevitable "State banquet", after which I had to propose the

Maharaja's health. I was able to be very civil to him and his Govt, without indulging in the slightest exaggeration, for he and his Minister have really managed very well.

Then fireworks, and home by the light of rather good illuminations, but, oh! how weary one gets of all this. I think I shall hate even a solitary squib for the rest of my days.

Up to-day at 7 to inspect the Maharaja's cavalry. Then back to breakfast, after which I received no less than four deputations, who presented me with addresses enshrined in nice little sandalwood boxes. Where I shall put all my caskets, *etc.*, when I get home, I don't know.

With the new year there came a renewal of trouble with the Amir of Afghanistan. Lord Lansdowne had always held the view that it was possible to concede too much in the hope of a good understanding with that potentate. Although not technically a vassal, he was not in the position of a purely independent ally. He could never have held his own as the ruler of Afghanistan without British support, and the mode in which that support had been given deprived him of the right to be treated as an independent sovereign.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. (19 January 1893)

The Amir is giving me some trouble, but we are not meditating an attack on Afghanistan. He is a cantankerous and suspicious old savage, and I don't think he has ever forgiven me for writing him a letter in which I told him that it was absolutely necessary that he should stop gouging out his prisoners' eyes, boiling them in hot oil, or tying them up to posts and leaving them to die of cold and hunger. He also hates our new Railway, and, I have no doubt, firmly believes that I want to annex his country. He is now trying to enter into negotiations with H.M. Government behind my back, and will be very angry when he finds out, as he will, that that is no good.

An attempt had been made to induce the Amir to come to India in order to arrive at a settlement of the various matters in dispute, but this proposal was not accepted, and after much negotiation it was agreed that

Lord Roberts should go on a special mission to Afghanistan. The procrastinating resources, however, of an Oriental ruler were quite equal to the task of killing the Roberts Mission. In March, Mr. Salter

[201] The maharaja of Mysore was the king and principal ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore and briefly of Mysore State in the Indian Dominion roughly between the mid-to late 1300s and 1950. Chamarajendra Wadiyar X (1863–1894) was the twenty-third Maharaja of Mysore from 1868 to 1894. (Ed.)

Pyne,[202] an Englishman in the service and confidence of the Amir, arrived in Calcutta on his way to England.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Kimberley. Calcutta. March 15, 1893

> Mr. Pyne has arrived in Calcutta, and I had a long talk with him yesterday.
>
> He tells me that the Amir has been really very ill with gout, but that he is now better. For the last three months he has been unable to stand. Someone has sent him a supply of medicine for gout, but His Highness will not take it himself, although he administers it freely to his courtiers and descants upon the excellent effect which it produces upon them. He is fond of proposing fantastic remedies of his own, and his doctors are so much afraid of him that they invariably agree with him that the proposed treatment is worth trying.
>
> Pyne brought two letters; one relates to the Biland Khel affair, and the other explains why the Amir was not able to receive Lord Roberts. The causes are, first, H.H.'s illness: secondly, the Hazara rebellion: and, thirdly, the severity of the winter, which rendered it impossible to collect his headmen in Durbar. H.H. then goes on to refer to the detention of his arms, which he says will cause the Russians to rejoice. He ends by recommending Mr. Pyne to me, and says that Pyne has been instructed to talk to us and to report to him.
>
> Pyne tells me that his instructions are that he is to write to the Amir and tell him how things look, and he will then receive further orders from H.H.
>
> I gather from him that the Amir was at first pleased with the idea of receiving Lord Roberts. After a while, however, it was suggested to him that Lord Roberts was being sent up to coerce him, and he got it into his head that the Commander-in-Chief was to be accompanied by an army of 15,000 men. H.H. is supplied with extracts from the Indian newspapers, and some foolish articles which appeared on this subject frightened him still further.

> Pyne's own idea is that what the Amir would really like best would be an invitation to England, but H.H. understands that it would be necessary for him to come to an agreement with us first on frontier matters. Pyne thinks he would like a small Mission to be sent to Kabul as a preliminary; more as a compliment, I fancy, than with any idea that such a Mission would find it possible to settle anything definitely. Pyne thinks that if the ice were thus broken, the Amir would probably consent to meet me, and would thus expect to be allowed to visit England.

The detention about this period of some guns destined for the unaccommodating tyrant was probably more effective in bringing him into a more reasonable temper than any amount of argument. Lord Roberts, who was in London in May, strongly recommended that the Amir should be invited to England. Lord Kimberley referred to the Viceroy for his opinion, and in view of a recent visit from an Afghan ruler, Lord Lansdowne's reply, dated June 6, 1893, is interesting:

> A visit to England might in some respects be good for the Amir. It would impress him with a sense of our power and, perhaps, of his own weakness, and he would be pleased at the fuss which would be made with him. On the other hand, his reception might, not improbably, turn his head. People at home have no sense of proportion in their dealings with Eastern visitors,

[202] Sir Thomas Salter Pyne (1860–1921) was a British engineer based in Afghanistan. He was born in Broseley, Shropshire and at the age of 15, he began an apprenticeship with an engineer and by 1879, had become the manager of a foundry and engineering works. In 1883, Pyne moved to India, where he worked for the merchant Thomas Acquin Martin for a few years. In 1887, after Martin was appointed Agent by Abdur Rahman Khan, the Amir of Afghanistan, Pyne was sent to Kabul to serve as Chief Engineer of Afghanistan. (Ed.)

and it is by no means unlikely that His Highness would meet with an amount of fulsome civility and adulation sufficient to disturb his equilibrium for the rest of his days. I see that Kapurthala[203] has been treated as if he were a Chief of first-rate importance, and spoken of at public banquets in language which will make the other Chiefs smile. I am, at any rate, persuaded that it would be undesirable to allow the Amir to go to England until he has arrived at some understanding with us as to the Questions at issue. It would be impossible to prevent him from discussing them with Her Majesty's Government, and, from the moment that he was allowed to do this, the authority of the Government of India would be at an end. I would certainly offer him no encouragement to visit England until we know the result of Mr. Pyne's Mission. It is quite possible that it may have the effect of improving our relations with His Highness,

and, in this event, should it become evident that he has really set his heart on going to England, he might be humoured. I am never quite able to make out how far the idea is the Amir's own and how far it originates with Pyne. Pyne would, of course, like to bring about the visit to London, where he would "run the show". In the meanwhile it is clear that the Amir is having a good deal of trouble in the Hazara country, and I do not believe that he would venture to leave Afghanistan under such circumstances. We have, moreover, as you have pointed out in your letter, yet to see what will be the result of our negotiations with Russia; they may perhaps materially affect the situation in Afghanistan.

Lord Kimberley was entirely in agreement as to the undesirability of these visits from semi-savage Oriental monarchs, which occasionally assume a blackmailing character.

The recent visit of Amanullah[204] affords a valuable object-lesson. This potentate, who only a few years before had made a totally unprovoked attack upon India, was received with the highest possible honours, treated like a civilized being, and became the object of unlimited newspaper gush, with the result that he lost his head - and at the time of writing, has lost his throne, too.

Lord Kimberley to Lord Lansdowne. India Office. June 30th 1893

I quite agree with you as to the absurd fuss which is made here with Eastern visitors. I am pestered to death with pressure for honours for Bhannagar, which, however, I shall not yield to. The pressure comes from persons who ought to know better. He himself seems to be a quiet, sensible man.

With regard to the Amir, I do not differ from your view of the present situation as described by your letter. The main difficulty as to a visit by him to England is what you point out, that he would inevitably insist on bringing political questions before us here.

The Opium motion comes on to-night. We shall propose a Commission.

The Opium Commission, which, as Lord Kimberley; explained, had been forced upon the Government by the pressure of Liberal supporters, affords an instructive instance of the manner in which the views

[203] Colonel Maharajah Sir Jagatjit Singh Sahib Bahadur (1872–1949) was the last ruling Maharaja of the princely state of Kapurthala during the British Raj in India, from 1877 until his death, in 1949. (Ed.)
[204] Ghazi Amanullah Khan (1892-1960) was the sovereign of Afghanistan from 1919, first as Emir and after 1926 as King, until his abdication in 1929. (Ed.)

of the Indian Government are occasionally overridden by the home- authorities. Lord Brassey,[205] against whom there was nothing to be said, was appointed Chairman, but amongst the members was the late Mr. Caine, M.P.,[206] to whose appointment the Indian Government took the strongest objection. These objections were expressed in forcible language.

> I am very sorry [wrote the Viceroy] that you were obliged to give way to Caine's appointment. The announcement has created a very painful impression here. I do not know whether people at home realise the extent to which the selection of a man of this kind weakens the authority of the Govt, of India. He has abused and libelled us in the most unscrupulous manner: he has again and again been detected in making false statements regarding the administration of the country: he has been exposed in the public press, and yet he is selected to come out here as a member of a tribunal which, in the eyes of the native community, is appointed for the purpose of putting the Govt, of India on its trial. This may not be the way in which the matter is looked at in the House of Commons, but it will certainly be so regarded here.

The Opium Commission proceeded to India in the autumn, but Mr. Caine was prevented from accompanying it by a severe illness, from which he never recovered.

In the meanwhile both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State had become involved in other troubles. Lord Lansdowne encountered a rebuff over the Juries Bill, a perfectly justifiable measure which had been introduced in consequence of the refusal of juries in certain districts of Bengal to convict in cases of murder. It was felt by the Government of India that if the jury system was ever to become a real and effective part of the administration of justice, it must be reformed. Accordingly

it was proposed that the system of trial by jury in certain districts in Bengal should be assimilated with the system which prevailed in other Provinces, and that certain offences should be withheld from the cognizance of a jury. The proposal gave rise to a prodigious outcry in India, and the home Government took alarm, but the face of the Viceroy was saved by the appointment of a Commission.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Calcutta. Feb. 11, 1893.

> I have had a very anxious time lately. H.M. Govt, is going to overrule me on the Juries question, and I have yet to see whether it will be done in a manner to which I can submit.
>
> I am quite prepared to admit that if we had known what an amount of agitation the Notification would lead to, we should have done better to give it no encouragement. But the agitation here would be nothing without the support which it is receiving at home, and I am thoroughly disgusted at the way in which Ministers are apparently allowing themselves to be influenced by wire-pullers and intriguers of all sorts. For many reasons I would gladly have done with it all and come home in March, but I don't want to show temper, or to give the gang of conspirators who are working against me the satisfaction of driving me away from my post. I

[205] Thomas Brassey, 1st Earl Brassey (1836–1918), was a British Liberal Party politician, governor of the Colony of Victoria. In 1893 Queen Victoria appointed nine members as the Royal Opium Commission, which consisted of seven British and two Indian members, which was headed by Lord Brassey, who served as the Chairman. The commission was to report on whether India Opium export trade to the far east (China) should be ended and, further, whether poppy growing and consumption of Opium in India itself should be prohibited save for medical purpose. (Ed.)

[206] William Sproston Caine (1842–1903) was a British politician and temperance advocate. He was elected to the House of Commons for Scarborough in 1889 and represented the extreme radicals. Caine visited India and realized that India also needed a movement to reduce alcoholism. In 1888 he established the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association in London along with Samuel Smith. In 1888-89 he visited India on a temperance tour. Caine was on a commission on Indian expenditure during 1895-96. (Ed.)

shall therefore be content to put some of my pride in my pocket. How much, depends on the events of the next few days. You will know the result long before you read these lines.

Barrackpore, 19/2/93.

I have, I am glad to say, got out of the Jury affair upon the lines which I had myself proposed to Lord K. We ourselves asked for a Commission of Inquiry more than a month ago, and the proposal has been accepted. The Commission will very likely report against the famous Notification, but, although we supported it and believe it to be justified on the merits, we have throughout admitted that there were possibly other ways of dealing with the difficulty, and we advised the appointment of a Commission for the purpose of considering the case from this point of view. The whole thing has been unsatisfactory, but this solution *n'a rien de très blessant*[207] for me, and leaves me in a

(Page 112) LORD LANSDOWNE [1893]

very different position to that in which I should have found myself had I been peremptorily ordered to recall the Notification. Lord Kimberley has, I must say, been very friendly all through, and has, I suspect, had a good deal of trouble in preventing his Radical colleagues from treating the matter in a widely different spirit.

As for Lord Kimberley, he was becoming more and more embarrassed by the ill-informed zeal of his political friends. Various extracts from his letters to the Viceroy throw an illuminating light upon the perplexities and misgivings which must have weighed upon a Liberal Secretary of State for India even in the 'Nineties.

It is sad to see the House of Commons swayed by such men; but the fact is there, and we have to deal with it as best we can. Every day shows that there will be extreme difficulty in carrying on the government of India in the face of the constant attempts to interfere, not only with its general principles, but with the minute details of your administration (*June 9, 1893*).

Nothing can be more odious to me than the agitation for the protection of venereal disease, for I can call it nothing else. We mass together a number of young single men. We know that we cannot in any way interfere with their inevitable illicit intercourse with women, and on "moral" grounds we decline to interfere to prevent the diseases which are a cruel injury to both men and women, not to speak of the consequences to innocent persons, and the heavy diminution of the efficiency of our troops. Anything more immoral than such a course I cannot imagine. But I am sorry to say we are powerless, and the responsibility must rest on the misguided agitators *(June 17,1893).*

There is, I am sorry to say, something of a dead-set by Liberal M.P.'s against our whole administration in India. You may rely on my doing all I can to remove this feeling, which, if further developed, might lead to serious results. It is all-important at the same time that the new situation should be fully appreciated in India. If this temper of mind was a mere passing phase of opinion, I should not attach so much importance to it; but I believe it to be the outcome of the marked democratic change which has come over this country and shows itself every day in relation to all public questions. The problem before

(Page 113) VICEROY OF INDIA [1893]

us, no light one, is how to reconcile this new condition of affairs at home with the government of an Indian Empire where the whole framework of society is so widely different (*July 27, 1893*)

[207] Not very hurtful. (Ed.)

These are pitiable confessions, more especially the phrase about "responsibility resting on the misguided agitators". The theory that Ministers were irresponsible puppets who were bound to obey the orders of ignorant agitators may have been a novelty at the time, but it has since been adopted as a principle that it is no part of the duty of a Government to warn the public or to tell it unpleasant truths: for when Mr. Asquith[208] and his colleagues were accused of failing to prepare the country for the possibility of war, they replied that the public was so blind and prejudiced that any warnings would have been completely useless.

As Lord Lansdowne's term of office was shortly about to end, the home Government was busily employed in endeavouring to secure a suitable successor. The task was somewhat complicated by the fact that no one but a professing Gladstonian was regarded as eligible, and Lord Kimberley's ideal Viceroy, "a statesman of high rank and social position, well versed in our ever-changing home politics, and capable of understanding the new aspect of our affairs here", took a great deal of finding. The post was refused by Lord Cromer (and doubtless by others), and eventually it was offered to and accepted by Sir Henry Norman,[209] who at that time was Governor of Queensland. The appointment created much surprise and little enthusiasm in India; but in a few days Sir Henry Norman, who was in his sixty-eighth year, withdrew his acceptance on medical advice, and a fresh search for a Viceroy was instituted. What eminent personages were approached on this occasion is not known, but presumably they were all Liberals of the orthodox Gladstonian type. The late Lord Lincolnshire[210] assured me more than once that

Mr. Gladstone definitely offered him the appointment, and that for a brief space he was actually Viceroy of India; but his satisfaction was short-lived, for in an evil moment for him, Lord Rosebery thought of Lord Elgin.[211] The latter was approached, but showed no enthusiasm for the undertaking, and it was only after he had been walked three times round Arthur's Seat by Lord Rosebery that he finally gave a reluctant consent. According to Lord Lansdowne, the announcement of the Elgin appointment created a more favourable impression than that of Sir Henry Norman.

In September it had at last been arranged that a Mission should proceed to Afghanistan, as the detention of his guns and the increasing aggression of the Russians had produced some effect upon the Amir, who

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[208] Herbert Henry Asquith, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith (1852–1928) was a British statesman and Liberal politician who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1908 to 1916. He was the last prime minister from the Liberal Party to command a majority government, and the most recent Liberal to have served as Leader of the Opposition. He played an important role in the design and passage of major liberal legislation and a reduction of the power of the House of Lords. In August 1914, Asquith took Great Britain and the British Empire into the First World War. During 1915, his government was vigorously attacked for a shortage of munitions and the failure of the Gallipoli Campaign. He formed a coalition government with other parties but failing to satisfy his critics, he was forced to resign in December 1916 and never regained power. (Ed.)

[209] Sir Henry Norman, 1st Baronet (1858–1939) was an English journalist and Liberal Member of Parliament and government minister. For several years he worked on the editorial staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and later joined the editorial staff of the *Daily Chronicle*, being appointed Assistant Editor of the latter in 1895. As a journalist he was famous for uncovering the truth behind the Dreyfus Affair. He retired from journalism in 1899. During this time he travelled in Canada and the United States and in Russia, Japan, China, Siam, Malaya and Central Asia. He was knighted in 1906, and made a baronet in 1915. (Ed.)

[210] Charles Robert Wynn-Carington, 1st Marquess of Lincolnshire (1843–1928) was known as the Lord Carrington from 1868 to 1895, and as the Earl Carrington from 1895 to 1912. He was a British Liberal politician and aristocrat. He was Governor of New South Wales from 1885 to 1890. (Ed.)

[211] Victor Alexander Bruce, 9th Earl of Elgin, 13th Earl of Kincardine (1849–1917) was known as Lord Bruce until 1863. He was a right-wing British Liberal politician who served as Viceroy of India from 1894 to 1899. He was appointed by Prime Minister Arthur Balfour to hold an investigative enquiry into the conduct of the Boer War in 1902 to 1903. Elgin was born in Montreal, Canada East (now Montreal, Quebec), the son of James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, who served as Governor-General of Canada. (Ed.)

was quite unsusceptible to argument. Sir Mortimer Durand,[212] the British Representative, was received with exceptional honours, and the negotiations terminated in a settlement which gave satisfaction to both parties.

The main object was to induce the Amir to consent to certain cessions of territory in order to establish a definite frontier which would be respected by the Russians, and to effect a settlement of the numerous questions relating to the North-West Frontier which had arisen between him and the Indian Government. During the course of the negotiations it had become evident that the Amir cared little about anything but guns, rifles, and money; that, as regarded trade, he only wanted permission to sell brandy and opium in India; and that his jealousy as to our interference with his internal affairs "amounted to insanity, and made him extraordinarily difficult to deal with". This being the case, it was a comparatively easy task to obtain his concurrence by the increase of his annual subsidy from twelve to eighteen lacs[213] of rupees, and it was calculated that the extra six lacs would be saved many times over by the avoidance of punitive expeditions in future. As

an instance of the Amir's knowledge of England, it may be mentioned that when Sir M. Durand took, leave, H.H. charged him to deliver specially affectionate messages to Lord Dufferin and Lord Salisbury. When reminded by an ill-advised courtier that Mr. Gladstone, and not Lord Salisbury, was Prime Minister, he replied with some irritation, "I know that, but Salisbury is my friend, and you are to tell him that I offer up constant prayers for his long life and prosperity", adding, after a pause, "However, if you come across Gladstone, you may wish him well".

The settlement was generally approved, and Lord Lansdowne was warmly congratulated by Lord Kimberley and by his predecessor Lord Dufferin.

The last official tour undertaken by Lord Lansdowne was a visit to Burma. The Viceregal party in the autumn of 1893 travelled up the Irrawaddy from Rangoon to Bhamo and back, and had plenty of opportunities to appreciate the attractions of that gay and smiling land, which affords so strong a contrast to India.

From Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Rangoon, Nov. 18, 1893.

> We anchored 14 miles below Rangoon last night and spent a stuffy, mosquito-infested night on board. We landed at 8 a.m. this morning and were received by a big crowd and a representative committee of the Rangoon folks. The proceedings began with the usual address of welcome. Such a casket!—a carved silver elephant's tusk at least two feet long, supported by two Burmese hobgoblins. Then we drove through a series of arches—I think there were 20 — each erected by some particular race, or creed, or profession: Jews, Burmans, Hindus, Karens, Shans, Chinamen of one sort, Chinamen of another, Suratis, Madrasis; to say nothing of endless schools, the scholars of which were evidently, in point of origin, a Rangoon mixture, indicating

> the dangerous fascination which the lady of the country exercises over the European sojourner.

[212] Sir Henry Mortimer Durand (1850–1924) was a British diplomat and member of the Indian Civil Service. He is best-known as the namesake for the Durand Line, which serves as the international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He was the son of Sir Henry Marion Durand, the Resident of Baroda. Durand entered the Indian Civil Service in 1873. He served as the Political Secretary in Kabul during the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–1880); was Foreign Secretary of India from 1884 to 1894; and appointed Minister plenipotentiary at Tehran in 1894. (Ed.)

[213] A lac or lakh is 100,000. (Ed.)

I forgot to say that we were treated to a *pwé*, or dance of Burmese girls, in the big tabernacle erected on the wharf. Funny little maidens in tight pink silk petticoats, like a trouser with one leg, much *maquilleés*[214] and with absurd gestures, but the whole effect rather quaint and attractive, and eminently respectable. These young persons are not in any way to be confounded with their Indian sisters, whose wearisome contortions I have often had to witness.

We are living in the Chief Commissioner's house, a ramshackle building which, under the influence of climate and white ants, is steadily settling down on one side — so much so that I feel as if I were still at sea when I walk into the verandah.

Viceroy's Camp, Rangoon, 22/11/93.

I have been ceaselessly on the warpath since I set foot on Burmese soil—work, speeches, interviews, visits to objects of interest, entertainments have followed one another at such a pace that I feel inclined to lie down and go to sleep rather than attempt a letter. I can only give you a bare list of what I have been about.

18th Nov. — Arrival and ceremonies already described. Visit to rice mills and petroleum factory in the afternoon, and levée in the evening.

19th (Sunday) — Work and interviews. Church in the evening. Deputations of Buddhist priests, and Arakan Chins in the afternoon.

20th. Shwe Dagon Pagoda before breakfast: very quaint and wonderful, a higgledy-piggledy of grotesque temples surrounding the huge golden dome in the midst. Buddhas everywhere—big and little—new and old—a gay crowd; palm trees—dogs—babies—barbarous music—flowers —and a bright and cheery crowd.

In the afternoon a Durbar, for an account of which see newspapers herewith. Then a memorial to unveil. Then visit to a Karen school, where the Karen choirs sang English songs and anthems to English, or, rather, American, music. Very curious, but not particularly pleasant.

Then a Durbar, which was hot and tiresome. Back in time to dress for a big official dinner, and to bed very weary.

21st.—Work before breakfast with Chief Commissioner Brackenbury and the local General; programme of military operations on the Frontier settled to every one's satisfaction—a very modest one, I am glad to say.

After breakfast a series of deputations:

Rangoon Bar,
Rangoon Chamber of Commerce,
Moulmein timber-dealers,
Shan *Sawbwas*, (ruler of the Shan states within Burma. Ed.)
Chin Chiefs;

but I don't believe you know what a Chin is, or the difference between a Chin and a Kachin, and I am sure that you haven't the faintest idea what a *Sawbwas* is—and why should you?

[214] Masked or made-up. (Ed.)

The Chin interview was melancholy, for they have lost 7 men, 2 big chiefs, from illness—a sort of cholera—since they came down, and the officer in charge says that the remainder of the tribesmen will certainly accuse him of having made away with the deceased men. Poor people! They are to be comforted by having no end of a funeral, and presents of a superior kind. They are wild creatures and the men drink nicotine. The women smoke hubble-bubble pipes, and when a sufficient quantity of the poison has been distilled, collect it in a gourd for the delectation of their better or worse halves.

In the afternoon, Burmese sports at the Dalhousie Lake, a very pretty sheet of water surrounded by beautifully-kept lawns and tall trees. There was a huge concourse, and the crowd was the gayest I ever saw. Pink of a dazzling shade was the popular colour and the park looked like a huge flower-bed. We were ferried across in an enormous gilt barge, a sort of floating temple, with a Burmese band on board and a Burmese ballerina to dance in front of us all the way. Nothing here can be done without a *pwé* or dance of some sort. We found more *pwés* on rafts, and more again on shore, one very much like another, but all bright and quaint. The girls are, most of them, between 10 and 14, and I will shew you some photographs of them when I come home. At the end there was a tug-of-war, of all things in the world, between two rival *corps de ballet*. One of them was less numerous by two than the other, and when the weaker team had been ignominiously pulled over by the stronger, a little monkey of perhaps 12 rushed up to me with folded hands and told me in breathless and voluble language, perfectly intelligible even to one

(Page 118) LORD LANSDOWNE [1893]

wholly ignorant of Burmese, that she and her mates hadn't had fair play, and blowed if she'd have come there at all if she'd only known that was the way she was to be treated—and what on earth was the good of a Viceroy if he couldn't stop nonsense of that sort; and then the whole gang of gamins flopped down upon the ground and asked for justice, much to every one's amusement. But in this joyful country the losers as well as the winners get prizes, and my little monkey received a solatium of some sort.

In the evening a dance. To bed at 12.30, very, very tired.

This morning I have been seeing elephants piling and unpiling teak logs — very wonderful indeed; and after breakfast I went off incognito, with the Chairman of the Municipality, and went all through the markets. I love a market, and these, for sights and smells, are wonderful. The great Burmese luxury is an abomination called *ngapi*, made of fish or prawns, salted and ancient. In some of the heaps there were more maggots than fish; a little of it must go a long way. I have asked my host to get me a mild sample to experiment upon. I saw many quaint wares and merchandises, but the vendors interested me most. They all look jovial and apparently do not care whether they do business or not. The women smoke huge cheroots or cigarettes, as long as this paper, and with a diameter bigger than a shilling. It is indescribably funny to see a pleasant-looking girl of 18 sitting among her baskets with one of these torches in her mouth and a coffee-coloured baby busy tugging at the maternal bosom

Mandalay. 23 November

We have just arrived here after a fairly comfortable journey of 24 hours. I think it would take you some time to get hardened to the ubiquitous presence of a black servant, stealing noiselessly into your bedroom, pulling up your mosquito curtains, and otherwise behaving as if he were a harmless housemaid.

The country between here and Rangoon is very pretty: vast stretches of rice fields, whose brilliant green contrasts with the darker shades of the trees, of which there are plenty; blue hills

in the distance and a cloudless sky. Now and again you come to a picturesque village, or a group of pagodas, which grow like mushrooms all over the place.

We had the usual entry into Mandalay, and the customary address (in the customary silver casket). The address and my reply had to be rendered into Burmese, apparently a copious

language, for although I said very little, the proceedings lasted a long time.
Guards of honour of volunteers, military police, and the Wiltshire Regiment, which is mainly composed of Wiltshiremen, including, I hear, a good few from our neighbourhood.

The Chief Commissioner's house is on the walls of the city, which is a square with a frontage of over a mile on each side, and a broad moat all round it. We have tidied it up a good deal since Theebaw[215] was got rid of, and it looks like a huge park with few toy-like buildings scattered about it.

To-morrow I have a Durbar and more talking to do and to-night we have to put in an appearance at a dance! *That* is really trying part of a Viceroy's tour. If one could but be alone and go to bed at 10.30 in the evening, the toil would not be half what it is. But we shall have easy times on the river between here and Bhamo, and in two months Lord Elgin will be in India. Hallelujah!

Viceroy's Camp, Irrawaddy— Above Bhamo. 30 Nov. 1893

Yesterday we reached Bhamo in a downpour of rain, very unusual at this time of year, and unlucky, for it gave all the Bhamo decorations a somewhat draggled appearance, and converted the main road—on either side of which the town, which is only a big bamboo village, extends—into a slough. But we went through with our programme, received addresses, made speeches, and had more *pwés* — of these there were no less than seven, four Burmese, two Kachin, and one Shan. I was much amused, but Ardagh, I am sorry to say, went soundly to sleep about the fourth *pwé*.

The Burmese girls were very smart. I will send you a translation of one or two of the odes which they sang in our honour, translated (faithfully, he assures me) by the able young Deputy Commissioner of Bhamo. I rather like the title "Lord of the Rushing Wheel", which evidently refers to our paddle-steamer.

The Kachins are real savages from the wild hills between us and China—flat-faced, high cheek-boned, dirty-looking villains, who have given us much trouble, and whom we are beginning to get into shape. Their women were the most unearthly creatures I ever saw, and their dance very original. But the most curious performance was that of a little Burmese missy of four years old who played a leading part in the Burmese ballet. She

never moved a muscle of her grave little round face, and got through all the elaborate gestures and contortions (principally of the hands and arms), of which Burmese dancing is mainly composed, without a mistake. Nothing could have been more solemn, nothing more absolutely correct than the *tenue* of this absurd little body, who had, I suppose, drunk in the dancing with

[215] Thibaw Min (1859–1916) was the last king of the Konbaung dynasty of Burma (Myanmar) and also the last Burmese monarch in the country's history. His reign ended when the Royal Burmese armed forces were defeated by the forces of the British Empire in the Third Anglo-Burmese War, on 29 November 1885, prior to its official annexation on 1 January 1886. (Ed.)

her mother's milk (I don't know where that necessary beverage comes from, for the bosom of the Burmese woman is apparently quite unprovided with *les deux hemisphères du beau sexe*).

We are now steaming, in smaller boats, through the defiles above Bhamo. Fine wild river scenery, with rapids and "Campsie Linns"[216] at every turn. We can go but very slowly, but shall come down at a rare pace to-morrow. The vibration, as you see, makes writing difficult.

2nd December

We reached Sen-bo on the afternoon of the 30th in time to poke about in the village and take a walk of a couple of miles along a miry track through the densest jungle I have yet seen. An awful country to fight in.

The village is extraordinarily picturesque—a medley of queer Shan huts and houses, and Buddhist shrines and pagodas, the shrines mostly falling to pieces and overgrown with ferns, orchids and creepers, which are rapidly pulling the solid brickwork to bits. Inside them, the Buddhas, or some of them, are as sound as the day when they were carved—they are all marble or alabaster. We were sorely tempted to do a little looting, and there was a delightful brass bell, supported by two wooden hobgoblins, which I should have liked to annex. I wandered about and did some photographs early yesterday morning, but I fear the light was bad.

We steamed down merrily to Bhamo, and I thought with exultation that next month we shall sail for England, and that we shall henceforth be working towards home. I hope never to be so far from Bowood again.

At Bhamo I held a Durbar on the deck of our "flat". The Burmese gave me an address. Then the Chinese, who are out of humour just now, finding that they do not have everything their own way, as they did under the Burmese regime. One of their complaints was that our police were in the habit, when "running them in", of dragging them along by their pigtails! And I should not wonder if there was some truth in the charge. I did my best to comfort them, and am told that I partly succeeded. Then

came 20 or 30 Kachin chiefs, real untamed savages from the hills—some of them men who had been on the warpath against us quite lately. They were introduced one by one, made their obeisance, and deposited at my feet a knife, or a spear, or a small tusk of ivory apiece. It was rather a curious spectacle. The outer ring of native officers, grim-faced Sikhs and Punjabis standing all round the bulwarks; next a circle of European officers, in full uniform, civil and military; then a row of gaily-dressed Burmese and Shans squatting on the deck; at the end the Chinamen, utterly unlike any of the rest, serious and cynical; on the floor the motley gang of Kachin sawbwas; while amidships, in full uniform, and resplendent with decorations, supported on one side by Brackenbury and on the other by the Chief Commissioner, and backed by a red-coated and perspiring staff, sate the "Lord of the Rushing Wheel", much comforted by the thought that the time was approaching when he would retire into private life, far from Kachins, Chinamen, and the whole blessed business of Viceregal tours.

As for the brave words which I addressed to the Burmese, and the comfort which I administered to the Chinamen, and the sound (and I am afraid, uncongenial) principles which I enforced upon the Kachins: are not these things written in the *Rangoon Times* or the *Mandalay Herald*, of which I must get you a copy.

[216] The name Campsie means Crooked Fairy Hill from the Scottish Gaelic -cam meaning crooked and sith meaning fairy. Linn is an archaic Scottish word for a waterfall. (Ed.)

He was back at Calcutta before the end of the year, and engaged in minor controversies brought about by anti-cow-killing agitators and by the activities of Lord Brassey's Opium Commission; but the period prior to his departure for England at the end of January 1894 was chiefly occupied by the numerous farewell functions which mark the departure of a Viceroy.

Lord Lansdowne to his Mother. Government House, Calcutta, 23 Jan 94

> This is really the last letter. To think that the moment should have come for writing it! You will receive two by this mail; the clerk forgot to post my English letters on the 17th. I telegraphed a few lines to catch the mail at Bombay, so that you might not think I had forgotten you, or come to grief. I am

(Page 122) LORD LANSDOWNE [1894]

> almost worn out and really feel as if I could scarcely last the week out. I have had some very big work to clear off at the last, and the Secretary of State has forced a currency crisis on us at my eleventh hour.
>
> I must send you some papers which will give you an idea of what has happened to us in the matter of farewell entertainments. The disloyal Bengalis tried hard to prevent the Corporation from giving me an address, but were badly beaten. I hear some of the *babus*[217] are very repentant, but they are led by a little knot of seditious scoundrels, and they are arrant cowards.
>
> Last night a great ball in our honour. I could not escape a farewell speech, although I have another to make to-night. Everyone very friendly and Maud's name received with boundless enthusiasm.
>
> *24th January*
>
> I have, thank heavens, got thro' my farewell dinner and my long speech. I was utterly done before I went to the Exchange, and I don't know how I got through. I am sending you papers which will tell you all about it. The speech was well received, but, I think, rather bored the audience, which doesn't care as much as I do about the Frontier.
>
> To-day there are more deputations, a garden party, and a dinner at the Lt.-Governor's.
>
> To-morrow, the last meeting of Council in the morning, and Elgin's arrival in the afternoon. Rajas and notables of various sorts keep dropping in to say good-bye. Scindia[218] (a boy of 16, who is rather fond of me) has just come in all the way from Gwalior. 1 have got so many caskets that I shall have to put them into the melting-pot when I get home.

By this time, as is shown by his correspondence, he was almost worn out physically and could not have stood the strain much longer. Always a delicate man, he had found the climate very trying and had suffered considerably from arthritis, sciatica, and other ailments. If was not so much the actual work which oppressed him as the constant ceremonial and social duties, and although these were invariably discharged with the refined courtesy which he possessed to an unusual degree, the effect upon his health was unmistakable, and when to this was added pronounced nostalgia and the desire

(Page 123) VICEROY OF INDIA [1894]

to be reunited with his sons and daughters, it is probable that no Viceroy ever welcomed the end of his rule with greater enthusiasm. But if he himself looked forward with the delight of a schoolboy to his approaching departure, the British community considered it as little short of a calamity, and this view

[217] Babu is a historical title of nobility used by bhumihar rulers and chieftains in the Indian subcontinent. (Ed.)
[218] Maharaja Sir Madhorao Scindia I of Gwalior (1876–1925), was the 6th Maharaja of Gwalior belonging to the Scindia dynasty of the Marathas. (Ed.)

was shared by the more intelligent natives—although, as invariably happens in the case of a departing Viceroy, there were plenty of assertions in the native press that he had been an Enemy of the People and a mere puppet in the hands of the Civil Service. The arrival of Lord Elgin in January had reproduced the customary symptoms which accompany the simultaneous presence in India of two Viceroys. The incoming Viceroy on landing at Bombay is invariably an object of adulation, and every effort is made to extract pledges and promises out of his inexperience; while the outgoing Viceroy is subjected to the adverse criticisms of those who have no longer anything to expect from him. Lord Elgin was prudent enough not to entangle himself in any rash pledges, and had long before taken the precaution of consulting his predecessor as to what he considered to be the most important questions with which he would be called upon to deal. In reply, he had received the following list:

Currency.
Burmo-Chinese Frontier.
Russian Frontier Negotiation.
Anti-Cow-Killing Agitation.
Cantonment Act (Contagious Disease).
Simultaneous Examinations.
Behar Settlement.
Agricultural Indebtedness.
Military Expenditure.
Presidential Armies.
Relations with Afghanistan.
Opium.

This list is of interest as specifying, on the highest

authority, the problems best worthy of the attention of a new Viceroy, but some of them, e.g. relations with Afghanistan, Presidential Armies, and Burmo-Chinese Frontier, were practically settled before Lord Elgin assumed office.

In attempting to estimate the success of Lord Lansdowne's Viceroyalty, it should be borne in mind that a Viceroy does not possess entire freedom of action, but is controlled and sometimes overridden by a Secretary of State, whose action is frequently, as has been shown in these pages, dictated by Parliamentary considerations which have little regard for the true interests of India. But the occasions on which the India Office differed from the Indian Government had fortunately been few, and the Viceroy parted with both his official chiefs on the most friendly terms. No definite failures can be recorded against him, although he was overruled on his Juries Bill; and in spite of a chivalrous attempt to remedy a social evil, succeeded only in raising the age of consent from 10 to 12. A violent campaign against this measure was headed by the notorious agitator Tilak,[219] and the opposition aroused was so strong and persistent that no subsequent Governments have ever dared to deal with the question. The attempt, too, to solve the currency difficulty by closing the Mints to the free coinage of silver was not entirely successful; but economic conditions were too unfavourable, and the stabilization of the rupee was not effected until another decade had passed. Against such minor discomfitures must be set the record of a sound and efficient administration. Lord Lansdowne, as in the case of Canada, had arrived during a quiet period, and his Viceroyalty had been devoid of sensational incidents. He had been too sensible to commit himself to anything in the nature of rash innovation, or to attempt an alteration of the exceedingly complex system over which he presided, and was content to carry on the reforming

[219] Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920) was an Indian nationalist, teacher, and an independence activist. He was one third of the Lal Bal Pal triumvirate. The British colonial authorities called him "The father of the Indian unrest". He was also conferred with the title of "Lokmanya", which means "accepted by the people as their leader". Mahatma Gandhi called him "The Maker of Modern India". (Ed.)

work of his predecessor which he found in operation on his arrival. Perhaps the most enduring memories of his administration were the peaceful settlement with Afghanistan, which put an end for a time to many futile punitive expeditions; and the prescient policy which laid down the definite frontiers of India, in anticipation of the time when highly civilized Powers would take the place of semi-barbarous States. These achievements, if they may be described by such a term, concerned the external interests only of India, but the record of internal administration will also stand the test of scrutiny with credit. Irrigation had been largely increased; thousands of miles of new railway lines had been opened for traffic; a system of waterworks inaugurated, and some advance made towards meeting the educational wants of the lowest classes. The clumsy system under which the Bombay and Madras armies formed separate commands was ended, and the troops brought under the direct control of the Central Government; provision made for the utilization of the forces of the Native States, and warlike races were substituted for less warlike races in the Indian Army; while the new Indian Councils Act, for which the Viceroy had never ceased to press, in face of strong opposition at home, gave the members increased new rights and powers of discussion, and went some way towards meeting the perpetual demand for more representative institutions with which every Viceroy is confronted.

After all, the successful Viceroy is the man who avoids blunders and who carries on the continuity of Indian policy. Judged by this standard, Lord Lansdowne must be reckoned amongst the most successful, and even his political enemies paid him the compliment of acknowledging his sincerity, high ideals, and his ceaseless devotion to duty. Those officials who served under him in India formed the highest opinion of his capacity and industry. No previous Viceroy had been easier to

work with, and none had shown greater despatch in the transaction of business or more mastery of the dry details of administration. His was one of those fortunate personalities, not too common in public life, which command not only the respect but the regard and even affection of their subordinates. Consideration, kindness of heart, and exceptional courtesy had, moreover, won for the Viceroy amongst all classes an almost unique popularity, to which the social gifts of Lady Lansdowne had largely contributed; and when he sailed from Calcutta at the end of January 1894, amid scenes of remarkable enthusiasm, it is questionable whether any Viceroy ever left India who was more generally regretted.

CHAPTER IV

WAR MINISTER [1894]

(Page 127)

Lord Lansdowne arrived in England in the early spring of 1894, and no wanderer from a foreign strand could have revelled more than he did in his return to old familiar scenes. In some rough autobiographical notes, found after his death, Lord Lansdowne alludes to the intense joy of the return home in 1894, *otiandi non negotiandi causa*.[220] "My idea of happiness", he had written to his mother not long before, "is breeding pigs and planting trees." It was, somehow, difficult to associate him with pig-culture, but it is understood that he was a good judge of certain breeds.

Here I am at my old writing-table [he writes from Bowood to his mother], which is really your old writing-table, with one eye on my paper and the other squinting across the lake. I can scarcely believe that I have been away more than 5 years. I might have walked out of this room a fortnight ago, so little have its contents been disturbed.

Later, he was at Derreen, and his affection for that place may be gauged from the fact that when in India he had written saying that he would willingly give a year of his life for a fortnight there. His devotion to Derreen was perhaps due in some measure to his having been personally responsible for much of its attraction. In a letter to Mr. Balfour inviting him to pay a visit, he describes it as resembling Ithaca: *ut neque planis porrectus spatiis , nec multae prodigus herbae*[221] and originally the promontory

(Page 128) LORD LANSDOWNE [1894]

in the midst of beautiful scenery on which the house stands must have been a semi-wilderness in which oak scrub, rocks and bog predominated. The extensive planting of woods and a thorough knowledge of horticulture, assisted by taste, have added so greatly to the charm of this favoured spot that it would be difficult to find its equal even on the famed South-West Coast of Ireland. Mountains, sea, islands, woods and lakes form an exquisite combination: the exotic vegetation grows so luxuriantly that one is even occasionally reminded of the West Indies, and the sport available ought to satisfy the most exacting, if sufficiently able-bodied. No wonder it was a favourite residence, and probably to a public man its charms were enhanced by reason of its being more than twenty miles from a railway and telegraph office.

Most of his new-found leisure was spent at Bowood and on his various estates, but he made occasional appearances in Parliament and delivered speeches on such unalluring topics as the closing of the Indian Mints, Cotton Duties, the Opium Commission, as well as on Irish Tenants Arbitration and Tithe Rent Charges Bills. Perhaps no human being is so liable to disillusion as an Indian Viceroy. After having occupied one of the most spectacular posts in the universe, after having been the cynosure of every eye, the central figure in every pageant, the oracle whose lightest utterance is listened to with reverential awe, a Viceroy returns home practically unnoticed: his friends remark casually that they have not seen him lately; the press ignores his existence; he relapses into the status of an ordinary private individual, and when he takes part in Parliamentary debates he discovers that little attention is paid to his opinions and that the number of persons who are really interested in Indian subjects is infinitesimal. Although Lord Lansdowne was one of the most modest of men, some trace of discomfiture is to be found in a letter to his mother:

(Page 129) WAR MINISTER [1894-5]

> I got through my Cotton Duties speech on Friday and am glad it is over. My audience was not unfriendly, but, oh! so dull to talk to. The dullness was perhaps, however, in my oration, which

[220] For the sake of leisure, not for the sake of business. (Ed.)
[221] Neither flat spaces nor many wild herbs. (Ed.)

> lasted, I grieve to say, sixty-five minutes! The discussion was, on the whole, useful, although we didn't get much out of Government.

In the spring of 1895, the Dowager-Lady Lansdowne, whose health had been failing for some time, died, and the tone of the letters which passed between mother and son for over forty years is the best evidence of their mutual affection. Writing to an old friend, Lord Lansdowne observes:

> You know what a loss this is to me. Our relations were not only those of mother and son, but of two old friends telling one another everything, sharing joy and sorrow, sunshine and shade.

The truth of this observation must be obvious to everyone who reads the passages which have been so extensively quoted; and in such subsequent correspondence with other persons as is available, it does not appear that there was anyone to whom he divulged his confidences with a similar freedom.

The death of his mother put him in possession of the Scotch properties of Meikleour and Tulliallan; and as a large portion of his estates in Ireland had been advantageously sold, he was now a rich man. Before long he was re-established in Lansdowne House and in a position to resume the duties and to enjoy the advantages which still fall to the lot of a great aristocrat in this country. In the meanwhile he had, in the French sense, fully "arrived". Honours had been showered upon him.

He had become a D.C.L. of Oxford, the Lord-Lieutenant of his County, had been offered and declined the Embassy of St. Petersburg, and had received a K.G.[222]

The Queen, upon the completion of his Indian service, had endeavoured to create him a Duke, a mark of favour which would have made no appeal to him, but the project.

was vetoed by Mr. Gladstone, who was, not unnaturally, disinclined to bestow exceptional rewards upon political opponents. Clearly he was marked out for high political office not only by his position but by proved capacity; and when Lord Rosebery's short-lived and troubled administration came to an end in June, Lord Salisbury offered him the post of War Secretary in the new Unionist Government.

With the exception of the now defunct office of Chief Secretary for Ireland, there has never been a more thankless post in any British Administration than that of Secretary of State for War: and in the selection of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Salisbury was probably influenced by the fact that for ten years he had taken no part in party politics, and that, consequently, his record was blameless. At this particular moment the much-harassed War Office (which incidentally had caused the defeat of the late Liberal Administration) was honeycombed with intrigue in connection with the appointment of a new Commander-in-Chief, and was threatened with drastic reorganization as soon as practicable, it being a fixed belief in this country that a reshuffling of posts and duties in the War Office will provide us with a sound military system. Reorganization, however, had to wait until the Duke of Cambridge had been replaced, and this proved to be no light task.

The decision to remove the old Commander-in-Chief had been taken by the late Liberal Government, and it was known that it had been their intention to appoint General Sir Redvers Buller in his place. But they had not had time to complete the appointment, and there were now three other candidates in the field: Lord Wolseley,[223] Lord Roberts, and the Duke of Connaught - the claims of the last-named being strongly pressed by the Queen.

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[222] Knight of the Garter, an honour created by Edward III in 1348. Lord Lansdowne was the 805th.(Ed.)

[223] Field Marshal Garnet Joseph Wolseley, 1st Viscount Wolseley (1833–1913) was an Irish officer in the British Army. He became one of the most influential and admired British generals after a series of successes in Canada, West Africa and Egypt, followed by a central role in modernizing the British Army in promoting efficiency. (Ed.)

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne. Osborne, Aug. 5, 1895.

> The Queen opened the question of the Commander-in-Chief this afternoon. She spoke of Roberts as absolutely impossible, partly on account of his ignorance of English military matters. I told her I had not had any discussion with you on the question, but that you had expressed a preference for the Irish Command for Lord Roberts, and that you proposed to recommend Lord Wolseley as Commander-in-Chief. She recognised Lord Wolseley's claims but demurred strongly to his great imprudence and his fondness for a clique. She then talked of the army's preference for the Duke of Connaught. The question then arose as to what was to happen to Lord Wolseley. She said that he was anxious to go to Berlin, or to India. She agreed with me that the latter was inadmissible, even if the Viceroyalty was vacant. But, after some discussion, we agreed that the Berlin idea really turned upon the disposition of the German Emperor.[224] His personality is so important that he must have pretty well whatever Ambassador he chooses, and if he wishes distinctly for a military Ambassador, I should not oppose the appointment of Wolseley. Fortunately he always speaks his mind very freely and therefore we shall probably know what he wishes to-morrow. If he is not in favour of a military Ambassador, I should be disposed to adhere to Wolseley for Commander-in-Chief. But if he is not available, I think Connaught would be better than Buller.
>
> The Prince of Wales is apparently pressing for the continuance of the Duke of Cambridge till next year.

Why the Kaiser should have expressed a desire for a military Ambassador in Berlin, in view of his profound contempt for the British Army, has never been made clear, but in any case it was not gratified. Lord Wolseley, in a letter to Sir John Ardagh which was manifestly intended for Lord Lansdowne's eye, had definitely explained that should there be any question of the appointment of the Duke of Connaught as Commander- in-Chief, he (Lord Wolseley) would not stand in his way, and that he had conveyed this assurance to the Queen some years previously. If, therefore, the appointment fell to the Duke of Connaught, he offered himself either as

Ambassador at Berlin or as Viceroy of India, for which latter post he considered himself well qualified.

Lord Lansdowne, having been made acquainted with the contents of the letter to Sir J. Ardagh, after further consultation with Lord Salisbury, wrote on August 7 to Lord Wolseley informing him that the Berlin Embassy was at his disposal, but that, in the opinion of Lord Salisbury and himself, he was the most suitable person to succeed the Duke of Cambridge, and that it would be a great pleasure to have him as his principal military adviser.

Lord Wolseley, whose heart was in his profession, naturally accepted, by telegraph, with alacrity.

Telegram: Lord Wolseley to Lord Lansdowne. Aug. 19th 1895.

> Extremely gratified by German Emperor's very flattering wishes and with the Queen's thoughtful consideration, but I would infinitely prefer to be head of the profession in which I have spent my life and with which I am so well acquainted: so with Her Majesty's permission I wish to adhere closely to decision contained in my letter in answer to yours of the 7th instant, always assuming that there will be no material alteration in position of Commander-in-Chief.

[224] Wilhelm II (Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albert; 1859–1941) was the last German Emperor and King of Prussia from 1888 until his abdication in 1918, which marked the end of the German Empire as well as the Hohenzollern dynasty's 300-year rule of Prussia. (Ed.)

Lord Lansdowne was quick to scent danger in the last sentence, and, in view of subsequent events, it was fortunate that he made the position quite clear.

Telegram: Lord Lansdowne to Lord Wolseley. Aug. 10th, 1895.

> As to concluding passage in your telegram, you must clearly understand that changes in position of Commander-in-Chief are inevitable. Their precise extent is not yet decided, but I think it probable that they will be on lines indicated by Campbell-Bannerman[225] in his House of Commons statement. I should, of course, give you full opportunity of discussing these with me, but it is necessary for me to retain a free hand and I could not

> agree to any conditions which might afterwards embarrass Government in carrying out desired reforms.

Lord Wolseley thus became Commander-in-Chief, having been explicitly warned that changes in that post were inevitable; Lord Roberts succeeded to the Irish Command, General Buller was retained in the War Office as Adjutant-General, and the Duke of Connaught was appointed to the Aldershot Command. The Duke of Connaught had maintained a dignified reticence during the struggle for the chief military prize, had never put forward any claims on his own account, and had altogether set an example which many public men, besides soldiers, would have done well to follow.

It must be admitted that Queen Victoria did not accept the Wolseley appointment with a good grace. She complained that it had been virtually offered to him without her sanction, and that the German Emperor would be bitterly disappointed at his non-appearance at Berlin. Further, she said that although she liked him personally, she feared that, for various reasons, he was not altogether best fitted for Commander-in-Chief. For a moment she apparently clung to the hope that he would reconsider his refusal of Berlin, but when it became clear that he had no such intention she accepted the inevitable and intimated, on August 11, that it *should be made clear that the Duke of Connaught must not be kept out of the Command-in-Chief for long* . A few days later she telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne:

> I think you should not mention any length of time for Wolseley's appointment. We must not be hampered. If the question is asked in Parliament, answer should be that it was not decided. You should impress on Wolseley the absolute necessity for his having nothing to do with the press, and say l must insist on this.

This was followed by another brief telegram on August 17:

> I sanction Wolseley's appointment, but I do not think it a good one. V.R.I.

The questions of the duration of the appointment and of Lord Wolseley's connection with the press are dealt with in the following letter:

[225] Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (né Campbell; 1836–April 1908) was a British statesman and Liberal Party politician who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1905 to 1908 and Leader of the Liberal Party from 1899 to 1908. He also was Secretary of State for War twice, in the cabinets of Gladstone and Rosebery. He was the first government leader to be called the "Prime Minister", the term only coming into official usage five days after he took office. He was the last Liberal leader to gain a UK parliamentary majority. (Ed.)

Lord Lansdowne to the Queen, August 20, 1895.

Your Majesty will have observed that Lord Lansdowne was careful to avoid committing himself upon the point in his statement to the House of Lords.

It is, however, quite clear that the question will be raised whenever this subject comes to be discussed in Parliament, and Lord Lansdowne ventures to submit to your Majesty that a definite explanation will be inevitable, and that there are strong reasons for treating the appointment as *prima facie* a five years' one

The late Secretary of State, following the recommendation of the Hartington Commission, expressly stated that the new Commander-in-Chief would hold his appointment for that time as other appointments are held, and it has been generally assumed that this will be the decision.

The alternative would be to allow Lord Wolseley to take office without any limit of time, but the result of such an arrangement might be to create the expectation that the term would exceed five years, and to facilitate its extension. Precedents would in such a case certainly be cited in favour of the prolongation of the time.

Lord Lansdowne would point out for Your Majesty's consideration that on the other hand, to make the appointment for five years would not preclude its earlier termination, should valid reasons for such a course afterwards present themselves.

Lord Wolseley called upon Lord Lansdowne this morning and Lord Lansdowne impressed upon him very strongly Your Majesty's wish that he should avoid relations with the press. Lord Wolseley urged that exaggerated statements as to his connection with the press had very likely reached Your Majesty's ears but he would be careful to avoid any action in this respect which might expose him to similar criticism in the future

Lord Wolseley's language in regard to other matters seemed to Lord Lansbury quite satisfactory

The question of the new Commander-in-Chief was

thus finally disposed of in accordance with the wish of the Cabinet, or perhaps it would be more correct to say in accordance with the views of Lord Salisbury, Lord Lansdowne and the Duke of Devonshire. There remained, however, the question of the old Commander- in-Chief, which occasioned a good deal of trouble to the Secretary of State.

The Duke of Cambridge had never concealed the fact that he considered himself to have been badly treated by the late Liberal Government, and as soon as the new Administration was formed, asked that his term of office should be extended. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had decided that it should terminate on October 1, but in view of the Duke's remonstrances, the date was postponed until November 1, it being clearly advisable that as the new Government was pledged to an ambitious scheme of reform, an early change in high places was imperative.

The Duke also considered that the exceptional position which he had held for so long gave him a right to exceptional generosity in the matter of a pension, and that the £2,200 a year to which he was entitled was inadequate. There are few things which Ministers dislike more than having to ask the House of Commons to sanction additional money grants to individuals, however highly placed, and the proposal met with little encouragement in the Cabinet. However, after much deliberation Lord Lansdowne eventually persuaded his colleagues, "not without considerable difficulty", to increase the Duke's pension to £4,000. All was now *couleur de rose*. The Duke expressed extreme gratification, and the question appeared to have been settled to everyone's satisfaction when, suddenly, to the general

consternation, it was discovered that the supplementary £1,800 would have to be voted annually by the House of Commons. This was a prospect calculated to make the stoutest hearts quail, and both the Duke and Ministers

(Page 136) LORD LANSDOWNE [1896]

regretfully recognized its impracticability. Nor was the former more successful in an attempt to secure a paid A.D.C. At the mere mention of the suggestion, "Hicks-Beach[226] (Chancellor of the Exchequer) kicked violently", and it was generally agreed that there was no hope of the House of Commons sanctioning any such proposal. But a further request put forward by the disconsolate old warrior might well have been acceded to without detriment. In consideration of his long service as head of the army he asked that he might be granted an honorary title (citing an Austrian precedent), such as Honorary Inspector-General. It seems surprising that Lord Wolseley should at once have raised the strongest objection to what most people would consider a very innocuous proposal. His view was that the army was divided into two schools and that if the proposed title was conferred the effect would be most injurious, as the reactionary element would be greatly encouraged, whereas the active and hard-working officers would lose heart. As, however, the Queen was anxious to bestow some mark of favour upon the Duke, various high-sounding alternative titles of a decorative character were suggested; none of them met with favour and nothing was done, in spite of an exhortation from Her Majesty to Lord Lansdowne that "your colleagues must not be afraid of speeches in Parliament".

Another small matter which gave rise to some ill-feeling and considerable correspondence was the question as to who was to command at the Birthday Parade. Lord Wolseley was apparently under the impression that this function was to be entrusted to the Duke of Cambridge, and under the circumstances asked that he might be spared the "humiliation" of attendance. The Queen, who displayed irritation over what apparently was a misunderstanding and was exceedingly tenacious of her rights in such questions, settled the difficulty by ordering the Prince of Wales to represent

(Page 137) WAR MINISTER [1896]

her at the ceremony, and Lord Wolseley went off to hold a parade of his own at Aldershot.

The Government scheme for the reorganisation of army administration was explained in Parliament by Lord Lansdowne at the end of August. As it was, however, followed by fresh schemes introduced by successive War Ministers, there is no necessity to enter into much detail. Briefly, it followed the recommendation of the Hartington Commission and the plan of the late Liberal Government, and its basis was the transfer of power from the military to the civilian side. The office of Commander-in-Chief remained, but shorn partly of its power, and a Military Board and a Consultative Council were created, whilst the decisions of the Secretary of State, he being alone responsible to Parliament, became final. The reception of the scheme was by no means enthusiastic, and the service critics condemned it as leaving no permanent officer at the War Office who was responsible to the Secretary of State for the army as a whole. The Commander-in-Chief became the principal adviser of the Secretary of State on all military questions, and was responsible for the supervision of the Military Department of the War Office, for plans of operations and for the Intelligence Department; he superintended the distribution and mobilization of troops, and the promotion of officers, while discipline, education, and recruiting were left to the Adjutant-General. The first criticisms of Lord Wolseley, in a private letter of August 22 which is quoted in full in his biography,[227] were not unfriendly, and here it should be noted that he set upon his task full of initiative and enthusiasm, until unfortunately a serious illness early in 1897 left

[226] Earl St Aldwyn, of Coln St Aldwyn in the County of Gloucester, is a title created in 1915 for the prominent Conservative politician Michael Hicks Beach, 1st Viscount St Aldwyn, known from 1854 to 1907 as Sir Michael Hicks Beach, 9th Baronet, of Beverston. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1885 to 1886 and again from 1895 to 1902. (Ed.)

[227] *The Life of Lord Wolseley*, by Sir F. Maurice and Sir George Arthur. (LN)

him with a loss of memory and an impaired capacity for work. But it could hardly be expected of him that he should be enthusiastically in favour of a scheme which diminished

(Page 138) LORD LANSDOWNE [1896]

the power of the Commander-in-Chief, and his views on the subject were shared not only by soldiers but by many civilians. Court opinion in particular was adverse, since the history of the office shows that for centuries it had been the key of the military control for which Crown and Parliament had continually contended, and anything which appeared to depreciate the dignity of the Commander-in-Chief met with severe disapproval. Thus a proposal in the interests of economy that he should be allotted two A.D.C.'s instead of four met with a strong protest from the Queen, on the ground that he would be lowered in the eyes not only of the army but of the public; and there were many other indications that the new arrangements met with little favour in Royal circles. The War Minister's Cabinet colleagues showed little interest in his proceedings, with the exception of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), a vigilant guardian of the public purse, who was convinced that the army was costing too much. He was sure that there was a very widespread feeling in the country and in the House of Commons, not by any means confined to civilians, that ample funds were voted for the army if they were properly expended, and felt that it would not be creditable to a new Government, and even less to a new Commander-in-Chief, if all they had to say on the matter was that there must be a small general increase in the Army Estimates as well as an "automatic" increase of the Non-Effective Vote. He proposed various economies and expressed the quite unfounded hope that an early statement would be made in Parliament announcing considerable financial reductions in future years. After receiving the War Office reply to his complaint, Sir Michael was forced to admit that more had been effected in the matter of economy than he had realized, but complained bitterly that the Admiralty and the Education Department were also putting forward

(Page 139) WAR MINISTER [1896]

demands for "automatic" increases amounting to over two millions. "I must try and reduce both, but I fear it will be hardly possible. Of course, I cannot help 'automatic increases', any more for education than for your non-effective service." Later on, there was considerable difficulty in extracting money from the Chancellor of the Exchequer for army manoeuvres and the assistance of Lord Salisbury was invoked. "I am afraid", wrote the latter, "we shall fail to convince Beach of the emptiness of the Treasury idols which he worships, but on the other hand I have heard that he is in somewhat better spirits as to his revenue, and I earnestly hope he will be able to give you the money wanted for the manoeuvres."

Another letter from Lord Salisbury written about the same time, although gratifying, must have added to the War Minister's perplexities:

> I need not say that in respect to these military arrangements I shall assent to anything which commends itself to you. But my advice will be, not to pay too much attention to your military advisers.

The fiasco of the miserable Jameson Raid[228] and the astuteness of Kruger[229] in surrendering the prisoners, as an act of grace and magnanimity to the British Government, had placed the latter in a

[228] The Jameson Raid (29 Dec 1895–2 Jan 1896) was a botched raid against the South African Republic (commonly known as the Transvaal) carried out by British colonial administrator Leander Starr Jameson, under the employment of Cecil Rhodes. It involved 500 British South Africa Company police and was launched from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Paul Kruger, for whom Rhodes had great personal hatred, was president of the South African Republic at the time. The raid was intended to trigger an uprising by the primarily British expatriate workers (known as Uitlanders) in the Transvaal but it failed. (Ed.)

[229] Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger (1825–1904), better known as Paul Kruger, was a South African politician. He was one of the dominant political and military figures in 19th century South Africa, and State President of the

position of considerable difficulty. There could be no real justification for a filibustering attack upon a neighbouring State, but the persistent hostility of the Transvaal Government and the insolent language of the Kaiser had done their work, and when Dr. Jameson and his companions arrived in this country the enthusiasm for them was so great that it was necessary to take special steps in order to curb their admirers. After being tried by the Lord Chief-Justice, Dr. Jameson[230] and five officers were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, and the latter were deprived of their commissions. There remained eight other officers against whom the Crown had declined

to proceed, and both Lord Wolseley and Lord Lansdowne were agreed that they should be sent back to their regiments with a "wigging". Lord Wolseley, in fact, would have gone much further.

> There is to me [he wrote on August 4] very little difference between the lot in prison and those who were not prosecuted. Had I dealt with the case, I should have turned all out of the army, but I am glad the Cabinet have let off these eight from this heavy punishment. But if lenient to them, they have been equally severe upon the regular officers in prison, who have been punished by the Lord Chief-Justice and are now to be punished by the Queen's dismissal from the army.
>
> My contention is that if the eight are not severely censured, either their punishment will be too light or the punishment meted out to the officers in prison will be too severe. Of those in prison, the soldiers will be far more severely punished than even Dr. Jameson himself.

In another letter, written on the same day, he justly pointed out that the question was not merely one of military discipline but a matter of international concern.

It was decided by Lord Lansdowne that the imprisoned officers should be permitted to retire instead of being dismissed, but Lord Salisbury was disposed to think that they had been too harshly treated and urged delay.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne, Sept. 5, 1896.

> I find it very difficult to answer in the affirmative. Assuming Willoughby's[231] statement to be true, these officers are in effect being turned out of the army for the offence of having believed the word of their superior officers. You tell them that men of their standing ought to have

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South African Republic (or Transvaal) from 1883 to 1900. Following the influx of thousands of predominantly British settlers with the Witwatersrand Gold Rush of 1886, "uitlanders" (foreigners) provided almost all of the South African Republic's tax revenues but lacked civic representation; Boer burghers retained control of the government. The uitlander problem and the associated tensions with Britain dominated Kruger's attention for the rest of his presidency, to which he was re-elected in 1888, 1893 and 1898, and led to the Jameson Raid of 1895–1896 and ultimately the Second Boer War. (Ed.)

[230] Sir Leander Starr Jameson, 1st Baronet (1853–1917), also known as Starr Jameson, was a British colonial politician, who was best known for his involvement in the ill-fated Jameson Raid. Leander was educated for the medical profession at University College Hospital, London, He distinguished himself as a medical student, becoming a Gold Medallist in *materia medica*. After qualifying as a doctor, he was made Resident Medical Officer at University College Hospital (M.R.C.S. 1875; M.D. 1877). His health broke down from overwork in 1878, and he went out to South Africa and settled down in practice at Kimberley. There he rapidly acquired a great reputation as a medical man, and, besides numbering President Kruger and the Matabele chief Lobengula among his patients, came much into contact with Cecil Rhodes. (Ed.)

[231] Sir John Christopher Willoughby, 5th Baronet (1859–1918) was a British army officer who served in the Egyptian campaign in 1882, in the Nile expedition in 1884–1885 and with the British South Africa Company's Force in Matabeleland in 1893. In South Africa in the Second Boer War from 1899 to 1900 he was present with Cavalry Headquarter Staff during the siege of Ladysmith and at the relief of Mafeking was appointed major, under General Hunter, in charge of Transport of Flying Column. (Ed.)

known that the superior officers were not speaking the truth. But how were they to know that? The alleged privity of the Imperial Government which Dr. Jameson averred, made the whole difference. If he spoke the truth, the expedition was an act of military duty: if he lied, it was an illegal raid. Is it not very harsh to inflict military punishment on them for the error of believing him and therefore obeying his orders?

(Page 141) WAR MINISTER [1896]

Put the matter the other way. Suppose H.M.G. had resolved to attack the Transvaal, and that De Wet[232] had been at that moment making the requisite declaration to Kruger. Suppose Willoughby had replied to Jameson: "I don't believe you; this is an attack on a friendly State, your orders are *ultra vires*[233] and invalid", and had refused to move. Suppose that in consequence a critical operation had failed. My hypothesis has nothing in it unreasonable or forced, and yet supposing Willoughby had done in that case what you now say it was his duty to do, he would have been very severely and very justly punished. Yet there was nothing to show him that this Hypothesis did not represent the actual fact. There was nothing to indicate to him that Jameson was deceiving him.

I have assumed his story to be true. As you have asked him for his story, can you take action without testing it? The obvious course is to ask Jameson whether he admits it to be true. I know there are difficulties in this course. If Jameson said "Yes", your future action would be much affected. Yet having gone as far as to ask Willoughby for his story, can you abstain from asking Jameson for his? If you do so, will you not be misconstrued? May it not be said, at least with a superficial plausibility, that Jameson was not asked because we were afraid of what Jameson might say, and therefore we preferred trying to close the discussion by punishing these men on inadequate grounds? I feel there is some risk in this. The monstrous libels which have been invented against Chamberlain, and for which proof has been to a certain extent manufactured, will come up for discussion. If Jameson confirms Willoughby's story and it appears that we punished them heavily for obeying orders, and, when they pleaded those orders, refused to inquire whether they had really been given, shall we not be in an awkward position? I admit all the difficulties of the case, but I greatly doubt about the "retirement" of these men. At all events, I have a strong feeling that before you take an irrevocable step you should wait till Chamberlain comes home and hear how the matter strikes him.

Up to this time I have believed that the officers could not plead an order given by Jameson with the alleged sanction of the home Government; for otherwise I thought they certainly would have pleaded it at the trial. Why they did not do so is an utter mystery.

In reply, Lord Lansdowne pointed out that Dr. Jameson was not an Imperial officer, and that in common

(Page 142) LORD LANSDOWNE [1896]

prudence Sir John Willoughby before invading a foreign State should have satisfied himself as to the authority of a Chartered Company official to issue any such order. He also pointed out that the raiders and their friends were threatening the Government with awkward revelations unless the former were dealt with leniently. "Awkward revelations" were, of course, thoroughly investigated afterwards by the South African Committee, but the threat appears to have caused Lord Salisbury to modify his previous views.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne, Sept. 19, 1896.

As far as the effect on the public goes, the course taken by the Government in reference to the raiders seems to have been quite successful. I am not quite satisfied that justice has been exactly

[232] Christiaan Rudolf de Wet (1854–1922) was a Boer general, rebel leader and politician. (Ed.)
[233] Beyond legal authority. (Ed.)

done, and I fear a bad precedent has been set. The last thing a soldier ought to be allowed to ask is whether the cause on which he is employed is a defensible one or not, but the case was full of difficulties.

The attempt to blackmail deprives the leaders of any claim to sympathy.

The effect of the unpardonable action of Mr. Rhodes[234] and his associates was disastrous in more senses than one. It gravely impaired our national reputation throughout the civilized world; and the unsatisfactory proceedings of the Parliamentary inquiry, which resulted in most of the principal culprits escaping scot-free, did little to re-establish it. But the raid had played directly into President Kruger's hand, for the Transvaal Government was now provided with an unanswerable excuse for hurrying on their hostile preparations, whilst we were debarred from taking corresponding action, further, in addition to continuous arming, the Boers maintained a political attitude towards us which might at any time lead to a *casus belli*.[235] The raid had, in fact, produced a state of things which made war at some future period practically inevitable. In common prudence

the War Office was bound to consider this eventuality, and reports were drawn up in the Intelligence Department by Major Altham[236] and Sir John Ardagh which have obtained much fame in consequence of the accuracy of their predictions both as regards the probable course of a campaign in South Africa and of the strength of the enemy. Unlike some high-placed politicians, they also foresaw that the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were certain to unite against us, but these extremely able reports did not attempt to indicate the number of men who would be required for a British Expeditionary Force.

In the early part of 1896, Lord Wolseley, who was impressed by the inadequacy of our forces abroad and who was doubtless influenced by the threatening situation in South Africa, put forward a demand for an increase to the army amounting to 16,000 men. From the military point of view his arguments were unanswerable, but under the voluntary system so large an addition meant an alarming increase in military expenditure which would have scared any British Government, and there was no certainty that the requisite recruits would be obtained. Probably he never expected that his full demands would be met, and perhaps he was in reality agreeably surprised when Lord Lansdowne, after an interchange of long memoranda, agreed to recommend to his colleagues an increase amounting to about 8,000 men. But Lord Wolseley was dissatisfied with his position, chafed at civilian control, said that he was only a vice-chairman of a debating society and complained that the Secretary of State was the real Commander-in-Chief. There was, however, little reason to complain of the Secretary of State, who not only obtained his colleagues' assent to his proposals for increasing the army but rendered it a signal service by acquiring part of Salisbury Plain for military purposes. As a variation of his War Office work,

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[234] Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902) was an English mining magnate and politician in southern Africa who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896. He and his British South Africa Company founded the southern African territory of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), which the company named after him in 1895. He also devoted much effort to realising his vision of a Cape to Cairo Railway through British territory. Rhodes set up the Rhodes Scholarship, which is funded by his estate. The son of a vicar, Rhodes was born in Hertfordshire. He was sent to South Africa by his family when he was 17 years old in the hope that the climate might improve his health. He entered the diamond trade at Kimberley in 1871, when he was 18, and with funding from Rothschild & Co, began to systematically buy out and consolidate diamond mines. Over the next two decades he gained a near-complete monopoly of the world diamond market. His diamond company De Beers, formed in 1888, retains its prominence into the 21st century. (Ed.)

[235] Cause for war.

[236] Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Altham (1856–1943) was a British Army officer who served in the Second Boer War and as a senior intelligence officer during World War I. He was Quartermaster-General in India 1917–1919. (Ed.)

Lord Lansdowne was now allotted the delicate task of piloting through the House of Lords an Irish Land Bill—one of the numerous efforts made at various periods to patch up a peace at somebody's expense. In this case it was the landlords who were aggrieved; and Lord Lansdowne, who introduced himself as a tame elephant employed to entice his wild brethren into the keddah,[237] was successful, after considerable trouble, in inducing his fellow-landlords to refrain from wrecking the Bill. It was the first of many such operations in subsequent years.

Early in 1897 there was a fresh South African crisis owing to Mr. Chamberlain having required that the Aliens Immigration Act passed by the Transvaal Government should be revoked. Had the Boers refused, war would have been precipitated; but as they doubtless felt that they were not yet fully prepared, the demand was ultimately complied with. Whilst, however, their action remained in doubt, it again became necessary for H.M.G. to consider the question of reinforcements although by this time the South African garrison was double its normal strength.

The matter was discussed by various Cabinet Ministers, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who wished to insist upon a maximum expenditure of £200,000 and there was a difference of opinion as to whether the reinforcements should go to Cape Colony or Natal. Mr. Chamberlain, naturally guided by political considerations and anxious to hearten the loyal population, was in favour of the former plan and was supported by Lord Wolseley. Lord Lansdowne preferred the latter, although he recognized that an occupation of Laing's Nek was a provocative measure which might precipitate a collision. "I confess, however, he wrote to Lord Salisbury in April, "that I do not see how we are to intimidate Kruger without provoking him, and I would prefer to risk the provocation

rather than adopt trivial and meaningless measures elsewhere."

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne, April 21, 1897.

> I came to the conclusion that as Chamberlain based his demand principally on the effect of inaction upon colonial opinion, it was hardly possible for us, who have not had his opportunities of watching that opinion, to refuse him the reinforcements he requires. I therefore wrote to him assenting to his proposal. But I urged the Laing's Nek plan upon him, both for its intrinsic merits and for its effect upon English opinion.
>
> It is essentially and on the face of it a defensive measure. It is the natural reply to the excessive armaments of the Boers, and implies no aggressive tendencies whatever. A simple addition to the garrison of Cape Town is hardly a defensive measure, for no one expects Cape Town to be attacked; but it is by no means clear that it may not be part of an aggressive plan—in fact, that is the most obvious interpretation of the step.
>
> Strategically I should not care to trouble you with my opinions, except so far as the strategy has a political element in it. I am astounded at reading the recommendations of Sir J. Ardagh. I suppose he reflects the dominant view of the Home Guards. He counsels our forcing the Orange Free State into position of enemies unless they will take our side, and further recommends us to go to war with Portugal unless she will stop Boer importation of arms through Lorenzo Marques. I cannot conceive a more unwise policy. But if we reject it, the importance of fortifying Laing's Nek and holding it in strength is greatly increased. For if the Orange Free State is nominally neutral, however insincerely, the Boers cannot march through it, and, unless they go to the west of it, Laing's Nek bars their advance.

[237] A khedda (or Kheddah) or the Khedda system was a stockade trap for the capture of a full herd of elephants that was used in India until 1972. (Ed.)

I also urged upon Chamberlain the European inconvenience of a war with the Transvaal. The Dutch of the mother country have a strong fellow-feeling for their kinsmen in the Transvaal, and we should become intensely unpopular in Holland if we took any action against them of which complaint could fairly be made. But just at this time I dread great unpopularity in the Netherlands. In the next year or two, the young Queen of Holland[238] will be married, if she marries anyone under the Emperor William's influence, the Germans will get out of the Dutch (*illegible word*s) which may enable them to man their fleet

with Dutch sailors. His great ambition is to have a fleet, but until he gets a maritime population he cannot have a fleet. Some control over Holland is very necessary to him.

I am much struck by Monson's[239] account two or three days ago of the very strong feeling that would be aroused against us in France if we took action against the Transvaal. Any adventurous policy in that direction would turn a vast amount of European opinion against us.

Subsequent events have shown that Lord Salisbury's opinion as to the German Navy was quite incorrect, but the latter letter is of considerable interest as showing how strongly he deprecated a war with the Boers.

The prospect of another Boer War brought an application from Lord Roberts, who asked to be employed should it take place.

Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne , April 25, 1897.

I was selected by the Government of 1881 to command the force with which it was intended to retrieve the Majuba Hill disaster. Unfortunately a hasty peace was made, and I had my journey to South Africa for nothing. I am, of course, sixteen years older than I was then, but I am in the best of health and would do my utmost to carry out the wishes of Government. My rank will not, I trust, be considered a bar to employment. I am holding the position of a General here, and, if necessary, I could fill that position on service. I have a great regard and high respect for Sir Alfred Milner,[240] and I am confident that I could work in harmony with him.

It was not, however, only in South Africa that additional British troops were required. In Egypt the task of reconquering the Soudan had been taken in hand under the able command of General Kitchener,[241] and Berber and other important points had been successfully occupied. But in order to reach Khartoum

[238] Wilhelmina Helena Pauline Maria (1880–1962) was Queen of the Netherlands from 1890 until her abdication in 1948. She reigned for nearly 58 years, making her the longest-reigning monarch in Dutch history, as well as the longest-reigning female monarch outside the United Kingdom. Her reign saw World War I, the Dutch economic crisis of 1933 and World War II. (Ed.)

[239] Sir E. Monson, British Ambassador in Paris (LN)

[240] Alfred Milner, 1st Viscount Milner (1854–1925) was a British statesman and colonial administrator who played a very important role in the formulation of British foreign and domestic policy between the mid-1890s and early 1920s. From December 1916 to November 1918, he was a member of David Lloyd George's War cabinet. He joined the staff of Chancellor of the Exchequer George Goschen and was posted to Egypt as under-secretary of finance. He briefly chaired the Board of Inland Revenue until April 1897, when he was appointed Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for Southern Africa by Joseph Chamberlain following the disastrous Jameson Raid. (Ed.)

[241] Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener (1850–1916) was a British Army officer and colonial administrator. Kitchener came to prominence for his imperial campaigns, his involvement in the Second Boer War, and his central role in the early part of the First World War. On 5 June 1916, Kitchener was making his way to Russia on HMS Hampshire to attend negotiations with Tsar Nicholas II when in bad weather the ship struck a German mine 1.5 miles (2.4 km) west of Orkney, Scotland, and sank. Kitchener was among 737 who died; he was the highest-ranking British officer to die in action in the entire war. (Ed.)

and to destroy effectively the Mahdi's power an expedition on a far larger scale was obviously required, and there was a difference of opinion as to whether it should be

(Page 147) WAR MINISTER [1897]

undertaken at once or whether it should wait for another year. In any case it would be necessary to employ British troops, and it is curious to note that Lord Cromer, whose judgment was seldom at fault, strongly deprecated the idea.

> An English expedition is [he wrote in June], I think, on every ground to be avoided. . . . The objections to it are, in my opinion, not merely financial, although those objections are of themselves sufficiently formidable. All I see and hear leads me to think that the British soldier is singularly unsuited to be used as a fighting machine in such a climate as the Soudan. The English battalion sent to Dongola last summer was quite useless. Only a few days ago, on the Queen's Birthday parade at Cairo, although the day was not exceptionally hot for the time of the year, some 120 men out of a force of 1,800 fell out of the ranks. I know I shall be told that British soldiers have already fought in the Soudan. To this I reply that the true history of the 1885 campaign has never yet been written. If it were written, I do not think that anyone would be tempted to repeat the experiment.

Lord Wolseley was anxious to make the advance at once, and had practical experience of both Egypt and the Soudan. He was especially anxious to forestall the French, who were known to be advancing upon the Upper Nile, and, in spite of scarcity of men, undertook to provide two infantry brigades, at least one strong cavalry regiment and two batteries of field artillery. This force, backed up by Soudanese soldiers, he considered would have little difficulty in destroying the Khalifa s army. Lord Lansdowne, on the other hand, was averse to a premature advance to Khartoum, partly because he thought that it would put an undue strain upon the Egyptian army after its recent activities, and partly because he considered that our appearance at Khartoum in the course of the winter would do little to prevent serious complications with the French in 1898.

That Lord Salisbury shared his view is clearly shown

(Page 148) LORD LANSDOWNE [1897]

by the following letter which he wrote to Lord Lansdowne on October 22, 1897:

> I agree with you, but I think Wolseley's letter ought to be sent out to Lord Cromer. It is a formal judgment given by a man who knows Egypt and the conditions of service there well, and who, from his present position, necessarily speaks with great authority.
>
> The two evils he balances against each other are: on the one side, the strain upon the Egyptian Army, as well as upon the Queen's, to which you refer; on the other, the diplomatic difficulties which might be interposed if any French explorer reaches the Nile before we have taken Khartoum. I am not greatly impressed by this danger, because we shall have to meet it anyhow. If we put into execution the claim of the Anglo-German agreement of 1891, I have no doubt we shall have a very lively protest from the French, and I doubt that it will be any the louder, or seriously louder, because upon some spot in the Nile Valley a French explorer may have succeeded in inducing some chief to accept a treaty. The diplomatic question will be interesting and difficult, but the increase of those qualities conferred by a French adventurer's "effective occupation" will not be serious.
>
> It is to be remembered that by destroying the Dervish power we are killing the defender who is holding the valley for us now. The only bit of authentic news I have heard is that the Belgians found the Dervishes in force a little north of Lado. But, though I fully agree with you, I think that Cromer ought to see Wolseley's letter.

The Khartoum expedition was, of course, postponed until the following year, but the above correspondence shows that the Government were fully aware of the French proceedings in Central Africa, and that their subsequent appearance at Fashoda could not, as was generally believed at the time, have come as a surprise.

Meanwhile, the much discussed Reorganization scheme was not making much satisfactory progress. The Secretary of State in the character of a military reformer was hampered by various obstacles which paralysed his most strenuous efforts. The public, with the

exception of political opponents, took no interest in the army, which for many years had not been called upon for anything but comparatively small expeditions; the press was critical and unfriendly; the Court was hostile, owing to a proposal to send some Guards battalions to Gibraltar; and all military expenditure, whatever its desirability, was consistently opposed by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who, although a man of conspicuous ability, seemed to be obsessed by devotion to economy. When, therefore, in the early days of 1898, Lord Wolseley's vehement appeal for a further increase in the army was put before the Cabinet by Lord Lansdowne and met with a very grudging and partial assent, the latter came to the conclusion that he had better tender his resignation.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Salisbury, February 2, 1898. Private.

> The conclusions at which the Cabinet arrived yesterday were, considered by themselves, not unsatisfactory to me, but I have to regard them in connection with the general tone of the discussion, and the statements made during the course of it by several of our colleagues.
>
> The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not and never has concealed his distrust of the War Office scheme. He intimated plainly that he would not defend my proposals. He has on two occasions attacked me on the platform, and is capable, judging from his recent language in the Cabinet, of doing so again. Mr. Chamberlain is also hostile and expressed his utter disbelief in the policy, which he described as an attempt to prop up a rickety and useless system.
>
> Lord James,[242] Long,[243] Akers-Douglas,[244] Ritchie[245] and others expressed similar views.
> You have yourself, I regret to say, always been frankly incredulous, and, if I did not misunderstand you, you intimated that you would not open your lips during the debates (of which there will be many) in the House of Lords.

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[242] Henry James, 1st Baron James of Hereford (1828–1911), known as Sir Henry James between 1873 and 1895, was an Anglo-Welsh lawyer and statesman. Initially a Liberal, he served under William Ewart Gladstone as Solicitor General in 1873 and as Attorney-General between 1873 and 1874 and 1880 and 1885. However, he broke with Gladstone over Irish Home Rule and joined the Liberal Unionists. From 1895 to 1902 he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Unionist ministries of Lord Salisbury and Arthur Balfour. (Ed.)

[243] Walter Hume Long, 1st Viscount Long, (1854–1924), was a British Unionist politician. In a political career spanning over 40 years, he held office as President of the Board of Agriculture, President of the Local Government Board, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Secretary of State for the Colonies and First Lord of the Admiralty. He is also remembered for his links with Irish Unionism, and served as Leader of the Irish Unionist Party in the House of Commons from 1906 to 1910. (Ed.)

[244] Aretas Akers-Douglas, 1st Viscount Chilston (born Aretas Akers; 1851–1926) was a British Conservative statesman who sat in the House of Commons from 1880 until he was raised to the peerage in 1911. He notably served as Home Secretary under Arthur Balfour between 1902 and 1905. In 1875, he took the additional surname of Douglas under royal licence in accordance with a relative's will. (Ed.)

[245] Charles Thomson Ritchie, 1st Baron Ritchie of Dundee, (1838–1906) was a Scottish businessman and Conservative politician who sat in the House of Commons from 1874 until 1905 when he was raised to the peerage. He served as Home Secretary from 1900 to 1902 and as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1902 to 1903. (Ed.)

Balfour, who has been at great pains to master the case, will support us, but evidently doubts whether we ought not to give way to some extent on the question of linked battalions.

(Page 150) LORD LANSDOWNE [1898]

I cannot help asking myself what, under these circumstances, are our chances of emerging successfully from a controversy which will be prolonged and acute. If we are ourselves unconvinced or even at heart opponents of the proposals, for which the Government as a whole will be responsible, can we expect to convince others? The regimental officers and their friends, the service members, a large section of the press, the Royal Family, and London society are all clamouring for the abandonment of the present system. I believe we could demolish their arguments in the House of Commons, but if others find out that we are half-hearted (and they will find it out), the task is hopeless.

Of my own position, all that I would say is, that while I should be sorry to leave the Cabinet, I would much prefer to do so now, as the result of a deliberate view of the situation, than be compelled to resign six months hence on the ground that the language, or even the silence, of my colleagues made it evident that I did not possess their confidence.

Will you, in view of what I have said, consider whether it might not be better for all concerned that I should step aside now? You might then, if my opponents in the Cabinet are not prepared with proposals of their own, refer the question of army organisation to a Royal Commission or to the Defence Committee.

I leave myself entirely in your hands and can assure you that I have no wish to raise unnecessary difficulties.

It must be admitted that, although to work with half-hearted or disapproving colleagues is highly discouraging, the reason for resignation was inadequate, as Lord Salisbury pointed out in his answer.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne , February 2, 1898. Confidential.

Your suggested action would be conceivable if the critics of your scheme in the Cabinet had any plan on which they were united. That is very far from being the case. Each man has, I think, a different ideal. Under these circumstances, any wide departure from the existing system is impossible. If you, therefore, having carried all your demands, were to resign because we did not accompany our submission with a hymn of praise to your

(Page 151) WAR MINISTER [1898]

scheme, this absurd result would follow: your successor would be subject to the action of the same considerations and difficulties as those which have impressed you, and would probably produce also a scheme not departing essentially from the existing system; the Cabinet would assent to it, and when it was produced, the motive and object of your resignation would become a historical mystery. I do not think, as you have got your way, that you would be held to have the slightest justification for resigning.

I need not say what a serious blow and loss it would be to the Government or how deeply we should regret it.

I do not think you need anticipate any adverse vote on any essential portion. Some modification of figures may become necessary, but on them Governments have always to discuss and, if possible, to compromise.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Salisbury , February 3, 1898.

> Many thanks for your considerate reply to my letter of yesterday.
>
> Your logic is, I admit, better than mine, which was perhaps somewhat distorted by sentiment.
>
> I shall, of course, be guided by your advice, and I shall not insist upon that "hymn of praise" which you suppose me to desiderate (*sic*). It would be a very curious symphony if the Cabinet were to attempt to sing it just now!

Apparently this correspondence was not seen by other members of the Cabinet, but they must have been aware that Lord Lansdowne meant to resign unless he got his way, and that his example would be followed by the Under-Secretary[246] (Mr. St. John Brodrick) and probably by high officials as well. They, therefore, yielded reluctantly; but it was quite a new experience to encounter a Secretary of State for War who was determined to stand by his military advisers and risk the consequences.

When Mr. Brodrick brought forward his Estimates later in the year, it was found that the policy of increasing the army and of improving the conditions of service

was much less unpopular than had been imagined, and Mr. Labouchère,[247] who moved to reduce the Vote for men by 13,000, obtained only forty-five supporters in a division.

The triumphant conclusion of the Sudan campaign, culminating in the destruction of the Khalifa's[248] rule at Omdurman, which evoked the admiration of other nations, and even produced an unsolicited testimonial from the Kaiser to the efficiency of the British and Egyptian forces, was followed by the Fashoda incident and a crisis of the severest nature. It was evident that we could not give way. As far back as 1895 Sir Edward Grey[249] had officially stated that we should regard an advance of the French

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[246] Now Earl of Midleton. (LN). William St John Fremantle Brodrick, 1st Earl of Midleton, (1856–1942), styled as St John Brodrick until 1907 and as Viscount Midleton between 1907 and 1920, was a British Conservative and Irish Unionist Alliance politician. He served as a Member of Parliament from 1880 to 1906, as a government minister in various departments from 1886 to 1892 and from 1895 to 1900, and as a Cabinet minister from 1900 to 1905. He was secretary of State for War from November 1902 to October 1903. (Ed.)

[247] Henry Du Pré Labouchère (1831–1912) was an English politician, writer, publisher and theatre owner in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. He is now most remembered for the Labouchère Amendment, which for the first time criminalised all male homosexual activity in the United Kingdom. Labouchère, who came from a wealthy Huguenot banking family, was a junior member of the British diplomatic service before briefly serving in Parliament in 1865–68. In 1880, he returned to Parliament as the Liberal member for Northampton, and became a key figure in the radical Home Rule wing of the party. He was a controversial figure and was never given a ministerial position. He became increasingly unpopular because of his opposition to the Second Boer War, and resigned from politics in 1906, when he left Britain and retired to Italy. (Ed.)

[248] The Mahdist State in Sudan was based on a religious and political movement launched in 1881 by Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdullah (later Muhammad al-Mahdi) against the Khedivate of Egypt, which had ruled Sudan since 1821. After four years of struggle, the Mahdist rebels overthrew the Ottoman-Egyptian administration and established their own "Islamic and national" government with its capital in Omdurman whose existence was terminated by the Anglo-Egyptian forces in 1898. (Ed.)

[249] Edward Grey, 1st Viscount Grey of Fallodon, (1862–1933), better known as Sir Edward Grey, was a British statesman and Liberal Party politician who was the main force behind British foreign policy in the era of the First World War. He served as Foreign Secretary from 1905 to 1916, the longest continuous tenure of any holder of that office. He renewed the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1911. The centrepiece of his policy was the defence of France against German aggression, while avoiding a binding alliance with Paris. He supported France in the Moroccan crises of 1905 and 1911. Another major achievement was the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. He resolved an outstanding conflict with Germany over the Baghdad railway in 1913. His most important action came in the July Crisis in 1914, when he led Britain into World War I against Germany. He convinced the Liberal

to the Nile Valley as "an unfriendly act", and the warning had been constantly reiterated. But the French Government showed no disposition to disavow Captain Marchand's[250] action, and for nearly two months the question of peace or war may be said to have hung in the balance. One danger to which we were exposed was pointed out by General Brackenbury, one of the ablest officers in the service, who had formerly been Military Attaché in Paris and had become aware of the fact that the French Government was secretly preparing for naval mobilization. In a letter dated October 22, he emphasized the point that if France made up her mind to go to war, it would be of enormous value to be the first in the field, and that she would give us no warning of an attack. The first intimation of war which we should receive would be the interruption of postal and telegraphic communications and the seizure of all British ships in French ports. Our Mediterranean fleet was divided, one-half being in the Levant and the other at Gibraltar, with the whole of the French Mediterranean fleet between them; while our Channel fleet was at Vigo, with the French Channel fleet at Brest, between it and the British Channel. Under these conditions the French might make an attack upon our Thames defences,

which were inadequately manned, and an initial reverse would have an appalling effect upon the public.

During the long period of suspense it had become evident that, with the exception of a negligible minority, all parties were prepared to support the Government. The feeling was general that a stand must be made against the irritating and provocative policy which had or years been pursued by France towards us; and when the combined patience and firmness of Lord Salisbury resulted in her giving way, it was felt that a national triumph had been obtained, although there was no disposition to exult at the expense of the French people.

The Fashoda settlement was undoubtedly by far the greatest British diplomatic success achieved during the past twenty years. The moral effect was felt throughout the whole of the Old World: at one stroke we recovered the prestige which had been adversely affected both in in the Near and Far East, and we had shown conclusively that we were fully prepared to defend our rights if called upon to do so.

The familiar question of the new status of the Commander-in-Chief was again revived early in 1899 by the Queen but, as Lord Salisbury complained, one of the difficulties in satisfying her was that her views and those of Lansdowne did not differ very much. "I have tried hard to explain the point, but my means of exposition are not great. That may partially be accounted for own ignorance." The interest of Queen Victoria in the army was, however, by no means confined to lofty appointments, for she had previously shown much indignation at learning that the Guards had been seen wearing brown gaiters when in marching order, and that a D.A.A.G. had been appointed before her assent had been asked for. She was appeased with some difficulty, and the Secretary of State was shortly confronted with more important problems.

cabinet that Britain had an obligation and was honour-bound to defend France, and prevent Germany from controlling Western Europe. (Ed.))

[250] Jean-Baptiste Marchand (1863–1934) was a French general and explorer in Africa. Marchand is best known for commanding the French expeditionary force during the 1898 Fashoda Incident. (Ed.)

CHAPTER V

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899-1902

(Page 154)

During the early months of 1899 our relations with the Transvaal gave no particular cause for anxiety, but a meeting between Sir Alfred Milner and President Kruger in May failed to effect any settlement of the two burning questions of suzerainty and the status of the Outlanders. On May 29, Sir A. Milner telegraphed that the ugly rumours from many quarters as to the attitude of the Boers were too numerous to be wholly groundless, and requested that General Butler,[251] "who regards me as a brawler", should be given a hint by the War Office to be on the alert. General Butler, who had made no secret of his disapproval of the demands put forward by the British Government, was generally looked upon at home as a strong sympathizer with the Boers, and, according to Lord Milner, he stubbornly refused to interest himself either in the Boers' preparations for war or in the safety of our outlying possessions. It was clearly most undesirable that the General commanding at the Cape should be in acute disagreement with the High Commissioner, but so anxious were the home Government to avoid any action which appeared to be provocative that the suggestion to supersede him was not adopted. Up till this period the home Government evidently believed that President Kruger would eventually yield and comply with their very moderate demands, after the usual resistance and delay; whereas President Kruger, who for so long had worked his own

(Page 155) THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR [1899]

will with complete immunity, could not bring himself to believe that we should ever have recourse to force. Both parties were thus more or less under a delusion, and President Kruger's attitude was, doubtless, much encouraged by a conviction that the British Liberals, who were never tired of asserting that the Government were plotting an unprovoked attack upon the Transvaal, represented the real state of feeling in the country. But whatever his belief, the war preparations of the Transvaal Government were carried on with such increased vigour that it was impossible to ignore them.

On June 8, a minute by Lord Wolseley stated that in the event of war we should require, in addition to the force then in South Africa, one complete army corps, one cavalry division, one battalion of mounted infantry and four battalions for the line of communications. He further urged that the army corps should be at once mobilized on Salisbury Plain under the General whom it was proposed to place in command of the expedition. "The operations", he added, "should begin in South Africa as soon as possible, so as to be over by next November." It is evident, therefore, that in Lord Wolseley's opinion the campaign would not last more than three or four months. General Buller, who had been designated for the command of the army corps, was asked whether in the event of an ultimatum being sent to President Kruger, he considered that it would be necessary to augment the garrisons in the Cape Colony and Natal; and in view of subsequent controversies, it is desirable to quote verbatim a passage from the report of the South African War Commission:

> There was a meeting in Lord Lansdowne's room at the War Office on the 18th July 1899, at which Sir R. Buller was asked this question. He replied that he had complete confidence in Butler's ability and foresight, and that as long as clever men like Butler and Symons[252] on the spot did not say there was danger, he saw no necessity for sending out any troops in advance of

[251] Lieutenant-General Sir William Francis Butler (1838–1910) was a British Army officer and writer. In 1898 he succeeded General Sir William Howley Goodenough as commander-in-chief in South Africa, with the local rank of lieutenant-general. For a short period (1898–1899) during the absence of Sir Alfred Milner in England, he acted as High Commissioner. (Ed.)

[252] Lieutenant-General Sir William Penn Symons (1843–1899) was a British Army officer who was mortally wounded as he commanded his forces at the Battle of Talana Hill during the Second Boer War. While his forces won the battle, they had to abandon their position and fall back to Ladysmith. Symons and the more severely

> the army corps to strengthen our position against any possible attack by the Boers on our frontiers. I do not say these were his exact words, but they are the exact meaning and pith of what he said to Lansdowne and me. (Signed) Wolseley.

Nevertheless, the Government decided to send 2,000 men to Natal on August 2.

A further careful and reasoned statement of Lord Wolseley's views was placed before the Cabinet on August 18, which dealt not so much with the strength of the force as with questions of its constitution and of general policy.

About this period a difference of opinion had developed between the military and civilian authorities upon the employment of troops from India. The latter, more especially Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Chamberlain, had always been strongly in favour of utilizing them for the reinforcement of Natal; now, to their consternation, they were told "that it is not intended to draw any troops from India in the event of hostilities in the Transvaal". This decision, characterized by Lord George Hamilton[253] (Secretary of State for India) as idiotic, was strongly objected to by Lord Lansdowne. The truth was (as disclosed in private letters) that the War Office soldiers had disliked the idea from the first, but they were, fortunately, overruled, and the contingent from India eventually arrived in the nick of time.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne, *August 30, 1899. Private.*

> On the question of Indian troops I quite agree with you. They will be a little cheaper and quite as good, and they are less hampered by Parliamentary regulations. As to the larger question whether a reinforcement ought to be sent without any great delay, I am inclined to agree with Chamberlain. I have always wished for the detachment of a larger contingent for Natal than has yet been sent there. I am sorry to find that both Milner and Wolseley are pressing for a larger garrison for Cape

> Colony. Our force is so small that if we scatter it we shall come to grief. Natal is another matter. I am in favour of sending a strong garrison there—among others, for the following reasons:
>
> 1. We have a Parliamentary answer to any critics in the demand for greater protection put forward by the Colony itself. I should take much greater advantage of this than has been taken hitherto.
>
> 2. This is the real point of danger. Any mishap may enable an army of, say, 20,000 Boers to win some sort of victory over us if our force on the frontier does not exceed four or five thousand men. Such a victory, especially if followed by a raid and the destruction of the Colonial railway, might have a very formidable effect on Dutch opinion throughout South Africa and would probably cause a rush of volunteers into the Transvaal.

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wounded were left to the Boers; he died three days later. A monument to his valour was raised in Victoria Park, Saltash, Cornwall, UK. (Ed.)

[253] Lord George Francis Hamilton (1845–1927) was a British Conservative Party politician of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was the third son of James, Marquess of Abercorn (later the Duke of Abercorn) and Lady Louisa, daughter of John Russell, 6th Duke of Bedford. He entered the cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty under Lord Salisbury in 1885, a post he held until 1886 and again between 1886 and 1892. He became Secretary of State for India under Salisbury, which he remained until 1903, the last year under the premiership of Arthur Balfour. (Ed.)

3 An addition to your force in the Cape Colony ought to be a very temporary measure, and is, in my judgment, a mistake. But you will have to keep a strong force in Natal for some time to come. The Boers will hate you for a generation, even if they submit. If they resist and are beaten, they will hate you still more. It will be, therefore, necessary to arm that frontier to a much higher degree than was necessary before this controversy began. This is an important consideration in view of expense.

Milner's letter suggests many reflections—but they may wait. His view is too heated, if you consider the intrinsic significance and importance of the things which are in controversy. But it recks little to think of that now. What he has done cannot be effaced. We have to act upon a moral field prepared for us by him and his jingo supporters. And therefore I see before us the necessity for considerable military effort—and all for people whom we despise, and for territory which will bring no profit and no power to England. All of us have felt in some despair over the limitations and the probable chronology of any assistance the War Office might give. I cannot but feel that more departmental drilling is wanted. Our autumn manoeuvres are directed to the handling of our army in a great campaign under the technical conditions of Continental warfare. Our army will not find itself in that position in a blue moon. What they ought to practise is the rapid expedition of a relatively small force to any point of the Empire where it may be wanted. Your business is that of a military fire brigade, and if we could start with the promptitude and certain preparation of the Metropolitan-

Fire Brigade many embarrassments would be saved to the unfortunate Ministers who have now to sit and see the conflagration burn.

Lord Lansdowne disliked the idea of war quite as much as Lord Salisbury, but, as the chances of a peaceful settlement were now rapidly receding, realized that the Indian contingent must be prepared to start at any moment; and, in reply to Lord Salisbury's strictures on the War Office, observed that whereas the fire brigade ideal was an excellent one, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade would not be likely to arrive in time if required to quell a conflagration in the Channel Islands.

After some hesitation, Sir George White was appointed to command the troops in Natal; it was announced early in September that the garrison was to be increased by 10,000 men, and matters had progressed so far before the end of the month that General Buller, who had been designated to command the Expeditionary Force should war break out, wrote a minute by request (published in the Report of the South African War Commission) in which he pronounced in favour of an advance through the Orange Free State in preference to an advance through Natal. Another minute, dated September 20, by Lord Wolseley expressed concurrence with General Buller's opinion, although for different reasons. On October 3, the celebrated message was sent to the Canadian and Australian Governments containing the much quoted words, "Infantry most, Cavalry least serviceable", which was generally regarded by the public as a proof of the ineptitude of the home Government; but it was conclusively proved that the message was seen and approved by the chief military personages at the War Office, including General Buller, and the subsequent explanation[254] of the latter really amounted to a statement that when he used the word Infantry he meant mounted men.

By this time the British forces in South Africa, which numbered less than 4,000 at the time of the Jameson Raid, had been brought up to a total of over 22,000. On October 9, an ultimatum of remarkable arrogance was despatched by President Kruger, accompanied by an intimation from the Orange Free State of its intention to join the Boers, and everything was tending to the final catastrophe. A few days later the unscrupulous old despot who had for so long tricked a Government which was sincerely

[254] Evidence before South African War Commission. (LN)

desirous of peace had attained his end and brought about a war of which one of the few satisfactory results was his own undoing.

Perhaps the strongest impression made upon a non-military reader of the confidential correspondence relating to the earlier period of the South African War is that the choice of General Buller as Commander was a fatal error. General Buller had had a most distinguished career, a vast amount of varied experience, was possessed of quite exceptional physical courage, and if the army as a whole could have been consulted, the probability is that he would have been the selected leader. But, as is shown in an interesting passage in General Sir Neville Lyttelton's[255] book, *Eighty Years*, General Buller had ceased to feel confidence in himself. General Lyttelton was working in the War Office at the time when General Buller was offered the command of the expedition, and relates that when the latter came out from his interview with the Secretary of State he expressed to Lord Wolseley his strong objections to accepting the command, said that he was sick of South Africa, and that if he was forced to go out he would come away as soon as he could. General Lyttelton, who was present when this conversation took place, states that it caused him much uneasiness at the time, and that when things in Natal later on were going from bad to worse the recollection of it often recurred to him. To put it shortly, General Buller felt that he was no

longer the man he had been, and apparently intimated this conviction to the Government.

The General arrived at Cape Town at the end of October, to find all his plans upset in consequence of the situation in Natal, but with full liberty of action, both as regards his movements and the selection of commanders. An instance of the complete discretion left to him in the latter case occurred early in November. Owing to the change in the plan of campaign and the decision of General Buller to take charge of the advance to Ladysmith, an independent command became necessary for the advance to Kimberley, and the War Office was disposed to suggest either Lord Grenfell[256] or Lord Kitchener for the task. Lord Wolseley preferred the former on the ground that there was little to choose between them on their merits, "but that he doubted South Africa being big enough for Buller and Kitchener, both being masterful men".

The matter was referred to Lord Salisbury.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne , November 8, 1899. Private.

> My leanings to Grenfell are not so strong. Kitchener is very good indeed, but I have not seen him at work under another soldier who is in some sense a rival.
>
> My advice—my very earnest advice—is to leave the matter entirely to Buller. Tell him he may have either Grenfell or Kitchener if he likes, or he may stick to Methuen if he prefers it. The choice and the responsibility must be his. It is most important that the officer in question should be one that can work well with Buller. This quality will outweigh a certain amount of superior ability.

[255] General Sir Neville Gerald Lyttelton, (1845–1931) was a British Army officer who served against the Fenian Raids, and in the Anglo-Egyptian War, the Mahdist War and the Second Boer War. He was Chief of the General Staff at the time of the Haldane Reforms and then became Commander-in-Chief, Ireland. (Ed.)

[256] Field Marshal Francis Wallace Grenfell, 1st Baron Grenfell (1841–1925) was a British Army officer. After serving as aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, South Africa, he fought in the 9th Xhosa War, the Anglo-Zulu War and then the Anglo-Egyptian War. He went on to become Sirdar (Commander-in-Chief) of the Egyptian Army and commanded the forces at the Battle of Suakin in December 1888 and at the Battle of Toski in August 1889 during the Mahdist War. After that he became Governor of Malta and then Commander-in-Chief, Ireland before retiring in 1908. (Ed.)

Lord Salisbury's reasoning seems to be perfectly sound. In the early stages of the Great War, one of the French Premiers—either M. Viviani[257] or M. Briand[258] was credited with the statement that "War is much too

serious a matter to be left to Generals and Admirals", and there is considerable truth in the aphorism; but at all events, during the South African War, Ministers abstained from interference with the operations and left the soldiers a free hand.

One of General Buller's biographers[259] has stated that on arrival at Cape Town he infused a new spirit of confidence and induced all the authorities to take a cheerful view of the situation; but there is little trace of optimism in his private letters to the Secretary of State. Indeed, as early as November 25 he wrote that "Up to date we are still hanging on by our eyelids". In fact, his pessimism was already causing uneasiness at home, and one of the persons who had gauged the situation correctly was Lord Roberts, who must have had the opportunity of seeing the communications from South Africa.

Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne. Private and Confidential. Dublin, Dec. 8, 1899.

> I am much concerned at the very gloomy view which Buller takes of the situation. There is, of course, no disguising the fact at we are engaged in a very serious war—one that may tax our resources to the utmost; and the manner in which the difficulties can be overcome depends almost entirely on the confidence of the Commander in being able to bring it to a successful conclusion.
>
> As, I think, I have often remarked to you, it is impossible to gauge a General's qualities until he has been tried, and it is a regrettable fact that not a single commander in South Africa has ever had an independent command in the held. It is the feeling of responsibility which weighs down most men, and it seems clear, unless I am very much mistaken, that this feeling is having its too frequent effect on Buller. He seems to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task imposed upon him, and I confess that the tone of some of his telegrams causes me considerable alarm. From the day he landed in Cape Town he seemed to take a pessimistic view of our position, and when a Commander

> allows himself to entertain evil forebodings, the effect is inevitably felt throughout the army.
>
> I feel the greatest hesitation and dislike to expressing my opinion thus plainly, and nothing but the gravity of the situation and the strongest sense of duty would induce me to do so, or to offer—as I now do—to place my services and my experience at the disposal of the Government.
>
> The difficulty of making this offer is greatly increased by the fact that, if it is accepted, I must necessarily be placed in supreme command, and to those who do not know me I may lay myself open to misconception. But the country cannot afford to run any avoidable risk of failure. A serious reverse in South Africa would endanger the Empire. I might not be able to avert it, but experience of command in war ought to help to this end.

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[257] Jean Raphaël Adrien René Viviani (1863–1925) was a French politician of the Third Republic, who served as Prime Minister for the first year of World War I. He was born in Sidi Bel Abbès, in French Algeria. (Ed.)
[258] Aristide Pierre Henri Briand (1862–1932) was a French statesman who served eleven terms as Prime Minister of France during the French Third Republic. He is mainly remembered for his focus on international issues and reconciliation politics during the interwar period (1918–1939).
[259] *Redvers Buller* by Captain Butler (LN)

This letter would never have been written did I not know I could depend, from your knowledge of me, that I should not be misunderstood. It is for your eye alone — unless, after reading it, you think my proposal worthy of consideration: then you are welcome to show it to the Prime Minister and, if you wish, to Mr. Chamberlain.

I would ask you to do me the favour not to let anyone besides those I have named read this letter, and not to mention its contents to any of the authorities at the War Office: for, impossible as it may seem, I am sorry to say I cannot help feeling they would prefer running very great risks rather than see me in command of a British army in the field.

I do not think that Buller ought to feel aggrieved at an officer senior to him being employed. The fact that the troops now in South Africa are more than double the number it was intended to make use of when he was appointed is surely a sufficient reason for placing a Field-Marshal in command.

The force now in the field is far and away the largest that any British Commander has ever had under him on service, and more than double what Marlborough had at any time in Flanders or that Wellington had in the Peninsula or at Waterloo.

In a further letter he pointed out, with justice, that General Buller would have no reason to consider himself superseded, as in addition to the great increase in the Expeditionary Force, he was cut off from the

columns commanded by Lord Methuen[260] and General Gatacre[261] and quite unable to control their operations effectively.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Roberts , December 10, 1899.

I agree with you as to the gravity of the outlook. Poor Gatacre's disaster makes it more serious still.

I also agree with you that Buller's pessimism is much to be regretted, but up to the present he has not made any mistake.

I shall always regret that he did not advance through the Free State, but his reasons for not doing so may be, for all I know, unanswerable.

I do not see that it would be possible to supersede him merely on account of the gloominess of his views. He may, indeed I hope he will, achieve a brilliant success on the Tugela within the next two or three days.

[260] Field Marshal Paul Sanford Methuen, 3rd Baron Methuen (1845–1932) was a British Army officer. He took a prominent role as General Officer Commanding the 1st Division in the Second Boer War. He suffered a serious defeat at the Battle of Magersfontein, during which he failed to carry out adequate reconnaissance and accordingly his artillery bombarded the wrong place leading to the Highland Brigade taking heavy casualties. He was later captured by the Boers at Tweebosch. After the war, he became General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in South Africa in 1908, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Natal in 1910 and then Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta in 1915. (Ed.)

[261] Lieutenant-General Sir William Forbes Gatacre (1843–1906) was a British soldier who served between 1862 and 1904 in India and various areas on the African continent. He commanded the British Army Division at the Battle of Omdurman and the 3rd Division during the first months of the Second Boer War, during which time he suffered a humiliating defeat at the Battle of Stormberg. He had purchased the rank of lieutenant on 23 December and reached the rank of captain by purchase on 7 December 1870, before the purchase of commissions was abolished in the early 1870s, and passed into Staff College in 1873. (Ed.)

But no one can say what turn events may take, and you may depend on my keeping your proposal constantly in my thoughts.

I shall let Lord Salisbury see your letter—no one else at present.

Instead of the hoped-for brilliant success on the Tugela, there followed the disastrous defeat at Colenso, which has provided material for a gigantic mass of criticism and has been succinctly epitomized by Sir Neville Lyttelton in the book[262] already referred to. General Lyttelton, one of the few Generals who emerged from the war with an enhanced reputation, took a prominent part in the battle and was a close personal friend of General Buller.

Thus ended one of the most unfortunate battles in which British army has ever been engaged, and in none has there been a more deplorable tactical display. No proper reconnoitring of thc ground, no certain information as to any ford by which to cross the river, no proper artillery preparation, no satisfactory targets for the artillery, no realisation of the importance of Hlangwane. The lost guns were sent forward blindly into a very

exposed position from which it was impossible to withdraw them in daylight, and before darkness set in, when withdrawal would have been easy enough, they were made a present of to the enemy.

The telegrams sent by General Buller after Colenso are so widely known that it is only necessary to quote a few sentences of great importance.

Telegram — Gen. Sir R. Buller to the Secretary of State for War.
Chieveley Camp, Dec. 15, 1899.

A serious question is raised by my failure to-day. I do not consider that I am strong enough to relieve Ladysmith. Colenso is a fortress which, if not captured by a rush, could, I think, only be taken by a siege. . . .

I consider I ought to let Ladysmith go, and to occupy good position for the defence of South Natal and so let time help us. But I feel I ought to consult you on such a step. Twenty thousand men, 1 consider, faced us to-day; both in arms and position they had the advantage. . . .

I was beaten. I now feel that I cannot say that with my available force I can relieve Ladysmith, and I suggest that for me to occupy a defensive position and fight it out in a country better suited to our tactics is the best thing that I can do.

This was bad enough—although General Buller subsequently endeavoured to convince the Royal Commission that there was a great difference between "letting Ladysmith go" and "letting Ladysmith fall", a distinction which would have been worthy even of Mr. Gladstone—but there was worse to follow, for on the following day he sent the notorious message to Sir George White in which he actually suggested to the latter that he should fire away his ammunition, burn his ciphers and make the best terms that he could with the enemy. This message seemed to Sir George White so incredible that his first impression was that the cipher had fallen into the hands of the Boers.[263] It is curious that this

message does not appear amongst the confidential telegrams which passed between South Africa and the War Office: there is no allusion to it in the private letters, and it is possible that it might have

[262] *Eighty Years Soldiering, Politics, Games,* by General Sir Neville Lyttelton, (1927). (Ed.)
[263] *The Life of Field Marshal Sir George White*, vol. ii. p. 138. (Sir Mortimer Durand.) (LN)

remained a secret for a considerable period had not Mr. Maxse ascertained the facts from Dr. Jameson and directed attention to them in the *National Review.*

In any other army, a General who had failed conspicuously in the field and had advised another General to surrender, would probably have met with short shrift; but General Buller was not recalled, although he was informed ‘‘that the abandonment of White’s force and its consequent surrender is regarded by the Government as a national disaster of the greatest magnitude. We would urge you to devise any attempt to carry out its relief not necessarily *via* Colenso, making use of the additional men now arriving, if you think fit.” The Cabinet, upon the receipt of the news of Colenso, decided upon the appointment of Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, with Lord Kitchener as Chief of the Staff; and in a letter to Mr. Balfour, written on April 7, 1902, with reference to statements in *The Times History of the War*, Lord Lansdowne deals with the chronology of their action.

Foreign Office, April 7, 1902.

The story of the events in question [he wrote] is, to the best or my belief, as follows:

The news of Buller’s defeat at Colenso reached me on Friday evening, December 15th.

At my request, you met me after dinner that evening, at my house, when I informed you that in my opinion it had become necessary to supersede Buller, and that I thought Lord Roberts should take the Chief Command, with Kitchener as his Chief of Staff. I mentioned to you that Lord Roberts had told me in the summer that he would, if necessary, be prepared to go to South Africa, and that he had reasons for knowing that Kitchener would be glad to serve under him.

On Saturday, Dec. 16th, I received Buller’s telegram of the

15th, announcing that he wished to let Ladysmith go, and occupy a defensive position.

On the afternoon of the same day a meeting was held in Lord Salisbury’s room at the F.O. I submitted a draft of a telegram pointing out that the surrender of White’s force would be a national disaster, and suggesting that he should make another attempt. This draft was amended at the meeting and despatched immediately afterwards.

I also laid before the meeting the proposal that Lord Roberts should be appointed as Commander-in-Chief, with Kitchener as his Chief of the Staff, and I was instructed to send for Lord Roberts and to communicate with Kitchener. But a final decision was not arrived at, I think, because we desired to make sure that Lord Kitchener would accept.

On the morning of Sunday, the 17th, Lord Roberts saw me and told me that he was prepared to accept the Chief Command. He had an interview with you and me later in the day and the matter was then finally decided. It was on that evening that the news of his son’s death arrived. I had to break it to him, and I remember asking him whether it affected his decision to accept the appointment.

On Monday, the 18th, I telegraphed to Buller that it had been decided to appoint Lord Roberts to the Chief Command.

The writer of the Proof states (page 22) that Buller’s despairing message “created the utmost consternation”

“Especially was this the case in the War Office, which in its absolute confidence in the General of its choice seemed almost inclined to acquiesce in his conclusions.”

This passage is very misleading. The confidence of the W.O. in the General of its choice had by this time been rudely shaken and I am not aware that anyone connected with that Department was inclined to acquiesce in his conclusion that Ladysmith should be let go. The Secretary of State for War was certainly not inclined to do anything of the sort.

The passage which follows requires, as I have shown already, considerable modifications. Lord Roberts' statement that he believed himself to be able to meet the physical strain of a long campaign was made in private conversation with me.

The writer repeats the often-made statement that in spite of all past experiences the W.O. preferred unmounted men for South Africa. The slender foundation upon which his accusation rests has again and again been exposed, and it is hard that it should receive corroboration in such a work as this.

(Page 167) THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR [1899]

The enclosed extract is from a speech which I delivered this 1899 session in the House of Lords in reply to a similar indictment.

Yours sincerely,
L.

This prompt and wise decision to send out Roberts and Kitchener met with the disapproval of the Queen, who complained that she had not been consulted beforehand: that she considered Lord Roberts was too old, and that it would have been better to have sent Lord Wolseley. It was naturally believed that General Buller would resent being placed in a subordinate position, and the following letter from Lord Lansdowne shows how anxious he was to spare him any sense of humiliation:

Lord Lansdowne to General Buller. (Private) Dec. 22, 1899.

Roberts' appointment must, I fear, have been very distasteful to you. I am sorry we had to take the step, but I believe it was inevitable. I won't repeat the arguments in this note, which I am writing merely because I wish to tell you that it gave me pain to do what I knew would be disagreeable to you, at a moment when you were entitled to all the sympathy and support which we could give.

I notice with pleasure that what we did has in no case been interpreted as a reflection upon you. It has been accepted, I think I may say universally, as the natural outcome of events which had altered the whole course of the campaign, obliged us to increase our forces immensely, and compelled you to give your whole attention to Natal.

I am glad that you are going to have another try at Ladysmith. Its abandonment would have had a deplorable effect. But I fully realise that the task is one of very great difficulty.

To do General Buller justice, he accepted the Roberts appointment with complete equanimity, and it is a remarkable fact that his defeat did nothing whatever to impair the confidence felt in him by the rank and tile.

The period embraced between the date of our first

reverses in the Ladysmith district in October 1899 and the surrender of Cronje's[264] force in the following February may be said to have marked the decline of our military reputation to its lowest level for over a century. Not only were we beaten in the field, but, with scarcely a single exception, every other nation was rejoicing over our misfortunes—the conviction being general that we were making an unprovoked attack upon peaceful and harmless people. Other humiliations were in store, for the German Emperor volunteered to show us how the campaign ought to be conducted, the Sultan of Turkey offered to lend us troops, and it was even suggested that Italian soldiers should replace the British garrison in Egypt. As a nation, however, we show up better in adversity than in success: and the spirit in which the so-called Black Week which culminated in Colenso was faced, shone brightly in comparison with the blatant rejoicings over the relief of Mafeking. The whole Empire was aroused, and there was a fixed determination in every quarter to carry the war to a successful conclusion.

On January 9, 1900, a ludicrous telegram was received from General Buller, who had estimated that the enemy could dispose of 145,000 men, and calculated that 120,000 were then actually in the field. He was informed in reply that the total Boer population amounted to only 90,000; and the calculations of our Intelligence department and the statements made subsequently by foreigners who served against us showed that at no time were there more than about 35,000 of the enemy simultaneously under arms. This telegram perturbed Lord Lansdowne, who repeated it to Lord Roberts observing: "His (Buller's) evident discouragement and apparent reluctance to act make me very anxious. I know you would like to give him a free hand, but please satisfy yourself that he is doing what is best." To which Lord Roberts replied:

Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne. Cape Town, Jan 11, 1900.

> Buller must, I think, have cheered up, because, before he knew of my arrival here yesterday, he had arranged to make a turning movement for the relief of Ladysmith: I earnestly hope it will be successful. Buller has had up to the present a perfectly free hand, and any instructions I may give him will depend on the result of the operations to which he is now committed.

The turning movement on Ladysmith mentioned in the telegram from Lord Roberts referred to the operations which terminated in another serious reverse at Spion Kop. This reverse was largely attributable to misunderstandings and differences between General Buller and Sir Charles Warren,[265] and the former admitted that there had been "mutual recriminations". Sir Neville Lyttelton observes, in his book, that on January 25 he wrote home: "I have lost all confidence in Buller as a general and am sure he has himself". This opinion must have been fortified after a third failure had occurred at Vaal Kranz, and Lord Roberts thought it advisable to settle upon his successor in the Chief Command should anything happen to himself.

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[264] Pieter Arnoldus "Piet" Cronjé (1836–1911) was a South African Boer general during the Anglo-Boer Wars of 1880–1881 and 1899–1902. He made his reputation in the First Boer War, besieging the British garrison at Potchefstroom. Cronjé was in command of the force that rounded up Leander Jameson at Doornkop at the conclusion of the Jameson Raid on 2 January 1896. During the Second Boer War, he began the sieges of Kimberley and Mafeking. At Mafeking, with a force between 2,000 and 6,000, he laid siege against 1,200 regular troops and militia under the command of Colonel Robert Baden-Powell. He was defeated at the Battle of Paardeberg where he surrendered with 4,150 of his commandos on 27 February 1900, after being enveloped by Lord Roberts' forces. He and his wife were sent to a prisoner of war camp on St. Helena until 1902. (Ed.)

[265] Sir Charles Warren (1840–1927) was an officer in the British Royal Engineers. He was one of the earliest European archaeologists of the Biblical Holy Land, and particularly of the Temple Mount. His command in combat during the Second Boer War was criticised, but he achieved considerable success during his long life in his other military and civil posts. (Ed.)

Lord Roberts to the Secretary of State for War. Feb. 8, 1900.

It seems essential to decide beforehand who should succeed to the Chief Command in South Africa in the event of anything happening to me. Buller seems to have lost confidence in himself, and, after his failures, cannot be expected to carry troops with him. White's fate is uncertain, and the next senior officers are more or less untried men. I strongly recommend Kitchener as my successor and would ask that I may be empowered to inform him that he would succeed me with the rank of full General. If this is approved, I would propose consulting him as to (which) officer he would desire to be his Chief of Staff. Please rest assured that am in vigorous health, and have not the slightest intention of running any unnecessary risk: but it is essential that this important question should be settled now

The selection of Lord Kitchener met, of course, with the approval of the Government.

Lord Roberts had now been in South Africa for over a month, and was carrying out the campaign according to the plan which he had advocated long before, and which had also been approved by Lord Wolseley; but he had been delayed by Buller's reverses and was now at Modder River. During the whole of his stay in South Africa, he maintained a long private correspondence with Lord Lansdowne, describing in much detail his operations, his experiences and his opinion of the various Generals under his command; but all the facts in connection with the campaign are so well known that it is unnecessary to quote any but some of the more interesting of these private communications.

Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne. Cape Town, 29th January 1900.

It was a great shock to me to learn that Buller had been compelled to relinquish his second attempt to reach Ladysmith, and 1 can understand how deeply the news must have been felt in England.

Buller's despondent telegrams from the very first made me fear the worst, and it is difficult to believe, from the reports which have reached us, that the enemy would not have given way if he had continued to press them. The mere fact of their having allowed him to carry out his retirement practically unopposed shows that they had not much heart left in them, or they would undoubtedly have taken advantage of the retrograde movement of our troops to seriously harass the retirement. The despondent tone of Buller's telegram regarding the possibility of a third attempt to reach Ladysmith makes me think it had better not be attempted until we have seen the result of my operations in the Orange Free State. My telegram of the 28th will enable me to learn what his intentions are, and unless I consider them to be sound and likely to be carried through I shall direct him to remain on the defensive.

I sent you a copy of a telegram I have sent to White, which

will, I hope, strengthen him in holding on to Ladysmith. Any attempt he might make at present to break out from there would probably be disastrous, and might result in his force having to capitulate while striving to reach the Tugela River. Even if he were successful in doing so, the moral effect of relinquishing a post he has so long held, and of abandoning, as he would necessarily have to do, his sick and wounded and material, would be most damaging to our prestige.

The copies of my recent telegrams to Buller, which have been sent on to you, will have kept you informed of my views on the general situation as it now presents itself to me. After a very careful consideration of the various ways by which the difficult problems before me can be

solved, I have come to the conclusion that my best course is to relieve Kimberley. For this operation, by taking almost every available man from the west of the line held by Gatacre, I shall have quite a strong column, especially in artillery, and by making proper use of my guns I earnestly hope we may be able to effect the relief without any serious loss.

Whether this will be so or not you will probably have learnt by telegram before this letter can reach you. Even should we fail to capture the enemy's guns and inflict on them a heavy loss, which is what I shall strive to do, the result of relieving Kimberley should have an immediate and important effect throughout South Africa and I shall be disappointed if it does not also, to a certain extent, relieve pressure in Natal. This should be still more the case when we approach Bloemfontein.

The following letters relate to Paardeberg and are evidence of the humanity displayed to the enemy, but of a very different spirit which characterized the combatants in South Africa as compared with that which prevailed in the Great War.

Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne. Paardeberg, 22nd February 1900.

My telegrams have kept you informed of what has occurred during the last few days. As soon as I heard from Kitchener that our force was harassing Cronje during his retreat from Magersfontein, I wired to French to move down

(Page 172) LORD LANSDOWNE [1900]

from Kimberley and head him, which was done most efficiently. I was detained at Jacobsdal to make arrangements connected with supply and transport; but as I understood from Kitchener's report on the evening of the 18th instant that it was apparently only a question of hours when Cronje's force would either be driven out of the place where he had made a stand or that he would have to surrender, I decided to push on here, a distance of about 30 miles, in one long march. I found Cronje in a peculiar position in the bed of the Modder River, which at first sight would appear to be untenable for any length of time, but which, owing to the peculiarities of the ground, has proved to be an extremely strong position and not at all easy to be searched even by howitzers. The river, which winds about, is deep and from 30 yards to 40 yards broad. It has steep banks fringed with bushes and trees, and the banks are much broken up by steep ravines. All this provides excellent natural cover, which the Boers have rapidly improved. A few determined men can bar an advance along the banks of the stream, and on each side of the river the ground is an absolutely bare plain which can be swept with rifle fire from the Boer entrenchments. I found on my arrival here, on the 19th instant, that Cronje had asked for an armistice of 24 hours to bury his dead. He knew, as we knew, that reinforcements are hastening to his assistance, so I refused his request, for it was obviously only an expedient to gain time, and he can bury his dead at night as we did. Two days later, on hearing that some women and children were in the laager, I sent Cronje a letter under a flag of truce. I told him how distressed I was to hear that they had, without my knowledge, been exposed to our fire, and I said I would pass them through our lines if they wished to leave. I also offered to send him doctors and medicines for his wounded. He declined to send the women away, and accepted the services of our doctors, provided it was clearly understood that they were not to leave his laager after they had entered it until, as he expressed it, "my laager is removed". I replied to him that I could not spare the services of my doctors for such an indefinite period. He then made a further proposal that I should establish a hospital for his wounded about 1000 yards west of his laager, to which he would allow free entry to my medical officers. I refused this, for the reason that it would give Cronje 1000 yards more cover along tile river bank, and also because I have no means of establishing a hospital for the Boer wounded. We have come here with such light equipment that it has been most difficult to arrange for

our own wounded, most of whom have had to be out in the open in great discomfort. I am sorry for Cronje, for he must be in a desperate plight. He told me in his letter that he has no doctors and no medicines for his wounded. His laager is crowded with dead animals, which are also lying about in the bed of the river, and, I hear, the stench in his camp is indescribable. In one way he is better off than we are, for the bulk of our troops are about a mile and a half down-stream, and it is sickening to see dead cattle and horses floating down in our only water supply, and to realize the dangerous pollution which is taking place above us.

Yet there is no remedy for it, and all ranks are as cheerful as if they were undergoing no discomfort. It was suggested to me that we should assault Cronje's position at daybreak yesterday.

As I wired to you, the personal inspection which I made of the position convinced me that such a course would result in a loss of life which I consider unjustifiable under the circumstances, and which I am loth to incur after our heavy losses of the 18th instant. Moreover, Cronje is so crippled and shaken that the moral of his force must have suffered, and the place he holds is of no strategical importance.

We are experiencing extreme difficulty about supplies. None are obtainable locally, and, owing to the drought, water is rarely found except in the rivers. In most places there is little or no grazing for the animals, and it is impossible to carry forage for them. Another point which affects military operations nowadays is the long range of modern weapons, which necessitates such a large area of ground being taken up that troops are exhausted before they reach a point where a supreme effort is required of them, and this is accentuated here by the great heat and the impossibility of providing an ample supply of drinking water to troops on the march. We had learnt from spies and other sources that reinforcements are being rapidly pushed into the Orange Free State from Natal; and as, by an oversight, arrangements had not been made on arrival of the force here to hold a kopje which some Boer reinforcements had seized and which somewhat threatened our right flank, I decided yesterday to dislodge the enemy from it. The Cavalry and Horse Artillery moved round to the rear of the position by both flanks while it was shelled in front. The result was that the Boers, numbering some 2000, hastily evacuated the kopje, with a loss to us of only two officers and four men wounded. They were thoroughly discomfited, and their hasty retirement should have an excellent effect on the surrounding country. We took 80 or 90 prisoners,

from one of whom we learnt some interesting details about the fight at Spion Kop. I enclose a report of his statement, which will show you how probable it is that if our troops had persevered the Boers would have retired from there. All the information we receive points to the fact that strenuous efforts are being made to prevent us reaching Bloemfontein. It is impossible to predict as yet by what road we shall get there, but, if practicable, I shall leave the river route, as I hear that halfway between here and Bloemfontein a position on the river of great natural strength is being strongly entrenched. The main question at issue is, will the supply of water available permit of my leaving the river route, and this I am enquiring into by sending the Cavalry and Horse Artillery on to Petrusberg. It will be a very anxious time during the next few days until we reach the railway, when I shall probably cut the railway line. Girouaid,[266]

[266] Sir Édouard Percy Cranwill Girouard, (1867–1932) was an Empire enthusiast, a Canadian railway builder, High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria and the East Africa Protectorate and British industrialist. In October 1899 Girouard was sent by the War Office to South Africa to advise on the railway situation of the Cape Colony. When the Boer War (1899–1902) broke out he became Director of Imperial Military Railways which included the lines in the Cape, as well as the lines taken over from the Boers in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

with a battalion of railway pioneers, will be with us to repair the railway: and while I shall endeavour to force my way into Bloemfontein from the south, I shall do all that is possible to repair the line to Cape Colony, probably via Bethulie; but for a few days we shall be in the position of having a troublesome enemy in our front, while cut off from communication with our rear.

I must again press on you the constant and severe drain on the army in horses, in men, and especially in officers. I strongly urge the necessity for more horses for Cavalry and Horse Artillery being speedily sent to us, and also that endeavours should be made to send us periodically officers and drafts of men to replace casualties.

I am very hopeful that Buller may succeed this time in relieving Ladysmith. It seems clear that several thousand men have been withdrawn from there and from the Tugela in order to oppose my advance, as I expected would be the case, and 1 shall be bitterly disappointed if we do not hear of White being relieved within the next few days. Sir Alfred Milner is very anxious about the state of affairs in Cape Colony and continues to press me to send troops in various directions, especially to the north-west and west of the main line of railway. I am doing all I can to help him, but I feel that the one thing which will put an end to the war is to advance in strength in the Orange Free State, and that everything must be sacrificed to that end.

Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne. Paardeberg, 28th February 1900.

I visited the Boer position yesterday, and from what I saw I am very thankful I did not allow myself to be persuaded to be committed to an assault, at any rate until we had advanced our trenches sufficiently to make it extremely awkward for the Boers in theirs. We were gaining ground with our trenches each night, but meanwhile dissension among the Boer troops, scarcity of food, and loss of moral caused by our bombardment and by a want of confidence in their commander, were bringing about the result which I ardently hoped for. I confess it was a great relief for me when I was able to despatch a telegram to you yesterday morning saying that Cronje and his troops had surrendered unconditionally.

They had constructed their entrenchments in an extraordinarily skilful manner—deep, narrow trenches, with each side well hollowed out, in which they got complete shelter from shell fire - and if their food could have lasted, they might have defied this large force for some time to come. Three officers and nine of our men were prisoners in the hands of the enemy. They were treated with great consideration by the Boers, who did their best to secure them from being injured by our fire. These officers tell me that after personally witnessing the effect of lyddite[267] they are unanimous in considering it is of little or no value against purely field entrenchments. This opinion was corroborated by Major Albrecht,[268] the Commander of the Orange Free State Artillery, and other Boer officers, who gave their opinion very frankly on the subject. It seems to me it is worthy of serious and early consideration whether we should not take steps at once to provide some other kind of shells for use in our heavy howitzer batteries.

His rapid reconstruction of the damaged lines and the innovative low level deviations around destroyed bridges, enabled the swift movement of men and material to support the advance of Lord Robert's forces in 1900 to capture Pretoria. (Ed.)

[267] Lyddite, commonly known as picric acid is trinitrophenol and is related to TNT, trinitrotoluene. The debate on the effectiveness of this explosive continued into WWI. (Ed.)

[268] "Major Albrecht, the commandant of the Free State Artillery, turned his two hundred men into a model corps. By birth a German, after taking part in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, Major Albrecht was charged by the Free State with the formation of a corps of artillery-men. Major Albrecht was taken prisoner in General Cronje's surrender at Paardenberg, on the 27th of February 1900." From Frederik Rompel's. *Heroes of the Boer War*. London: "Review of Reviews" Office; The Hague and Pretoria: the *Nederland* Publishing Co., 1903.)

It is satisfactory to find that among the prisoners are some of the leading men of the Orange Free State and South African Republic. They were evidently nervous when they first reached our camp as to the reception they might meet with, but after they had been fed and spoken to kindly, they soon became reassured and talked quite openly with our officers about recent events. The principal topic was the unpopularity of Cronje in his force and they resented his having declined my offer to give safe conduct to the women and children and to afford medical assistance to the wounded. Some of the latter are in a deplorable state.

Cronje informed me that he had only about 70 wounded, but over 170 have been found lying about in the trenches, uncared for, their wounds festering, and they say the only treatment they have had has been applications of tobacco and vinegar.

Cronje is a short, strongly-built man of about 60, with a determined, coarse, cruel face. He compares unfavourably with the Chief Commandant (Wolmarans[269]) of the Transvaal Army, who is a fine-looking old fellow, rather like a Scotch shepherd, whose only request to me was that he might not be deprived of a favourite old horse—which, of course, I gladly complied with. Mrs. Cronje and one or two other officers' wives, with several women and children, were in the laager all the time we were bombarding it, and I feel very strongly about Cronje's cruelty in subjecting them unnecessarily to such an ordeal. Mrs. Cronje will accompany her husband to his destination, and the others will be sent to their homes as soon as it can be arranged.

To-morrow I ride to Kimberley, returning here the following day. I earnestly hope that before very long we may be gladdened by hearing of the relief of Ladysmith. The telegram from Buller I have just wired on to you makes me hope that he will certainly attain his object this time.

Postscript. KIMBERLEY, 1st March.—This is glorious news about Dundonald[270] being in Ladysmith. I am so delighted. I came over here this morning to see Mr. Rhodes and Methuen about Mafeking, and return to camp to-morrow. The relief of Mafeking is troublesome on account of the great distance it is off, 215 miles from this. Methuen wants to start off at once, but I do not think he quite realizes all the difficulties. Very many thanks for your kind telegram of congratulations on the relief of Ladysmith and please thank Lady Lansdowne for her nice postscript to it.

Lord Roberts to the Secretary of State for War, London.
Paardeberg, 28th February 1900.

Cronje, with his family left here yesterday in charge of Major-General Pretyman[271] and under an escort of the City Imperial Volunteer Mounted Infantry. Later in the day, the remaining

[269] Frederik Gerhardus Andries Wolmarans. Little information is available on this individual but he is one of the South Africans sent to St. Helena. (Ed.)
[270] Lieutenant General Douglas Mackinnon Baillie Hamilton Cochrane, 12th Earl of Dundonald, (1852–1935), styled Lord Cochrane between 1860 and 1885. He served in the Second Boer War and in November 1899 he volunteered to be the Commander of the Mounted Brigade, part of the South Natal Field Force, whilst there on the 22nd of the same month, Sir Redvers Buller gave him command over the mounted troops (which mainly consisted of colonial irregulars) . For these services, he was mentioned six times in dispatches, received the medal with six clasps and was promoted to the rank of major-general for distinguished service to the field. He took part in the Relief of Ladysmith in February 1900. (Ed.)
[271] George Tindal Pretyman (184-1917) was the son of the Reverend J. R. Pretyman, formerly Vicar of Aylesbury. He was Major-General in 1897 and Commandant at Headquarters, South Africa, 1899-1900 (despatches twice). He became Military Governor of Bloemfontein, 1900 and Commanded Kimberley District in 1901. (Drawn from https://www.angloboerwar.com/index. Ed.)

prisoners were despatched, under charge of the Earl of Erroll,[272] and escorted by the Gloucestershire Regiment and 100 City Imperial Volunteers. The women and children are all being sent to their homes. I understand that grave dissatisfaction was

(Page 177) THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR [1900]

felt by the Boers at Cronje's refusal to accept my offer of a safe-conduct to the women and children and medical care of his wounded, 170 of whom are now in our hospital, very many of them in a terrible plight from want of care at an earlier stage. I inspected the Boer laager yesterday, and was much struck by the ingenuity and energy with which the position was made almost impregnable to assault. Rensburg was reoccupied yesterday by Clements,

A few days later Lord Roberts was in Kimberley and wrote to express the startling opinion that from what he had seen of field service under the British system the home army was

not nearly so well prepared for war as the army in India was twenty years ago. This is apparent in more ways than one, and I attribute it to two things—doing away with the Quartermaster-General's Department, and to the desire on the part of the soldiers at the War Office to get control of the spending departments. Hence the origin of the Army Service Corps.

On March 7 the Boers were attacked and defeated at Poplar Grove. The two Presidents, Kruger and Steyn[273], were present in person and, unluckily, just escaped capture, in consequence, according to Lord Roberts, of Sir John French[274] failing to comply with his orders to make straight for the Modder River instead of pursuing small parties of the enemy. Bloemfontein was occupied on March 13, and the British troops were well received by the inhabitants.

The capture of Cronje and his force, the relief of Ladysmith and of Kimberley and the occupation of Bloemfontein had completely transformed the aspect of the campaign. The backbone of the Boer resistance was broken, but an opportunity to deal them a staggering blow after the relief of Ladysmith was neglected by General Buller, and here General Lyttelton, who was present, shall be cited for the last time:

At 1 a.m. on the 1st March an orderly from Dundonald came to my tent with the news of his entry into Ladysmith and

(Page 178) LORD LANSDOWNE [1900]

I sent him on at once to Buller. I expected immediate orders to press on would be issued, but this was not done, so I went over to find Buller and get him to move. I could not find him, but I found his Chief Staff Officer, and urged him strongly to get Buller to push on without further delay. Whether he did this or not 1 don't know, but nothing was done, and I am convinced a

[272] Lord Newton's index lists this man as the 19th Earl of Erroll. However, he had died 1891 so this must be Major General Charles Gordon Hay, 20th Earl of Erroll (1852–1927), styled Lord Kilmarnock until 1891. He was a Scottish soldier and Conservative politician. (Ed.)

[273] Martinus (or Marthinus) Theunis Steyn (1857–1916) was a South African lawyer, politician, and statesman. He was the sixth and last president of the independent Orange Free State from 1896 to 1902. (Ed.)

[274] Field Marshal John Denton Pinkstone French, 1st Earl of Ypres (1852–1925)was known as Sir John French from 1901 to 1916, and as The Viscount French between 1916 and 1922. He was a controversial figure. At the outbreak of the Great War he was Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). After the British suffered heavy casualties at the battles of Mons and Le Cateau, French wanted to withdraw the BEF from the Allied line to refit and only agreed to take part in the First Battle of the Marne after a private meeting with the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener, against whom he bore a grudge thereafter. In May 1915, he leaked information about shell shortages to the press in the hope of engineering Kitchener's removal. After the Battle of Loos, at which French's slow release of XI Corps from reserve was blamed for the failure to achieve a decisive breakthrough on the first day, H. H. Asquith, the British Prime Minister, demanded his resignation. (Ed.)

very great opportunity was lost by this indecision. The Boers, dispirited by defeat, encumbered by a huge train of wagons, the Sunday River in flood behind them with only one bridge, were at our mercy. As for their being formidable in rearguard actions (as Buller said in his evidence), I don't know where they showed this, but anyhow nothing could have stopped our men if they had been let go.

These days were absolutely wasted. Buller had recovered his self-confidence and would not listen to any advice. I was told on unimpeachable authority that he said he would not lose a single life to capture the whole Boer camp, transport, *etc.*, *etc.* Few Commanders have so wantonly thrown away so great an opportunity.

It was in Ladysmith that I first heard of the astounding suggestion he made to White after Colenso - that he should propose terms of surrender to the Boers and at first I refused to believe it. I had no idea that his state of depression had been so deep. However, White's spirited rebuff saved him from this disgrace.

After the relief of Ladysmith, Lord Roberts had asked General Buller to send him any troops that he could spare and the latter had offered Sir Charles Warren's division and some cavalry. The arrangement broke down, however, as General Buller changed his mind and refused to part with Warren's division. Lord Roberts acquiesced in the refusal, and a harmless telegram came from the Secretary of State asking him the reasons for Buller's refusal. This brought about an indignant communication from the Queen, who was generally prone to believe that Ministers were interfering with Generals in the field, although she herself was not averse from making suggestions as to how the campaign should be conducted.

(Page 179) THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR [1900]

The Queen to Lord Lansdowne. March 17, 1900.

I am much surprised and shocked to gather from telegrams received to-day that there is evidently a desire on the part of the Government to interfere with the military dispositions in South Africa. If Lord Roberts is satisfied that Sir R. Buller's arrangements are justified by circumstances, it seems to me most unfair to attempt to question the latter's action from home, more especially as both you and the Commander-in-Chief have to me always deprecated such a course. I fail to see that there were any grounds to justify the suggestion of a difference of opinion between Lord Roberts and Sir R. Buller.

It was explained at some length to Her Majesty that the Cabinet had not the slightest intention of interfering with the dispositions made by the Generals in South Africa, but that Ministers had been greatly surprised at Lord Roberts' change of opinion, as he had previously stated that it was of vital importance that his force should be increased and that "everything must be sacrificed to that end". Lord Roberts had merely stated that Warren's division had been kept back "because General Buller required it", and, in view of the former's chivalrous nature, it was conceivable that he had yielded to pressure against his own conviction. "The sudden change as to the division had been received with much concern by Lord Lansdowne's colleagues, and with something like dismay by Lord Wolseley, who would have favoured the use of more decided language than that actually employed."

Another explosion of royal indignation followed shortly afterwards. Two regrettable incident had occurred: one the ambush into which General Broadwood's[275] force fell at Sannah's Post, where several

[275] Lieutenant-General Robert George Broadwood (1862–1917) was a British Army general. A cavalry officer, Broadwood saw service in the Sudan, in the Second Boer War, and in the First World War. He took part in the relief of Kimberley and the Battle of Paardeberg in February 1900. In March 1900, Broadwood's force was ambushed at Sanna's Post by the Boers, suffering 571 casualties and losing several guns, though he eventually managed to extricate his troops. He was killed in action in 1917, while commanding the 57th Division. (Ed.)

guns, some 250 prisoners and a convoy were captured by the enemy; another at Reddersburg in which General Gatacre was involved, when five companies of infantry

were taken prisoners. These reverses resulted in the following telegram to Lord Roberts:

Secretary of State for War to Lord Roberts. April 6, 1900.

> We await your further report with anxiety, but if these successive disasters are, in your judgment, due to carelessness or inefficiency, it is surely desirable that the officers responsible should be superseded. It seems to us difficult to believe that the moral of troops can be maintained if they get the idea that they are not being properly led.

Queen Victoria on seeing this telegram at once wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

The Queen to Lord Lansdowne. April 7, 1900.

> 1 am at a loss to understand what has led you to send such a message to Lord Roberts. He surely is the only judge of what is necessary, and must not really be interfered with by civilians at a distance who cannot judge the exact state of the case.
>
> Lord Roberts has never blamed anyone, and he even praised General Broadwood and the good march of the troops.
>
> I, must ask that such messages should not be sent without my previous knowledge.

The next day Lord Lansdowne replied:

> The telegram to Lord Roberts to which Your Majesty has taken exception was drafted in the Cabinet and represented opinions strongly held by Your Majesty's advisers, many of whom would have preferred a more vigorously worded message. The desire of the framers of the telegram was not to interfere with Lord Roberts' discretion in dealing with his subordinates but to show him that if "in his judgment" any of these subordinates had been guilty of negligence and if he thought proper to deal with them in an exemplary manner, the Cabinet was ready to support him and share his responsibility. The words which Lord Lansdowne has quoted in inverted commas seem to him of the first importance.

> There was in the case of the Reddersburg disaster an impression that General Gatacre, to whose force of captured troops belonged, and who had been left in command in spite of a serious blunder earlier in the campaign, might be again to blame.
>
> Lord Lansdowne has given Your Majesty an account of the circumstances which led to the despatch of the telegram; he begs, however, to assure Your Majesty that he concurs in believing that the General Officer in Command on the spot must in such cases be a better judge of the purely military aspects of the case than civilians at a distance. On the other hand, it may be held that the latter are within their right in endeavouring to strengthen the hands of the General and to make him feel that the responsibility for severe measures, if taken, will not be his alone.
>
> Lord Lansdowne will not go further into the matter, as the Prime Minister is writing to Your Majesty by this post.

In the meanwhile the publication of the Spion Kop despatches had produced a very bad impression; it was impossible to conceal from the public that the various commanders were in disagreement, and on March 30 Lord Lansdowne had telegraphed to Lord Roberts:

> Your despatch about Spion Kop puts us in a difficulty. Buller has under him 50,000 men. He and his Second in Command (Sir Charles Warren) have apparently quarrelled. We gather that in your opinion neither one nor the other has shown competence in recent military operations. It does not seem easy to justify keeping them in their present positions if they are to he entrusted with difficult operations in the future, or leaving all of their troops with them if they are not.

A private letter to Lord Roberts on the following day explained the view of Ministers at greater length.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Roberts. March 31st, 1900.

> My telegram of yesterday was concocted in the Cabinet. I may tell you, of course in strict confidence, that many of my colleagues are indignant with Buller, not so much because of his conduct in the Spion Kop affair as because of the faults of

> tone and temper which he has exhibited throughout the campaign. My view is that, in spite of all, it would be most unwise to recall and supersede him at this moment. I do not know who you would put in his place, nor have we yet been told that his troops have lost confidence in him. With a large section of the army he is very popular, and in the eyes of the public he represents the dogged soldier who in face of very great difficulties has persevered and succeeded. His supersession would, I believe, be received in many quarters, some of them very exalted, with indignation. Nor, again, do I like the idea of washing all our dirty linen in public and before the eyes of the foreigner.
>
> I have, therefore, little doubt that you will leave Buller where he is. We have already said enough to show you that you would have had our support if you had recommended his supersession, or that of any of your Generals. For this reason, I should myself have been content without sending yesterday's telegram; but, as I have told you, feeling in the Cabinet ran high, and there was a general desire to make you aware that we were ready to take our share of the responsibility for any course which you might advocate. As to Warren, I confess that I am uneasy at any combination which leaves our troops at his mercy.
>
> There is an impression here that some unnecessary loss took place at Paardeberg, and curiously enough, the man in the street (who is the most mischievous product of the age) announces at one moment that the fault was Kitchener's, who insisted on the attack, and at another that Kelly-Kenny[276] was to blame for disregarding Kitchener's advice and attacking a strong position in spite of it. I have, however, seen letters which seem to me to make it clear that Kitchener had authority from you to direct Kelly-Kenny's operation

On the same day, Lord Roberts was writing from Bloemfontein to say that:

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[276] General Sir Thomas Kelly-Kenny (1840–1914) was a British Army general. In the Second Boer War, Kelly-Kenny was, as a lieutenant general, General Officer Commanding the 6th Division of the South African field force. He was twice mentioned in despatches and received the Queen's South Africa Medal with four clasps. He was involved in the relief of Kimberley, the battles of Paardeberg, Poplar Grove and Driefontein. At the battle of Paardeberg, Kelly-Kenny had a conservative plan to besiege General Cronje and bombard his Boer force from a safe distance with superior artillery. When Lord Roberts became ill, he appointed Lieutenant-General Herbert Kitchener as commander. He overruled Kelly-Kenny and ordered an assault on the Boer trenches. The result was 'Bloody Sunday' — an unnecessary sacrifice of hundreds of lives on the British side. (Ed.)

Personally, I should be glad to see both Buller and Warren leave the country, but it is not easy to get rid of them without a storm being raised, which I would rather avoid, for the credit of the army.

Queen Victoria, who shared the widespread disapproval of the publication of the Spion Kop despatches and considered that it would lower the Generals in the

estimation of their men, had demanded an explanation; and Lord Lansdowne's answer is an illustration of the difficulties of waging war under a Parliamentary system.

Lord Lansdowne to the Queen. April 19, 1900

Lord Lansdowne greatly regrets that Your Majesty should he surprised at the publication of these despatches. He ventures, however, to submit that the course adopted was virtually the only one open to him.

It would, in his belief, have been impossible to avoid publishing some of the documents relating to the operations which took place on the Tugela during the latter part of January. He has no doubt that the production of documents would have been demanded and that the Government would have been unable to refuse the demand altogether.

It would certainly have been in Your Majesty's opinion, as in Lord Lansdowne's, out of the question to publish the papers in their entirety.

Two other solutions were possible: one of these was that Lord Roberts and Sir Redvers Buller should rewrite their despatches, omitting all doubtful passages and documents, with a view to publication. This alternative was suggested to Lord Roberts, but objected to decidedly by Sir R. Buller, who was consulted. There remained the alternative actually adopted, *viz*. the publication of a careful selection from the papers. After much anxious consideration and consultation with others, Lord Lansdowne found himself unable to make a better selection. He is fully alive to the disadvantage of publicity in cases of this kind, but the public was already aware that there had been a serious miscarriage at Spion Kop, and the suppression of the despatches would, he believes, have increased rather than diminished the suspicions which already prevailed.

Lord Lansdowne discussed the question of publication on several occasions with Lord Wolseley, who agreed to the selection actually made. He would, no doubt, and so would Lord Lansdowne, have much preferred to publish nothing, had such a course been possible.

It is not very easy to understand why the Spion Kop despatches created so strong a feeling against the

Government, but the fact remains that the attacks made upon them proceeded not only from opponents but from supporters, and there was an evident conviction in both Houses of Parliament that the charges had not been met in a spirit of frankness. In the House of Commons, the Government escaped censure by a strictly party vote, and many of their supporters abstained from the division. Judging from a subsequent correspondence between Lord Salisbury and Lord Lansdowne, it appears as if the decision to publish the papers was due to a misunderstanding in the Cabinet, and that some of the Ministers, including Lord Salisbury himself, were under the impression that no action was to be taken. The unhappy result caused Lord Salisbury to express the doubt whether "our traditional practice of not recording Cabinet decisions is a wise one", and it was decided not to publish anything more for the present.

As for the campaign, it was proceeding satisfactorily. Kroonstad was reached on May 13, but here a delay took place, owing to a breakdown of the railway. The late Lord Rawlinson,[277] who was at the time on Lord Roberts' staff, wrote:

> We have got the Boers on the run, but I am anxious about the effect of delay here. To make matters worse, Buller is very obstinate in Natal, and sees all sorts of difficulties in the way of his advance. I fear that he is sore about the Spion Kop despatches and is sulking. I hear that he gives out that "Bobs" will not allow him to advance, when we have been doing all we can to make him move. He is so full of excuses that it has been almost impossible to get any action out of him. With a lot of pushing, he has at length occupied Dundee, but he ought to have been over the frontier by now. The delay on both fronts will, I am afraid, mean that the war will go on for a long time yet. The enemy will break up into small parties and take to guerilla warfare, which it will cost much time and blood to defeat.

Johannesburg, however, was reached by the end of

May, and on June 5 Lord Roberts entered Pretoria. There was naturally much sanguine anticipation that the war was nearing its end, but Lord Rawlinson's prognostications were only too well founded. It was manifest, however, that it was unnecessary to keep a Field-Marshal in the field to deal with guerilla operations, and when, in September, General Buller telegraphed that he saw no use in his remaining, Lord Roberts was persuaded by his staff to return, too. Accordingly, it was arranged that the latter should leave before the end of October, but owing to an accident he was not able to embark until December, Lord Kitchener remaining as his successor.

General Buller arrived in England in October, and, in spite of his various misfortunes, was received everywhere with remarkable enthusiasm and reinstated in the Aldershot Command. The story of the close of his career is so curious as to bear repetition. As the result of an egregious speech, he was relieved of his command.

His case was taken up in Parliament by the Liberal party, with marked ill-success; and the bitter comment was made that a man whose action had, in official language, endangered the whole Empire by his conduct in South Africa, but who had, nevertheless, been reinstated in the most important military command in the country, had at last been dismissed because of some foolish utterances at a luncheon. But the General's popularity, far from diminishing, continued to grow, until the ill-advised efforts of his admirers converted him into a kind of military Tichborne Claimant—a just man who was being defrauded of his rights; and he finally experienced the rare satisfaction of seeing a statue of himself erected at Exeter, on the base of which appeared the inscription: "He saved Natal".

Before the end of August, Lord Lansdowne had become convinced that there would shortly be demands for fundamental changes both in the army and the War

[277] *The Life of General Lord Rawlinson*, by Major-General Sir F. Maurice (LN) General Henry Seymour Rawlinson, 1st Baron Rawlinson (1864–1925) was a senior British Army officer in the First World War who commanded the Fourth Army of the British Expeditionary Force at the battles of the Somme (1916) and Amiens (1918) as well as the breaking of the Hindenburg Line (1918). Rawlinson served with distinction in a field command in the Second Boer War from 1899 to 1902, earning promotion to the local rank of colonel on 6 May 1901. He was in Western Transvaal during early 1902, and led a column taking part in the Battle of Rooiwal, the last battle of the war (11 April 1902). He commanded the Indian Army from 1920 to 1925. (Ed.)

Office, in consequence of many defects that had been revealed during the war. In a letter to Lord Salisbury, dated August 26, he pointed out that various high appointments, including that of Commander-in-Chief, would shortly become vacant:

> If reform is to come from within, does it not follow that we ought to have a new Secretary of State as well as a new Commander-in-Chief? H.M. Government will have to satisfy the public that great military questions are being treated with an open mind. Will it be possible to convince the public that a Secretary of State who has held the seals for five years, and upon whose advice the existing organisation of the War Office was introduced, is free from all leanings towards the order of things which he had himself accepted or brought about? And although Lord Roberts might not share these misgivings, his task would probably be rendered easier for him if he were to commence his term of office with a civilian colleague not previously committed upon questions of army policy.
>
> Holding these views, I feel that it is my duty to lay them before you and to tell you that you will find me ready to place my resignation in your hands at the moment which may seem to you most convenient.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne. Private. Sept. 1, 1900.

> Intermediately I will only utter one word of caution. It is quite possible we may not be far from an election. We must all face it *together*. It would have the worst effect if discussions about future resignations, *etc. etc.*, were to be encouraged and get abroad just now. It would give the impression that we were falling to pieces. Therefore I would press you earnestly not to allow yourself to enter upon those personal speculations which are the basis of your letter. It will be time enough to raise them, it they have to be raised, when the electors have spoken At present any such discussions resemble an attempt to solve an equation with the principal factor left out.
>
> During the Queen's reign, every Minister who, after a years tenure of office or more, has dissolved Parliament, has

> turned out within a year by the Parliament he has summoned. There is no exception to the rule: therefore, till after the election —*pauca verba*.[278]

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Salisbury. Sept. 3, 1900.

> I am much obliged for your letter.
>
> I have only two observations to make upon it.
>
> 1. You need have no fear of my entering into these speculations with others. But I wish you to be made aware of my feelings at an early stage, and before the subject had been raised, as it no doubt will be, in other quarters.
>
> 2. The point bears upon another question which we must decide soon: that of Roberts' appointment as Commander-in- Chief and Kitchener's appointment to India on the headquarters staff. It is, I think, impossible entirely to dissociate the two matters.

[278] Few words. (Ed.)

Now that Roberts has annexed the Transvaal, I hope you will on your return obtain the Queen's approval of his selection, and we can then consult him about Kitchener.

Neither of these proposed appointments met with the approval of the Queen, whose interest in all military matters remained unabated, and who made no attempt to conceal her natural disappointment that the Duke of Connaught had again been passed over.

The Queen to Lord Salisbury Sept. 27, 1900.

I was much surprised at your proposal that Lord Roberts and not the Duke of Connaught should be Commander-in-Chief. I had always hoped that the Duke of Connaught would, after Wolseley, be appointed to the position, which his zeal and conscientious service and great experience at home and abroad have fully qualified him for, and in which he would be received with the greatest approbation by the army.

Please remember all that occurred when he was so anxious to go to South Africa and you assured me that his being prevented from doing so by the Government would not injure his chance of

succeeding Lord Wolseley. I also naturally wish to see him at the head of the army during my lifetime..

However, as my Ministers think otherwise, I suppose I cannot object; and I only hope that the high expectations of Lord Roberts will be fulfilled. So far, the substitution of a subject for a Member of the Royal Family has not proved very successful and I know how anxiously the appointment of my son has been awaited. I do not at all like the idea of the appointment being annual in tenure. This would tend to lower the office, which I and my army so desire to maintain and, indeed, raise. The army requires in the Commander-in-Chief someone in whom they have confidence and to whom they can turn and, if necessary, appeal to. These relations would never exist towards the occupant of so shaky a position.

On the whole, I think that appointment should be made without reference to time, on the understanding that it may be extended if public exigencies so demand.

But, in thus yielding to representations of my Ministers, I must insist that you undertake that one of the first points in the army reform shall be a reconsideration and amendment of the Order in Council of 1895, with a view to increasing the power and responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, who is now virtually a cipher.

Of course, there could be no question of rescinding the Order in Council and the Queen's irritation was partly due to the fact that Lord Salisbury, who was unwilling to intrude upon her in consequence of the death of the Duke of Coburg,[279] had waited too long for the psychological moment; but the unpleasantness of the situation was much relieved by the loyal attitude of the Duke of Connaught, who frankly recognized the claims of Lord Roberts and undertook to help the new Commander-in-Chief by every means within his power. This valuable assistance at a really difficult conjuncture was much appreciated by the Secretary of State.

[279] Alfred (Alfred Ernest Albert; 1844–1900) was sovereign Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha from 22 August 1893 until his death in 1900. He was the second son and fourth child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. He was known as the Duke of Edinburgh from 1866 until he succeeded his paternal uncle Ernest II as the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in the German Empire. (Ed.)

Lord Salisbury instructed Lord Lansdowne when offering the appointment to Lord Roberts to use simply the bald phrase, "the appointment of Commander-in- Chief", as he did not wish to pledge himself to a five

(Page 189) THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR [1900]

years' system, and found himself upon this point in agreement with the Queen.

The question of the Roberts appointment was, therefore, disposed of; but the appointment of Lord Kitchener to the Indian Command met with considerable opposition from Her Majesty.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Lansdowne. Sept. 28, 1900.

> I am told that there is a new difficulty ahead. Her Majesty takes a very strong line against Kitchener for India and swears nothing shall induce her to consent to it, because she thinks his manner are too ferocious. This is her *riposte* to my objection to Connaught excluding Roberts, for she knows I value Kitchener.

In a subsequent letter the Queen explained that she had the greatest admiration for Lord Kitchener and was, therefore, unwilling to place him in a position where he would run the risk of failure. She considered that it would be a great mistake to place him over the heads of many Generals who had had long experience of India, and that it was a further mistake to place him in a position for which, from his disposition and want of experience, he would be eminently unsuited, at a time when his remarkable qualities of organization would be of much value at the War Office. Although she had great confidence in Lord Roberts, who had recommended him for India, she thought that the former was probably biassed; considered that other opinions should be sought; and finally suggested that Sir C. Mansfield Clarke[280] should go to India and that Lord Kitchener should become Quartermaster-General.

All this discussion was, of course, premature, for none of the parties concerned had any intuition as to the prolongation of the war, which was fondly believed to be practically over, whereas Lord Kitchener was detained south Africa until 1902 and did not proceed to India until the end of that year.

(Page 190) LORD LANSDOWNE [1900]

Meanwhile Lord Lansdowne's tenure of the War Office Was near its conclusion. Lord Salisbury had decided upon a general election in October and the dissensions in the Liberal party left the issue a foregone conclusion. The Unionist party returned to office with a very large majority, which, partly owing to the war being made the main issue and partly owing to abstentions, did not correctly represent the real political sentiment of the country and eventually led to disaster. Lord Salisbury took advantage of the new situation to remodel his Cabinet, resigned the Foreign Office and handed it over to Lord Lansdowne. Apparently the Queen had also suggested this appointment.

Lord Lansdowne to the Queen. Oct. 29, 1900

> Lord Lansdowne has been made aware by the Prime Minister that you have been pleased to think of him for the Foreign Office. He is most grateful for this mark of Your Majesty's confidence in him. He values it the more because he does not disguise from himself that as

[280] General Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, 3rd Baronet, (1839–1932) was a British Army officer who rose to become Commandant-General of the Colonial Forces of the Cape of Good Hope between 1880 and 1882. He held a series of administrative roles before becoming Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army in 1893. He was appointed to the command of the Sixth Army Corps in the Second Boer War in South Africa in December 1899. He served as Quartermaster-General to the Forces from 1899 until 1903, during which he was promoted to general on 5 August 1902. (Ed.)

> Secretary of State for War he must often have seemed to Your Majesty to fall short of expectations.
>
> He is fully aware that the task which lies before him is not an easy one, and he is glad to think that under the new distribution of offices he can look forward to the wise guidance of the Prime Minister, who will now have a larger amount of leisure at his disposal and who will no doubt continue to take a close personal interest in the affairs of the Department which he has so long and successfully directed.

Being one of the most modest of men, the offer of the Foreign Office had come as a complete surprise, as is shown in a letter to Lord Roberts of November 1:

> My translation was a great surprise to me. I told you of the reasons which led me to ask Lord Salisbury to relieve me of my position here, and I fully expected to be relegated to an uneventful existence at Bowood, or perhaps to some easy-going post in another Department. But it has been otherwise ordered. My new

> work will be hard, but less trying in many ways than my work here.

It would be idle to attempt to disguise the fact that there were many others besides himself who felt surprise, and amongst them were the less intelligent members of his own party, who were disposed to consider him a failure at the War Office and as being largely responsible for the reverses in South Africa. Far from this being the case, he had been emphatically the best Secretary of State for War since Cardwell, although the services which he rendered to the army have never been recognised. He went to the War Office at a critical moment when the long period of centralization in the Commander-in-Chief had come to an end and changes were imperatively necessary. In the work of reorganisation he enjoyed the co-operation of Lord Wolseley, and in spite of diversity of temperament— the one reticent and discreet, the other impulsive and expansive it is not an exaggeration to say that a new spirit grew up in the army between 1895 and 1900 during their joint service at the War Office. Lord Lansdowne was the first Secretary of State since 1870 to make a real stand for the army. Hitherto his predecessors had been accustomed to content themselves with such supplies of men and money as could be extracted from a reluctant Cabinet. But when the crisis which has been described in these pages came in 1898, Lord Lansdowne did not hesitate to jeopardize his political future by threatening to resign unless the very moderate demands made by himself and by Lord Wolseley were acceded to. In this conjuncture he was greatly helped by the staunch and loyal attitude of his Under-Secretary, the present Lord Midleton, who was also determined to resign if necessary. It was probably, in fact, the decision of the latter which turned the scale, for the Government would have been in a very awkward petition if he had refused to move the Army Estimates.

But whatever may have been the merits of the reorganization for which Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley were jointly responsible, they were completely obscured by the reverses and disappointments which marked the earlier stages of the South African War, and these reacted upon the Secretary of State, who has always been the target for ignorant abuse, as Lord Midleton and Mr. Arnold-Forster[281] were destined to discover a few years later.

The whole history of the South African War has been the subject of searching investigations and of innumerable criticisms, upon which it is unnecessary to enlarge. It revealed many defects, the chief of

[281] Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster (né Arnold; 1855–1909), known as H. O. Arnold-Forster, was a British politician and writer. He was Secretary of State for War in Arthur Balfour's Conservative government from 1903 until December 1905. (Ed.)

which was the breakdown of the voluntary system, although few people had the courage to avow it. The so-called Voluntary System admirable in theory and adequate tor the purpose of dealing with small wars waged against semi-savage nations, is quite inadequate for a prolonged war against white men and the prolongation of the South African War was due to the fact that we did not possess the necessary reserves of trained men and were forced to improvise makeshifts, at a disproportionate cost. But even the Generals who had taken part in the campaign failed to convey this unpalatable truth to the public, and the speeches of Lord Roberts, who was not yet converted to the principle of universal service, were, misinterpreted as an encouragement of the popular belief that all that was necessary to create an efficient soldier was the possession of a rifle and of a broad-brimmed hat.

The charge that the Government and civilian ineptitude at the War Office were responsible for the many failures of the campaign seems, upon impartial review, to be entirely without foundation. The Government was placed in a hopeless position by the Jameson Raid; it was, as a whole, sincerely desirous of avoiding war (which, indeed, no sensible person could ever have desired) and was prevented, in consequence of the Raid

(Page 193) THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR [1900]

from sending adequate reinforcements. When war was forced upon it by Boer aggression, the military were given a free hand; and the latter, in spite of the admirable reports of the Intelligence Division, failed completely to grasp the magnitude of the task.

When hostilities began, the civilians carefully abstained from any interference in the operations and gave the Commanders everything that they asked for.

In a letter to Lord Lansdowne, dated October 25, Lord Roberts wrote:

> I will certainly take the first opportunity that may offer, after my return home, of letting the public know how completely my demands for the army in South Africa have been met throughout the war.

These few all-important words seem to dispose finally of the charge that the Government failed to meet the requirements of the military, and here the question might well be allowed to rest.

Lord Midleton, who had twelve years' experience of the War Office, has pointed out that a serious injustice to Lord Lansdowne's memory as War Minister has been done by the attempt made by the Liberal party to assume that the whole credit for the organization and equipment of the Expeditionary Force rested with Lord Haldane.[282] This claim, which Lord Haldane can scarcely be said to have discouraged, has been revived since his death.

These extravagant pretensions have been allowed to submerge the great reforms in the army carried out from 1895 to 1900 under Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley, which enabled the country to meet the strain of the Boer War, and which were carried much further after that sinister experience by Lord Roberts. Lord Lansdowne was the first War Minister who organized the army for a considerable war when none was in sight and he was also the first to hazard his own career

[282] Richard Burdon Haldane, 1st Viscount Haldane (1856–1928) was a Scottish lawyer, philosopher, an influential British Liberal and later Labour politician and statesman. He was Secretary of State for War between 1905 and 1912 during which time the *Haldane Reforms* of the British Army were implemented. As Secretary of State of War, he was instrumental in founding MI5, MI6, the Territorial Army, the British Expeditionary Force, and the Royal Air Force. (Ed.)

by insisting, even to the point of resignation, on expenditure to which many of his colleagues demurred. Four main reforms which were set on foot by Lord Wolseley:

1. The proportion of Artillery to Infantry was largely increased, while the strength of all infantry battalions at home was raised to enable them to supply their foreign drafts without becoming 'squeezed lemons'. Lord Haldane reduced the Infantry by nearly 10,000 men and the Artillery by 3,400, while abolishing the three years' enlistment with nine years in Reserve, instituted by Lord Roberts. The loss of over 30,000 men in the Reserve available in 1914 would have been severely felt if war had broken out a year later, and the Seventh Division could never have been mobilized.

2. Lord Wolseley insisted on Selection for Appointments. This system was carried by Lord Roberts to the point that no officer was entrusted with any command who was not to lead the same troops in the field.

3. Lord Wolseley entrusted the Volunteers with heavy guns—had them trained under Regular officers, with proper reserves of ammunition and stores. Lord Roberts insisted on a fortnight's camp, and organized the Volunteers in brigades for foreign service.

4. Lord Wolseley organized the Intelligence Department and staff. Lord Roberts provided the staffs for a force of 120,000 men to go abroad at once and 120,000 for home defence.

Thus the Expeditionary Force, which was already a "going concern" in 1905, owed its inception to the persistence of Lord Lansdowne and Lord Wolseley.

CHAPTER VI

THE EUROPEAN SITUATION, 1900-1

(Page 195)

Lord Lansdowne before his death spoke of his tenure of the Foreign Office as incomparably the most interesting period of his life, and it must have been a profound relief to escape from the intrigues, difficulties, and disappointments associated with the much-abused War Office into the serener atmosphere of an efficient Department where complete harmony prevailed.

When, during the final stages of the Great War, the Imperial Governments of Russia, Austria, and Germany were successively overthrown, the secret archives of the foreign Offices at Petrograd, Vienna, and Berlin were seized and published to the world, partly with the objective of discrediting the fallen rulers and partly in order to create dissension amongst the victorious Allies. This example was followed in a more correct and orderly manner by His Majesty's Government, and all the more important confidential Foreign Office correspondence from 1898 to 1914 is in process of publication under the title*, British Documents on the Origins of the War,* a work edited with much skill by Dr. Gooch[283] and Dr. Temperley.[284] Consequently there remain few secrets, except perhaps those of a personal nature to reveal; and everyone who is interested in the subject must be acquainted with the general state of Europe and our own position towards the close of 1900.

Our own position was anything but satisfactory. The bulk of our army was locked up in South Africa,

(Page 196) LORD LANSDOWNE [1901]

and there were plain indications that, in spite of the skill and moderation of Lord Salisbury's policy, we were not only isolated but also without a real friend amongst the Great Powers. The hegemony of Europe had hitherto been disputed between the Triple and Dual Alliances, the latter being undisguisedly hostile to us; but at the time when our fortunes in South Africa were at their lowest, the two rival groups showed signs of being disposed to come to terms and to attack us, and probably the true reason why the project failed was that no one Power was willing to risk the loss of its fleet.

In addition to the threatened danger in Europe, we were involved in the international complications brought about by the Boxer rebellion in China, and had been forced to send a British contingent to defend our interests. There were further complications with Belgium in connection with the Congo Free State; Egypt was a prolific source of anxiety; Russian aggression was a constant menace both in Persia and in the Far East; in various parts of the world the conflict between German and British interests assumed a more threatening character; France, still smarting under the Fashoda discomfiture, lost no opportunity of showing her ill-will; and even the Spanish Government, according to Sir Mortimer Durand,[285] had conceived such a distrust of British designs that a visit of the Channel Fleet to Algeciras in December caused profound apprehension at Madrid.

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[283] George Peabody Gooch (1873–1968) was a British journalist, historian and Liberal Party politician. A follower of Lord Acton who was independently wealthy, he never held an academic position, but knew the work of historians of continental Europe. For about ten years from the mid-1920s onwards, he was involved, with Harold Temperley, in the publication of the official British diplomatic history. The selection of Gooch for the project selection was made over the reservations of James Wycliffe Headlam-Morley and of Temperley himself, who believed that Gooch was too committed to a pro-German position and too critical of Sir Edward Grey. (Ed.)

[284] Harold William Vazeille Temperley, (1879–1939) was an English historian, Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge from 1931, and Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. During World War I, Temperley was commissioned into the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, missing the Gallipoli landings due to illness. He was then seconded to the War Office, working on intelligence and policy in the Balkans. His History of Serbia was published in 1917. In the compilation of the *British Documents on the Origins of the War* he collaborated with George Peabody Gooch, (1873–1968). (Ed.)

[285] British Minister at Madrid (LN) (*See footnote on page 114*. Ed.)

One of the first steps taken by Lord Lansdowne after taking possession of the Foreign Office was to write to Sir F. Lascelles[286] and to explain that while he entered upon the duties of his new office with very few preconceptions, there was one to which he pleaded guilty, *viz*. the idea that "we should use every effort to maintain and, if we can, to strengthen the good relations

which at present exist between the Queen's Government and that of the Emperor". In a reply dated November 17, Sir F. Lascelles assured him that he had always been an "optimist" with regard to this object.

Both Bülow[287] and Richthofen,[288] he believed, were sincerely anxious to arrive at an understanding with us, but both were much afraid of public opinion, which was unmistakably anti-British, as was demonstrated by an offensive press; and in spite of his own keen desire for thoroughly good understanding with Germany, he did not recommend any concession either in China or in South Africa, unless we received a completely adequate consideration.

The ex-President Kruger was at this period a fugitive in Europe and making efforts to be received by the Kaiser, but, although a hero with the German people, there were obvious objections to such a reception, and with some difficulty this embarrassing audience was averted, a private request from Windsor having perhaps contributed to this decision.

Meanwhile, the health of Queen Victoria, now in her eighty-second year, had declined to such an extent as to give rise to the gravest fears. Her alarming condition in January 1901 caused the German Emperor to undertake his famous visit to Osborne at short notice.

His intentions may be gathered from the following letter which he wrote to Sir F. Lascelles on January 19, 1901:

> Since I left you I saw Uncle Arthur,[289] who had just received the notice to immediately return as the situation was very grave. He could not catch the train, so I have ordered my special to be ready and shall accompany him. I have duly informed the Prince of Wales, begging him at the same time that no notice whatever is to be taken of me in my capacity as Emperor and that I come as grandson. So please telegraph off any kind of reception or

> anything resembling it. I suppose the "petticoats" who are fencing off poor Grandmamma from the world—and, I fear, often from me—will kick up a row when they hear of my coming; but

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[286] British Ambassador to Berlin (LN). Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles (1841–1920) was a British diplomat. He served as Ambassador to both Russia and Germany. He was related to the Earls of Harewood as the fifth son of William Lascelles, himself the third son of Henry Lascelles, 2nd Earl of Harewood. He joined the Diplomatic Service in 1861. (Ed.)

[287] Foreign Minister. (LN). Bernhard Heinrich Karl Martin, Prince of Bülow (1849–1929) was a German statesman who served as the imperial chancellor of the German Empire and minister-president of Prussia from 1900 to 1909. His government's foreign policy did much to antagonize France and Great Britain thereby contributing significantly to the outbreak of the World War I. Born into a prominent family of Danish-German aristocrats, Bülow entered the German foreign service after his father, Bernhard Ernst von Bülow, was appointed foreign secretary in Otto von Bismarck's government. He held several diplomatic posts, including German ambassador to Rome, before being appointed foreign secretary in 1897 by Wilhelm II. Three years later, he was appointed chancellor following the resignation of the Prince of Hohenlohe.

[288] Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. (LN). Oswald Samuel Konstantin Freiherr von Richthofen (1847–1906) was a German diplomat and politician, who served as Foreign Secretary and head of the Foreign Office from 23 October 1900 to 17 January 1906. (Ed.)

[289] Duke of Connaught. (LN). (*See footnote on page 56*)

I don't care, for what I do is my duty, the more so as it is this "unparalleled" Grandmamma, as none ever existed before! So should you feel counter-currents, please cut them short at once. I just found a notice from Reid[290] saying that disquieting symptoms have developed that cause considerable anxiety. I leave with Uncle at six. Am very, very sorry. Wilhelm I.R.

The Emperor's sudden appearance produced many manifestations of good-will from the British public, which is essentially sentimental, and the Harmsworth[291] press even went to the length of hailing him with frenzied enthusiasm as "A Friend in Need". The visit taken in conjunction with his recent refusal to receive Kruger, did much to obliterate the effect of the Raid telegram, and appeared to indicate a real desire to improve Anglo-German relations. In fact, the Kaiser's friendly demeanour towards us got him into trouble with his own subjects, who resented the length of his stay here, and also with his Ministers, who were suffering from the groundless fear that relations between uncle and nephew would become so intimate and friendly that the interests or Germany would be endangered.

The proceedings of the Kaiser whilst on this visit have been described by various writers, including Baron von Eckardstein,[292] who was then a Secretary at the German Embassy, and who had worked hard to negotiate some form of alliance between the two countries. Only a few days before the Kaiser's arrival he had been in communication with Mr. Chamberlain at Chatsworth, who had already in 1898 expressed in public his wish for an Anglo-German agreement and who now repeated his views on the subject, and, according to Eckardstein, urged that advantage should be taken of the recent change at the Foreign Office—and of the absence of

Lord Salisbury abroad—to further this object. Some long conversations took place between the Kaiser and Lord Lansdowne, and the following undated notes made by the latter must refer to these interviews and embody the Imperial views on Russia:

- Don't talk of the Continent of Europe. Russia is really Asiatic
- In 1900 there was a Russo-French proposal for intervention.
- He telegraphed to Bülow to refuse.
- The Russian Emperor only fit to live in a country house and grow turnips.
- Only way to deal with him is to be the last to leave the room.
- French bitterly disappointed with Russia and with Russian Emperor. No real love between the two countries.
- Russian Grand Duke likes Paris and a girl on each knee.
- Russia bankrupt. Will get the money she wants in Wall Street.
- U.S. hates us and will go in with Russia.
- Russia wants to direct U.S. enterprise towards the Yangtse.

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[290] The index lists him as Sir John Reid but he must be Sir James Reid, 1st Baronet (1849–1923) a British doctor who served as physician-in-ordinary to three British monarchs: Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V. At the age of 31, Reid was given medical charge of the Royal Household at Balmoral. Queen Victoria became increasingly dependent upon Reid as she grew older, and he accompanied her everywhere. He also attended to members of the royal family, and delivered several of Victoria's grandchildren. (Ed.)

[291] Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe (1865–1922), was a British newspaper and publishing magnate. As owner of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*, he was an early developer of popular journalism, and he exercised vast influence over British popular opinion during the Edwardian era. Lord Beaverbrook said he was "the greatest figure who ever strode down Fleet Street." About the beginning of the 20th century there were increasing attempts to develop popular journalism intended for the working class and tending to emphasize sensational topics. Harmsworth was the main innovator. (Ed.)

[292] *Ten Years at the Court of St. James* (Eckardstein). (LN). Baron Herman von Eckardstein (1864–1933) was a diplomat from 1888. His activities were mainly based at the German Embassy in London, and from 1891 until 1902, he held various posts. Finally, from 1902 to 1907 as Counsellor and First Secretary, the Baron worked zealously for greater understanding between Germany and his host country. (Ed.)

These typical expressions of opinion were probably intended to instruct the new Foreign Secretary in his duties, but there does not appear any record of Lord Lansdowne's observations on this occasion, although the Kaiser stated subsequently that "he had made a visible impression" upon that reticent listener.

Not long after the Emperor's departure for Germany, Eckardstein again returned to the subject of an Anglo-German alliance—a subject rendered more possible for discussion by the threatening danger of a war between Russia and Japan. Lord Lansdowne's opinion on this issue may be gathered from his letter of March 18, 1901, addressed to Sir F. Lascelles.

> Eckardstein [he wrote], who has several times suggested to me (of course ''without authority") that Germany and England might egg on Japan to fight and then combine to prevent a third Power from intervening, now drops this idea altogether and is talking to me and others about a defensive alliance, limited in duration to, say, five years, between Germany and England against

(Page 200) LORD LANSDOWNE [1901]

> Russia and France, the idea being that neither we nor the Germans should be bound to help one another so long as we or they were at war with one only of the other two Powers, but that if a second joined in the attack, a second should join in the defence also.
>
> I doubt whether much will come of this, and there are obvious difficulties in giving effect to such an arrangement even if it were accepted in principle. It would oblige us to adopt in all our foreign relations a policy which would no longer be British but Anglo-German. I doubt, moreover, whether it would be possible to distinguish clearly between cases in which either of the two Powers was acting on the defensive and cases in which it was not. Action of a technically offensive character may be resorted to for a purpose which is unquestionably defensive.

There can be no doubt that Eckardstein was personally quite sincere in his efforts to promote an Anglo-German alliance. It was uncertain, however, whether he was fully authorised by his own Government to enter upon negotiations. Lascelles, appealed to on this point, said he said that he did not think that Eckardstein would have ventured to make proposals of such importance on his own responsibility, and that they corresponded so closely with the views which the Kaiser had expressed on various occasions that it was difficult to believe that they had not been inspired by the latter.

The negotiations with regard to an Anglo-German alliance proceeded so far that in May 1901 a Draft Convention was actually drawn up at the Foreign Office and submitted to Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury, who was still wedded to the policy of isolation,[293] pointed out that the practical effect of the proposals was that we should join the Triple Alliance, and, in his opinion, the liability of having to defend the German and Austrian frontiers against Russia was heavier than that of having to defend the British Isles against France, and therefore the bargain would be a bad one for us. We had never really been in danger in consequence of our isolation; but the great objection

(Page 201) EUROPEAN SITUATION [1901]

to the proposal was that neither we nor the Germans were competent to make the suggested promises. A promise of defensive alliance with England would excite bitter murmurs in every rank of German society, judging from the indications of German sentiment which had appeared during the last two years. As for ourselves, a British Government could not undertake to declare war, for any purpose, unless it was a purpose of which the electors would approve; and if the Government promised to declare war for an object which did not commend itself to public opinion, the promise would be repudiated and

[293] Gooch and Temperley, volume II, pp. 68, 69. (LN)

the Government would be turned out. Lord Salisbury added that Count Hatzfeldt[294] had on several occasions tried to ascertain from him what would be the probable attitude of England in the event of Germany or Italy becoming involved in war with France, but that he had always replied that no English Minister could venture on such a forecast.

In the early days of the session of 1901, a debate took place in the House of Lords which attracted much attention and produced some painful impressions. Lord Wolseley, who had now retired, took the opportunity of condemning in strong terms the Order in Council of November 1895, which had to a great extent transferred the command and management of the army from the Commander-in-Chief to a civilian Secretary of State, assisted by subordinates with whom he dealt directly, and the obvious moral of his speech was that the lamentable reverses during the early period of the Boer War were largely due to this cause. In a crowded House, which displayed considerably more signs of agitation than usually characterise that sedate assembly, Lord Lansdowne rose to reply at length, and it was the only occasion on which—in a personal experience of nearly thirty years—can recollect his showing any sign of temper. Obviously he felt aggrieved and was suffering from a sense

(Page 202) LORD LANSDOWNE [1901]

of provocation, but his case was overwhelming. On the general question he contended that it had been finally decided that the centralization of all War Office administration in the person of the Commander-in-Chief should cease, but that the Order in Council assigned to that official duties of great importance, and that if Lord Wolseley had paid more attention to the discharge of those duties, we might have made better use during the war of the auxiliary forces, which had been neglected during the last five years. But the real sting in his reply was the remark that Lord Wolseley, before the war, might have warned the Government that Ladysmith was a dangerous station for British troops to occupy, and also that it would take more than one army corps to defeat the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. These strictures have since been justified by official documents and by Lord Wolseley's own memoranda, but at the time they were resented strongly by various speakers in the debate as being in the nature of an unfair personal attack upon the ex-Commander-in-Chief. The debate was adjourned, and Lord Wolseley returned to the attack on March 15 with a demand for the publication of all the papers bearing upon the allegations made against him; but his position was not improved by an admission that he had underrated the fighting powers of the two Republics. The demand for papers was resisted by the Government on the ground that it would involve the publication of War Office minutes of the most confidential character; and Lord Lansdowne, who repeated more or less what he had said on the previous occasion, had little difficulty in convincing the House of the justice of his objections. In spite of the support of Lord Rosebery, Lord Northbrook, Lord Spencer,[295] and others, Lord Wolseley's motion was supported by only thirty-eight peers. It must be admitted, however, that although Lord Wolseley had a very weak case, since he was perfectly well aware when he took

(Page 203) EUROPEAN SITUATION, [1901]

office of the changed status of the Commander-in-Chief, much sympathy was felt for him in view of his distinguished past. The facts were imperfectly understood, not only by the public but by many of the peers. The contest between the two men seemed unequal. Lord Wolseley was broken in health, obliged to read his speeches, and incapable of an unprepared reply; while his opponent, in the plenitude of his intellectual power, was fortified by all the resources at the disposal of a Cabinet Minister. Besides this, public sympathy, in the event of a controversy between a soldier and a civilian, is usually on the

[294] German Ambassador in London (LN). Melchior Hubert Paul Gustav Graf von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg (1831–1901) was a German diplomat who served as ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1885 to 1901. He was also envoy to Spain and the Ottoman Empire, foreign secretary, and head of the Foreign Office. (Ed.)

[295] John Poyntz Spencer, 5th Earl Spencer (1835–1910), known as Viscount Althorp from 1845 to 1857, was a British Liberal Party politician under, and close friend of, prime minister William Ewart Gladstone. He was twice Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. (Ed.)

side of the former, as was demonstrated subsequently in the cases of Lord Midleton and General Buller and of Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener.

The conversations on the subject of an Anglo-German alliance, which had latterly been carried on by Eckardstein, were resumed in May by the Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, but as the latter was in failing health and about to leave his post, little or no progress was made; and the Kaiser, who in April had described the British Ministers as a "set of unmitigated noodles", showed signs of irritation that no practical result had been attained, and complained that the relations between the two countries could only be placed on a satisfactory footing by a definite and binding treaty, which would be of a great advantage to England, since we ran the risk of finding a coalition of Powers arrayed against us.

In August, King Edward proceeded to Germany, and, before leaving, had instructed Lord Lansdowne to prepare a private memorandum for his use upon all the various questions at issue between the two countries. Lord Lansdowne hurriedly compiled a document which dealt with a number of subjects: the Chinese negotiations concerning indemnities and other matters; the Netherlands South African Railway claims; the deportation of certain persons from South Africa; Koweit,[296] and

Morocco. This document was naturally confidential, but King Edward immediately on arrival handed it to the Kaiser, who, in his turn, at once sent it on to his own Foreign Office. Fortunately, little harm was done, as the memorandum contained nothing offensive to Germany; but Lord Lansdowne had been compelled to write it in great haste and a *lapsus calami* in which the word "Transcaspian" was inadvertently substituted for "Anatolian" gave an excuse for a typical gibe at British ignorance. The memorandum had spoken of the "Transcaspian" Railway terminating at Koweit. "Good heavens!" exclaimed the Imperial critic, in a marginal note in English: "how is that to come there? The British Foreign Office ought to learn geography! Bagdad Railway! The Transcaspian is to lead to Herat, I believe!" But at all events, as Sir F. Lascelles, who had seen the marginal note, observed, it showed that the Kaiser had taken the trouble to read the memorandum, and the German reply was not unfriendly in tone.

As, however, notwithstanding the apparently amicable attitude of the Kaiser, the negotiations between the two Governments hung fire, the German Government conceived the idea, in October, of inviting Sir Valentine Chirol,[297] the well-known journalist, on the staff of *The Times*, who was intimately acquainted with all the ramifications of German policy, to visit Berlin, doubtless with the object of gaining the support of *The Times* in the effort to obtain an alliance on Germany's own terms. The invitation came from Baron Holstein,[298] an old personal friend, but the intention was to give Count Bülow an opportunity of exercising his powers of persuasion, and the interview between him and Sir Valentine Chirol as recorded in the latter's book[299] is really a summary of the long story of the attempts of the two Governments to come to

terms. Count Bülow, who had never shown much signs of being an Anglophile, was an extremely specious and plausible advocate. He began by expatiating upon the disastrous effect produced upon the Kaiser by an alleged proposal by Lord Salisbury in 1895 to partition the Turkish Empire (of which no corroboration exists in this country), and then did his best to explain away the tortuous and underhand

[296] Now known as Kuwait. (Ed.)
[297] Sir Ignatius Valentine Chirol (1852–1929) was a British journalist, author, historian and diplomat. (Ed.)
[298] Foreign Office official. (LN). Friedrich August Karl Ferdinand Julius von Holstein (1837–1909) was a civil servant of the German Empire and served as the head of the political department of the German Foreign Office for more than thirty years. He played a major role in shaping foreign policy after Bismarck was dismissed in 1890. (Ed.)
[299] *Fifty Years in a Changing World*, Sir Valentine Chirol (LN)

proceedings of the German Government in China, where, amongst other manifestations of ill-will, Russian aggression in Manchuria had been declared to be outside the scope of the Anglo-German Agreement of 1900. He dwelt upon the obvious affection for England felt by the Kaiser, as evidenced by his visit to his dying grandmother, and by the advice he had given as to how the Boers should be beaten. Could anyone, under such circumstances, seriously believe that there was any real Anglophobia in Germany? As for the attacks upon England in the German press, the Foreign Office had never been privy to them; and with regard to the increase in the German Navy, how could England be jealous of this modest attempt to follow in her footsteps? It was the future alone which mattered, and Germany and England could assure the peace of the world by joining hands to defend it. Germany was ready and willing: England was in the precarious position brought about by isolation, and a prominent British statesman, Mr. Chamberlain, had declared Germany to be her natural ally. Bülow discreetly omitted to mention that he had received Mr. Chamberlain's overtures at the time with marked disapproval; appears to have, refrained from commenting upon the other numerous differences between the two countries in various parts of the world; and finally, coming to business, advocated an alliance from the scope of which Asia should be excluded, as Germany was unwilling to compromise her own relations with Russia—an arrangement which would have been an

excellent one-sided bargain for Germany. At the termination of the interview, he grasped his interlocutor by both hands and in his best theatrical manner gave vent to the following ebullition:

> Believe me, and I give you my word of honour as I sit in this chair as the Chancellor of the German Empire, not only shall I never countenance the hostile attacks upon your country of which I know a large—too large—section of the German press is often guilty, but I shall never allow, as in the past I have never allowed, the anti-British sentiments of an ignorant public to deflect me by so much as a hair's-breadth from the policy of true friendliness towards England which lies nearest my heart

The German Foreign Minister appears to have over-acted his part. A short time before the above interview took place, Mr. Chamberlain, in a speech at Edinburgh, had rightly and forcibly replied to the gross and unfounded charges made against British troops in South Africa by the German press, but Count Bülow made no allusion whatever to it. In a few days, however after the interview, the speech was disinterred for the benefit of the German press; and when discussed in the Reichstag, Count Bülow seized the opportunity to deliver a violent speech, which had the effect of producing an almost unparalleled outburst of Anglophobia.

The Reichstag speech caused so much indignation in England that King Edward apparently desired that a strong remonstrance should be made; but this was discouraged by Lord Salisbury, who considered that the more dignified and effective course would be to ignore it, and that if the King wished to show his personal displeasure he could do so by either postponing or cancelling a proposed visit of the Prince of Wales[300] to Berlin.

The Bülow Chamberlain recriminations may be said to have dealt a death-blow to the negotiations and 1901 was a fateful year for Europe in as much as before its end, Lord Lansdowne (December 19) was writing[301]

[300] The Prince of Wales after Queen Victoria's death in 1901 was George Frederick Ernest Albert (1865–1936) who was King George V from 6 May 1910 until his death in 1936. (Ed.)
[301] Gooch and Temperley, vol. ii. pp. 80-83 (LN)

to Sir F. Lascelles informing him that he had intimated to Count Metternich[302] that "the temper of the two countries was not in a particularly favourable state", and that "while we certainly did not regard the German proposal with an unfriendly or critical eye, he did not think that for the moment we could take it up". A suggestion that the two countries might arrive at an understanding with regard to specific questions in particular parts of the world met with no encouragement from the German Ambassador, who said that with his Government it was a case of "the whole or none".

Much has been written concerning the breakdown of the proposed Anglo-German alliance, and each country has laid the blame upon the other. There can be little doubt that Eckardstein, Hatzfeldt, and Metternich, the German representatives in London, were sincerely anxious to promote it, and there can equally be little doubt that at one time the Kaiser desired it himself, but it is difficult to believe that this friendly feeling prevailed in Berlin amongst responsible Ministers, such as Holstein and Bülow. Eckardstein, who is, however, not always reliable, in view of his bias against the German Foreign Office, has enumerated four occasions in 1895, 1898, 1899, and 1901—on which the British overtures were rejected owing to the stupidity of his Government, and other German writers have taken the same view. There is much truth in this charge, but the failure was not solely due to the Germans making impossible conditions. Clearly there was a reluctance on both sides to enter upon so critical an enterprise. Lord Salisbury was still Prime Minister in 1901 and strongly averse from entangling the country in alliances with European countries, and his views could not be disregarded. The Germans, on their side, were labouring under the hallucination that it would never be possible for us to come to terms with either Russia or France,

and that they might consequently impose any conditions upon us which they thought fit—as, for instance, the demand that we should join the Triple Alliance and thus become responsible for the tottering Austro-Hungarian fabric. They were also haunted by the fear of a war on two fronts, and for that reason were reluctant to take a step which might endanger their relations with Russia. The German military and naval chiefs never viewed the project with any favour, and the erratic personality of the Kaiser was another obstacle. But the real obstacle to any renewal of these proposals lay in the persistent increase in the German Navy, the object of which was unmistakable, and in the suspicion and bad feeling which existed between the two countries. Until the Jameson raid, we had always regarded Germany as a friendly nation, but the outburst of German feeling over that disgraceful incident completely dispelled our illusion, and gave place to a feeling of mutual dislike which eventually developed into a hatred, always more pronounced upon the German side than upon ours.

The failure of the negotiations in 1901 may be described as a turning-point in the history of the world, and will, doubtless provide a subject of endless speculation as to what would have occurred had they ended favourably; but one thing is certain, and that is that William II (the Kaiser) would have been almost intolerable as an ally

Meanwhile, Anglo-French relations were in a scarcely happier state. For a long time past Anglo-French relations had been extremely unfavourable; nor were the reasons far to seek. As a Secretary at the Paris Embassy from 1881 until 1886, I witnessed the rise and fall of at least ten French Governments— for they seldom lasted more than six months—and I cannot remember one, with the exception of the short-lived Gambetta Administration, which was not distinguished by some measure of Anglophobia. Twice subsequently the two

[302] The new German Ambassador in London. (LN). Paul Anton Marie Hubert Graf Wolff Metternich zur Grach (1853–1934) was a Prussian and German ambassador in London (1901–1912) and Constantinople (1915–1916). He was a prominent German opponent of Ottoman actions during the Armenian genocide. (Ed.)

countries were on the verge of war: in 1894 in consequence of a quarrel over Siam, and in 1898 over Fashoda. There was still much rancour in 1901 over the humiliation which the latter incident was considered to have inflicted upon the French nation; and the conflicting interests of the two countries in various parts of the world and the South African War had further increased our unpopularity. Writing in November 1900, whilst preparations were being made in France to give Kruger a triumphant reception, Sir Edmund Monson[303] explains that while a section of the more moderate and sensible people, not necessarily Anglophile, were undoubtedly anxious to keep the peace between the two countries, nine-tenths of the papers circulating in Paris and in the provinces were ‘‘maliciously set against us”, a combined Opposition was actually attacking the Waldeck-Rousseau Government for subservience to England on the question of the surrender of Sipido,[304] an anarchist who had attempted to murder the Prince of Wales. Sir Edmund's letter also contains an unflattering portrait of the French Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé,[305] of whom so much was to be heard subsequently.

> I think it is well to explain to you [he wrote to Lord Lansdowne], as I have done before to Lord Salisbury, that Delcassé is an unsatisfactory Minister to us diplomatists in Paris. He is extremely uncommunicative, not to say secretive. Consequently it is very rare that any one of us succeeds in extracting information from him. He has plenty of commonplace conversation, which flows glibly enough, and he will talk eloquently in an academical fashion. But he hardly ever tells one anything in the way of political news, and he has an adroit way of feigning ignorance which took me in at first, until I convinced myself that it was all shamming. He always urges that he is not a diplomatist by profession, but he carries the practice of subterfuge to an extent which I have hardly ever met before in a Minister of Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, he does not tell lies systematically, as X did.

This somewhat negative recommendation and Delcassé’s favourable impression of Lord Lansdowne owing to the latter’s French descent seemed to be, from the British point of view, the only promising signs in the personality of the French Foreign Minister, who had been largely responsible for the enterprises which resulted in Fashoda. Anglophobia in France was now so marked that the German Ambassador at Paris observed to Sir E. Monson that Fashoda seemed actually to have obliterated the memory of Alsace-Lorraine; and the late President of the Republic, M. Felix Faure,[306] who had a passion for Royalties, had actually counted firmly upon the presence of the German Emperor at the Paris International Exhibition. As Sir E. Monson observed in a despatch in March:

> It is not to be forgotten that during the last two years the current of the public opinion in Germany and France has run in one channel in its direction towards a common object of antipathy. The French press, and also French politicians and officials, have been gratified by the bitterness of the German press and people against British policy in South Africa.

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[303] British Ambassador in Paris. (LN) Sir Edmund John Monson, 1st Baronet (1834–1909), was a British diplomat who was minister or ambassador to several countries in his career including Austria from 1893 and France from 1896. (Ed.)

[304] Jean-Baptiste Victor Sipido (1884–1959) was a Belgian anarchist who became known when he, then a young tinsmith's apprentice, attempted to assassinate Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), at the Brussels-North railway station in Brussels on 5 April 1900. (Ed.)

[305] Théophile Delcassé (1852–1923) was a French politician who served as foreign minister from 1898 to 1905. He is best known for his hatred of Germany and efforts to secure alliances with Russia and Great Britain that became the Entente Cordiale. He belonged to the Radical Party and was a protege of Léon Gambetta. (Ed.)

[306] Félix François Faure (1841–1899) was President of France from 1895 until his death in 1899. Faure became a member of the Chamber of Deputies for Seine-Inférieure in 1881. He rose to prominence in national politics up until unexpectedly assuming the presidency. (Ed.)

In September an official visit was paid to France by the ill-fated Nicholas II. and his Consort.[307] This event had been eagerly anticipated, but much disappointment was caused by the fact of Paris being omitted from the Imperial itinerary. On a previous visit, in 1895, the Emperor had not accepted the hospitality of his allies and had stayed at the Russian Embassy. On this occasion, however, the Imperial pair, after being present at a great naval review at Dunkirk, were entertained at Compiègne, and the elaborate honours paid to them by their Republican hosts excited the derision of the more scurrilous section of the Paris press, which, as Lord Dufferin remarked in a famous despatch written in 1893, "is the worst in Europe". The Imperial visit was, of course, represented as a huge success: an immense military review was held in honour of the distinguished

guests; but the speeches made by the Emperor consisted of the vaguest platitudes, and, with characteristic ill-luck, the Empress appears to have been unfortunate in her social relations with the Republican dignitaries.

It will easily be realised that as far as Anglo-German and Anglo-French relations were concerned, Lord Lansdowne had difficult furrows to plough in a flinty soil. Nor were Anglo-Italian relations any better. Mention has already been made of the unsatisfactory nature of our general relations with the European Powers in consequence of the South African War, but, apart from that cause, Italy had other grievances against us of a somewhat indefinite nature and yet was anxious to obtain a pledge of support in the event of a war with France. The present King[308] had only recently succeeded to the throne, and at his first reception of our Ambassador, the late Lord Currie,[309] he dwelt at length upon the length and costliness of the Boer War and the weak points of our military system, which he argued must force us to adopt compulsory military service. He also complained of the financial strain imposed upon Italy in consequence of the despatch of 4,000 men to China, and thought that the demand for the execution of the Chinese Princes was unwise; but said little or nothing about Italian relations with England. The latter point is dealt with in the following letter from Lord Currie to Lord Lansdowne, dated November 27, 1900. Lord Currie had, in the previous September, urged that the British Government "should give some proof of our determination to stand by Italy in the event of her being attacked":

Lord Currie to Lord Lansdowne. November 27th, 1900

> It is not to be denied that the friendship felt for us in Italy has sensibly cooled, and I believe the date at which the process began is that of our North African Convention with France. The Italians held that we ought to have brought them into the bargain respecting the Hinterland of Tripoli. Since then, they thought us lukewarm in our support of their interests in China

[307] Alexandra Feodorovna (born Princess Alix of Hesse and by Rhine; 1872–1918) was the last Empress of Russia as the consort of Tsar Nicholas II from their marriage on 26 November [O.S. 14 November] 1894 until his forced abdication on 15 March [O.S. 2 March] 1917. A granddaughter of Queen Victoria, Alexandra was one of the most famous royal carriers of haemophilia and passed the condition to her son, Alexei Nikolaevich, Tsarevich of Russia. (Ed.)

[308] Victor Emmanuel III (Italian: Vittorio Emanuele Ferdinando Maria Gennaro di Savoia; 1869– 1947) was King of Italy from 29 July 1900 until his abdication on 9 May 1946. A member of the House of Savoy, he also reigned as Emperor of Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941 and King of the Albanians from 1939 to 1943, following the Italian invasions of Ethiopia and Albania. (Ed.)

[309] Philip Henry Wodehouse Currie, 1st Baron Currie (1834–1906) known as Sir Philip Currie between 1885 and 1899, was a diplomat. He was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1888/9 to 1893, Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1893 to 1898 and Ambassador to Italy from 1898 to 1902. (Ed.)

when Admiral Canevaro[310] attempted to gain possession of San Mun Bay.
Very unreasonably, too, they are annoyed that we do not out of our abundance deal with them more bountifully on the Sudan-Erythrea boundary.

The Maltese language question is a purely sentimental grievance, and I do not believe that the Transvaal War has had much effect in alienating the Italians from us. They are far too much wrapped up in themselves to care what happens to the Boers; and the Garibaldians, who are inclined to sympathise with a people "struggling to be free", are strongly Anglophile. Expressions of good-will from English statesmen are eagerly welcomed, and the supply of these has not of late been quite adequate to the demand. But *au fond* the Italians are not a sentimental people and value their friends mainly according to the advantages they can extract from them. At the present moment they doubt whether there is anything to be got out of us, and hence the cooling of their affections.

The French party had been busy since the Franco-Italian Commercial Convention was signed in the autumn of 1898, but Barreu,[311] the French Ambassador, gave great offence by his too open attempts to nobble the press, and they have not made much way. German influence, which is more discreetly exercised, and which is based on the Triple Alliance, is far stronger in governing circles, though I do not imagine there is any great sympathy for the Germans among the general public

In default of more practical benefits, I have done my best to keep up the supply of cordiality and sympathy on the part of England, and I find that the acknowledgment of my friendly speeches is generally accompanied by expressions of regret at our changed attitude.

I am anxious that H.M. Government should realise the present state of opinion in this country. Whether it is to be regretted or not must depend mainly on the view taken by our military and naval authorities as to the part that Italy should play in the event of war between England and France. Whether they have any definite opinion on the subject I do not know but I venture to think that it is one which, in the present state of Europe, ought to be carefully considered.

The suggestion that we should give a formal assurance of support to Italy met with little approval, as

gathered from Lord Lansdowne's reply to Lord Currie, dated December 12, 1900:

I fear that I cannot help you much to solve the Italian conundrum.

It is a pity that there should be any coolness between us: your attempt to account for its origin is very interesting . I trust that the feelings may prove transient. We must do what we can to allay it by considerate language in all matters affecting both countries.

[310] Felice Napoleone Canevaro (1838–1926) was an Italian admiral and politician and a senator of the Kingdom of Italy. He served as both Minister of the Navy and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his naval career, he was best known for his actions during the Italian Wars of Independence and later as commander of the International Squadron off Crete in 1897–1898. (Ed,)

[311] The index has the spelling Barrère which identifies him as Camille Barrère (1851–1940) a French diplomat, most notably the ambassador to Italy from 1897 to 1924. In 1902, Barrère negotiated a secret accord with Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Giulio Prinetti that ended both countries' historical rivalry for North Africa. (Ed.)

> But it is clear that you wish to go a good deal further. I gather from your despatch of September 28th that what you contemplate is a formal intimation that in the event of war between us and France we should afford protection to the port and fleets in Italy.
>
> It seems to me that we ought to be extremely careful how we give any such assurance as that suggested. I use the word "assurance" because unless the intimation amounted to one, it would not be regarded as of any value. In the case supposed, we might be at war with more Powers than one, and it might be of less importance to us to save Italian ships and ports than to concentrate our own ships at those points where we were most threatened or where we could strike hardest at the enemy. I should, therefore, doubt the wisdom of accepting the obligation to protect Italy, which might prove a source of serio embarrassment to us.
>
> Moreover, the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory arrangement would be increased if it is true that the policy of Italy in case of a European war will be mainly determined by the advice she may receive from Germany, whose concurrence, you think, will be necessary.
>
> As at present advised, I see nothing for it but to persevere in the line of action which you are very wisely following, and to show all possible civility and good-will towards the Italian government, whenever the chance presents itself: e.g . in any operations in the Somali Hinterland we must go out of our way to assure Italy as to our intentions.
>
> But I shall not fail to consider carefully what you have written and I may perhaps find that further study renders me more sanguine as to the possibility of giving effect to your ideas.

Lord Salisbury, in a written concurrence with this

(Page 214) LORD LANSDOWNE [1900]

reply, said that he had often received similar complaints from Count Hatzfeldt:

> My answer always was that England never gives assurances of unconditional support, unless under existing treaties. Our conduct in any future war will depend largely on the *casus belli*. As that cannot be foreseen, so neither can our attitude be foreseen.

The main importance of the above correspondence lies in the fact that war between ourselves and France was evidently looked upon as a strong probability by those best qualified to form a judgment, and some commiseration may be felt for Lord Currie, who complained in a private letter to the late Sir Eric Barrington[312] that he could not extract from Lord Salisbury any definite opinion as to what our relations with Italy ought to be under these circumstances. It should be remembered that Lord Salisbury only resigned the Foreign Office in November but that as Prime Minister his influence was naturally paramount

Lord Lansdowne's difficulties as Foreign Secretary were further increased by the complete lack of understanding between Russia and England

In January 1898, Lord Salisbury had made a direct overture to Russia, with a proposal that the two countries should come to an agreement with regard to China The proposal was favourably received by the Tsar and his Minister M. Witte,[313] and negotiations on the subject proceeded satisfactorily until it

[312] Sir Bernard Eric Edward Barrington (1847–1918) was a British civil servant who was principal private secretary to three Foreign Secretaries including the Earl of Derby and the Marquess of Salisbury. (Ed.)
[313] Count Sergei Yulyevich Witte (1849–1915), also known as Sergius Witte, was a Russian statesman who served as the first prime minister of the Russian Empire, replacing the emperor as head of government. Neither liberal nor conservative, he attracted foreign capital to boost Russia's industrialization. He served under the final two emperors of Russia, Alexander III (r. 1881–1894) and Nicholas II (r. 1894–1917). (Ed.)

was discovered that the Russian Government was obstructing a British loan to China; and a complete breakdown occurred later in consequence of the shameless German seizure of Kiaochow, for the Russians in their turn retaliated by seizing Port Arthur and turning it into a military instead of a free port, while we were forced eventually to follow their example by acquiring a lease of Wei-hai-wei. The Boxer rebellion and the international expedition sent to

China in 1900 under the command of Count Waldersee[314] for the purpose of restoring order had only accentuated the differences between the various nations concerned, and in 1900 Anglo-Russian relations were a source of continual anxiety.

In the spring of 1901, however, the Russian Foreign Minister, Count Lamsdorff,[315] showed some inclination towards a more conciliatory policy. In the opinion of Sir Charles Scott,[316] the British Ambassador, he was reflecting the views of the Russian Royal Family as against those the Grand Dukes and other military chauvinists. There were no doubt other reasons. Count Lamsdorff was not an enthusiast for the French alliance, and his inclination turned rather towards monarchical States than to Republics subject to constant political changes; but probably the chief motive which influenced him was the fear of a future war with Japan.

Lord Lansdowne to Sir Charles Scott. April 23, 1902

> Count Lamsdorff has always impressed me favourably and I am as ready as you are to give him credit for a desire to pursue a conciliatory policy. Some of his statements to you are, however, a little difficult to understand. It may be literally true he had never got so far as a "definite" or "final" draft of the agreement, but there must have been something a good deal more fully developed than a mere sketch prepared in the different Departments concerned. Nor, again, does it seem to me quite probable that the Chinese were never asked to sign anything, and that all their perturbation was simulated or caused by mere anticipation of what Russia might ask them to submit to.
>
> Be this, however, as it may, we shall certainly not reject an overture, if one is made to us; and you cannot do wrong in repeating that we wish to be friends, and that we recognise special interests which Russia possesses in Manchuria.

> You have already heard that we are beginning to arrange for a reduction of our force. The other Powers will do the same and Russia may follow *pari passu*[317] in Manchuria.
>
> The gain would be great if she would accept our policy in regard to the indemnity question—a policy which is dictated mainly by our desire to bring about the early withdrawal of the greater part of the allied forces, and the restoration of China to those normal conditions which Count

[314] Alfred Ludwig Heinrich Karl Graf von Waldersee (1832–1904) was a German field marshal who became Chief of the Imperial German General Staff. He became Prussian military attaché at the Paris embassy in 1870. This gave him insight into the French defences that would prove crucial in the upcoming Franco-Prussian War, in which he played a significant role. Later, as principal assistant to Field-Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, von Waldersee gained influence with the future Kaiser Wilhelm II, who promoted him Chief of Staff on his accession. (Ed.)

[315] Count Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorf (1845–1907) was an Imperial Russian statesman of Baltic German descent who served as Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire from 1900–1906, a crucial period which included the Russo-Japanese War and the Russian Revolution of 1905. (Ed)

[316] Sir Charles Stewart Scott (1838–1924) was a British diplomat from 1859 and rose to be British ambassador to Imperial Russia from 1898 to 1904. (Ed.)

[317] At an equal rate. (Ed.)

> Lamsdorff so much desires. Unless we can find a short cut such as wc have suggested, I fear the abnormal situation may be indefinitely prolonged
>
> We are quite ready to facilitate a substantial increase in the import duties, but not merely for the purpose of enabling China to pay her creditors.

This second attempt to arrive at a friendly understanding with Russia on Chinese questions was no more successful than it predecessor. The agreement referred to in the previous letter related to Manchuria. The Russian Government, going behind the backs of the other Powers, was endeavouring to force upon the Chinese an agreement which would virtually have transformed Manchuria into a Russian province. In deference to protests from all sides, it was announced that the negotiations would be dropped; but Russian troops continued to occupy the country and collected the Customs revenues of Newchwang. These proceedings were all the more flagrant in view of the fact that when, after the Chinese War, Japan was in possession of a portion of South Manchuria only, Russia had stated that the continued possession of such territory was calculated to menace the independence of Corea (Korea) and calculated to disturb the peace of the Far Fast.

Trom this time on, Anglo-Russian negotiations with regard to China consisted mainly in an endeavour on our part to secure an evacuation of Manchuria, and a date (April 8, 1903) was actually fixed upon for this purpose: but when the time arrived the Russians laid down conditions which the Chinese found impossible to accept; all protests were disregarded, and the deadlock

continued until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.

Thus, wherever Lord Lansdowne looked in 1901 on the continent of Europe he found coolness and hostility. England was isolated, and it was therefore not surprising that the project of an alliance with a non-European Power should now be entertained.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE [1901]

(Page 218)

When the three Great Powers, Russia, France, and Germany, combined in 1895 for the purpose of robbing Japan of the fruits of victory over the Chinese and insisted upon the retrocession of the Liao-tung Peninsula and of Port Arthur, they presumably failed to foresee the consequences. Few more hypocritical transactions have taken place during recent times. The three governments intervened nominally in order to preserve the integrity of China whereas their real intention was to secure advantages for themselves. Thus, Russia, as recompense for her support, obtained the concession for the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway; France obtained concessions in Yunnan and along the Yangtse; and Germany was obliged, for the time being, to content herself with the concession of a portion of the city of Tientsin for the exclusive use of the German colony. By 1901 two of the self-constituted friends of China had greatly improved their positions. Russia was in possession of Manchuria and Port Arthur, and the opportune murder of two missionaries in 1897 had enabled the Germans to seize Kiao-chow and to give the Kaiser an occasion for sabre-rattling which excited the perturbation of the civilized world.

What Russia France, and Germany apparently failed to realize, however, was that Japan was a very different country from China, and that a new Power had risen which was determined not only to recover what

(Page 219) ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE [1901]

it had lost, but to assume its place amongst the great nations of the civilized world. As the result of the Shimonoseki intervention in 1895, a new grouping of the Great Powers in the Far East was formed, Germany and France siding with Russia, and England and America with Japan, and the opinion gradually grew in the latter country that an alliance with us had become desirable.

In the spring of 1901 the international troops were still in China; the conditions in that country were becoming more and more confused; and according to Sir Claude Macdonald,[318] who had until recently been British Minister in Peking, the three successive German Ministers who had been his colleagues there had all frequently stated, in spite of their Government's assurances to the contrary, that it was impossible to maintain the integrity of China, and that the sooner that country was partitioned the better. German policy in the Far East at this particular period was singularly unedifying. While perpetually assuring the world that all they desired was the pacification of China and open opportunity for all, the Germans were terrorising the country with punitive expeditions, demanding preposterous indemnities and concessions, secretly conniving at Russian aggression, and yet simultaneously inciting the Japanese to war with Russia by promising them British assistance.

The first Japanese approaches to the British Government appear to have been made in April 1901, when Count Hayashi,[319] the Japanese Minister in London, suggested to Lord Lansdowne that the two Governments should endeavour to arrive at some permanent understanding for the protection of their

[318] British Minister in Tonkin (LN) Colonel Sir Claude Maxwell MacDonald (1852–1915) was a British soldier and diplomat, best known for his service in China and Japan. In 1896, MacDonald was appointed Her Majesty's Minister in China. He was simultaneously the British Minister to the Empire of Korea in 1896 through to 1898. MacDonald was appointed Consul-General to the Empire of Japan in October 1900. On 30 January 1902, the first Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed in London between the Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne and Hayashi Tadasu, the Japanese Minister. (Ed.)

[319] Count Hayashi Tadasu (1850–1913) was a Japanese career diplomat and cabinet minister of Meiji-era Japan. On 2 December 1905 Hayashi became the first Japanese ambassador to the Court of St James's, as diplomatic relations were upgraded between the Empire of Japan and the British Empire. (Ed.)

interests, and, as usually happens on such occasions, explained that he "was merely expressing his own views". Count Hayashi, it may be noted, was an extremely capable man, who had received a European education, spoke excellent English

and had been Minister in Peking and St. Petersburg, besides having held important posts in his own country.

Count Hayashi, whose first advances were not unfavourably received, of course lost no time in communicating with his Government, and learnt in the meanwhile, upon reliable authority, that some of the British Cabinet Ministers, including Mr. Chamberlain, were well disposed towards the project. Another important conversation took place on July 31, and upon this occasion it was Lord Lansdowne who explained that "he was speaking without authorization from His Majesty's Government".

That evening Lord Lansdowne wrote to Mr. Whitehead,[320] the British Charge d'Affaires in Tokyo:

> ... We then discussed the situation in regard to Manchuria. Count Hayashi told me that the Japanese had a strong sentimental dislike to the retention by Russia of that province, from which they had, at one time, been expelled.
>
> But Japan's real concern was for Corea (Korea). Corea could not possibly stand alone - its people were far too unintelligent—and sooner or later it would have to be decided whether the country was to fall to Russia or not. They would certainly fight in order to prevent it, and it must be the object of their diplomacy to isolate Russia, with which Power, if it stood alone, they were prepared to deal.

Here we have really the kernel of the question in a few words. Japan was prepared to fight Russia for Corea single-handed, but not if other Powers, such as France or Germany, were to intervene. Hence the necessity for a British alliance.

The conversation terminated with observations from Lord Lansdowne that there was so much resemblance between the policy of the two Governments, neither of which harboured aggressive designs in the Far Fast that it would be worth while to consider what joint line of conduct should be followed, supposing the balance of

power in those regions to be threatened with serious disturbance. He added that he was quite ready to return to the matter later on. Hayashi reported the conversation to Tokio and was overjoyed to receive a telegram on August 8:[321]

> Japanese Government acknowledges the purport of the propositions made by England regarding a definite agreement and accepts *in toto* your reports of the conversations with Lord Lansdowne. It desires you to proceed to obtain full particulars of the British attitude in this matter. Success or failure of this Convention depends on your carefulness. When our policy is fully decided upon, the work will be easy.

---

[320] Gooch and Temperley, vol ii p. 91. (LN) Sir James Beethom Whitehead (1858–1928) was a British diplomat. Among his many postings he was appointed Secretary of Legation at Tokyo in October 1898 and in October 1901 he transferred as First Secretary of Legation at Brussels. (Ed.)

[321] *Secret Memoirs of Count Hayashi*, ed. A. M. Pooley: London, 1915. These memoirs, although they have possibly suffered in translation, are a substantially correct representation of the facts. (LN)

Hitherto the negotiations had been technically private. In September there was a change of Government in Tokio, and Count Komura,[322] who had become Foreign Minister, now authorized Hayashi to exchange official views and gave him formal powers as Plenipotentiary.

When the official negotiations were resumed on October 16, Hayashi gave a sketch of the proposed agreement. Manchuria, he said, was of secondary interest to Japan, but that it was a matter of life and death to keep the Russians out of Corea; and it was not only necessary to keep the Russians out, but to maintain the privileges conceded to Japan under the Russo-Japanese Agreement of 1898. As for China, both Japan and England were agreed as to the maintenance of its integrity and independence. Briefly, the Japanese proposal was that each Power should come to the assistance of the other, should either be attacked by more than one adversary, but only in that event. Should, for instance, Japan be at war with Russia, it would be sufficient if England remained neutral. Then there came up the question as to whether Germany should be a party to the understanding, and it was agreed that the best course

would be to complete the negotiations first and to decide afterwards as to the invitation to Germany.

The conversations continued during October and both parties produced drafts of articles which were subjected to much alteration and amendment, the question of Corea creating great difficulty, for the Japanese wanted a clearer statement as to their control there than the British Government was disposed to concede.

On November 6 the first British draft of the treaty itself was handed to Hayashi, and it was suggested by Lord Lansdowne that its provisions should be extended. That day Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir Claude Macdonald:

> I told Count Hayashi that I had prepared the draft solely with reference to the possibility of either Power becoming involved in hostilities in consequence of events in China or Corea. This was in accordance with the understanding at which he and I had arrived, and I had therefore not felt that I was justified in extending the scope of the draft. On the other hand, I felt bound to tell him that an agreement limited in this manner seemed to be in some respects an incomplete solution of the question. What, after all was of importance to both Great Britain and Japan was that neither of them should be overthrown by a combination of foreign Powers. The disappearance of Great Britain as a Sea Power in the Far East would be a calamity to Japan, and it would make no matter to her whether such a calamity were to be brought about by a quarrel originating in the Far East or by complications in some other part of the world.

The fact was that some of the Cabinet Ministers considered the proposed treaty was too one-sided, inasmuch as Japanese interests in Corea were much greater than British interests in the Yangtse, and they wished to extend its scope so as to include India, the Straits Settlements and Siam; this, however, the Japanese refused, on the ground that the liability was too great.

The negotiations were kept profoundly secret and Count Hayashi must have been much surprised to receive a telegram on November 13 directing him to go

[322] Marquess Komura Jutarō (1855–1911) was a Japanese statesman and diplomat. In September 1901, Komura became Minister for Foreign Affairs under the first Katsura administration, and he signed the Boxer Protocol on behalf of Japan. (Ed.)

to Paris at once, in order to communicate to the Marquis Ito[323] all the correspondence and to endeavour to persuade him to support the British draft.

A very critical situation was now disclosed which threatened to wreck the proposed alliance completely. The Marquis Ito, one of the most distinguished amongst the Elder Statesmen of Japan, and well known to be a strong advocate for an understanding with Russia, had left Japan earlier in the year to pay a private visit in America. He was now on his way to Russia via France, having purposely avoided England, and it became known that he was under instructions to negotiate a Russo-Japanese agreement on the basis of giving to each country a free hand in Manchuria and Corea respectively.

Hayashi proceeded to Paris on November 14. Ito was much surprised to find that the negotiations with England had proceeded so far, and it was only after much "persuasive oratory"[324] had been expended upon him that he was induced to promise his support, in principle, of an Anglo-Japanese alliance. His first inclination was to return to Japan and abandon the journey to Russia, but upon reflection he decided that he had better adhere to the original plan, as his arrival had already been notified to the Russian Government. Meanwhile, our Foreign Office was, of course, well aware both of his movements and of his pro-Russian proclivities, and Hayashi had to submit to some very plain speaking on the subject from the late Lord Bertie,[325] who was then an Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. Hayashi must also have had an uncomfortable interview with Lord Lansdowne, who asked why Ito had not visited England, and expressed polite surprise on being told that Ito was in bad health and that in order to avoid the November fogs of London he had preferred to spend that month in the particularly insalubrious city

of St. Petersburg. Once arrived in St. Petersburg, Ito's doubts as to the advantage of the British alliance seem to have revived. His conversations with the Emperor, Witte, and Lamsdorff inspired him with fresh hope that an understanding might be arrived at, and his activities were not cut short until in December the Council of Elder Statesmen decided definitely in favour of the British alliance and orders were sent to stop the Russian negotiations.

Before the end of 1901, Ito was in England and paid a visit to Bowood. By this time, the impressions created by his flattering reception in St. Petersburg had to some extent worn off, and he was reconverted to the principle of the British alliance, but he, nevertheless, put forward a tentative suggestion that Japan and Russia might enter into a fresh agreement with regard to Corea which would not be inconsistent with the British agreement. This attempt to have the best of both worlds met, however, with no success. He was told that it would be obviously improper that Japan should enter into a bargain with us affecting our common interests in the Far East and should then enter into another bargain of a conflicting character with a third Power. On January 9,1902, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir Claude Macdonald:

> The question of the agreement is still in suspense. The Japanese are pressing us hard to insert inconvenient stipulations with regard to the strength of the naval forces which each power is to maintain in the Far East. They are also anxious to keep for themselves an absolutely free hand as to Corean affairs. I hope we shall come to terms, but they are very stiff and we are naturally a little nervous as to the manner in which this new departure may be regarded in Parliament and by the public.

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[323] Prince Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909), born Hayashi Risuke, was a Japanese politician who served as the first prime minister of Japan from 1885 to 1888, and later from 1892 to 1896, in 1898, and from 1900 to 1901. He was a leading member of the genrō, a group of senior statesmen that dictated policy during the Meiji era. The Japanese nobility system was based largely on the French and so Marquis is used more than the English Marquess. (Ed.)

[324] *Secret Memoirs of Count Hayashi, (see ref. 60).*

[325] Francis Leveson Bertie, 1st Viscount Bertie of Thame (1844–1919) was a British diplomat. He was Ambassador to Italy between 1903 and 1905 and Ambassador to France between 1905 and 1918. (Ed.)

The various differences, however, between the two Governments were successfully adjusted, the assent of the Cabinet was obtained, and the treaty was finally signed on January 30, 1902. Its scope and object are

(Page 225) ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE [1902]

defined in a despatch from Lord Lansdowne to Sir Claude Macdonald, dated January 30, 1902:[326]

> I have signed to-day, with the Japanese Minister, an agreement between Great Britain and Japan, of which a copy is enclosed.
>
> The agreement may be regarded as the outcome of the events which have taken place during the last two years in the Far East, and of the part taken by Great Britain and Japan in dealing with them.
>
> Throughout the troubles and complications which arose in China consequent upon the Boxer outbreak and the attack upon the Peking Legations, the two Powers have been in close and uninterrupted communication and have been actuated by similar views.
>
> We have each of us desired that the integrity and independence of the Chinese Empire should be preserved, and that all nations should, within its limits, be afforded equal opportunities for the development of their commerce and industry.
>
> From the frequent exchanges of views which have taken place between the two Governments it has resulted that each side has expressed the desire that their common policy should find expression in an international contract of binding validity.
>
> We have thought it desirable to record in the Preamble of the instrument the main objects of our common policy in the far East, and in the first Article we join in entirely disclaiming any aggressive tendencies either in China or Corea. We have, however, thought it necessary also to place on record the view entertained by both the high contracting parties that should their interests, as above described, be endangered, it will be admissible for either of them to take such measures as may be indispensable in order to safeguard those interests.
>
> The principle obligations undertaken mutually are those of maintaining a strict neutrality in the event of either of them becoming involved in war, and of coming to one another's assistance in the event of either of them being confronted by the opposition of more than one hostile Power.
>
> H.M.G. have been largely influenced in their decision to enter into this important contract by the conviction that it

(Page 226) LORD LANSDOWNE [1902]

> contains no provisions which can be regarded as an indication of aggressive or self-seeking tendencies in the regions to which it applies. It has been concluded purely as a measure of precaution, to be invoked, should occasion arise, in the defence of important British interests. It in no way threatens the present position or the legitimate interest of other Powers.
>
> H.M.G. trust that the agreement may be found of mutual advantage to the two countries, that it will make for the preservation of peace, and that, should peace unfortunately be broken, it will have the effect restricting the area of hostilities.

[326] Gooch and Temperley, vol. ii. pp. 113, 114. (LN)

The agreement was published on February 11 but it was thought advisable to communicate its terms privately beforehand to the German Government, and this act of courtesy appears to have made a very favourable impression on the Kaiser, who told the British Ambassador he had received the communication "with interest and satisfaction", and expressed the surprise that the agreement had not been concluded earlier. In Italy and Austria opinion was entirely favourable, the view being expressed that we had not only achieved a great diplomatic success but secured the maintenance of peace in the Far East.

As for France and Russia, they made little attempt to conceal their disappointment. M. Cambon[327] remarked to Lord Lansdowne that there was far too much *méfiance* in England as to Russian designs in various parts of the world, that, agreement or no agreement, we should probably be unable to tolerate the partition of China or of Corea and that being so, he could not see what object we had in tying ourselves by a hard and fast bargain to a yellow ally who might involve us, in spite of ourselves in troublesome quarrels. M. Delcassé, who was probably too much annoyed to discuss the question at any length, seems merely to have disclaimed any intention of the part of France to infringe the integrity of China

Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, in addition to showing dissatisfaction, adopted an attitude of injured innocence. He said that he knew of no Powers having any intention to threaten the integrity, independence or interests specified in the agreement, and that it was impossible that it should not sound a somewhat disquieting note throughout the world by its provision for the eventuality of hostilities. This would lead to other Powers taking similar precautions; to demands for increased armaments, so disturbing to foreign relations; and in short, the publication of the agreement, prepared in such secrecy and sprung at this precise moment when everything looked so peaceful, was a great discouragement to him. He does not appear, however, to have made any reference to his own abortive negotiations with the Marquis Ito.

At home the reception of this startling new departure in foreign policy was almost universally favourable, although, in accordance with tradition, the agreement was denounced by the Liberal Party in both Houses of Parliament. Lord Rosebery, however, who naturally spoke with greater authority than anyone else, dissociated himself from his political colleagues and expressed his approval—observing, like the Kaiser, that he was surprised that the undertaking had not been arrived at long ago. It was, in fact, very difficult to find fault with a straightforward agreement the objects of which were peaceful and well defined, and it required an extraordinary amount of self-sufficiency to contend that we were justified in refusing, unconditionally, any offer of alliance.

The success of the agreement is now a matter of history and there is no necessity to dwell upon it here, but it may be as well to point out that the motives of the two Powers, in spite of the declaration in Article 1, were not precisely similar. We were anxious to maintain the peace and to obtain an ally in case we were attacked by a

[327] French Ambassador in London (LN). Pierre Paul Cambon (1843–1924) was a French diplomat and brother of Jules Cambon (see p. 471). In 1886, Cambon became French ambassador to Madrid; was transferred to Constantinople in 1890; and in 1898 to London, where he served until 1920. In London, Cambon quickly became an important figure by helping to negotiate the Entente Cordiale between Britain and France in 1904 and serving as the French representative at the London Conference that resolved the Balkan Wars between 1912 and 1913. Upon the outbreak of the First World War, Cambon helped secure British intervention on the French side. He was also the French signatory to the Sykes-Picot Agreement. (Ed.)

combination of Powers: on the other hand, the Japanese, while no doubt desirous of peace, too, were careful to leave a loophole which would give them an excuse for war with Russia over Corea if necessary. The efficiency of their military and naval forces was approaching its zenith, but unless the financial situation improved it would be impossible to keep them up to the mark, and if war with Russia was inevitable, perhaps the sooner it came the better. But if war with Russia was believed to be inevitable, how is it possible to account for the Ito mission—unless Ito, like the late Lord Haldane, was under the amiable delusion that his personality was sufficiently strong to prevent war between two nations? There seem to be only two explanations. One, that the pro-Russian party in Japan was stronger than was generally realised; the other, that the Japanese Government did not believe that the British negotiations would be brought to a successful conclusion, and that before they became aware of the progress which had been effected they made advances to Russia and only withdrew at the last moment. This was a very risky course, which might easily have led to disaster, for the Bismarckian policy of reinsurance is one which can only be pursued with safety by the stronger Power.

It will have been observed that all the negotiations took place in London, and the credit for the successful result should be attributed jointly to Count Hayashi and Lord Lansdowne. There can be little doubt that the former was instructed privately from Tokio to ascertain British feeling on the subject, and that he was much encouraged by the friendly reception of his overtures. The British Cabinet seem to have allowed the Foreign Secretary a free hand, and there was little interference with him by his colleagues. The private letters from Lord Salisbury do not display much enthusiasm for the new departure, but it is understood that by this time his political activity had considerably diminished. He

had wished to retire when Queen Victoria died, and now considered that important decisions should be left to younger men.

Lord Lansdowne’s real merit was that he was not afraid to assume a heavy responsibility. In those days diplomacy was secret and no steps whatever were taken to enlighten the public or to influence it by propaganda. The announcement of the agreement came as a complete surprise, but the appeal to the common sense of the country was completely successful, and as time proceeded the advantages of the Anglo-Japanese alliance became more and more evident. In after years it was both renewed and extended, and no adequate justification for its subsequent abandonment has ever been forthcoming.

[The Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904, as Japan sought to halt the expansion of the Russian Empire's colonies in China. Britain did not officially join the Russo-Japanese War, but supported Japan in espionage, ship design, finance, and diplomacy during the war. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was not activated, because its terms stipulated a promise of support only if a signatory entered war with more than one power, whereas Japan was at war only with Russia. Similarly, the nature of the alliance meant that France was unable to come to Russia's aid, as this would have meant going to war with Britain. Wikipedia.]

CHAPTER VIII

PERSIA, 1901-5

(Page 230)

In May 1901 Lord Lansdowne received a long confidential letter from Lord Curzon, who had succeeded Lord Elgin as Viceroy of India, intended exclusively for his eye, deploring the absence of any systematic British policy in Persia.[328] Lord Curzon complained that Lord Salisbury and his colleagues considered him to be suffering from "political inebriety" on the subject, and that they were too much immersed in the South African War and in other entanglements to pay any attention to Persian matters. He, therefore, now addressed himself in strict confidence to Lord Lansdowne as a former Viceroy who could appreciate the danger of allowing Persia to pass under the control of a foreign Power or to concede to it ports or points of vantage in the Gulf. Lord Curzon's letter, dated April 5, 1901, runs as follows:[329]

> Since we addressed you in September 1899, the situation, already bad, has changed materially for the worse. Within the last 25 years, British prestige and influence have never sunk so low. The Shah[330] is against us, because, owing to the narrow pedantries of the British Treasury, we refused him the loan he was anxious to take from us three years ago, but for which we drove him into Russia's arms, and because, for some reason which I have never been able to understand, he was not allowed to come to England in 1900. The Grand Vizier is against us because we deserted him while in exile, and left the Russians to bring him back. Our friends and allies in the country are.

(Page 231) PERSIA 1901-5 [1901]

> being banished to distant Governorships. The Russian Bank at Teheran is rapidly cutting out the Imperial Bank. Russian Consulates are being established in all parts of the country. The Persian Cossacks under Russian officers have been greatly raised in numbers. Their advanced guard is already at Ispahan, and we shall presently see detachments at Shiraz, Mohammereh, and Bushire. We affect to have prohibited Persia from making any railways in Southern Persia without our consent, but bodies of Russian engineers perambulate the entire country and push their surveys unhindered. We have large claims for damage done to British persons and interests in the South, but we are unable to obtain compensation. Meanwhile, subsidized Russian steamers are making their way into the Persian Gulf, and the artificial creation of trade will assuredly be followed by the still more artificial generation of political rights and claims.
>
> The Government of India have done what they can.
>
> Meanwhile, I am not aware that the Foreign Office at home has done anything, and, for all I know, we are as far from having a policy as we were in my day or have been, I may truthfully and, at any time during the past fifty years.

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[328] At this period, the British Naval Fleet was powered by coal-fired steam piston engines. HMS Queen Elizabeth, launched in 1913, was the first major warship to run entirely on oil. This transition was strategically risky since Britain had abundant coal but no domestic oil production, making the Navy dependent on imported oil, primarily from Persia (Iran). To secure supply, the British government purchased a controlling stake in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1914, which later became BP. In 1906, HMS Dreadnought was the first battleship driven by steam turbines. (Ed.)

[329] Gooch and Temperley, vol. iv. pp .356-363. Note this is not the full text but extracts from it. (Ed.)

[330] Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar (1853–1907) was the fifth Qajar shah of Iran, reigning from 1896 until his death in 1907. He is often credited with the creation of the Persian Constitution of 1906, which he approved of in one of his final acts as shah. He was the fourth son of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848–1896). (Ed.)

I will venture to say what I think ought to be done. It may be summed up in a sentence: "Make up your minds as to how far we are going to allow Russian encroachment to the south without resisting it." There is no use in drawing a mythical line across the middle of Persia.

1 do most emphatically urge that there should, quietly and deliberately, be framed a policy: (a) for the use of H.M.G. at home; (b) for the guidance of the Government of India; (c) for the clear understanding of the Persian Government. The latter has no more idea as to what our ultimate views and intentions are than we have ourselves.
You will, I am sure, not misinterpret or resent the candour with which I have written to you. Of course, you cannot remedy matters all in a day; but I do most earnestly entreat you during your time at the Foreign Office, which I hope will be long and I am certain will be distinguished, not to lose sight of the Persian question. For we are at present drifting merrily towards

another Port Arthur and a second Manchurian Convention. As a recent British representative at Teheran put it to me, all the while that he was there he felt like a jellyfish in a whirlpool.

This could not have been a very agreeable communication to receive—all the more so because Lord Curzon, who possessed far greater vision and knowledge than the ordinary Cabinet Minister, was very seldom in the wrong, and his complaints were founded upon undoubted facts, reinforced by a personal knowledge of the country in question. The replies which he received to various letters pitched in the same key can hardly have been considered adequate, but at all events they were an improvement upon the past; and, as was shown later, his exhortations, especially as regards the Persian Gulf, did lead to a definite statement of policy by H.M. Government.

In 1901 we were represented at Teheran by Sir Arthur Hardinge, a man of much capacity and energy, who had been a contemporary and friend of Curzon at Balliol, but who, as in the case of another early friend, subsequently found the strain of official relations with the Viceroy very exacting.

Two months before Lord Lansdowne had received Lord Curzon's views on Persia, Sir A. Hardinge had written to him, on March 5, 1901:

Russian influence is undoubtedly very strong here. Perhaps the number of Russian and Persian Cossacks under Russian officers in Persian employ make it seem to the eye of the ordinary observer even stronger than it really is, and give to the more modern part of Teheran, much of which is laid out and built in Russian style, a very "Asiatic-Russian" aspect. The Russians rather take the line of being "at home" in Persia, and of just tolerating the other European representatives as Western strangers, alien from Asia, who have no real business or *raison d'etre* in the country. They affect to act, in fact, somewhat as they did in Peking before the siege, standing aloof from, and thus, of course, effectually paralysing, any common European action for the reform of abuses or attainment of objects in which

all foreigners alike are interested—an attitude of which all the Western diplomats, even the French, arc inclined to be a little resentful. The one popular element in the country seems to be the Belgian Customs Administration, but its present heads, though perhaps not actively pro-Russian, feel the need of standing well with the Russian Legation, and, moreover, rather share the present Belgian dislike and jealousy of us, which Dr. Leyds[331] has done so much to foster.

[331] This may be Willem Johannes Leyds (1859–1940) who was a Dutch lawyer and statesman serving as state attorney and state secretary of the South African Republic. From 1898 to 1902, during the crucial period of the Second Boer War, he was the Republic's special envoy and minister plenipotentiary in Brussels, accredited to several European states. (Ed.)

> There are, however, just at present no burning political questions, and I doubt whether the Russians will or can do much more than slowly consolidate the position already won by them, so long as they have their hands free in the Far East.

In the same letter he intimated that the Shah was contemplating a visit to England, an announcement which evoked a minute by King Edward to the effect that a visit during the current year would be very awkward on account of the Court mourning, and that if he came in 1902 it would be difficult to avoid giving him a Garter, as his predecessor had received one. The Garter question subsequently became an important feature in Anglo-Persian relations.

In the autumn of 1901, the Persian Government was in much need of money, partly owing to the personal extravagances of the Shah, and it was thought to be a favourable opportunity for increasing British influence by a loan. As India was considered to be specially interested, it was suggested that the money should be found by the Indian Government, but the difficulty in arranging for it is illustrated in a letter from Lord Lansdowne to A. Hardinge in November.

> The Treasury [he wrote] met us with an absolute *non possumus*;[332] the India Office was suspicious and could not be induced to move at more than half-speed. Curzon, on the contrary, was ready to make the pace, but only upon conditions which seemed to me, as they seemed to you, prohibitive.

Lord Salisbury at the time was abroad, and as there was no one else capable of putting sufficient pressure upon the Departments concerned, the projected loan

fell through; but Sir A. Hardinge, as will be seen from the following letter, accepted the failure in a philosophic spirit, deriving consolation from the fact that we had increased our popularity by making an offer. It need scarcely be added that the Persians would have been delighted to borrow from us, had they not feared Russian disapproval.

The attempt to assist Persia financially having failed, Sir A. Hardinge urged that the Shah should be invited to pay a visit to England, more especially as it was an open secret that the Russians would do their best to prevent it.

> It is, I think, very desirable [he wrote] that the Shah should see England. Our enemies in his entourage are perpetually endeavouring to deprecate our power, magnifying every little reverse we have in South Africa, and urging that so long as the Boer War goes on we are powerless for good or ill. The sight of London, of our resources, *etc.*, and a cordial reception by the King and British Government would, I am sure, have an excellent effect, and would give him an opportunity of an exchange of views, which he never gets here, with Englishmen in important public positions. I hope, therefore, that His Majesty will send him an invitation. He is bent on visiting London if he can.
>
> To be able to make an offer, even of an unacceptable one, of financial aid to Persia, has been a great help to me, and has tended to dispel the belief which, I fancy, the Shah and Grand Vizier were both inclined to entertain that we did not care what became of the country.

In another letter to Lord Lansdowne, written on January 6, 1902, he suggests that in order to secure our rights in Persia it might be possible to do a deal with the Russians over Manchuria:

> If I may speak quite frankly, I do not quite understand why we did not inform the Russians of our intended advance to Persia. We can discuss the matter with Russia as equals, but Persia

[332] It cannot be done.

cannot; and the moment the Russian Government gave them to understand that their acceptance of our offer would be disagreeable at St. Petersburg, they dropped it and did not even dare to use it as a lever for getting better terms for themselves

(Page 235) PERSIA, 1901-5. [1902]

It struck me that Lamsdorff's communication to Charles Hardinge,[333] in which he dealt jointly with the Manchurian and Persian questions, gave us an opening for a deal, and that *désintéressement* in Manchuria, where our interests are less important than in Persia, might perhaps be the price of the restoration of the equilibrium here.

I am so convinced that the financial question dominates all others, with a corrupt and spendthrift Government like this, that I regard the recovery of our right to lend money to Persia as an absolute condition of our doing anything, or even maintaining our position here, and therefore as an advantage worth purchasing by pretty heavy concessions and risks. Once that is regained, everything else follows: as it is, we are ploughing the sands. Reasoning, arguments, the interests of their country in the future are nothing to the Persian Ministers: they understand only two things—force and money. With the latter one can do anything with them; but it must be given, not bargained about. Had we been willing so to arrange our offer that it could have been accepted by them without conflicting with their Russian engagements, we should have won the trick; but, as you say, the India Office and Treasury would not see the thing from the point of view of "Nothing venture, nothing have", and we must be content with having at least made a proposal, which has shown them that they can still turn to us in an emergency.

The much discussed visit of the Shah[334] to London was at length arranged, and Sir A. Hardinge wrote in March to impart that potentate's wishes as to how he should be entertained. He proposed to stay for about ten days and desired to avoid being taken over factories and "made giddy by the whirl and noise of machinery"; also to be spared any public dinners or functions entailing a series of long speeches: he would like on alternate days to be permitted to visit such of the sights oft London as might take his fancy, in a private manner, without being tied down to a fixed programme: he would appreciate a military review, but would only care to see a naval one "on condition that he could do

(Page 236) LORD LANSDOWNE [1902]

so on dry land, without having to get on to a ship". "He is not very fond of the opera and would prefer a first-class ballet. Whether His Majesty receives him at Buckingham Palace or at Windsor Castle, he would like to lay a wreath on the tomb of the late Queen: he is not keen on a reception in the City, and if he goes, as his father did, to the Guildhall, would desire the proceedings to be brief."

It will be observed that in this programme there is no suggestion that the Shah desired to discuss politics, and the real object of his visit was to secure a Garter, the bestowal of which was strongly urged, for important political reasons, by both Lord Lansdowne and Sir A. Hardinge. King Edward, however, was by no means disposed to comply with their advice, on the ground that the Shah was not a Christian, and announced on July 27 that he would not give a Garter "either now or afterwards".

The Shah arrived in London on August 18—an unfortunate moment, for the King had scarcely recovered from his dangerous illness: his arrival coincided with that of the Boer Generals, whose presence here excited so much hysterical enthusiasm, and most of the Cabinet Ministers were in the

[333] The present Lord Hardinge of Penshurst. (LN) Charles Hardinge, 1st Baron Hardinge of Penshurst, (1858–1944) was a British diplomat and statesman who served as Viceroy and Governor-General of India from 1910 to 1916. Hardinge was the second son of Charles Hardinge, 2nd Viscount Hardinge, and the grandson of Henry Hardinge, 1st Viscount Hardinge, a former Governor-General of India. (Ed.)

[334] Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar (1853–1907) was the fifth Qajar shah of Iran, reigning from 1896 until his death in 1907. (Ed.)

country. At the price of much inconvenience, he was lodged at Marlborough House, as it was understood that he would consider himself insulted if accommodated at Dorchester House, since that mansion had been lately inhabited by an Afghan potentate[335] regarded as an inferior; and on August 20 he proceeded to visit King Edward on the Royal yacht at Portsmouth, accompanied by Lord Lansdowne. The journey was not devoid of incident, for the Shah constantly stopped the train, on the ground that its excessive speed *lui faisait mal au ventre*,[336] and conversation was much impeded because it was found impossible to silence a large musical box which had been provided for the Shah's entertainment.

Whilst on the yacht, Lord Lansdowne occupied himself with drawing up a short memorandum to the effect that the statutes of the Order of the Garter would be amended so as to make non-Christians eligible, and that when the necessary change was effected the Shah would be one of the first recipients. This memorandum was read, apparently approved by the King, and its purport explained to the Shah; but when an Oriental is told that something will be done for him in the future, he thinks he is being put off with a polite refusal, and the Shah was quite incapable of understanding why he should not be treated in the same way as his father and the two Sultans of Turkey.

Assuming that the King's objections had been overcome, Lord Lansdowne now informed the Persian Government officially that the Garter would be bestowed upon the Shah as soon as the necessary changes were completed: and then learnt, to his consternation, that there had been a misunderstanding; that the King still refused to give his consent, and that the subject must be considered closed. Nor were matters improved by an attempt to substitute for the Garter a ''jewelled portrait", and decorations for the suite: both jewelled portrait and decorations for the suite were rejected, and the Shah left the country "very unhappy".

The consequences of repudiating an assurance to the Persian Government were too dangerous, however, to allow the King's objection to prevail. Sir Arthur Hardinge asked to be relieved from his post if the British promise were not kept, and, strange though it may sound, a severe Cabinet crisis nearly supervened, the King complaining that the Foreign Secretary had tried to force his hand, and that nothing would induce him to alter his decision. A letter, in fact, sent by his direction to Mr. Balfour, contained such criticisms that it was clear that if Lord Lansdowne ever saw it, he would be compelled to resign. Fortunately, the Cabinet were

unconscious of the trouble, and the only person whom Mr. Balfour consulted was the Duke of Devonshire. The latter agreed that if the undertaking made to the Persian Government were not kept, Lord Lansdowne would certainly have to resign, and that—

> although the King might part with Lansdowne without much regret, can we sacrifice him? My own impression is that if we stand by him, the King will give in. It is inconceivable that he would risk a crisis and a change of Government on such a point, unless he wants to get rid of us.

It was only after the receipt of a strongly worded memorandum from Mr. Balfour, who pointed out that Lord Lansdowne had acted under a misapprehension, and commented upon the disastrous results which

[335] The index has an entry for page 236 for Nasrullah Khan (1874–1920), sometimes spelt as Nasr Ullah Khan, who was shahzada (crown prince) of Afghanistan and second son of Emir Abdur Rahman Khan. He held the throne of Afghanistan as Emir for one week, from 21 to 28 February 1919, until his nephew Amanullah staged a coup against him. (Ed.)

[336] Discomfort in the stomach. Motion sickness.

would follow if the promise were repudiated, that the King eventually yielded, and it was finally decided to send out a Garter Mission to Teheran under Lord Downe.[337]

For some months the official correspondence with Teheran related chiefly to the question of decorations. Elaborate recommendations were received from Sir A. Hardinge. Thus, he urged particularly that the Grand Vizier should receive a star instead of a jewelled box.

> Persians care for anything in the form of a decoration more than for the most expensive present, and the fact that none was sent to the Grand Vizier would be made political capital of by the Russian Legation, which will do its utmost to mar the success of the Mission. The presents which I suggested for the great officers are all emblematic and appropriate, whereas jewelled boxes all round would not convey the same thing.

Lord Downe arrived at Teheran with the appropriate presents and decorations, and, in view of the interest aroused by the Mission, Sir A. Hardinge's description of the investiture, written to Lord Lansdowne on February 3, 1903, is perhaps worth quoting:

> So far everything has gone off very well. The reception given to Lord Downe was a great deal more brilliant than that

> to General Kuropatkin,[338] and the Shah at the investiture ceremony was radiant. Lady Hardinge, who saw it from a window looking into the Throne Room, said that when Lord Downe and I had left with our respective staffs, the Persian courtiers crowded round the Shah and fingered the insignia on him like so many children with a new toy. When Lord Downe gave the Shah the collar, he insisted on putting it on, which Lord Downe tells me is wrong. The leg difficulty I solved (knee-breeches being, of course, an abomination to the faithful) by getting the Shah to wear a cavalry uniform with riding breeches and top-boots, and turning the left top-boot down so as to clip the garter between it and the knee.

There was ostensible proof that the Mission had been a success, for the Russians made no attempt to conceal their annoyance. The success was, however, only ephemeral, for the Shah shortly afterwards approved a new tariff without referring it to us for examination, and gave permission to a Russian representative to accompany a Persian Mission to Seistan.

The whole Persian Garter incident provoked the contemptuous criticism of Lord Curzon[339] and created trouble in another quarter. After the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, the Emperor of Japan had fully expected to receive a Garter, and the Japanese press stated that it would be conferred immediately after the King's Coronation; but it was intimated to Sir C. Macdonald that there was no foundation for the statement, as King Edward was opposed to conferring it upon non-Christian sovereigns. It was true that two Sultans of Turkey had been so honoured, and also the last Shah of Persia, but it had been refused to the present Shah and to the King of Siam[340] (much to their disgust), and it was suggested that a jewelled miniature of King Edward would be a suitable equivalent.

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[337] Major-General Hugh Richard Dawnay, 8th Viscount Downe, (1844–1924) was a British Army general. In early 1903, Lord Downe was appointed a Special Envoy deputized by the King to travel to Iran to present the Shah with the insignia of the Order of the Garter. (Ed.)

[338] Aleksey Nikolayevich Kuropatkin (1848–1925) served as the Russian Imperial Minister of War from January 1898 to February 1904 and as a field commander subsequently. Historians often hold him responsible for major Russian defeats in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 to 1905, most notably at the Battle of Mukden (1905) and at the Battle of Liaoyang (August-September 1904).

[339] T*he Life of Lord Curzon* (Ronaldshay), vol. ii. p. 307 (LN)

[340] Chulalongkorn (1853–1910) was posthumously honoured as King Chulalongkorn the Great. He was the fifth king of Siam from the Chakri dynasty, titled Rama V. (Ed.)

Politeness being a characteristic of the Japanese, the miniature set in jewels was accepted with effusion, but presently there arrived the news that a special Mission was,

after all, about to proceed to Teheran with a Garter for the uninspiring Shah. This naturally created, in Sir C. Macdonald's words, "a very bad feeling" in Japan, and eventually it became necessary to send a similar Mission to Tokio, headed by Prince Arthur of Connaught.[341]

These incidents reveal how large a part decorations played, and presumably still play, in exalted circles, and seem to show that they are valuable assets in diplomacy. It is remarkable, however, that King Edward, whose political insight has been universally recognized, should not have shown, in these instances, a greater sense of proportion.

Amongst the important events of 1902, that year was memorable for the ending of the South African War, which had lasted for nearly three years, and had caused what was then regarded as a stupendous expenditure of money, although the total sum only equalled approximately one month's cost to us during the latter period of the Great War, and now represents less than a quarter of our annual Budget. An attempt at mediation by the Dutch Government early in the year had been rightly resisted, and one of Lord Salisbury's last official actions was to veto the suggestion that peace negotiations should be carried on in London, on the ground that it would be most unwise to run the risk of alienating the loyalists in South Africa by a possible overruling of Milner and Kitchener. The signing of peace was followed by preparations for the Coronation, and the Foreign Office had long been engaged in the task of making the necessary arrangements in connection with the distinguished guests who were expected, some of whom might be the cause of embarrassment, while others might be secretly inspired with the hope of obtaining a Garter. Before, however, the postponed Coronation took place, Lord Salisbury found it necessary, on grounds of ill-health, to resign; and the great

figure which for so long had dominated the Councils of Europe and successfully surmounted the many perils which threatened his country disappeared completely from the scene: for, unlike some distinguished statesmen, he made no subsequent reappearance in political life. The intimation was conveyed in a private letter to Lord Lansdowne expressing great regret at the severance of their connection and high appreciation of his help, and the following letters were received from the new Prime Minister and the Duke of Devonshire:

Mr. Balfour to Lord Lansdowne. July 11, 1902.

> As you know, Salisbury has been forced by ill-health to resign. The King has intimated to me that he wishes me to undertake the Government. I earnestly hope—let me add that I believe—you will not object to going on under the altered circumstances? Chamberlain and Devonshire have both most cordially agreed. Hicks-Beach is the only member of the Cabinet who seems to desire—for reasons not personal to myself— to take this occasion for retiring.

The Duke of Devonshire to Lord Lansdowne. July 11, 1902.

> A. Balfour told me this afternoon that the King had asked him to form a Government, and although he put it in a sort of interrogative way to me, he had already seen Chamberlain and got his adhesion. I told him that I saw no difficulty, and that so far as 1 was concerned, I was

[341] Prince Arthur of Connaught (Arthur Frederick Patrick Albert; (1883–1938) was a British military officer and a grandson of Queen Victoria. He served as Governor-General of the Union of South Africa from 20 November 1920 to 21 January 1924. His father was Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, third son of Queen Victoria. (Ed.)

quite ready to stay till the Education Bill was through the House of Lords; that then I should certainly wish to give up the Education Office, and must hold myself free to give up altogether when the time came—to all of which he assented.

I cannot say that I am quite pleased at not having been consulted at all in the matter, but it is a relief not to have the responsibility of making a decision or giving advice.

There will still be difficulties. Beach has declared his unalterable intention of resigning, not on private grounds, but because he knows that the differences between him and the majority of the Cabinet are irreconcilable. He can go now without

(Page 242) LORD LANSDOWNE [1902-3]

an open breach of policy, which he knows must come. I think that A. J. B. agrees with him in the main, and is inclined to let him go, but he may still make an effort to keep him. The difficulty of finding a successor will be very great. If Spencer[342] is going to make a speech on foreign affairs next week, I suppose that Rosebery is sure to cut in, and I must be primed as far as possible. I have left off reading your China telegrams for a long time, as I don't understand a word of them, and I am not sure that I have followed the others more closely.

With reference to the last paragraph, it should be explained that upon the retirement of Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire became leader in the House of Lords and was therefore forced to take part in all debates of importance. It was his habit to profess complete ignorance of any subject he was called upon to pronounce an opinion at comparatively short notice, and I remember that he even disclaimed any knowledge of betting, in a reply to a question when he appeared as a witness before a Select Committee. The note of complaint at not having been consulted was probably due to the fact that the elaborate and expensive fiction that the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists constituted two separate parties was still existent. The resignation of Sir M. Hicks-Beach was due to his almost passionate desire for economy, and to the fear that with the departure of Lord Salisbury his views would not be adequately supported in the Cabinet.

It had been anticipated and strongly urged in some quarters that the retirement of Lord Salisbury should be taken advantage of in order to reconstruct and strengthen the Ministry, but the only change of much importance was the substitution of Mr. Ritchie for Sir M. Hicks- Beach as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and this proved to be a very unfortunate appointment, as it soon brought about the breach which eventually caused the collapse or the Balfour Administration.

In May 1903, Lord Lansdowne had made an

(Page 243) PERSIA, 1901-5. [1903-5]

important declaration in Parliament to the effect that H.M. Government would "regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf as a very grave menace to British interests, and that we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal". It was to emphasize this warning that Lord Curzon's cruise in the Gulf took place in the late autumn, and this demonstration, which closely resembled a Royal progress, was uniformly successful, except at Bushire. Sir A. Hardinge was present during part of the tour, and fully discussed the various Persian problems with the Viceroy.

In February 1904, Sir A. Hardinge wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

I threshed out with Curzon almost all our burning questions, and I think that our exchange of views resulted in a substantial agreement on two-thirds of them. The chief point on which we found the other hopelessly obstinate was the question of the Belgian Customs officials. He

[342] Earl Spencer, Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords. (LN). (*See footnote on page 202.* Ed.)

persists in regarding them as Russian agents and wanting to fight them. With this I totally disagree.

He also blames me for being too courteous and diplomatic with the Persians, and treating mendacious Asiatics as if they were European statesmen, instead of talking to them with the frank and, if need be, brutal directness which he himself finds successful with the rulers of Afghanistan and Nepal. He forgets that India overshadows them in a manner to which the position here affords no parallel, and that he has not to deal with the active competition on the spot of intriguing Russian diplomatists, not to speak of Frenchmen and Germans, all meddling in the vortex of Persian politics for separate objects inconsistent with ours, and with a set of semi-civilised politicians, full of vanity and pretensions, with whom patriotism and every notion of duty to their country is entirely subordinated to personal ambition and self- interest.

Much, I suppose, depends on whether war breaks out between Russia and Japan, as, if we are sooner or later dragged into it, the Russians will, I presume, take Herat and occupy Khorassan. On the other hand, if we keep out of it, the Russian

pressure upon Persia is bound to be relaxed, and we may profit by our rival's embarrassments to consolidate and strengthen our position here.

Two months later the Anglo-French Agreement inspired Sir A. Hardinge with the hope that an agreement might be arrived at with Russia as to Persia on the same lines as the Siam settlement, but he feared that any such arrangement would have to include a port on the Gulf, a provision which was certain to be obnoxious to the Indian Government. It has been noted that his ideas as to how the Persians should be dealt with did not correspond with those of Lord Curzon, and in one of his last letters to Lord Lansdowne written on July 16, 1905, he justifies his method:

The Persians, small or great, are a people with whom much can be done by ministering to their feelings of vanity and *amour propre*. They are, in most of their qualities and vices, very similar to the Irish and I think that our failures in Persia are due to very much the same causes as our failure in Ireland, *viz.* to our inability to understand the characters of both peoples, and, in dealing with them, to make allowance for their somewhat peculiar idiosyncrasies. It is very little use with a Persian or an Irishman to argue in the dry light of pure reason; you have to enter, in both cases, into his peculiar sympathies, to make allowance for the shams and vanities on which he lives, and you will do more by a little civility, a little gush, and, I would add, a little blarney, than by the most serious and sustained reasoning as to what his true interests are, from a cold objective British point of view. The Russians have understood this, and it has been one of the main secrets of their success. Your Lordship, who knows Ireland so well, and who, if the papers are not misleading, has been the advocate in recent controversies of a sympathetic treatment of Irish grievances, will instinctively understand what I mean without my needing to emphasise the point.

Sir A. Hardinge's prognostications as to the effect upon Persia of the result of the Russo-Japanese war proved to be perfectly correct, as is shown by an extract from his book *A Diplomatist in the East*, referring to the annihilation of the Russian Fleet in 1905.

Indeed, from one end of Persia to the other, a huge weight appeared to have been lifted from men's hearts, and the whole native population breathed again, as in Central and Southern Europe, outside France, after Napoleon's final overthrow at Waterloo; for the history of the present Shah's reign had been that of a long absorption, military, financial, and commercial, of the ancient realm of Iran by Russia; and Persia's other neighbours, Great Britain and Turkey, had seemed to stand helplessly aside

and to make no real effort to save her. The destruction of the Russian Fleet by an Asiatic Power was one of the main indirect causes of that national, if ill-managed, revolutionary attempt to overthrow the ancient polity of Persia, which broke out in the following year, and the ultimate effects of which, in our own day, it is still far from easy to predict.

CHAPTER IX

ANGLO-GERMAN AND ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, 1902-3

(Page 246)

It has already been pointed out that the negotiation on the subject of an Anglo-German Alliance broke down in 1901, and although Count Bülow and others recurred occasionally to the subject, they evidently did so with little conviction. So much ill-feeling had been created by the Bülow-Chamberlain controversy that there was a question of cancelling a visit which the Prince of Wales was due to pay to Berlin in January, and it was only in consequence of vehement protestations from the Kaiser that it was not abandoned. One unfortunate incident in connection with it was that a personal letter from King Edward to the Kaiser, sent in the official bag, was alleged to have been "mislaid" between Berlin and Potsdam, a statement which was received at Buckingham Palace with complete incredulity, as a receipt for the letter had been sent to Sir F. Lascelles from the German Court.

On January 22nd Sir F. Lascelles[343] had a conversation with the All-Highest on the subject of the newly completed Anglo-Japanese Alliance in which the Kaiser gave full vent to his contempt for British Ministers, and a fortnight later (Feb. 8th, 1902) the Ambassador wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> You will see by despatch I am sending you this evening that I found it necessary to translate into diplomatic language.

(Page 247) ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS [1902]

> the expression which the Emperor employed in conveying his approval of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. The words His Majesty deigned to use were: "The Noodles seem to have had a lucid interval". The conversation was a very short one and took place in the Emperor's smoking room in the presence of the other Ambassadors who, however, were not within earshot.

It seems more than probable, however, in view of subsequent revelations, that the latter were eventually favoured with a full expression of the Imperial views on this subject.

The private letters from Sir F. Lascelles about this period leave little doubt, in spite of their optimism, as to the hostile feelings entertained towards us by important personages in Germany. The Kaiser's entourage was notoriously anti-British, and whenever he received reports from his own representatives in London that the British Government was in reality more friendly than was believed, elaborate efforts were made to convince him to the contrary. On April 22, 1902, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir F. Lascelles:

> I am sanguine enough to hope that the bitter feeling which now prevails against us in Germany may not last for ever. Have we not a right to ascribe a good deal or it to the South African War, and would the Emperor, Bülow, Holstein and others have contemplated as they did an Anglo-German Alliance if hatred of Great Britain was to be regarded as for all time inherent in the sentiments of the German people?
>
> Five years hence, before the German naval programme has been carried out, the outlook both in South Africa and in Germany may have altered enormously. And apart from sentiment, I cannot see that it will ever be of advantage to Germany to let us "go under" before a great European coalition.

[343] The British Ambassador in Berlin (LN).

Is it not more likely that she will stick to her role of the honest broker, taking advantage, if you like, of our difficulties in order to pursue a *politique de pourboire*[344] at our expense, but without pooling her ironclads with those of France and Russia?

Three days later Sir F. Lascelles replied:

I have always been an optimist as to the relations between England and Germany for the simple reason that I believe that

(Page 248) LORD LANSDOWNE [1902]

The interests of the two countries demand a good understanding between them. It is true that the bitter feeling against England existed before the war began, and was due partly to jealousy of our success in colonising, and partly to a feeling that the position of Germany as a first-class Power had not been adequately recognised by us. The Germans are quite extraordinarily sensitive. They are always on the look out for fear they should be insulted, and at the same time they cannot understand that, if England were to cease to exist as a Great Power, they would be at the mercy of Russia and France if those two Powers united against them. Supposing then that England went under, and a quarrel arose between Germany on the one hand and France and Russia on the other, Germany would have to fight for her very existence as a State and would probably have to succumb to her two powerful neighbours. It is, therefore, I think, most unlikely that Germany would lend her hand to anything which would be likely to seriously weaken the power of England.

The naval development of Germany was not in my opinion intended by the German Government to be directed against England. The German Government wish for a powerful navy to be able to protect German interests all over the world irrespective of any other Power. They no doubt have made use of the animosity against England to obtain the necessary votes in the Reichstag, but although they may wish to become the equal of England on the sea I do not think they would wish to annihilate her even in combination with other Powers.

In a postscript, the Ambassador found it necessary to modify the latter opinion.

P.S. April 26. Since writing the above, I have had a talk with Captain Ewart,[345] who has pointed out to me that the development of the German navy was directed against England. This was stated over and over again during the debates in the Reichstag, and the preamble of the Navy Bill states that its object is to create a navy which will be equal to that of the greatest sea Power. I must therefore modify my answer to that question

Captain Ewart's opinion, it may be added, was shared by every successive naval attaché at our Berlin Embassy.

(Page 249) ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS [1902]

A singular instance of Prussian mentality is shown in the following plaintive letter from Count Metternich[346] to Lord Lansdowne, dated May 30, 1902. It should be explained that the Kaiser had been invited to send a warship to attend the Coronation Naval Review, and that he had expressed much pleasure at the compliment.

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[344] Tipping policy (Ed.)

[345] Admiral Arthur Wartensleben Ewart (1862–1922) was a Royal Navy officer. A gunnery expert, from 1900 to 1903, Ewart served as the first British naval attaché in Berlin. After this he undertook a number of ship commands in the Channel Fleet and Atlantic Fleet. Promoted to rear-admiral in 1911. (Ed.)

[346] German Ambassador in London. (LN) (*See footnote to page 207*)

I have telegraphed to H.R.H. Prince Henry of Prussia,[347] who is coming with his flagship as the representative of the Emperor at the Coronation to England that the Admiralty do not wish him to come to Spithead on June 23rd on account of the preparations for the Naval Review, but that any other point, for instance, Sheerness, would be convenient.

The Prince now telegraphs to me that as a representative of the German Navy he will only land at Spithead, and declines positively to land anywhere else. He wishes to come on June 23rd in order to take part in the Coronation Week programme beginning on that day. He wishes to land with his flagship at 9 a.m. on the 23rd at Spithead. Should the Admiralty persist in not allowing him to land, the Prince tells me that he has to lay the matter before the Emperor, as H.R.H. can, from the naval point of view, not find any difficulty for a single foreign flagship to be allowed to land at Spithead although the arrangements for the mooring of the British men-of-war may take place on the same day.

Can you help me in the matter?

Lord Lansdowne's reply is unfortunately not available.

The Bagdad Railway

The abortive negotiations in connection with the Bagdad Railway which were seriously resumed in 1902 were a further source of trouble, and tended to increase the bad feeling between the two countries. In the spring of 1902, Lord Lansdowne was approached by representatives of the most important financial houses in the city with regard to their participation in the enterprise. Our position with regard to this project was very similar

to what it had been when the construction of the Suez Canal had become a practical proposition. In the latter case, the British Government had declined to participate because a canal was considered to be contrary to our interests, but the canal was constructed in spite of our opposition. In the case of the Bagdad Railway, however, it seemed probable that if it were left to the German and French financial groups concerned, the work could not be carried through successfully, and that British capital was essential. The facts are lucidly expressed in a minute by Lord Lansdowne written in April 1902.[348]

It would, to my mind, be a great misfortune if this railway were to be constructed without British participation. The line will be a most important highway to the East with a *débouché*[349] on the Persian Gulf. It is clearly for our interest that the enterprise should be given an international character and that we should have our full share in the control of the line as well as of any advantages to be derived from its construction and maintenance.

If the project is to be successfully financed, our consent to (1) increase of custom duties, and possibly also to (2) creation of monopolies is indispensable.

I have discussed the matter informally with the French and German Ambassadors, and I have told them that our attitude would depend upon our being given a share at least equal to that of any other Power in the enterprise.

[347] Prince Heinrich of Prussia (1862–1929) was a younger brother of German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhem. A career naval officer, he held various commands in the Imperial German Navy and eventually rose to the rank of Grand Admiral and the office of Inspector General of the Navy. (Ed.)
[348] Gooch and Temperley, vol. ii. pp. 178-9. (LN)
[349] Outlet. (Ed.)

But if we are to insist upon having such a share, someone must be prepared to receive it. I have been endeavouring to ascertain whether there is any prospect of the scheme being supported in the City. The result of my inquiries has been to show that unless the British Government gives practical proof of its confidence in the undertaking by giving it material support, British financiers are not likely to come forward.

Lord Rothschild[350] and Lord Revelstoke[351] suggest that H.M.G should take a part of the ordinary shares. None of the other Governments are, so far as I am aware, doing anything of the kind. In order to secure the international character of the railway, we might propose to France and Germany that we should each of us take a certain amount of shares. It is, however, not unlikely

that we shall be told that German and French groups are ready to come forward without any such inducement.

It would, no doubt, be most unusual for a British Government to invest public money in such a project. On the other hand, the acquisition and retention by the British Government of a certain number of shares seems to be the only mode of securing for this country a permanent share in the control of the railway. If we were merely to guarantee a certain number of shares, we should have no security that those shares would not find their way into the hands of foreign holders.

Unless we are able to secure a footing from the outset, it will not be easy for us to come in at a later stage except on the most onerous terms. As matters stand, however, we are confronted with a two-fold difficulty: (a) the resistance of the City to come forward except upon terms to which we may find it impossible to agree; and (b) the doubt as to our ability to veto the project by refusing to accept the new Tariff.

The attitude which the British Government were forced to take up with regard to this project was in truth one of a very embarrassing nature. Many good judges, including Lord Curzon, were of opinion that the railway would be disadvantageous to our interests, and one of the objections from the British point of view was that in order to find the money for the kilometric guarantee, it would be necessary to raise the Turkish Customs Tariff, and that this increase would react more severely upon our trade than upon that of any other country. A curious light was thrown upon German motives in a letter from the Kaiser to the Tsar on January 3, 1902.

The behaviour of the Foreign Power (England) at Koweit[352] sets into a strong relief the enormous advantage of an over whelming fleet which rules the approaches from the sea to places that have no means of communication overland, but which we others cannot approach because our fleets are too weak, and without them our transports at the mercy of the enemy. This shows once more how very necessary the Bagdad Railway is which I intend German capital to build. If that most excellent Sultan had not been dawdling for years with this

[350] Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild, 1st Baron Rothschild (1840–1915), was a British banker and politician from the wealthy international Rothschild family. From 1865 to 1885, Nathan Rothschild sat in the House of Commons as Liberal Member of Parliament for Aylesbury. His father Lionel (1808-1879) had previously been elected for the City of London from 1847 but had been unable to take the obligatory oath until 1858; they were MPs together from 1865 to 1868 and from 1869 to 1874. (Ed.)
[351] John Baring, 2nd Baron Revelstoke (1863–1929) was senior partner of Barings Bank from the 1890s until his death. He was the eldest surviving son of Edward Baring, 1st Baron Revelstoke, who had died in 1897. (Ed.)
[352] Now called Kuwait.

> question, the Line might have been begun years ago, and would have offered you the opportunity of despatching a few regiments from Odessa straight down to Koweit, and then that would have turned the tables on the other Power by reason of the Russian troops having the command of the inner lines on shore against which even the greatest fleet is powerless for many reasons.

The Russian Government, however, never liked the scheme, which they regarded as intended to give Germany a dangerous preponderance in Asia Minor, nor did it meet with much favour with the French Government. The latter had stipulated that there should be absolute and entire equality between French and German participation in every respect, and now complained that it was proposed to allot 10 per cent to the Turkish Government which would practically be under German control. After much negotiation a draft Agreement between the Deutsche Bank and the Imperial Ottoman Bunk was signed at Berlin, under which the distribution of shares was fixed at 25 per cent, to Germany, England, and France respectively; 10 per cent, to the Anatolian Railway Company, and 15 per cent, to *divers*,[353] but it was subject to two reservations. The French group had made their acceptance conditional on the approval of the French Government, which was dependent upon Russian participation, while the Germans had reserved the question of Switzerland being chosen as the domicile of the new Company, and the former reservation threatened the failure of the Agreement. The negotiations continued in London, and Lord Revelstoke, at the request of His Majesty's Government, became the official head of the British group. Later, Lord Lansdowne, who had always been in favour of the project, provided that it was genuinely international, and that British interests were safeguarded, addressed a memorandum to the Cabinet in which he urged that the British group should be authorized to proceed. Although, he said, our abstention might cause

delay, the line would eventually be constructed, and in that case the absence of British participation would be a national misfortune. The line would shorten the journey to India; would open up new and productive regions, and would have a terminus in the Persian Gulf where our interests were supreme. An obstructive policy, such as opposition to the proposed increase in the Turkish Customs Tariff, would place us in a very embarrassing position, as we should find ourselves—perhaps in concert with Russia—opposing a revision of the Tariff solely for the purpose of wrecking a great and useful enterprise, warmly supported by other Powers. An attempt to block the line at the Persian Gulf might be equally difficult; Koweit was not the only place where a terminus could be found and, unless we were prepared to sterilize the Persian Gulf commercially, we could scarcely veto a commercial port as a terminus. As to the adoption of a neutral policy, unless the Government acceded to the conditions put forward by the English group, *viz*. an increase in the Customs Tariff; the utilization of the Railway for the carriage of mails and passengers to India, and the provision ot terminal facilities at Koweit, that group would certainly retire. He was convinced that the right policy was to treat the scheme as one of common and international interest; that it Russia desired access to the Persian Gulf she could build her own line from Erivan to Bagdad and obtain running powers from Bagdad to the terminus, finally, he reminded the Cabinet that the question had been fully discussed at a conference between the foreign Office, the India Office, and the War Office, and that it had been agreed "that it would be a great mistake to oppose the project, which we ought, on the contrary, to encourage to the best of our power, provided we can acquire a proper share in the control of the railway and of its outlet on the Persian Gulf'.

But in the meanwhile the opposition to the scheme

[353] Others.

in England had grown so strong that the Government became intimidated and gave way. The chief adversaries of the enterprise were the late Mr. St. Loe Strachey[354] of the *Spectator*, the late Mr. T. G. Bowles, M.P.,[355] and Mr. Leo Maxse,[356] and the success of their campaign—whether beneficial or the reverse—is an instance of the influence which can still be exercised by able men whose motives are clearly disinterested. As for Lord Lansdowne, his opinion remained unchanged, as is seen from the following letter to Lord Curzon.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Curzon. April 24, 1903.

> We have had a sharp recrudescence of the anti-German fever over the Bagdad Railway question. The result has been that the scheme has been discredited, and that for the moment it has been virtually impossible to make any progress with it. I believe, however, that we had the game very much in our own hands and that we might have done a great stroke by getting rid of the existing Anatolian Railway as a German enterprise, and substituting for it an international line from sea to sea upon conditions which would have permanently secured for it and for its terminus on the Persian Gulf an international character.
>
> Such an arrangement might have settled the Persian Gulf question for many years to come, and I should not be in the least deterred by the anticipation that the Russians would immediately build a line of their own across Persia to the Gulf. Whether we shall ever again have as good a chance of insisting upon our own terms, I do not know. The construction of the line will be proceeded with, as far as the next section is concerned, and the enterprise will acquire a more distinctly German complexion than ever. I am afraid that in the long run our attitude will be somewhat difficult to explain.

In after years Lord Lansdowne stated privately that he had been forced to yield to an "insensate outcry" and added that Mr. Chamberlain was opposed to the project.

It must be admitted that in this transaction the British Government played what, to the rest of the

world, must have appeared to be a very unheroic part. They had successfully obstructed an enterprise—ostensibly at all events beneficial—after prolonged hesitation, and had finally yielded not to argument, but to an anti-German ebullition. The story of the Bagdad Railway negotiations in 1902-1903 is a striking instance of a conflict in England between reason on the one side and sentiment on the other, and it is a singular fact that in the end it was the latter which was justified, for if the line had been completed before the War, our difficulties in fighting the Turks in Mesopotamia would have been greatly increased.

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[354] John St. Loe Strachey (1860–1927) was a British journalist and newspaper proprietor. Between 1887 and 1925, he was editor of *The Spectator*. Strachey's son, John, became a Labour politician and government minister. His daughter Amabel married the architect Clough Williams-Ellis who designed Port Merion. (Ed.)

[355] Thomas Gibson Bowles (1841–1922) was a British politician and publisher. He founded the magazines *The Lady* and *Vanity Fair*, and became a Member of Parliament in 1892. (Ed.)

[356] Leopold James Maxse (1864–1932) was an English amateur tennis player and journalist and editor of the conservative British publication, *National Review*, between August 1893 and his death in January 1932. Before the Great War, Maxse argued against liberal idealism in foreign policy, Cobdenite pacifism, Radical cosmopolitanism and, following the turn of the century, constantly warned of the "German menace".

The Venezuelan Question

A long series of illegal acts against British subjects, the piratical seizure of a British vessel, and the non-performance of commercial obligations, by the Venezuelan Government, had obliged Lord Lansdowne in the summer to threaten force, diplomatic representations having proved fruitless. Italy and Germany were also concerned, and as soon as the German Government heard that we were prepared if necessary to resort to force, they at once intimated their wish to be associated with us. This intimation appears to have been made on July 23, 1902.

The course suggested by Lord Lansdowne was the seizure of the Venezuelan gunboats, but the Germans desired in addition to establish a blockade. Each Government sent an ultimatum to Venezuela, a blockade was declared in December and Venezuelan warships were seized, but the German naval commander, ignoring an agreement with us to take no separate action, and probably also impelled by an uncontrollable spirit of Frightfulness, proceeded to bombard Maracaibo and to sink several gunboats. This exploit naturally caused extreme indignation, and as might have been anticipated,

brought about a strong feeling of hostility in the United States, where any kind of European intervention in South America has always been violently, and often unjustifiably, resented. In November, Sir Michael Herbert[357] had already written: "I wish we were going to punish Venezuela without the aid of Germany, for I am not sure that joint action will be very palatable here". In the same letter he observed that he had received many hints as to German attempts to sow dissension between England and the United States, and that President Roosevelt[358] had expressed the hope "that you do not think that I believe everything the Kaiser tells me". The latter had been engaged for some time in endeavouring to persuade America that Germany was her real friend, and had recently sent Prince Henry of Prussia to the States on a propaganda tour. A month later, on December 19, 1902, Sir M. Herbert again wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> The Administration and the Senate are very sensible about the Venezuelan difficulty, but the House of Representatives is restless and irritated, and Hay[359] fears bellicose resolutions.
>
> The explosion of feeling against Germany here is somewhat remarkable. I confess to regarding it with malevolent satisfaction, especially when I think of all the German efforts to discredit us and to flatter America during the past year. The Administration is very anxious for a settlement of the Venezuelan question, as it is afraid of American public opinion if it drags on.

The danger, of course, lay in delay and in the complications always brought about by a blockade, and as we were already involved in difficult negotiations with the American Government over the Alaska Boundary question, there was every probability that the anti-British element which plays so large a part in American politics would not neglect an opportunity for making fresh trouble.

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[357] The British Ambassador in Washington. (LN). Sir Michael Henry Herbert, (1857–1903), was a British diplomat and ambassador. (Ed.)

[358] Theodore Roosevelt Jr. (1858–1919), also known as Teddy or T. R., was the 26th president of the United States, serving from 1901 to 1909. Roosevelt had previously been involved in New York politics, including serving as the state's 33rd governor for two years. He served as the 25th vice president under President William McKinley for six months in 1901, assuming the presidency after McKinley's assassination. (Ed.)

[359] The US Secretary of State. (LN). John Milton Hay (1838–1905) was an American statesman and official whose career in government stretched over almost half a century. Beginning as a private secretary and an assistant for Abraham Lincoln, he became a diplomat. He served as United States Secretary of State under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. (Ed.)

In the meanwhile, President Roosevelt, who suspected the Germans of a design to seize a port in Venezuela, had been pressing the various Powers concerned to accept the principle of arbitration. Both the British and the Italian Governments were willing to agree, but the Germans were strongly opposed to any such concession, and the Kaiser—permanently obsessed with the hallucination that British Foreign policy was dictated by King Edward—annotated a despatch on the subject from Metternich[360] with the scornful observation: "*Serenissimus verliert Nerven! Das hatte Grossmama nie gesagt!*"[361] But the German Government was shortly forced to give way, and the successful use of the Big Stick is described in *The Life of John Hay*.[362]

> One day, when the crisis was at its height, he (President Roosevelt) summoned to the White House Dr. von Holleben,[363] the German Ambassador, and told him that unless Germany consented to arbitrate, the American Squadron under Admiral Dewey[364] would be given orders, by noon ten days later, to proceed to the Venezuelan coast, and prevent any taking possession of Venezuelan territory. Dr. von Holleben began to protest that his Imperial master, having once refused to arbitrate, could not change his mind. The President said that he was not arguing the question, because arguments had already been gone over until no useful purpose would be served by repeating them; he was simply giving information which the Ambassador might think it important to transmit to Berlin. A week passed in silence. Then Dr. von Holleben again called on the President, but said nothing on the Venezuelan matter. When he rose to go, the President asked him about it, and when he stated that he had received nothing from his Government, the President informed him in substance that, in view of this fact, Admiral Dewey would be instructed to call a day earlier than the day he, the President, had originally mentioned. Much perturbed, the Ambassador protested: the President informed him that not a stroke of the pen had been put on paper; that if the Kaiser would

> agree to arbitrate, he, the President, would heartily praise him for such action, and would treat it as taken on German initiative; but that within forty-eight hours, there must be an order to arbitrate, or Dewey would sail with the orders indicated. Within thirty-six hours, Dr. von Holleben returned to the White House and announced to President Roosevelt that a despatch had just come from Berlin saying that the Kaiser would arbitrate. Neither Admiral Dewey (who with an American Squadron was then manoeuvring in the West Indies) nor any one else knew of the step that was to be taken; the naval authorities were merely required to be in readiness, but were not told what for.

The humour of this incident consists in the fact that upon the announcement of Germany's consent, the Kaiser was publicly complimented by the President upon his enthusiasm for the cause of arbitration.

It had been hoped that President Roosevelt would have consented to act as arbitrator, in which case the question would have been quickly settled, but he declined the invitation. The receipt of this news caused Lord Lansdowne to reply to Sir M. Herbert on January 2, 1903:

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[360] German Ambassador in London. (LN) (*See footnote on page 207*. Ed.)

[361] "His Majesty's nerves are giving way! Grandmamma would never have talked like that!" (*Die Grosse Politik*, xvii.).

[362] *The Life and Letters of John Hay* (W. R. Thayer).

[363] Theodor von Holleben (1838-1913) was a German diplomat. Following a military service in the Franco-Prussian War, he entered the diplomatic service in 1872; was chargé d'affaires at Beijing, 1873–1874; at Tokyo, in 1875; minister at Buenos Aires 1876-1884; at Tokyo 1885-1889; and at Washington, D.C., 1892-93. (Ed.)

[364] George Dewey (1837–1917) was Admiral of the Navy, the only person in United States history to have attained that rank. He is best known for his victory at the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish–American War, with the loss of only a single crewman on the American side. (Ed.)

> I am sorry the President did not see his way to arbitrate for us. If he had undertaken the duty, he would probably have put it through promptly and with a desire to deal justly with all concerned, and an award by him would have carried with it a strong moral sanction. The Hague Tribunal is a cumbrous piece of machinery.
>
> The violence of the anti-German feeling here has been extraordinary, and has produced a profound impression on the German mind. It has, however, been allowed to go much too far. Kipling's[365] poem was an outrage. The point which the critics seem to have missed entirely is that the only claims which we proposed to enforce at the point of the bayonet were our first rank claims, which were of small amount and could have been easily settled by Venezuela. For all the rest we were prepared to go to a Mixed Commission, surely a very indulgent and considerate proposal, and not one which threatened a dangerous prolongation of the partnership.

In the negotiations preliminary to arbitration, the

representative of the Venezuelan Government was a Mr. Bowen,[366] recently American Minister at Caracas.

This gentleman was a diplomatist of the most objectionable type: blustering, untrustworthy, and insolent, who made no secret of his Anglophobe proclivities, and of his efforts to sow dissension between Sir M. Herbert and his German colleague. On January 30, 1902, Sir M. Herbert had written to Lord Lansdowne:

> I have been careful to conceal my impression of Bowen in Washington, where he has a great reputation as an active diplomatist, but it has required much patience and self-control to negotiate with him.
>
> At the first two interviews I had with him, he was most overbearing, and I had gently to intimate to him that he was representing (to use an Americanism) the under-dog, not I, and then he came down. He is very averse from putting anything on paper, and he complained of the way I insisted on this point, stating that he had expected that we should treat each other like gentlemen!
>
> The feeling against Germany is intense here for the moment, and after the bombardment I was very nervous as to what was going to happen, for complications with Germany mean trouble for us.
>
> You may possibly think me too anxious to arrive at an agreement with Bowen, but my business is to think first of all of our relations with the U.S., and in my opinion it is better to let the claimants and bondholders wait a few years than to embarrass the Administration here, which is so friendly to us, and alienate good feeling towards England.
>
> I quite admit that it is unfair that we should not have preferential treatment over the other Powers, but if Venezuelan hands are tied in regard to France and Belgium, an impasse is created.

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[365] Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) was an English journalist, novelist, poet, and short-story writer. He was born in British India, which inspired much of his work. He wrote *The Rowers* in 1903. It ends with the words: "With a cheated crew, to league anew with the Goth and the shameless Hun!" (Ed.)

[366] Herbert Wolcott Bowen (1856–1927) was an American diplomat and poet. He served as ambassador to Venezuela, and consul-general in Spain and Iran. (Ed.)

> Bowen threatens to break off, and although I presume that he is bluffing, I am not so sanguine as I was in regard to a settlement, especially if Germany keeps putting forward fresh conditions.

Mr. Bowen, who unfortunately held all the trumps in his hand, took full advantage of his opportunities,

and enhanced his popularity by working the press, and representing himself as a courageous American defending the innocent Venezuelans against the greed and rapacity of European Powers. Incidentally he circulated the statement that England was not desirous of a settlement, and that Sir Michael Herbert was a man of ferocious and passionate disposition. As regards the latter allegation, those who were personally acquainted with the late Sir Michael Herbert, whose brilliant diplomatic career was terminated by a premature death, must realise that it would have been impossible to depart further from the truth.

On February 7, Sir M. Herbert telegraphed that we had practically obtained all that we had asked for, except preferential treatment, and that the only outstanding obstacles to the signing of the Protocol were the belated claims of German and Italian creditors. He added that a great change in American feeling towards England had occurred recently, and that if our German alliance continued much longer, our relations with the United States would be seriously imperilled. In fact, in American opinion, the time had almost arrived when we should have to choose definitely between the friendship of Germany and that of the United States. It was impossible to disregard this warning; instructions were sent to Sir M. Herbert to sign the Protocol, and the Venezuelan blockade came to an end.

The Venezuelan incident was not one which redounded much to the prestige of the British Government. We obtained a cash settlement of our first line claims, but at the cost of much trouble and unpleasantness. Public opinion in England had shown itself to be strongly opposed to association with Germany, although in after years Lord Lansdowne expressed the opinion that "the Germans, upon the whole, ran straight as far as we were concerned", and a feeling of ill-will towards us in America was developed, which increased the

difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory solution of the Alaska boundary question.

The Alaska Boundary

Another Anglo-American dispute now became capable of settlement—that of the Alaskan Boundary. With regard to this dispute, the American Government had for some time opposed a proposal to arbitrate, but as President Roosevelt had forced arbitration upon the Powers concerned in the Venezuela question, it was hardly possible to refuse it in the case of Alaska, and an agreement was signed in January 1903 under which the question was to be submitted to a Commission of "six impartial jurists of repute", three to be British and three American; and the eventual composition of this body provided one of those unsatisfactory incidents which sometimes characterize American foreign policy. Mr. Hay, the Secretary of State, was genuinely anxious to settle the question and had always shown himself friendly to us, but, as he lamented to Sir M. Herbert, the Senate had rejected thirteen treaties which he had signed, and upon this occasion he failed to secure the support of President Roosevelt and other influential personages. Instead of nominating three Judges of the Supreme Court as had been confidently expected upon the strength of assurances, three prominent politicians, Senator Lodge,[367]

[367] Henry Cabot Lodge (1850–1924) was an American politician, historian, lawyer, and statesman from Massachusetts. A member of the Republican Party, he served in the United States Senate from 1893 to 1924 and is best known for his positions on foreign policy. (Ed.)

Senator Turner,[368] and Mr. Elihu Root,[369] were appointed, much to the surprise of the British Government and to the indignation of the Canadian Government—the Viceroy, Lord Minto,[370] even going so far as to characterize the action of the United States as "monstrous". We might, as Lord Lansdowne observed, have retaliated by appointing three County Court Judges; but instead of breaking off negotiations at once, as urged by the indignant Sir Wilfrid Laurier,[371] Lord Alverstone[372]

was selected as the British representative, in company with two distinguished Canadian lawyers.[373] Sir M. Herbert now (February 21, 1903) wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> The President's Alaska appointments, with the exception of that of Root, are more than unfortunate, and I am naturally disgusted and disheartened. Moreover, all my illusions are gone in regard to men in whom I believed. Everything in this country is subservient to politics, and really an Ambassador in Washington needs more than an ordinary stock of patience. Hay had no defence to make when I reproached him privately beyond: "Lodge is a friend of the President's", and I understand that he disapproves of the appointments, but is powerless.
>
> The President, who has got his back up, takes the line that the Justices having refused, he had to appoint prominent public men, and that no statesman of importance in this country can be found who has not pronounced himself strongly on the Alaska question. In his opinion, the men appointed fulfil the conditions of the treaty. He also states that the U.S. case is so good that he only consented to the Commission because it afforded a means for England to get out of the difficult position in which she has been placed by Canada. In short, he is obstinate and unreasonable.
>
> The question is: what is to be done? I realise the impossible position in which the Laurier Government has been placed in Canada, and they have every right to complain of what has happened; but in spite of this, it would be useless and inadvisable for them to protest, and folly to break off as Laurier suggests, for the consequences would be too grave to contemplate. Moreover, the more I appreciate the temper of the politicians in Washington in regard to the Alaska Boundary, the more I realise the paramount importance of having the question settled.
>
> I spoke to Lodge about his appointment and asked him in a friendly way if, after his speeches in the autumn, he could fairly consider himself as impartial. He replied: "Those were only political speeches and must not be considered. If I sit on the Commission, 1 shall have to take

[368] George Turner (1850–1932) was a jurist and diplomat who served one term as a United States senator from Washington. In 1903, he was a member of the Alaska Boundary Tribunal and was an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor in 1904. (Ed.)

[369] Elihu Root (1845–1937) was an American lawyer, Republican politician, and statesman who served as the 41st United States Secretary of War under presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt and the 38th United States Secretary of State under Roosevelt. He received the 1912 Nobel Peace Prize "for bringing about better understanding between the countries of North and South America and initiating important arbitration agreements between the United States and other countries". (Ed.)

[370] Gilbert John Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, 4th Earl of Minto, (1845–1914), known as Viscount Melgund by courtesy from 1859 to 1891, was a British peer and politician who served as Governor General of Canada from 1898 to 1904, and Viceroy of India from 1905 to 1910. (Ed.)

[371] Sir Henri Charles Wilfrid Laurier (1841–1919) was a Canadian lawyer, statesman, and Liberal politician who served as the seventh prime minister of Canada from 1896 to 1911. (Ed.)

[372] Richard Everard Webster, 1st Viscount Alverstone (1842–1915) was a British barrister, politician and judge who served in many high political and judicial offices including Attorney General from 1885. (Ed.)

[373] Sir Louis-Amable Jetté, (1836–1920) was a Canadian lawyer, politician, judge, and professor who served as lieutenant governor of Quebec and chief justice of the Court of King's Bench. The Hon. Allen Bristol Aylesworth, was elected to the Canadian House of Commons in 1905. He was a prominent member of the Laurier government, appointed Postmaster General in 1905, and Minister of Justice in 1906. (Ed.)

an oath to consider the evidence impartially and 1 shall do so." Oddly enough, he was not aware that the word impartial" was used in the treaty before the

(Page 263) THE ALASKA BOUNDARY [1903]

word "jurists", and I had to show him a copy of the treaty to convince him. I do not know whether the President was equally ignorant when he made the appointments.

To sum up, although the selection of two out of the three American Commissioners is not in accordance with the spirit of the treaty, I imagine it will be more dignified and more politic to assume that the President has acted in good faith, and to appoint on our side the very best men we can get.

To appoint three politicians on our side would be a mistake and a source of danger.

Mr. Choate,[374] the American Ambassador in London, had no more convincing explanations to offer of this surprising action than Mr. Hay.

Sir M. Herbert's charitable assumption that President Roosevelt had "acted in good faith" is hardly borne out by subsequent proceedings. In a conversation with Mr. Raikes,[375] a member of the British Embassy at Washington, in May 1902, he had announced that he was "going to be ugly" over the Alaska Boundary, and he was as good as his word. In the biography of Mr. Hay there appears the following passage, in an undated letter to him from the President (vol. ii. p. 210):[376]

I wish to make one last effort to bring about an agreement through the Commission which will enable the people of both countries to say that the result represents the feeling of the representatives of both countries. But if there is a disagreement, I wish it distinctly understood, not only that there will be no arbitration of the matter, but that in my message to Congress I shall take a position which will prevent any possibility of arbitration hereafter: a position which will render it necessary for Congress to give me the authority to run the line as we claim it, by our own people, without any further regard to the attitude of England and Canada.

In order that there should be no misunderstanding, he had, in fact, already sent troops to Alaska. To put it

(Page 264) LORD LANSDOWNE [1903]

plainly, President Roosevelt had accepted arbitration, but only on condition that the award was favourable to him. If no favourable agreement was reached, he intended to use force and had already made the necessary preparations.

It would be difficult to conceive any action more calculated to bring disrepute upon the principle of arbitration, to which every nation renders lip-service; but in order to make his intention perfectly clear, President Roosevelt took steps to enlighten the British Government privately before the Commission had concluded its labours. The person whom he selected for this communication was the late Mr. Henry White,[377] then secretary at the American Embassy in London, a very popular and amiable man, well

[374] Joseph Hodges Choate (1832–1917) was an American lawyer and diplomat. He was chairman of the American delegation at the Second Hague Conference, and ambassador to the United Kingdom

[375] This could be Arthur S. Raikes, listed in a directory of British diplomats as a counsellor at the British Embassy in Washington from 1901-1904. (Ed.)

[376] *Life and Letters of John Hay* (W. R. Thayer). (LN)

[377] Henry White (1850–1927) was a prominent American diplomat during the 1890s and 1900s, and one of the signers of the Treaty of Versailles. Theodore Roosevelt, who was president during the peak of White's career,

known for his strong Anglophile sentiments. Mr. White paid a visit to Mr. Balfour at Whittingehame on October 2, of which he gives an account in a letter to Mr. Hay:[378]

> I took occasion on Sunday afternoon, the 4th, to have a long talk with him, during which I left no doubt upon his mind as to the importance of a settlement nor as to the result of a failure to agree.
>
> I explained to him very fully the position of Alverstone, and intimated that I thought that it would be very desirable to that he should be told that the Government, without in any way wishing to influence him, was very anxious for a decision.
>
> Whenever things seemed to be approaching deadlock – as they did once or twice during the last week – I only attributed it to Lord Alverstone's very natural and proper desire to do the best and make all the fight possible for the Canadians on the question of the width of the *lisière*,[379] and I never for a moment doubted that the undercurrents of diplomacy, the force and quiet working of which you and I appreciate, would bring about a decision in the end.

From Mr. White's letter it would seem that he felt more confidence in the success of "the undercurrents of diplomacy" than in that of abstract justice. There is no reason to believe that the Cabinet put any pressure whatever upon Lord Alverstone, nor was there any occasion to do so, since the Canadians did not attempt to conceal their dissatisfaction at what they considered to be his pro-American attitude, and the threatened deadlock ended in his giving his vote for the American side on the main contention.

The decision, as might have been expected, caused intense irritation in Canada, where the moral was drawn that Canada ought to possess the right of treaty-making, and public indignation was directed chiefly against Lord Alverstone. Had the Canadians been aware at the time of President Roosevelt's action, their indignation would presumably have risen higher still. It is unpleasant to consider what might have been the consequences if Lord Alverstone had taken the opposite course, and one wonders what would have happened if a British attempt had ever been made to influence an American Commissioner's decision by threats to his own Government.

In President Roosevelt's autobiography there is no mention of the unedifying Alaska Boundary settlement, but one of his biographers, Mr. W. R. Thayer, [380] expresses approval of his action:

> "He took precautions to assure a verdict in favour of the United States if there was a disagreement," although "Roosevelt's brusque way of bringing the Alaska Boundary question to a quick decision may be criticised as not being judicial."

Another, Mr. Draper Lewis,[381] observes with unconscious humour: "Under Roosevelt's administration, the cause of arbitration flourished."

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described White as "the most useful man in the entire diplomatic service, during my Presidency and for many years before." (Ed.)

[378] *Adventures in American Diplomacy* (Dennis), p. 54. (LN)

[379] Border (Ed.)

[380] *Theodore Roosevelt: an Intimate Biography* (W. R. Thayer), pp. 175, 177. (LN). William Roscoe Thayer (1859–1923) was an American author and editor who wrote *Theodore Roosevelt: An Intimate Biography* (1919) Grosset & Dunlap). (Ed.)

[381] *The Life of Theodore Roosevelt* (W. Draper Lewis), p. 214. (LN). William Draper Lewis (1867–1949) was the first full-time dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School (1896–1914). (Ed.)

> It was during this period, too, that the Alaska Boundary question was submitted to a mixed British and American Commission, and was thus finally settled to the satisfaction of both disputants.

Strangely enough, an English biographer of President Roosevelt, Lord Charnwood,[382] has also written in approval of his Alaska procedure, but it is known that he wrote in haste and that he has since entirely changed his opinion.

[382] Godfrey Rathbone Benson, 1st Baron Charnwood (1864–1945), was an English author, academic, Liberal politician and philanthropist. (Ed.)

CHAPTER X

ANGLO-FRENCH AND ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1902-4

(Page 267)

The private letters from Sir E. Monson in the beginning of 1902 show considerable uneasiness with regard to the effect upon Anglo-French relations should a change of Ministry take place in France, the Prime Minister at the time being M. Waldeck-Rousseau[383] and the Foreign Minister M. Delcassé, who although unsatisfactory in some respects, was "less Anglophobe than his predecessor", M. Hanotaux.[384] It was, however, a hopeful sign that the proposal of a visit to Paris by King Edward in the following year was received by President Loubet[385] with great pleasure.

On August 6, Lord Lansdowne had an important conversation with M. Cambon,[386] in the course or which the first symptoms of an inclination to come to terms on the subject of Siam and Morocco became apparent. The essence of M. Cambon's observations was that the French Government were *partisans du status quo partout*,[387] and that in this respect they did not differ from us. Their colonial dominion sufficed for their needs, and they had no desire to extend it: their colonial policy was therefore conservative, and it ought to be possible to *marcher d'accord avec vous*,[388] more especially as the French were not commercial competitors with us, like the Germans and Americans. The only two points, in the opinion

(Page 268) LORD LANSDOWNE [1902]

of M. Delcassé, at which her position was insecure, were Siam and Morocco.

In the former case, there should be no difficulty in disposing of the trivial questions which had arisen during the last few years; but in Morocco, France was not prepared to allow an *influence exterieure*[389] to establish itself, which might interfere with her own administration. It was desirable that the two Governments should frankly discuss together the action which ought to be taken in the event of the liquidation of both Siam and Morocco; and as the result of the conversation, Lord Lansdowne undertook to bring the matter before the Cabinet. On August 23, 1902, Sir E. Monson wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> M. Cambon's exordium[390] as to the colonial policy which, in Delcassé's own view, France should pursue, entirely represents the opinion which the latter has frequently stated, not only to me and to my colleagues, but also to Parliament, and I have never felt any doubt as to the sincerity of his desire to move in accordance with H.M. Government.
>
> His statement as to the impossibility that France should ever allow any exterior influence to establish itself to her prejudice in Morocco is one that M. Delcassé has repeatedly made, and is matter of public property.

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[383] Pierre Marie René Ernest Waldeck-Rousseau (1846–1904) was a French Republican politician who served for three years as the Prime Minister of France from June 1899 to June 1902. (Ed.)
[384] Albert Auguste Gabriel Hanotaux, known as Gabriel Hanotaux (1853–1944) was a French statesman and historian who was France's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1894 to 1895 and 1896 to 1898. (Ed.)
[385] Émile François Loubet (1838–1929) was the 45th Prime Minister of France from February to December 1892 and later President of France from 1899 to 1906. (Ed.)
[386] French Ambassador in London. (LN) (*See footnote on page 226.* Ed.)
[387] Supporters of the current situation everywhere. (Ed.)
[388] To walk in agreement with you. (Ed.)
[389] Outside influence. (Ed.)
[390] Introduction. (Ed.)

> With regard to Siam, it is certainly a novelty that H.E.[391] should have termed the questions which have been so long in dispute as "somewhat trivial". The attitude which he has observed, and the language which he has employed in regard to these questions in discussion with the Siamese Minister, as well as in his allusions to them in conversation with myself and my colleagues, must have been immensely and deliberately exaggerated if he held them in such low estimation. They would, however, be aptly so described in comparison with the projects for a division of influence which M. Gambon has proposed to you.

The fact that England and France were meditating a friendly arrangement must have soon become known, for in October, Dr. Dumba,[392] the Austrian Charge d'Affaires at Paris, who subsequently obtained notoriety in the

Great War, called upon Sir E. Monson, and stated that the news had much perturbed his Government. Austrian interests in Siam were purely commercial, but if England should ever agree to the excessive pretensions of France in Morocco, the situation in the Mediterranean would be changed in a manner extremely serious not only to the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but to those of the other Mediterranean Powers. Italy, for instance, would never agree to such an arrangement, nor would it be easy to persuade Spain to renounce her prospects of territorial acquisition in Morocco.

As, however, Austro-Hungarian interests in these two countries were virtually negligible, it is not unreasonable to surmise that Dr. Dumba's warning was instigated by his German colleague.

In December, a rebellion broke out in Morocco, and the Sultan's so-called army, which was partly commanded by Englishmen, was severely defeated. On December 28, 1902, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir E. Monson:

> Fortunately, we seem to have no very thorny questions at issue with the French just now. I own, however, that I am perturbed by the latest news from Morocco. It seems clear that the Sultan has sustained a serious reverse, and if there is a catastrophe, the French will certainly take advantage of it, and renew the overtures which Cambon has more than once made to me for an arrangement between us, which would certainly not be to the advantage of Morocco. They are, I believe, convinced that we have designs of our own, although we do not reveal them. I wish we could persuade M. Delcassé of our absolute sincerity and disinterestedness. We have no wish to anglicise the Sultan's army and then to use it in furtherance of our own interests, and our advice to him about loans and railways has throughout been of a moderating character.
>
> There is one comparatively small matter about which I am a little uneasy. I mean the ill-treatment by the French local authorities of British firms in the Congo. It is really a bad case and there will be trouble over it if we don't take care. We have hitherto stroked down successfully the Chambers of Commerce,

> but if the firms obtain no relief and their cause is taken up in the House of Commons by a good debater, very unpleasant things will be said and the effects will be bad. Do what you can to

[391] His Excellency. (Ed.)

[392] Dr. Konstantin Theodor Dumba (1856–1947) was an Austro-Hungarian diplomat Dr. Dumba was born in Vienna and joined the Austro-Hungarian foreign service in 1879, subsequently serving at various embassies including London, St. Petersburg, Rome, Bucharest and Paris. He became Austria-Hungary's Ambassador to the United States from 1913-15, whence he was expelled because of espionage accusations. (Ed.)

impress this upon M. Delcassé. So far as I can make out, the tone of the French Colonial Office has been friendly and considerate, but the local officials are very different.

Sir E. Monson to Lord Lansdowne. Dec. 31, 1902.

Delcassé was evidently excited and anxious about the situation in Morocco, and I cannot too much emphasise his insistence on the inexpediency of sending British ships of war to the coast and thus risking the further exasperation of the fanatical element against the Europeans.

The argument thus put forward may be correct, but I cannot help thinking that if M. Camille Pelletan[393] had not done so much to dislocate the navy and to impair the mobility of the French Mediterranean Squadron, there might have been less deprecation on Delcassé's part of any movement of ships towards Tangiers.

I am told that after I left the Quai d'Orsay, the Spanish Ambassador arrived, and after speaking in a tone so loud as to be heard by all the diplomatists in the waiting-room, declared that the Moors were a formidable race of warriors in possession of a country so difficult in its configuration that it would take an army of 400,000 men to reduce them! My Spanish colleague is rather given to exuberance of language.

I fear that the very probable catastrophe which seems to await the Sultan will not cause either this Government or public opinion in France any regret. He is generally considered as more or less a puppet in the hands of British advisers, and his disappearance would be hailed as a check to our "intrigues".

It is difficult to ascertain Cambon's exact relations with Delcassé, but I believe that he plays very much for his own hand and counts upon being approved and supported without waiting for any definite instructions. I am assured that there is no definite intimacy or sympathy between the two men.

The M. Camille Pelletan alluded to above was the Minister of Marine who had demoralized the French

with his ultra-democratic methods; and it will be observed that in spite of their advances, the French Government, as well as the French public, were still permeated with the old suspicion of British trickery.

When the news of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement was communicated to Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, he had received it ostensibly in good part, and had even expressed a faint inclination to include Russia in its scope, but at the same time it was evident that he was quite prepared to make trouble for us in other parts of the world.

Sir C. Scott[394] to Lord Lansdowne. St. Petersburg, Jan, 22, 1903.

I am sorry to have to send you an unsatisfactory report of Count Lamsdorff's view of the Afghan relations question, which does not correspond with what I had been led to expect.

He seemed to wish to treat the whole question as one of minor importance, and sufficiently settled by the Russian Memorandum of 1900.

[393] Charles Camille Pelletan (1846–1915) was a French politician, historian and journalist, Minister of Marine in Emile Combes' Bloc des gauches (Left-Wing Blocks) cabinet from 1902 to 1905. (Ed.)
[394] British Ambassador in St. Petersburg (LN). (*See footnote on page 215*).

I think I made him clearly realise that this was not the view taken in England, and I hope Benckendorff[395] will be enabled to enlighten him in this respect.

From his whole tone I gathered that he does not regard the old assurances given under a former reign, and in, as he seems to think, different circumstances, as definite pledges undertaken by Russia binding her for all time.

He was inclined to take his stand only on the last Memorandum given to us, and to regard it as not inviting further discussion or explanations with us.

In short, I do not anticipate the probability of getting from Lamsdorff any new engagements or assurances of a sufficiently binding character upon which to base a safe policy.

I did not detect any symptom of a sincere desire to try and avert misunderstandings by a free and frank exchange of confidential views.

(Page 272) LORD LANSDOWNE [1903]

Lamsdorff is, no doubt, at present in a difficult position. He has to contend with the chauvinist military party and the influence of certain Grand Dukes. He and M. Witte stick together more than ever, and the Emperor, I fear, will always remain a very weak factor in the formation of all important decisions, although I am assured that he desires nothing more sincerely than good relations with England.

It is not surprising that this calm repudiation of solemn engagements should have produced a bad impression here, and the letter was minuted by King Edward: "This is most unsatisfactory and may lead to grave consequences in the future".

But there was another unpleasant surprise in store for H.M. Government, for presently it appeared that the Russians proposed to send an expedition to Thibet[396] and to establish a protectorate over that country. This intelligence naturally caused much perturbation in India, and Lord Lansdowne was forced to speak very plainly to Count Benckendorff on the subject.[397]

The interest of India in Thibet was, I said, of a very special character. With a map of Central Asia before me, I pointed out that Lhassa was within a comparatively short distance of the northern frontier of India. It was, on the other hand, considerably more than 1000 miles distant from the Asiatic possessions of Russia, and any sudden display of Russian interest or activity in the regions immediately adjoining the possessions of Great Britain could scarcely fail to have a disturbing effect upon the population, or to create the impression that British influence was receding and that of Russia making rapid advances into regions which had hitherto been regarded as altogether outside of her sphere of influence.

I went on to say that it must be obvious to H.E. that, as we were much more closely interested than Russia in Thibet it followed that, should there be any display of Russian activity in that country, we should be obliged to reply by a display of activity, not only equivalent to, but exceeding that made by Russia If they sent a mission or an expedition, we should have to do the same, but in greater strength.

[395] Russian Ambassador in London. (LN)
[396] Tibet. (Ed.)
[397] Conversation with Count Benckendorff, Feb. 18, 1903. (LN). Count Alexander Philipp Konstantin Ludwig von Benckendorff (1849–1917) was a Russian diplomat, of Baltic German heritage, who served as ambassador to Denmark and the United Kingdom. (Ed.)

The Russians had, therefore, received a fair warning and Lord Lansdowne did his best to impress upon the Russian Government that we could not deal with such occurrences as if they were isolated incidents, and that if we were ever to come to an understanding, it must have reference to Thibet, Afghanistan, Seistan,[398] and Persia generally. In spite of the pin-pricks above referred to, Count Lamsdorff had again thrown out a vague hint at an understanding, at the same time remarking that it was very difficult for a constitutional Government to adhere to its pledges—and in view of the manner in which the autocratic Russian Government had continually violated its engagements, the hardihood of this observation is sufficiently surprising.

Our troubles with Russia in Asia, however, were approaching their end, for during the whole of 1903 that country was gradually drifting into war with Japan, and when it came early in 1904, the machinations of authorized and unauthorized Russian agents became practically innocuous. Letters from Sir C. Scott and Mr. Spring Rice[399] throw a curious light upon the conditions under which Russia was governed at the time.

Mr. Spring Rice to Lord Lansdowne's Private Secretary.
St. Petersburg, Oct. 29, 1904.

> The Emperor is personally under the Kaiser's influence when they meet, though he hates to confess it and always dreads a meeting beforehand and regrets it afterwards. But he becomes infected and hypnotised. Witness the following story,[400] which perhaps you know. At Wiesbaden, the Kaiser said he wanted a port in China: did Russia object? He was told no: and told that it was somewhere in Shantung Province—the name he forgot. The Emperor agreed. Then came the news some months afterwards of the seizure of Kiao-chow, which was actually mentioned

> in the Cassini Convention. Muravieff[401] wanted to fight. The Emperor told him he must be bound by his promise.
>
> The policy is evidently peace in the Far East. The question is eternal. Japan, if she remains as she is, even if on friendly terms with Russia, neutralises 300,000 men and a large fleet. But she never can be on friendly terms with Russia. If there is war, Japan may be utterly wiped out—financially speaking. If Japan wins, however, for a time, she may frighten France into joining Russia, or unite the yellow races and get too big for her boots.
>
> I believe the Russians have our cipher, so please take heed what is said and give a private warning. I gather this because of a curious change in manner on the part of the F.O. here after I had sent a warning telegram about the Afghan frontier.

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[398] Sistān is a historical region in present-day south-western Afghanistan, south-eastern Iran and extending across the borders of south-western Pakistan. (Ed.)

[399] Afterwards Sir Cecil Spring Rice, G.C.M.G. (LN). Sir Cecil Spring Rice (1859–1918) was a British diplomat who served as British Ambassador to the United States from 1912 to 1918, as which he was responsible for the organisation of British efforts to end American neutrality during the First World War. He was a close friend of US President Theodore Roosevelt, and served as best man at his second wedding. He is best known as the writer of the lyrics of the patriotic hymn "I Vow to Thee, My Country". (Ed.)

[400] Already reported by Sir C. Scott in a despatch dated April 11, 1904. (LN)

[401] Russian Foreign Minister. (LN). Count Mikhail Nikolayevich Muravyov (1845-1900) was a Russian statesman who advocated transferring the attention of Russian foreign policy from Europe to the Far East. (Ed.)

Very shortly before war broke out in the Far East, the Japanese had made an important proposal to the Russian Government, from whom no answer could be extracted, and a remarkable explanation of the delay is given in a letter from the British Ambassador.

Sir C. Scott to Lord Lansdowne. Dec. 11, 1903.

> The delay which has occurred, although inexplicable to anyone not having an insight into the way in which government is carried on in Russia just now, is equally to be accounted for by three circumstances.
>
> In the first instance, by the illness of the Empress and the moral shock sustained at the death of the little Hessian Princess, at which time apparently the Emperor declined to attend to any business at all, and all the Departments of the Government were put to great inconvenience by the delay; but in addition to this temporary disturbance of affairs, there is much to account for the delay in the existence at present of the two contending forces to which the Emperor has given a voice in the decision of foreign policy in the Far East—a dangerous situation, further complicated by the indecision of character of the Emperor himself, which displays itself particularly at critical moments when he is called upon to act by the exercise of his autocratic decision.

> It is a very grave and dangerous symptom. In another country it might have less serious consequences, but here, where there are no constitutional resources to fall back upon, it tends to render autocracy a misnomer and might easily constitute a grave national danger.

And this was the Government which, according to Count Lamsdorff, could not ally itself with constitutional States (France excepted), on account of their instability!

In March 1903, Lord Lansdowne intimated to Sir E. Monson that King Edward proposed making a cruise in the Mediterranean, and that on his return journey it would give him much pleasure to meet the President (M. Loubet) on French soil. This intimation was received by President Loubet with much enthusiasm, and on March 13, 1903, Sir E. Monson wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> The intimation of His Majesty's desire was welcomed by the President with unmistakable delight, as I had expected would be the case. He said that a visit from the King would, in the present temper of France, do an amount of good which is probably not realised in England. He hoped, indeed, that H.M.G. were already aware of the extent to which cordiality to England had increased in France, but probably the public at large were not to the same extent informed as to the growth of that sentiment in Paris and throughout the country. In this capital H.M., while Prince of Wales, had acquired an exceptional personal popularity, and his many old friends would be overjoyed to see him again; but this statement was not confined to his old friends and was general among all classes.
>
> I venture to say that, in my humble opinion, M. Loubet is perfectly correct in his anticipations. I have refrained from harping upon the expediency of a visit to France on the part of the King, because I understood that H.M. was absolutely disinclined to make any plans involving any such event. But the hope that it might be realised has been constantly present in my mind, and has been strengthened by the steadily increasing manifestation

> of the desire of the French that it should come to pass, and the current of popular feeling has set in favour of friendliness to England.

The visit was fixed for the beginning of May, and in the meanwhile the King proceeded to Italy. As he was on a health cruise, it had originally been intended that Rome should be omitted from the itinerary, but the plans were altered, with the result that complications were caused in connection with official receptions and a proposed visit to the Pope.[402] Influential Catholics in England were extremely anxious to bring about this visit, which was not looked upon with favour either by the British Cabinet, which stood in fear of anti-Catholics at home, or by the Italian Government. Ultimately, however, a private meeting was arranged, which created no dissatisfaction in any quarter.

Sir F. Bertie[403] to Lord Lansdowne. May 5,1903.

> The stay of the King in Rome has been very successful. The public generally are better pleased with the King than with the Kaiser. The latter's ostentatious display, all the state, and particularly the escort of his own soldiers on his visit to the Pope, have given offence in White circles.
>
> The King's speech, which was in English, was spoken in a very clear voice and in a tone which conveyed a conviction that what he said was said in all sincerity. There was absolutely nothing in it that could offend any foreign country in the slightest

The speech in question was delivered at a State banquet, and the Italian Government had made an unsuccessful attempt to ascertain beforehand a verbatim text of what His Majesty proposed to say.

Sir F. Bertie to Lord Lansdowne. May 17, 1903.

> The proceedings of the Kaiser were very theatrical and intended to be successful with the King, the Italians, and the Pope. Not content with putting the customary wreaths on the tombs of the Kings, he plucked roses from the wreaths and gave them to the Court Chaplain and to the President of the Corps of Veterans of 1848. He spent a long time with the Queen Mother, visited H.M.'s chief lady,[404] and personally left a card on all her other ladies, and sent them presents. When he went over the Forum, he plucked a laurel sprig and presented it to the excavator Boni,[405] telling him that he was worthy of laurels.
>
> The Kaiser went in great state to the Vatican; a Daumont[406] and four horses, state liveries, outriders, and four of his own Bodyguard, which was much commented on as being quite an unnecessary performance. The cortege of some dozen carriages was preceded and followed by escorts of carabinieri. There was no great crowd. The cheering was not enthusiastic but sufficient.
>
> I hear that the Kaiser wanted to obtain the reversion from France of the Protectorate of Catholics in the East, and that he did not get any encouragement at the Vatican. When H.M. arrived at his Vatican Legation, his standard at the Quirinal was lowered by the Italians as an indication of the extraterritoriality enjoyed by the Pope and the Diplomatic Representatives accredited to him. A request, however, came from the German Ambassador that the flag should be run up

[402] Pope Leo XIII was born Gioacchino Vincenzo Raffaele Luigi Pecci (1810–1903) and was head of the Catholic Church from 20 February 1878 until his death. (Ed.)
[403] British Ambassador in Rome. (LN). (*See footnote on page 223*. Ed.)
[404] Margherita of Savoy (1851–1926) was Queen of Italy by marriage to her first cousin King Umberto I of Italy. She was the daughter of Prince Ferdinando of Savoy, Duke of Genoa and Princess Elisabeth of Saxony, and the mother of the King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy. (Ed.)
[405] Giacomo Boni (1859–1925) was an Italian archaeologist specializing in Roman architecture. He is most famous for his work in the Roman Forum. He was the Government Archaeological Director. (Ed.)
[406] A daumont is a carriage drawn by four horses, of which the two near ones are ridden by postilions, and having two footmen at the rear. (Ed.)

again, and it was accordingly re-hoisted before the Kaiser's visit to the Pope had terminated. In the speeches of the King and the Kaiser at the Palace gala dinner, no mention was made of Austria or the Triple Alliance. This has been a good deal talked about. Altogether the visit of the Kaiser to Rome has not come up to what, I imagine, were his expectations. He only pleased the Vatican so far as he irritated the Italian Government by the pomp with which he went to visit the Pope, particularly the taking his escort of four of his own Gardes-à-cheval. 'The Italians quite see that the chief object of his stay in Rome was a visit to the Pope, and they draw comparisons not favourable to H.M. between the ostentatious manner of that visit and the quiet way in which the King of England went to the Vatican.

The Kaiser, who incidentally brought a suite of no less than eighty persons, as well as twelve horses, had with his habitual passion for theatricality and advertisement, completely overshot the mark, not for the first or last time.

King Edward arrived in Paris on May 1, and all the circumstances attending this visit have been so copiously published that it is unnecessary to describe it in detail. His reception, cool, if not frigid, at first, developed subsequently into a very remarkable personal triumph, and the manifestations of public regard for him, both in respect to his individual and representative capacity, contributed largely towards the improvement of the relations between the two countries, and the realization of the existence of their common interests. A private letter, dated May 20, 1903, from the late Sir H. O'Beirne,[407] at that time a secretary at the Paris Embassy, contains an instructive comment on its effect upon the hostile French section.

I was greatly pleased by the observation made by a violent Anglophobe to a friend of mine. He said: "I can't think what has overcome the population of Paris. The first day they behaved well, the second day, they merely displayed interest, but the third day "c'était attristant—ils ont acclaimé le Roi!"[408] This is testimony from a very hostile witness.[409]

Deville,[410] the President of the Conseil Municipal, told me that what was most gratifying to the official world was the way in which the King was received when driving to and from Vincennes. The people lining the streets were certainly the most frightful looking Apaches, and it seems that on some former occasions it has been thought dangerous to take the President there. The only sort of grumble I heard from Government quarters was with regard to the King leaving Loubert in his stand at the races to go and see one race from the Jockey Club stand no reasonable creature could make a grievance of that! As to the society people, it was of course gall to them to see the King monopolised by the Loubet, Pelletan *etc. etc.* but their

irritation was all for the Government and not for us. Combes[411] got a regular hissing at Longchamps after the King had left.

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[407] Hugh James O'Beirne (1866-1916). Entered diplomatic service in 1892; 3rd Secretary, British embassy, St. Petersburg, 1892-1896; 3rd secretary, Washington D.C, 1897; British embassy, Constantinople and Paris and Counsellor, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1906–1913; Minister, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1913-1915; Charge de affaires, Bulgaria in 1915. He was an aide to General Kitchener in 1916 and died in the sinking of HMS Hampshire in 1916. (details from website findagrave.com/memorial, Ed.)

[408] "It was sad—they acclaimed the King!"

[409] Lansdowne *Private Papers*. (LN)

[410] Alphonse Deville (1856-1932) was a French lawyer, journalist and politician, (Ed.)

[411] Émile Justin Louis Combes (1835–1921) was a French politician and freemason who led the Lefts Bloc cabinet from June 1902 to January 1905. (Ed.)

The King's visit to France had caused a good deal of apprehension at home, and some ministers had been opposed to it, but Lord Lansdowne had always been confident of success. In its way, it was an historical event, and various writers have acclaimed it as the genesis of the *entente*, which is manifestly absurd, but undoubtedly it assisted greatly towards the creation of a more favourable atmosphere. The real moral, however, conveyed by it seems to be the advantage of a monarchical system. Royal rank makes just as strong an appeal to democratic states as to private individuals, and the visit of a monarch makes an impression in every country which cannot be successfully rivalled by any republican president, however blameless.

The success of the Royal visit to Paris led to a return visit from M. Loubet to London in July the constitutional difficulties attendant upon a French President's travelling to a foreign country during his term of office having been overcome. The President was accompanied by M. Delcassé, and during his stay in London was entertained at a dinner at Lansdowne House at which the King was present, and the guests were reminded of their host's French connection by the service of the banquet on Sèvres china bearing the monogram of the famous Cardinal Prince de Rohan.[412] A number of French politicians interested in promoting an Anglo-French *entente* were also on a visit to London at the same time.

On July 7, an important conversation took place between Lord Lansdowne and M. Delcassé, and in addition to the questions of Siam and Morocco, other subjects came up for discussion, among them being Newfoundland, Sokoto, and the New Hebrides. Egypt appears to have been mentioned for the first time on

this occasion, and M. Delcassé expressed the hopeful opinion that the Egyptian question formed part of the larger African question which, he felt sure, could be disposed of satisfactorily, if only they could come to an agreement as to the position of France in Morocco. It was obvious that in any arrangement with regard to Morocco, it would be necessary to consider Spanish claims, and Lord Lansdowne, from the first, made it clear that they could not be ignored. In a letter to our Ambassador at Madrid he observes:

> My own impression is that it would not be difficult for us to come to terms with France if Spain were out of the way. Nothing will, however, induce me to be disloyal to her or to make a backstairs arrangement with the French Government to her detriment.
>
> The question seems to me to be whether this country and Spain could not afford to acquiesce in such a preponderance if it were carefully limited in the manner which I indicated.[413]

All through the negotiations the French showed a disposition to disregard the Spanish claims, and a bitter feeling was created in that country, but owing to Lord Lansdowne's attitude, the ultimate reversion to Spain was not unsatisfactory, though less than had been hoped for. M. Delcassé's views were submitted to Lord Cromer, to whose opinion much value was rightly attached by the British Government. On July 17, 1903, Lord Cromer wrote from Cairo to Lord Lansdowne:[414]

> His [M. Delcassé's] language appears to me to be eminently satisfactory. For my own part, I may say that I did not anticipate that he would open out anything like so hopeful a prospect of settling our various outstanding differences with France. I most earnestly hope that advantage will be taken of the opportunity which is now apparently offered for settling these differences.

[412] Louis-René-Édouard de Rohan (1734–1803) known as Cardinal de Rohan, Prince de Rohan-Guéméné. He was a French bishop of Strasbourg, politician, cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. (Ed.)
[413] Lord Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand, July 14, 1903. (LN)
[414] Gooch and Temporley, vol. ii. pp. 298-300. (LN)

What it really amounts to is this: that everything depends on our attitude as regards Morocco. M. Delcassé, you say, "did not attempt to disguise from me the immense importance which the French Government attached to obtaining from us a recognition of the predominance which they desired to obtain in Morocco."

I rather anticipated something of this sort, but I certainly did not expect M. Delcassé to go so far as to say that "he was entirely in favour of a comprehensive settlement, and that the Egyptian formed part of the larger African question, which could, he felt sure, be disposed of satisfactorily if only we could come to an agreement as to the position of France in Morocco".

I cannot help thinking that in making these remarks, M. Delcassé went rather further than he intended, and that it may consequently be found that, under pressure exerted by the permanent officials at the Quai d'Orsay, and others, he will be reluctant to face the French Chamber with any Egyptian proposals which would be thoroughly satisfactory to us. However that may be, we are for the moment perfectly justified in taking him at his word.

There are six outstanding questions, *viz*. (1) Newfoundland; (2) Morocco; (3) Siam; (4) the New Hebrides; (5) Sokoto; (6) Egypt. In Morocco, Siam, and Sokoto the French want various things which we have it in our power to give. In Newfoundland and Egypt the situation is reversed. In these latter cases we depend to a greater extent on the goodwill of France.

'The New Hebrides question does not fall distinctly into one or other of these two groups.

There would not appear to be any great difficulty as regards meeting the French views in Siam.

Possibly some concession in Sokoto might be made in return for counter concessions on their part in Newfoundland.

But the main question is manifestly Morocco. My own opinion is distinctly in favour of making concessions in Morocco in return for counter concessions in Egypt and elsewhere.

The question therefore to my mind is this: have we any objection to Morocco becoming a French province? Personally, I see none, provided always (1) that we get an adequate *quid pro quo* in Egypt and elsewhere; and (2) that the French comply with your three conditions as regards Morocco. These, it I understand rightly, are (1) the seaboard is to be neutralised; (2) a proper regard is to be shown to Spanish interests and susceptibilities;

and (3) a guarantee is to be obtained that British trade will not be placed at any legal disadvantage.

In all diplomatic negotiations there is always a danger of moving either too fast or too slow. In the present case possibly the danger lies rather on the side of moving too slow. Personally, I should be inclined not to delay too long, but to take advantage of the present phase of Anglo-French tendencies and relations. It is conceivable that it may not last.

As a result of combined official and unofficial efforts, an Arbitration Treaty, limited in scope, was signed in the summer, but it became evident, apart from minor obstacles, that there would be great difficulty over Egypt in arriving at a general agreement. When, for instance, on July 29, M. Cambon came to discuss the general question, he made no mention of Egypt at all, and when reminded by Lord Lansdowne of M. Delcassé's observations on the subject, replied that he had no instructions to mention the matter, and then asked whether it would not be possible to deal with all the other points, and to leave

Egypt alone for the present? Whereupon he was at once told that it was impossible that we should leave Egypt out of consideration, and that the Cabinet would certainly not look at any proposals which did not include one for the regularization of our position in that country. M. Delcassé, when appealed to, explained that he had not understood that the whole Egyptian question was to be raised and that the British proposals seemed to him "to be very far-reaching". The fact was that the French, as was only natural, were endeavouring to obtain their objects in Morocco at the price of minimum concessions to us with regard to Egypt, and M. Delcassé was no doubt in great fear as to how any surrender to us there would be received by his countrymen. It must be remembered that the French had never forgiven themselves for having missed their opportunity in 1882, and for many

years one of their chief aims in foreign policy had been our expulsion from Egypt. As a prominent French diplomatist once remarked to me: "The London Embassy possesses little attraction for me, as the French Ambassador is expected to get the English out of Egypt, and the thing can't be done". It is true that of late years this feeling had abated, but it was too much to expect that a sudden renunciation of a traditional policy should be adopted with complete equanimity, and M. Cambon laboured in vain to show that we were obtaining disproportionate advantages in Egypt as compared with French gains in Morocco.

Lord Cromer, whose views were always practical, was quite right in urging that the negotiations should be speeded up as much as possible, in spite of the difficulties not only in connection with Egypt, but with regard to other questions.

On November 1, 1903, Lord Cromer wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> I am not at all discouraged by the French answer. This is where we have got:
> (1) The settlement of the Siamese question.
> (2) The neutralisation of what appears to me to be a sufficient portion of the coast of Morocco.
> (3) The recognition of the British occupation of Egypt.
> (4) The cession of the Conversion economies.
> (5) The recognition of the principle that both the system of financial control and the regime of the Capitulations in Egypt are to undergo modification.
>
> Certainly this is not enough. But when we consider the difficulties of the subject, the general course of diplomatic negotiations of this description, and the frame of mind of the French only so recently as the Fashoda period, I cannot think that we have any reason to be dissatisfied. Who would have imagined, only a short time ago, that we should ever have got so far?
>
> I most earnestly hope, not merely on Egyptian but on more general grounds, that you will continue the negotiations vigorously

> Such an opportunity as the present is not likely to recur. We *must* manage to come to terms—though any display of excessive eagerness to do so would, of course, be inadvisable. Personally, I regard this as by far the most important diplomatic affair that we have had in hand for a long time past. We cannot, of course, expect to get all we want, but there is ample room for a notable and very beneficial achievement.
>
> The complications and intricacies of the Egyptian part of the business are beyond description. Internationalism has managed to throw a net over this country—legal, financial, and diplomatic, with the result that no sooner does one see a way of breaking through the meshes in one direction, than a danger of being caught again in some other direction turns up.

> *We must not fail.* If we once come to terms with the French, we are bound to carry the thing through, and this on every ground—notably because, if we accept defeat, the French will have got all they want out of us, and we shall have got little or nothing out of them. We should not have secured one of our main objects, which is to get a free hand for dealing with the finances of Egypt and the Soudan.

Lord Cromer was of opinion that as regarded Morocco and Egypt, we were in reality asking for a great deal more than we offered in return. What we said to the French amounted to this: "Here is a country (Morocco), falling into a state of anarchy, which apparently must come into the sphere of influence of some European Power. We don't want it for ourselves. If you like to go to the trouble and expense of taking it, pray do so. We will not object, provided always you secure to us the commercial advantages which we have heretofore possessed, and guarantee to us that Spain, which is a weak power and cannot do us any harm, shall possess the coast line and not construct fortifications." The French were not yet in possession of Morocco and perhaps never would be: the prospective advantages were dependent upon a number of circumstance which might never occur, whereas the concessions which we were demanding in Egypt were positive and immediate;

therefore the offer from the French point of view could hardly be considered attractive, but it might be made more palatable to them by making some concession to sentiment in connection with financial control.

Lord Lansdowne's reply to Lord Cromer, dated November 17, 1903, runs as follows:

> I do not disagree with you in thinking that we are asking for a good deal, and of course the French see this as clearly as you do. But they are extremely anxious to have their position in Morocco recognized, and we must turn this feeling to account.
>
> If you allow us to postpone Conversion, our difficulties will certainly be diminished and the retention of the control, although with its wings clipped, will no doubt make the French easier to deal with.
>
> I have felt from the first, and so has Cambon, that we shall have to reckon with Germany. Metternich has made several inquiries as to what we were about, and the newspapers have made so many disclosures of late that they probably know the whole story, even if they did not know it before. It would not surprise me if they were to ask for Rabat. I do not know what our Admiralty would say to this, but the French have always assumed that we were to keep other Powers out of Morocco, and the Spaniards cannot bear Germany and impute to her the most sinister designs.

Ten days later Lord Cromer wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> I fancy that from what the French Agent says that Delcassé hopes that eventually we shall come to terms with Russia and thus isolate Germany. Indeed, I cannot help thinking that, to the French Government, this is one of the main attractions of the whole scheme.
>
> I gather from what I read in the Print that you are not sanguine about the possibility of arranging with the Russians. The Russian negotiation is of course, far more difficult than the French, mainly owing to the fact that it is next to impossible to rely on Russian promises. Still it is well worth an effort.
>
> Since I have been at this sort of work for 20 years, I do not think that I remember such an opportunity as the present.

My fears that not so much as I should hope will come of it

(Page 286) LORD LANSDOWNE [1903]

are based on two considerations, in respect of which I hope I may be wrong.

The first is that the soldiers and sailors will want too much. The strategical arguments are, of course, of great importance, but there is often a tendency to push them too far.

The other is that everyone's attention in England is so much taken up with the fiscal controversy that the very great importance of the present diplomatic negotiation may be minimised.

I should think it almost certain that the Germans would ask for something—either Rabat or perhaps a coaling-station in the Red Sea. They want coaling-stations badly. It will be rather an awkward demand to meet.

In the meanwhile, my French colleague appeared to take quite kindly to the idea that, if the Germans did not accept the Anglo-French arrangement, we should go on without them. This is natural enough. It is manifestly in French interests that we should fall out with Germany.

According to Sir E. Monson, M. Delcassé was now getting nervous over the magnitude of the scheme which he had helped to set on foot, and was dribbling out to the Press at frequent intervals scraps of information relating to the Lansdowne-Cambon negotiations in London, and intimating that a "big thing" was on hand. The British Ambassador also reported that, although there had been an astonishing change in French feeling towards us, it was not universal amongst politicians, and that it was feared in some quarters that amity with England was incompatible with the obligations of the Russian Alliance.

On December 7, 1903, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Lord Cromer:

We are now waiting for the next move on Delcassé's side. I have tried, I think successfully, to convince Cambon that delay is fatal.

Last time I saw him, he said that the only two points which signified were: (1) The contributions which would be left to the Caisse under our plan; (2) The question of territorial compensation

(Page 287) ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS [1903-4]

for the French rights on the Treaty Shore. They are bent on getting something, even if the modified clause is adopted.

But they now must have realised that they will not get the Gambia, and, personally, I should have no objection to letting them have a revised boundary line in the Sokoto region, if that will make the deal go through.

What you say as to the demands of the military and naval experts is quite true as far as the latter are concerned.

But I have told Balfour that he must make up his mind to be told by the *Spectator* and critics of that kidney that we have given away the Western Mediterranean and betrayed the interests of the Empire at other points. We must make our minds up to face that sort of music, and I don't want another Bagdad Railway fiasco.

The Russian position is very obscure. Benckendorff, as far as I can make out, has really been instructed to arrange the basis of a live-and-let-live understanding, and is to go back in January with a project if he can get one. I am endeavouring to work it out. But the Russian Government

has been "upset", as the servants say, by (1) Thibet; (2) George Curzon's prancings in the Persian puddle; and no doubt by (3) our purchase of the Chilian ironclads. I do not, however, at all regret that we should have succeeded in irritating them, and I feel pretty sure that we shall not thereby have at all diminished the prospects of an agreement.

I am glad that you have re-christened Fashoda. It was a happy inspiration, and if the newspapers don't find it out, I shall contrive some means of making them do so. Our French friends will certainly be pleased.

It may be added, with reference to the last paragraph, that Lord Cromer never lost an opportunity of conciliating French sentiment whenever that was possible.

On January 8, 1904, the astonishing information came from Sir E. Monson to Lord Lansdowne that M. Delcassé had actually not yet consulted his colleagues on the general question. Monson's letter contained the following paragraph:

Cambon [who was in Paris] said that the time had now come in which Delcasse must consult his colleagues on the general

scheme of arrangement. I suppose that I looked a little surprised, for Cambon went on to explain that so far the members of the Cabinet had not learned much of the details, but had only received from Delcassé general information. But Delcassé, although he may have sketched out a project perfectly acceptable to himself, is not sufficiently in touch with public opinion to be able to judge of its acceptability by the Chambers and by France at large. To ascertain this he must refer to his colleagues and would now have to do so.

If this statement was correct, and if M. Delcassé really knew nothing about public opinion and had never taken his Cabinet colleagues into his confidence, it was obvious that the fate of the negotiations hung in the balance. Three days earlier (January 5), Lord Lansdowne had written to Lord Cromer:

I think our French negotiation is proceeding fairly well. So far as I can make out, the Egyptian part of the business may be regarded as virtually settled, but I hear that Delcassé has been keeping his colleagues very much in the dark, and they may be troublesome.

The French have unluckily at the eleventh hour put forward a quite unreasonable demand for the cession of an extensive tract of territory on the right bank of the Niger.

The French are indeed quite unreasonable in asking for substantial territorial compensation for their concessions to us in Newfoundland. Their rights on the Treaty Shore are of no present and little prospective value, and we could not defend paying for them first by the compensation of private interests and then by a compensation of the kind proposed.

This particular question of compensation formed the subject of various lively discussions between Lord Lansdowne and M. Cambon, the latter stating that our attitude had caused M. Delcassé much regret, as he had always considered that France should receive territorial compensation of a substantial kind for the surrender of the Newfoundland rights. He had asked for a portion of the Gambia and had failed to get it, and now that he had

suggested a slice of territory in Western Africa, he had again been met with a blank refusal. There was a strong feeling in France on the subject of Newfoundland, and he was convinced that no French

Minister could afford to announce the retirement of France unless he could show that he had obtained a *quid pro quo* elsewhere.

The proposed concession of a tract of country in the region of Sokoto would not be a reasonable equivalent.

To this Lord Lansdowne replied that M. Delcassé's decision seemed to bring the negotiations to a deadlock, and said that all he could do was to report the matter to the Cabinet. Meanwhile Lord Cromer continued to urge the danger of delay, and the advisability of making whatever concessions were possible in appearance.

> "The French are greatly influenced by forms, by words, and by everything which flatters their national vanity."

On January 20th he telegraphed that the language of his French colleague at Cairo was much less hopeful:

> "*les négociations marchent, mais péniblement*",[415] and in marked contrast to previous conversations. "I am inclined to think that the risk of a breakdown is serious. I need hardly say that I hold very strongly that it is worth some sacrifice to avoid this. In any case, I recommend settling the matter quickly. The negotiations are being allowed to drag on rather too long."

Lord Cromer was perfectly right, but M. Delcassé was obviously hanging back and making difficulties at the last moment because he was afraid of an attack by the French Colonial party in the Chamber. The contest over the compensation for Newfoundland continued in London, and as late as March 2 it appeared that M. Delcassé had not yet taken the French Colonial Minister into his confidence. This almost incredible omission was explained as being due to the former's extreme anxiety that the secrecy of the negotiations should be mainlined. On March 30, after it had been believed that the question of compensation had been disposed of by

the cession of the Los Islands and a readjustment of territory in Africa, Sir E. Monson telegraphed that M. Delcassé had announced that he did not see how he could give way over the "bait" question, the evident explanation of this fresh obstruction being that he was about to receive a deputation from persons interested in the Newfoundland fisheries who intended to impress upon him the extreme importance of procuring bait throughout the whole coast of Newfoundland.

> I told M. Cambon plainly [wrote Lord Lansdowne] that if this demand were persisted in, I should be obliged to break off the negotiation altogether, and in this event the whole arrangement, including those parts of it which have reference to Morocco, Egypt, and Siam, would have to be abandoned.

This firm language had the desired effect, but M. Delcassé capacity for eleventh-hour haggling was not exhausted. He now proposed to insert in the Declaration as to Egypt the following words:

> *"De son côté le Gouvernement de la République déclare qu'il n'entravera pas l'action de l'Angleterre dans ce pays en prenant l'initiative de demander qu'un terme soit fixé à l'occupation britannique."* [416]

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[415] The negotiations are going well but laboriously. (Ed.)

[416] For its part, the Government of the Republic declares that it will not hinder England's action in this country by taking the initiative of requesting that a term be set for the British occupation. (Ed.)

The intention was obvious, and it was clear that M. Delcassé was still clinging to the hope of a time limit to our occupation. "I took strong exception to the words, '*en prenant l'initiative*'", wrote Lord Lansdowne, and after this final instance of ineffectual obstruction, M. Delcassé collapsed, and the Agreement was signed on April 7, 1904.

The Secret Articles contained in the Agreement, which were not divulged until 1911, have, of course, been the subject of much controversy. Lord Grey of Fallodon has always taken the view that they were of little importance.

On the face of the agreement with France [he writes][417] there was nothing more than a desire to remove causes of

(Page 291) ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS [1904]

dispute between the two nations, to make up old quarrels, to become friends. It was all made public, except a clause or two of no importance, which were not published at the time, owing to regard, as I suppose, for the susceptibilities of the Sultan of Morocco; even these were published a few years later.

M. Poincaré[418] has said the same thing. Other writers, notably the late Mr. E. D. Morel,[419] have expressed the opinion that

> In point of fact, France, Spain, and Britain had privately entered into contracts with one another whereby the destruction of the independence and integrity of Morocco was decreed, the date of the event to depend upon circumstances.

This is manifestly a misstatement. The Secret Articles did not provide for a partition of Morocco; what they did provide for was the respective sphere of influence of both France and Spain should the State of Morocco disintegrate, and in 1904 such a contingency was not regarded as imminent.

It is however difficult to accept the statement that the Secret Articles were without importance. They were, no doubt, inserted at French instigation for the purpose of facilitating "penetration" of Morocco, and the French calculated that we should in consequence be compelled to support them against German opposition, as indeed actually occurred before long.

The provisions of the Agreement are well known, and there is no necessity to recapitulate them. It was of course a totally different instrument from the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. The latter was a definite Treaty embodying the terms under which each country undertook to defend the other if attacked under certain circumstances. In the former there was no question of an Alliance; the common object was to remove the causes of differences between the two countries in different parts of the world, and the stories that were circulated afterwards as to our having promised naval

(Page 292) LORD LANSDOWNE [1904]

and military assistance were completely unfounded. The Anglo-French Agreement was really based upon ordinary common-sense principles, and its success has never been seriously disputed, although some critics were to be found on both sides of the Channel. Prominent amongst them was Lord Rosebery, who was perhaps influenced by his experiences of the French in Siam ten years earlier.

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[417] *Twenty-five Years*, Lord Grey of Fallodon, vol. i. 29. (LN]

[418] Raymond Nicolas Landry Poincaré (1860–1934) was a French statesman who served as President of France from 1913 to 1920, and three times as Prime Minister of France. He was a conservative leader, primarily committed to political and social stability. (Ed.)

[419] *Morocco in Diplomacy*, E. D. Morel. (LN). Edmund Dene Morel (born Georges Edmond Pierre Achille Morel Deville; 1873–1924) was a French-born British journalist, author, pacifist and politician. (Ed.)

It not unfrequently happens that when a distinct success has been obtained, credit is given to the wrong person, and in the case of the Anglo-French Agreement the public has been led to believe that it was brought about by the visit of King Edward to Paris in 1903.

King Edward was a highly successful constitutional monarch, and his personality, social gifts, and exceptional powers as a linguist, enabled him to use effectively his unique position as a means of creating a sympathetic political atmosphere, since foreign statesmen are like humbler beings, highly susceptible to royal favour, and as a rule overrate the influence of the Crown in British politics, whereas it would be impossible to quote an instance within the last half-century in which the will of the Monarch has prevailed over a dissentient Administration in any important matter. But King Edward was not of a studious disposition, and as he read little, his knowledge of complicated international questions can scarcely have been profound. His minutes, for instance, upon Foreign Office correspondence, which have been frequently quoted with much reverence, are not of a very illuminating character. And if the British public may have been under some slight misconception as to the late King's part in politics, the Continental conception of him as a tireless intriguer eternally working for the encirclement of (Germany is little less than an instance of international hallucination.

(Page 293) ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS [1904]

During the War, steps were taken by the British Government to enlighten the world, by means of books and pamphlets, as to its true genesis, and the popular misconceptions with regard to the origin of the *entente* account for the following instructive letter from Mr. Balfour:

Mr. Balfour to Lord Lansdowne. Jan. 11, 1915

> Have you looked through a small book on the *Origins of the War*, by Holland Rose?
>
> Holland Rose[420] is a serious historical student, best known by his work on Napoleon, and this particular book is, on the whole, sound and sensible.
>
> I was, however, much surprised to see that he quite confidently attributes the policy of the *entente* to Edward VII., thus embodying in serious historical work a foolish piece of gossip which prevailed at the time of King Edward's death, and perhaps before.
>
> Now, so far as I remember, during the years which you and I were his Ministers, he never made an important suggestion of any sort on large questions of policy. I wish you would cudgel your own memory and tell me whether in this opinion I am right. If I am, I think I shall write privately to Rose and tell him the facts, leaving him to make or not to make the requisite correction in subsequent editions, as he pleases.
>
> I do not, of course, wish to have anything in the nature of a public controversy, but I think it only fair to let a man know, who is trying to tell the truth, what the truth is.

A study of the correspondence relating to the Anglo-French Agreement cannot fail to convince anyone that it was the result of long and laborious work on the part of Ministers which began months before the celebrated Royal visit to Paris, and the preceding pages indicate only a small portion of the difficulties involved.

Just as Lord Lansdowne and Count Hayashi were the real authors of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, so Lord Lansdowne and M. Cambon deserve the chief credit for the successful negotiation of the Anglo-French

[420] John Holland Rose (1855–1942) was an influential English historian who wrote biographies of William Pitt the Younger and of French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. He was Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History at the University of Cambridge between 1919 and his retirement in 1934. (Ed.)

entente. Less credit rests on M. Delcassé, whose stock of courage barely lasted long enough to achieve a successful result, and who imperilled the whole agreement by haggling over details in the final stages of the negotiations.

As in the former case, the two negotiators were not afraid of responsibility and were prepared to take risks, and the two achievements afford a striking justification of that secret diplomacy which it is now the fashion to disparage.

CHAPTER XI

TARIFF REFORM, 1903

(Page 295)

Not for a long time had any political event created so much stir in the country as Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Birmingham in May 1903, in which he once and for all renounced Free Trade and advocated Colonial Preference and Tariff Reform. Lord Lansdowne was not publicly one of the protagonists in the struggle which soon divided the Unionist party, but one result of the controversy was that his responsibilities were considerably increased, for upon the subsequent retirement of the Duke of Devonshire he became the official leader of the Unionist Party in the House of Lords.

The Tariff Reform controversy started in complexity, for on the very day that Mr. Chamberlain made his celebrated pronouncement, the Prime Minister was engaged in making a singularly unconvincing defence of the repeal of the shilling duty on corn which had been the original cause of trouble. Extracts from Lord Lansdowne's private correspondence about this period show that Ministers were as much perplexed as the general public, and the really surprising fact is that the Cabinet managed to avoid a definite split until the month of September. The Duke of Devonshire was as much perplexed as any, as will be gathered from his letter to Lord Lansdowne dated May 31, 1903:

> I had written to Ritchie (an ardent Free Trader) on Friday

(Page 296) LORD LANSDOWNE [1903]

> to ask him what he was going to do, and told him that although I did not Profess to have absolutely made up my mind, I thought my conversion to the new policy extremely improbable; and that I did not intend by silence or acquiescence to allow myself to be committed to proposals which had never been accepted by the Government.
>
> You will see that the position is serious, and I should be very glad to hear what your view of it is before I see Ritchie.
>
> The worst of it is that the debate on the Finance Bill comes on, as at present arranged, on the 9th, and there is no time for consultation either by the Cabinet as a whole or by those who dissent from the new policy.

There is no record of Lord Lansdowne's reply, but it is quite plain that, with his habitual caution, he declined to be rushed, and he must have spent much of his time in endeavouring to keep the peace amongst his discordant colleagues. Mr. Ritchie had already intimated, in a letter to Mr. Balfour, that there was no longer room for him and Mr. Chamberlain in the Government; and the various Cabinet Ministers were soon engaged in bombarding one another with lengthy memoranda embodying their personal views. The discreditable spectacle of a Cabinet divided against itself, under a Prime Minister whose policy the ordinary elector found it difficult to understand, lasted until the middle of September, when the simultaneous resignations of Mr. Chamberlain, Lord George Hamilton, and Mr. Ritchie were announced, followed immediately by those of Lord Balfour of Burleigh[421] and of Mr. Arthur Elliot.[422] On the part of these dissentient Ministers there was much soreness, inasmuch as they complained that

[421] Alexander Hugh Bruce, 6th Lord Balfour of Burleigh, (1849–1921) was a Scottish Unionist politician, banker and statesman, who took a leading part in the affairs of the Church of Scotland. He was Secretary for Scotland between 1895 and 1903. He was the son of Robert Bruce whose claim to the peerage was recognised in 1868, four years after his death. As a result, his son became sixth Lord Balfour of Burleigh on the reversal of the title's attainder by Act of Parliament in 1869. (Ed.)

[422] Arthur Ralph Douglas Elliot (1846–1923) was a British journalist and Liberal Unionist politician. He was elected M.P for the city of Durham in the General Election of 1900. A supporter of Free Trade, he served briefly as Financial Secretary to the Treasury under Arthur Balfour between April and October 1903. (Ed.)

at the fateful Cabinet of September 14 they had resigned without having been informed previously that Mr. Chamberlain had already resigned himself; and Mr. Balfour on September 23, 1903, circulated the following memorandum dealing with the charge that

(Page 297) TARIFF REFORM [1903]

he had purposely concealed this information from his colleagues:

Memo

> I did not see him (Mr. Chamberlain) till an hour before the Cabinet on that day (the 14th).
>
> We talked over the letter; he reiterated his view, afterwards expressed to Cabinet, that, if preferential duties were dropped, there were reasons, personal to himself, which made it impossible for him to stay; and I said to him, what I said to Cabinet within the next hour, that I was becoming more and more convinced that public opinion was not ripe for a tax on food, and that any attempt at the present time to impose one would endanger that portion of fiscal reform against which there was no such widespread prejudice.
>
> Whether, however, a duty on food-stuffs should be attempted or not seemed to me then—and seems to me still—a subsidiary point, important indeed, but in no way fundamental.
>
> I was not, therefore, of the opinion that either Mr. Chamberlain's attitude or mine towards a food tax was relevant to the question of principle; not could I suppose that any discussion on it would affect the opinion of those members of the Cabinet who were not prepared heartily to accept a change of fiscal policy at all.
>
> Over and over again, I therefore called the debate back from all minor issues to this, which I conceive to be the main point, and I have never doubted that on this point the dissentient Ministers take a different view from myself and the majority of the Cabinet.
>
> The fiscal discussion has been going on in an acute form since the middle of May. Never once, so far as I am aware, did any hesitating member of the Cabinet suggest to me that his objection to Tariff Reform would be completely met if no attempt were made to put a tax on food.

Lord George Hamilton, one of the aggrieved Ministers, also produced a memorandum, in which he complained that he had been kept in the dark until he had handed in his resignation. Unlike the Duke of Devonshire, he had not been told everything, and when the

(Page 298) LORD LANSDOWNE [1903]

latter had suggested that he (Lord G. Hamilton) should be allowed to withdraw his resignation, the suggestion had been at once refused, and no steps had been taken to put him in possession of the real facts of the situation until after his resignation had been gazetted.

Lord Lansdowne, who apparently had been asked to give his version of what occurred at the Cabinet meeting in question, contributed a further memorandum on October 17, 1903:

> As to the assertion that Mr. Chamberlain expressed to the Cabinet the view that, if preferential duties were dropped, it would be impossible for him to remain in the Government, my recollection is that he reminded us that he had on a previous occasion offered to resign rather than modify his demands; that he regretted not having insisted upon resigning then, and that he was prepared to resign now. The Cabinet did not, however, I think, infer that the resignation would necessarily take place, although it was evidently open to the Prime Minister to close with the offer if he pleased.

It is also within my recollection that the Prime Minister stated that, in his view, public opinion was not ripe for a tax upon food, and that to propose such a tax would endanger the scheme which he advocated in the Blue Paper circulated to the Cabinet in the summer. The Prime Minister made it perfectly clear during the discussion that he asked for the loyal support of his colleagues for his proposals, and that that support must be "cordial". He treated this as the essential point, and stated at the outset that, as some of his colleagues had committed themselves definitively to a course hostile to the whole scheme, he regarded the break-up of the Cabinet as inevitable. The decision of his language on this subject produced, I remember, a deep impression upon some of his hearers.

I may add that at one moment Lord G. Hamilton proposed that the dissentient members should await the speech which the Prime Minister was to deliver at Sheffield, and that I supported the proposal. The Prime Minister, however, refused to entertain it, almost peremptorily, upon the ground that he must know whether his colleagues were prepared to accept the general outlines of fiscal policy which he had advocated.

So far as I am aware, the Prime Minister is correct when he says that no member of the Cabinet suggested to him that his

objection to the new policy would be completely met if the idea of taxing food were to be abandoned.

Mr. Balfour's defence of his action is, perhaps, not absolutely convincing, but the dissentient Ministers really had not much ground for complaint, inasmuch as their zeal for Free Trade had converted them into opponents of any kind of fiscal reform, and under the circumstances he was probably glad to get rid of them.

But he was destined to receive shortly a far ruder shock, for the Duke of Devonshire, who had been persuaded with great difficulty to remain in the Cabinet, resigned early in October. In a characteristic letter to the Prime Minister, the Duke practically justified his resignation on the ground that, owing to the slow working of his mind, he had not fully grasped the nature of the proposed changes in the fiscal system; Mr. Balfour, on his side, expressing himself as quite unable to discover any valid ground for this "singular transformation", and further stating that, in the case of any other man, the Duke's action would have been attributed to a desire to pick a quarrel. There can be little doubt that if any other man had acted in a similar manner, he would have been loudly denounced from many quarters, but it is a high testimony to the respect which the Duke of Devonshire enjoyed amongst all sections of politicians that his curious action aroused no really hostile criticism. This loss was a serious blow to the Balfour Administration; but the Duke himself was probably overjoyed to escape from the trammels of office, and, as has been related, handed over his duties as leader to Lord Lansdowne.

The early history of the Tariff Reform controversy seems to justify an opinion expressed to me at the time by a very eminent politician, *viz*. that it was another case of "an old man in a hurry". If Mr. Chamberlain had been content to advance at a slower pace, and had started by simply advocating the taxation of manufactured imports, he would probably have met with much

support; the clap-trap about "taxing the food of the people" would never have been heard, and common sense would gradually have brought the electorate round to the principle of his policy. But, in 1903, the change which he proposed must have appeared to many voters as almost equivalent to a sudden invitation to change their religion.

CHAPTER XII

TURKEY, 1903-5

(Page 301)

During these years, public attention, so far as Turkey was concerned, was concentrated almost entirely upon Macedonia; and the misgovernment of that province of Turkey had culminated in 1902 in a rebellion, which had been temporarily suppressed by typical Turkish methods. From that time until the outbreak of the Balkan War, with the exception of a brief lull in 1908-9, Macedonia remained in a semi-anarchical condition which constituted a danger to the rest of Europe. The Great Powers, in their own interests, were obliged to intervene and to force a scheme for reforms upon the Sultan, which he had not the slightest intention of carrying out. The want of success which had almost invariably attended attempts to coerce Turkey by the so-called Concert of Europe was conspicuous also in this instance, but the difficulties were exceptionally formidable.

It was not a comparatively simple case where, as in Armenia, one Christian race was persecuted by the Government and by the Mussulman population. Macedonia was inhabited by several Christian races, all of whom hated their Christian neighbours just as much as they hated the Turks, and plundered and murdered each other indiscriminately. Nor were the different races distributed in separate territorial districts; on the contrary, they were scattered incongruously throughout the country, and the three States concerned—-Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece—did their best to support their compatriots

(Page 302) LORD LANSDOWNE [1903]

unofficially in all their revolutionary and internecine activities. To cope successfully with such a situation was quite beyond the capacity of the cumbrous combination of a number of Powers with conflicting interests, and it was eventually agreed that the task of reforming Macedonia should be handed over to Russia and Austria: and under what was known as the Mürzsteg Convention, two Civil Agents, appointed by those two Powers, were appointed in 1903 "in order to establish control over the activity of the Ottoman local authorities in regard to the application of reforms"; international officers were to be entrusted with the task of reorganizing the gendarmerie; mixed Commissions were to investigate the crimes committed during the disturbances; money was to be set apart by the Turkish Government for the repatriation of Christian refugees, and the formation of bands of Bashi-Bazouks[423] absolutely prohibited. It was noticeable that no mention was made of reforms in the Provinces of Adrianople and Albania, where the conditions were almost identical to those in Macedonia

After the customary long-continued wrangle with the Porte,[424] the reform scheme was accepted in principle, and the Russian and Austrian Civil Agents proceeded to their posts while the Sultan appointed as Inspector General, Hilmi Pasha,[425] an experienced and crafty official, well qualified to put a check upon the reforming activities of any European reformers. But the choice of Russia and Austria as the reforming mandatories of Europe was in itself an omen of failure. Russia and Austria were the self-constituted heirs of the Sick Man of Europe,[426] and the last thing they desired was his recovery. I was myself in Macedonia once or twice about this period, and had not difficulty in realising that the whole high-sounding scheme of Macedonian Reform was little better than a gigantic sham. Indeed it was the local jest in Salonika that whenever an effective reform

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[423] Leaderless mercenary soldiers belonging to the skirmishing or irregular troops of the Ottoman Empire, notorious for their indiscipline, plundering, and brutality. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Ed.)

[424] Sublime Porte, also called Porte, the government of the Ottoman Empire. The name is a French translation of Turkish Bâbıâli ("High Gate," or "Gate of the Eminent"). which was the official name of the gate giving access to the block of buildings in Constantinople, (now Istanbul) that housed the principal state departments. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Ed.)

[425] Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha (1855–1922) was an Ottoman statesman and imperial administrator. He was twice the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire around the time of the Second Constitutional Era (1908-20). (Ed.)

[426] The nickname at this time for Turkey. (Ed.)

was proposed, the only doubt was whether it would be the Russian or the Austrian Agent who would be the first to oppose it. The international gendarmerie did their best, within their limited powers, to preserve order, but the situation was in reality hopeless, for every one knew that there could not be any real change for the better so long as the country remained under Turkish rule. And here it must be admitted, in fairness, that the Christians themselves were little less culpable than the Turks, and that in many cases they deliberately brought about by revolutionary action merciless Turkish reprisals, in the hope of shocking the conscience of Europe.

As for Europe, it may be truthfully stated that England is the only European country in which there was to be found a genuine humanitarian sympathy for the Christian races under Turkish rule. It certainly is the case that formerly Russia was their most prominent champion; but when they became politically useless, they were abandoned altogether. Russia, for instance, in the days of Abdul Hamid,[427] could have put an end to the massacres and persecutions of the unfortunate Armenians without much difficulty, but she never made any efforts to do so, and the impossible task was left to us. No other Powers have ever shown anything more than platonic sympathy with oppressed Christians, unless their own political or commercial interests were concerned, and one Power—Germany—during the period in question, ostentatiously dissociated herself from any united attempt to put pressure upon the Sultan. Consequently, as no one but England really cared whether Macedonia were reformed or not, Lord Lansdowne and Sir N. R. O'Conor,[428] our capable and hard-working Ambassador at Constantinople, were fighting a hopeless battle from the start.

Austria and Russia produced their reform scheme early in 1903, and its intrinsic value was at once indicated by the fact that both Governments announced

themselves to be whole-hearted supporters of the *status quo*. Even Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, whose attitude towards Russia had hitherto been marked by servility, threw ridicule upon it, and provoked the indignation of the Kaiser, who, in a letter to the simple-minded Czar, denounced the "Arch-Plotter"[429] as preparing a "Crimean Combination" against Russia in the East. The fact was that the Bulgarian Government was not strong enough to control the Bulgarian bands in Macedonia, and as soon as the two Powers realized this unpleasant fact, they deeply regretted their action.

> I think both Russia and Austria are heartily sorry that they touched the question, and would be only too glad to get out of it if they could,"

wrote Sir N. O'Conor in May 1903. Meanwhile the German contribution to the reform scheme had been advice to the Turkish Government to suppress all revolutionary movements with extreme vigour. "The German advice to repress the insurrection vigorously and in their own (Turkish) way is cruel, but, from their point of view, intelligible; but the Austro-Russian policy is difficult to explain, except on the theory that they are pleased to see Turkey exhaust herself before they come forward with some real settlement."[430] Later he made the grave statement that:

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[427] Abdulhamid or Abdul Hamid II (1842–1918) was the 34th sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1876 to 1909, and the last sultan to exert effective control over the fracturing state. (Ed.)

[428] Sir Nicholas Roderick O'Conor (1843–19 March 1908) was an Anglo-Irish diplomat. He was ambassador to the Court of the Sublime Porte of the Ottoman Empire from 1898 and died in office. (Ed.).

[429] Ferdinand I (1861–1948) was Prince of Bulgaria from 1887 to 1908 and Tsar of Bulgaria from 1908 until his abdication in 1918. Under his rule, Bulgaria entered the First World War on the side of the Central Powers in 1915. (Ed.)

[430] Sir N. O'Connor to Lord Lansdowne, Sept. 4, 1903

> It is beyond doubt that the excesses committed since the beginning of August were due to the advice given by the German Ambassador on his return, *viz*. 'Sévir le plus sévèrement et vite.'[431] The Turks acted on it with a vengeance."[432]

No wonder Lord Lansdowne began to complain that the progress of the Austro-Russian reform was disappointing; but an appeal to the French Government to co-operate in attempting to improve matters was refused with decision, and, in spite of a vigorous

anti-Turkish agitation at home, it was obvious that we could not attempt the coercion of Turkey single-handed, Italian assistance being equally quite out of the question.

A letter from Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Balfour, dated January 9, 1905, defines the Austian attitude:

> I am not surprised at your being perplexed as to the attitude of Austria. It has always seemed to me inexplicable, but I believe that if an explanation is possible the second of your alternatives is the correct one. Since I have been at this office I have never been able to detect in the conduct of the Austrian Govt, signs of a profound and carefully-thought-out Near Eastern policy— they seem to me, on the contrary, to be living from hand to mouth, and they have probably plenty to think about in their own domestic affairs. They have, however, no doubt, aspirations which they do not care to define precisely, and I should say that the feeling which was probably uppermost in their minds was a desire that no one else should take advantage of these events in order to reap an advantage to their exclusion. It is this tendency to put spokes in other people's wheels that, in my belief, accounts or what you well describe as the incurable suspicion with which Austria is regarded by all concerned in the Near East. No one knows exactly what she will do next, and she is therefore looked upon, not without reason, as a dangerous factor in the calculation. This theory accounts for the reticence which, as you point out, the Austrian Government, have so constantly observed. They don't tell us their story, because they have not got one to tell.

A touch of humour with regard to the situation is supplied by complaints from both the Austrian and Russian Governments that their reforming activities had been commented upon disparagingly in a House of Lords debate.

It would be superfluous to attempt to describe the further progress of the so-called Macedonian Reforms. Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian bands pillaged the country, and occasionally fought with each other when not engaged in killing Turks or blowing up railways and Government buildings. Bulgaria and Turkey remained for years on the brink of war, and most of the

international representatives were almost as much occupied in intriguing against their colleagues as in carrying out reforms; whilst Abdul Hamid and the resourceful Inspector-General, Hilmi Pasha, were engaged in the congenial task of obstructing everyone and everything all round. The sorry farce continued long after Lord Lansdowne had left the Foreign Office, and was only terminated temporarily by the Turkish Revolution of 1908, when all the conflicting races swore eternal friendship, being convinced that the millennium had arrived simultaneously with the appearance of the Young Turk. As soon as this agreeable illusion had been dispelled, Macedonia relapsed into its former condition and so remained until the Balkan War of 1912 inaugurated a new era.

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[431] Take action as quickly and severely as possible. (Ed.)
[432] Sir N. O'Connor to Lord Lansdowne, Sept. 25, 1903

CHAPTER XIII

RUSSIA, 1904-5

(Page 307)

In February 1904, the Japanese, whose patience had at length been exhausted by Russian bad faith and procrastination, declared war, and there followed a series of triumphs by land and sea almost unprecedented in modern years. These amazing successes, especially those at sea, completely falsified the opinions of the experts, who had almost unanimously predicted that the war must eventually end in a Russian victory; and the late Lord Fisher,[433] regarded by many misguided people as an infallible authority, actually pointed out to Lord Lansdowne, on the map, the exact spot where the Japanese fleet would be annihilated. I can remember, too, another very distinguished British Admiral, who had at one time been head of the Intelligence Division, assuring me that although the Japanese had excellent ships, they did not know how to use them, and that consequently the Russians were certain to win.

The Japanese alliance, together with the firm line which we had taken in Thibet and our opposition to the "legitimate Russian aspirations" in Manchuria, had naturally increased our unpopularity in Russia, but there were, nevertheless, intelligent Russian politicians who had begun to realize the desirability of an Anglo-Russian understanding on the lines of the recently concluded agreement with France. Amongst these was M. Isvolsky,[434] then Minister at Copenhagen, and generally regarded as Count Lamsdorff's probable

(Page 308) LORD LANSDOWNE [1904]

successor. M. Isvolsky, in April 1904, when unburdening himself to the British Minister (the late Sir E. Goschen), confessed that he regarded the Russo-French alliance as being purely external, and that there was something "cynical" about it:

> Nothing that would serve for the real progress and development of his country: whereas, on the other hand, England was stable and conservative, had monarchical institutions, also a respect for law and order such as no other country possessed, and a political and social system which might well serve as a model for countries less highly developed. An alliance, or even a friendly understanding, with such a country would be really beneficial and, in his opinion, ideal.

M. Isvolsky's desire for an understanding with England had been greatly stimulated not only by the conclusion of the Anglo-French entente but as the result of a long conversation with King Edward, who was on a visit to Copenhagen at the time. M. Isvolsky had never concealed his dislike of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, and looked upon it as the only serious obstacle to an Anglo-Russian agreement. Delighted with the sentiments expressed by the King, he at once wrote a despatch on the subject to Count Lamsdorff, and furnished the King with a copy, which the latter forwarded to Lord Lansdowne for his confidential information. In the course of his conversation, the King appears to have made some rather incautious observations with regard to our attitude towards Japan, of which M. Isvolsky made full use; and Lord Lansdowne's comments contain a correction so tactfully conveyed that it might well serve as a model to all Ministers who may be called upon to deal with similar cases. His letter to the King, dated April 18, 1904, included the following paragraphs:

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[433] Admiral of the Fleet John Arbuthnot Fisher, 1st Baron Fisher (1841–1920), commonly known as Jacky or Jackie Fisher, was a British Admiral of the Fleet. His efforts to reform the Royal Navy helped to usher in an era of modernisation which saw the supersession of wooden sailing ships armed with muzzle-loading cannon by steel-hulled battlecruisers, submarines and the first aircraft carriers.

[434] Count Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky or Iswolsky (1856-1919, Paris) was a Russian diplomat remembered as a major architect of Russia's alliance with Great Britain during the years leading to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. (Ed.)

At one point it seems to Lord Lansdowne that M. Isvolsky probably misapprehended Your Majesty's meaning. In the latter part of his account of the conversation, he represents you as

(Page 309) RUSSIA, 1904-5

having told him that your Government had done all that it was possible for them to do in order *pour modérer le Japon*,[435] but that Japan had refused to be guided by them, and had insisted upon being allowed to settle their differences with Russia in their own way. M. Isvolsky also attributes to Your Majesty a statement that the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, which M. Isvolsky believes to have been one of the principal causes of the war, had, on the contrary, been intended rather to restrain Japan (*plütot à contenir le Japon*). In both cases M. Isvolsky has probably imputed to Your Majesty statements in excess of Your Majesty's actual observations: for, as Your Majesty will remember, your Government were careful to avoid, while the Russo-Japanese negotiations which preceded the war were in progress, putting pressure of any kind, whether moral or material, upon the Japanese Government for the purpose of inducing them to moderate their demands. Those demands did not seem to your Government unreasonable in themselves, and they felt that nothing could be more unfortunate than that Japan should be able hereafter to place upon this country the responsibility of having deprived her of an opportunity, which might never be within her reach again, of ensuring her safety as a nation.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, although not intended to encourage the Japanese Government to resort to extremities, had, and was sure to have, the effect of making Japan feel that she might try conclusions with her great rival in the Far East—free from all risk of a European condition such as that which had on a previous occasion deprived her of the fruits of victory.

Lord Lansdowne has, in accordance with Your Majesty's permission, shown M. Isvolsky's letter to the Prime Minister, who concurs in the observations which Lord Lansdowne has ventured to offer in this letter, and, like Lord Lansdowne, feels how much Y our Majesty has done to promote peace and goodwill amongst nations.

In spite, however, of M. Isvolsky's encouraging attitude, the Military and Court parties were still against understandings with constitutional Governments. The Kaiser had lately obtained a considerable ascendancy over the mind of the Czar, and the German Government was working hard to persuade the Russian government that, in making the Anglo-French Agreement, France was playing traitor. The knowledge of

(Page 310) LORD LANSDOWNE [1904]

these German efforts caused the French much anxiety and made them all the more desirous of an Anglo-Russian understanding.

A letter from the newly appointed Ambassador, Sir Charles Hardinge, written to Lord Lansdowne on May 25, 1904, soon after his arrival, contains much interesting information:

The situation here is a complex one. The Foreign Office is undoubtedly friendly for the time being, and anxious to be conciliatory, but Lamsdorff's influence is small. The Court and Military party is said to be anti-English. I hear that the Emperor is constantly advised not to allow any agreement with England on Asiatic questions, so that Russian policy may have a free hand in Afghanistan and may always be able to put pressure upon us there. A partial agreement, say in China and the Balkans, they would not mind.

As regards the war, there appears to be very little enthusiasm. It is, however, evident that the lower classes are phlegmatic and indifferent to the news from the front, even when successes

[435] To allay Japan. (Ed.)

such as the loss of two Japanese warships are reported. They do not understand the causes of the war, they have but a vague idea where Manchuria may be, and they have not yet had time to feel the material effects of war.

In the meantime, the Ministry of the Interior is seriously preoccupied with the spread of revolutionary propaganda.

Amongst the middle and commercial classes the war has caused great depression. The Government are squeezing the municipalities of the big towns for money for the Red Cross Societies and the purchase of ships; and Moscow, the richest town in Russia, had to be told by the Governor that its contribution of £50,000 was insufficient, and they paid up another £100,000 on the understanding that their municipal budget would be reduced, a condition which was ignored.

In military circles there is a general feeling of optimism as to the future, and the officers I have seen are full of explanation of the defeat on the Yalu.

Corruption is said to be rampant, and it is known that there have been serious defalcations in connection with the Red Cross.

The same state of affairs is said to prevail in every department, and this will heavily handicap the Russian armies.

Although Admiral Alexeieff[436] is the general scapegoat of the war, there are many in society who blame the Emperor and hold him to a great extent responsible. There is no doubt that Lamsdorff, Plehve,[437] and Kuropatkin were all opposed to war, but their advice was overridden by the Emperor at the instigation of the "Council of the Far East". H.M. is said to regard this war as a personal question, and in the same way that he appointed Alexeieff to his present post without consulting his Ministers, he is said to show the same independence in many other ways.

Thus, it is generally known that the circular respecting foreign intervention emanated directly from the Emperor himself, and that the Foreign Minister was not even responsible for the text.

It was greeted with enthusiasm by the chauvinists, but was regarded by more serious people as impolitic and possibly disadvantageous to Russia. There are many who, with a view to terminating the war, would welcome the idea of intervention or mediation after the first big Russian success; but from all accounts that one hears, it seems likely that the Emperor and the Military party would only be encouraged by success to crush the Japanese so that they should never lift their heads again.

The efforts made by Germany to effect a *rapprochement* with Russia have aroused the alarm of the anti-German party. It has been explained to me that the policy of the Kaiser is to maintain that the Agrarian party is the only party in Germany that is friendly to Russia. To preserve their friendship, it is necessary for Russia to consent, in the new tariff, to an increase of the German duty on corn. The rivals of the Agrarians, *i.e.* the Commercial and Socialist parties, are said to be bitterly hostile to Russia. At the same time, the Russian autocracy is largely dependent on the assistance of the German secret police to watch and control Russian revolutionaries in

[436] Yevgeni Ivanovich Alekseyev or Alexeyev (1843–1917) was a Russian admiral in the Imperial Russian Navy, viceroy of the Russian Far East, and commander-in-chief of Imperial Russian forces at Port Arthur and in Manchuria during the first year of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. (Ed.)
[437] Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Plehve (1846–1904) was a Russian politician who served as the director of the police (1881-84) and later as the minister of the interior from 1902 until his assassination in 1904. (Ed.)

> Germany. This is so important for the safety of the Emperor that it is not improbable that the policy of the Kaiser may succeed.

With regard to this last paragraph, the Kaiser had already sent a kind of blackmailing letter[438] to the

Czar, in strict secrecy, urging the conclusion of a Treaty of Commerce, which was intended to make Russia economically dependent upon Germany, with the result that a treaty was signed in July. The Kaiser's letters to the Czar about this period, which are occasionally couched almost in a tone of servility, are highly inconsistent with his original statement to Lord Lansdowne that the Czar was only fit to grow cabbages; and abound in warnings against the machinations of the British Government, described in his pompous and inflated language as "signals from the Admiral of the Atlantic to the Admiral of the Pacific''.

It may not be out of place to point out here that the Kaiser who has lived to see himself denounced more violently that any other human being, appears in the "Willy-Nicky" correspondence in a deplorable light. It would be absurd to dispute his intelligence, his versatility and his patriotic energy; and like other rulers who have afflicted mankind, his private life, except as regards his relations with his mother, has always been, exemplary: but in these letters he is alternately servile, boastful, and false, and the underlying purpose, that of a huge Continental combination against England, is clear enough.

At this period, in spite of a succession of reverses, the Russian authorities expressed themselves with complete confidence as to ultimate victory, while the Czar in a letter[439] to King Edward (April 17), had already made in clear that no kind of mediation would be tolerated.

> The only difficult moment will be that when the end of the war is near or rather when negotiations of peace are opened. Taught by bitter experience in the years 1856 and 1878, there is not a man in the whole of Russia who would tolerate another country mixing in this affair of ours and Japan's. This seems to be quite just, my dear Uncle Bertie; no one hindered England at the conclusion of her South African War. I hope you won't

> mind my telling you this so frankly, but I prefer that you should hear it privately from me than in any other way.

The report of a conversation between Sir C. Hardinge and M. Witte at the end of June afforded a clear indication of what was to be expected if Russia were victorious. M. Witte represented the moderate element in Russian politics, but he was quite emphatic that Japan must be for ever crippled, that she must be forbidden to have a fleet, and that the predominance of Russia on the Pacific Coast must be assured; also, that if sufficient compensation could not be obtained from Japan, it would have to be provided by her weaker neighbours. Whatever objections might be raised by the British Government to such terms, they would not be able to count upon the support of France and Germany, and would have to rely entirely upon their own efforts or on the co-operation of the United States.

As the war progressed, the customary unpleasant incidents occurred at sea, and various British merchant steamers were illegally seized by Russian cruisers on the pretence that they were carrying contraband of war. Another ship was sunk by the Vladivostok squadron on mere suspicion. These incidents formed the subject of a vigorous protest by H.M. Government, but the Russian reply was conciliatory, the illegality was admitted, and compensation was obtained.

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[438] *The Kaiser's Letters to the Czar*, pp. 115, 116 (Hodder and Stoughton). (LN)
[439] *King Edward VII*., vol. ii. (Sir S. Lee). (LN)

Lord Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge. July 27 1904

> As you may imagine, these Russian incidents have upset everyone's equanimity and we are having a troublous time. But I won't let the mail go without telling you that I greatly appreciate the manner in which you are playing a difficult hand of cards. Up to the present we have had the best of the encounter, and this is, I think, admitted except by the hotheads who want us to bluster and bounce. I feel sure that the more quietly we can proceed, the better. Benckendorff is contrite, and so, I

(Page 314) LORD LANSDOWNE [1904]

> suspect, is Lamsdorff, and we must blacken their faces as little as possible.
>
> I am in hopes that they will climb down over the *Knight Commander*[440] just as they have over the *Malacca* and *Ardova,* and we shall have to persuade them to stop short of taking steps which will bring the whole of our trade with the Far East to a standstill.

A curious instance of the Czar's unbalanced mind is shown in connection with these incidents. He sent to ask Sir C. Hardinge if, were a canal constructed from the Black Sea to the Baltic, His Majesty's Government would consider the transfer of the Black Sea Fleet to the Baltic as an *acte de mejiance*.[441] Of course, what he had in mind was the forbidden passage of the Dardanelles, and apparently he was not able to realize that a country had as much right to make a strategic canal as a strategic railway; but the strange feature was that in a time of extreme financial difficulty and in the midst of a disastrous war, his mind was dwelling upon a gigantic undertaking for purely strategic purposes in the distant future.

At the end of August, in view of the decision to send the Baltic Fleet to the Far East, the Russian Government had applied to us for coaling facilities, and met with a rebuff. It was also made clear that we were inflexibly opposed to the passage of the Dardanelles by the Black Sea Fleet.

Lord Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge. Aug. 24, 1904.

> Poor Benckendorff was very sad when I told him that the Russian ships of war on their way to the scene of naval operations would not be allowed to coal in British ports. It seemed to me that we were bound in fairness to tell the Russian Government what had been decided, but it was most unfortunate that the announcement should have coincided, as it did, with the Russian reverses outside Port Arthur. I was able to prove that we had arrived at our decision long before those events, but it

(Page 315) RUSSIA, 1904-5

> was, nevertheless, a very unkind cut, and I felt that I should have resented it if I had been in Benckendorff's place.

But these minor differences were soon superseded by the notorious Dogger Bank incident, when the Baltic Fleet fired upon some British fishing boats, sinking one of them and killing and wounding several persons. The attack was so gratuitous that it was at first thought that it was provocative, but subsequent investigations showed that it was due solely to incompetence and nervousness; and as an instance of the former defect, it may be mentioned that the Russians actually managed to kill some of their own people. This outrage naturally created the most intense indignation, which was increased in

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[440] The British cargo ship Knight Commander was sunk by a Russian warship off Idzu, Japan, on July 23rd, 1904. She was on a voyage from New York to Yokohama carrying a general cargo. Source: wrecksite: https://wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?136314 (Ed.)

[441] Act of betrayal. (Ed.)

consequence of the fact that the Russian Admiral,[442] who had callously left the unfortunate victims to their fate on October 21, attempted no explanation of his astonishing action until October 27, by which time he had reached Vigo. When his explanation did arrive, it only made his case the worse, as he had the audacity to allege that two torpedo boats had attempted to attack him, and that no commander, even in times of peace, could have acted otherwise. Fortunately, long before the egregious message of the Admiral had been received, the situation had been dealt with by capable men with cool heads.

The news did not reach the Foreign Office till the 24th, and Lord Lansdowne telegraphed to Sir C. Hardinge that—

> the whole action would seem to have been of the most deliberate character.
>
> Inform Count Lamsdorff of what has occurred, and say that it is impossible to exaggerate the indignation which has been provoked. It is aggravated by the callousness of the Russian commanding officer, who must have known, before resuming

> the voyage, that his fleet had fired upon and seriously injured innocent and defenceless people.
>
> It will be the duty of H.M.G. to require ample apology, complete and prompt reparation, as well as security against recurrence of such intolerable incidents. They prefer, however, not to formulate their demands until they have received the explanation which the Russian Government will, no doubt, hasten to lay before them.

The news had reached St. Petersburg on the same day, but had been suppressed by the censor. Sir C. Hardinge, who was acquainted with it, called on Count Lamsdorff, before receiving his instructions from Lord Lansdowne, and, after pointing out the gravity of the occurrence, asked him to give an assurance that if on enquiry the Russian Admiral was proved to be in fault, he would be severely punished, and full reparation made. Count Lamsdorff, who expressed himself as filled with horror, gave the necessary assurance, but was confident that some terrible misunderstanding had arisen, and made the extraordinary statement that perhaps a report had been received at the Ministry of Marine which had not been communicated to him. Count Benckendorff, hurriedly brought back from the Continent, informed Lord Lansdowne that *une indemnité la plus complète*[443] would be paid to the victims. For a few days the crisis was acute, and the requisite naval action was taken in case it should be necessary to prevent the Baltic Fleet from proceeding to its destination; but, fortunately, an agreement was reached to refer the matter to an International Commission, with a guarantee that any person found guilty would be punished adequately, while the Russian Government undertook to issue instructions which would prevent the recurrence of such incidents. The right to compensation had already been admitted.

The British Government had shown conspicuous moderation, which was denounced in some quarters, but

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[442] Admiral Roszjestvensky. (LN). Zinovy Petrovich Rozhestvensky (1848–1909) was an admiral of the Imperial Russian Navy. He was in command of the Second Pacific Squadron in the Battle of Tsushima, during the Russo-Japanese War. Admiral Rozhestvensky's fleet was ambushed by the Japanese under Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō and by the evening of 27 May 1905, his flagship and the majority of his fleet were on the bottom of the Tsushima Straits. The Russians had lost 5,000 sailors. (Ed.)

[443] Comprehensive compensation. (Ed.)

to all sensible persons the peaceful issue came as a profound relief.

The following letters, more especially the first, that of Sir C. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne on October 29, 1904, show how narrowly the catastrophe of war was escaped:

> It has been an anxious week—no one knows it better than you do. I think we have got through well, and, in spite of some of the growlers, I fancy that is the general verdict.
>
> On Thursday evening it looked to me as if the betting was about even as between peace and war.
>
> I may be allowed to say again how much I appreciate the tact and promptitude with which you acted. Your earlier telegrams show that you exactly anticipated our instructions.
>
> I am still very anxious for the future. We have got the Russians out of the scrape this time. Nothing that you or I or Lamsdorff or Benckendorff can do will get them out of a second scrape, and I cannot dismiss from my mind the apprehension that they will, through stupidity or perversity, or both, tumble into another.
>
> I have written earnestly to Benckendorff on this subject, and I am sure you will impress this upon Lamsdorff. But, unfortunately, these Russian Admirals are not responsible to him.

A week later Sir C. Hardinge again wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> The atmosphere on Thursday of last week was charged with electricity. The reaction from the role of the accused to the accuser simply made these people lose their heads altogether. They were in a most dangerous frame of mind. They fully realised that if they went to war with us they would lose their Baltic Fleet, but they had got their backs against the wall and they were ready to risk anything in a general cataclysm. Lamsdorff spoke to me about it the next day, and said that if you or I had on that day used a single word of menace, war would have been inevitable. He said that, much as he had hated war, he would at the slightest menace from us have had to yield to the war party. It must be remembered that the voyage of the Baltic Fleet is like a forlorn hope. Few people believe that it will ever reach the Far East, and most are indifferent to its fate. On the other hand, a successful advance on India is not doubted for an instant, and is

> regarded as an easy means of bringing us to reason. In their present frame of mind, I do not think it safe to trifle with them, and for that reason I deprecate the shadowing of the Russian fleet (if it is true), as being provocative and as showing that we place no confidence in the instructions which have been given in connection with neutral shipping.

The Dogger Bank incident, due to the clumsy stupidity of an Admiral, only just failed to bring about war, and seems to have almost persuaded the Czar to conclude a German alliance. On October 28 he telegraphed to the Kaiser:[444]

> I have no words to express my indignation with England's conduct. I agree fully with your complaints about England's behaviour concerning the coaling of our ships by German steamers. Whereas she understands the rules of keeping neutrality in her own fashion, it is certainly time to put a stop to this. The only way, as you say, would be that Germany, Russian and France

[444] *The Kaiser's Letters to the Czar*, p. 138

should at once unite upon arrangements to abolish English and Japanese arrogance and insolence. Would you like to lay down and frame the outlines of such a treaty? As soon as it is accepted by us, France is bound to join her ally.

No communication could possibly have been more welcome to the Kaiser, who had been urging his Imperial Brother to send his Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles, and also inflaming his mind against the iniquity of the British refusal of coal to Russian ships. He had, in fact, already anticipated the request, and sent off a draft treaty to St. Petersburg, of which more will be heard shortly.

The Kaiser to the Czar. Oct 30 1904

Best thanks for telegram. Have sent letter, including draft of treaty you wished for, off by Imperial field *jäger*[445] this evening. Heard from previous source that Hull fishermen have already acknowledged that they have seen foreign steam craft among their boats, not belonging to their fishing fleet, which they knew not.

So there has been foul play. I think the British Embassy in Petersburg must know this news, whereto all kept from the British public till now, for fear of "blamage". Willy.

In another letter to "Dearest Nicky", dated November 17, 1904, the Kaiser[446] enlarges upon the superlative merits of his draft treaty:

The Russo-German Treaty once a fact, our combined powers will exact a strong attraction on France, which you have already foreseen in your telegram of October 29th when you say: "After the arrangement is accepted by us, France is bound to join". Of course, it will be the work of your diplomacy to make the necessary arrangements with France, Germany in the meanwhile remaining gallantly behind you.

Last, not least, an excellent expedient to cool British insolence and overbearing would be to make some military demonstration on the Perso-Afghan frontier, where the British think you powerless to appear with troops during the war. Even should the forces at your disposal not suffice for a real attack on India itself, they would do for Persia—which has no army—and a pressure on the Indian frontier from Persia will do wonders in England, and have remarkably quieting influence upon the hot-headed jingoes in London. For I am aware and informed that this is the only thing they are afraid of, and that the fear of your entry into India from Turkestan and into Afghanistan from Persia was the real and only cause that the guns of Gibraltar and of the British fleet remained silent three weeks ago! India's loss is the death-stroke to Great Britain!

This is how I hope that our treaty will fulfil its task to preserve the peace of Europe.

The next letter, however,[447] was more of a blackmailing than of an amiable character. The British Government, he complained, had forbidden German ships from coaling the Russian fleet:

It is far from my intention to hurry you in your answer to my last remarks about your proposal about our defensive alliance. But you will, I am sure, be fully alive to the fact that I must have positive guarantees from you, whether you intend leaving me unaided or not in case England and Japan should declare war

[445] A German military term for rifle-armed infantry. (Ed.)
[446] *The Kaiser's Letters to the Czar*, November 17, 1904. (LN)
[447] *The Kaiser's Letters to the Czar*, December 12, 1904. (LN)

> against me on account of the coaling of the Russian fleet by Germany. Should you be unable to absolutely guarantee me that in such a war you will loyally fight shoulder to shoulder with me, then 1 regret to assert to be under the necessity of immediately forbidding German steamers to continue to coal your fleet.

A letter dated December 21 betrays the Imperial fear that the proposed treaty should be divulged to the French before its actual conclusion:

> My opinion about the agreement[448] is still the same; it is impossible to take France into our confidence *before* we two have come to a definite arrangement. Loubet and Delcassé are no doubt experienced statesmen. But they are not being Princes or Emperors. I am unable to place them—in a question of confidence like this one – on the same footing as you, my equal, my cousin and friend.
>
> Should you therefore think it imperative to acquaint the French Government with our negotiations before we have arrived a definite settlement, I consider it better for all parties concerned to continue in our present state of mutual independence.

Port Arthur fell in December, and Sir C. Hardinge reported that the general public, who had for so long been deluded with mendacious Government news, now began to realize the truth, and that peace might possibly be secured if the Japanese were to come forward with moderate proposals. But the Court influence was all in favour of continuing the war until some spectacular military success had been achieved. The Port Arthur squadron had now been destroyed, and it was proposed to spend over a hundred millions in building a new fleet. It is instructive, in connection with this project to find the Kaiser now coming forward in the character of an Imperial bagman.

In a letter to the Czar of January 2, 1905, after enlarging upon the defence of Port Arthur, which

> "will become proverbial for all ages, and be upheld as an example to be emulated as long as a soldier exists", he goes on to say:

> Now that the programme for the renewal of your fleet has been published, I hope you won't forget to remind your authorities to remember our great firms at Stettin, Kiel, *etc.*; they will, I am sure, furnish fine specimens of line-of-battle ships.[449]

"Business as usual", in fact. It may be added that the panegyrics on the defence of Port Arthur turned out to have been singularly misplaced. General Stoessel,[450] the Russian commander, who had been the idol of our sensational press, and upon whom the Kaiser had impulsively bestowed his highest military Order, was shown to have surrendered the fortress without justification, and was relegated to the St. Peter and St. Paul State Prison.

As the war went from bad to worse, unmistakable signs of discontent were evident in Russia, and both Czar and Kaiser began to feel perturbed. The latter, however, as became a resourceful sovereign, had a patent and original remedy of his own. The war had been mismanaged and was now unpopular; Ministers were of little account in Russia and popular discontent might vent itself upon the Czar; therefore the latter "should make the expected *grand acte* by going to Moscow and assembling the

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[448] *The Kaiser's Letters to the Czar*, December 21, 1904. (LN)
[449] *The Kaiser's Letters to the Czar* January 3, 1905. (LN)
[450] Anatoly Mikhaylovich Stessel (1848–1915) was a Russian baron of German descent, military leader, and general.

nobility and notables in his magnificent Palace, and speak to them—perhaps beginning with a reprimand for publishing letters and addresses sent to him, which is bad manners and must not be repeated—and then proclaim the reforms he has prepared for his people, as far as he thinks fit."

> After this, the Czar, *entouré* by the Clergy, with banners and Cross and incense and holy Icons, would go out on the balcony and read out the same speech he held before, as a Manifesto to his assembled loyal subjects in the courtyard below, encircled by the serried ranks of the troops, *la baïonnctte au canon , le sabre au poing.*[451]
>
> The Czar's popularity would be recovered, and he would gain his people's sympathy besides. All persons who take an interest in

(Page 322) LORD LANSDOWNE [1905]

> the Russian events are unanimous in their opinion that the Czar must not remain in perpetuum in Tsarske or Peterhof, but that it is sure that should his first appearance be made under the above-mentioned conditions the sensation and impression created in the whole world would be enormous, which would, with bated breath, listen to him when he addresses it, as his forefathers formerly did, from the Ramparts of the Kremlin.[452]

Whether the world would in reality have listened with bated breath to the unfortunate Czar reading a speech to his people behind "serried ranks of troops" is more than doubtful, but William II was conspicuously deficient in all humour, except horse-play, and was so much imbued with the true autocratic spirit that it is quite possible that he believed honestly in his own remedy. The Czar, however, being of a less histrionic temperament, refrained from taking the spectacular action suggested, and his Government adopted the more practical course of endeavouring to obtain some sort of mediation. Apparently M. Witte had suggested a message from King Edward to the Czar in favour of peace, and President Roosevelt was quite prepared to offer his services. On April 3, 1905, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir C. Hardinge:

> I am, however, very apprehensive as to the effect which may be produced, both upon Russian and Japanese opinion, by ill- advised and premature attempts to bring about peace negotiations. Between ourselves, I suspect that Roosevelt has been overanxious in this direction, and, as usual, there has been a good deal of indiscretion as to his sayings and doings, with the result that the Japanese are thoroughly suspicious.
>
> Knowing what I did, I was strongly opposed to an attempt of the same kind on the part of our King. No one could perform such a task better or more tactfully if the conditions were favourable, but the pear is not ripe yet.
>
> Witte's ideas as to terms do not seem to me, on the face of them, unreasonable, except upon the one point of the indemnity.

(Page 323) RUSSIA, 1904-5

> Is there any case of a war of this kind in which the losing side has not had to pay for its folly or ill-luck?
>
> I never expected to find Russia ready to make peace on the very morrow of her greatest disasters, but, as time goes on, these effects must be realised.

[451] Bayonet fixed, sabre in hand. (Ed.)
[452] *The Kaisers Letters to the Czar*, Feb. 21, 1905

The letters from the British Ambassador about this period show that, strangely enough, there was some recrudescence of pugnacity, although there were no successes to show, and the last card had been staked on the Baltic Fleet. Internal disturbances were increasing; the financial outlook was becoming more and more unsatisfactory, owing to the refusal of the French to provide a loan; the country was now threatened with an outbreak of cholera—and yet the Czar remained determined to carry on the war. The fact was that he had compromised himself so deeply in various Proclamations that he was unable to draw back, and unfortunately he was, as Sir C. Hardinge remarked, the only decisive factor in the country. Even when the crowning and unprecedented naval disaster of Tsushima occurred and the ships of the "Admiral of the Pacific" lay at the bottom of that ocean, he remained in the same frame of mind, impervious to facts, blind to consequences, and arguing that the situation of the army in the Far East was no worse than before the Baltic Fleet had been destroyed. But even his obstinacy was at length overcome, and probably he was much influenced by his Imperial Brother, who, having originally encouraged him to make war and to reject any offer of mediation, now wrote that the game was up, and offered himself as a mediator, on June 3, 1905:

> Should you think that I could be of any, even smallest, use to you for the preparatory steps to bring about peace, pray dispose of me at your leisure.
>
> If anybody in the world is able to influence the Japanese, it is President Roosevelt. Should it meet with your approval, I

> could easily place myself*, privately, en rapport with him*, as we are very intimate.

This offer, however, came too late, as President Roosevelt had already cast himself for the role of mediator, and the Peace Conference assembled at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in August—the Russian attitude, in spite of ignominious defeat, being pronouncedly arrogant.

The decision having been taken to enter upon peace negotiations, it was clearly desirable that M. Witte, the most capable representative, should be selected, and a long letter from Sir C. Hardinge describes the tortuous methods which it was necessary to employ in order to secure his selection.

When his name was first suggested, the Czar at first absolutely refused to consider him. The name of Nelidof[453] was then put forward, it being known that on account of age and ill-health he would be forced to decline the honour. Upon his refusal, Witte was again proposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and again rejected by the Czar. The next suggestion was Count Mouravieff,[454] and, to the dismay of the Russian Foreign Office, he accepted. But the Department was not to be beaten, and besides representing that his state of health was prohibitive, drew up a set of instructions which would have made the failure of his mission a foregone conclusion. Mouravieff, who incidentally was in robust health, asked that his instructions should be modified, whereupon he was at once relieved of his duty by the Czar.

> On the removal of Mouravieff, Lamsdorff and Witte's supporters once more made strenuous efforts to obtain the Czar's consent to Witte's appointment. H.M. maintained his former objections, but the scale was eventually turned by Baron Friedrichs,[455] Minister of the Court, who pointed out to the Czar that Witte was a dangerous man, that he would be safer at

[453] Russian Ambassador in Paris. (LN) Aleksandr Ivanovich Nelidov (1838–1910) was a Russian diplomat. Among his many roles he was Ambassador to Saxony in 1879. Ambassador to Italy (1897–1903) and Ambassador to France (1903–1910). (Ed.)

[454] The spelling Muravyov as given in modern sources. (*See footnote on page 274*. Ed.)

[455] Count Adolf Andreas Woldemar Freedericksz (Vladimir Borisovich Frederiks; 1838–1927) was a Finno-Russian statesman who served as Imperial Household Minister between 1897 and 1917 under Nicholas II. He was responsible for the administration of the Imperial family's personal affairs and living arrangements. (Ed.)

> Washington than at St. Petersburg, and that in undertaking such a mission himself, either by failure to secure peace or by the conclusion of peace on what might be considered humiliating terms. By such arguments, the Czar was induced to give his consent.
>
> Mouravieff's instructions have been passed on to Witte, but with the understanding that he need not adhere to them.[456]

It is rather surprising to learn, in connection with the Russo-Japanese negotiations at Portsmouth, that President Roosevelt, who was less Anglophile than was generally believed, was convinced that, for some occult reason, we wished the war to continue. He also complained that the British Government had given him no support in pressing the Japanese to abate their terms, whereas the Kaiser, on the other hand, had been most helpful in influencing the Czar. Lord Lansdowne had wisely and consistently refused to put any pressure on the Japanese, and in the end his decision was fully justified.

It is interesting to find that at the outset of the Conference, President Roosevelt felt little confidence as to its success, and that the Russian representatives made an unfavourable impression upon him. Writing to the American Minister in Peking, he observes:

> The Peace Conference has just met, but I have no hope of its success. The Russian Government jumps from side to side. They have not been able to make war and now they cannot make peace; their representatives give me the worst impression; they are tricky and inefficient. I believe the Emperor may be well meaning, but he has no influence on his Administration.

The Russians, who had entered upon the negotiations in a "not a copec, not an acre" spirit, succeeded in escaping without having to pay an indemnity, but were forced to cede Port Arthur and its adjacent territory, half the Island of Saghalien, to recognise Japan's permanent interests in Corea, and to evacuate Manchuria, besides making other concessions. On the whole, the

Japanese, who had displayed marvellous self-control and moderation in the hour of victory, had no reason to be dissatisfied. They had obtained practically all that they had fought for, and it was far more sensible to surrender the demand for an indemnity than to continue a ruinous and exhaustive war.

Incredible though it may sound, the infatuated Czar continued until the last moment to oppose a peace settlement, and telegraphed to Witte a few hours before the preliminaries were signed: "Finish and come home at once". The conduct, in fact, of the ill-fated Czar throughout the crisis seems to show that, with the exception of Bolshevik rule, no greater calamity can befall a country than to be governed by an incompetent autocrat. Witte, however, decided to disregard the order, as he was convinced that the Japanese insistence on an indemnity would cause a breakdown, and the responsibility for the rupture would consequently have fallen upon them. The situation was saved by the sudden waiving of the indemnity claim by the Japanese, but the Czar sent no reply to Witte's telegram that peace had been concluded, and it has been stated that shortly afterwards he ordered Witte to prevent the final conclusion of peace. On October 5th, 1905, Sir C. Hardinge wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> I have always told you that the Emperor did not want peace, but wished to continue the war indefinitely. Curiously enough, additional confirmation was given only yesterday by both the Emperor and Empress to Colonel Waters.[457] They expressed annoyance at the conclusion of

[456] Sir C. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, July 18, 1905. (LN)

[457] Colonel W.H-H. Waters was British Military attaché at St. Petersburg. (LN) Among his published works is *"Private and Personal". Further Experiences of a Military Attaché, 1928*. by Brig.-General W H-H Waters published by Wallscourt Hely Hutchinson. (Ed.)

peace when the Russian Army was in such a splendid position, and the Emperor spoke excitedly of the cunning of the Japanese in having renounced the indemnity, and said that he had been tricked into giving up half of Saghalien. The Empress spoke even more bitterly.

Witte has returned with his head entirely turned, not only by his success in America, but especially by his reception in Germany. I am assured that it was only from his stay in Berlin

(Page 327) RUSSIA, 1904-5

and his visit to Rominten[458] that his enthusiasm for the Kaiser and a German rapprochement dates. He is now, I hear, madly pro-German in his sympathies, and will require careful watching. He proclaims his ideal to be a Russo-German-French understanding, directed evidently against England and Japan, and he denounces loudly our new Treaty.

The latter remark refers to the new Anglo-Japanese Treaty, which was in effect an extension of the Agreement of 1902, and contains articles obviously designed for the better protection of India against a Russian attack. It is probable, however, that this engagement was of less importance than it appears. A memorandum[459] by the General Staff of June 16, 1905, seems to show that in their opinion it would be very difficult to make effective use of Japanese troops on the North-West frontier of India, and it would, perhaps, be more correct to regard it as an amicable gesture on the part of the Japanese Government. In return for this undertaking, the Japanese obtained complete control over Corea, and it was understood that there would be no opposition to ultimate annexation. The provisions of the Treaty are well known, but it is not generally realized that the daring decision to renew and extend the Japanese Treaty[460] was taken before the negotiations at Portsmouth had been concluded, as is shown in an important private letter from Lord Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge, dated September 4, 1905 :

You will receive simultaneously with this letter, or soon after it, a despatch briefly setting forth the objects of the Alliance, which you will communicate to Count Lamsdorff. I earnestly trust that you will be able to convince him that it contains nothing to which the Russian Government can reasonably take exception. I do not, of course, mean to say that the new Agreement is not, from the force of circumstances, aimed at Russia more than at any other power, but this is inevitable. All measures

(Page 328) LORD LANSDOWNE [1905]

of precaution whether they take the shape of military and naval preparations or, as in this case, of Alliances, must be directed against somebody, and no country has, it seems to me, the right to take offence because another country raises the wall of its back garden high enough to prevent an over-adventurous neighbour, or that neighbour's unruly or over-zealous agents, from attempting to climb over it.

I can at any rate say with absolute conviction that this new arrangement must not be taken as an indication of unfriendliness on our part. I have, as you know, always desired and still desire that we should live on neighbourly terms with Russia, and this view, which Benckendorff has often expressed to me, represents, I believe, the feelings of his Chief. So far as we are concerned, there can be no reason why, in the new chapter of history which is now beginning for Russia, we should not work with her for the good of the civilised world. We are doing so at this moment in Macedonia and in Crete, and we are ready to do so at other points, whether in Europe or in Asia, where we come in contact.

[458] A shooting lodge belonging to the Kaiser. (LN)
[459] Gooch and Temperley, vol. iv. pp. 137-40 (LN)
[460] The new Anglo-Japanese Treaty had been signed on August 12. (LN)

> You will, I know, do all you can to reassure Count Lamsdorff, and to convince him that we are absolutely sincere, and that we have no intention whatever of interfering with the legitimate activity of Russia or of aggrandising ourselves at her expense.

A private letter in almost identical terms was sent to Count Benckendorff on the same day, and the eventual results completely justified the somewhat risky decision which had been taken as to the renewal and expansion of the Treaty.

With the end of the Japanese War, much of the Russian hostility to England disappeared, although it still survived in Court and military circles. The new Treaty was not unfavourably received; in a short time the negotiations for an Anglo-Russian understanding were renewed, with the active support of the French, and such satisfactory progress was made that in 1907 Sir Edward Grey was enabled to sign the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

CHAPTER XIV

ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1904-5

(Page 329)

The news of the Anglo-French Agreement met with a more favourable reception in Germany than had been anticipated. According to Sir F. Lascelles, the official view was that no German interest was affected. But it had come upon many Germans as a surprise because they were convinced that England could only come to terms with France by making heavy concessions in Egypt, and as a disappointment because Germany would no longer have the power of playing off one country against the other. It very soon became apparent, however, that the German Government was prepared to make trouble over the Egyptian part of the Agreement, and on May 6, 1904, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir F. Lascelles:

> The proposal of the German Government to make their concurrence in regard to the Khedivial Decree dependent upon an all-round settlement, including such questions as Samoa, China, South African compensation, and commercial relations with the British Colonies, looks to an ordinary observer like a great piece of effrontery. You would, I think, have been justified in telling Richthofen at once that you did not see how we could mix up the Egyptian question with these other matters which have no connection with it. The suggestion that the consent of the German Government to a perfectly innocuous arrangement in Egypt can only be bought at the price of concessions elsewhere does not become more palatable when we find it connected with an intimation that Germany is hesitating whether "she shall

(Page 330) LORD LANSDOWNE [1904]

turn to the East or to the West". That is a veiled threat of which I remember Hatzfeldt used to be fond.

Later in the year, Sir F. Lascelles was entrusted with the delicate task of intimating to the Kaiser that a visit to England which he contemplated in the winter would not be welcome for various reasons. The fact was that the relations between Kaiser and King had become much strained in the course of 1904. The former had made a serious grievance out of what appeared to be singularly insignificant incidents. He complained vehemently to Lascelles that the King had failed to visit him on his return from Marienbad; that he had taken no notice of the reception given to the British Fleet in German ports; and that an invitation to the Crown Prince[461] to visit England without having previously asked for his (the Kaiser's) permission constituted little less than "a personal insult . He added that a previous visit of the Crown Prince to England had been of an unedifying character, as at a well-known country house[462] where he had stayed "there had been unseemly romping in unlighted corridors and one lady had absolutely gone the length of taking off her slipper".

Obviously it must have been difficult to remain on friendly terms with so susceptible a personage, but the fault was not entirely on one side, for Lord Lansdowne was forced to admit that:

> The King talks and writes about his Royal Brother in terms which make one's flesh creep, and the official papers which go to him, whenever they refer to His Imperial Majesty, come back with all sorts of annotations of a most incendiary character.

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[461] Wilhelm, German Crown Prince, Crown Prince of Prussia (Friedrich Wilhelm Victor August Ernst; 1882–1951) was the eldest child of the last German emperor, Wilhelm II, and his consort Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, and thus a great-grandson of Queen Victoria. (Ed.)

[462] Prince Heinrich of Prussia (Albert Wilhelm Heinrich; 1862–1929) the Kaiser's brother on a visit to England stayed at Lord Newton's residence at Lyme Park. Photographs of the occasion, which included shooting parties, survive at the hall. (Ed.)

In view of the mutual antipathy between the two sovereigns, it seems strange that continual efforts were made to bring about personal meetings which seldom led to satisfactory results.

A small incident which occurred on one of the Royal visits to Germany is, perhaps, worth mentioning as

(Page 331) ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1904-5

showing the King's sense of humour. After a Court reception, the various guests were conveyed to their homes in large closed coaches, and a member of the King's suite found himself the only Englishman amongst a number of German officers. It was dark; and the last officer who entered the vehicle and was unaware that any stranger was present, exclaimed in a loud tone:

"Gott sei dank! die verdammten Engländer sind alle weg".[463] The Englishman knew German, and as everyone had heard the remark there was considerable embarrassment. The following morning the King was asked whether he wished any notice to be taken of the incident. "Certainly not", he replied; "it is exactly what you would have said had I been entertaining a party of Germans at Windsor!"

The report of a conversation between Lascelles and Metternich, who came to relate to him the latest views of the Kaiser with reference to Anglo-German relations, makes the latter's desire to visit England all the more inexplicable. On December 23, 1904, Sir F. Lascelles wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

> Metternich came to see me, and said that in an audience he had had of the Kaiser, he had found H.M. very bitter against us.
>
> Then the Kaiser went on to say that he was now convinced that England was seeking an opportunity to attack Germany.
>
> Metternich assured the Kaiser that no serious person in England desired a war with Germany, and the idea that England would attack Germany would only be laughed at in England. The Kaiser said he was very glad to hear it, and Metternich believed that on this point he had relieved H.M.'s apprehensions, and he asked me whether I thought he had gone too far in the statement he had made.
>
> I hear from other sources that the Kaiser has been generally letting out against England, and Spring Rice tells me that Witte

(Page 332) LORD LANSDOWNE [1904-5]

> recently expressed his astonishment at the hatred of H.M. towards England.
>
> The Kaiser, it appears, still believes in the Yellow Peril, and thinks that Russia is fighting for the whole of Europe, and that the consequences will be disastrous to Europe if Japan should prove victorious. This is not, however, the opinion of the majority of his subjects.

Lord Lansdowne, in replying to this letter, expressed the belief

> that it would be impossible to find a sane individual in these Islands who thinks that it would be for our interest, or was likely to become our duty, to fasten a quarrel upon Germany.

But, he added:

[463] "Thank God!. The d---d Englishmen are all gone!"

> They cannot seriously believe that we are meditating a coup against them. Are they perchance meditating one against us and are they seeking to justify it in advance? All this talk about one driving them to lean towards Russia looks a little like it.

In the spring of 1905 there were strong indications that Germany was contemplating a change in foreign policy. The military and naval collapse of Russia had shown that Power to be much less formidable than had been imagined, and advances were being made to America and Japan, the object in the case of the former country being to "forestall England" in coming to a friendly understanding. This new departure, however, was obviously quite inconsistent with the tone of the Kaiser's letters to the Czar, which have already been quoted and had been kept strictly secret.

At the end of March, the Kaiser was in the Mediterranean, and paid a visit to Tangier, which was characterized by his Royal uncle as "the clumsiest bit of diplomacy he ever heard of, and an egregious blunder". In a conversation with Prince Louis of Battenberg[464] at Gibraltar on April 1,[465] a report of which was transmitted to Lord Lansdowne by the King, the Imperial tourist

unbosomed himself freely on the subject of this visit, in his well-known style.

> I went to Tangier for the express purpose of telling the French Minister what my views were. I said, "I know nothing of any agreement between France and Morocco. For me, the Sultan is an independent sovereign. I am determined not to have a repetition of what happened in Tunis."
>
> When the Minister tried to argue with me, I said "Good morning" and left him standing. I do not believe that the French will ever conquer the Moors, whatever means they employ.
>
> *Russo-Japanese War*.—Russia is beaten and can never hope to retrieve her fortunes. She ought to make peace, and the sooner the better. There can be no mediation until one of the parties expresses his readiness to make peace. President Roosevelt tried it the other day and got snubbed. [This, however, did not prevent him from offering to mediate himself, as shown in his letter to the Czar of June 3rd.] It is, however, of the utmost importance that there should be no idea of a European Conference. This is precisely what Russia would want, as she would then expect France to help her to get back all the territory from which the Japanese have driven her out.
>
> Japan may be a danger by and by, but it is to the interest of us all, Germans and others, to see that Russia does not get too powerful.
>
> I sent a message to your King the other day to the effect that I would never consent to a European Conference.
>
> *Anglo-German Relations*.—The dominion of the world in the future will be divided between the two great virile races— Teutonic and Slav. The Latin races are moribund and must be got under. We, the three great Anglo-Saxon races, as represented by Germany, Great Britain and the United States, must make common cause and march shoulder to shoulder, although we be rivals in trade.
>
> *The Near Fast*.—During the past year, Russia asked me many times to help her in getting out her Black Sea Fleet. My reply was always the same; of all the Signatory Powers, England is the only one which has a direct interest, and your only chance

[464] Louis Alexander Mountbatten, 1st Marquess of Milford Haven (1854–1921) formerly Prince Louis Alexander of Battenberg, was a naval officer and German prince related by marriage to the British royal family. (Ed.)
[465] *King Edward VII,* vol. ii. p. 340. (LN)

> is to make it worth while for England to consent to the Dardanelles being declared an open waterway. But that is precisely what the Russians don't want.

It is interesting to compare these views with those expressed to the Czar in the course of the subsequent Björkö meeting in July.

Lord Lansdowne to Sir F. Lascelles. April 9, 1905.

> 1 afraid that we can hardly regard this Tangier ebullition as an isolated incident. There can be no doubt that the Kaiser was much annoyed by the Anglo-French Agreement and probably even more so by our refusal to vamp up some agreement of the same kind with Germany over the Egyptian question
>
> We shall, I have little doubt, find that the Kaiser avails himself of every opportunity to put spokes in our wheels and convince those who are watching the progress of the game that he means to take an important part in it.
>
> My impression is that the German Government have really no cause for complaint either of us or the French in regard to the Morocco part of the Agreement. We made no secret of its existence. It dealt exclusively with French and British interests in Morocco, and so far as the other Powers were concerned, it provided adequate security for their interests, and for the integrity of Morocco itself. What else does the Kaiser want?
>
> As to the attempts of the German Government to ingratiate themselves with the U.S. and Japan, I am under the impression that these two Powers, while certainly desiring to be well with Germany, know exactly how much value to place on such overtures, and are not likely to be driven by them off their true course.

The threatening attitude of the Kaiser suggested to one ardent spirit, Admiral Fisher, a "golden opportunity" for making war upon Germany, and in a letter to Lord Lansdowne dated April 22 he actually undertook that if it came about,

we could have the German Fleet, the Kiel Canal, and Schleswig-Holstein within a fortnight.

Not long after the Kaiser's return from his Morocco expedition, the much-enduring Lascelles had reason to complain of his gross incivility. On June 7 the Ambassador mentioned that he was going to London, and asked if His Majesty had any orders for England.

> "Orders for England!" he exclaimed; "No, I shall have nothing to say to you until you learn how to behave!" Although I was rather taken aback by this outburst, I asked H.M. what we had been doing, and he then began the old story of the attacks on him in the English press, which we could put a stop to if we liked. On my attempting to protest, he said that he knew for a fact that H.M.G. shortly after the North Sea incident had interfered to stop the violence of the press against Russia, and had succeeded in doing so. He said that he knew what he was talking about, and had at last found out who it was who was doing all the mischief. It had taken him two years to find out, but now he knew. On my asking whether he would tell me the name, he said, "Moberly Bell".[466]

[466] Moberly Bell, Manger of *The Times*. (LN). Charles Frederic Moberly Bell (1847 to 1911) was a British journalist and newspaper editor. He was the managing director of *The Times* during the late 19th and early 20th

This outburst compelled Sir F. Lascelles to complain to the German Foreign Office of his treatment, and to intimate that he could not allow the Kaiser's remarks to pass unnoticed while his own mission, during which he had unceasingly endeavoured to promote good relations between the two countries, appeared to have been a failure. Thereupon Bülow was sent to him in the character of a peacemaker, and stated that he had seen the Kaiser, who "had had no intention of wounding the Ambassador's feelings, and on the contrary entertained for him a sentiment of 'Freundschaft und Verehrung' ".[467] As the German Government were anxious that Sir F. Lascelles should continue to remain as Ambassador at Berlin, Bülow called again and expressed the sincere hope that there would be no change.

(Page 336) LORD LANSDOWNE [1905]

> He[468] would speak to me quite openly and unreservedly. There was no doubt that on occasions the Emperor was wanting in tact. He had on several occasions been compelled to furnish explanatory interpretations of H.M.'s utterances. H.M.'s remark to me was an instance of his want of tact, but it did not in the least imply that his friendship for me had undergone any change. On my observing that for a considerable time the Emperor had not talked to me on any political subject, Bülow said that he himself was to some extent to blame for this. He had noticed the Emperor's growing irritation against England, and knowing his impatient nature, had urged him not to discuss the relations between the two countries with any Englishman.

Holstein, who was present during this conversation, observed that:

> The Emperor s irritation against England might in part be due to reports which had reached him that "important Personages in England" had made no secret of their hostility to Germany. He could not mention names, nor could he give me his authority, but he believed that some persons in a high position had indulged in very strong language with regard to Germany and the Emperor himself.

The above passage was underlined by King Edward, who appended an indignant minute to the effect that "This is an old story, invariably revived every year". Some of Lord Lansdowne's recorded statements appear, however, to corroborate it.

It will be remembered that for some time past the Kaiser had been pressing the Czar to agree to a Treaty which he not inaccurately defined as a "Continental Combine". In July 1905, both Emperors were cruising in the Baltic and a meeting was arranged at Björkö. On July 24th there was a memorable scene on the Russian Imperial yacht, which has been described by Professor Brandenburg from materials to be found in *Grosse Politik*, xix. II. chap. 38.[469] The Kaiser asked why the Treaty proposed in the previous autumn had fallen

(Page 337) ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1904-5

through, and was told by the Czar that it was because France was unwilling to co-operate with Germany.

The Kaiser replied that this obstacle no longer existed; since the Morocco agreement he was acting in concert with France so that they could now revert to the earlier idea. When the Czar remarked that he no longer remembered accurately the text of the proposals then submitted, the Kaiser replied that he happened to have a copy with him, and drawing it out of his pocket, he gave it to the Czar, who thereupon pulled the Kaiser into his private cabin, shut all the doors himself, and read the manuscript through several times. He then declared that he wholly approved the contents. The Kaiser, who had

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centuries, where his innovations included founding the forerunners of the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Times Educational Supplement* and co-sponsoring the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. (Ed.)

[467] Friendship and esteem. (LN)

[468] Sir F. Lascelles to Lord Lansdowne, June 12, 1905. (LN)

[469] *From Bismarck to the Great War*, Brandenburg. (LN)

watched him with a prayer on his lips, now proposed that they should both sign the treaty forthwith, and as the Czar had no objection, this was done.

The Treaty was witnessed by Count Tchirschky,[470] a German diplomatist, and by a Russian Admiral in the Czar's suite, who admitted afterwards that he was completely ignorant of the contents of the document.

No wonder the Kaiser was elated, and felt that Providence was once more at his side. In an hour or so he had, as he thought, made history, and in his imagination he pictured the many-sided continental league, under his guidance, destroying the hated British Empire,

The result of the Björkö meeting was kept a profound secret. Neither at our Embassy at Berlin nor at St. Petersburg had it been possible to obtain any knowledge of what had passed, and the only British diplomatist who succeeded in obtaining any information was Mr. Tower,[471] our representative at Munich, who happened to be acquainted with Prince Wittgenstein,[472] a member of the Kaiser's suite. According to Prince Wittgenstein, who sat next to the Czar at the fateful luncheon on the yacht, the latter was in the highest spirits, in marked contrast to the Kaiser, who was restlessly talkative and silent in turn, and seemed

exceptionally preoccupied throughout the whole cruise. He talked vehemently on subject after subject, and suddenly relapsed into complete silence, staring intently into space for several minutes together. To his guests, his demeanour and general appearance had changed much for the worse during the past year.

The Kaiser's talk is ever of alliances and political combinations, and he gave utterance on the cruise to his cherished idea of being able to effect a coalition between Germany, France, and Russia, to the exclusion of Great Britain.[473]

Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Tower. Aug. 20, 1905.

> So far as 1 am aware your letter contains the only account having any pretence to authenticity of what passed on the occasion of the interview between the two Emperors.
>
> I must say that the description of the Kaiser's language and demeanour fills me with disquiet. What may not a man in such a frame of mind do next?

Both rulers were, delighted with their handiwork; the Czar returned home, according to Sir Charles Hardinge, "very pleased with himself", and the Kaiser had every reason to be jubilant, for on receipt of the telegram announcing the Treaty, Bülow had immediately expressed his "deep emotion and heartfelt gratitude", and congratulated his master upon having carried the operation through single-handed. Further, Witte, on his way back from making peace in America, was taken into the Kaiser's confidence, and according to the latter,[474] the tears stood in his (Witte's) eyes, and he was so overcome by emotion as to be unable to speak at first. Then he exclaimed,

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[470] Heinrich Leonhard von Tschirschky und Bögendorff (1858–1916) was a German diplomat and politician, who served as Foreign Secretary and head of the Foreign Office from January 1906 to 25 October 1907. (Ed.)
[471] Now Sir R. Tower, K.C.M.G. (LN). Sir Reginald Thomas Tower (1860–1939) was a British diplomat whose career lasted from 1885 to 1920. From 1903 to 1906 he was Minister Resident in Bavaria and Württemberg. (Ed.)
[472] This could be Richard, 4th Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg (1882–1925) who was the Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg from 1904 to 1918. (Ed.)
[473] Mr. Tower to Lord Lansdowne, August 1905. (LN)
[474] Brandenburg, *From Bismarck to the Great War* (from Die Grosse Politik). (LN)

> God be praised! He would never have dared to hope for that. Now France must be gradually won over and till then the Treaty must be kept secret.

(Page 339) ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1904-5

There is, however, a conflict of evidence upon this point, as Witte in his memoirs asserts that the Kaiser only gave his own version of the Treaty, and that when he (Witte) reached St. Petersburg and saw the text, he disapproved of it.

It was not long, however, before the fool's paradise in which the two autocrats were living vanished. First Bülow discovered objections to the Treaty which were so strong that he threatened resignation, and only withdrew it when they were met, and then the French Government got wind of the Czar's egregious folly. In a short time the Czar too was writing to the Kaiser and making difficulties. In fact he suggested the cancelling of the Björkö Treaty in the event of a Franco-German War, a suggestion which evoked plaintive comments from the Kaiser on the subject of human ingratitude.

The Treaty nominally came into force on October 14th, but before that date it was virtually dead.

So ended the ambitious attempt to win over Russia and form an irresistible Continental League. By the end of 1905, Germany was almost completely isolated, and Russia and England were on more amicable terms than they had been for a century. Lord Lansdowne had contributed not a little to the cordiality of Anglo-Russian relations, and quite early in 1905 he had made up his mind that an "understanding" was not impossible.

In the January of that year, Sir Francis Bertie, our new Ambassador at Paris, reported that he had received a visit from the French Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, who had come to urge the desirability of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. If those two Powers and France acted together, the peace of Europe would be ensured for a long time, and he wanted to know if there would be any probability of bringing Italy into this arrangement, to which Sir F. Bertie, who had recently been Ambassador at Rome, replied that there was a wish there to be on the best of terms with Francc and

(Page 340) LORD LANSDOWNE [1905]

England. Incidentally, M. Delcassé, as a faithful ally, expatiated upon the "straightforward character and pacific wishes of the Czar", and presumably was not fully acquainted with His Majesty's real views.

Lord Lansdowne's reply to Sir F. Bertie, dated January 19, 1905, ran as follows:

> I am glad you spoke plainly upon the subject of the difficulties of establishing a permanent understanding between Great Britain and Russia. I do not see why such an understanding should be impossible, but it is a very different affair from an understanding with France. The Russian diplomatic currency has become debased and discredited, and it will not be easy to restore it to its face value.
>
> The scare on account of the so-called Yellow Peril seems to me absurd. I do not believe for a moment that the Japanese are foolish enough to take part in an anti-European movement. They are extremely vulnerable by sea, and could always be smashed by the European Naval Powers, and they are no doubt aware of this.

Before long the position of M. Delcassé had become increasingly difficult. As long as the issue of the Russo-Japanese War remained doubtful, and France could still count upon being supported effectively by her ally, Germany, although much incensed that an Anglo-French Agreement should have been arrived at without her participation, had remained passive. Now, however, that Russia had been temporarily crippled, it was decided to attack the French on the subject of the agreement which they were negotiating with the Moorish Government, and the Kaiser's visit to Tangier had been arranged as

an anti-French demonstration. The visit was followed by a violent campaign in the German press against the Anglo-French Agreement generally, and the arrogant attitude of the German minister at Tangier actually reached such a point that the Moors were informed that if the Spanish Minister proceeded on a contemplated journey to Fez, the German Government would look upon it "as an unfriendly act". The

German view, as expounded by the Kaiser and others, was plain enough. It was a clear challenge to France, England, and Spain, and the demand was put forward that a conference should be held for the purpose of dealing with the Moroccan question generally, while in order to emphasize it, the German Minister was sent to Fez in order to try and persuade the Sultan to ignore the Anglo-French Agreement. The indirect German threats of war became so alarming that, in April, President Roosevelt felt moved to offer himself again as a mediator, the Kaiser having informed him that he feared that England was about to support France in some important declaration of policy". The President was thereupon assured by Lord Lansdowne that we have not, and never had, any idea of attacking Germany; nor do we anticipate that she will be so foolish as to attack us .

But in the meanwhile the French Government had become thoroughly alarmed. They were aware that M. Delcassé was regarded with special animosity by the German Government, and as a scapegoat was required, his resignation was announced in June. On receipt of this news, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Sir F. Bertie, June 12, 1905:

> Delcassé's resignation has, as you may well suppose, produced a very painful impression here. What people say is that it one of our Ministers had had a dead set made at him by a foreign Power, the country and the Government would not only have stood by him, but probably have supported him more vigorously than ever, whereas France has apparently thrown Delcassé overboard in a panic. Of course, the result is that the *entente* is quoted at a much lower price than it was a fortnight ago.

In a private letter to another friend he remarks:

> The fall of Delcassé is disgusting and has sent the *entente* down any number of points in the market.

On June 15, Sir F. Bertie replied:

> Delcassé would have fallen even if Germany had not been menacing, but he might not have fallen so soon. His elimination

> from the Cabinet was in great part due to his treatment of his colleagues. He did not keep them fully informed of what he did and proposed to do. He had got to consider himself indispensable.
>
> With Combes he could do as he liked in foreign affairs, as he always had Loubet[475] with him. With Rouvier[476] it was different. Delcassé had put all his money on Russia. Several of *his chers collègues* disliked him and it ended by his being set aside. The German Government took advantage of the feeling that a scapegoat should be found. They spent money and spread about

[475] Émile François Loubet (1838–1929) was the 45th Prime Minister of France from February to December 1892 and later President of France from 1899 to 1906. (Ed.)

[476] Maurice Rouvier (1842–1911) was a French statesman of the "Opportunist" faction, who served as the Prime Minister of France between January 1905 and March 1906. He is best known for his financial policies and his unpopular policies designed to avoid a rupture with Germany. (Ed.)

that Delcassé's mismanagement was the sole cause of the misunderstanding, and they so assisted in bringing about his fall.

It was of no use to try and disguise the fact that the throwing over of Delcassé was one of the most humiliating incidents that had occurred in France for many years. He was regarded with detestation in Germany, where he was credited with labouring incessantly to isolate her; with creating difficulties for her all over the world; and with desperate attempts to create ill-feeling between Austria and Italy. In order to signalize a triumph over a personal enemy, Count Bülow was now created a Prince. Delcassé's real crime, of course, in German eyes, consisted in his responsibility for the Anglo-French Agreement, and M. Rouvier had, at an early stage, offered to sacrifice him.

M. Declassé upon his retirement wrote privately to Lord Lansdowne expressing warm gratitude for his cooperation, again urging a Russian agreement, and in the same letter intimating that he would like to come to London and offer to the King "*l'expression de ma respectueuse gratitude*".[477] Here it may be mentioned that King Edward, who was yachting in the Mediterranean at the time, had taken the very unusual step of telegraphing, through the Governor-General of Algiers, pressing M. Delcassé not to resign.

M. Declassé's visit to London, however, did not take place until a change of Government had occurred; and during his stay I was asked one day to accompany him to the House of Lords. As a distinguished stranger,

(Page 343) ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1904-5

he was accommodated on the steps of the Throne, and there he remained for an unconscionable period with his eyes fixed upon Lord Lansdowne, who, as leader of the Opposition, was engaged in taking part in a lengthy discussion during the Committee stage of some singularly uninspiring measure. Thinking that he must be much bored, I suggested after a time some other attraction, to which he replied emphatically: "*Non, non! Je préfère rester ici écouter Lord Lansdowne!*"[478] Hero-worship could go no further, for he was completely ignorant of English. His admiration for Lord Lansdowne, however, did not prevent him in after years from lending some colour to the preposterous story that the latter, in 1905, had promised the French to send an expeditionary force of 120,000 men to the Baltic coast of Germany should they become involved in war, and had offered an offensive and defensive alliance. This allegation, which had about as much foundation as Bülow's story of Lord Salisbury's proposal to dismember Turkey in 1895, was a pure figment of the imagination. There are no traces of any such undertaking in Lord Lansdowne's private papers, nor in the exhaustive work of Messrs. Gooch and Temperley, and he himself was the last person in the world who would have been likely to give such an assurance. All that he did was to warn the German Government that if they attacked France in connection with the *entente*, we could not undertake to remain indifferent.[479]

The Morocco crisis of 1905 ended in two ostensible German successes. The obnoxious Delcassé had been got rid of, and the proposal for a conference, which

(Page 344) LORD LANSDOWNE [1905]

ultimately took place at Algeçiras, was accepted. But the main object had failed. The real German aim had been to convince the French that the Anglo-British *entente* was useless to them, whereas the tangible

[477] The expression of my respectful gratitude. (Ed.)
[478] No, no! I prefer to stay here to listen to Lord Lansdowne. (Ed.)
[479] A conversation of Lord Lansdowne with M. Cambon on May 17, 1905, and letters from each of them on May 24th and 25th give the crucial documents. The first of these was contemptuously minuted by Lord Lansdowne thus, at a later date: "I suppose this was the origin of the offensive and defensive alliance"; and on April 4, 1927, after reading all the documents, he stated once more that "he had no recollection of any proposal of an alliance", —Gooch and Temperley, iii. pp. 76-8, 87. (LN)

result had been further to alienate France from Germany and to strengthen and consolidate Anglo-French relations.

Lord Lansdowne's tenure of the Foreign Office terminated in the winter of 1905, and in this slight summary of his labours during five critical years it will probably not have escaped observation that no mention has been made of many important occurrences in various parts of the world. It is, however, impossible to deal adequately in a few chapters with all the manifold activities of a British Foreign Secretary, and it has seemed advisable to touch only upon those questions which may still possess a living interest.

The first outstanding feature in his period of office is the abandonment of the old British policy of isolation and the substitution for it of understandings and alliances. The second is the gradual but clearly defined tendency to move nearer to France and Russia and further from Germany.

Lord Lansdowne will always be best remembered in connection with the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and the Anglo-French entente. In the former case it was decision and the courage to face responsibility which were required; in the latter, infinite patience combined with firmness: and there can be little doubt that his perfect knowledge of the French language and his own partial French origin must have contributed largely towards gaining the confidence of a race somewhat prone to suspicion. Perhaps the best tribute to his success during five critical years is that his policy was never seriously impugned, and that his successor followed implicitly in his footsteps. The fact is that he was exactly suited for the Foreign Office, both by

training and by a natural and hereditary aptitude. His instinct was essentially diplomatic and he possessed all the requisite qualities.

The main qualifications required by a Foreign Minister are extreme patience and tact, a judicial disposition, a willingness to listen to experienced opinion, some knowledge of other countries, and of foreign tongues, the faculty of knowing when to make a stand, when the national interest requires it, and the power of defining the national policy, both in the written and the spoken word, in dignified and courteous language. These qualifications he possessed to perfection. No one ever excelled him in his conscientious attention to details, or in the application needed to master the innumerable dry and complicated questions with which the Secretary of State is confronted daily. No one was ever more accessible to those who served under him, and certainly no other Foreign Secretary inspired a stronger feeling of confidence amongst foreign representatives here; while his position and the ability to entertain on a magnificent scale, naturally tended to facilitate social relations.

All this, combined with the administrative experience that he had already acquired in the public service, gave him perhaps greater advantages than any other occupant of the post, and it may be truthfully asserted that it would be difficult to cite any man who established himself more rapidly and firmly in the opinion of all alike as an international statesman of the first order.

CHAPTER XV

IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9

(Page 346)

Never in recent times has any political defeat equalled the disaster which overwhelmed the Unionist party in 1906. No less than 513 Liberals, Labour members, and Irish Home Rulers were returned, as against a miserable remnant of 157 Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, which did not even include some of the most prominent men, since the electors—no respecters of persons—had rejected Mr. Balfour himself and several of his most eminent colleagues. It was the fashion at the time to attribute this unparalleled electoral defeat to the unscrupulous use made of the Big and Little Loaf and Chinese slavery cries, but it may be doubted whether the senile maunderings on the subject of the Hungry Forties or the spectacle of sandwich-men masquerading as Chinese slaves really exercised any substantial effect upon the polls. What counted for more than anything else was that, with the exception of one brief interlude, the Conservative party had been in office for twenty years, and that the country desired a change. But there were also plenty of contributory causes. The majority obtained in the so-called Khaki Election of 1900 was largely fictitious, inasmuch as the South African War was the sole question at issue, and played much the same part as the Zinovieff Letter[480] in 1924. Mr. Balfour's attitude towards Tariff Reform was incomprehensible to the general public, and, worst of all, he had outstayed his welcome. Most Cabinets, after having been for some

years in power, convince themselves that their continuance in office is indispensable to the interests of the country, and the failure of the Balfour Administration to realise their growing unpopularity is a striking instance of this delusion. Mr. Balfour had parted with some of his most distinguished colleagues; the party was split; by-election after by-election was being lost; the tide was evidently running strongly against him, and yet opportunities for resigning, provided by the Wyndham-MacDonnell episode and by a defeat in the House of Commons, were not taken advantage of. It is understood that Mr. Balfour himself was in favour of resigning in October 1905, but that he was overruled by his colleagues, some of whom perhaps regarded their inclusion in a future Cabinet as an improbable contingency. The Government therefore staggered on towards a catastrophe which prudence might have, to some extent, mitigated.

With the election of 1906, the fortune of the Unionist party reached its lowest level, and in its new role of Opposition—leaderless and attenuated—the party did not even possess the merit of homogeneity, since it was composed of Balfourites, Chamberlainites, and Unionist Free Fooders, and the differences between these groups were such that, as shown in the following letter from the Duke of Devonshire to Lord Lansdowne, dated January 28, 1906, it was apparently not considered advisable that they should dine together at the customary semi-official banquet before the opening of Parliament:

> I do not think that the result of the elections has in any way modified my opinion that the distinction between Free Traders and all shades of Tariff Reform should be as strongly marked as possible, and I am afraid, therefore, that we must dine apart. I do not understand Goschen's position. I wrote to him telling him that he would probably receive an invitation from both of us, and he will have to make his choice. St. Aldwyn I leave to you, but I think that Balfour of Burleigh, who I believe to be a strong Free Trader, should also have the option.

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[480] The Zinoviev letter was a forged document published and sensationalised by the British *Daily Mail* newspaper four days before the 1924 United Kingdom general election, which was held on 29 October. The letter purported to be a directive from Grigory Zinoviev, the head of the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow, to the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), ordering it to engage in seditious activities. The letter was widely taken to be authentic upon publication and for some time afterwards, but historians now agree it was a forgery. The letter perhaps aided the Conservative Party by hastening the ongoing collapse of the Liberal Party vote, which, in turn, produced a Conservative landslide. (Ed.)

The Parliamentary dinner invitations afforded a slight indication of the difficulties confronting the party as a result of the fiscal schism, and Mr. Chamberlain's persistence in keeping it in the foreground was naturally a source of much embarrassment to the official party leaders.

Of these leaders, it is correct to say that Lord Lansdowne was the only one who had emerged from the *débâcle* with an enhanced reputation, due not only to his success as Foreign Secretary—which was universally admitted—but also to the confidence which he had inspired as an exponent of common sense and moderation. It was he who was now responsible for the employment of the only effective weapon left in the Unionist armoury, *viz*. the huge and unwieldy majority in the House of Lords, and, as a prudent leader, his efforts were directed to preventing a wider breach in the party over the fiscal question.

> As soon as you come south [he wrote to Mr. Balfour on January 20, 1906] I should like to discuss the situation with you. We shall have to consider very carefully the line to be taken in both Houses; and if Joe is to understudy you, I am by no means confident that his line will be that which I should approve.
>
> I have received a summons to attend a Liberal-Unionist Association Council (Executive Committee) on Friday next. Joe [Mr. Chamberlain] will preside, and will no doubt produce a policy for our acceptance. I shall be surprised if it commends itself to your judgment or mine. From his speeches I infer that he will nail his colours to the mast, and invite us to set to work at once to convert the country to his fiscal proposals. This would, to my mind, be an egregious blunder. Many of your best supporters "stretched a point" when they went as far as you did, and will absolutely decline to go any further. If Joe insists on pushing his views, the schism will become deeper, and the Unionist party will degenerate into two feeble and mutually suspicious groups. Surely we may, so far as the near future— certainly so far as this session—is concerned, relegate the fiscal question to the background of our political life, and devote our attention to the many grave questions which members of

> H.M. Government have told us will be taken up, and some of which will no doubt find a place in the King's Speech. With regard to these questions, there will, I hope, be a fair approach to unanimity amongst us, and I shall be disappointed if, when they come up for discussion, some of the friends who have left us do not rally to your standard.
>
> It is not necessary that we should recant our opinions as to retaliation or colonial preference, but the country has pronounced decisively against them, and we must accept the verdict, whether the jury has been misdirected or not. With a majority of over 200 against us, we are —for the moment, at all events—relieved of the necessity of bringing forward a constructive policy of our own.
>
> I particularly dislike the idea of tarring the House of Lords with the brush of Protection.
>
> If I am *not* likely to see you before the L.U.A. meeting, please write me a few lines to say whether you agree or differ.
>
> Two or three words by telegram would suffice.
>
> I am delighted that you stand for the City.

The result of the Liberal Unionist meeting was from Lord Lansdowne's point of view unsatisfactory, and to judge from the correspondence which passed between him and Mr. Balfour at this period, the

differences between the two sections of the party were even more serious than had been suspected by the public.

A week later on February 4th, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Mr. Balfour:

> The situation as it developed itself at the Liberal Unionist meeting fills me with uneasiness. Is there any way out of it? Can we save the unity of the party upon terms which would not be disastrous to it and damaging to our own reputations? I wish I could answer these questions satisfactorily.
>
> You are, I understand, to discuss with Austen[481] the purely economical aspects of the problem. It is conceivable that by the exercise of much ingenuity and mutual forbearance you may discover a formula which will in appearance reconcile the two parties.
>
> Armed with this formula we should, I suppose, summon the party meeting, and announce that henceforth we should be at one; and when Parliament meets, Chamberlain would, as

> your deputy, explain in his own language the conditions upon which the compact has been signed. I gather that he and some supporters of his would move an amendment to the Address in terms which would clinch the bargain in the most unambiguous fashion.
>
> I reluctantly express my conviction that any "compromise" which the Chamberlainites are at all likely to accept would inevitably be regarded by the public and by your friends as a surrender on your part, and as an admission that we have been insincere when we have said and allowed our supporters to say that your policy was a self-contained one and that it differed from Chamberlain's.
>
> And the public will be right, for it is, to my mind, certain that Chamberlain will not budge an inch from his position. It is you who will have to move towards him and to explain how it has come to pass that while, a few weeks ago, you resigned on account of the differences which existed within the party, these differences have now been composed.
>
> I here are two conditions upon which Chamberlain will evidently insist:
>
> 1. The acceptance in principle of a scientific tariff, to be followed by an early promulgation of its details.
>
> 2 . A complete severance of relations with Unionists who refuse to accept the full Chamberlain programme.
>
> The first of these seems to me utterly unreasonable, especially having regard to our uncertainty as to the attitude of the colonies. Chamberlain, no doubt, wants to have a tariff for purely protective purposes, but we are deeply committed against such a policy.
>
> The second condition is, I venture to think, wholly inadmissible. At the Great George Street meeting, Chamberlain urged it with much bitterness. We are not only not to support staunch Unionists who are not whole-hoggers, but we are to repudiate them, and contradict them, when

[481] Sir Joseph Austen Chamberlain (1863–1937) was a British statesman, son of Joseph Chamberlain and older half-brother of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Commonly referred to as Austen Chamberlain to distinguish him from his father, he served as an M.P. for 45 years, as Chancellor of the Exchequer (twice) and was briefly Conservative Party leader before serving as Foreign Secretary. He died just ten weeks before his younger brother, Neville, became prime minister. (Ed.)

they suggest that they are our friends. Could any doctrine be more unpatriotic at a crisis such as that which confronts us?

It is founded upon the preposterous theory that we are concerned as a nation with one question and one only, and that at a moment when any of our institutions may be attacked, and before we know the quarter in which the attack may develop, we are to reject the assistance of our best soldiers because they differed from our military policy during the last campaign.

My own feeling is that almost any misfortune would be better for us than an alliance in these terms; I am, moreover, sure that if we made it, it would not last six months, unless we are prepared to follow Chamberlain still further into the quagmire. There would be renewed complaints, fresh recriminations, and the schism would declare itself in spite of all our sacrifices.

Only one word more, and I am not sure that I ought to write it. Your friends look upon you as the most valuable asset which the party possesses. The value of that asset will, to my mind be heavily depreciated if, in your desire to maintain unanimity, you allow it to be said that Chamberlain has at last overcome your scruples.

If he wrecks the party, or what remains of it, let him accept the responsibility and the consequences. He must lead in the H. of C., and one of his men in the H. of L. If he persists in his view and we in ours, I don't see how he can refuse.

When this happens, I believe, you will be surprised to find how many people there are who will rally to you.

Two days later Mr. Balfour replied:

I have never thought it possible either to retract or to modify the public statement of my views, which, in their essence, have undergone no alteration. And if Chamberlain insists upon this as the necessary price of unity, all hopes of unity must be abandoned.

The result, of course, will be that our party will occupy a position of which it is difficult to say whether it partakes more of the tragic or of the comic.

It was obvious that a party meeting had become inevitable, partly in order to satisfy Mr. Chamberlain and partly in order to present some ostensible semblance of Unity. Lord Lansdowne offered Lansdowne House for the purpose, although disliking the idea that "it should hereafter be associated with the memory of a discreditable and useless episode". With his methodical and cautious temperament, he was much concerned as to procedure, objected to a possible ordering about of the leaders by the rank and file, and pointed out that Mr. Chamberlain had declined to submit to the meeting the

decision as to whether he or Mr. Balfour was to lead the party.

The party meeting took place on February 15 at Lansdowne House, but much of the interest with which it had been awaited was dispelled by the publication on the previous day of letters between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain which were regarded as establishing complete harmony. The meeting was attended by peers, members of Parliament, and defeated candidates, and was presided over by Mr. Balfour himself, the Duke of Devonshire being also present. My recollection is that the audience appeared to be almost wholly in favour of Tariff Reform: that the proceedings were amicable, and that Mr. Balfour appeared somewhat in the character of a captive, it being the general belief that he had

yielded at the last moment in consequence of the pressure put upon him by numerous members of the party. Certainly the general impression was that Mr. Chamberlain had practically got his way. A private letter to Lord Lansdowne from a former colleague confirms this view:

> I am afraid it has been a capitulation. Joe was able to say that he had surrendered nothing, that A. J. B. agreed with him, and that the result was the official policy; and amid the resounding cheers of Tariff Reformers, A. J. B. said nothing. What you said is, I believe, perfectly true, *viz*. that an agreement between him and Joe would be, in any case, considered a surrender by the former; and to make the thing certain, Joe dotted the i's, and A. J. B. and X. mutually congratulated each other that they have introduced some words of a limiting character in the precious resolution which Joe drafted.

But at all events an ostensible agreement had been arrived at which was good enough for the general public, and the Opposition were now in a position to prepare for the impending fight with the new Government, everyone being able to foresee the inevitable collision between the enormous Liberal majority in the Commons and the equally enormous Unionist majority

in the Lords. A memorandum by Lord Lansdowne draws 1906 attention to the desirability of establishing closer cooperation between the Front Benches in both Houses; but it is a singular fact that such co-operation, though manifestly essential, is still lamentably lacking after the passage of twenty-three years.

> It seems to me very desirable [Lord Lansdowne wrote on April 5, 1906] that after the Easter holidays an endeavour should be made to set up some machinery for establishing closer contact between the Opposition Front Benches in the two Houses of Parliament.
>
> The Opposition is lamentably weak in the House of Commons, and enormously powerful in the House of Lords. It is essential that the two wings of the army should work together, and that neither House should take up a line of its own without carefully considering the effects which the adoption of such a line might have upon the other House. In dealing with such Bills as the Trade Disputes Bill or the Robartes Bill,[482] I cannot help thinking that the leaders in the House of Commons should have before them at the very outset a definite idea of the treatment which the question might receive in the event of either of those Bills coming before the House of Lords later in the session. Similarly, there are many important questions which will from time to time be debated in the House of Lords and which should be discussed with an eye to the effect of the discussion upon the temper of the House of Commons. At this moment no such machinery as I have suggested is in existence.
>
> Mr. Balfour might like to call a few of us together after the holidays in order to consider the procedure which might be adopted.
>
> 1 should myself be inclined to propose that he should institute a not too numerous Committee, including, say, four or five members of each House, who might meet in his room at the House of Commons, once a week at least, for an exchange of ideas. Such a Committee might appoint other Committees *ad hoc* to deal with any particular subject, and on these any prominent members of the Opposition might be invited to serve.

[482] Thomas Charles Reginald Agar-Robartes (known as Tommy) (1880–1915) was a British Liberal politician and the eldest son and heir of Thomas Agar-Robartes, 6th Viscount Clifden. He was elected a Member of Parliament for Bodmin in the 1906 general election, but lost his seat in June 1906 following a controversial election petition by the defeated candidate alleging illegal payments to potential voters. He was elected to the St Austell Division of Cornwall in a by-election in 1908 and held the seat until his death. (Ed.)

As a House of Lords' delegation I would suggest Lord Halsbury,[483] Lord Cawdor,[484] Lord Salisbury, and myself.

(Page 354) LORD LANSDOWNE [1906]

Mr. Balfour to Lord Lansdowne, April 13, 1906.

I have to-day emerged from my three weeks' hibernation, and have read your memo, on the advisability of a weekly conference.

There is not the least doubt that your idea must, in some shape or other, be carried out; but if we are to have, as you suggest, a Committee consisting of members selected from the Front Bench in both Houses, I think it would be very difficult to exclude any member of the late Cabinet who had a seat in the present Parliament, and, if that be so, what we should really have would be a shadow Cabinet once a week. This, however, is all a question of detail. The real point is, as you truly say, to secure that the party in the two Houses shall not work as two separate armies, but shall co-operate in a common plan of campaign. This is all-important. There has certainly never been a period in our history in which the House of Lords will be called upon to play a part at once so important, so delicate, and so difficult. From what I hear of the events of the three weeks in which I have been lying *perdu*,[485] I conjecture that the Government method of carrying out their legislative work will be this: They will bring in bills in a much more extreme form than the moderate members of their Cabinet probably approve: the moderate members will trust to the House of Lords cutting out or modifying the most outrageous provisions: the Left Wing of the Cabinet, on the other hand, while looking forward to the same result, will be consoled for the anticipated mutilation of their measures by the reflection that they will be gradually accumulating a case against the Upper House, and that they will be able to appeal at the next election for a mandate to modify its constitution.

This scheme is an ingenious one, and it will be our business to defeat it, as far as we can.

I do not think the House of Lords will be able to escape the duty of making serious modifications in important Government measures, but, if this be done with caution and tact, I do not believe that they will do themselves any harm. On the contrary, as the rejection of the Home Rule Bill undoubtedly strengthened their position, I think it quite possible that your House may come out of the ordeal strengthened rather than weakened by the inevitable difficulties of the next few years.

(Page 355) IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9 [1906]

It is, of course, impossible to foresee how each particular case is to be dealt with, but I incline to advise that we should fight all points of importance very stiffly in the Commons, and should make the House of Lords the theatre of compromise. It is evident that you can never fight for a position which we have surrendered; while, on the other hand, the fact that we have strenuously fought for the position and been severely beaten may afford adequate ground for your making a graceful concession to the Representative Chamber.

The above letter contains an admirable diagnosis of the situation and equally admirable advice; its only flaw is the quite unfounded expectation that the House of Lords might emerge from the ordeal not only unscathed but in greater strength. Mr. Balfour, it may be added, had by this time returned to the House

[483] Hardinge Stanley Giffard, 1st Earl of Halsbury (1823–1921) was a British barrister and Conservative politician. He served three times as Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, for a total of seventeen years. (Ed.)
[484] Hugh Frederick Vaughan Campbell of Cawdor, 4th Earl Cawdor of Castlemartin (1870-1914). (Ed.)
[485] Forgotten. (Ed.)

of Commons as member for the City, and had almost immediately recovered the unique position which he had held there during the previous Parliament.

The first clash between the two Houses arose over the Education Bill, which, after a stormy career, had passed through the House of Commons in July. It had been violently opposed both by the Unionists and by the Irish, and that it was less generally popular than was supposed was shown not only by demonstrations in the country but by largely diminished Government majorities in the division lobbies. When the Bill reached the House of Lords, the second reading was agreed to without a division, but Lord Lansdowne made the ominous remark that the peers "did not part with one jot or tittle of their right to deal with it at some future day"; and when the Committee stage was taken in the autumn session, it soon became clear that the Bill would be fundamentally altered. Early in November, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister, had intimated that the Government could not be expected to accept the Lords' amendments, and when the Bill returned to the House of Commons in December, the Cabinet decided to reject the amendments *en bloc* and

trust to the saving of the Bill itself by private negotiations. There were moderate men on each side who were willing to work for a compromise, and as the result of a private arrangement between Lord Lansdowne and Lord Crewe, three representatives of each of the two parties were chosen to meet in conference, and to these was added, at the suggestion of the King, the Archbishop of Canterbury.[486] A memorandum by Lord Lansdowne describes the proceedings at the meeting— where the attempted compromise finally broke down:

Note of meeting in Mr. Balfour's room at the House of Commons on the evening of December 18, 1906.

Present:—	Lord Crewe[487]	Mr. Balfour
	Mr. Asquith	Lord Lansdowne
	Mr. Birrell[488]	Lord Cawdor
	Archbishop of Canterbury.	

After a brief general conversation, it was agreed that the discussion should be confined to the really vital points, and it was agreed that the question of the teachers was the most prominent of these. We were invited to state our views in regard to it, and it was explained that what we demanded was full freedom for all teachers in all schools. We were told plainly that this demand was wholly inadmissible, and that all we could expect was that no teacher should be permitted to give religious instruction except with the consent of the local education authority; that, with or without such permission, no head teacher could be allowed to give such instruction; and that even assistant teachers could not in any circumstances be allowed to teach in schools except those with 250 pupils.

It was suggested, towards the close of the conversation, by Mr. Birrell, that some further concession, though only a partial one, might be looked for, even in the case of the head teachers, but only upon condition that all the other Government demands were complied with.

[486] In 1906 the Archbishop of Canterbury was Randall Thomas Davidson, 1st Baron Davidson of Lambeth, (1848–1930) who served from 1903 to 1928. He was the longest-serving holder of the office since the Reformation, and the first to retire from it. (Ed.)

[487] Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes, 1st Marquess of Crewe (1858–1945), known as The Honourable Robert Milnes from 1863 to 1885, The Lord Houghton from 1885 to 1895 and as The Earl of Crewe from 1895 to 1911, was a British Liberal politician, statesman and writer. (Ed.)

[488] Augustine Birrell (1850–1933) was a British Liberal Party politician, who was Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1907 to 1916. (Ed.)

It was also suggested by the Liberal representatives that the number of pupils might be somewhat less than 250.

Lord Crewe and his colleagues almost went so far as to discourage discussion on other points, admitting that the difficulty as to the teachers lay *in limine*,[489] and that unless it could be overcome

it was useless to approach other questions. They indicated to us plainly that, at this as well as on other points, they had advanced as far as they dared, and that they were, to use Lord Crewe's words, already on the edge of a precipice in consequence of the concessions which had been made.

The Archbishop of Canterbury threw out distinctly the idea that, so far as he was concerned, there were minor concessions which he was prepared to advocate in consideration of a surrender upon the question of the teachers. He was told in reply that the Cabinet would not look at such a transaction, even if it were within reach.

The general impression produced upon us was that Lord Crewe and his colleagues felt that they had already gone too far, and were inclined to draw in their horns rather than to advance further.

We said that all we could do was to report what had passed to our colleagues.

A prodigious outcry followed the loss of the Bill, but its sincerity may well be doubted. Doubtless there were moderate Liberals who were really anxious to see it pass and who were willing to make adequate concessions, but the bulk of the party and certainly all the Labour M.P.'s were only too pleased to welcome the rupture between the two Houses; and the statement of the Prime Minister when pronouncing the usual funeral oration, "that the resources of the House of Commons were not exhausted, and that a way would be found by which the will of the people would be made to prevail", was received with rapturous applause.

The biographer[490] of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman has explained that the Liberal wire-pullers were convinced that a reaction would follow the gigantic success of the general election, and that it was consequently desirable to rush as many measures as possible through Parliament without loss of time. In pursuance of this policy, an abnormal number of Bills were included in the King's Speech, most of which were sent up to the House of Lords as usual at the end of the session. From

the same source we learn that it had been calculated that the Lords would not venture to throw out more than one measure of real importance in a session. This calculation proved to be quite erroneous, for the Plural Voting Bill, a highly contentious measure which had long figured on the Liberal programme, was promptly rejected on the second reading, and the circumstances attending its defeat were rendered all the more exasperating as, owing to the carelessness of the Unionist Whips, no arrangement had been made for sustaining the debate, which consequently collapsed in an hour and a half. Under any circumstances, extreme annoyance would be only natural at seeing the cherished scheme of many years destroyed in an hour and a half of talk, and the indignation evoked by the loss of the Plural Voting Bill was probably far more genuine than that displayed over the Education Bill, for the former was a first-class vote-catching measure, while the general popularity of the latter was dubious.

[489] Literally "on the threshold".
[490] The *Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* by J. A. Spender. (LN)

Another measure, however, of a far more dangerous character—the Trade Disputes Bill—was allowed to pass. This Bill, as introduced by the Attorney-General, Sir Lawson Walton,[491] on behalf of the Government, contained certain safeguards which were objected to by the Labour members. Thereupon the Prime Minister, with remarkable cynicism, threw over his Attorney-General and adopted the Bill of the Labour party. It had naturally been anticipated that strong resistance would be encountered, but both parties were now obsessed with fear of the growing strength of organized Labour, and the Opposition in the Commons allowed the second reading to pass without a division.

When the Bill reached the Lords, in December, its pernicious character had become more apparent, and the fact that the Trade Unions had been placed in a privileged position outside the law was undeniable. There could be no question as to the relative importance

to the nation of the adoption of this proposal as compared with the method under which children were to receive religious instruction in elementary schools—a difficulty which had killed the Education Bill—and there were loud appeals to the House of Lords to come to the rescue. But there are obvious limits to the activity of an unrepresentative Chamber, and the final argument by which Lord Lansdowne justified his appeal in favour of allowing the Bill to pass is best expressed in his own words, delivered in the House of Lords on December 3, 1906:

> We are passing through a period when it is necessary for this House to move with very great caution. Conflicts, controversies, may be inevitable, but let us, at any rate so far as we are able, be sure that if we join issue we do so upon ground which is as favourable as possible to ourselves. In this case I believe the ground would be unfavourable to this House, and I believe the juncture is one when, even if we were to win for the moment, our victory would be fruitless in the end. I say then, that, so far as I am concerned, I shall not vote against the Bill. I regard it as conferring excessive privileges upon the Trade Unions, as conferring dangerous privileges on one class and on one class only - privileges in excess of what the most trusted exponents of their views have formerly asked for, privileges fraught with danger to the community and likely to embitter the industrial life of this country; but 1 hold also that it is useless for us, situated as we are, to oppose this measure.

It was not likely that the phrase which advocated fighting "on favourable ground" would escape notice, and for a long time it was denounced by his political opponents as an instance of cynical opportunism. But if on this occasion Unionist convictions were sacrificed to tactics, there was very little to choose between the two parties, for the Prime Minister had cynically thrown over his own Attorney-General and many Liberal members had broken their pledges in order to placate the Labour party.

The session of 1906 had ended in strife and in the

dissatisfaction of both parties, the Liberals feeling that their time had been largely wasted, the Unionists apprehensive as to the future. As if by common consent, the session of 1907 opened in a gloomy but less contentious atmosphere, and an opportunity was offered to the peers of setting their House in order.

The failure of the Unionist party to recognise the necessity of reforming the House of Lords when they had the opportunity during their ten years' period of office from 1895 to 1905 is one of the most curious oversights in party tactics imaginable. The House of Lords positively invited attack. Overgrown, unrepresentative, and unwieldy, when the Unionists were in office it was expected merely to act as a kind of registry office, and to pass without amendment, and occasionally without discussion, any

[491] Sir John Lawson Walton (1852–1908) was a British barrister and Liberal politician. He became President of the Wesleyan Conference for Great Britain in 1887. (Ed.)

measure sent up to it at the last moment. When, however, a Liberal Government was in power, it was expected to come to the rescue of a discomfited Opposition. Although the House of Lords has occasionally shown itself to be a more correct interpreter of public feeling than the House of Commons, its gigantic and permanent Conservative majority deprived it of any appearance of impartiality, and, unfortunately, it had not shown any sign of independence by throwing out any Conservative measure. The danger of the situation had become fully apparent to the more clear-sighted and energetic members of the Conservative party, and instigated by some of these, and more especially by Mr. Maxse, I introduced a Reform Bill early in the session. The obvious person to discharge this duty was, in virtue of his past efforts in that direction, Lord Rosebery; but he had had quite enough of the thankless task, and wrote that he heartily handed over to me "all copyright in the Reform of the House of Lords". The proposal, however, found little favour in the eyes of the official Opposition, and various efforts were made privately to induce me to withdraw the Bill, chiefly on the familiar ground

at it was "inopportune". It was certainly inopportune in the sense that it had been far too long delayed, but it was evidently less inopportune in 1907 than in 1910, when a similar attempt met with failure. But in spite of official discouragement, it was clear that there was a strong feeling that something should be done. The Conservative press was almost unanimous in favour of action: so were many of the party organisations, and it was known that there were important personages in the House of Lords itself who shared these views. Consequently, the second reading of the Bill was moved early in May, and as the subject had aroused exceptional interest, the House was unusually crowded. In fact, nearly one-half of the members must have been present—a very improbable occurrence at the present time.

The task of pointing out its imperfections to any Assembly is an ungrateful one, and there were probably many who resented my action as an impertinence; but whatever defects the House of Lords may possess, it is always polite, and the reception of the Bill was more favourable than might have been anticipated. There was no pretence of originality about this measure, which merely embodied the various proposals made from time to time in the past for a reduction in numbers and better representation of minorities, and it was supported in the debate by Lord Rosebery, the Duke of Devonshire, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and even by so strong a Conservative as the late Duke of Northumberland.[492] The only direct opposition proceeded from Lord Halsbury, who invariably objected in principle to all change. The attitude adopted by the Liberal peers, as expounded by Lord Crewe, was that they were only concerned with the question of the relations between the two Chambers, and that as the constitution of the House of Lords was a matter of indifference to them, they would vote against the Bill. He might have added that an unreformed House of Lords suited the Liberal party admirably.

It could always be utilized as a reward for deserving supporters; as a refuge for decayed Ministers; as a convenient safeguard for the purpose of reassuring those moderate men who were afraid of moving too fast; and finally, upon occasion, as a horrible object-lesson to the electorate. But the really decisive factor in the reception of the Bill was the attitude of Lord Lansdowne, who had by this time so completely won the confidence of the Conservative peers that they were prepared to subordinate their own views to his judgment. Lord Lansdowne had never been an enthusiast for House of Lords Reform, and was of much too cautious a temperament to commit himself to any cut-and-dried programme. He, therefore, put up Lord Cawdor to move an amendment of a somewhat dilatory character to refer the Bill, together with other proposals of the same nature which had been made from time to time, to a Select Committee. When his own turn came to speak, he devoted himself chiefly to criticizing the futile attitude of the Government, and admitted the obvious weaknesses of the constitution of the House which had been pointed out by supporters of the Bill. He even went so far as to welcome the introduction of

[492] Henry George Percy, 7th Duke of Northumberland (1846–1918), styled Lord Warkworth between 1865 and 1867 and Earl Percy between 1867 and 1899, was a British Conservative politician. He served as Treasurer of the Household under Benjamin Disraeli between 1874 and 1875. (Ed.)

the subject, and concluded by urging the House to agree to a Committee which should consider the question of Reform in all its aspects. This appeal naturally turned the scale; many who probably were only anxious to do nothing at all, felt themselves safe in voting for a Committee, and Lord Halsbury and Lord Crewe were defeated, after a two days' debate, by 198 to 46.

The appointment of this Committee marked the most decisive advance hitherto made in the history of House of Lords Reform, and expectations that practical results would follow were raised by Lord Rosebery's consent to act as Chairman. The Committee was rigidly boycotted by the Government, but, nevertheless, some independent Liberals, amongst whom were Lord Courtney[493]

(Page 363) IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9 [1907]

and the ex-Speaker, Lord Selby,[494] consented to serve on it, as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury. It included the most distinguished Opposition peers, such as Lord Lansdowne, Lord Rosebery, Lord Curzon, Lord St. Aldwyn,[495] and Lord Midleton, and altogether the press did not employ much exaggeration in describing it as the strongest Committee of modern times.

It must be admitted, however, that Lord Rosebery was less successful as a Chairman than might have been anticipated, for he allowed the members to stray from the point under discussion, frequently made discursive if entertaining speeches himself, and conveyed the impression that he was physically unequal to the moderate strain of work involved. He was also liable to fits of discouragement; I remember receiving from him one day a telegram announcing that in consequence of some minor difference of opinion he intended to resign from the Committee and it was only with difficulty that he was induced to continue.

This Committee sat for a year, and its deliberations revealed considerable diversities of opinion as to how a new House of Lords should be constituted. An interesting letter from Mr. Balfour to Lord Lansdowne, dated February 22, 1908, dealing with the hereditary principle, suggests a simple solution which is in reality far more practical than most of the elaborate schemes which have been put forward from time to time.

> The justification of the House of Lords [he wrote] is partly historical, partly practical. It is an original portion of the British Constitution and it works well. It is only bad political theory which asks for anything more. But if the House of Lords through their Committee admit that hereditary right is an insufficient qualification for the exercise of legislative functions, they inevitably raise the question why it is a qualification at all.
>
> I have always been in favour of life peers. The principle is already admitted and it has historical justification.
>
> Would not your purpose be adequately served by saying that

(Page 364) LORD LANSDOWNE [1907]

> the number of life peers should be very largely increased, but that as that reform cannot be carried out without making the House of unwieldy size, the number of hereditary peers permitted to take part in the proceedings must be diminished, and that the most convenient way of effecting this diminution would be to enable the peers themselves to elect the requisite

[493] Leonard Henry Courtney, 1st Baron Courtney of Penwith PC (1832–1918) was a radical British politician, and an academic, who became famous as an advocate of proportional representation in Parliament and acting as an opponent of imperialism and militarism. (Ed.)
[494] William Court Gully, 1st Viscount Selby (1835–1909) was a British lawyer and Liberal politician. He served as Speaker of the House of Commons between 1895 and 1905, for which service he as ennobled. (Ed.)
[495] Formerly Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, (*See footnote on page 136*. Ed.)

number from among their own body? I believe that in practice this would give you almost the same House of Lords that you would get by more elaborate methods of selection. It would almost certainly exclude the idlest and most incompetent and the least reputable, but it would avoid all the fancy franchises, and the fatal admission that the ancient ground of hereditary qualification was insufficient to qualify for the Upper House. If it is not a sufficient qualification it is no qualification at all, and your reform based upon the hybrid principle would, in my opinion, only be a halfway-house to its abolition.

It may seem paradoxical to say that the so-called "accident of birth" is more easily defended on what some people would call its naked absurdity than birth plus acknowledged services. Nevertheless, I think it the fact; and if it be desirable to find a place for acknowledged service in the Second Chamber, I would do it by the addition of life peers, not by any inquiry into the personal claims of hereditary peers.

The Committee, in its Report, which was published in December 1908, practically adopted all the proposals in the Bill of 1907, notably those relating to reduction and limitation of the hereditary principle. The Report met with little adverse criticism, since it was felt that it was the result of mature deliberation by a body of peers who might fairly be described as representing the general opinion of the House; and sanguine people believed that a stage had been reached at which serious action had become possible. This anticipation, however, proved to be quite unfounded: all efforts—even to discuss the Report—were successfully obstructed, on the old plea of inopportunity; and nothing more was heard of Reform until 1910, when, under the shadow of the Parliament Bill, the so-called Rosebery Resolutions were hurried through the House in what must have appeared

(Page 365) IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9 [1907]

to the public either in the light of a panic or of a 1907 death-bed repentance.

It has been explained that the session of 1907 was comparatively peaceful. The most important event was the adoption of Mr. Haldane's new scheme of Army Reform. Mr. Haldane's much-advertised scheme had received very little support from his own party, who were only interested in the reduction of military expenditure, and when it reached the Lords it was subjected to a double attack—in the first place, on technical grounds from those who were opposed to change, and, secondly, from those who contended that a "Nation in Arms" (the Haldane designation of the Territorial Force) could not be created without compulsion. The latter criticism proved subsequently to be correct: for the Territorial Force before the War never reached a proportion of more than $1/150^{th}$ of the entire population; but Lord Lansdowne declined to associate himself with these attacks, being of the opinion that the scheme should be given a fair trial. Other Government measures were dealt with in a less amicable fashion, and before the end of the year Lord Lansdowne undertook a campaign in Scotland and the North of England with the object of dealing with the questions of the House of Lords, Fiscal Reform, Ireland, and Foreign Policy. Amongst his activities at this period should be noted the fact that he was instrumental in securing the return to Parliamentary life of Lord Curzon, who had been out of favour with both political parties since his return from India. Now, thanks to this intervention, he entered the House of Lords as a Representative Irish Peer, greatly to the general advantage. It should be added that Lord Lansdowne was largely responsible also for the selection of Lord Curzon as Chancellor of Oxford University.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman died in the spring of 1908, and his successor, Mr, Asquith, took the opportunity

to make various changes in the Cabinet—of which the most important was the appointment of Mr. Lloyd George[496] as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Morley[497] became a peer; Lord Ripon retired from the leadership in the Lords, and this retirement afforded a pleasing instance of friendly personal relations between political opponents. Lord Ripon had written to Lord Lansdowne on April 16, 1908, to announce his resignation, and received the following reply:

> I am touched by your thought of writing to me and, above all, by your kind words as to our political relations. We shall, all of us, regret that you are no longer to lead us, and recognise the spirit in which your duties as leader were always discharged. We have the big battalions in our House, you have them behind you in the Commons, and if you are good enough to commend the manner in which our forces have been handled, we may be permitted to recall the fact that your superior strength elsewhere never led you to deal with us otherwise than fairly and considerately.
>
> 1 am glad you remain on the front bench—I hope, to set us for many years an example of sound and dignified Parliamentary methods.[498]

Lord Ripon's place was taken by Lord Crewe, who discharged a difficult and ungrateful task with much tactful ability and patience.

The new Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, was not regarded with particular favour either by the extremists of his own party or by the Home Rulers, but there was no reason to anticipate a change of policy, and Lord Lansdowne expressed the sentiments of the Unionists when he pointed out, at a meeting on April 8, that the Government were in a less favourable position than in 1906: that free discussion had been suppressed in Parliament; that the state of Ireland was thoroughly unsatisfactory; and that their policy with regard to such questions as education, licensing, the land, and the House of Lords

was marked more by vindictiveness than by any other quality.

Both parties were at this period experiencing difficulties. The increasing activities of the Female Suffragists were causing the Government serious inconvenience, while the dissensions over fiscal reform showed no signs of abatement, and Lord Lansdowne's correspondence contains numerous letters from indignant Unionist Free Traders, headed by Lord Cromer, complaining of their treatment at the hands of Tariff Reformers. The latter claimed the credit for such successes as had been obtained at by-elections, and it was difficult to dispute their contention.

The Ministerial programme for the year included an Old Age Pension Bill, an Eight Hours (Coal Mines) Bill, two Scottish Land Bills (which had been lost in the previous session), and various other measures; but the *pièce de résistance* was a Licensing Bill, which was obviously intended as a trial of strength between the two Houses. Before this Bill reached the House of Lords in the late autumn, that Assembly

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[496] David Lloyd George, 1st Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor (1863–1945) was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1922. A Liberal Party politician from Wales, he was known for being the Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1908-1915, Minister for Munitions from 1915 to July 1916, Secretary of State for War from July to December 1916 then Prime Minister. He led the United Kingdom during the latter phases of First World War and the Paris Peace Conference. (Ed.)

[497] John Morley, 1st Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1838–1923), was a British Liberal statesman and writer. He was editor of the newly Liberal-leaning *Pall Mall Gazette* from 1880 to 1883, and was elected a Member of Parliament (MP) for the Liberal Party in 1883. He was Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1886 and between 1892 and 1895; Secretary of State for India between 1905 and 1910 and again in 1911; and Lord President of the Council between 1910 and 1914. He resigned in opposition to the First World War. (Ed.)

[498] *Life of Lord Ripon*, by Lucien Wolf. (LN)

embarked upon the discussion of many topics, in all of which Lord Lansdowne as leader of the Opposition was forced to take a part; and perhaps his intervention in connection with the celebrated so-called private letter of the Kaiser to Lord Tweedmouth[499] on the subject of the British Navy will be best remembered, as he had happily characterised the effusion as "private only in the sense that the Royal Academy private view is private", and the *mot juste*[500] covered the whole incident with well-deserved ridicule.

Whatever may have been the merits of the Licensing Bill, its vindictiveness was undeniable, and some of its provisions were denounced as confiscatory. Before it reached the House of Lords, confident statements had already been made that its rejection was certain, and the brewing interest was threatening the withdrawal of its

(Page 368) LORD LANSDOWNE [1908]

support if the Bill were allowed to pass; but on the other hand there was a strong movement in favour of compromise, and long before the Bill left the Commons the Government seem to have made use of the King in this connection.

LORD LANSDOWNE
Memorandum , October 12, 1908.

> The King desired me to call upon him to-day, and after some conversation with regard to the situation in the Balkan Peninsula, told me that he wished to say a few words to me in reference to the treatment of the Licensing Bill in the House of Lords.
>
> His Majesty thought it most desirable that the question should be settled, and he feared that if the attitude of the peers was such as to suggest the idea that they were obstructing an attempt to deal with the evils of intemperance, the House of Lords would suffer seriously in popularity. He had reason to know that his Ministers were ready to make considerable concessions to the Opposition, notably in regard to the time limit, which they would, he thought, extend to 20 or 21 years, if pressed to do so. It seemed to him that this would give the House of Lords an opportunity of amending the Bill, which would be much better than rejecting it on the second reading. The King added that the Prime Minister was aware that I was to have an interview with His Majesty, and was entirely in favour of it,
>
> I told the King that, in the first place, he must not suppose that there was any truth in the statements, which had been constantly repeated in the press, to the effect that the leaders in the House of Lords had already come together and decided as to the course which they would take when the Bill came up from the House of Commons. The point had not even been discussed during the summer session, and since then I had had no opportunity of conferring either with the front bench peers or with Mr. Balfour and those who act with him in the House of Commons. It seemed to me impossible for me to decide what advice I should give to the House until we knew how the Bill fared in the House of Commons. I agreed with His Majesty in thinking that, for the sake of the House of Lords, it was not desirable that the peers and the brewers should be represented as in too close

(Page 369) IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9 [1908]

> nor should I be sorry to see the question, which was an extremely troublesome one, disposed of for a time. The Bill as it stood was, however, intolerably unjust. The Prime Minister had

[499] This would be Edward Marjoribanks, 2nd Baron Tweedmouth, (1849–1909), a British Liberal Party statesman, who sat in the House of Commons from 1880 until 1894 when he inherited his peerage and then sat in the House of Lords. He served in various capacities in the Liberal governments of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Ed.)
[500] Apt description. (Ed.)

announced on Saturday last that he was prepared to deal equitably with the trade. No one could, however, pretend that a fourteen years' time limit supplied an equitable compensation; nor, to the best of my belief, would a twenty-one years' limit be sufficient, particularly if at its expiration the surviving licence-holders were made to pay the full competitive value of their licences. The critics of the Bill had again and again challenged Ministers to give them the data upon which the fourteen years' time limit had been arrived at; but the challenge had, to the best of my belief, not been accepted.

I told the King that I had made no attempt to canvass the peers one way or another, but I was aware that there was a considerable cleavage of opinion amongst them, some being strongly in favour of the rejection of the Bill at the outset, whilst others leaned towards amendment. I said that it appeared to me important that we should deal with the Bill in a manner which could not be misunderstood, and that there was some danger of such a misunderstanding if we accepted the principle of the Bill and involved ourselves in a controversy over matters of detail.

We had, moreover, had, in the case of the Old Age Pensions Bill, a bitter experience of the manner in which His Majesty s Government treated amendments inserted by the House of Lords.

It should be explained that the Lords' amendments to the Old Age Pensions Bill had been ruled to be "privileged" and therefore inadmissible, "a ruling to which", as Lord Ullswater records in his book,[501] "the Lords bowed, but only under protest".

The intervention of the King led to no result. Lord Lansdowne was absolutely correct in his statement that the Opposition had not decided upon their action, and the sense of the party was not taken until the eve of the second reading; but there were plain indications as to the fate of the Bill, although some of the most respected peers were against rejection. Amongst them was Lord

(Page 370) LORD LANSDOWNE [1908]

Milner—one of the most upright of public men—who wrote to Lord Lansdowne on November 22, 1908:

Personally, I am rather in favour of the Bill. I believe that on the whole it will make for temperance.

But I admit that my strongest feeling in the matter is a great fear that the out-and-out rejection of the Bill should give a great check to the tide which is steadily setting against the Government.

Though I am a very poor party man, I am as keen as anyone can be to see Balfour and you back in office, as you will be in a year or two, unless we go out of our way to give these people a fresh lease of life.

Very likely the Bill will be lost in any case. It is evident that it will have to be largely amended in order to prevent injustice. But I think it will make a great difference to the feelings of many men, who are in general sympathy with our side and are yet strong temperance men, if they can salve their consciences by attributing its failure to the intractability or bad management of the Government, and not to a wholly unsympathetic attitude on the part of the Lords. We may protest as much as we like that we care as much about temperance as the other side. But if we throw out a measure on second reading which, with all its defects, has been welcomed by all

[501] *A Speaker's Commentaries* by Viscount Ullswater. (LN). James William Lowther, ennobled in 1921 as the 1st Viscount Ullswater (1855–1949), a British Conservative politician. He was Speaker of the House of Commons between 1905 and 1921. He was the longest-serving Speaker of the 20th century. (Ed.)

the strong temperance people who are not also political partisans, I do not think these protestations, perfectly sincere though they may be, will carry much conviction.

The party meeting took place at Lansdowne House on November 24th and was largely attended. By an overwhelming majority it was decided to reject the Bill, and the dissentients did not appear to number more than ten, amongst whom were Lord St. Aldwyn, Lord Cromer, Lord Milner, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and Lord Lytton.[502] So far as I can recollect, the argument that chiefly influenced the majority was that any important amendments would be treated by the Commons as a breach of privilege, and the conviction that an early collision between the two Houses had now become inevitable.

The second reading debate took place on the following day, but, in view of the Lansdowne House meeting, its result was a foregone conclusion, and the Bill was lost by 272 to 96—Lord Lansdowne explaining that, in view of the Government attitude towards amendments, straightforward rejection was the best course to adopt. This action was bitterly resented in many quarters and formed the subject of many expostulations on behalf of the Liberal party; but naturally the more extreme members found comfort in the fact that a substantial contribution had been made towards the process of "filling up the cup". It should be added that another Education Bill had failed to pass.

The Government, however, were not preoccupied solely with the question of fastening a quarrel upon the House of Lords, for the Continental situation in the autumn of 1908 contained the possibility of a European war owing to the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence, and on November 6, Mr. Balfour wrote to Lord Lansdowne a letter which possesses a double interest, as it shows that the Asquith Cabinet, although strenuously denying it in public, were fully aware of the German danger, and that in 1908 the Unionist leaders were prepared to give exactly the same patriotic assurance of support as they tendered in 1914.

Mr. Balfour to Lord Lansdowne. Nov. 6, 1908.

Asquith asked me to speak to him last night after the House rose. He was evidently extremely perturbed about the European situation, which, in his view, was the gravest of which we have had any experience since 1870.

He said that, incredible as it might seem, the Government could form no theory of the German policy which fitted all the known facts, except that they wanted war, and war at the present time clearly means much more than it did in 1870, as it would

certainly involve Russia, Austria, and the Near East—to say nothing of ourselves. I observed that the almost incredible frivolity of the excuse for hostilities which the Germans had devised would shock the civilised world beyond expression, and that it was difficult to see what Germany expected to gain by a war in which she must lose so much morally and was by no means certain to gain anything materially. Asquith's only answer to this objection was that the internal condition of Germany was so unsatisfactory that they might be driven to the wildest adventures in order to divert national sentiment into a new channel. I said that, quite apart from the *entente*, we should, as I understood it, be involved under treaty obligations if Germany violated Belgian territory. Asquith assented, and said that (as we all know) the Franco-German frontier is now so strong that the temptation to invade Belgium might prove irresistible.

[502] Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer-Lytton, 2nd Earl of Lytton (1876–1947), styled Viscount Knebworth from 1880 to 1891, was a British politician and colonial administrator. He served as Governor of Bengal between 1922 and 1927 and was briefly Acting Viceroy of India in 1926. His father, Edward Robert Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, the 1st Earl was Viceroy of India between 1876 and 1880. He died in 1891. (Ed.)

> He gave me no information, and, I believe, had no information which is not in the newspapers, but I was very much struck by the pessimistic tone in which he spoke of the position.
>
> I told him he might count upon the Opposition in case of national difficulty—an attitude which, I am confident, you and all my colleagues will approve.

This confidence was amply justified, for Lord Lansdowne, in reply, observed:

> I am glad you said what you did to Asquith as to our attitude. It is almost inconceivable that the Germans should provoke a European war, but the Emperor is becoming more irresponsible with every year that passes.

The European crisis did not, however, reach its full intensity until the spring of 1909, and it was then followed by the Kaiser's famous "Shining Armour" oration. It is curious that we are only just beginning to realize the similarity of the situation in 1909 as compared with that of 1914. No reasonable person can feel any doubt that Germany had for many years been preparing for a war of aggression, and here in 1914 the belief was universal that Austria was merely made use of as a cat's paw, whereas in reality it was the headstrong and inept policy of that Power which brought about a crisis of which the military party in Germany took full advantage

(Page 373) IN OPPOSITION, 1906-9 [1909]

The policy of Bismarck had always been to keep Austria in the position of a subordinate, while maintaining friendly relations, as far as possible, with both Russia and England. But by 1909 the Kaiser and his Ministers had alienated all the Great Powers with the exception of Austria, and were therefore forced to follow the Austrian lead whether they approved of it or not, as otherwise they would have been left without a friend in Europe. Consequently Germany was forced to stand by her ally in 1909, and the only difference between the crisis of 1909 and that of 1914 was that in the former case Russia capitulated and that in 1914 she resolved to fight. Had, therefore, the Russian decision been reversed in 1909, the World War would have begun five years earlier.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET

(Page 374)

Although the year 1909 was not wanting in important events, attention in this country was almost exclusively fixed upon Mr. Lloyd George's Budget, it being realised on all sides that the conflict between the two Houses was now approaching the final stages.

After the lapse of over twenty years and in view of the present scale of national expenditure, it is somewhat difficult now to realize the intense feelings evoked by this measure, and the prolonged and embittered controversy between its supporters and opponents seems almost to relate to another world. To put it quite briefly, the Chancellor of the Exchequer required sixteen millions to provide mainly for the requirements of old age pensions and of the navy, and he proposed to find the money by additional taxation upon landowners, Income Tax-payers, and the liquor trade. These proposals were denounced by opponents as unsound financially, calculated to impair British credit and to increase unemployment, vindictive, and Socialistic; but they commended themselves strongly to those who saw in them an opportunity for paying off old scores and of settling with the House of Lords once and for all. In fact, from the party point of view the constitutional problem was of much greater interest than the Budget itself. In consequence of the huge Government majority, nothing could prevent the Budget passing through the House of Commons, but the question in the mind of

(Page 375) THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET [1909]

everyone was whether the Lords would fight upon it or not.

The Budget had been introduced on May 1st, and the House of Commons sat continuously discussing its provisions throughout the summer. It had been attacked with much skill and pertinacity by the Opposition, but its passage was only a question of time, and in the early autumn endeavours were made to ascertain opinions as to what action should be taken when it reached the Lords. One difficulty which confronted the Unionist leaders at this period was the schism between the Tariff Reformers and the Unionist Free Traders, who kept up their feud just as, five centuries earlier, the inhabitants of Constantinople had pursued their theological squabbles whilst the Turks were battering down the walls of their city. The number of Unionist free Traders was insignificant, but amongst them were some of the most capable members of the party, and their views were usually put forward with much vigour by Lord Cromer, who, for once in a way, seemed to have temporarily lost his sense of proportion. He now wanted to obtain a definite and authoritative statement that the Unionist leaders dissociated themselves from the "extreme" Tariff Reformers. This assurance Mr. Balfour declined to give, arguing that, at a time when everyone was working himself to death in order to smooth down difficulties, a public declaration of the kind demanded would do more harm than good. The attitude, therefore, of the Unionist Free Traders remained uncertain.

Another uncertain factor was the attitude of Lord Rosebery, who was commonly believed to exercise vast influence in the country, and who was due to make a speech at Glasgow on September 10th, which was awaited with much interest. Lord Lansdowne begged him to say nothing which could be utilized against the Lords should they decide upon rejection; but Lord Rosebery was hampered to some extent by opinions

(Page 376) LORD LANSDOWNE [1909]

which he had expressed in 1894, and although he denounced the Budget forcibly and dilated on the dangers of Socialism, he abstained from recommending any definite line of action, and the one clear fact that emerged was that he had cut himself off from the Liberal party.

From another eminent man there came an opinion which could not be disregarded. Lord St. Aldwyn was not only one of the ablest, but also one of the most experienced amongst the Unionist leaders, and, with the possible exception of Mr. Balfour, there was no one better qualified to estimate the probable effect of rejection.

> As to my views [he wrote to Lord Lansdowne, September 8, 1909], I have not altered them, except that it occurs to me that if the Licensing Clauses came to us in such a form as to be really unfair and unpopular, we might avoid the entire rejection of the Budget, and the charge of only caring for our own interests as landowners, by cutting both them and the Land Tax Clauses out and passing the rest of the Bill. It would throw the onus of the loss of the Budget on the Commons, and I think they would probably avoid that loss and save their own dignity by sending up a new Bill without the obnoxious clauses, which, of course, we should pass; while the cup of our iniquity might be declared full, an "Abolition of Lords' Veto" Bill form the first business of next session, and a dissolution follow—as soon as may be convenient to the Government—on our rejection of it.
>
> If we are to do anything, this seems to me a reasonable course; but I own that my House of Commons feeling on finance is against it, and I think both the right and the wise course is to pass the Budget as it comes to us.

Letters in a similar sense came from various peers, including Lord James of Hereford, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Cromer, Lord Lytton, and from so strong a party man as the late Lord Onslow.[503] The letter from Lord Lytton shows so much political prescience on the part of a young man of thirty-two that it is worthy of quotation.

(Page 377) THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET [1909]

Lord Lytton to Lord Lansdowne. Oct. 8, 1909.

> I have the strongest objection to the Budget and am most anxious to prevent the principles of taxation which are embodied in it from becoming permanently established, but for that very reason I hope that the Lords will not reject it. I am convinced that the Budget is as popular in theory to-day as it will prove unpopular in practice to-morrow. The electors are being asked to believe, and for the moment appear to have fallen under the delusion, that the Government desire to tax the luxuries and superfluities of the rich, whereas the Opposition propose to tax the necessaries of life of the poor—an entirely false antithesis, of course.
>
> This is the theory which for the time being has restored the popularity of the Government, hitherto so rapidly diminishing. The unwise utterances of some of the wealthy opponents of the Budget about their inability to continue their subscriptions to party objects have still further inflamed the class prejudice created by the Government.
>
> In these circumstances, a general election immediately following the rejection of the Budget would, beyond all doubt, be disastrous to the fortunes of the Unionist party. The Government would be returned with a sufficient majority to re-enact the Budget and to remain in office another five years. This would be bad enough, but it would be still worse if they obtained—as they must inevitably try to obtain—power to curtail the veto of the House of Lords. Their opportunity for mischief would then be unlimited.

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[503] William Hillier Onslow, 4th Earl of Onslow (1853–1911) was a British Conservative politician. He was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies between 1887 and 1888 (in which post he was vice president of the first Colonial Conference in April 1887) and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade between 1888 and 1889. He was also Governor of New Zealand between 1889 and 1892. He had succeeded his great uncle to the Earldom in 1870 at the age of 17.(Ed.)

This is the result which I fear from the rejection of the Budget.

If, on the other hand, the Budget were allowed to pass, it's burdens would soon prove odious in practice, and the comforting theory on which it is now founded would be exploded. By the end of another year the Government would have to go to the country and would, I believe, suffer defeat. A Unionist Government would then be in a position to amend the Budget, strengthen the House of Lords against further attack, and save the country from the Socialism and class warfare which are being fostered to-day.

(Page 378) LORD LANSDOWNE [1909]

Lord Lansdowne, however, was of a different opinion, and his reply to a somewhat similar letter from Lord Balfour of Burleigh is given in full, because it epitomizes in a convenient form the arguments for rejection.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Balfour of Burleigh. Bowood, Oct. 2, 1909.

The situation is, as you say, extraordinarily difficult. We are, I am sure, in entire agreement as to the iniquity both of the Government proposals and the methods which they have adopted. I also agree with you in believing that the case is not one for elaborate arguments with regard to so-called constitutional precedents, and that our line of action must be determined on broad grounds of policy. I was much attracted at first with the idea of endeavouring to amend the Bill, but I found little support for this except amongst rather crotchety people, and even they have, I think, come to the conclusion that amendment is out of the question. There are two reasons against it, either of which would, in my opinion, be sufficient. If the Lords were to deal only with Land and Licensing, they would be accused of deserting their fellow-sufferers and thinking of their own skins only. Apart from this, we should get into controversies upon the technical right of the Lords to amend Money Bills and the right of the Commons to "tack" extraneous matter on to the Finance Bill. We should lose ourselves in unprofitable discussions, and the real issue would be obscured. I am therefore clear that it is a case of rejection or acceptance. Upon the whole, although, as you truly say, no decision can be regarded as final until the Bill actually comes up to the Lords, I am in favour of rejection, upon the broad ground that the Finance Bill is a new departure of the most dangerous kind, to which the House of Lords has no right to assent until it is sure that H.M.G. have the support of the country. This, so far as I am able to make out, is the feeling of most of our friends, although there are no doubt some dissentients. Those who think as I do, do not conceal from themselves that the Budget is probably not unpopular with the working classes, or, at any rate, with a considerable section of those classes. I do not like the reports from Scotland; from other parts of the country they are less disquieting. We must, I think, assume that, if there is a general election, we may be beaten at the polls; but

(Page 379) THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET [1909]

to my mind the consequences of acquiescing in a measure which we know to be iniquitous, and have denounced as such, would be more deplorable than the consequences of a defeat.

I am assured, on what I believe to be good authority, that, even if we let the Budget go through, Government will appeal to the country early in the year. This seems likely, for the popularity of the Budget will not increase as time goes on, and H.M.G. would appeal with all the trumps in their hand after what would be regarded as an ignominious capitulation on the part of the Opposition. To my mind, in such an event, the position of the House of Lords would have been gravely and permanently impaired. We could never in future, however outrageous the financial policy of a Radical Government might be, claim the right to stand in its way.

I think it, then, quite conceivable that we shall be defeated, but I take it as certain that the Radical majority would be greatly decreased. This would be to some extent a justification of our conduct, and we should be far stronger if we were no longer a mere handful in the House of Commons. If the majority either way is to be a *small* one, it would, I think, be better for us to be in a large minority than in a small majority.

Your fear is that such a defeat would involve the virtual destruction of the H. of L. as a Second Chamber. I am much less afraid than you are of this result. The Radicals will no doubt do their best to confuse the issue and to make out that a verdict in favour of the Finance Bill carries with it a *carte blanche*[504] to deal with the H. of L. But the destruction or reform of the House of Lords is not to be accomplished in a few weeks or months; and when the heat and fury of the general election has spent itself, the country will, I believe, be quite able to discriminate between the two issues—and I do not believe the country desires a Single Chamber system. By the time the H. of L. issue is ripe for treatment, the popularity of the Budget will, unless I am mistaken, have greatly diminished. We shall not, in my opinion, get through the present crisis without two general elections.

These are my views, but I can well understand the position of those who think otherwise.

It will not have escaped notice that the letters urging the acceptance of the Budget emanated mainly from Free Trade peers, and they were few in number when compared with the communications received from

Tariff Reformers, who unanimously took the opposite view. At the time when the above correspondence was proceeding, Lord Cawdor, who was staying at Balmoral, prepared for the information of the King a memorandum embodying his own views in which he pronounced strongly for rejection.

Apparently, therefore, Lord Lansdowne and his lieutenants were half convinced that rejection was unavoidable as early as the beginning of October, while Mr. Balfour had, from an even earlier period, believed that a compromise was impossible.

It was, however, not only the chiefs but their followers who appeared to have made up their minds, and in every quarter—in Parliament, in the press, and in the constituencies—there was little dissent from the opinion that the challenge must be met. Unionist M.P.'s were almost unanimous, Tariff Reformers were eager to seize the chance of testing the opinion of the country; wire-pullers reported that the Budget was already losing its popularity, no financial authorities of repute could be found to approve of it; some simple-minded peers were convinced that as the action of the Lords in throwing out Home Rule in 1893 had been approved, similar approval would be forthcoming in 1909; and above all, it was continually dinned into the ears of all concerned that if the House of Lords failed to assert itself on this occasion its utility as a Second Chamber would vanish for ever. Perhaps it was in consequence of this preponderant opinion that it was not considered necessary to hold a party meeting when the Finance Bill left the Commons, as had usually been the practice on former occasions of the same kind; and little surprise was felt when Lord Lansdowne, on November 10th, gave notice that he would on the second reading move: "That this House is not justified in giving its assent to the Bill until it has been submitted to the judgment of the country."

The debate on the Finance Bill took place on November 22nd. It was one of those historic occasions on which the House of Lords showed at its best; and the discussion was opened by Lord Lansdowne in a

[504] Complete freedom. (Ed.)

speech which was a model of dignity, moderation, and sound argument. Nothing was omitted that should have been said, and nothing was said that was liable to be misinterpreted or to embitter the raging controversy; and behind the polished and lucid phrases there was revealed the honesty of the man who, fully conscious of the probability of failure, was determined to act in accordance with his convictions. It was, in fact, a speech worthy of a leader upon a great occasion, and Lord Morley in his *Recollections* observes that "on the whole I really think that it was Lansdowne who made the best of the case for his amendment". The debate was continued for six days on a remarkably high level, and nearly all the prominent members of the House took part in it. Amongst them was Lord Rosebery, who, after denouncing the Budget proposals in the strongest terms, astonished his audience by announcing that he did not intend to vote—a decision which gave rise in the lobby to the *mot* that he had *sauté pour mieux reculer*.[505]

This discussion undoubtedly enhanced the debating reputation of the House of Lords, as it was conducted throughout not only with conspicuous ability, but with a complete absence of discourtesy and ill-temper. *The Times* indeed subsequently paid the speakers the compliment of issuing a special edition containing a verbatim report of their remarks.

When the division was taken, 350 voted for Lord Lansdowne's motion and 75 against. In the majority were many unfamiliar figures who might perhaps have been included in Mr. Lloyd George's well-known uncomplimentary designation of "backwoodsmen", but although the House of Lords now contains over 100

more peers than in 1909, it is doubtful whether as many as 425 could be collected at the present time.

The rejection was taken very quietly, but on the following day (December 2) war between the two houses was formally declared by Mr. Asquith, in a resolution declaring that a breach of the Constitution had been perpetrated.

Nearly twenty years have passed since the rejection the People's Budget, and all the prophecies made with regard to its failure have since been justified: yet, if their opinion could be taken, most people of political experience would agree that its rejection was a tactical error. It has been assumed by various writers that Lord Lansdowne was an unwilling convert to this course and that it had been forced upon him by the pressure of Tariff Reformers, of a clamorous press, and of reckless partisans who were longing for a fight, regardless of consequences. This is evidently incorrect. As is shown in the letter to Lord Balfour of Burleigh, he admitted that he had almost made up his mind at the beginning of October, and nothing seems to have subsequently modified his opinion. Mr. Balfour had from the beginning been convinced that collision was inevitable; and here it may be remarked that if Mr. Asquith had been in charge of the Finance Bill instead of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, some compromise would probably have been reached. Mr. Lloyd George, however, saw clearly that the opportunity was unique. There is no convincing proof that the voters were much exercised over the constitutional dispute, and they had never displayed much resentment over the loss of Liberal Bills; but the charge that the Lords, as representatives of the upper classes, were seeking to evade their fair share of taxation was a totally different matter, and appealed irresistibly to primitive instincts. Moreover, Mr. Lloyd George possessed to an exceptional degree the capacity of exasperating political opponents, and his

speeches in the country, aided occasionally by inept contributions from indignant magnates on the other side, created an atmosphere which rendered compromise almost impossible. The tactical error had been committed of fighting the Bill so hard in the Commons that retreat had become almost impossible without stultifying the language that had been used. Yet there must have been many peers besides

[505] To step back to jump farther or to delay the inevitable. (Ed.)

myself who voted out of loyalty to the leaders, while feeling an uncomfortable conviction that we were walking deliberately into a trap set by our opponents. The principle of fighting upon favourable ground had been definitely abandoned.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PARLIAMENT BILL

(Page 384)

The general election of January 1910 resulted in a disappointment for both the Government and the Opposition. The latter gained approximately a hundred seats, and Liberals and Unionists being now exactly balanced, the Government majority therefore depended upon the support of Labour members and Home Rulers, whose united total was 123; but as the latter were opposed to the liquor taxation proposed in the Budget, they were in a position to dictate their terms, and the price of their support could obviously only be paid by abolishing the Lords' veto, which was the main obstacle to Home Rule. This was made plain in a statement made by Mr. Redmond[506] early in February.

This momentous election, in which all parties displayed unparalleled activity, was noticeable in one respect, as being the first in which peers were permitted to take part. Since they had been the special object of attack, it was only reasonable that they should be entitled to defend themselves in person, and a large number availed themselves of the opportunity. On the whole, they acquitted themselves with credit, and when the audiences in industrial districts had grasped the fact that there was no essential difference between peers and other sections of the community, they usually succeeded in obtaining a fair hearing, although it is probable that some heard the truth about themselves for the first time since leaving school. Lord Lansdowne, who had, of

(Page 385) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1910]

course, been denounced with exceptional vigour, took his full share of the work, and addressed meetings in all parts of the country.

Before the election had begun, Mr. Balfour received communications from the party managers intimating that a drastic scheme of House of Lords reform would be popular in the constituencies, more especially in Scotland, and imparted this intelligence to Lord Lansdowne, whose reply was not enthusiastic.

Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Balfour. Bowood, January 3, 1910.

> I have received several letters pressing us for a strong declaration as to House of Lords reform, but I am convinced that we should make a great mistake if we were to pledge ourselves to changes which would, in effect, give us a second elective Chamber. This would, in the truest sense of the word, be a revolution, for which no necessity can be shown. The House of Lords has its admitted faults, and these can be cured by reforms based on the scheme of the Rosebery Committee. Up to that point, all is comparatively plain sailing; but the moment you go further, and attempt to bring in what Rosebery described as "more fresh air" from outside, you find yourself face to face with innumerable difficulties. The greatest of these is that which you indicate in your earlier letter, *viz*. that a Second Chamber so composed would claim co-ordinate powers with the House of Commons, the result of which would be that we should constantly have a deadlock of a more serious description than that which now, as we are told, confronts us. Such a change would, as you truly point out, be anything but a timely and cautious concession to Radical opinion.

[506] John Edward Redmond (1856–1918) was an Irish nationalist politician, barrister, and M.P. He was best known as leader of the moderate Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) from 1900 until his death in 1918. (Ed.)

> In my view, we ought not to allow ourselves to be rushed by Sir Reginald MacLeod[507] or anyone else. I shall have something to say on the subject at Liverpool on Wednesday. I propose to point out that the House of Lords, as at present constituted, owing to its numbers, which have doubled since the Reform Bill, an unwieldy Assembly, and for that very reason includes a number of peers for whom there is literally and figuratively no

> room, and who consequently devote themselves to other pursuits. The Rosebery Committee laid it down that the mere possession of a peerage should not confer the right to legislate, and proposed that this duty should be entrusted to an Inner House, partly elected by the peers from amongst themselves, partly composed of peers whose fitness, on account of their antecedents, is unquestionable, and partly of life peers appointed on the recommendation of the Ministry of the day. I shall add that, if we come in, we shall no doubt deal with the question of House of Lords reform, and that the Report which I have quoted will afford a useful basis. If anyone suggests that we ought to go much further, I should say that in my view this is undesirable, because I hold that the House of Commons must always be the predominant partner, and that its preponderance would be threatened if a too-powerful House of Lords were to be created. Finally, I should express my hope that House of Lords reform would be the work of both parties, acting in consultation and in a spirit somewhat different from that which now prevails. But I am afraid that this will be regarded by some of our friends as a meagre and disappointing announcement.

Soon after the election Mr. Balfour received information that the more moderate party in the Cabinet would regard their influence as strengthened if it were understood that a scheme for the reform of the House of Lords was to be proceeded with at an early date.

> The only objections [he wrote to Lord Lansdowne on January 29] that I can see to this course are (1) that it a little savours of panic, and (2) that we may not find it easy to agree upon a scheme of reform which would be agreeable to the House of Lords, which would meet the views of the Unionist doctrinaires in the constituencies, and which would be workable. Still, if the announcement that you mean to try your hand at the problem would strengthen the hands of the king and of the moderates in the Cabinet in resisting unconstitutional pressure by the extremists, I see no reason why it should not be made, and of course, if made, acted on.

The words "acted on" possess a satirical significance to-day, for the Baldwin Administration,[508] with its immense majority, always refrained from facing the question.

The two objections indicated in this letter were obviously only too well founded: a party which had definitely refused to take a particular course and then suddenly adopted it two years later, could hardly expect to escape a charge of panic; and the nearer the Veto approached, the more difficult it would be to obtain unanimity amongst those who would be affected by it.

Lord Lansdowne's reply to Mr. Balfour, dated February 1st, 1910, runs as follows:

> I am glad to gather from what you say that we look at the question of House of Lords reform through very similar spectacles. I do not like the idea—nor, I think, do you—of being driven

[507] Chief Conservative Agent in Scotland (LN). Sir Reginald MacLeod of MacLeod KCB (1847–1935) was the 27th Chief of Clan MacLeod. In 1902, he was appointed Permanent Under Secretary for Scotland. (Ed.)
[508] Stanley Baldwin, 1st Earl Baldwin of Bewdley (1867–1947) was a British statesman and Conservative politician who dominated the government of the United Kingdom between the world wars. He was prime minister three times, from May 1923 to January 1924; November 1924 to June 1929; from June 1935 to May 1937. (Ed.)

off our course by the blatant nonsense which has been talked about the House of Lords during the elections; and I am sure that the difficulties of constructing a scheme which shall not be open to damaging criticism are greater than some of our friends suppose. I wonder whether you carry in your mind a letter[509] which you wrote to me on February 22nd, 1908, when the Rosebery Committee was commencing its deliberations. If you have not got a copy of it, I think I ought to send you one. It contains an excellent definition of your House of Lords policy. But, of course, any scheme based upon the Report of the Committee, or upon the principles laid down in the letter to which I refer, would be regarded in many quarters as absurdly insufficient, and, as you are aware, some of our friends are in favour of handling the subject in a much more drastic manner.

I recognise that we may, in the end, have to harden our hearts and go a good deal further than you or I would probably like to go. A more advanced scheme of this kind might, I think, result from negotiations conducted between moderate men of both political parties, but I do not like the notion of suddenly springing it upon the public as our own idea of the mode in which the subject might be dealt with.

I am, upon the whole, inclined to think that in the debate on the Address, when something is sure to be said about House of Lords reform by the other side, we might express our readiness to take up the question, basing ourselves upon the Report of the Rosebery Committee, but with an open mind as to changes of a more courageous description.

(Page 388) LORD LANSDOWNE [1910]

Whatever happens, I expect that some peer like Newton, *i.e.* the author of this book, will either introduce a Bill or move a resolution. We should in that event, I assume, bless it in principle, and promise to take action ourselves if ever we should be in a position to do so, adding that we were ready to confer with His Majesty's Government at once should they be disposed to deal with the constitution of the House, instead of leaving its constitution alone and concentrating themselves upon its powers of resistance to the House of Commons. We should, I think, be justified in arguing that if H.M. Government have received any mandate, it is one which refers not so much to the powers of the House of Lords as to the manner in which that Assembly is composed.

Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne were, therefore, in agreement upon what should be done, but they were apparently labouring under the double fallacy that some measure of support might be expected from their opponents, and that the approaching conflict could be fought, not upon the powers but upon the constitution of the House of Lords.

It has already been shown that in consequence of the hostility of the Irish members the People's Budget in the new Parliament was in jeopardy, and, as the late Lord Oxford and Asquith observed in his *Fifty Years of Parliament*, "a good deal of steering was needed to round this rather hazardous point". It was doubtless the existence of this difficulty which prompted King Edward, before the opening of Parliament, to send for an intermediary who was in the confidence of the two Opposition leaders. His object in doing so (obviously instigated by the Government) was to ascertain whether the Opposition would, if necessary, be willing to assist in passing the Budget, and the enquiry was accompanied by many observations upon the distinction between the claims of party and the claims of State, together with some complimentary allusions to Mr. Balfour's patriotic character. It was, however, rather too much to expect of a leader that he should suddenly desert his

[509] Quoted on page 363. (LN)

friends in order to get his opponents out of a difficulty which they had created for themselves.

Memorandum for the King from Mr. Balfour, February 15th, 1910.

Mr. Balfour is, from the nature of the case, very imperfectly acquainted with the precise position of affairs with which the Government have to deal, and of their relations with the Irish party and the Labour party. But he quite recognises that the present situation is one of peculiar difficulty, and that it may not be easy to make the necessary arrangements for carrying on the work of the King's Government.

In these circumstances, the last thing that Mr. Balfour would desire to do would be to throw unnecessary obstacles in the way of Government business, but it seems to him quite evident that whatever be the line taken by Mr. Redmond and his friends, it would be impossible for the Unionist Opposition to do otherwise than vote against the Budget as a whole, or, if they came up for separate discussion, those taxes to which they have taken such strong exception both in Parliament and in the country. Great as would be the embarrassment to all parties which would follow upon an immediate defeat of the Government, supporting the Budget, or even abstaining from opposing it, would be too high a price to pay in order to escape them. The Budget was fought in the House of Commons for six months and more; it was made the subject of exceptional—though, in Mr. Balfour's judgment, most justifiable—action on the part of the House of Lords; it was attacked in the country by every Unionist candidate, and every Unionist member who has been returned is pledged to oppose it. In circumstances like these it would be vain to ask the Unionist party on tactical grounds to vote black where they had before voted white; and if such a course were pursued, it would be utterly misunderstood by the public outside.

Mr. Balfour, however, cannot help thinking that Mr. Redmond's threat will prove more formidable than his actions, and that he will not destroy a Government from whose legislation he expects so much.

If Mr. Balfour is right, the Government will survive the re-introduction of the Budget, and will pass it.

As regards other matters, Mr. Balfour need only reiterate

what he has said in the earlier part of his Memorandum, namely, that he is fully alive to national exigencies, and has no desire whatever to embarrass the Government over details, or to fight them strenuously on anything but the broadest issues.

Apart from the Budget and the navy, it is evidently round the question of the House of Lords that the controversies of the session are likely to centre. Mr. Balfour is disposed to think that no final or satisfactory solution of this constitutional issue could be obtained except through the co-operation of both parties in the State. Whether the times are yet ripe for such a solution may be doubtful; but one thing seems clear, namely, that the Unionist party could never consent to any modification of our present Constitution which would practically put the legislation of the United Kingdom entirely in the hands of one Chamber. For all other plans there may be something to be said, but this plan seems wholly inadmissible.

Parliament met on February 21st, and that experienced observer, Sir Almeric Fitzroy,[510] records the following in his diary:

> The debate in the Lords was remarkable for a speech of Lord Lansdowne, which must enhance his reputation as the best Parliamentarian of the day. For an hour he kept the House in a state of tension while he exposed, in incisive and often scathing sentences, the weakness of the Government position.

His references, however, to the necessity of reform did not indicate much intention of haste and Lord Rosebery intervened for the purpose of intimating that no time should be lost. A day or two later, he gave notice of moving resolutions on the subject.

These resolutions were three in number. The first proclaimed the need of a strong and efficient Second Chamber; the second advocated the reform and reconstruction of the House; and the third and most important indicated the abandonment of the hereditary principle, inasmuch as it declared that "the possession of a peerage should no longer of itself give the right to sit and vote".

(Page 391) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1910]

Lord Rosebery and Lord Lansdowne had never been in absolute agreement with regard to Reform. The former, supported chiefly by Lord Curzon, had always been in favour of a more drastic scheme than was approved of by the latter and his friends; nor was Lord Lansdowne disposed to move so soon. There was much correspondence on the subject between him and Lord Rosebery as to the date and nature of the resolutions, which it is unnecessary to quote; and, as was to be expected, advice, encouragement, and protests began to arrive from all sections of the Unionist Party.[511]

Terms having been satisfactorily arranged, Lord Rosebery moved his resolutions in March, in an eloquent and impassioned speech which excited much admiration. The debate lasted for several days, and, as had been the case on the previous occasion, the only out-and-out opponents consisted of Lord Halsbury with a few followers. The Government again dissociated themselves from any scheme of reform, making it quite clear they were only concerned with the powers of the House; and the debate was wound up by Lord Lansdowne in a speech marked by his usual ability, but which showed little evidence of enthusiasm, and was regarded as disappointing by some of the more ardent spirits, who feared that it would exercise a discouraging effect upon Lord Rosebery. The only resolution which was divided upon was the one relating to the hereditary principle,

(Page 392) LORD LANSDOWNE [1910]

and Lord Halsbury was able to muster only 17 against it.

Lord Lansdowne's speech resulted in an amicable exchange of letters with Lord Rosebery.

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[510] Sir Almeric William FitzRoy (1851–1935) was a British civil servant. He was Clerk of the Privy Council between 9 August 1898 and May 1923. (Ed.)

[511] Amongst these communications was a letter from Lord Roberts which is of some interest, not because it contains much of importance on the subject of reform, but because it refers to a very different matter. Lord Roberts, writing at the end of February, mentions that he had had a long conversation with the Chief of the French General Staff (General Laffon de Ladébat), who had told him that the General Staff was quite convinced that the German attack upon France would be made through Belgium, and a year later Lord Roberts received exactly the same information. If this was the fixed belief of the French General Staff in 1911, why did they change their opinion in 1914? An officer who was on familiar terms with Marshal Joffre, before the war, told me that whenever he asked the Marshal what he would do if the Germans did come through Belgium, the invariable reply which he received was: "*Ah! s'ils font cela, je les tiens!"(if they do that I've got them)* but no further enlightenment was ever forthcoming. (LN). Étienne-Édouard Laffon de Ladébat (1849-1925) was Chief of General Staff from 1909 to 1911. (Ed.)

Lord Rosebery to Lord Lansdowne. March 18, 1910.

> I heartily admired your speech last night, which I thought one of your best. But I must confess that my heart sank when you came to detail. As to my views, they are, of course, much beyond yours. But this does not matter. What does matter is the public feeling in the country. And I honestly think that if you cannot go beyond the limits that you appeared to lay down last night, the House of Lords plan will be still-born. The great mass of the Lords are naturally not solicitous about reform at all: if they must have it, they will go for the minimum, and it is minimum which their leader offers and declares to be sufficient.
>
> I do hope you will not close the door to other views until you have taken counsel with some of the other leaders of your own party as to the probable effect of your proposals upon the constituencies. That, after all, is the vital aspect of the matter. If the House of Lords plan is repudiated by the country, we shall, I fear, see semi-Socialism in high places and the House of Lords at the mercy of its enemies, or, rather, the Second Chamber paralyzed and inefficient: for it is that that I care about. Forgive my writing frankly, but I believe the matter to be vital. And if this chance is missed, it may not recur. Don't trouble to answer, for I am only uplifting my testimony, as we say in Scotland.

Lord Lansdowne's reply the next day was couched in equally amicable terms:

> I am glad that you should have written, and I could not forgive you if there were any want of frankness on your part. I say in all sincerity that few things would give me greater pleasure than to feel that you and I were able to work together in the closing years of our lives in bringing about a solution of this great question.
>
> I fear that there is a real difference between us, although I will endeavour to meet you as far as I can. I tried to do so, perhaps not very successfully, the other night; and, of course, [shall

> have to take counsel with my colleagues and others. Some of them feel at least as strongly as I do about election.
>
> I hope we shall get the three resolutions without much trouble, but I hear rumours of a frontal attack on No. 3: not a bad thing, perhaps, if it is repelled with success. We must see what happens on Monday. I still incline to think that No. 3 might well be carried over to, say, the 30th; and I hope that, having got No. 3, you will give us breathing-time before resuming your course.

It will be readily understood, with reference to these letters, that the two men were in totally different positions, quite apart from the merits of the case. Lord Rosebery had become independent of parties; he was not responsible to anyone, and had from his early political days been the chief and most eloquent champion of Reform. He could advocate what he pleased, and was certain to attract the interest of all and the support of many. Lord Lansdowne, on the other hand, by nature cautious and conservative, was not only reluctant himself to do more than was absolutely necessary, but was the responsible leader of the Unionist peers. Now, no one in his heart likes to be reformed: the ordinary peer is no exception to the rule, and Lord Lansdowne was forced to take account of this feeling. It is the business of a leader to keep his party together, and no doubt he felt that while the bulk of his followers could be induced to vote for resolutions which appeared to be of a moderate character, they would rebel if too much were asked of them. Besides, to many of the prospective victims of reform it must have appeared somewhat incongruous and illogical that, having been invited to throw out the budget, they were now informed that they were not fitted to discharge the ordinary functions of a Second Chamber.

Coming events, however, were shortly to show that it mattered little whether Lord Rosebery and Lord Lansdowne were in agreement or not.

Mr. Asquith had come to terms with the Irish, and

(Page 394) LORD LANSDOWNE [1910]

at the end of March moved the Veto resolutions which were intended to form the basis of the Parliament Bill, and their nature speedily dissipated any expectations of compromise, or that House of Lords reform was seriously contemplated by the Government, except in a nebulous future. The resolutions passed through the House by the middle of April 1910, and the Parliament Bill itself, containing the celebrated Preamble as to the necessity of substituting a Second Chamber constituted on a popular basis "but which substitution cannot be immediately brought into operation", was introduced on April 14th. In introducing the Bill, the Prime Minister made it clear that in the event of a dissolution he would demand the necessary guarantees for ensuring that the "judgment of the people" should prevail—in other words, the creation of a sufficient number of peers to swamp the Second Chamber: a declaration which showed that the extremists had got the upper hand, although Sir Edward Grey did go to the length of asserting that Single Chamber government meant "death, disaster, and damnation".

After the Rosebery resolutions had been disposed of, many efforts were made privately to bring him and Lord Lansdowne into closer harmony, but they did not meet with much success, and the death of King Edward naturally suggested a political truce, while Lord Rosebery was now urged by Lord Lansdowne to suspend his activities, as it was thought that any action by the peers would play into the hands of the extremists.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Rosebery. May 20th, 1910.

> I succeeded in catching Arthur Balfour at Windsor to-day, and repeated to him the substance of our conversation last night. He hopes most earnestly that you will not make a move in any direction until we know more of the intentions of H.M. Government.

(Page 395) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1910]

> Whilst he admits, as you know, that on the merits the House of Lords would be entitled to proceed with the discussion of its domestic affairs as if nothing had happened, he thinks that there is considerable risk of such action on our part being misinterpreted by the public, and it will almost certainly be misrepresented by H.M. Government and their friends.
>
> It may interest you to know that during the journey to Windsor I had some conversation with Austen Chamberlain on the same subject. He is, I think, a good judge—perhaps a better judge than Arthur Balfour—of the manner in which the ordinary politician looks at these questions. He said emphatically, without a moment's hesitation, that in his opinion any fresh move on our part with regard to the resolutions would certainly be regarded as a as a renewal of hostilities; and he thought that if, as is probably the case, there is an influential party in the Cabinet which desires to prevent a truce or a compromise, their hands would be greatly strengthened if it were to become known that we intended to resume our discussion of your resolutions *quand meme*.[512]
>
> I travelled back with Walter Long, to whose opinion I attach less importance, but who is, nevertheless, not a bad judge, and he expressed views almost identical with those of Austen Chamberlain.

Lord Rosebery was not at all inclined to abandon his campaign, and argued that reform of the Lords was a domestic matter which ought to be proceeded with independently of the Government policy; but,

[512] All the same or nevertheless. (Ed.)

in view of a general opinion that the accession of a new sovereign provided an opportunity for an amicable settlement, he eventually agreed to postpone further action during the sittings of the Constitutional Conference which came into being in June.

The Constitutional Conference

At this Conference the Government were represented by Mr. Asquith, Lord Crewe, Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Birrell; the Opposition by Mr. Balfour, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Cawdor, and Mr. Austen

(Page 396) LORD LANSDOWNE [1910]

Chamberlain, and—to use the words of the Liberal Prime Minister—an honest attempt was made for nearly six months to arrive at a settlement. The proceedings of this Conference (approved of by the moderate men of both parties, but much disliked by the extremists), were enveloped in much secrecy, which for once in a way was successfully maintained. No statements were ever issued to the public as to whether agreement had been reached on any particular point, and no explanation was forthcoming when the negotiations finally broke down in November. As is invariably the case on such occasions, many rumours were current with regard to the proceedings, and it was widely believed that a number of highly important matters of national interest were discussed, whereas in reality the parties confined themselves to a highly technical discussion of the problem presented by a conflict between the two Chambers.

The deliberations began in June, and some progress towards agreement on certain points seemed probable. The Unionist representatives proposed dividing legislation into three categories—ordinary, financial, and constitutional—and argued that each category required separate consideration and different treatment if a satisfactory solution was to be arrived at. On finance, they were prepared to abandon the right of the House of lords to reject Money Bills, provided the House of Commons would abandon its extreme claim to treat all Bills, if they were only technically financial, as entirely outside the province of the House of Lords. On this point some progress was made in the direction of agreement, but the others showed little prospect of a favourable solution; and during the autumn recess, Lord Lansdowne, never an optimist, expressed himself as unhopeful, in a memorandum sent to Mr. Balfour:

(Page 397) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1910]

Lord Lansdowne
Memorandum to Mr. Balfour. Sept. 10, 1910.

> I am not sanguine of the success of the Conference. There are marked divergences of opinion with regard to points which are cardinal, and we shall, I fear, be unable to secure agreement except at a price which I am not prepared to pay.
>
> The proposal that in all cases where serious differences of opinion between the two Houses have arisen, or are anticipated, there should be conferences, to be followed if necessary by joint sittings, seems to me in principle an excellent one. There is such an amount of agreement upon this point that, whatever happens, some machinery of this kind will, I believe, be introduced into the Constitution, either by our opponents or by ourselves.
>
> The proposed conferences would stand a much better chance of bringing about a satisfactory solution than the conferences with which we are at present familiar. Under the proposed plan the conference could be invoked at any moment, and before the deadlock had actually arisen; and the proceedings would, I should hope, differ considerably from the scrambling discussions between the leaders of the two Houses which have taken place during recent years, usually at the fag-end of the session. A conference with a joint sitting in prospect would, moreover,

deliberate under conditions wholly different from those which are present when the last word has to be said on each side in the conference itself.

A serious difficulty, however, arises with regard to the representation of the two Houses at the joint sittings. It would at first sight seem obviously reasonable that either the plenum of both Houses should take part or a delegation of each House, but I think it is true that there are objections to a delegation of the House of Commons. The difficulty of providing for such a delegation would be almost insuperable. We are therefore driven to the plenum of the House of Commons. But the admission of the plenum of the unreformed House of Lords would clearly be out of the question. On the other hand, the admission of the plenum of a reformed House of Lords would be defensible in argument. It might, however, be contended that even the reformed House of Lords, under any of the schemes of reform which have been proposed, will always be, in the main, a conservative

(Page 398) LORD LANSDOWNE [1910]

body, and that, therefore, a Radical Government will always be hopelessly outvoted in the joint sitting and would have no chance of prevailing when the question under discussion was a big popular issue. This would, no doubt, be true, except in the rare case where there might be a huge Radical majority in the House of Commons that is, at the very moment when the application of the constitutional drag was most needed. These considerations no doubt weigh with our opponents, and we must endeavour to meet the argument.

The best means of meeting it is by providing a House of Lords which shall be really so constituted as to exercise the functions appropriate to such a body fairly as between the two great parties in the State" (Prime Minister's memo, of May 28, 1910). I shall return to this point presently; but it must be insisted upon at this stage, because it shows that the reform of the House of Lords is really the hinge upon which the whole of this controversy revolves.

Finance

Up to a certain point there is agreement. We are, I believe, all ready to admit that pure finance should be under the sole control of the House of Commons, and we all desire that certain measures, which are financial but not purely financial, should be treated as exceptions to the rule. We were met, during the discussion of this part of the case, in an apparently not unreasonable spirit, and if we have failed to obtain anything which could be accepted as a solid basis for an agreement, this has, I cannot help thinking, been largely due to difficulties which are inherent in the case, and, I am afraid, insuperable. No one has yet been able to suggest a formula which, to my mind, would be really satisfactory for the purpose of dividing pure finance from legislation partly financial, but important quite as much from its political as from its financial effects.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposal for the appointment of a Joint Committee for the purpose of determining whether a financial Bill is an ordinary or an exceptional measure seems to me well conceived. For such a purpose a Committee of this kind would, to my mind, be preferable to a court of law.

Constitutional Legislation

I cannot disguise from myself that there are difficulties in the way of defining constitutional questions not less formidable than

those which meet us in our attempts to define pure finance. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposal upon this point does not help us much. Under his scheme a Home Rule Bill, or a Bill or the disestablishment of the Church, would be classed as an ordinary Bill; and even if his list of constitutional questions were to be amplified,, it would probably still be open to a Liberal Government to introduce a measure like the Irish Councils Bill of 1906, and to represent that it did not involve any constitutional change. The fact is that the difficulty of forming a complete catalogue of constitutional questions, in a country without a written Constitution, is enormous, and, for that reason, analogies taken from the Constitutions of other countries are not really helpful.

I therefore disbelieve in the possibility of setting up in this country a complete arrangement on the Continental model for safeguarding us from "organic" changes, and the attempt to set such safeguards would fetter Parliament in a manner which 1 would probably resent. All we can do in this country is to except, by name, certain subjects of legislation, or, in other words, to make our a list as been made out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to say that these subjects are to fall outside the category of ordinary legislation.

House of Lords Reform

I pass to the question of House of Lords reform, which, as I have already said, appears to me to dominate the whole controversy. It seems to me that we should do all that we can to facilitate a settlement of this question, and to show that, if a settlement is unattainable, it is not we who are to blame. At this point we are able to make concessions of which we need not be in the least ashamed, and which will bring us no slight tactical advantage should the negotiations end in a breakdown. We must, in the first place, remember that we are ourselves convinced House of Lords reformers, and that the House of Lords itself took up the question of reform long before the Conference was dreamed of.

Apart from this, we ought, in my opinion, to concentrate upon this point, because I believe it to be precisely that at which our opponents are weakest. Throughout the discussion they have shown an ill-concealed desire to "shunt" this part of the case. They are, indeed, deeply committed to the policy of House of Lords reform, and it figures conspicuously in the Prime Minister's

memorandum of May 28. We have, however, never been able to prevail upon them to get to close quarters with it, and I have no doubt that the obvious explanation is the right one, *viz*. that they are divided as to the lines upon which House of Lords reform should proceed. The Prime Minister has, however, admitted casually that the hereditary element must not disappear, and that any House of Lords must of necessity be conservative in its general complexion.

But it may be said: Are not we also divided as to the lines upon which House of Lords reform ought to proceed? No doubt we are; but I question whether our cleavage is as deep as theirs. Upon the main points, at any rate, we are in general agreement. These are, I take it:

1. That the number of the present House should be largely reduced.

2. That the new House should contain the *fine fleur* of the present House.

3. That, of the peers sitting and voting in the new House, not one shall owe his seat to his hereditary right alone.

4. That the House should be substantially reinforced by the introduction of a popular element from outside.

And, as the Unionist members of the Conference virtually accepted this part of the Prime Minister's memorandum, I think I might add:

5. That the Second Chamber should be "so constituted as to exercise the functions appropriate to such a body fairly as between the two great parties in the State".

The above extracts from Lord Lansdowne's long memorandum constitute a reasonable summary of the Unionist case, and his caution presently saved the two parties from committing what might have been considered a blunder. When the Conference separated for the recess, it had been agreed that, for purposes of convenience, the next meeting should take place at Lord Crewe's country house, but Lord Lansdowne at once saw the objections to this arrangement. The Conference was already regarded with suspicion by the extremists on both sides, and he pointed out that the

public would not understand their meeting under Lord Crewe's roof:

It would at once be said that the whole affair was a picnic, and that business of such importance ought not to be transacted in an environment of such a kind. Supposing, on the other hand, that *per impossibile* we were to arrive at an agreement, it is bound to contain a number of points which will meet with severe criticism at the hands of our friends. Will not that criticism be much more severe if it can be said that we had been "softened" by the excellence of Crewe's champagne and the other attractions of a hospitable and luxurious country-house?

His arguments prevailed, and undoubtedly he was right, for a large section of the public attach as much importance to the methods under which conferences are conducted as to the actual results. When, during the War, I was sent with other delegates to Holland to negotiate with the Germans on the subject of treatment of prisoners of war, many people were apparently much more concerned to know whether we had shaken hands with the German delegates than with the fate of the prisoners themselves.

The Conference resumed its sittings in London in October, and the Prime Minister recapitulated the decisions arrived at, although, as Lord Lansdowne observes, the words "were not quite appropriate".

The points upon which agreement had been provisionally reached were:

The mode of dealing with finance.

Procedure by joint sittings.

A special mode of dealing with certain constitutional questions.

There remained the question of Home Rule, which was really in the minds of the Opposition representatives when constitutional legislation was being discussed.

They refused to admit that this was the only constitutional question which had to be taken into consideration and urged that all questions affecting the machinery

by which legislation was turned out should be treated as constitutional, a contention which Mr. Asquith was quite unable to accept, on the ground that the Liberal party would not agree to any differentiation between structural and other legislation. It was not found possible to arrive at an agreement as to the

respective numbers of the two Houses at the proposed joint sittings, and the Government representatives refused to discuss the question of House of Lords reform. At the 21st sitting, therefore, on November 4th, it was admitted that the negotiations had broken down, and the only question was whether it was advisable to make any explanatory statement. It was suggested by Mr. Balfour that it might be intimated that the breakdown had taken place over the separate treatment of constitutional questions; but as Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George objected, the final decision was that the announcement should simply be that the negotiations had broken down.

Just before the last sitting of the Conference, a small meeting of the leaders of the Unionist party was held at Lansdowne House, and an explanatory statement was made by Mr. Balfour regarding the proceedings. An outline of this statement by a highly competent authority[513] may be accepted as a practically correct summary:

Legislation was to be divided into ordinary, financial and constitutional legislation.'

1. Ordinary Legislation.

If a difference arose on two occasions in two sessions in two years, between the Houses of Parliament, it was to be settled by a joint sitting of the two Houses. The joint sitting was to consist of the whole of the House of Commons and 100 peers, 20 of them members of the Government and 80 to be selected on a system of proportional representation.

2. Financial Legislation.

The Budget not to be rejected by the Lords unless in case of tacking.

Legal tacking presents no difficulties; but in the event of equitable tacking, the Government proposed that such a Bill should be treated like ordinary legislation.

3. Constitutional Legislation.

The Prime Minister stated that no differentiation was possible between that and ordinary legislation.

But the Government were willing that Bills affecting the Crown or the Protestant Succession or the Act which is to embody this agreement should be subject to special safeguards. If the two Houses differed, the Bill would drop; if they agreed, there should be a plebiscite.

On October 16, Conference broke off on the difficulty of Home Rule. Mr. Balfour proposed that if a Home Rule Bill was twice rejected by the House of Lords, it should go to a plebiscite.. Mr. Lloyd George, while admitting the reasonableness of this, said it was impossible for the Government to assent.

Subsequently the Government proposed a compromise, *viz*. that a general election should intervene on the next occasion on which a Home Rule Bill, having passed the House of Commons, was rejected by the House of Lords—but only on this one occasion; and that Home Rule Bills if introduced afterwards should be treated like ordinary Bills.

[513] The late Viscount Finlay (LN). Robert Bannatyne Finlay, 1st Viscount Finlay, (1842–1929), known as Sir Robert Finlay from 1895 to 1916, was a British barrister and politician who was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain from 1916 to 1919. (Ed.)

After hearing Mr. Balfour's statement, the Unionist leaders decided that it was useless to continue negotiations, and the only person who seems to have had any doubts on the subject was Mr. Gerald Balfour.[514]

It is plain from the above facts that the main efforts of the Unionists were directed towards forcing the government to appeal to the country again on the question of Home Rule, and that the belated scheme of House of Lords reform was put forward in the hope of preserving some if not all its existing powers through the sacrifice of the hereditary principle. The Government, however, had no intention of again risking their fate over Home Rule, and were only anxious to get it out of the way as quietly and quickly as possible. As for House of Lords reform, it was quite the last thing they wanted; they knew that, in any reformed House, Conservatives

(Page 404) LORD LANSDOWNE [1910]

would be in a majority, and they also knew well enough that to countenance any such proposal would meet with the emphatic disapproval of most of their supporters.

The breakdown of the Conference was followed by much political manoeuvring, both inside and outside Parliament, which must have greatly perplexed the ordinary voter. The Opposition having brought the negotiations to a close, in order, presumably, that the judgment of the constituencies should be invoked, were in no hurry for an immediate dissolution; whereas the more advanced Government supporters were determined to force one at once, without having a technical excuse to claim from the Crown the exercise of its prerogative. In the House of Lords, Lord Rosebery resumed the discussion of his postponed Reform resolutions, and these were all disposed of in the course of an afternoon, with practically no opposition. Meanwhile, as it was obviously necessary for the Government to prove that they had lost all control over a Parliament which was not yet a year old, it was impossible to resist the demand from Lord Lansdowne that the Parliament Bill should be introduced and proceeded with; and in the debate which ensued, Lord Crewe intimated that the Government were not prepared to accept any amendments. When however, the second reading was moved, on November 21st, Lord Lansdowne intimated that he would move the adjournment of the debate in order to bring forward alternative proposals. These proposals, in the shape of resolutions, were moved on November 23rd, and followed the lines of the proposals put forward at the Constitutional Conference. The Parliament Bill was declared to be no settlement; the resolutions implied a reduced and reconstituted House of Lords; the constitutional right of the House to reject Money Bills was unassailable, but that right would be surrendered subject to certain safeguards; and the referendum would

(Page 405) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1910]

prove to be of great value whichever party was in power, as its existence would usually ensure a settlement out of court. All this might be difficult to carry out, but until Parliament had made the attempt there was no reason to consider it impossible. All the principal members or the Government and of the Opposition took part in the debate, and its most remarkable feature was the enthusiasm shown for drastic reform by some of those who had previously deprecated any action of this nature as inopportune and ill-advised. But on the whole the proceedings were conducted in an atmosphere of unreality, as the King's scruples in regard to a dissolution had in the meanwhile been overcome and interest transferred to the constituencies.

The election was, however, preceded by a fresh dispute in the Unionist party, as Mr. Balfour in a speech at the Albert Hall had announced that he was ready to submit Tariff Reform to a referendum—an announcement which elicited the historic interjection: "That's won the election!" The Tariff Reformers manifested much discontent at this unexpected pronouncement, and subsequently contended that many

[514] Gerald William Balfour, 2nd Earl of Balfour (1853–1945) was known as Gerald Balfour or The Rt Hon. G. W. Balfour until 1930. He was a senior British Conservative politician who became a peer on the death of his brother, former prime minister Arthur Balfour, in 1930. (Ed.)

seats had been lost in consequence; nor were they appeased when told that it had been necessary to come to a hurried decision, and that the only leader available for consultation at the moment was Lord Lansdowne. The really effective reply to their complaint was that the referendum had recently been adopted as part of the Unionist programme, and that it would naturally be regarded as intolerable to apply this solution to Liberal measures only, while leaving Conservative legislation immune.

The general election of December 1910 much resembled that of January. Although of a less strenuous character, it proved equally disappointing to both parties. It is probable that most of the voters were unable to understand why an election should be necessary at all. All kinds of issues were raised: Home Rule,

Tariff Reform, Female Suffrage, the Referendum, the constitutional question, and many others, and there was no clear indication that the average voter was much interested in the fight between Lords and Commons. The net result was to leave the Government with almost exactly the same majority which they had obtained in January, the Unionist gains in Lancashire and elsewhere having been balanced by losses in London and the South, while in many constituencies there were no contests. The situation, therefore, was still controlled by the Nationalist[515] party, who avowedly desired to see the Parliament Bill passed merely because they regarded it as the inevitable precursor of Home Rule, and by the Labour party, who were themselves controlled by Socialists, and whose aspirations were certainly not in consonance with those of Liberal Cabinet Ministers.

A majority or this composition could scarcely be considered satisfactory, but if the Government were determined to make use of it for their own purposes, it was difficult to prevent them from doing so.

The result of the election was to place the King in a very difficult position, and in Sir Almeric FitzRoy's[516] book there is to be found an interesting record of Lord Morley's opinion on this subject. Lord Morley went so far as to say that if the demand should be made to create 500 peers, the King would have very good reason for refusing, doubtful as the consequences might be. Should he refuse, he thought that Mr. Balfour would take office, that another dissolution would follow, and that the country, in despair of any other expedient, might return an Unionist majority. On the whole he thought that the Opposition were in a stronger position, as they were homogeneous, whereas Ministers could only rely upon a composite majority, a section of which could turn them out at any moment.

This opinion was noteworthy as emanating from one of the most eminent members of the Government, but

if was not shared by Mr. Balfour who, in a long letter dated December 27th, analysed the position of the Sovereign. There was in reality, he thought, no limit to the pressure which an unscrupulous Ministry could exercise on the Crown if the Sovereign had not the alternative of calling into existence a Ministry which could secure an adequate parliamentary support in the existing House of Commons, or could hope to obtain a support by another appeal to the country. In his view no such alternative was possible: to change a Ministry without a dissolution would be a mere advertisement of impotence, and in the absence of almost unthinkable provocation, a dissolution in February following on a dissolution in the preceding December, which itself followed on a dissolution in the preceding January, would be so unpopular that the Ministry who advised it could hardly expect to gain by it. For good or for evil, therefore, the King would have to work with the present government, and within rather wide limits they could compel him to take any course they pleased by threatening resignation. He did not believe that

[515] That is The Irish Nationalists, who supported the Liberals on Irish Home Rule (Ed.)
[516] Sir Almeric William FitzRoy (1851–1935) was a British civil servant. He was Clerk of the Privy Council between 9 August 1898 and May 1923. (Ed.)

men like Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, and Lord Crewe would find any satisfaction in acting the part of bullies in the Royal Closet, but they had talked so rashly about "guarantees" and were so completely in the hands of the Irish and of the Labour Party, that they would probably be forced to ask for pledges quite inconsistent with the spirit of the Constitution. Even if the creation of 500 were a proper exercise of the prerogative, it was indefensible for any Ministry to ask for hypothetical pledges as to the occasion on which it should be put in notion, and even if it were the constitutional duty of the Sovereign to act in accordance with the advice of his ministers, it could scarcely be regarded as part of his duty to promise in accordance with their advice.

> "If I were the King [continued Mr. Balfour] and found myself in the very difficult position in which the Sovereign is now

(Page 408) LORD LANSDOWNE

> placed, I think I should be disposed to compel my Ministry to show their whole hand. I should say to them—"Am I to understand that, under the threat of leaving me without a Ministry, and the country without a Government, you propose to compel me to give a promise that, under circumstances which no man can foresee, I am to raise to the peerage 500 gentlemen, whose names have not been submitted to me, in order to pass a Bill which has never yet been discussed in Parliament, and which, under the pressure of discussion, may be moulded into some quite unexpected shape? If this be your real policy, although I have no power to prevent it, I must enter my solemn protest against it. My one anxiety is to carry out, in spirit and in letter, the duties of a Constitutional Sovereign; but you are compelling me to exercise those functions in a manner wholly unknown to the Constitution, and utterly contrary to its spirit. As each occasion arises, I conceive it to be my duty to exercise the prerogative so as best to maintain the liberties of my people. You are driving me now to give you a complete power of attorney to use that prerogative in a manner which may suit you best, under circumstances which neither you nor I can forecast; this is not a demand which a Constitutional Ministry should make of a Constitutional Sovereign.
>
> If a protest of this kind were made in the most solemn manner, I think the King would at all events show that he had done his best to maintain the Constitution, and I think the consciences of the Ministry, if that organ is not wholly atrophied, would prick them severely. I do not believe, however, as at present advised, that it would be fair to the King to suggest that he will better his position by attempting, under present circumstances, to change his Government. I consider, as I said before, that such a policy would certainly be ineffectual, that it might be humiliating in its results to the Crown, and might possibly impair its popularity.
>
> I have written the above on the assumption that, terrified by their followers, the Government will use their full power of coercion."

There was nothing very encouraging in this communication, and a month later Lord Lansdowne was given the opportunity of ascertaining His Majesty's views.

(Page 409) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1911]

LORD LANSDOWNE
Note of Conversation with the King, at Windsor Castle. January 27, 1911.

> H.M. told me that he had had some controversy with the Prime Minister as to the propriety of interviews between himself and the leaders of the Opposition. H.M. had, however, insisted, explaining that he did not seek for advice, but desired to obtain knowledge at first hand as to the views of the Opposition. Upon this, the P.M. had reluctantly withdrawn his objection.

The result had been the interview which took place between Mr Balfour and Lord Knollys before the departure of the former from London, and now my presence in H.M.'s room.

I said that I could not conceive that there should be any impropriety in such conversations. As a constitutional Sovereign, H.M. was no doubt obliged to be guided by his Ministers, but this obligation did not seem to me in any way to preclude him from seeking information either as to questions of fact or as to matters of opinion. Suppose, e.g. that Mr. Balfour or I were to contribute an article to one of the magazines upon the constitutional crises: was H.M. not to read it? If this was permissible, I could not see why he should not interrogate us by word of mouth.

H.M. then told me that the P.M. and Lord Crewe had both told him that when Parliament met, finance would, in the first place, have to be dealt with; then the Parliament Bill in the House of Commons, where it would be taken before Easter. H.M.G. expected to pass the Bill through both Houses before the Coronation. Other business of importance would probably be carried over until the autumn.

H.M. went on to say that the two Ministers referred to had assured him that proposals for the amendment of the Parliament Bill would be fully considered in both Houses, and any arguments advanced by the Opposition carefully examined with a view to a "compromise". This conversation, H.M. told me, had taken place before the Cabinet which had just been held, and he thought it possible that the views of his advisers might be modified. H.M. had, however, no doubt that he was correctly representing the views of the P.M. and Lord Crewe, for he had recorded their observations in his notebook.

I said that I thought the language of the two Ministers reasonable. It appeared to me to be in contrast with that which

Lord Crewe had used in the House of Lords when he told us that we should merely be wasting our time if we discussed amendments of the Parliament Bill.

H.M. said that the circumstances were not quite the same, and he observed that it was owing to him that we had been allowed to have the Parliament Bill in the House of Lords at all; but there was obviously no time for discussing it then.

I said that it seemed to me to follow, from what the two Ministers had said, that the situation might be greatly modified as the discussion proceeded. It appeared to be inconceivable that the Parliament Bill should represent the last word of H.M.G. Its provisions were entirely different, in substance and in spirit, from those which had been put forward by the Government during the Constitutional Conference.

Some discussion followed as to the possibility of H.M. being forced to create Peers in order to overcome the resistance of the House of Lords. I could conceive that the step might become inevitable, but it was one which had been universally condemned as violently straining the Constitution. It was a step which I felt sure H.M. would be reluctant to take, and his Ministers not less reluctant to advise; and I thought it not unfair to say that, up to a certain point, we should be justified in bearing this fact in mind when considering whether it was desirable to offer resistance to the Government proposals.

H.M. dwelt on the improbability of Mr. Balfour's being able to form a ministry and to go to the country, supposing the King were to send for him.

I said that I did not differ from H.M., and that if the crisis were to come upon us to-morrow, owing to the rejection of the Parliament Bill, I did not see that Mr. Balfour would stand any chance if the country were to be again appealed to upon what would virtually be the same issue. It might, however, happen that, as the situation developed, the issue might undergo a change. For example, supposing an amendment to be carried for the purpose of safeguarding the Constitution against a violent change during the time which, if the Bill became law, would pass before a reformed House of Lords could be called into existence, a new issue of the kind which I contemplated might arise. Was it conceivable that H.M.'s advisers would desire that he should create 500 peers for the purpose of resisting such a proposal?

I summarised my views by observing—

(1) That I thought H.M. should be careful how he took it

(Page 411) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1911]

for granted that in no circumstances might the House of Lords take a line which would render it impossible for him to overcome them except by the creation of peers (I dwelt upon this because I gathered that Lord Knollys had told H.M. that he was under the impression that the Lords would in no circumstances push the King to extremities); and

(2) That I thought it would be most unwise for any of those concerned, either H.M.G. or the Opposition, or, if I might be permitted to say so, H.M. himself, at this moment to commit themselves finally to any particular line of action, or above allow it to be known that they had so committed themselves.

There has always been much doubt and speculation as to the exact moment when the consent to the creation peers was obtained, and it has been asserted that the necessary guarantees were given before the General Election of December 1910, but there is nothing in the above conversation to show that the decision had yet been taken.

As was to be expected after an unsuccessful election, the party wire-pullers became extremely active, and much pressure was exerted to induce the House of Lords to introduce a Reform Bill at the earliest opportunity. The Whips were very insistent that a Bill should be brought in at once, and in their zeal went so far as to urge that a bad Bill was better than nothing, and that unless something was done promptly the Party would be completely smashed. This attitude was in strange contrast with that of former years, when all efforts of the kind had been denounced as inopportune,

The chief objections to introducing a Bill at this moment were that public attention would be concentrated upon any defects which it might contain, and so distract attention from the defects of the Parliament Bill; and further that it would reveal considerable differences of opinion in the Unionist Party when details came to be discussed. Foremost among those objectors as Lord Rosebery. Writing to Lord Lansdowne early

(Page 412) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911]

in February, he expressed himself as absolutely against the presentation of a Bill, since that could only be done by a Government. For an Opposition to make the attempt would be to invite disaster, and to transfer attack from the Government to the Opposition. Therefore, he was in favour of further Resolutions affirming the belief that the Resolutions of the previous session afforded a fair basis for the reconstitution of the Second Chamber, and the adjustment of its relations with the House of Commons. But he also urged that the Government scheme promised in the Preamble to the Bill should be at least presented before the Bill was passed or even taken into consideration, or a clause might be added to the Bill providing that it should not come into operation until the second Chamber had been reformed as promised by the Government. Other correspondents urged that no Reform Bill should be introduced

until the Parliament Bill had passed through the Commons. Lord Lansdowne was himself rather disposed to agree with Lord Rosebery, but the bulk of the communications received from various quarters pressed for the early introduction of a Bill. Lord Curzon, who naturally carried much weight, was especially insistent upon immediate action; individual peers who had been associated with the question and who were consulted, mostly shared Lord Curzon's views; the Unionist press was almost unanimous in advocating them, and so were the Unionist M.P.s who now looked upon a Reform Bill as a good electioneering asset. The result was that on the same day that the Parliament Bill was introduced in the House of Commons, Lord Lansdowne gave notice of a Bill, amending the Constitution of the House of Lords, this announcement unloosed a fresh flood of correspondence from all kinds of persons who desired either to express approval of the decision, or to make suggestions as to how the reformed House should be constituted and in the former class it is interesting to note the name

of Sir C. Cripps, M.P.,[517] who as Chairman of a large meeting of Unionist members, forwarded a resolution "cordially welcoming the notice of Lord Lansdowne".

As was certain to be the case, the communications from the latter class revealed a great diversity of opinion, ranging from the Duke of Bedford[518] who wanted an Elected Senate, to Lord Robert Cecil, M.P.[519] who strongly deprecated the adoption of too democratic system. There were also many suggestions as to details from such important personages as Mr. Bonar Law,[520] Lord St. Aldwyn and Sir Robert Finlay.[521]

The kind of difficulty which Lord Lansdowne had to face is illustrated by the accompanying letter to Lord Midleton, who had been endeavouring to ascertain the prevailing views of Unionist members of Parliament.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Midleton. Lansdowne House. March 15th, 1911.

> I have heard from various sources that the feeling which you mention prevails amongst the members of what you describe as "the forward party in the House of Commons", but I own that I am not much inclined to be driven from our course by such gusts of opinion. One of their principal apprehensions is, you tell me, that the bill which we shall introduce "will certainly not satisfy the Government". I regard this as beyond question, and it would never enter my head to frame our proposals with the idea that they would willingly be accepted by H.M.G. Their other apprehension, that they might find it impossible to defend our scheme in the constituencies, seems to me rather absurd. As far as I can make out, an almost infinite variety of views prevails amongst our more adventurous supporters. Some of them are, no doubt, in favour of relying entirely, or almost entirely, upon direct election, but I doubt whether they

[517] Charles Alfred Cripps, 1st Baron Parmoor, (1852–1941) was a British politician who crossed the floor from the Conservative to the Labour Party and was a strong supporter of the League of Nations and of Church of England causes. He became Leader of the House of Lords from June 1929 to August 1931. He was the father of Sir Stafford Cripps, who became a Labour M.P. and was a member of the wartime coalition government and later Chancellor of the Exchequer under Clement Atlee from November 1947 to October 1950. (Ed.)
[518] Herbrand Arthur Russell, 11th Duke of Bedford (1858–1940) was an English politician and peer. He was the son of Francis Russell, 9th Duke of Bedford, and his wife Lady Elizabeth Sackville-West. (Ed.)
[519] Edgar Algernon Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 1st Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (1864–1958), known as Lord Robert Cecil from 1868 to 1923, was a British lawyer, politician and diplomat. He was the son of the 3rd Marquess of Salsbury, the former Conservative Prime Minister. He was one of the architects of the League of Nations and his service to the organisation saw him awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937. (Ed.)
[520] Andrew Bonar Law (1858–1923) was a British statesman and politician who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from October 1922 to May 1923.
[521] Robert Bannatyne Finlay, 1st Viscount Finlay, (1842–1929), known as Sir Robert Finlay from 1895 to 1916, was a British barrister and politician who was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain from 1916 to 1919 in the government of the Prime Minister David Lloyd George. (Ed.)

have realised what this means, or the extent of opposition which the proposal would encounter amongst our more moderate supporters.

At the adjourned meeting of House of Commons members,

(Page 414) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911]

which took place on February 28th, it was decided that those present should, if they pleased, send me an unofficial expression of their views. Only two of those who sent in replies went so far as to say that they would have no part of the new House elected by the hereditary peers. The rest were all in favour. Of course you must lay your views fully before the shadow Cabinet, which, I hear, is not to meet until next week.

There can be no doubt that he was right in not attaching too much importance to spasmodic expressions of opinions of this character. Very few Unionist members of Parliament had ever considered the question seriously, and in the hour of need some of them were now ready to take any steps, regardless of objections, which might conceivably meet with the approval of their constituents.

Owing to illness, Lord Lansdowne was prevented from introducing his Reform Bill until May 8th, when he took the opportunity of explaining its provisions. He pointed out that although the Government had linked together Reform and the question of settling difficulties between the two Houses, they had persisted in dealing with the two questions separately, and that the Opposition, considering that they should be dealt with *pari passu*,[522] were forced to take action which should not have devolved upon them. It was proposed that the new House should consist of about 350 members, no peer (except Royal Princes) being summoned unless he were a "Lord of Parliament" as defined in the Bill. Of these, 100 would be elected by the hereditary peers from among such hereditary peers as were qualified under a schedule: 120 would be elected by colleges consisting of Members of Parliament: 100 would be appointed by the Crown in proportion to the strength of parties in the Commons: there were to be sixteen peers who had held high judicial office: seven spiritual Lords: the creation of new hereditary peerages was to be limited to five per year, and peers who were not Lords

(Page 415) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1911]

of Parliament would be eligible for election to the House of Commons. The scheme was generally attributed to Lord Curzon, and it will be observed that its main feature was the abandonment, to a great extent, of the hereditary principle.

These proposals, which really amounted almost to a sentence of death upon the most ancient Legislative chamber in the world, were received by a crowded and attentive House in a dignified if frigid silence, and the pallid and wasted appearance of the speaker, who had but lately recovered from a severe illness, seemed to accentuate the general gloom. Otherwise, Lord Lansdowne had seldom shown to greater advantage, and so great was the confidence and the regard which he enjoyed that there were no recriminations on the part of those who might have justifiably complained that they had been sacrificed without ever having been consulted.

A week later, the second reading was moved, when all the old arguments were repeated by distinguished personages, and the reactionary peers, now generally described by the uncomplimentary title of "Backwoodsmen", made ineffective protests which failed to materialise in the division lobby. The Bill passed, unchallenged, as the Government supporters walked out of the House, but an air of unreality pervaded the whole proceedings, since Lord Morley had intimated that the Parliament Bill would apply to a reformed as well as to an unreformed House, and nothing more was heard of Lord Lansdowne's measure.

[522] On and equal footing. (Ed.)

Thus ended a serious but much belated attempt at House of Lords reform, and although spasmodic efforts have since been made from time to time, it seems still doubtful whether anything ever will be done. The fact is that the desire for reform is confined to a small section of politicians who look further ahead than the ordinary man; but they have no substantial backing in the country, and the House of Commons has no

desire to increase the efficiency of the Second Chamber. When the Conservatives are in office they have no fault to find with the House of Lords; the Liberals appear to be content with the present state of affairs; the Labour Party is not composed solely of revolutionaries, and probably contains many members who are relieved to feel that the means of delaying legislation exist, while wire-pullers and Whips find the House of Lords the most convenient source for replenishing the party funds. On the whole, therefore, it is not impossible that it may reach a membership of over 1000 before anything serious happens to it.

The academic discussions on Reform having terminated, the House of Lords was brought back to realities by the appearance of the Parliament Bill. It had, however, been agreed that the preliminary stages should be unopposed, and the debate on the Second Reading created little interest. When, however, the Committee stage was reached, various amendments were moved and carried by the Opposition. Of these, one of the most important was a proposal by Lord Lansdowne that Bills of a constitutional character should be submitted to a popular vote—the point in fact, which the Opposition leaders had striven for during the Constitutional Conference. This amendment was vigorously debated for two days, and eventually carried against the Government. When the Report stage had been concluded, the position arrived at was that the Commons had been left with the exclusive control of Money Bills, and that the Lords had accepted the curtailment of their power over general legislation. Instead of leaving the Speaker as the sole authority upon what constituted a Money Bill, a Joint Committee had been substituted, and Bills which affected the Constitution were to be referred to the judgment of the electorate. These amendments were not unreasonable, and if the Government had offered any concessions, a conflict might possibly

have been avoided. The private communications, however, which took place between the leaders during the interval between the Report stage of the Bill and the Third Reading were not of a hopeful character.

On July 18th, Mr. Lloyd George met Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, and stated that a pledge to create peers had been obtained from the King as far back as November: that nothing would induce the Government to run the risk of losing the Parliament Bill in the House of Lords; and that the Government were reluctant to create peers.

He also explained that on July 24th, the Prime Minister intended to move that the Lords' Amendments should be taken into consideration, and, in making this motion, to announce categorically that peers would be created. It was understood, however, that the House would not be asked to proceed at once with the consideration of the amendments, and that there should be an interval of a few days, so as to leave room for negotiations.

Mr. Lloyd George also intimated that the Government were prepared to consider whether an official communication of the King's intentions might be made to Lansdowne before July 24. This proposal was put forward with the idea that an announcement coming in this form might be less distasteful to the peers than an announcement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, without any previous intimation to the Lords. He further hinted that the Government might be prepared to concede something upon the proposal to deal specially with the Crown and the Protestant Succession and the proposal to substitute a Joint Committee for the Speaker.

Lord Lansdowne expressed the opinion that, should the Government disagree with the Lords' Amendments, the proper course for them to pursue was to send them back to the House of Lords with a statement of the

(Page 418) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911]

reasons for which they were objected to. This would give the Lords an opportunity for considering their position. The course suggested by the Government was entirely inconsistent with the consideration which one House had a right to expect at the hands of the other, but to this plan Mr. Lloyd George objected on the ground that it might involve a possibility of the loss of the Bill should the Lords insist on their amendments.

The meeting between the Unionist leaders and Mr. Lloyd George was followed on the next day by a conversation between Lord Knollys and Lord Lansdowne.

Memorandum. Lord Lansdowne , July 19, 1911.

> As the result of communications which had passed between Lord Knollys and Mr. Balfour, I asked Lord Knollys to call upon me this evening.
>
> I told him that a suggestion had been made that I should receive a formal intimation, either from His Majesty through his private secretary or from the Prime Minister, to the effect that His Majesty had undertaken to create a number of peers sufficient to secure the passing of the Parliament Bill in its House of Commons shape.
>
> We understood that on Monday next the Prime Minister would announce in the House of Commons that such a creation of peers would be resorted to unless the House of Lords surrendered. Such an announcement, I said, could not fail to have a most exasperating effect upon those peers who were already inclined to oppose the passing of the Parliament Bill at whatever cost, and it was thought by some that it would be possible for them to discuss the situation with less heat if they were made aware by me, at a peers' meeting (probably on Friday), of what was intended.
>
> Lord Knollys asked me whether it was necessary that the communication should be in writing. I replied in the affirmative, and said that in my view the document should contain a categorical statement of His Majesty's intentions. Lord Knollys urged that written communications of the Sovereign's intentions were not usual, and that it would be bringing the King too much into the controversy. I replied that the circumstances were wholly unprecedented, and that it seemed to me impossible to exclude

(Page 419) THE PARLIAMENT BILL[1911]

> the King's name, because no one but His Majesty could create the peers; but I did not myself much care whether the letter was written to me by Lord Knollys or by the Prime Minister on the Kings authority. Lord Knollys promised to consult the Prime Minister at once.
>
> I mentioned to him that I looked forward with the gravest apprehensions to the effects which Mr. Asquith's announcement might have upon the peers. We had all of us anticipated that our amendments would be sent back to us with the usual statement of the House of Commons objections, and that we should be thus given an opportunity of reconsidering the situation. It was, so far as I was aware, an unheard-of thing to throw out our amendments *en bloc*, and to tell us at the same time that, unless we undertook, while the Bill was still in the hands of the House of Commons, to accept it in its House of Commons shape, peers would be created in sufficient numbers to overwhelm our resistance.

Lord Knollys expressed great surprise at my statement, and said that he had no idea that any such procedure was likely to be followed, and that he did not believe the King understood what was proposed. He would certainly repeat to His Majesty what I had said. He said that His Majesty was most reluctant to proceed to the creation of peers, and that he (Lord Knollys) hoped that an intimation that Peers would be created as a last resort would suffice for the purpose of carrying the Bill without material amendments. He said incidentally that it was considered in some quarters that a small creation (say 20) would be enough, but he trusted that even that would not be necessary.

Late at night, Lord Knollys called again to say that he had seen the Prime Minister, who was ready to write, either to Mr. Balfour or to Lord Lansdowne, a letter of the kind which had been discussed, and it was agreed that this should be done unless there was any prospect the Government reconsidering their attitude. The third reading of the Bill was due on the following day, and there was considerable uncertainty as to what might a happen, for I can remember Lord Lansdowne telling me privately that he was in fear of a "revolt".

In moving the third reading, Lord Morley described the Bill as transformed, and complained that a

death-blow had been directed against the authority and responsibility of the House of Commons. To this exaggerated statement, Lord Lansdowne rejoined that the action of the Opposition had been correct and constitutional: they had agreed to the second reading of the Bill because they realised that some adjustment of the relations between the two Houses was required, and that the question had been considered at the General Election, but they had a clear right to amend it in a practical manner. The Opposition were prepared to proceed on constitutional lines and in a conciliatory spirit, but they were not prepared to withdraw from some of their amendments "as long as they were free agents", words which were generally interpreted as an intimation that he and his friends were prepared to give way should the threatened creation of peers be carried into effect. The third reading was passed, but it was now abundantly clear that an unknown number of peers were determined to insist upon the Amendments whatever might be the result.

On the same evening, Mr. Asquith wrote to the two Opposition Leaders informing them that the House of Commons would be asked to disagree with the Lords' Amendments, and that, under the circumstances, "the Government will advise the King to exercise his prerogative to secure the passing into law of the Bill in substantially the same form in which it left the House of Commons, and His Majesty has been pleased to signify that he will consider it his duty to act upon that advice". The battle had therefore begun, and the peers were hurriedly summoned to a meeting at Lansdowne House, there being no room sufficiently large for the purpose available at Westminster. The proceedings are described in the accompanying memorandum by Lord Lansdowne, prepared apparently for the information of the King.

Lord Lansdowne
Note of Meeting held at Lansdowne House on Friday. July 21, 1911.

The meeting was attended by about 200 peers, and was fairly representative.

Lord Lansdowne read the Prime Minister's letter to Mr. Balfour, since published in the newspapers, and explained that, unless he was mistaken, the Parliament Bill would not be sent back to the House of Lords until either (1) the Government had reason to know that it would be accepted by that House substantially in its House of Commons shape, or (2) until a number of peers had been created sufficient to ensure the passing of the Bill in that shape.

Lord Lansdowne explained that this course would have the effect of depriving the House of Lords of their usual opportunity of considering the House of Commons reasons for objecting to the Lord's amendments, and of reconsidering their own position should they desire to do so. This seemed to him a violent and unjustifiable departure from the procedure usually followed in the Case of differences between the two Houses of Parliament.

He said that in his opinion it was now clearly established—

1 That no compromise was possible on the points which the Lords regarded as essential, and on the other hand no concessions upon second or third rate points were likely to be regarded as affording the basis of a compromise;

2. that the Government had obtained from Your Majesty unconditional pledges to create whatever number of peers might be sufficient for their purpose;

3. that it was therefore no longer possible to offer effectual instance to the passing of the Bill, which would certainly become law either with or without the creation of peers.

He summed up briefly the arguments for and against further resistance.

In favour of resistance it might be reasonably argued that anything which had the appearance of surrender would create great discouragement in the Unionist party, and that until peers had actually been created the rank and file would not believe that so revolutionary a measure had been sanctioned.

In favour of "surrender" it might be said that the creation of a large body of new peers, recommended to Your Majesty merely as partisans of the present Government, would destroy the independence of the House of Lords, and deprive it even of the slender opportunities left to it under the provisions of the Parliament Bill. Such a creation would, moreover, throw discredit upon our institutions, and render us ridiculous in the eyes of the whole civilised world. Moreover, even if we were prepared to face these consequences, we should not be saved from the passing of the Bill.

Lord Lansdowne allowed it to be seen that in his view the more prudent course might be to allow the Bill to pass, the peers of course making it clear that they accepted no responsibility for it, and would, whenever the opportunity presented itself, take steps to restore the balance of the constitution.

He did not, however, ask the peers present to arrive at any decision and advised them, on the contrary, to await the statement which would be made by the Prime Minister on Monday.

Several speakers followed, and the opinions expressed were in marked conflict.

Lord Selborne,[523] in a speech of great force and earnestness, expressed the view that no course could be more disastrous than that of surrendering until the opponents of the Bill were actually outvoted in the House of Lords.

[523] William Waldegrave Palmer, 2nd Earl of Selborne (1859–1942), styled Viscount Wolmer between 1882 and 1895, was a politician and colonial administrator, who served as High Commissioner for Southern Africa. (Ed.)

Similar views were expressed by Lord Halsbury with great vigour, by the Duke of Bedford, Lord Salisbury,[524] and Lord Willoughby de Broke[525] and in more cautious terms by the Duke of Norfolk.[526]

On the other hand, Lord St. Aldwyn, in a speech which produced a deep impression, dwelt upon the impossibility of preventing the Parliament Bill from taking its place on the statute Book, and the deplorable consequences of submitting to a large creation of peers. Although we might be applauded for our courage if we "died in the last ditch", the deliberate judgment of the country, when it had had time to reflect, would be against us.

Lord Curzon spoke with much ability in the same sense.

Lord Lansdowne is inclined to think that a majority of the peers present were in favour of the view he expressed but a large number not only differed but acutely resented the suggestion that they should desist until they were beaten in the House by H. M. Government aided by a reinforcement of Radical peers. They hold that the House of Lords has already

gone great lengths to meet Your Majesty's Ministers, that it is to going to be treated with great discourtesy by Your Majesty's Ministers, and that as trustees of the constitutional rights which they at present possess they are not at liberty to surrender them in deference to a mere threat.

The peers referred to will, in Lord Lansdowne's opinion, certainly not recede from their attitude.

During the course of the discussion, one or two speakers suggested that the creation of a comparatively small number of peers might be sufficient to secure the passing of the Bill, without "swamping" the House of Lords to such an extent as to place it entirely in the hands of the Liberal Government.

The impression left upon me at this meeting was that for once in a way—Lord Lansdowne showed some slight deficiency in the art of leadership. He had personally made up his mind as to the course which should be followed, however unpalatable it might be to some of his followers, and it seemed, therefore, that he ought to have spoken with greater decision, and to have intimated that he would resign if his advice was not followed. Instead of doing so, he appeared to invite expressions of opinion, and the opportunity was at once seized by Lord Halsbury, Lord Selborne, Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Willoughby de Broke to raise the standard of revolt, and their vigorous denunciations of surrender met with considerable approval. No vote was taken, but my impression was that out of the 200 present, about 50 belonged to the so-called Die-Hard category.

One of the surprises disclosed at Lansdowne House was that the two Unionist Whips had deserted to Lord Halsbury's side, and another hurried meeting of some of those who remained faithful to Lord Lansdowne was immediately held at Lord Curzon's house, with the object of impressing upon the general body of peers the necessity of following the official leaders of the party. Lord Lansdowne himself was disinclined to put any pressure upon them, but Lord Curzon with his habitual

[524] James Edward Hubert Gascoyne-Cecil, 4th Marquess of Salisbury, (1861–1947), known as Viscount Cranborne from 1868 to 1903, was a politician. (Ed.)
[525] Richard Greville Verney, 19th Baron Willoughby de Broke (1869–1923) was a British peer and conservative politician. (Ed.)
[526] Henry Fitzalan-Howard, 15th Duke of Norfolk (1847–1917), styled Lord Maltravers until 1856 and Earl of Arundel and Surrey between 1856 and 1860, was a British Unionist politician and philanthropist. He served as Postmaster General between 1895 and 1900. (Ed.)

force and energy was quite ready to undertake the task of conversion. It was by no means easy to ascertain how far the cleavage had gone. As the majority of peers habitually keep away from the House as much as possible, it is always somewhat problematical as to how they may vote; what made the difficulty much greater in this instance was that nearly all the peers concerned were Conservatives, and a sound Conservative might be just as likely to vote with Lord Halsbury as with Lord Lansdowne. The probability was that the majority would follow the latter, if only because of the confidence in his leadership, and some of the prominent figures in the House, such as Lord Curzon, Lord Rosebery, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord St. Aldwyn, Lord Cromer, and Lord Midleton, had ranged themselves on his side. Still, the Die-Hard peers were a formidable body, and included ex-Ministers like Lord Halsbury, Lord Selborne, Lord Milner, and a back-bencher, Lord Willoughby de Broke, who proved a most valuable asset. Some years earlier Lord Lansdowne had asked my advice with regard to the choice of a Whip. I strongly urged him to appoint Lord Willoughby de Broke, and shall always believe that had he done so the split in the party might have been minimised, if not avoided altogether. Lord Willoughby de Broke was not a man of high abilities, but he possessed an attractive personality, a real political flair, experience of the House of Commons, unbounded energy, and a marked talent for forcible and humorous platform oratory. Such a man was invaluable in an internal crisis, and exercised an influence not to be measured by pure intellectual capacity.

Whilst the two sections of the Unionist peers were endeavouring to circumvent each other and to ascertain their respective numbers, Lord Lansdowne had another interview with the King.

(Page 425) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1911]

Lord Lansdowne
Memorandum. Lansdowne House, July 24th, 1911.

> I had an interview with the King at twelve o'clock this morning. His Majesty mentioned to me that both he and his advisers were most anxious to avoid a large creation of peers. The Prime Minister had indeed said to him that if he were able to assure a majority of one for the Bill he would be satisfied.
>
> His description of the course contemplated by his Ministers agreed with that given by Mr. Lloyd George on a previous occasion. He asked me whether that course was the usual one. I replied that it certainly was not and described to his Majesty what I conceived to be the proper procedure when the two Houses of Parliament differed. His Majesty asked me whether it would make any difference if a course less offensive to the peers were to be resorted to. I said that I thought it would have great difference if the question had been so treated at the first but that I was afraid that after the Prime Minister's announcement, a change of programme, which it would be difficult for Ministers to make, would not produce much effect.
>
> His Majesty observed that the Prime Minister had suggested that, after the adjournment of the debate which was to begin to-day, there might be some kind of a conference between the leaders.

Mr. Balfour had in the meanwhile given no very definite lead, and as the Halsbury party were reported to be growing in numbers, it was thought advisable to bring him, as head of the party, to the assistance of Lord Lansdowne. Accordingly, at the instigation of Lord Curzon, he was persuaded to write a letter which purported to be a reply to a perplexed peer who required advice, and I learnt, to my surprise, that I had been selected as this imaginary correspondent. The letter duly appeared in the press on July 25, and was greeted by the faithful as indicating the clear duty of the Unionist Lords. In this letter Mr. Balfour unequivocally committed himself to the support of Lord

Lansdowne. "I agree", he wrote, "with the advice Lord Lansdowne has given to his friends: with Lord Lansdowne I stand; with Lord Lansdowne I am ready, if need be, to fall." The situation, he held, was much misunderstood by many Unionists, and terms such as surrender and compromise" were inapplicable.

On the day that this letter appeared, a meeting of the Halsbury party was held at Grosvenor House, where Mr. Balfour's counsels did not meet with much respect; and in the evening there took place the celebrated Halsbury banquet. It had been stated that this function was not intended as a demonstration against the party leaders, and the speakers, who included Lord Halsbury himself, Lord Selborne, Lord Milner, Mr. Wyndham,[527] Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Sir E. Carson,[528] and Mr. F. E. Smith,[529] were careful to announce that although they regarded both Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne with respect and admiration, they felt it to be their duty to fight to the last; the underlying tone, however, being complete repudiation of Mr. Balfour's advice.

The all-important task of ascertaining the respective numbers of the two factions was now undertaken by the unofficial Committee which had been organised by Lord Curzon. The nominal strength of the House at that time was over 600, and the Government could not count upon more than about 75 supporters. Letters and confidential circulars were sent to all Conservative and Liberal Unionist peers who were not already pledged, with the result that over 200 signified in writing that they were ready to follow Lord Lansdowne, and about 50 announced that they would take the opposite course, although expressing, in almost every instance, deep personal regret at differing from him. But the promises of the 200 did not include any undertaking to vote for the Government, and it was therefore obvious

that if Lord Halsbury could collect more than 75 followers the Bill would be definitely lost, and it became necessary to take the unpleasant step of ascertaining whether a sufficient number of Unionist peers were prepared if necessary to sacrifice themselves by voting for the Government. The official Unionist leaders were not prepared to take this course themselves, or to give any advice on the subject, as such a proceeding would have caused intense indignation and accentuated the split in the party. It was, therefore, expedient to make private inquiries, and as the result it was discovered that about 40 or 50 peers, prominent amongst whom were Lord St. Aldwyn and Lord Cromer, were willing to make personal sacrifice involving much obloquy. Whether this self-sacrificing action would be necessary depended, of course, upon the number of the Halsbury peers, and only a few days before the fateful debate I believed that these did not amount to more than 70. They had, however, been careful not to disclose any information on the subject, and in the end they were able to muster 114 votes. It had been feared that the government intended to proceed with the creation of Peers before the debate took place—

[527] George Wyndham, (1863–1913) was a British Conservative politician, statesman and man of letters. Wyndham was appointed Under-Secretary of State for War under Lord Salisbury, which he remained until 1900. He was closely involved in Irish affairs. Having been private secretary to Arthur Balfour during the years around 1890 when Balfour was Chief Secretary for Ireland, Wyndham was himself made Chief Secretary by Salisbury in 1900. He continued in this position after Balfour succeeded as Prime Minister in July 1902, but was taken into the Cabinet. Wyndham furthered the 1902 Land Conference and also successfully saw the significant Land Purchase (Ireland) Act 1903 into law. This change in the law ushered in the most radical change in history in Ireland's land ownership. Before it, Ireland's land was largely owned by landlords; within years of the Acts, most of the land was owned by their former tenants, who had been supported in their purchases by government subsidies. This could without exaggeration be called the most radical change in Irish life in history. (Ed.)

[528] Edward Henry Carson, Baron Carson (1854–1935) was from 1900 to 1921 known as Sir Edward Carson. He was an Irish unionist politician, barrister and judge, who was the Attorney General and Solicitor General for England, Wales and Ireland as well as the First Lord of the Admiralty for the British Royal Navy. (Ed.)

[529] Now Lord Birkenhead. (LN). Frederick Edwin Smith, 1st Earl of Birkenhead, (1872–1930) was a British Conservative politician and barrister who in the early 20th century, became Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain. He was a skilled orator, noted for his staunch opposition to Irish nationalism and for his wit. (Ed.)

an action which would have produced much additional exasperation—but from private communications which took place between Lord Cromer and a prominent member of the Government it appeared that the Government had a abandoned this intention but were prepared in the last resort to create "at least 300 peers" in order to safeguard the Bill against any possible opposition.

The division in the Unionist ranks was embarrassing to the Government, for it was extremely doubtful whether they could command a majority; but after a period of hesitation, it was decided to take the risk of rejection, and on August 9th the final debate, which was to determine not only the fate of the Bill but the fate of the House of Lords, began.

(Page 428) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911]

In an experience extending over thirty years, I cannot remember any debate in the House of Lords which approached the interest on this occasion. As a rule, debates are conducted on party lines: the result is scarcely ever in doubt: everyone knows beforehand what will be said, and speeches exercise little or no effect. But now the case was completely different, for no one could predict the result with certainty; every vote—strange to say—was of value, and how those votes would be cast depended upon what fell from the speakers. Besides, the atmosphere of the House was entirely changed. Under ordinary circumstances the House or Lords presents an appearance of polite restraint which seems to represent detachment almost amounting to indifference, and party animosity is concealed under a veil of studied courtesy; but now, for the first time, the peers abandoned their habitual restraint and gave vent to the vehement feelings which the situation had provoked. In a word, they behaved like ordinary human beings; nor did the somewhat pedantic attitude of Lord Morley, who, in the place of Lord Crewe, officiated as leader, tend to alleviate the tension. The position of Lord Lansdowne was exceptionally difficult. Hitherto he had led an unbroken party with unchallenged authority; trusted, admired, and regarded with affection, his decision had been accepted without questioning. Now he was faced with a party irretrievably divided, and confronted with the opposition of friends and colleagues, some of whom were even ready to impute the charge of treachery. In this painful position he acquitted himself with his usual tact, dignity, and ability, and must have carried conviction to all but those who were temporarily blind to facts and to ordinary prudence.

As the debate proceeded, temper rose, and two speeches in particular provoked special indignation amongst the Halsbury party. One was from Lord

(Page 429) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1911]

Camperdown,[530] who announced his intention of voting with the Government, and thereby elicited a declaration from the Duke of Norfolk that he with his friends would consequently vote with Lord Halsbury; and the other from Lord Curzon. Lord Curzon had unfortunately in the past derided the probability of a creation of peers, and had urged his friends to fight in the last ditch against the Bill. He had now not only changed his opinion, but had taken the most active part in countering the Die-Hard campaign, and his conduct was therefore all the more bitterly resented. Emotion rose to an almost painful pitch when Lord Morley, whose manner showed that he was deeply moved, read out the statement that in the event of defeat "a sufficient number of peers would be created to guard against any possible combination of the different parties in Opposition by which the Parliament Bill might be exposed a second time to defeat". This announcement ought to have finally dispelled all illusions, and probably affected many votes; but the Halsbury party still professed disbelief, and the debate was continued with unabated fire—Lord Rosebery declaring, in an impassioned speech, that in order to save the degradation of the House he would vote for the Bill, but would never enter its precincts again. Amid intense excitement the division took place, and the tragic suspense was prolonged until the last moment. When the figures (131 to 114) were announced, it was realised that the Bill had only been saved by the votes of Unionist peers who had sacrificed themselves in order to prevent a worse catastrophe. A

[530] Robert Adam Philips Haldane Haldane-Duncan, 3rd Earl of Camperdown (1841–1918) was styled Viscount Duncan from 1859 to 1867. He was a British Liberal politician. (Ed.)

scrutiny of the division list revealed the fact that the minority included many peers of little political experience and some who had actually just taken the oath. The fury of the defeated was directed chiefly against the Unionists who had voted With the Government, and who had in reality played a more creditable part than the mere abstainers; but the

(Page 430) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911]

and ill-feeling caused by the crisis had gravely impaired the solidity and morale of the party, as was to be clearly demonstrated before long.

Out of the mass of private correspondence originating from the passage of the Parliament Bill, the following letter from Lord Lansdowne to a relative is quoted as a simple explanation of his action:

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Wicklow.[531] *Derreen, Aug, 31st, 1911*

> It was very good of you to think of writing to me. I never supposed for an instant that you would willingly have deserted, and although I did not know the reasons which weighed specially with you, and should have liked to have had an opportunity of discussing them with you, I felt sure that it was only because you had strong convictions that you refused me your support. I am afraid, however, that I remain quite unconvinced by your main argument. You do not believe that the Government "would have had the courage to carry out their threat", and you think that "they have been successful in a great game of political bluff". As to this, I make two observations. It is, I venture to think, absolutely certain that the Government would, if they had lost their Bill, have proceeded to a large creation of peers. No Government, however unscrupulous, could have dared to make, on the express authority of the Sovereign, the kind of announcement which Morley made in the House of Lords without subsequently making good their threat should the circumstances have rendered it necessary.
>
> But even if we could assume that this Government meant to bluff, and would have endeavoured to find some means of avoiding so violent a step, can we bring ourselves to believe that their supporters would have allowed them to shirk? I will undertake to say that if Asquith had tried to evade their pledges, their Irish and Labour supporters would have turned him out of office within three months.
>
> I will make only one other observation. You say, "I could not bring myself to believe that it could ever be right to pursue a course which appeared to be expedient in preference to one which one felt to be honest". I cannot see where the question of honesty and dishonesty comes in, and I feel sure that when

(Page 431) THE PARLIAMENT BILL [1911]

> You wrote these words you had no idea of suggesting that those who differed from you, deliberately preferred the course which they thought expedient to that which honesty dictated.

There are still many who hold that the decision of the Unionist leaders was wrong, and that the Government would never have proceeded to extremities; but there are two incontrovertible facts which no ingenuity can dispose of. The first is that the consent of the Crown having been obtained to create as many peers as were required, further resistance had become useless. The second is that, by general admission, there was not the slightest prospect that a third general election would result in an opposition majority. One of the peculiarities situation was that in spite of the convulsions at Westminster, the country showed only a faint interest in the constitutional question, and that interest was quickly eclipsed by a big railway strike and the Agadir crisis, when Europe was again brought to the brink of War through

[531] Ralph Francis Howard, 7th Earl of Wicklow (1877–1946) was an Irish aristocrat and politician. The index has a misprint and lists him as the 17th Earl. (Ed.)

the aggressive policy of Germany. Looking back, after an interval of eighteen years, it is difficult to resist the melancholy conclusion that the humiliating defeat of the Unionist party over the Parliament Bill was due more to the tactical error of rejecting the Budget of 1909 than to any other cause.

CHAPTER XVIII

INTERREGNUM [1911]

(Page 432)

Early in November 1911 the political world was provided with a surprise by the unexpected announcement of Mr. Balfour's resignation. At a hurriedly summoned meeting of his constituents in the City, he explained that it was due to the state of his health, but it was an open secret that the malcontents in the party were determined to get rid of him, partly on account of his dubious attitude towards Tariff Reform, and partly on account of his action in connection with the Parliament Bill, and a so-called "Halsbury Club" had, indeed, been founded apparently for the purpose of glorifying an act of party indiscipline. Mr. Balfour's intentions had been communicated beforehand to Lord Lansdowne, but not, apparently, to other colleagues.

Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Balfour. Nov. 2nd 1911.

> Your decision fills me with sadness, and I am afraid I think it not only a misfortune but a mistake.
>
> I hold this view without disputing your fundamental proposition. I understand your weariness. I realise that you might not improbably find it impossible to take office a year or two hence. But I think the moment ill-chosen. This for two reasons:
>
> 1. It is not separated by a sufficient interval of time from the events of last August and the sequelae of those events. To the ordinary spectator it will seem that you have been driven from office by a successful and unscrupulous cabal.
>
> And many of your supporters will say that you are depriving

(Page 433) INTERREGNUM [1911]

> them of your guidance at the very moment when your followers, even those who had been running riot, were coming to heel, and when the party was longing to pull itself together under a lead which no one else can give it.
>
> 2. It is also ill-chosen because the change will take place at a time when the country is threatened—both at home and abroad—by dangers and difficulties innumerable. There is no quarter of the globe in which serious trouble may not arise at any moment, and at home there is a state of unrest the like of which none of us can remember.
>
> People will say that, even at the cost of grave personal inconvenience, your first duty is to remain at the head of your party.
>
> I will say nothing of my personal feelings, because I am sure you understand them. But if you are no longer to lead us, I do not see how I can usefully stay where I am. This is, however, a very subordinate matter.
>
> Austen came to see me about another matter, and was dismayed when I told him that you had been seriously considering the question of retirement.

The appeal was made in vain. Mr. Balfour retired, but retired with dignity, showing no trace of resentment at ingratitude after a period of twenty years of leadership; and the enthusiastic welcome which he received from all parts of the House upon his first appearance after resignation might justly

have been construed as a censure upon the intrigues which had undermined his position. It is possible that he relinquished an ungrateful post with secret satisfaction, but his retirement was a severe blow to Lord Lansdowne. The two were not only the closest personal friends, but had worked in complete harmony, and Lord Lansdowne was with difficulty dissuaded from following his example. He was, however, induced to remain, and continued to cooperate on the same friendly terms with the new leader, Mr. Bonar Law.

The passing of the Parliament Act, which reduced the House of Lords technically to the position of one of

(Page 434) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911]

the weakest Second Chambers in the world—although its influence is still more considerable than might be supposed—had the natural effect of diminishing the attendance of its members and of depriving debates of interest, in spite of the fact that it contained some of the most able and experienced men in the country. The depressing condition into which the House of Lords had temporarily sunk was accompanied by difficulties in the Unionist party, the resignation of Mr. Balfour having caused the quarrels over Tariff Reform to break out again with increased bitterness. The main difference had arisen over the vexed question of a referendum on the taxation of food, and whether Mr. Balfour's pledges on the subject were to be held binding or not. The chief advocates of Tariff Reform were continually complaining that their efforts were hampered by the efforts of Unionist Free Traders; while these protested vigorously against fighting the Government with what they described as the millstones of food taxes hanging round their necks. Difficulties reached their climax after the annual conference of Unionist Associations, which was held at the Albert Hall in November, when Lord Lansdowne announced the decision to retain as part of the party programme the duty on foreign wheat, subject to certain conditions. The effect of this declaration upon the party was such that both Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne subsequently contemplated resignation, and the latter was with difficulty persuaded to abandon the intention in deference to urgent entreaties from prominent members of the party. A letter written by Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Harold Cox[532] in 1913 recalls the unfortunate episode:

> You, perhaps, do not carry in your mind as distinctly as I do the memory of the events which followed the Albert Hall meeting. At that moment it looked as if nothing could save us from a schism which would have split the party from top to bottom. Both to Bonar Law and myself it seemed that the

(Page 435) INTERREGNUM [1911-14]

> only course open to us was the resignation of our leadership — amongst other reasons for this, that it appeared virtually certain that as soon as the food duties were dropped, those who were against Tariff Reform of any kind would immediately agitate for its complete abandonment. But practically the whole Unionist party in the House of Commons sent a memorial to Bonar Law in which they undertook, if food taxes were dropped, the rest of the tariff programme should be loyally supported. We did not think that we had a right to resist the appeal which was made to us, and the situation was saved upon this basis; but we had to put our pride in our pockets, and I do not think that either of us would do so a second time.

The crisis had been successfully surmounted and food taxes disappeared henceforth from the official programme, but it was evident that the leaders had not been made acquainted with the real opinions of their followers, and there was nothing so far to show that any advantage had been gained by getting rid of Mr. Balfour.

The history of domestic politics during the whole of 1913 and the greater part of 1914 is little more than a record of futility. The Parliament Act had already proved a failure, and the Unionist party, still rent

[532] Harold Cox (1859–1936) was a Liberal MP for Preston from 1906 to 1910. (Ed.)

by internal dissensions, was making desperate efforts to force the Government to again take the opinion of the country upon Home Rule before it came into operation, and opportunities provided by the Marconi Scandal[533] and the Sex War were fully exploited, without much success. Party feeling continued to grow more bitter, disorderly scenes in the House of Commons became more frequent, and there were clear signs that the Ulstermen were determined to resist Home Rule for Ireland, if necessary, by force. Nevertheless, moderate opinion did not despair of an Irish settlement by compromise, as is shown in the following letter from Lord Lansdowne to Lord Derby,[534] dated September 1912:

> I share your feeling that we ought to be extremely cautious in the language which we use as to the suggestion of a settlement

(Page 436) LORD LANSDOWNE [1911-14]

> by consent. If we are not careful, it is quite likely that our opponents will manoeuvre us into a position which will be tactically disadvantageous. I would therefore say nothing at all suggestive of the idea that we should contemptuously reject any overture which might be made to us. On the other hand, I do not think it is our business to make such an overture; nor do 1 think we could listen to a proposal for negotiations in which it would be taken for granted that the present Home Rule Bill held the field. An open conference would be another matter, but I do not for a moment believe that Redmond will allow Asquith to offer anything of the kind. I remain of opinion that a general election would, from our point of view, be far the best solution of the difficulty.
>
> Bonar Law has been staying with me here, and what I have written above is, I think, in accordance with the views which he holds.
>
> Carson's language at Durham was no doubt strong, but he is fighting his own hand, and no one has a right to regard his utterances as committing the Unionist party. I do not, however, interpret his words as an absolute refusal to 'entertain "any idea of a conference".

Early in 1914, the situation in Ireland was becoming every day more intolerable, while party passions in England were rising to a height unknown for more than half a century. The Government accused the Opposition of planning a civil war, and the Opposition suspected the Government of an intention to seize Belfast and to use the fleet for the purpose. Then the Ulstermen began their military preparations; a number of officers at the Curragh sent in their resignations upon being told that they might be required to serve against the Ulster loyalists; the Secretary of State for War was obliged to send in his resignation in consequence of additions to a letter approved by the rest of the Cabinet; two officers of high rank also resigned from the Army Council, and the Prime Minister was forced to take over the War Office himself. The situation of the Government was becoming more and more critical; they had lost much of their prestige both in Parliament

(Page 437) INTERREGNUM [1914]

And in the country, and were harassed by the threat of labour troubles, by the loss of Bills, by the Female Suffrage movement, by the discontent of their supporters, and above all by the growing danger

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[533] The Marconi scandal broke in mid-1912. Allegations were made that highly placed members of the Liberal government under the Prime Minister H. H. Asquith had profited by improper use of information about the government's intentions with respect to the Marconi Company. They had known that the government was about to issue a lucrative contract to the British Marconi company for the Imperial Wireless Chain and had bought shares in an American subsidiary. (Ed.)

[534] The 15th Earl of Derby died in 1893 and the 16th in 1908. By 1914, Villiers Stanley (1865–1948) was 17th Earl of Derby styled The Hon. Edward Stanley from 1886–93 and Lord Stanley from 1893 to 1908. He was a peer, soldier, Conservative politician, diplomat and racehorse owner. He was twice Secretary of State for War and also served as British Ambassador to France. (Ed.)

in Ireland, where there was every sign of fighting, not only in Ulster but also in the Southern Provinces. The dreaded anniversary of the 12th of July was passed without an outbreak, but just as the final climax was approaching over the Amending Bill, it was unexpectedly announced that, on the initiation of the King, a conference between the leaders would take place at Buckingham Palace, with the Speaker[535] in the chair. The members of the conference were, on the one side, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Dillon,[536] and Mr. Redmond; on the other, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Lansdowne, Sir E. Carson, and Captain Craig.[537]

This meeting was regarded with little favour in Liberal and Labour circles, and Lord Lansdowne does not seem to have entertained much hope of success. In a letter to Lord Stamfordham,[538] of July 20th, he undertook to do his best to promote a settlement, but thought that before summoning the Conference some bases of preliminary agreement ought to have been ascertained, whereas they appeared to be non-existent; also that the difficulty of the task would be increased through there being no reference for guidance, and the necessity for secrecy.

The Conference, as has been explained by Lord Ullswater[539] confined itself almost entirely to an endeavour to draw a suitable frontier between Ulster and the rest of Ireland—an extremely difficult task, as the Protestants and Catholics were inextricably intermixed.

After sitting for four days, the negotiations finally broke down over the division of the county of Tyrone, which seems a somewhat insufficient reason; but, as Lord Ullswater explains, although the English representatives

at the Conference were authorized to come to an agreement on behalf of their respective parties, neither the Ulster nor the Nationalist members were fully accredited plenipotentiaries, and were under the orders of their most extreme supporters.

A few days later, the outbreak of the Great War summarily put an end to the Home Rule question, to Female Suffrage, Plural Voting, Tariff Reform, Welsh Church Bills, Marconi Scandals, and to other matters which had for some time so violently agitated the political world.

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[535] James William Lowther, 1st Viscount Ullswater (*See footnote on page 370.* Ed.)
[536] John Dillon (1851–1927) was an Irish politician from Dublin, who served as a Member of Parliament (MP) for over 35 years and was the last leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. (Ed.)
[537] James Craig, 1st Viscount Craigavon (1871–1940), was a leading Irish unionist and a key architect of Northern Ireland as a devolved region within the United Kingdom. During the Home Rule Crisis he defied the British government in preparing an armed resistance in Ulster to an all-Ireland parliament. He accepted partition as a final settlement, securing the opt out of six Ulster counties from the dominion statehood accorded Ireland under the terms of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty.
[538] Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur John Bigge, 1st Baron Stamfordham (1849–1931) was a British Army officer and courtier. He was Private Secretary to Queen Victoria during the last few years of her reign, and to George V during most of his reign. (Ed.)
[539] *A Speaker's Commentaries*, by Viscount Ullswater. (LN)

CHAPTER XIX

THE OPENING YEARS OF THE GREAT WAR

(Page 439)

Although the war clouds had been gathering over Europe for years, the storm, when it came, came with almost dramatic suddenness. For a few days at the end of July and the opening days of August the Liberal Government seemed to think that Britain could remain neutral. A couple of short sentences in Lord Oxford and Asquith's *Memories and Reflections* record the fact that "Bonar Law and Lansdowne came to see me early this morning (August 3rd). They were in general agreement, but laid great stress upon Belgian neutrality"—a bald statement which shows little recognition of one of the most important events in our history.

The acute period of the crisis arrived (as had often been predicted) during a week end when the various political chiefs were scattered in the country, but, thanks to the energy of the present Lord Lloyd,[540] of General Sir Henry Wilson,[541] and Mr. Maxse, the Unionist leaders were brought hurriedly back to London, and at a little meeting late on the Sunday[542] night at Lansdowne House, which was of infinitely greater importance than other gatherings at the same place which have made much noise in the world, it was decided to offer full support to the Government in the event of war. It was rightly considered that it would be inadvisable to mark as "Private" the historic note to the Prime Minister, which was taken by Lord Lansdowne's car to Downing Street on the Monday morning:

(Page 440) LORD LANSDOWNE [1914]

> Dear Mr. Asquith,— Lord Lansdowne and I feel it our duty to inform you that in our opinion, as well as that of all the colleagues whom we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honour and security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in supporting France and Russia at the present juncture, and we offer our unhesitating support to the Government in any measures they may consider necessary for that object.—Yours very truly, A. Bonar Law.

It would be impossible to estimate too highly the importance of this assurance: for judging from the following conversation with Lord Haldane, there was still considerable reluctance to despatch the Expeditionary Force:

Lord Lansdowne. Note of conversation with Lord Haldane. Aug 4th 1914

> I told him that we were strongly of opinion that it would have been desirable, if possible, to send out the Expeditionary Force, or a portion of it, to the seat of war at the very outset.
>
> Lord Haldane said that he was glad to have an opportunity of speaking to me upon the subject. The Cabinet had carefully considered the question of sending out the Expeditionary Force, and still had in mind the possibility of despatching it. They had, however, come to the conclusion that it would have been unwise to take this step at the very outset, for several reasons.
>
> 1. The despatch of so large a portion of the Home Force before the completion of mobilisation would have dangerously weakened this country, and would have rendered it impossible to send the Fleet far from our own shores. If the country had been denuded of the Fleet, Germany might have been tempted to attempt a coup.

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[540] Then the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George. (*See footnote to page 365.* Ed.)

[541] Field Marshal Sir Henry Hughes Wilson, 1st Baronet (1864–1922) was one of the most senior British Army staff officers of the First World War and was briefly an Irish unionist politician. After retiring from the army Wilson served briefly as a Member of Parliament, and as security advisor to the Northern Ireland government. He was assassinated by two IRA gunmen in 1922. (Ed.)

[542] August 2nd, 1914 (LN)

2. If we had sent 100,000 men to the German frontier, the German Army would have made a prodigious effort to surround and annihilate our force.

3. The neutrality of Italy enabled France to use, on the German frontier, a larger number of troops, who would have been otherwise employed in watching the Italian Army.

Lord Haldane added that the French Ambassador was now quite happy as to the part which we were about to take. He also observed that it was clearly recognised by both sides that our liability to send out the Expeditionary Force was one to which we could not be expected to give effect except in circumstances which enabled us to do so without incurring too serious a risk. If there was an implied engagement, it was quite a different one from that implied in the arrangement under which France had undertaken to keep her Fleet in the Mediterranean on the understanding that ours was concentrated in the North Sea.

It will not escape notice that this opinion of Lord Haldane is in direct conflict with the statement made in his own book, as well as with those made by Lord Grey or Fallodon and others, in which he is represented to have urged the immediate despatch of all the six divisions. Perhaps in his interview with Lord Lansdowne he was only expressing the views of the majority in the Cabinet; but, in any case, the first four divisions started on August 12th.

It is curious to note in this connection that, in *Politicians and the War*, Lord Beaverbrook, who claims to have been in the confidence of Ministers and ex-Ministers at the time, asserts that Lord Northcliffe,[543] one of Lord Haldane's most violent opponents, "came to Mr. Churchill[544] and protested strongly against the movement of the troops. I would ascribe this action in his case to a confusion of mind on military topics". As an illustration of confusion of mind, it may be recalled that a few days later the Harmsworth press was engaged in vehemently exhorting the public to continue "Business as usual"!

The pitiable vacillation which characterised the Cabinet has been frequently disclosed by various authorities, and additional light has been thrown upon the situation by the publication in 1928 of the so-called *Morley Memorandum*. As the result of the pledge given by the Opposition leaders, the Cabinet Ministers who had been organising resistance to intervention, and threatening resignation, collapsed; and eventually two only, Lord Morley

and Mr. John Burns,[545] adhered to their convictions and left the Government. A letter from Lord Morley shows the personal regard which he entertained for an old political opponent:

Lord Morley to Lord Lansdowne. Aug. 6, 1914.

It was an irresistible impulse in me to bid you farewell, in spite of the deluge. And I was sure that you would not take it amiss, for your indulgence and consideration since I entered the

[543] *See footnote on page 198*

[544] Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874–1965) was a statesman, military officer, and writer who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. For some 62 of the years between 1900 and 1964, he was an MP. He was for most of his career a member of the Conservative Party, which he led from 1940 to 1955 but he was a member of the Liberal Party from 1904 to 1924. (Ed.)

[545] John Elliot Burns (1858–1943) was an English trade unionist and politician, particularly associated with London politics and Battersea. He was a socialist and then a Liberal Member of Parliament and Minister. When the Liberal cabinet made a decision for war on 2 August 1914, he resigned and played no further roll in politics. (Ed.)

House of Lords have never failed me. Pray believe that I am very sensible of it. I doubt if I shall ever draw upon it again.

On the whole, the Germans may be accounted as distinctly unlucky in making war upon us at a moment when a Liberal Government was in office, for it is inconceivable that a Conservative Government, under similar circumstances, could have received assurances of support from a united Liberal party. Instead, therefore, of having to deal with an Administration which had brought Ireland to the verge of civil war, and had shown itself incapable of coping successfully with Mrs. Pankhurst,[546] the Germans found themselves faced with a united nation, determined to carry the struggle to the bitter end if necessary.

From the early days of the War, Lord Lansdowne was taken into the counsels of the Cabinet, more especially as regarding our relations with the Allies and neutrals, and as an instance of his methodical industry, it may be mentioned that he made a daily precis of all the more important Foreign Office telegrams received from August 1914 until he joined the first Coalition Government. Amongst many other activities, he became Chairman of the Man-Power Committee, and was head of the Red Cross Society. Lady Lansdowne presided over the Officers' Families Fund, the headquarters of which were established at Lansdowne House; Bowood was

converted into a hospital, and both sons, Lord Kerry and Lord Charles Mercer Nairne,[547] rejoined their former regiments.

It was not long before Lord Lansdowne was fated to realise the full tragedy of the War in its most cruel aspect, for his second son, a young man of great personal attraction and promise, to whom he was devotedly attached, was killed in France at the end of October. The blow was one from which he never entirely recovered, although the letters written to sympathizing friends show a fine spirit of fortitude and a determination to carry on his public work. His health, however, had begun to give way, and during the short autumn session he was obliged to delegate some of his duties to Lord Curzon; but by this time proceedings in Parliament had to a great extent lost their interest. The Home Rule and Welsh Church Bills were passed under the Parliament Act; their operation, however, was suspended for a year or longer if necessary, and another Bill to amend the Home Rule Bill was promised. Much emergency legislation was also passed, and neither side was satisfied; for the Irish Party were disappointed that Home Rule had again been deferred, while the Opposition felt that, although temporarily postponed, a principle had been forced upon the country which had always been rejected when submitted as a separate issue.

The correspondence of Lord Lansdowne, who at the beginning of 1915 was still prevented by illness from attending Parliament, contains, at that period, many complaints from prominent Unionist politicians deploring the ineffectual conduct of the War and the difficulties in which the Opposition found themselves.

A vigorously worded memorandum by Lord Curzon, who was temporarily leading in the House of Lords, gives expression to these feelings:

[546] Emmeline Pankhurst, née Goulden (1858–1928) organised the British suffragette movement and helped women to win in 1918 the right to vote in Great Britain and Ireland. Her work is recognised as a crucial element in achieving women's suffrage in the United Kingdom. (Ed.)

[547] Lord Charles FitzMaurice had assumed the name of Mercer Nairne when he inherited Lord Lansdowne's Scottish estate. (LN)

Lord Curzon. Memorandum, January 1915.

We are expected to give a mute and almost unquestioning support to everything done by the Government: to maintain a patriotic silence about the various blunders that have been committed in connection with the War (e.g. *Goeben*,[548] *Audacious*,[549] *Hogue, Cressy, Aboukir*,[550] Antwerp, E. Africa, Cradock,[551] *Formidable*,[552] our submarines at Yarmouth and Hartlepool, *etc.*, *etc.*); to dismantle our party machinery, to forgo all possibility of party advantage, and to allow, without a protest, the most outrageously partisan of measures, such as the Plural Voting Bill, to be carried over our heads, or even with our consent. In other words, the Government are to have all the advantages, while we have all the drawbacks of a Coalition. They tell us nothing or next to nothing of their plans, and yet they pretend our leaders share both their knowledge and their responsibility. If we ask perfectly legitimate questions in the House of Lords, we are treated as though we were naughty children, to be snubbed even by Lord Lucas.[553] The Secretary of State for War [Lord Kitchener] reads us exiguous memoranda of platitudes known to everybody, is acclaimed by the Liberal press as having delivered an almost inspired oration and scored off his impertinent antagonists; he interpolates a curt affirmative or negative to the solitary speech to which he deigns to listen, and he then marches out and leaves the rest of the debate to colleagues who either affect to know nothing or screen their silence behind his authority. The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee was started under the patronage of the leaders and with the aid of the organisation of both political parties, but we are not allowed to hear anything about the results. The whole agency of the Unionist party has been utilised to obtain additions to the army. But if we ask how the effort has fared, or what is the present situation, we are treated almost as though we were enemies of our country.

I do not think that this state of affairs can continue indefinitely, both because the temper of our party will not long stand it and because, in the interests of the nation, the position is both highly inexpedient and unfair. We are ready enough to give the Government our support, but it can only be if they give us their confidence and if they refrain from taking advantage of our patriotism. We cannot cease to be an Opposition for our own

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[548] In August 1914, the British Mediterranean Fleet attempted to intercept the German battlecruiser SMS Goeben and the light cruiser SMS Breslau. The German ships evaded the British fleet and passed through the Dardanelles to reach Constantinople, where they were eventually handed over to the Ottoman Empire and were instrumental in bringing the Turks into war with Russia. (Ed.)

[549] HMS *Audacious* was the fourth and last King George V class dreadnought battleship built for the Royal Navy in the early 1910s. The ship was sunk by a German naval mine off the northern coast of County Donegal, Ireland, on 22 October 1914. (Ed.)

[550] HMS *Hogue*, *Cressy* and *Aboukir* were three cruisers sunk in the North Sea on 22 September 1914. Initially it was thought that they had struck mines but later is was found that they had been torpedoed by the German submarine U-9. In total, 62 officers and 1,397 ratings were lost. (Ed.)

[551] At the Battle of Coronel, off the coast of Chile, Admiral Cradock was killed with the loss of his flagship HMS Good Hope and the cruiser HMS Monmouth when he encountered the German East Asia Squadron under Vice-Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee on 1 November 1914. (Ed.)

[552] HMS *Formidable* was a pre-dreadnought battleship sunk in the channel by the German U-24 when in exercises without submarine protection on 1 January 1915. (Ed.)

[553] This could be Auberon Thomas Herbert, 9th Baron Lucas and 5th Lord Dingwall (1876–1916), who preferred to be known as Bron Herbert. He was a radical British Liberal politician and fighter pilot. He was a member of H. H. Asquith's cabinet as President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries between 1914 and 1915. On 3 November 1916, whilst flying over German lines in the vicinity of Bapaume, his aircraft was attacked and brought down by a German fighter-aeroplane, and Lucas died of wounds whilst a prisoner of war the same day at the age of 40. (Ed.)

> purposes, and yet remain one for theirs. The question is: what steps, if any, should be taken to terminate this situation? Like Mr. Long I am entirely against a Coalition Government, even if (which I do not think at present is the least likely) it were proposed to us by the other side. A Coalition would tie our hands and close our lips even more effectively than at present. It would make us responsible for many things which we ought to criticise, it not now, at any rate later: and, with politicians so widely severed on almost all questions, save the War, as are the leading members of the two parties, it might lead to a disastrous break-down, followed by painful disclosures or injurious recriminations. If the country were actually and seriously invaded, a Coalition Government might become expedient and even necessary. But for the present it does not seem needful to discuss it.

Lord Curzon would have been more than human if he had failed to criticise the deficiencies of his old antagonist, Lord Kitchener, and his complaints were justifiable. Lord Lansdowne, in writing to Mr. Bonar Law on January 28th, expressed the opinion that the situation was intolerable, and that the sooner it was put an end to the better:

> I agree with Long and Curzon in thinking that we shall have to take steps for the purpose of defining our own attitude towards H.M.G. We can scarcely leave matters where they are.
>
> As to the *modus operandi*, I am against making use of the newspapers when Parliament is sitting, and I should say that we could without difficulty find an opportunity in both Houses for making our position clear. You and I could agree as to the language which we should use, and our two Benches would, I have no doubt, remain in line. I am not much enamoured of conferences.
>
> But before we talk about any of these things, we must make up our minds as to the sort of conditions for which we should press. Curzon suggests that they should include:
>
> (a) The abandonment of all party legislation;
>
> (b) The taking of the leaders of the Opposition into full confidence about all important matters connected with the conduct of the War.
>
> Is it not certain that we should break down over (a)? We shall do so unless H.M.G. have completely changed their mind.

The Coalition, however, arrived sooner than had been expected, and Mr. Asquith, who on May 12th had stated that no such step was contemplated, announced only a week later that the Government was about to be reconstructed "on a broader political basis". An enormous amount of literature has been produced which deals with this episode, and the birth of the Coalition Government has been attributed to the shortage of shells in France and to the resignation of Lord Fisher, whose megalomania had risen to fantastic heights, as described in Lord Oxford and Asquith's book.[554] Whether the Coalition was really brought about by one or both of these causes seems doubtful. It would be probably more correct to attribute this important step to the realisation by the thinking portion of the community of the absurdity of leaving a life-and-death struggle to be conducted under the party system. The new Administration was quickly formed: various Liberal Cabinet Ministers, including Lord Haldane, gave place to Unionists and members of the Labour party, the smaller offices were divided amongst the various parties, and at the invitation of Lord Lansdowne, who had consented to join the Cabinet without

[554] *Memories and Reflections*, vol. ii. pp. 93, 94. (LN)

portfolio, I accepted a minor post which gave one an insight into the working of the Government machine during the four eventful years of 1915-19.

Lord Lansdowne and Lord Crewe, who had for so long confronted each other from opposite sides of the House of Lords, now sat side by side as joint leaders of the Coalition party, and as they had many qualities and views in common, their co-operation was completely harmonious. The front Opposition bench also presented a curious spectacle, as it was now occupied by representatives of both parties who until recently had been engaged in denouncing each other.

It had been fondly assumed that the presence of

Unionist Ministers in the Cabinet was a guarantee that attention would be concentrated upon the requirements of the War, and that everything would be subordinated to that object, but this assumption was soon shown to be unfounded. The main military requirement was now the supply of men, and the voluntary system was plainly in danger of collapse. It was no longer possible to evade the question of an ultimate resort to compulsion, and leading Liberal Ministers, including the Prime Minister, were straining every nerve to avoid or postpone action. Most Liberal politicians (Mr. Lloyd George was a bright exception) were determined to fight to the last against it, and nearly every man in the Labour party was apparently prepared to run the risk of losing the War rather than do violence to one of Labour's rooted principles, while Mr. Asquith and his friends were, unfortunately, able to shelter themselves behind Lord Kitchener, who for some incomprehensible reason had led the country to believe that a four years War could be successfully conducted under the voluntary system. Lord Lansdowne had, in the past, never been a supporter of compulsion, but he now began to urge preparation for the inevitable.

Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Asquith. Lansdowne House, 5th August 1915

> May I say a word to you on the subject of recruiting? Kitchener told us a few days ago that it was going on well; but—
>
> 1. Are we sure that it is going so well that we can rely upon a supply of recruits sufficient to maintain the huge force which will be in the field during the next few months.
>
> 2. It is commonly stated that we arc accepting a number of recruits of very inferior quality. Is this the case?
>
> 3. Arc we not still taking numbers of men who, because

> they are married or are usefully employed, ought not be taken save in the last resort?
>
> If these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily and confidently, ought we not to consider betimes the steps which we may have to take if we should be driven to compulsion?
>
> There is, besides, the further question, *viz*. that of applying some form of compulsion in regard to national service other than military.
>
> It is true that we shall not be in a position to deal with these matters until the new Register has been compiled, but if we wait until it is completed we may lose valuable time.
>
> In order to avoid this, might you not give directions for the preparation of a Compulsory Service Bill? We shall never get to close quarters with the subject unless we get away from generalities

and come to concrete proposals. Kitchener a short time ago held strongly the view that it was impossible to graft any form of compulsion upon a volunteer army in the midst of a great war. With a concrete scheme before us it will be easier to estimate the value to which this argument is entitled.

I am writing for myself alone, but I know that several members of the Cabinet are getting anxious, and, if I may be allowed to say so, I think it would be far better that the proposal should come from you rather than from a group of our colleagues.

Before the end of the year, the two compromises known as the Registration Bill and the so-called Derby Recruiting Scheme had both been tried, with but little success; and in reply to a vigorously worded representation from Lord Curzon, Lord Selborne, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Mr. Asquith reluctantly consented to the preparation of a Bill for Compulsory Service.

The Bill was introduced early in January 1916, and its reception showed how completely he had miscalculated the temper of the country. All the lurid predictions which had been made of a revolutionary movement amongst the working classes were shown to be baseless; the Bill obtained a majority of nearly 300 on the second reading in the House of Commons, and the only Minister who left the Cabinet was Sir John

Simon.[556] It was, however, a long time before compulsion was systematically enforced, and the Government never mustered up courage to apply it to Ireland, which remained one of the few European communities to benefit by the War.

The communications received by Lord Lansdowne whilst he was a member of the Coalition Cabinet in 1916 deal with a variety of subjects, and contain little of either a satisfactory or of a hopeful nature: letters from Lord Midleton complaining of gross extravagance, which a newly appointed "Retrenchment Committee" was afraid to check; from Lord Loreburn[557] complaining of the uncompromising attitude of Government spokesmen with regard to possible peace proposals; from Mr. Walter Long deploring the unpopularity of the Government, of which he was a member; from the Queen of the Belgians[558] apprehending that Belgian interests were likely to be sacrificed; from Lord Curzon on all kinds of subjects, including the appointment of subordinate National Gallery officials; a warning from Mr. Bonar Law that he might feel compelled to resign; and perhaps worst of all, an intimation from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that after March 1917 it would be impossible to continue our advances to the Allies, whose demands were becoming more and more insistent. Nor was there any encouragement to be derived from a survey of the military situation. At the end of October the members of the War Committee were asked by the Prime Minister to express their views as to the terms upon which peace might be concluded. The memorandum by Lord Lansdowne, dated November 13, 1916,

[555] Lord Newton's index includes an item for page 449 which is not mentioned in the text. It is for Reginald McKenna (1863–1943), a British banker and Liberal politician. His first Cabinet post under Henry Campbell-Bannerman was as President of the Board of Education, after which he served as First Lord of the Admiralty. His most important roles were as Home Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer during the premiership of H. H. Asquith. (Ed.)

[556] John Allsebrook Simon, 1st Viscount Simon (1873–1954) held senior Cabinet posts from the beginning of the First World War to the end of the Second World War. He is one of three people to have served as Home Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Chancellor of the Exchequer, the others being Rab Butler and James Callaghan. He also served as Lord Chancellor, the most senior position in the British legal system. (Ed.)

[557] Robert Threshie Reid, 1st Earl Loreburn (1846–1923) was a British lawyer, judge and Liberal politician. He served as Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain between 1905 and 1912. (Ed.)

[558] Elisabeth of Bavaria (Elisabeth Gabriele Valérie Marie; 1876–1965) was Queen of the Belgians from 23rd December 1909 to 17th February 1934 as the wife of King Albert I, and a duchess in Bavaria by birth. (Ed.)

written in reply to this request, is quoted in full in *Memories and Reflections*;[559] and Lord Crewe,[560] in the same work, is disposed to attribute the break-up of the Coalition Government to this paper.

(Page 450) LORD LANSDOWNE [1916]

> Possibly [Lord Crewe wrote] the veritable *causa causaus*[561] of the final break-up is to be traced to Lord Lansdowne's striking paper of November 13th, 1916.
>
> It has been rumoured that Mr. Lloyd George regarded this document as the danger-signal marking an obstruction in the road, the barrier being a supposed invitation to the Elder Statesmen, or soberer spirits of the Government, to anticipate an enforced conclusion of the War. Study of the memorandum does not confirm this fear. It is rather to be regarded as a plain and courageous exposition of the facts, perhaps erring somewhat in the direction of mistrust, but displaying no poverty of spirit or lack of determination.

In effect, Lord Lansdowne's memorandum was an anticipation of the celebrated Peace Letter which appeared a year later, and disposes of the erroneous impression that the latter was due to a sudden access of pessimism. The memorandum of November 1916 deals with the general situation in the lucid and dispassionate spirit characteristic of the writer.

> No one [he says] for a moment believes that we are going to lose the War; but what is our chance of winning it in such a manner, and within such limits of time, as will enable us to beat our enemy to the ground and impose upon him the kind of terms which we so freely discuss?

How much better was our position likely to be at the end of another year's fighting? The enemy might be in a worse plight than we and our Allies, but if our position was grave, that of our Allies was more menacing: France and Italy—more especially the latter—were showing unmistakable signs of war-weariness, and England was being represented as the only country anxious to prolong the struggle *à outrance*,[562] for her own ends. A disaster was impending in Roumania; at Salonika we had become entangled in an enterprise forced upon us, against our better judgment, by our Allies; in Russia both the domestic and military situations were far from reassuring.

(Page 451) OPENING YEARS OF GREAT WAR [1916]

As for ourselves, our casualties already amounted to over 1,100,000; there was no reason to suppose that they would increase at a lower rate; and we were slowly but surely killing off the best of our male population. The financial burden already accumulated was stupendous, and we were adding to it at the rate of over five millions a day:

> All this it is, no doubt, our duty to bear, but only if it can be shown that the sacrifice will have its reward. If it is to be made in vain, if the additional year, or two years, or three years, finds us still unable to dictate terms, the War with its nameless horrors will have been needlessly prolonged, and the responsibility of those who needlessly prolong such a war is not less than that of those who needlessly provoked it.

The situation led him to suggest that there should be a general stock-taking, amongst the principal Allies, of their resources, in confidential consultation. Not until such action had taken place would it be possible to determine the broad lines of their policy, or of the attitude which they ought to assume towards those who talked to them of peace. Let the naval, military, and economic advisers tell the

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[559] *Memories and Reflections* (the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, 1928). (LN)
[560] As above, vol. ii. Memorandum contributed by Lord Crewe, p. 127. (LN)
[561] The expression *causa causae* relates to the sequence of events leading up to the event. Lord Crewe's version may be intended to mean the same. (Ed.)
[562] To excess. (Ed.)

Government frankly whether they were satisfied that the knock-out blow could and would be delivered; if they were unable to do so, movements in favour of an interchange of views as to the possibility of a settlement should not be discouraged:

> As to peace terms, I hope we shall adhere steadfastly to the main principle laid down by the Prime Minister in the speech which he summed up by a declaration that we could agree to no peace which did not afford adequate reparation for the past and adequate security for the future; but the outline was broadly sketched and might be filled up in many different ways. The same may be said of the not less admirable statement which he has just made at the Guildhall, and of the temperate speeches which the Foreign Secretary has from time to time delivered.
>
> But it is unfortunate that, in spite of these utterances, it should be possible to represent us and our Allies its committed to a policy partly vindictive and partly selfish, and so irreconcilably

> committed to that policy that we should regard as unfriendly any attempt, however sincere, to extricate us from the impasse.

Such was, roughly, the purport of the memorandum which, in the opinion of so sound a judge as Lord Crewe, helped to seal the fate of the Coalition Government; and Lord Lansdowne's views obtained the "complete concurrence" of Mr. Asquith, in a short note in three or four lines dated November 28. As a further contribution towards the history of an important Cabinet convulsion, a letter from Lord Curzon is worth attention:

Lord Curzon to Lord Lansdowne. Confidential. Dec. 3rd, 1916.

> I am sorry you could not be present at the meeting at Bonar Law's, which is just over. It is a long story. For a fortnight *pourparlers*[563] have been going on between Lloyd George and the Prime Minister, in which Bonar Law (without telling us) has taken a prominent part.
>
> The letters were read to us just now. Practically, Lloyd George issued an ultimatum to the Prime Minister, putting the latter in the complete background, and constituting a War Committee of three, under himself.
>
> The Prime Minister refused, and stuck to the arrangement (of two Committees) mentioned at the last Cabinet and agreed to at our last meeting in Bonar Law's room, with himself as Chairman. Lloyd George, as the papers of yesterday and to-day will have shown you, has attempted to force the situation by announcing his own resignation, which is apparently to appear in the press to-morrow. Derby is to resign with him, and Bonar Law has been so far implicated that his name appears with theirs in the papers, and he told us he meant to resign this afternoon.
>
> We felt three things: (a) that this was unfair on the Prime Minister; (b) that it placed Lloyd George in a position where he could dictate his terms; (c) that Bonar Law ought not to act independently, but that we ought both to think and act unitedly. Accordingly, it was unanimously decided that Bonar Law should see the Prime Minister early this afternoon (he has been summoned back from Walmer, whither, with characteristic nonchalance, he had slipped away yesterday evening); that Bonar

[563] Discussion or negotiation preliminary to an agreement. (Ed.)

> Law should tell him that in our opinion the events to which I have referred had rendered internal reconstruction no longer possible; that he (Asquith) should this afternoon place his resignation in the hands of the King (including, of course, ours); and that if he was not able to take that step, we placed the whole of our resignations in his hands.
>
> All our colleagues were at the meeting except Arthur Balfour, who is in bed, and yourself.
>
> The object of these tactics, which are, in my opinion, fundamentally sound and essential, is this:
>
> When the Prime Minister resigns, the King will send for Lloyd George. The latter will then, for the first time, be confronted with the difficulties of the situation. He will cease to be a merely destructive and disloyal force. He will have to make terms with the Prime Minister and with all the rest of us. He will soon find out what is the attitude of the Irishmen, the Labour men, and so on. His Government will be dictated to him by others, not shaped exclusively by himself.
>
> For instance, no one of us would accept a dictatorship of Carson and himself. The following, both in House of Commons and country, of the Prime Minister will become apparent, and Lloyd George will have to make terms with them. In other words, he will for the first time have the responsibilities of his action in breaking up the Government.
>
> In passing, I may say that he does not mean to have Balfour at any cost, and I suppose that the majority of the present Government are doomed to disappearance.
>
> Had one felt that reconstitution by and under the present Prime Minister was possible, we should all have preferred to try it. But we know that with him as Chairman, either of the Cabinet or War Committee, it is absolutely impossible to win the War, and it will be for himself and Lloyd George to determine whether he goes out altogether or becomes Lord Chancellor or Chancellor of the Exchequer in a new Government, a nominal Premiership being a protean compromise which, in our view, could have no endurance.

Some of Lord Curzon's surmises proved to be quite incorrect, but it is easy to see that, like many others, he had come to the conclusion that Mr. Asquith's procrastinating leadership was quite inconsistent with an effective war policy, and that to attempt to govern, under

the circumstances, by means of a Cabinet of twenty-two members, was only inviting failure.

Lord Lansdowne's account of the crisis is contained in a letter to the Duchess of Devonshire[564] (then in Canada) on December 5:

> On Friday I went to Bowood, taking Edward Grey down for a rough shoot, which I think he thoroughly enjoyed. He has a great power of throwing his anxieties aside for the moment.

[564] The Duchess was Lord Lansdowne's daughter. Victor Christian William Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire (1868–1938), on 30 July 1892, married Lady Evelyn Petty-FitzMaurice (1870-1960), the elder daughter of Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquess of Lansdowne. Evelyn held the position of Mistress of the Robes to Queen Mary from 1910 until 1916, when she accompanied her husband upon his appointment as Governor General of Canada. Upon returning to England, the Duchess again was appointed Mistress of the Robes to Queen Mary, holding the position until the latter's death in 1953. She was a widow from 1938 and spent her final years living at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire. (Ed.)

While we were peacefully fraternising in the country, a red-hot conspiracy was coming to a head in London. I was telegraphed for to attend a meeting of Unionists at 11.0 on Sunday, and as there were no trains, I—perhaps fortunately—escaped. In these days the newspapers are apparently told everything, and you will have read all about these alarms and excursions long ago. I am not too well pleased at the manner in which the business was handled, and I am afraid old Asquith thinks he has been badly treated, which, so far as Lloyd George is concerned, is probably true.

For the moment all is in suspense, and no one knows whether the P.M. and L.G. will be able to come to terms, and, if so, what the terms will be. My impression is that they will find a *modus*.[565]

It will be deplorable if there is a complete break-up at a time like this. The only thing which is certain is that I shall not be one of the next Government when it emerges from the melting-pot. I am quite sure that I want to be combed out and that I ought to be combed out. Your mother is rabid with one of the papers for describing me as an "idle septuagenarian"; "idle" is perhaps severe, but this Cabinet is too big, and in a War Cabinet no septuagenarian ought to find a place. I should not be surprised if A. J. B. dropped out also, but if Asquith remains he will not *lâcher*[566] Arthur, unless Arthur wants to be let go. He has not been well lately, and looks to me as if he wanted a rest. I went to see the P.M. last night and found him very friendly, but hurt and anxious. I had a distracting interview with X. which I will not attempt to describe.

Yesterday was a weary day of confabulation and argument. As usual, someone supplies the press with circumstantial accounts of all that took place, and *The Times* has a fairly correct version coloured by a certain amount of malevolence.

We seemed to be nearing an agreement on a basis of reconstruction

and a reduced War Committee, but the P.M., encouraged by some of his friends, stiffened in his resistance, and L.G. became more intractable and finally resigned. We Unionists (sitting on one side of Downing Street) came to the distinct conclusion that the only way to end a scandalous strife was for the whole Government to resign, in the expectation that L.G. would then have to try his hand and say, like Jezebel: "Who is on my side, who?" While we were deliberating, the Liberal members of the Cabinet, sitting on the other side of the street, at No. 10 came to a similar conclusion—all this between 5.0 and 6.30 p.m. Poor old Asquith therefore had no choice but to resign for us all. I don't think that Bonar Law will form a Government, but there will be some interesting transactions during the next few hours.

It makes me sad that we should be washing all this dirty men at such a time, and I would have swallowed a good deal in order to avoid it, but the situation had got out of hand.

Some of us will probably serve in the new Government, and, much as they may dislike it, we ought to do all we can to make it strong and efficient; but I don't think Arthur will join and I rather doubt whether Long will. *Il n'est plus question de moi.*[567] I have long wished to be released, but this is not the kind of last act to which I looked forward for my poor play.

The revolt organized by Mr. Lloyd George ended in his resigning on December 5th, and a few hours later Mr. Asquith was also compelled to resign. The King thereupon sent for Mr. Bonar Law, but he was unable to form an Administration, because most of the Liberals declined to serve under him unless

[565] That is a *modus operandi* or method of operating. (Ed.)
[566] Release. (Ed.)
[567] It is no longer a question of me. (Ed.)

Mr. Asquith was associated with the new Government. Thereupon the King fell back upon Mr. Lloyd George, and the latter, having previously secured the support of Mr. Bonar Law, at once set about the task.

On December 7th, Mr. Lloyd George met the leading members of the Unionist party and much bargaining took place with regard to Ministerial appointments and other matters. He appears to have guaranteed that neither Lord Northcliffe nor Mr. Winston Churchill should be asked to join his Administration. There were

(Page 456) LORD LANSDOWNE [1916]

to be two Conservatives, Lord Curzon and Sir E. Carson, in the War Cabinet, and a Labour Minister, Mr. Henderson.[568] As Mr. Balfour (Foreign Secretary) and Mr. Bonar Law (Chancellor of the Exchequer) were to be permitted to attend its deliberations when they desired, the War Cabinet was, therefore, predominantly Conservative, Mr. Lloyd George being, in fact, the only Liberal member. Nearly all the Liberal members of the old Cabinet retired, and so did Lord Lansdowne, whose long official career now came to a close, and who henceforth modestly occupied a seat on a back bench behind the new Coalition Government, whereas Lord Crewe retreated to the front Opposition bench.

Perhaps it is not inappropriate to endeavour here to convey some impression of the manner in which, during a difficult period, Lord Lansdowne carried out the duties of a leader.

Within the period roughly covered by this book there were four Conservative and Unionist leaders in the House of Lords: the late Lord Salisbury, the late Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Curzon; and, of these, Lord Lansdowne must, taken all round, be distinctly pronounced as the most successful, in spite of the fact that it was during his time that misfortune overtook the House. When I first entered it, in 1899, the commanding figure of Lord Salisbury dominated the Assembly to a degree which probably had never been attained before, and certainly has not been reached since. Lord Salisbury, at that time near the close of his career, was then not only the first statesman in England but the first statesman in Europe, and this unchallenged position placed him, as it were, in an exceptional category. No one, so far as I remember, ever ventured to dispute with him, and he remained a serene and Olympian form, admired and respected, but remote from the interests and circumstances of the ordinary

(Page 457) OPENING YEARS OF GREAT WAR [1916]

peer. Under such a personality, debate was apt to languish, and sittings were reduced to a minimum.

The Duke of Devonshire occupied the position for a short period only, and although there was no man in the country who inspired greater confidence, it required an emergency to bring out the great qualities which he possessed, and the routine work involved in his duties must have been particularly uncongenial to his temperament. No one, probably, has ever hailed an escape from office with more genuine satisfaction.

Lord Curzon combined unparalleled industry with intellectual brilliancy in a manner which has never been equalled by any of his political contemporaries, but he was also possessed of certain defects of character, described by his biographer, which may have been trivial but were sufficient to impair his popularity.

Each of these had formerly been a member of the House of Commons, but Lord Lansdowne was without this invaluable experience, and was, moreover, the Whig leader of a party consisting mainly of Tories,

[568] Arthur Henderson (1863–1935) was a British iron moulder and Labour politician. He was the first Labour cabinet minister, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934 and, uniquely, served three separate terms as Leader of the Labour Party in three different decades. (Ed.)

some of whom were deeply imbued with reactionary principles. He was, however, endowed with a Parliamentary instinct, which showed itself in his youth; and when, in middle age, he was chosen to fill the position of so much responsibility, the choice was at once justified.

In 1909, before the appearance of the fatal Budget, he had reached the position of being regarded as one of the best Parliamentarians of the day, and his skill in persuading his followers to accept the compulsory clauses of an Irish Land Bill in October of that year has been described by Lord Morley as "the most dexterous manipulation of a difficult situation he had ever known".[569] It was not until the internecine struggle brought about by the Parliament Bill had broken out in 1911 that his influence was shaken, and even then the respect and regard felt for him by the recalcitrants remained unimpaired.

(Page 458) LORD LANSDOWNE [1916]

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the House of Lords is different from any other Legislative Assembly in the civilised world, and that the limits which regulate its procedure are so wide that unless the spirit of tradition is respected, its power of functioning would break down irretrievably. Any peer, for instance, out of 700 or more, however insignificant he may be, possesses the power of coming down on any day that the House is sitting and of making a totally irrelevant speech under the guise of a question, and it is much to the general credit that this right is not more abused. The ordinary methods of enforcing order in debate are absent, and procedure is regulated more by good-feeling than by anything else. The course of business is uncertain and liable to be interfered with at the shortest notice by the unexpected actions or the caprice of individuals; little or no consideration is shown to the Second Chamber either by the House or Commons or by the Government of the day, and the various political parties treat it with equal contempt when it is found necessary to pass Bills without adequate discussion. Another problem is that presented by absenteeism: for the real work of a House numbering over 700 members is conducted by a nucleus of about fifty or sixty men, while the views of many of the others are to some extent a matter of speculation. An Assembly so peculiarly constituted demands a kind of leadership quite different from that of the House of Commons, where parties are well disciplined, where the votes of the members are directed and controlled by Whips, and where the majority passes from one side to the other in accordance with the results of the general elections. In the House of Lords, on the other hand, there is a huge Conservative majority permanently encamped and, with an unfortunate lack of vision, the semblance of impartiality which ought to characterise a second Chamber has been lost, and the House of Lords, although in reality more independent than it

(Page 459) OPENING YEARS OF GREAT WAR [1916]

appears, has of recent years been regarded, whether justly or unjustly, as a mere wing of the Conservative party. When a Conservative or Unionist Government is in office, the leader's task is usually simple. It is confined to overcoming the scruples of a few members who may object to what they consider too advanced legislation, and to making the position of the Opposition as little humiliating as is possible. When a Liberal or Labour Government is in power, the situation demands a considerable amount of tact and judgment in the prudent use of the permanent majority already referred to.

The success of Lord Lansdowne's leadership was assured from the first, and it was not due to the display of exceptional brilliancy but to a combination of various sterling qualities. His efficiency was obvious; but this efficiency was accompanied by modesty—as is not always the case—and by a rare courtesy and urbanity which was extended to everyone with whom he was brought into contact. Amongst the qualifications necessary for success in a Parliamentary leader is the gift of suffering fools gladly, and one important part of his duty is to sit and listen, and eventually to reply, to the various bores who are to be found in every Assembly. His method of dealing with speakers of this description was a model of polite tolerance; nor did he ever show any resentment with those of his party who differed from him or showed a tendency to indiscipline. I am afraid that I must not infrequently have tried his patience myself, but he never showed any sign of irritation, and we were always on the best of terms. In fact, I

[569] Sir A. FitzRoy, *Memories*. (L.N.)

can only remember one instance of his displaying any evidence of temper, and that was in the Wolseley debate of 1901, to which reference has been made earlier. A man who is able to keep his temper under the provocation of debate is certain to find his reward sooner or later, and he found it before long in the hold which he

(Page 460) LORD LANSDOWNE [1916]

soon obtained over both parties in the House; for no one excelled him in the delicate art of saying disagreeable things to his political opponents without giving offence.

Again, it is the depressing duty of a leader to sit out every debate, and to wind it up with a speech; naturally, all kinds of subjects are raised, sometimes of a very complicated or recondite nature, but Lord Lansdowne was never at a loss on such occasions, and invariably acquitted himself with credit, besides paying the originator of the discussion the compliment of showing that he had taken the trouble to study the question. Perhaps, however, the most practical tribute that can be paid to his assiduity is that during a period of nearly thirty years I cannot remember a single occasion on which I saw him asleep in the House—a feat of endurance which no other Parliamentary leader has been able to achieve.

His method of speaking was of the most effective Parliamentary type. Without any attempt at rhetoric or at working upon the emotions, his speeches were models of lucidity: dignified, temperate, and judicial; marked invariably by thorough knowledge of the subject, by graceful diction, and sometimes by a delicate humour, but devoid of the fire and conviction which is expected from a party leader. Admirable as a Parliamentary speaker, he was not the kind of man to appeal to a popular audience. I remember once accompanying him to a meeting at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, shortly before the general election of 1906, which was marked by a somewhat humorous incident. The hall was only partially filled, the audience apathetic, and after Lord Lansdowne had spoken, the succeeding speakers were interrupted with mysterious and continual cries of "Ix", "Ix", "Ix", which appeared to be organized. After the demonstration had continued for some time, a gentleman made his way to the front of the platform and stood revealed as the future Home Secretary

(Page 461) OPENING YEARS OF GREAT WAR [1916]

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks,[570] whose allocution was much more to the taste of the meeting than the speeches which had preceded it.

The secret of Lord Lansdowne's success with his own party was probably due as much as anything else to the fact that he seemed able to express adroitly the sentiments of the average peer in concise and polished language which bore the impress of careful study and judicial restraint.

Amongst the numerous letters received from all sides deploring his retirement may be quoted one from Lord Buckmaster:[571]

Lord Buckmaster to Lord Lansdowne. Dec. 14th, 1916.

> I cannot allow the sudden severance of our political relationship to pass without writing to thank you for the consideration and courtesy you have always shown me, and more particularly for

[570] Now Viscount Brentford (L.N.) William Joynson-Hicks, 1st Viscount Brentford (1865–1932), known as Sir William Joynson-Hicks, from 1919 to 1929 and popularly known as Jix, was an English solicitor and Conservative Party politician. He first attracted attention in 1908 when he defeated Winston Churchill, a Liberal Cabinet Minister at the time, in a by-election for the seat of North-West Manchester but is best known as a long-serving and controversial Home Secretary in Stanley Baldwin's Second Government from 1924 to 1929. (Ed.)

[571] Stanley Owen Buckmaster, 1st Viscount Buckmaster (1861–1934) was a British lawyer and Liberal Party politician. He was an M.P. for most of the years from 1906 to 1915, when he was elevated to the peerage and served as Lord Chancellor under H. H. Asquith from 1915 to 1916. (Ed.)

your kind greeting the other evening. The Coalition Government has ended, but I do not think it wholly failed, and it has at least enabled men like myself better to understand the views and actions of their former political adversaries. For the future of the country this ought to be of great and definite good, and to it you have notably contributed. I leave office with some relief, and with nothing but the kindliest feelings to all my former Unionist colleagues and a sense of much personal gratitude to yourself.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Buckmaster.
Dec. 16, 1916.

Your letter gives me much pleasure. The collapse of H.M. Government was catastrophic, and will puzzle the historians who have to account for it. Changes were, I am convinced, inevitable, but I certainly did not expect this particular *dénouement*.

I am sure you are right in believing that the Coalition has been hardly judged by its critics. I was reluctant to join it, but

I am glad that I did so. We shall some day, no doubt, go back to party lines, but it will never be quite the same thing again.

I shall preserve a very agreeable recollection of my official relations with you, as well as a distinct impression (shared by many others) of the tact and ability with which you handled the House of Lords. I have sat in it for nearly half a century, and consider myself a fairly good judge of Lord Chancellors!

As a private member he continued to attend the House with regularity, and spoke on a variety of subjects more or less connected with the War—Ireland, India, the blockade, agriculture, Mesopotamia, corn production, conscientious objectors, *etc.*, and also became a member of the Joint Committee presided over by Lord Bryce[572] which had been formed for the purpose of considering the constitution of a reformed Second Chamber. Unlike many eminent politicians, however, who have relinquished office for various reasons, he refrained from attacking his former colleagues.

By this time his physical powers were waning; he was past seventy, and with increasing ill-health it might have been anticipated that he would before long disappear from political life. But in reality his intellectual powers were unimpaired; and to one of his character the spectacle of unceasing carnage and the prospect of complete ruin which now threatened Europe became at last intolerable. In November 1917 he decided upon an action that at once restored him into the forefront, and for the moment he became again one of the most prominent and, incidentally, one of the most reviled men in Great Britain. That action was to write to the *Daily Telegraph*, in November 1917, a missive known to the world as the "Peace Letter".

[572] James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce (1838–1922) was a British academic, jurist, historian, and Liberal politician. According to Keith Robbins, he was a widely travelled authority on law, government, and history whose expertise led to high political offices culminating with his successful role as ambassador to the United States, 1907–13. (Ed.)

CHAPTER XX

THE PEACE LETTER

(Page 463)

It has been widely assumed that this letter, which aroused more controversy than almost any individual opinion during recent years, was the result of a hurried decision brought about by a temporary loss of nerve. It is true that Lord Lansdowne's letter came as a complete surprise to his friends and family, and the first intimation of his action was the appearance of the letter in the press; but in view of the memorandum of 1916 quoted above, it is quite evident that the Peace Letter was not an act of sudden impulse but represented a reasoned conclusion which had been formed a year earlier. The memorandum of 1916 and the letter of 1917 are practically identical, the only real distinction between them being that the former was a confidential document. Why Lord Lansdowne never made any subsequent reference to the memorandum is difficult to understand, for, had he done so, his position would obviously have been much stronger. It is true that the memorandum was a confidential Cabinet document, but he might, nevertheless, have asked permission to publish it. Whether permission would have been accorded is perhaps doubtful, but there is nothing in his private, papers to show that he ever contemplated such a step; and the fact remains that, presumably owing to his scrupulous respect for Cabinet tradition, he never made any allusion to it either in speech or in writing. Nor does his correspondence show that he previously consulted any

(Page 464) LORD LANSDOWNE [1917]

of his former colleagues, except to the extent of sounding Mr. Balfour as to the expediency of a peace debate in Parliament. On November 16, in a letter to Mr. Balfour, he explained his proposals in detail, and received the following answer:

Mr. Balfour to Lord Lansdowne. Private. Foreign Office, Nov. 22nd, 1917.

> I do not know that this is a very suitable time for discussing peace matters. I rather think not. But I send you the following observations, for what they are worth, on the various statements which you propose to elicit from H.M. Govt, by question in the House of Lords or by some other method: [573]
>
> 1. That they do not seek to bring about the destruction or dismemberment of the Central Powers.
>
> 1. I certainly do not desire the destruction or dismemberment of Germany, if by "Germany" is meant that part of Central Europe which properly belongs to the German people. I do not think, therefore, that the transference of Alsace-Lorraine to France, or the re-creation of so much of the historic Poland as is really Polish, constitutes dismemberment. But the Germans think differently, and this introduces the inevitable ambiguity into the proposed answer to your first question.
>
> 2. That they do not desire to impose upon those Powers any form of government other than that of their own choice.
>
> 2. A similar ambiguity attaches to the proposed answer to your second question. I certainly do not, for example, desire to compel Germany to adopt full-blown Parliamentary institutions; but I do want to see a form of government established in, say (German) Poland, to which Germany would certainly object.

[573] The numbering of these points is shown as in the original. They appear to relate to points made in Lord Lansdowne's memorandum and his response to them (Ed.)

These observations, which are true of Germany, may surely be applied, *mutatis mutandis*,[574] to Austria also.

3 That they do not desire to destroy or paralyse these Powers as trading communities, but that they are determined to secure for this country, from sources upon which it can depend, an adequate supply of the essential commodities.

3. I quite agree that we do not wish to destroy Austria and Germany as "trading communities", but nothing ought to be said which hampers the attack on German commerce as a war

measure, or (if it should prove necessary) the threat of post-war action in case Germany shows herself to be utterly unreasonable.

4. That they are prepared to examine in concert with other nations the great group of international problems, some of them of recent origin, which are connected with the question of "the freedom of the sea".

4. As regards sea power, it has to be observed: (a) that the phrase "freedom of the sea" is extremely vague, and is differently interpreted by different Powers; (b) that the abuse of sea power should not be distinguished, either in logic or in law, from the abuse of land power; and (c) that it is a subject which concerns neutrals as much, or almost as much, as belligerents, and cannot, therefore, be decided at any conference where belligerents alone are represented.

5. That they will insist upon the adhesion of our enemies to an international arrangement under which ample opportunities would be afforded for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, and of such a nature as will make it hereafter impossible for any Power to provoke a sudden war until an attempt has been made to bring about a peaceful solution.

5. The last criticism applies also to this, but, of course, we are all in favour of it.

6. That our general aims as to territorial questions have been stated in broad outline. That we recognise that no complete settlement of these questions can be reached without full discussion, but that such a discussion has been rendered impossible by the refusal of the Central Powers to put forward a corresponding statement of the aims which they have in view.

6. I am in general agreement with this, though, perhaps, I might be inclined to make some change in the wording.

A. J. B.

The proposed peace discussion in Parliament having been deprecated by Mr. Balfour, Lord Lansdowne now addressed himself to the press, and in the first instance approached *The Times*.

On November 27th he asked the editor, Mr. Geoffrey Dawson,[575] who was a personal friend, to call, and showed him the letter which he proposed to send. Mr. Dawson, who realized the obvious objections to

[574] With necessary changes made.
[575] George Geoffrey Dawson (1874–1944) was editor of *The Times* from 1912 to 1919 and again from 1923 until 1941. (Ed.)

communication, said that he would like to have more time in which to consider it, and that he would give an answer on the following afternoon. Meanwhile he treated it as strictly confidential and made no mention of it to anyone. Next day he saw Lord Lansdowne again and urged strongly that the letter should be withheld, on the ground that it would suggest to the Allies, just assembled for the Paris Conference, a weakening in the strongest partner; that it would be utilized by the Germans as a tribute to their new conquests in Italy and to their negotiations with the Bolsheviks; and that it would discredit Lord Lansdowne himself, more particularly in view of the weight which his name carried abroad. Finally Mr. Dawson begged him to defer any action until Ministers had returned from Paris, and left Lansdowne House under the impression that he had succeeded. But as soon as he had gone, Lord Lansdowne addressed himself to Lord Burnham,[576] also a personal friend, and asked if he would publish the letter in the *Daily Telegraph*. To this, Lord Burnham, who was disposed to think that the Foreign Office was not decisively opposed to some of the proposals, agreed, and the letter consequently appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on November 29.

> We are now [Lord Lansdowne wrote] in the fourth year of the most dreadful war the world has known, a war in which, as Sir W. Robertson[577] has recently informed us, the killed alone can be counted by the million, while the total number of men engaged amounts to nearly 24 millions. Ministers continue to tell us that they scan the horizon in vain for the prospect of a lasting peace. And without a lasting peace we all feel that the task we have set ourselves will remain unaccomplished.
>
> But those who look forward with horror to the prolongation of the War, who believe that its wanton prolongation would be a crime differing only in degree from that of the criminals who provoked it, may be excused if they, too, scan the horizon anxiously in the hope of discovering there indications that the outlook may, after all, not be so hopeless as is supposed.

We were waging war in order to obtain reparation and security, but reparation was the less important aim, and the longer the war went on, the more there would be to repair and the less there would be to repair it with, security was our main object, and could be obtained by a general pact submitting future disputes to arbitration; and here he was able to quote President Wilson,[578] the German Chancellor, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign minister, and Mr. Balfour, to show that there was, in principle unanimity between the chief belligerents on this point.

As regards the proposals for carrying on a commercial war after the peace, he looked upon them as unreasonable:

> Commercial war is less ghastly in its immediate results than the war of the armed forces, but it would certainly be deplorable if after three or four years of sanguinary conflict in the field, a conflict which has destroyed a great part of the wealth of the world, the Powers were to embark upon commercial hostilities to retard the economic recovery of all the nations involved.

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[576] Edward Levy-Lawson, 1st Baron Burnham (1833–1916), known as Sir Edward Levy-Lawson, 1st Baronet, from 1892 to 1903, was an English newspaper proprietor. He was the owner of *The Daily Telegraph*. (Ed.)

[577] Field Marshal Sir William Robert Robertson, 1st Baronet (1860–1933) was a British Army officer who served as Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) – the professional head of the British Army – from 1916 to 1918 during the First World War. He had enlisted in the Queen's Lancers in 1877 just before his 18th birthday and has the unique distinction of being the only such man to rise to the rank of Field Marshall.. (Ed.)

[578] Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) was the 28th president of the United States, serving from 1913 to 1921. He was the only Democrat to serve as president during the Progressive Era when Republicans dominated the presidency and legislative branches. As president, Wilson changed the nation's economic policies and led the United States into World War I. He was the leading architect of the League of Nations. (Ed.)

> Some of the Allied claims for territory will probably become unattainable. Others, again, notably the reparation due to Belgium, remain, and must always remain, in the front rank: but when it comes to the wholesale rearrangement of the map of Southeastern Europe, we may well ask for a suspension of judgment, and for the elucidation which a frank exchange of views between the Allied Powers can alone afford.
>
> As the Allies were forced to adapt their military and naval strategy to the changing developments of the War, so they must make it their business to examine and, if necessary, revise their ideas about the peace settlement:
>
> We are not going to lose this War, but its prolongation will spell ruin for the civilised world, and an infinite addition to the load of human suffering which already weighs upon it. Security will be invaluable to a world which has the vitality to profit by it, but what will be the value of the blessings of peace to nations so exhausted that they can scarcely stretch out a hand with which to grasp them?

(Page 468) LORD LANSDOWNE [1917]

> In my belief, if the War is to be brought to a close in time to avoid a world-wide catastrophe, it will be brought to a close because on both sides the people of the countries involved realise that it has already lasted too long.

The German Government had been able to strengthen its military position by representing that the aims of the Allies included the "destruction of Germany, the imposition upon her of a form of government decided by her enemies, her destruction as a great commercial community, and her exclusion from the use of the seas". Stimulus would be given to the peace parties in the enemy countries if it were made clear that we did not contemplate the destruction of Germany as a Great Power; that we did not propose to impose upon her a government not of her own choice; that, except as a legitimate war measure, there was no intention of excluding Germany from the great international commercial communities; that we were prepared to examine in concert with other Powers the questions connected with the "freedom of the seas"; and finally, that we were also prepared to enter into a pact for the settlement of international disputes without having recourse to war:

> If it be once established that there are no insurmountable difficulties in the way of agreement upon these points, the political horizon might perhaps be scanned with better hope by those who pray, but can at this moment hardly venture to hope, that the New Year may bring us a lasting and honourable peace.

The publication of this letter encouraged thousands of people who had been longing and praying for some honourable way of ending the frightful slaughter, and they were overjoyed that a great Unionist statesman had come forward with a proposal to explore the possibility of peace. At the same time there poured forth, as might have been expected, a flood of invective and an incredible mass of abusive correspondence, which, though largely incoherent, was marked by a violence

(Page 469) THE PEACE LETTER [1917]

rare in English political life. In fact, the abuse could not have been stronger had the writer been an open traitor, like Casement,[579] instead of one of the most respected and experienced statesmen in Europe, and a signatory of the historic letter of August 2nd, 1914, which decided a wavering Cabinet to enter the

[579] Roger David Casement (1864–1916), known as Sir Roger Casement between 1911 and 1916, was a diplomat and Irish nationalist executed by the United Kingdom for treason during World War I. He worked for the British Foreign Office as a diplomat, becoming known as a humanitarian activist, and later as a poet and Easter Rising leader. (Ed.)

War. A letter from Lord Haldane, written on the day of publication, whilst congratulating him on his courage and expressing agreement with his views, contains the passage:

> Only two men in the country could have properly ventured to write this letter, yourself and Grey, and there are reasons which made you the right one of the two to publish this deliverance.
>
> I cannot say that personally I go beyond the modest hope about the New Year which you express. But there is a chance, and it was a high duty to take that chance, a duty which you have fulfilled as no one else could.
>
> I await anxiously in the next few days the deliverances of the press. They may make or mar. For in such days men have to submit to their opinions represented not in their own language but in the language of other people which is attributed to them.

The attitude of the press was at once defined. *The Times*, then suffering under Lord Northcliffe, denounced the writer with quite exceptional violence; and Lord Northcliffe's virulence even prompted him to send an emissary to Ireland with the object, apparently, of demonstrating that it was "the inveterate, unteachable, stupid arrogance of landlords of the Lansdowne class"[580] which was the "root cause of Sinn Fein" and of the semi-anarchy which prevailed there. An attempt was even made to revive the legend that no Lansdowne tenants were permitted to marry without previously obtaining the landlord's consent.

But in spite of the vituperations of the Northcliffe, Rothermere, and Hulton press[581] and the hostility of politicians who denounced it as craven , inept, or "inopportune", the letter met with a very considerable

welcome throughout the country. Many of the leading provincial dailies, including the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Yorkshire Post*, *Yorkshire Observer*, *Birmingham Post*, *Sheffield Independent*, *Freeman's Journal*, *Edinburgh Evening News,* as well as the *Daily News* and *Star* in London, supported it warmly, and most of the weeklies were cordial. *Common Sense*, a weekly newspaper edited by Mr. F. W. Hirst,[582] in its issue of December 1st, declared that "every man whose moral and intellectual equipment is up to the average—whether he call himself a Liberal or a Conservative or a Socialist will feel, on reading Lord Lansdowne's letter in Thursday's *Daily Telegraph* that a way has at last been opened towards peace". *The Nation* was equally friendly, and the *Saturday Review* remarked on December 8th: "Now that the malice and scurrility of the press and the clubs are exhausted, we take leave to say that the publication of Lord Lansdowne's letter has done good."

The letter had, as was to be expected, a mixed reception abroad. Many of the French papers, notably the *Echo de Paris* and the *Figaro*, ignored it altogether, and none of them gave it in full. A few reproduced the comments of the Northcliffe papers, but *Le Temps* in its foreign leader followed Lord Lansdowne in demanding a revision of war aims, the scrapping of secret treaties, and a "clean slate", and *L'Intransigeant*, the most widely circulated of the evening papers, welcomed the suggestion of peace by negotiation, though it differed from some of the proposals set forth in the letter. A correspondent writing at the time reported that copies of the papers containing extracts from the letter were in great demand in Paris, and that, in spite of the silence of some of the important papers, the letter

[580] *Daily Mail*, Dec 8, 1917 (L.N.)
[581] Edward Hulton (1838–1904) was a British newspaper proprietor in Victorian Manchester, who established a vast newspaper empire. The Hulton's son Edward expanded the business and among its titles were *The Manchester Evening Chronicle* in 1897, *The Daily Dispatch* in 1900 and *The Daily Sketch* tabloid in 1909. In addition there were the *Sunday Chronicle*, *Empire News*, *Evening Standard*, *Sunday Herald*. (Ed.)
[582] Francis Wrigley Hirst (1873–1953) was a journalist, writer and editor of *The Economist* magazine. (Ed.)

was arousing keen interest. This statement is supported by the accompanying letter from Lord Esher,[583] who enjoyed exceptional opportunities of gauging French opinion:

(Page 471) THE PEACE LETTER [1917]

To Lord Lansdowne from Viscount Esher. Dec. 7th, 1917

> Will you let me send you a word of affectionate admiration for your courage and patriotic attempt to make our unfortunate people use their brains.
>
> All the French whose opinions are worth anything have been deeply interested in your letter, and applaud its outspokenness. A very competent ex-Minister says 50 p.c. of the people here agree with you.
>
> It is interesting to see how your points and Wilson's coincide, except upon the one point of "qualification" for the enemy negotiators.
>
> The War has been decided by factors altogether outside the military horizon. These forces were bound to operate, and among them, as some foretold in 1915, was the psychology of the Russian native. There is now an antagonism between the sullen masses in France, England, and Italy, who have had enough of the War. Northcliffe's following, who wish to wait for America, do not appreciate the energy of the enemy and the impossibility of "waiting" in war. A defensive, pure and simple, for another 18 months will be a hard trial to the population of England and France.
>
> I am sure that we could have detached Austria, had we had the skill to make her definite peace offers six months ago. Now it is too late, but even now a combination of military and diplomatic blows would obtain for the Allies as good results as they deserve. But if you will allow me to say this about an institution in which you spent so many years of your life, the F.O. is beneath contempt. Old Jules Cambon[584] and Co. are even worse.

The Italian press was for the most part silent. A few of the Interventionist papers criticized the letter adversely, as damaging to the Allied cause. Only the briefest extracts appeared, and in several instances these were expunged by the Censor. In the United States, which had only recently entered the struggle, war enthusiasm still ran high everywhere, and the letter excited little popular response. Few papers outside New York noticed it at all. Even ex-President Taft,[585] an exponent of the League of Nations, expressed his disapproval. According to Colonel House,[586] however, the

(Page 472) LORD LANSDOWNE [1917[

letter gave great encouragement to President Wilson, who formulated the first of his peace proposals on January 8th.

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[583] Reginald Baliol Brett, 2nd Viscount Esher (1852–1930) was a British historian and Liberal Party politician, although his greatest influence over military and foreign affairs was as a courtier and a member of public committees. Behind the scenes, he influenced many pre-First World War military reforms and was a supporter of the British–French *Entente Cordiale*. (Ed.)

[584] The political director of the French Foreign Office. (L.N.) Jules-Martin Cambon (1845–1935) was a French diplomat and brother of Paul Cambon. As the ambassador to Germany (1907–1914), he worked hard to secure a friendly détente. He was frustrated by French leaders such as Raymond Poincaré, who decided that Berlin was trying to weaken the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Britain and was not sincere in seeking peace. (Ed.)

[585] William Howard Taft (1857–1930) served as the 27th president of the United States from 1909 to 1913 and the tenth chief justice of the United States from 1921 to 1930. (Ed.)

[586] Edward Mandell House (1858–1938) was an American diplomat, and an adviser to President Woodrow Wilson. He was known as Colonel House, although his title was honorary and he had performed no military service.

A simple and unaffected justification of his action is contained in a letter from Lord Lansdowne to his daughter, the Duchess of Devonshire, dated December 10th, 1917:

> You will have heard too much already about my letter to the *Daily Telegraph*. I fear you may not like it, but you will at any rate have taken the trouble to read it. The greater part of the critics were content to form their opinion on *The Times'* comments.
>
> I have for some time felt that it was somebody's duty to put this view of the case before the public. My friends in the Government were strongly opposed to a debate in the House of Lords which would have served my purpose, and they were probably right, as they would have been closely interrogated and forced to say something or maintain an undignified silence. A large section of "society" took its clue from the Northcliffe press, and during the first day or two no abuse was too violent for me; but when people had had time to look at the text of the letter and at the shrewd comments passed upon it by a number of the best and soberest provincial papers, they became more reasonable
>
> I have been snowed under with letters from all manner of folk—a few hostile, but mostly in complete sympathy with me. The prevailing note is, "you have had the courage to say what we have been thinking for ever so long".
>
> The Archbishop told me he was on my side, and innumerable old friends have sought me out to assure me of their support I am surprised—I wonder if I really am?—at the number of letters written to me by officers at the front to say that they welcome the letter.
>
> I wish you and Victor were here; but whether you would take my side or not, I am not sure.

In another letter to her in February 1918 he remarks:

> I am afraid I am quite unrepentant about the original letter which has, I think, done good both at home and abroad; but if 1 had had more of the wisdom of the serpent, I should have

> added good deal of padding as to my abhorrence of anything which could be called a German Peace.

It was essential that the letter should not be allowed to drop out of sight as a mere personal expression of opinion, and, in England, *Common Sense* undertook the task of rallying public opinion to the support of Lord Lansdowne's proposals. On January 31st, an Address was presented to him at Lansdowne House, thanking him for his lead to the cause of peace, signed by men differing widely in interests and political opinions.

In replying to the Address, which was presented by his old friend Lord Loreburn, Lord Lansdowne again emphasized the necessity for a restatement of war aims, and his belief in the possibility of "a clean peace in good time", concluding:

> We desire such a peace to be obtained as soon as possible, and we trust there will be no unnecessary fencing through an exaggerated fear of falling into peace traps. Finally, may I express our hopes that our own Government in pursuit of these objects will leave no effort unmade, however difficult, and no avenue unexplored, no matter how unpromising it may seem to be.

A Lansdowne Committee was formed, under the chairmanship of Lord Beauchamp,[587] and the support of business, commercial, and labouring men throughout the country was invited. The first conference, which was held on February 25, included many men of weight and importance, not only in press and political circles, but also in business. No attempt had been made to excite popular demonstrations, and the size and representative character of the gathering were convincing proof of the headway which Lord Lansdowne's views were making among people of all classes.

It looked, for a short time at the beginning of 1918, as though the possibilities of such a peace as Lord Lansdowne had urged were not altogether hopeless. President Wilson's peace proposals had been followed

by a speech from Mr. Lloyd George in which he admitted the necessity for a restatement of war aims, and by the overtures of Count Czernin;[588] but when the Allied Conference met at Versailles in February the representatives decided that these offers did not provide an adequate basis for peace discussions, and repudiated the weapon of diplomacy as a means of peace. A few days later, Count Hertling,[589] in a speech which was in some measure a reply to the Allied declaration, again suggested an "intimate meeting" of the belligerent Powers and seemed disposed to accept President Wilson's peace terms.

With this as a starting-point, Lord Lansdowne, on March 5, addressed a second letter to the *Daily Telegraph* in which he said that Count Hertling's speech seemed to mark a perceptible advance in the discussion, and, in careful analysis, drew attention to the points on which it agreed with the proposals of President Wilson.

The new letter obtained a wider circulation in the foreign press than had the first. It was published in full throughout America; and in France the two letters together with the reply to the Address, were printed as a pamphlet and had a large sale, while a number of French papers commented on the movement in their editorials, and an organization calling itself the Republican Coalition, composed of members of the Left group was formed to promote a peace based on the principles of no annexations and no penal indemnities.

A public conference was organized by the Lansdowne Committee to support the new letter. Local committees were formed to organize local meetings, and a memorial circulated asking Lord Lansdowne to place himself at the head of a movement for promoting a peace settlement honourable to all nations, Mr Ramsay MacDonald[590] going so far as to say that for his part he would welcome a Lansdowne Government if

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[587] William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp (1872–1938), styled Viscount Elmley until 1891, was a Liberal politician. He was Governor of New South Wales between 1899 and 1901, a member of the Liberal administrations of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and H. H. Asquith between 1905 and 1915, and leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords between 1924 and 1931. (Ed.)

[588] Ottokar Theobald Otto Maria Graf Czernin von und zu Chudenitz (1872–1932) was an Austro-Hungarian diplomat and politician during the time of World War I, notably serving as Foreign Minister from 1916 to 1918. Following the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, there was the Austro-Hungarian strike of January 1918 in which Czernin had to personally intervene. On 24th January 1918, he announced he accepted Wilson's Fourteen Points. He then negotiated a separate peace treaty with the newly created Ukrainian People's Republic that was signed on 9th February 1918 and in which he agreed to cede Chełm. He reached the highlight of his career by subsequently signing peace treaties with Russia on 3rd March and with Romania on 7th May and was considered the leading diplomat of the Central Powers (Ed.)

[589] Georg Friedrich Karl Freiherr von Hertling, from 1914 Count von Hertling (1843–1919) was a German politician of the Catholic Centre Party. He was foreign minister and minister president of Bavaria, then chancellor of the German Reich and minister president of Prussia from 1st November 1917 to 30th September 1918. He was the first party politician to hold the two offices; all the others were career civil servants or military men. (Ed.)

[590] James Ramsay MacDonald (né James McDonald Ramsay (1866–1937) was a statesman and politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The first two of his governments belonged to the Labour Party,

it would bring the War to an end. This view was not confined to a few members of the Labour party or to so-called pacifists. Lord Lansdowne received an extraordinary number of letters of support from the men at the front, and it was even alleged that among the British soldiers he was perhaps the most popular politician.

On March 19th, on the occasion of a debate on the League of Nations, Lord Lansdowne brought forward his proposals in the House of Lords, and, in a speech which was listened to with respectful attention, expressed his hope of a great Peace Conference which should ripen into a League of Nations; and argued that a military victory and the imposition of crushing terms would be very unlikely to yield that security which to many was the chief argument for going to war.

The launching of the German offensive at the end of March put an end for the time being to all prospects of peace negotiations, but on May 8th, when Lord Denbigh[591] brought forward a motion asking the Government to suppress pacifism, Lord Lansdowne replied with a strong and carefully argued plea for peace by negotiation; and on July 31st, on the occasion of a conference arranged by the Lansdowne Committee, he sent an important letter to the chairman. It opened with a brief reference to the tremendous cost to the world in lives and suffering of every month of war, and to the very widespread desire for peace which existed among the enemy nations. "But we are, apparently, as far as ever from the end. . . . From time to time a ray of reasonableness illumines the gloom, only to be followed by a relapse into recriminations and controversies, in which each side, instead of searching for points of agreement, is apparently content with dialectic successes." He found the chief obstacle to peace in the lack of a definite explanation of the terms on which we were prepared to open discussions for peace, and argued for a careful restatement of war aims.

> We shall be told [he concluded] that the moment when the Allied armies are achieving glorious successes in the field is not the moment for even hinting at the possibility of peace. If the hint had been thrown out at a moment when the fortune of war was turning against us, we should have been told still more emphatically that that moment, too, was inopportune, and that we must meet our reverses with a bolder front. But surely, in the face of the world-wide calamities which this War has brought with it, no moment can be inopportune for the consideration of reasonable proposals, put forward in good faith; and if one moment is more opportune than another, it is the moment when events have shown that, whatever be the feeling which inspires us, it is not doubt of our ability to hold our own in the deadly struggle if we are forced to continue it.

The letter was reprinted in full in leading papers throughout the world. In Austria it was regarded as a hopeful sign of peace, and though in Germany some papers professed to see in it nothing more than a restatement of Mr. Lloyd George's point of view, a number of journals, including the *Berliner Tageblatt*, declared that it furnished a real basis for peace negotiations. In France, *L'Humanite* welcomed it as a workable solution, and agreed that a restatement of war aims along the lines indicated by President Wilson was essential. In America, though it can hardly be said to have been received with enthusiasm, it was given wide publicity.

These three letters and his speeches in the House of Lords practically closed Lord Lansdowne's public utterances on the subject of peace negotiations. With the weakening of the German forces and the

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where he led a minority Labour government for nine months in 1924 and again between 1929 and 1931. In 1931 he formed a National Government dominated by the Conservative Party and supported by only a few Labour members, which governed until 1935. MacDonald was expelled from the Labour Party as a result. (Ed.)

[591] Rudolph Robert Basil Aloysius Augustine Feilding, 9th Earl of Denbigh, 8th Earl of Desmond (1859–1939), styled Viscount Feilding from 1865 to 1892, was a British Army officer and peer. (Ed.)

increasing success of the Allied offensive, the prospect of immediate negotiations for peace again receded, and the Austrian proposals of September 1918 were brusquely rejected. In October, however, the overture of Prince Max of Baden[592] and President Wilson's reply seemed to open the door once more. Lord Lansdowne had a good opinion of the new German Chancellor, and in an interview, published

(Page 477) THE PEACE LETTER [1918]

in *Common Sense* on October 12, he said that the offer appeared to mark the most substantial advance yet made by the Central Powers, and expressed his agreement with President Wilson's reply as affording a reasonable basis for negotiations. The rapid course of events, however, brought about the conclusion of the armistice within the next three weeks.

One of the most curious facts in connection with the latter stages of the War is that the Allies were completely ignorant of the real situation in Germany: for shortly before her collapse Allied politicians and generals were talking airily of fighting for another year or two, and the late Sir Henry Wilson and Colonel Repington[593] in their diaries, in common with other writers, expressed the opinion in 1918 that no responsible authorities considered that there was any hope of finishing it until the summer of 1919. Mr. Winston Churchill, for instance, in his latest book, *The World Crisis* (p. 272), remarks: "They (the Allies) had no reason at the end of 1917 nor during the greater part of 1918, to count upon a German collapse in the West. Even in September, it was prudent to expect a German retreat to the Meuse or to the Rhine, and every nerve was strained in preparation for a vast campaign in 1919."

It must be admitted that the sudden and unexpected collapse of Germany in November 1918 ostensibly justified the advocates of the knock-out blow; but at the moment when the Lansdowne Letter appeared, neither the Allied naval nor the military authorities could give any sort of guarantee of victory. The War had, in fact, assumed the appearance of a gigantic gamble, in the course of which hundreds of thousands of men were being slaughtered, and every European belligerent State was drifting rapidly into bankruptcy, if not into revolution as well. The choice really lay between this terrific gamble and a negotiated peace. The Allied gamble was successful, but it may well be questioned whether the

(Page 478) LORD LANSDOWNE [1918[

pool ultimately shared by the winners provided an adequate return for their sacrifices.

The moment chosen, however, by Lord Lansdowne for peace proposals was clearly unpropitious: it coincided approximately with our reverse at Cambrai and with the far more serious Italian disaster at Caporetto, which was only retrieved by the energy of the British and French Governments. Russia had gone out of the War; the Americans had just begun to send their troops to Europe, and were not likely to be inclined to withdraw before they had taken a prominent part in the struggle. Here in England every wall was placarded with clenched fists emblematic of the knock-out blow, and the voice of reason and sanity was drowned in the bellowings of Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Bottomley.[594] The peace letters, therefore, to the superficial observer bore the appearance of surrender, and proposals which might have

[592] Maximilian, Margrave of Baden (Maximilian Alexander Friedrich Wilhelm (1867–1929) also known as Max von Baden, was a German prince, general, and politician. He was heir presumptive to the throne of the Grand Duchy of Baden, and in October and November 1918 briefly served as the last chancellor of the German Empire and minister-president of Prussia. He sued for peace on Germany's behalf at the end of World War I based on U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points.

[593] Charles à Court Repington (1858–1925), known until 1903 as Charles à Court, was an English soldier, who went on to have a second career as an influential war correspondent during the First World War. He is also credited with coining the term *First World War* and one of the first to use the term *world war* in general. (Ed.)

[594] Horatio William Bottomley (1860–1933) was an English financier, journalist, editor, newspaper proprietor, swindler, and Member of Parliament. He is best known for his editorship of the popular magazine *John Bull*, and for his nationalistic oratory during the First World War. His career came to a sudden end when, in 1922, he was convicted of fraud and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. (Ed.)

received much support when circumstances were comparatively favourable, were regarded by the majority as unthinkable whilst we were still engaged in a life-and-death struggle.

It must be admitted, too, that Lord Lansdowne was to some extent hampered by certain followers who had always been identified with consistent opposition to the War, and that on the other hand he did not obtain the open support of former colleagues who had privately expressed their sympathy with his views.

In contrast with much ignorant abuse and criticism, a letter written to Lord Cromer[595] in December 1917 by the late Lord Sanderson,[596] for many years the able permanent head of the Foreign Office, may be quoted with advantage:

> Although I did not think the time very wise I was quite delighted at Lord Lansdowne's straightforward statement. It was a long time since we had been favoured with any solid and statesmen-like utterances. No doubt many of his suggestions were open to discussion and argument but surely this is what he intended,

> and it was a relief to read the calmly-balanced utterance of the really experienced and educated statesman after the wild, vulgar platitudes and speeches to a low-class press with which we have been regaled by Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues.

Lord Sanderson's letter is far more typical of instructed opinion than was realized at the time, although there were few bold enough to declare their sympathy in public.

Lord Lansdowne's error seems to have consisted in the fact that he made his negotiated peace proposal too late. It would seem as if there had been at least two opportunities which offered more favourable prospects.

The first came at the end of 1916, when the Coalition Government broke up and when Lord Lansdowne's first peace memorandum was composed. At that time the Germans were putting forward peace proposals; the military situation of the Allies was then rather more favourable than at the end of 1917; the Russians were still in the War, Bolshevism had not declared itself, and American intervention was still uncertain. Had the Peace Letter appeared then, it would, presumably, have been supported by those British Ministers who, like Mr, Asquith, were in sympathy with it, and the War might have been shortened by nearly two years.

Or, alternatively, the attempt might have been made in the spring of 1917, when the Austrian Emperor[597] made his peace proposals through Prince Sixte.[598] The circumstances of this peace offer have never been fully disclosed; the approach was made in the first place to the French and Italian Governments,

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[595] Rowland Thomas Baring, 2nd Earl of Cromer (1877–1953), styled Viscount Errington between 1901 and 1917, was a British diplomat and courtier.

[596] Thomas Henry Sanderson, 1st Baron Sanderson (1841–1923) was a British civil servant. He was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1894 and 1906. (Ed.)

[597] The Emperor Franz Joseph, who had ruled for almost 68 years, had died in 1916 to be succeeded by Charles I (1887–1922) as Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary (as Charles IV), King of Bohemia (as Charles III), and the ruler of the other states of the Habsburg monarchy from November 1916 until the monarchy was abolished in November 1918. He was the son of Archduke Otto of Austria and became heir presumptive of Emperor Franz Joseph when his uncle, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, was assassinated at Sarajevo in 1914. (Ed.)

[598] This must be Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma (German: Sixtus Ferdinand Maria Ignazio Alfred Robert von Bourbon-Parma; 1886–1934) who was a member of the House of Bourbon-Parma, a Belgian officer in World War I, and the central figure in the Sixtus Affair, an attempt to negotiate a treaty to end Austria-Hungary's participation in the Great War separate from its Central Powers allies. (Ed.)

and it is not clear whether the British Government was ever fully informed at the time with respect to the actual proposals. In any case, both opportunities were lost—with disastrous results for Europe.

In Count Czernin's well-known book, *In the World War* , there is an illuminating passage which contains the truth:

(Page 480) LORD LANSDOWNE [1918]

> Taking it altogether, the real historical truth concerning the peace movement is that, in general, neither the *entente* nor the ruling, all-powerful military party in Germany wished for a peace of understanding. They both wished to be victorious, and to enforce a peace of violence on the defeated adversary. The leading men in Germany—Ludendorff[599] above all—never had a genuine intention of releasing Belgium in an economic and political sense; neither would they agree to any sacrifices. They wished to conquer in the East and in the West, and their arbitrary tendencies counteracted the pacifist leaning of the *entente* as soon as there were the slightest indications of it. On the other hand, the leading men in the *entente* —Clemenceau[600] from the first and Lloyd George later—were firmly resolved to crush Germany, and therefore profited by the continuous German threats to suppress all pacifist movements in their own countries, always ready to prove that a peace of understanding with Berlin, would be a "pact between the fox and the geese".
>
> Thanks to the attitude of the leading Ministers in Germany, the *entente* was fully persuaded that an understanding with Germany was quite out of the question, and insisted obstinately upon peace terms which could not be accepted by a Germany still unbeaten. This closes the vicious circle which paralysed all negotiatory activities.

This opinion of Count Czernin, who during the War was in the closest contact with the German military and naval authorities, as well as with Kaiser Wilhelm, and who incidentally went through many unpleasant experiences, has been fully corroborated in the memoirs of Prince Max of Baden; and the irresistible conclusion is that it is General Ludendorff who bears the heaviest responsibility for the continuation of the War and the downfall of his own country. The Kaiser practically ceased to count as a force from the moment hostilities began, and in a short time Ludendorff became the real ruler of Germany. By a strange paradox, his military efficiency proved his undoing: for, being completely destitute of any political sense, he insisted, heedless of all warnings, upon action which brought America into the war. It is he who consistently frustrated all peace

(Page 481) THE PEACE LETTER [1918]

overtures, from whatever quarter they proceeded, and who never could be induced to agree to an unequivocal statement regarding the future of Belgium; and finally it was he who risked everything upon the great attack in 1918, and who, when that desperate gamble failed, suddenly threw up his post and left the ensuing chaos to be dealt with by others. His conduct is all the more unpardonable because, although he doubtless, just as clearly as Prince Max of Baden, Kühlmann,[601] Czernin, and others,

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[599] Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff (1865–1937) was a German general and politician. He achieved fame during World War I (1914–1918) for his central role in the German victories at Liège and Tannenberg in 1914. After his appointment as First Quartermaster General of the German General Staff in 1916, Ludendorff became Germany's chief policymaker in a *de facto* military dictatorship until the country's defeat in 1918. Later, during the years of the Weimar Republic, he took part in the failed 1920 Kapp Putsch and Adolf Hitler's 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, thereby contributing significantly to the Nazis' rise to power. (Ed.)

[600] Georges Benjamin Clemenceau (1841–1929) was a French statesman who was Prime Minister of France from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1917 until 1920. A physician turned journalist, he played a central role in the politics of the Third Republic, particularly at the end of the First World War. (Ed.)

[601] Richard von Kühlmann (1873–1948) was a German diplomat and industrialist. From 6 August 1917 to 9 July 1918, he served as Germany's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and led the delegation that negotiated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which removed the Russian Empire from World War I in March 1918.

realized that the German cause was lost as early as the beginning of July, and although the German public were then desperately anxious tor peace (a fact which was unknown in this country), he still refused to agree to open negotiations which would have certainly left his country in a very different position from that which it now occupies. General Ludendorff's real sentiments are in fact expressed in one pregnant sentence quoted by Czernin: "If Germany makes peace without profit, then Germany has lost the war."[602]

The Lansdowne peace effort, therefore, never had much chance of success, but there was nothing to be ashamed of in an unsuccessful attempt to persuade a tormented world to listen to counsels of moderation instead of pursuing a course which threatened universal ruin; and at all events, as the following letter shows, he earned the credit of inspiring President Wilson's Fourteen Points which formed the basis of the Armistice conditions:

> I well remember how much encouragement Lord Lansdowne's announcement gave me. I had been trying to get an expression from the Allies as a whole upon their war aims, but without success. Lord Lansdowne's courageous statement struck a note that had been strangely lacking up to that time. His party affiliations and his prestige gave weight to what he said. It was certainly one of the contributing causes to the formulation of the Fourteen Points.[603]

(Page 482) LORD LANSDOWNE [1918]

Lord Lansdowne's celebrated Peace Letter is generally regarded as a fatal blot upon a long and distinguished career, but now, eleven years after the victorious termination of the War, is it certain that his action is still looked upon in the same light? And has the knock-out blow, which was intended to annihilate Germany, brought the benefits which were anticipated?

Germany was crushed and the Allies were able to force their own terms upon her; but she is rapidly recovering, and the confident assurance that the whole costs of the War would be extracted from her has been shown to be a ridiculous myth. The Austro-Hungarian Empire has been destroyed, but can it be claimed honestly that the disappearance of that Empire has been an unmixed benefit? The only countries which have been disarmed are the ex-enemy Powers, although Turkey, equally guilty, has been able to evade the penalty. The injustices contained in some of the treaties, and the violation of ethnographical frontiers, have created feelings of exasperation which may some day find vent in another explosion; the War which was to "make the world safe for democracy" has resulted in the setting up of half a dozen dictatorships, and every belligerent country is hampered by a crushing debt, while the lowering cloud of Bolshevism threatens Western civilization. All this, it will probably be held by many people, is a high price to have paid for the sake of the knock-out blow, and it is as well to look at the other side of the picture. As Lord Grey of Fallodon observes in his book, with reference to the missed opportunities for peace:

> Prosperity and security might be to-day more fair in prospect for us all than the victory of 1918 and the treaties of 1919 have made them; and there would have been a peace with no noxious secret ideas of *revanche*.[604]

If peace had been made at the end of 1917, it is

(Page 483) THE PEACE LETTER [483]

clear that the Germans would have escaped their legitimate punishment. On the other hand, the failure of their criminal aggression would have been unconcealable, the Kaiser and the military caste would have been discredited, and any disposition to embark upon another similar enterprise would have

[602] *In the World War*, Count O. Czernin, p. 247 (LN)
[603] Colonel House to Mr. F. W. Hirst, March 5, 1929. (LN)
[604] *Twenty-five Years* (Lord Grey of Fallodon). (LN)

vanished. A negotiated peace, although it might have disappointed many aspirations, would certainly have effected a more permanent European settlement than exists at the present day. Millions of lives would have been saved and the load of human misery substantially reduced. We ourselves, at a moderate computation, should have been spared hundreds of thousands of casualties, and more than fifteen hundred millions of expenditure— more in fact than the capitalized sum of our American tribute.

On the whole, therefore, it seems not inconceivable that a future generation may take the view that Lord Lansdowne was right, after all

CHAPTER XXI

CLOSING YEARS [1919-27]

(Page 484)

Lord Lansdowne had now, in 1918, reached the mature age of seventy-three years, and it was inevitable that his Parliamentary activities should become fewer and fewer in the years that remained to him. During the session of 1918 his appearances in Parliament were rare, but in the early part of 1919 he was moved, partly at the instance of Lord Robert Cecil, to plead the cause of the semi-starving multitudes in Central Europe, and thereby again incurred disapproval in certain quarters.

Early in 1919, Lord Loreburn published his book, *How the War Began*, in which he made reference to British diplomacy in the years preceding the War. Lord Lansdowne was inevitably mentioned a great deal, and Lord Lansdowne's letter to Lord Loreburn, after reading the book, is of great interest. Lord Loreburn, it may be remarked, often used to complain in private that he and others in the Cabinet had always been kept in the dark with regard to the German danger.

> I have no complaint [Lord Lansdowne wrote on April 29th, 1919] whatever to make of those passages in which my name occurs. The only one which provokes controversy is the statement with regard to the promise which I am alleged to have given in 1905. You are quite justified in saying that this statement is without foundation. My assurances, which are all on record, did not go beyond the substance of the *entente*, which you correctly summarise at page 288.
>
> I have always believed, as you evidently do, that the War might have been avoided if Grey had been in a position to make

(Page 485) CLOSING YEARS [1919-27]

> a perfectly explicit statement as to our conduct in certain eventualities. I am under the impression that he would himself have been ready to make such a statement, but that he could not venture to do so, and could not have got the support of the Cabinet, if he had asked for it.
>
> I used at one time, soon after the outbreak of war, to talk pretty freely about these things to Cambon, whose language to me was quite in accordance with this theory. Your account of the conversations which took place between Grey and Cambon on July 30th, 1914, supports my view.
>
> I am still very anxious as to the situation at Paris. The late Lord Salisbury once told me that the Italians were always sturdy beggars, and they certainly play the part consistently.

The importance of the denial of having offered military assistance to France during the Morocco crisis of 1905, and of the opinion that war might have been avoided had Sir Edward Grey been able to give a definite assurance in 1914, will be at once recognized.

In May 1919, Lord Lansdowne was stricken down by an acute attack of rheumatic fever, and for nearly two years was prevented from taking any part in Parliament, or of even attending the meetings of the Trustees of the National Gallery, in whose work he took much practical interest. His illness was so severe, in fact, that fears were entertained as to his recovery. The long period of seclusion was passed chiefly at Bowood, and many communications were received from all sides deploring his absence from Parliament whilst the peace negotiations were proceeding at Paris. It was, in fact, an international misfortune that he was not a British representative. Many of these letters came from the late Lord Bryce, who strongly disapproved of the attitude of the Allies at Paris, and predicted accurately the results which were certain to follow some of their more ignorant and vindictive decisions.

During his enforced seclusion, he appears to have fallen back upon the solace of the classics. There is, for instance, a letter from him to Mr. F.W. Hirst, with

(Page 486) LORD LANSDOWNE [1919-27]

whom he had been brought much into contact since the publication of the Peace Letter, regarding a difficult passage in an Ode of Horace (I. 23, 2nd stanza):

> I would allow the text to stand. It is not easy to translate, but I do not think it very difficult to discern what Horace had in his mind.
>
> "*Veris adventus*" means, I think, "the first breath of spring". "*Inhorruit*" is dreadfully difficult to render into English. There is, somewhere or other—I think in Virgil—a line in which the words "*Inhorruit unda tenebris*" appear. The best translation I can suggest is: "Whether, at the first breath of spring, a shudder passes over the fluttering leaves, or whether a green lizard pushes the briars aside", or "shows itself among the briars". The image seems to me to be perfectly conceived, and I do not think Bentley's reading would improve the picture.
>
> By the way, is it not usual in vulgar circles to describe a young woman, not yet completely emancipated, as a "kid"? This would seem to be good classical Latin and not modern slang.

In a letter to Mr. Choate, American Ambassador in London, written some years earlier, he had once apologized for an excursion into Horace on the ground that an imperfect knowledge of Horace is always supposed to be the only intellectual equipment of an Eton boy"!

But his proficiency in the classics went far beyond a knowledge of Horace, although he never made any parade of it either in public or in private. It was only by accident that a friend, Mr. C.W. James, elicited the fact, that he occasionally amused himself by metrical translations from the Greek, for he entertained an intense dislike to appearing as a poet.

> That was indeed an unguarded moment [he wrote to Mr. James] when I confessed that I had once tried to translate the lament of Moschus[605] over his herbaceous border. I never dreamed that I should be called upon to "deliver the goods", and I am reluctant to deliver them now; but I cannot resist your appeal, so here they are—for your eye only.

(Page 487) CLOSING YEARS [1919-27]

> These attempts only prove to those who make them now how hopeless it is to translate the super-poetry of these old writers. This is a weak rendering, which I could criticise as mercilessly as you will:
>
> Alas! Alas! Low are the mallows laid.
> The fresh green parsley and the anise fade; The garden's joy is sere.
> Yet for all these is a new life in store,
> Still their sap rises as it rose before,
> And waits the coming year.
>
> But for us men, so strong, so brave, so wise.
> When once pale death has sealed our mortal eyes,
> There is no second birth.
> We sleep the sound sleep which no dawn may break,

[605] *Lament for Bion* by Moschus. (LN). Moschus was an ancient Greek bucolic poet and student of the Alexandrian grammarian Aristarchus of Samothrace. He was born at Syracuse, Magna Graecia, and flourished about 150 BC. (Ed.)

The long, long sleep from which not one may wake.
Within the hollow earth.

So far from being "a weak rendering to be mercilessly criticised", this translation is one of much merit, and is evidence of the keen delight which he took in classical poetry. One wonders, too, how many other people would have shown similar modesty under the circumstances.

It was, no doubt, the knowledge of his scholarship which prompted the Oxford authorities to ask him privately, upon the death of Lord Salisbury, whether he would consent to accept the office of Chancellor, and to renew the invitation upon the death of Lord Goschen in 1907. On both occasions he declined the honour, as well as a similar invitation from Bristol University.

Lord Lansdowne's illness kept him away from Parliament until March 1921, and his reappearance in the House of Lords was marked by a demonstration rare in that Assembly. He was now physically, however, a much altered man. The once slim and upright figure was bent; the alert movements, the light and active gait, had gone, and given place to an appearance of extreme frailty, which was enhanced by chronic lameness. But his intellectual power and activity remained, and soon after his return he made a speech on the perpetual

question of House of Lords reform. He was also well enough to unveil a War Memorial at Calne, and, accompanied by Lady Lansdowne, to visit his son's grave in France. In this year he left Lansdowne House for good, having made it over to Lord Kerry, and henceforth lived at 65 Brook Street. The Scottish property, Meikleour, had already been made over to the second son before the war, and the well-known Rembrandt's "Mill" had some years earlier been sold for £100,000 for the benefit of the younger children.

A letter received from Lord Sanderson (who was possessed of a phenomenal memory) about this period is of some interest, as it deals with a disputed point over which there has been a controversy, already referred to.

Lord Sanderson to Lord Lansdowne. Feb. 4th, 1922.

> I have no recollection of your having proposed to the French Government in 1905, or any other time, a development of the *entente* of 1904 on the lines of the agreement between France and Russia.
>
> My recollection is that when in 1905 the Germans took a threatening tone about French proceedings in Morocco, you told Cambon that you would warn Germany that in the event of her attacking France in connection with our *entente* public opinion here would be very excited: that you could not answer for our remaining neutral—and that you did give this warning. I do not remember your going further.
>
> There were, no doubt, consultations between military and naval experts as to what we might do if Germany attacked Franee through Belgium, and there was some loose talk by Lord Fisher and even more exalted persons as to a possible landing on the Schleswig coast. But the F.O. had nothing to do with that.

It will be remembered that Lord Fisher[606] once actually suggested what he called the "Copenhagening of the German Fleet" in time of peace, and it is curious

[606] *Memories* Lord Fisher, p. 4. (LN). (*See footnote on page 307 for biographical details.)*

that this stupefying proposal was not made more use of in German propaganda.

Lord Lansdowne was now in his seventy-seventh year, and an event now occurred which caused him the deepest distress.

All through his long life, nothing had ever given him so much enjoyment or had been so eagerly looked forward to as his visits to Kerry: now in his last years this pleasure was denied him, for in the autumn of 1922 Derreen was looted and burnt. This cruel and senseless act of destruction had no reference whatever to the ordinary disputes between landlord and tenant; his relations with all his neighbours had always been of the most friendly character, and the only explanation was to be found in his own words, "the relentless and persistent persecution of a helpless minority", which characterized the situation in Ireland at the time.

As the result of a long correspondence with the Free State Government, in which the Governor-General showed a very conciliatory spirit, compensation was ultimately awarded; and when the country showed some signs of a return to ordinary conditions, the work of rebuilding the house was undertaken. But here a fresh stroke of ill-luck occurred, for the contractor's work was so badly performed that dry-rot set in, and it became necessary to reconstruct the new building; nor was it until the autumn of 1926 that he was able to take possession. Letters to his old friend Lord Inchcape[607] and to Mr. Hirst reveal the joy of return to this much-loved home, and the pathetic sense of his approaching end. "Health", he writes to the former, "is the only thing that matters. I am still able to extract a good deal of pleasure from this place and from its infinite variety of beauty, but my inspection has to be done from a Bath-chair, and though I sometimes take a cast, I always feel that it may lead me to end my days in the river."

To Mr. Hirst he writes:

> We have been here more than a month, and it is a joy to me to be restored to my garden, which suffered in what the people euphemistically call "the troubles", but not irrevocably. The beauty of it all—sea, mountain, and lakes—is more entrancing than ever. I crawl about in a donkey-chair, or hobble on two sticks, but my area is very limited.
>
> I cannot find anyone who has a word to say in defence of the imposition of the Irish language. "Imposition", by the way, is a word *ancipitis usus* —or am I thinking of "imposture"?

Notwithstanding these physical disabilities, he succeeded in killing a salmon which had defeated the efforts of so renowned a sportsman as Lord Desborough,[608] and this must have been one of his last exploits so far as field sports were concerned.

In these closing years of his life Lord Lansdowne continued to attend the House of Lords whenever his health permitted, invariably accompanied by Lady Lansdowne. Occasionally he took part in debate, and, with habitual courtesy, expressed in private gentle commendations to those younger men who seemed worthy of encouragement. Whenever he spoke himself, his utterances were listened to with the interest which they had always commanded, and to the end of his days he exercised an influence which was certainly not surpassed by that of any other man in the House. The last speech he delivered was in

[607] The index lists him as Viscount Inchcape. James Lyle Mackay, 1st Earl of Inchcape (1852–1932), known as Sir James Mackay from 1894 to 1911, was a British businessman and colonial administrator in India who became Chairman of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company ("P&O"). Ed.

[608] William Henry Grenfell, 1st Baron Desborough (1855–1945) was a British athlete, sportsman, public servant and politician. He sat in the House of Commons first for the Liberal Party and then for the Conservatives between 1880 and 1905 when he was raised to the peerage. (Ed.)

1925 in support of the claims of the Irish loyalists, but he continued to attend at intervals until within two months of his death.

In the May of 1927 Lord Lansdowne set out for Derreen, accompanied by Lady Lansdowne, hoping to revisit it once more in the glory of early summer; but this final gratification was denied him, for during a short stay on the journey at Newtown Anmer, the home of his younger daughter, Lady Osborne Beauclerk, he succumbed, after a short illness, to an aneurism of the heart, on June 3rd, 1927, at the advanced age of eighty-two.

The funeral took place at Bowood a few days later, amid universal manifestations of sympathy; and the tributes which were paid to his memory in the House of Lords were marked by a real and genuine feeling of regret, which is not always to be found on such occasions.

With Lord Lansdowne there passed away one of the last examples of a type of statesman once familiar in this country but now almost extinct. A great noble, cultivated and accomplished, the owner of historic titles and of historic houses, he was one of those who, from motives of duty and patriotism, deliberately chose the toil and responsibility of political life in preference to the existence of cultured ease and pleasure which was within his reach. His official life stretched back for nearly sixty years, to an epoch when the great Whig families divided the government of the country between themselves; and in the course of an exceptionally crowded career he occupied the two most important posts outside these islands and, as it so happened, the two most important places at the time (War Office and Foreign Office) in the Cabinet at home.

In this long and distinguished career there can be no doubt that the Foreign Office period was at once the most important and the most successful, and the gradual abandonment of the policy of isolation brought about by the conclusion of the Japanese and French Agreements, with the new orientation which resulted, will be recognized as his main achievement. It has, however, been widely recognized that, with the possible exception of the War Office, the four great posts which he occupied were all held with great ability and distinction. The administration of Canada and of India during his Viceroyalties presented no especial difficulties, but in each case his capacity and industry were fully recognized, and he left behind in both countries a sense of increased progress and stability, besides having won an unsurpassed personal popularity. In so far as

his tenure of office as Secretary of State for War may appear to have lacked the success which attended him elsewhere, he was, as has been shown, largely the victim of circumstances. His efforts in the direction of reorganization were overtaken by the outbreak of the South African War, and the odium resulting from the neglect of serious military preparation which has always characterized this country was unjustly cast upon him, for when a scapegoat is required it is always easy to convince the public that military errors are due to civilian incapacity.

As regards his success as a party leader, there may possibly be some difference of opinion. Undoubtedly he possessed high Parliamentary qualities and enjoyed greater personal popularity than any other leader in the House of Lords, but he was always aware that he suffered from the drawback of never having been a member of the House of Commons. All his life he had consorted with officials and with members of his own class: he had had no experience of the hustle and the hurly-burly of election fights, of association with aspiring or discontented spirits in the Lobby, of the rough and tumble of House of Commons life, of the questionable ethics of the Whips' Room, or of the apparatus controlled by these functionaries outside Parliament. All this was unknown to him. He was, in fact, a Whig, a fastidious Whig of the highest quality not unlike the type depicted in Disraelian novels— who, if the truth were known, probably felt more affinity with men like Lord Crewe and Sir Edward Grey than with many of the robust Conservatives with whom his lot was cast. Amongst his Conservative colleagues, he

apparently had more in common with Mr. Arthur Balfour than with anyone else: to him he was “Clan”, and the intimacy between these two is shown clearly in their correspondence.

The disability from which he suffered was that he

(Page 493) CLOSING YEARS [1919-27]

was of too fine a grain to make the requisite impression upon the public and upon the party as a fighting man.

There was not enough of the hearty contempt for opponents or of the blunt self-confidence and pugnacity which is expected from a party leader, and his name, therefore, conveyed little to the man in the street. His influence was, in fact, almost entirely Parliamentary, and in this respect he presented a contrast to his brilliant friend and contemporary, Lord Rosebery: for whereas Lord Rosebery was always a force in the country rather than in Parliament, Lord Lansdowne was pre-eminently a force in Parliament, and his name was, strangely enough, perhaps better known in foreign countries than to the British public. The one man appealed to the popular imagination, the other to knowledge and experience.

This, however, cannot have concerned him in the least, for it was one of his engaging characteristics that he was not merely indifferent to notoriety, but anxious to escape it. Whereas most of the politicians of the day who are the heroes of the press seem to exhaust their ingenuity in drawing attention to the most insignificant and uninteresting personal matters, it is doubtful whether Lord Lansdowne ever gave a press interview during his long life. He certainly never posed for a press photograph, and never, so far as is known, either attempted to influence an editor or to inspire a personal paragraph. As he cultivated no peculiarity of dress, owned no racehorses, and would probably not have understood what was meant by a publicity agent, such a man remained almost unrecognized and devoid of interest to the general public.

As to his personality, there were no two opinions. Never in recent years has any public man enjoyed to a higher degree the affectionate regard of his party or the esteem of his political opponents.

It has already been pointed out that the task of leading

(Page 494) LORD LANSDOWNE [1919-27]

an overwhelming Conservative Opposition in the House or Lords from 1906 until the Coalition of 1915 was beset with difficulties, and the circumstances were such that it is doubtful whether anyone, however gifted, could have carried it out with success. The struggle between the two Houses was inevitable from the moment that the huge Liberal majority was established in the House or Commons, and it was only possible to avert it by what amounted to almost complete surrender. Such a surrender would never have been tolerated, and the result was the adoption of a middle course which, although the most practical under the circumstances, met with hostility on both sides. To the demagogues, he appeared as the personification of the aristocratic principle, an imperturbable and inflexible nobleman, who sealed the fate of Liberal measures, usually with urbane, but sometimes with biting words; while by some Conservatives he was regarded as a leader who was not strong enough to stand up to the enemy in an emergency. Such criticism is easy to make but difficult to justify, under the prevailing circumstances, and those who were associated with him will prefer to recall the skill, tact, the industry, and the patience which he displayed in a trying political situation, which was in effect a protracted crisis. In private as well as in public life, perhaps his chief characteristic was a refined and unostentatious dignity, which, personally, I have never seen surpassed, even in the most exalted circles. And here is may not be inappropriate to cite the impression made upon a political opponent when first brought into contact with him:

I found him the very best type of British aristocrat, straightforward and frank, dignified, accessible, firm and even tenacious, yet wisely regardful of other people's opinions, sensitive to the honour of his own country and unconcerned at the attacks which had been levelled against him.

In his invariable and slightly ceremonious courtesy he seemed to combine the polished grace of the cultivated Frenchman with the practical nature of the Briton, but a certain natural reticence tended to check intimacy, and to create occasionally an unfounded impression of austerity. I was always on the most friendly terms with him; I was frequently in his house and he occasionally in mine, but, like many others, I never felt that I knew him intimately, and have, therefore, left his personal characteristics to be dealt with more fully by a relative.

The impression which he always left upon me was that had he been born in a less exalted sphere he would have acquitted himself equally well in any branch of public life. It was not always the case that those who were born in the official purple, and belonged to what used to be called the "governing families", were really adaptable for general purposes; but Lord Lansdowne was one of those persons who could be confidently trusted to discharge successfully any task allotted to him, and the explanation lay in the fact that intellectual capacity was combined with conscientious application and industry. When to these qualities are added an invariable courtesy to all with whom he came in contact and a kindness of heart partially concealed under a somewhat formal exterior, it is not surprising that he should have attained the highest offices in the State, and left a record of long and honourable service which has been seldom surpassed. It would, perhaps, be hardly accurate to say that he was fortunate in the moment of his death. His long and distinguished career ended with the fulfilment of forebodings which he had often uttered, with the depression which the spectacle of a saddened and distracted world must have produced upon the survivor of a happier age, and with the painful experience of the ingratitude which public men meet with when, in

the spirit of conscientious conviction, they advocate an unpopular course.

Lord Lansdowne's merits were to a great extent unrecognized; his name has perhaps already been almost forgotten by the unthinking mass of Englishmen; but to those who knew and were able to appreciate his qualities, his memory will be treasured as that of one who represented the very finest type of what the old patrician system of this country could produce, for no one ever understood more fully obligations of his class or lived more closely to the ideals expressed in the family motto, "*Virtute*[609] *non Verbis".* The mould has been broken and is not likely to be recast.

[609] "By courage not words." (Ed.)

APPENDIX I

LORD LANSDOWNE AND IRELAND

(Page 497)

This chapter reviews Lord Lansdowne's associations with Irish politics. They occupied him, sometimes intensely, through nearly half a century, but they infringed only once on his larger career—when, in 1887, Mr. William O'Brien, breathing all the hatreds of the Irish Land War, pursued him to Canada. It is well, perhaps, that these Irish events should be lifted out of the main stream of the narrative; for they are a story of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago". The new Ireland, at least, has agreed to forget nearly everything that happened between 1880 and 1914: as modern history, that period has been crowded out, and it has no glamour of ancientry.

Lord Lansdowne, even if he had been a small instead of a big Irishman, could not have escaped the conflict. He was born into the days of the land war, and, like the young man in the Bible, he had great possessions. In 1880, when they became the storm-centre of Irish politics, the Lansdowne estates, next to the Conyngham estate, were the largest landed property in Ireland. They contained 121,349 statute acres and the valuation was £32,342 a year. They thrust their influence into British politics in July 1880, when Lord Lansdowne resigned his Under-Secretaryship for India in Mr. Gladstone's Government. By all the standards of that time he was a liberal and conscientious landlord, but he could not stomach Mr. Forster's Compensation for Disturbance Bill. This, in the light of later legislation, was a mild measure of reform. It provided that an evicted tenant should be entitled to compensation if he could prove that he was unable to pay his rent owing to bad harvests and that the landlord had refused his reasonable offers.

The House of Lords rejected the Bill, and, during the interval before the famous Land Bill of 1881, the Irish Nationalists and the English Radicals made a fierce campaign against the

(Page 498) LORD LANSDOWNE

morality of the Irish land system. Lord Lansdowne was their most formidable opponent and bore the brunt of their attack. He defended himself with skill, dignity, and manifest conviction of the justice of his cause. Mr. Charles Russell,[610] afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen, went to Kerry on behalf of the *Daily Telegraph*, and drew lurid pictures of the condition of the Lansdowne estates. They made a deep impression on the Liberals. Here is one extract: "Piece of bacon, hanging up in a tenant's house. Explanation of this phenomenon—tenant an ex-policeman, and had a pension of a year." Lord Lansdowne's replies in the *Daily Telegraph* and other newspapers were nearly as voluminous as the attacks. He answered every charge in detail, and his general defence was supported by his brother, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice,[611] by Lady Fitzgerald,[612] widow of the Knight of Kerry, and by the Provost and Senior Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, who were landlords of large property at Cahirciveen.[613] The Roman Catholic Bishop of Kerry testified also to the good management of Lord Lansdowne's estates.

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[610] Charles Arthur Russell, Baron Russell of Killowen, (1832–1900) was an Irish statesman of the 19th century, and Lord Chief Justice of England. He was the first Roman Catholic to serve as Lord Chief Justice since the Reformation. (Ed.)

[611] Edmond George Petty-Fitzmaurice, 1st Baron Fitzmaurice (1846–1935) was styled Lord Edmond FitzMaurice from 1863 to 1906. He was a British Liberal politician. His was a younger brother of the 5th Marquess of Lansdowne. Fitzmaurice was educated at Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he served as President of the Cambridge Union in 1866. (Ed.)

[612] The text does not identify clearly the husband of Lady Fitzgerald but if he were Sir Peter George FitzGerald, 1st Baronet, 19th Knight of Kerry (1808–1880) she would be Julia Hussey, daughter of Peter Bodkin Hussey of Farranikilla House, County Kerry, who died in 1896. (Ed.)

[613] Cahersiveen, sometimes Cahirciveen, is a small town in the far south-west of Ireland, in County Kerry. (Ed.)

At this time of day, it is easy to see that the prosecutors and the defendants were arguing from different premisses. Mr. Russell was looking for "standards of English comfort" among the Irish peasantry of 1880. Lord Lansdowne and his brother-landlords were deeply rooted in notions of the rights of property that now seem to be archaic. The first movement of the revolution came with the Irish Land Bill of 1881, which established the three "F's"—fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale—and virtually abolished freedom of contract in respect of the hire of Irish agricultural land. It will suffice here to summarise the Bill's genesis and results in two brief quotations. Mr. R. Barry O'Brien,[614] in his *Life of Parnell*, says that the Bill was "wrenched from the Government by one of the most lawless movements which had ever convulsed any country"; Sir James O'Connor,[615] in his *History of Ireland, 1798-1924*, says: "The revolution that dates from 1881 enfeebled, impoverished, and finally abolished the territorial aristocracy of the country."

The Land Bill of 1881 provoked Lord Lansdowne's definite secession from the Liberal Government. Nevertheless, although he deeply resented "conditions so novel, so onerous, and so uncertain he fought the Bill temperately and with a shrewdness for which the events of later years have furnished many illustrations. For instance, in a letter to *The Times* (April 20th, 1881), he suggested twenty-two years' purchase of a revised rental as a

fair price for the expropriation of landlords. In fact that price, or thereabouts, was the basis of most of the sales of larger estates under Mr. Wyndham's Land Act of 1903. He foresaw, too, the multiplication of small and uneconomic holdings—which is happening in 1929—and recent events in Ireland seem to be justifying a third prediction of the same letter. To-day many of the more shiftless tenant-proprietors in the Free State are becoming restive under the "mechanical, inexorable, and bullet-proof landlordism" of the Irish Land Commission. In the eager hope that something may come of it, they are supporting Mr. de Valera's[616] denunciation of the payment of Irish land purchase annuities to the British Government.

Despite their quarrel over two Irish Land Bills, it was upon Mr. Gladstone's recommendation that Lord Lansdowne was appointed Governor-General of Canada in May 1883. Instantly upon this news the flames of Nationalist rancour leapt high, and Lord Lansdowne was threatened with the unrelenting animosity of the Irish in the Dominion. Indeed, the British Government regarded the Irish threats so seriously that it took special precautions to ensure the safety of the Queen's ships in Canadian waters. It was not until the third year of Lord Lansdowne's Viceroyalty, however, that Ireland went to Canada in earnest. In 1887, one of the bitterest conflicts of the whole land war was waged on the Lansdowne estate at Luggacurran, in Queen's County. The tenants asked for a reduction of fifteen per cent on their judicial rents, and when the demand was refused, they adopted the Plan of Campaign. Evictions followed, including that of Mr. Dennis Kilbride,[617] who, although his yearly rent was £750, threw in his lot with his poorer co-tenants. "In the mingled pride and anguish of the eviction day," says Mr. William O'Brien, "it was resolved that the evicted tenant and myself should carry the war into Canada, and at Lord Lansdowne's palace gates challenge him to trial before the freeborn democracy under his rule, for the wrong done in the distant Irish valley." *Uret et Eoos uret et Hesperios*[618] was fate's decree for

[614] Richard Barry O'Brien (1847–1918) was a lawyer, historian, journalist and writer on Irish subjects. (Ed.)
[615] Sir James O'Connor, (1872–1931), was an Irish solicitor, barrister and judge. He was appointed Solicitor-General for Ireland in 1914, Attorney-General for Ireland in 1917, and a judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature of Ireland in 1918. (Ed.)
[616] Éamon de Valera, first registered as George de Valero; changed some time before 1901 to Edward de Valera; (1882–1975) was an American-born Irish statesman and political leader. He served several terms as head of government and head of state and had a leading role in introducing the 1937 Constitution of Ireland. (Ed.)
[617] Denis Kilbride (1848–1924) was an Irish nationalist politician, who as member of the Irish Parliamentary Party represented South Kerry (1887–1895), North Galway (1895–1900), and South Kildare (1903–1918) as a Member of Parliament (MP). (Ed.)
[618] This may be a reference to burning. In September 1922, Lord Lansdowne's home at Derreen in County Kerry was looted and burned by Republicans.(Ed.)

Luggacurran—theretofore and thereafter noteless. The visit to Canada was a noisy and picturesque performance. At Toronto, it is recorded, Mr. O'Brien held a meeting in the Queen's Park, where Orange and Green were equally represented. He was received "with loud cheering and equally loud groaning, fiendish yells and curses and the singing of *God Save the Queen*".

This attack had no reactions on Lord Lansdowne's imperial career, and did not affect his consistent equanimity and prudence in Irish politics. In 1895, after his return from India, he joined Lord Salisbury's third Ministry, and in the following year supported Mr. Gerald Balfour's Land Bill against the strong opposition of the Irish Peers. Concerning one of his amendments to the Bill, Mr. T. M. Healy[619] has written: "I felt grateful to Lord Lansdowne, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Balfours for trying to save the tenants from Dillon's folly, which lost them tens of thousands of pounds."

The year 1902 was a turning-point in Irish affairs. Land purchase, that stubborn problem, was on the eve of settlement, and had been replaced by the problem of Home Rule. At this moment fortune brought together, as in one of the old Roman triumvirates, three men of extraordinarily diverse characters. They were the brilliant, impulsive, and romantic George Wyndham, who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland; Lord Lansdowne, of sober judgment and Odyssean experience; and Sir Antony MacDonnell,[620] the Irish plebeian, who had revealed in India the national genius for the government of subject races. Who shall say whether Lord Lansdowne's instinct was not beginning at this time to reconcile itself to the apparently inevitable, and whether, almost unconsciously, perhaps, he had not marked Sir Antony MacDonnell as an instrument of evolution? At any rate, Sir Antony became Under-Secretary for Ireland in 1902, and Mr. T. M. Healy, who has a profound knowledge of the obscurer tracts of modern Irish history, says that he was "a nominee of Lord Lansdowne, who, as an ex-Viceroy of India, knew of his great career". It is manifest, however, that if Lord Lansdowne's influence was really paramount in this matter, he exercised it with some misgivings. "The MacDonnell conundrum", he wrote to Mr. Wyndham in August 1902, "is very difficult." MacDonnell, he added, was fearless and just, and, although his sympathies were probably with some form of Home Rule he would not truckle to the Nationalists. On the other hand, "there is no doubt that, as Balfour says, the appointment would be regarded with consternation in certain quarters. The landlord party is intolerant and suspicious, and you would have to expect a howl." Yet Lord Lansdowne concluded, "Upon the whole, I should be inclined to take him", and so, after waverings and delays. Sir Antony was taken.

It is impossible now to recapture the atmosphere of those

curious days in Dublin. Mr. Balfour's Government was in office. The Nationalists were hotly expectant of political reform. The Irish Unionists, both in North and South, feared the worst. They disliked the

[619] Timothy Michael Healy, KC (1855–1931) was an Irish nationalist politician, journalist, author, barrister and a controversial Irish Member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. His political career began in the 1880s under Charles Stewart Parnell's leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) and continued into the 1920s, when (on 5 December 1922) he was appointed as the first governor-general of the Irish Free State. (Ed.)

[620] Antony Patrick MacDonnell, 1st Baron MacDonnell, (1844–1925), known as Sir Antony MacDonnell between 1893 and 1908, was the son of a Catholic Landlord in County Mayo. He was educated at Queen's College in Galway graduating with first class honours in modern languages. He became a civil servant, much involved in the Indian land reform and famine relief in India. He was Permanent Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1902–1908); Member of the Council of India (1902); Privy Councillor (1902); Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (1895–1901); Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (1893–1895); Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces (1890–1893); Chief Commissioner of Burma (1889–1890); Home Secretary to the Central Government of India (1886–1889); Secretary to the Government of Bengal and the Bengal Legislative Council. (Ed.)

Viceroy, Lord Dudley.[621] Mr. Wyndham, a novel type at Dublin Castle, though it had known many types, puzzled and frightened them. Sir Antony MacDonnell they regarded with angry suspicion, and he made few efforts to propitiate them. He was a masterful man, full of faith in himself, and he forgot frequently that the then autocratic methods of Indian government must be dangerous in a country of free farmers. Here was ample material for the comedy or tragedy of errors which followed. To-day, perhaps, when all things are new in Ireland, that story hardly deserves the labour of disentanglement. The late Earl of Dunraven,[622] a man of fertile and restless mind, broached schemes of political devolution—very mild and harmless they appear to-day—to the Nationalist leaders. Sir Antony MacDonnell was in close touch with Lord Dunraven. Lord Dudley and Mr. Wyndham had some knowledge of these manoeuvres, and treated them, as it seems, with a sort of casual good-will. Lord Lansdowne probably did not know how quickly the plot was thickening, until the Irish Unionists took sudden alarm and the hue and cry was in full blast. Neither Lord Lansdowne nor Mr. Wyndham, it is certain, did anything of which, by the nicest standards of political conduct, he need have felt ashamed, but both perhaps were content, like Aristippus, to follow rather than to control circumstances. The outraged Unionists had a brief and costly victory. Mr. Wyndham resigned the Chief Secretaryship in March 1905, and Mr. Balfour's Ministry resigned at the end of the same year. During the following months the conduct of the Unionist leaders was debated fiercely throughout the country and in Parliament, where the Irish Council Bill, the fruit of Sir Antony MacDonnell's labours, was the *pièce de résistance*. In a speech at Nottingham, in October 1906, Lord Lansdowne defended Mr. Balfour and himself against the charge of association with Lord Dunraven's devolution scheme, and denied the existence of documentary evidence connecting them with any projects of Home Rule. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that Lord Lansdowne's general attitude to the problems of Irish government had encouraged the devolutionists. Writing in *The Times*, after Lord Lansdowne's death, Mr. William O'Brien expressed the view that he had been a decisive contributor to Irish settlement.

and that if the Council Bill of 1906 had reached the House of Lords, he would have backed it with all his authority.

Certainly Lord Lansdowne played a decisive part in the Home Rule crisis of 1913. Again he was more moderate than most of the Unionist party, but he took a strong and reasoned stand against the proposed coercion of Ulster. On the Bill's first reading in the House of Lords he said that it was a disastrous bargain for all concerned, that it would not fit into any scheme of federation, and that the Colonial analogy was worthless: "in war, Ireland would be a menace to the Empire, and in peace a disturbing influence". Returning good for evil to men who had criticised him with the utmost harshness, Lord Lansdowne stood loyally by Ulster, and, with an unwonted vehemence, protested against the tyranny of the Parliament Act. It was Lord Lansdowne's amendment that, on the second reading in July, brought the crisis to a head. The amendment—"That this House declines to proceed with the consideration of the Bill until it has been submitted to the judgment of the country"—was carried by 302 votes to 64. In September, however, the Bill was forced to the Statute Book, and some months later an effort to relieve a now almost desperate situation took shape in the Home Rule Amending Bill, which provided for the temporary exclusion of such Ulster counties as might desire to take advantage of its provisions. The Bill was transformed by the Lords into a measure of permanent exclusion for the whole of Ulster. Lord Lansdowne supported the second reading, but solely as a means to gain time. He had no faith in a "makeshift emergency measure", which was "fit for a museum and wholly inadequate to avert a

[621] William Humble Ward, 2nd Earl of Dudley (1867–1932) was a British aristocrat, politician, and military officer who served as the fourth Governor-General of Australia, in office from 1908 to 1911. He was previously Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1902 to 1905, and also a government minister under Lord Salisbury. (Ed.)

[622] Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, 4th Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl (1841–1926), styled Viscount Adare between 1850 and 1871, was an Anglo-Irish journalist, landowner, soldier, sportsman and Conservative politician. He served as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies under Lord Salisbury from 1885 to 1886 and 1886 to 1887. He also successfully presided over the 1902 Land Conference and was the founder of the Irish Reform Association.

calamity". In the same speech, however, he struck, once more, the note which distinguished him from the rank and file of Unionists. "We fully recognize", he said, "that there is a great Irish problem requiring to be handled with courage and sympathy, and that we cannot adopt a policy of mere negation or destructive criticism." When Nationalist Ireland rose in scorn and passion against the Amending Bill, a last effort of settlement was made by the Buckingham Palace Conference (July 21st,1914), at which Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law represented the Unionists of Great Britain. On July 24th the Prime Minister announced the failure of the Conference, and the United Kingdom confronted the imminent prospect of civil war.

During those last weeks of July, Ulster completed her plans

to defend herself against all comers. Her volunteers, as the result of a great gun-running and of much midnight drilling, were equipped and ready. The young women of her better families had qualified themselves to be field nurses and telegraphists. On a smaller scale, the South had followed Ulster's example. Guns were run into Howth on a fine Sunday in late July, and on that afternoon an ordered rifle volley broke the silence of the Dublin quays. A company of Scottish soldiers, returning from the gun-running at Howth, had fired upon an attacking mob, and a woman was killed. Then the calamity of civil war was averted, for the time being, by the greater calamity of the World War. Within a month of the shooting on the quay half the men of that Scottish regiment were casualties in the retreat from Mons. While Irish soldiers—every one a volunteer—fought splendidly in Flanders, the Sinn Fein movement had its birth at home, but the Irish Government was blind and deaf to the wrath to come. A fortnight before the Easter rising of 1916 a full-dress rehearsal of an attack on Dublin Castle was conducted under officialdom's incurious eyes. The rebellion was suppressed, but the Sinn Fein movement increased, and when, in 1917, the British Government opened new negotiations for a political settlement, the old Nationalist party, on which it still relied, was utterly discredited in Southern Ireland. If the Irish Convention of 1917 had been a success, instead of the dismal failure that it was, Mr. Redmond's party would have been unable to "deliver the goods".

Two years of agitation and outrage were followed by the Government of Ireland Act. A truncated Ulster seized the Act and retired behind her barriers; but when the Parliament of Southern Ireland was summoned at Dublin, in June 1921, only four members answered the roll-call. The boycott was complete, and the British Government decided at last to do business with Sinn Fein.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty was made on December 6th, 1921, and on the same day twelve months later the Irish Free State took formal existence as a self-governing Dominion of the British Empire. During six years Lord Lansdowne, like other men of goodwill, had been a helpless spectator of bloodshed and disorder. Like most of them, too, he constrained himself to accept triumphant revolution and to hope for the best. The Free State Constitution Bill was passed by the House of Lords in November 1922. In his speech on the third reading, Lord Lansdowne

criticised some features of the Bill, and complained in particular that it furnished insufficient protection for the Southern minority. "It had, however, the merit that it gave an opportunity to both Northern and Southern Ireland, after they had had some years' experience of the working of the Constitution, of considering whether it would not be best for the whole country that they should join hands in seeking to create a prosperous and united Ireland.

There was more than statesmanship—there was magnanimity—in this greeting to the Irish settlement: for Lord Lansdowne had received a recent and heavy blow. In September 1922 his beautiful home at Derreen, County Kerry, was burned and looted by Republicans. The outrage was condemned by such local opinion as dared to speak, and much of the looted furniture was recovered afterwards by the Roman Catholic clergy. Lord Lansdowne gave a substantial pledge of his faith in the Free State's future

when he rebuilt Derreen in 1926. His courage and constancy were not ignored by the new Irish Government. On Mr. Cosgrave's[623] invitation, Lord Lansdowne's son, the Earl of Kerry, became an original member of the Free State Senate, and was active in his duties there until he succeeded to the Marquisate.

When Lord Lansdowne died, some of the warmest tributes to his memory came from his old enemies of the Irish conflict. They had learned to respect him alike as an Irishman and as a statesman. He loved his country, was a chivalrous fighter, and always stood serenely aloof from the sectarian rancours of his time. His imperial outlook distinguished him from the majority of Irish Unionists, for whom the Home Rule issue was a narrowly domestic affair. None had more to lose from the country's political and social disorders, and, while he was an outspoken champion of the Irish minority's grievances, he bore his personal losses without bitterness or complaint. Perhaps no other Irishman's character came through all those fierce and testing years with fewer scars. Of none other, perhaps, would all Irishmen agree to say that he "nothing common did or mean, upon that memorable scene".[624]

If Lord Lansdowne had not been an ambassador of Empire in two continents—if he had devoted his whole life to Irish affairs in Ireland and in the House of Lords—would the course of recent history have been altered? This is an interesting speculation. His personal influence in Irish politics would have been immense, and it may be that his moderation and foresight would

have averted many misfortunes. They might have persuaded the Irish Unionists to agree with their adversary quickly while they were in the way with him, and to accept the second, if not the first, of the Sibylline Books.[625] It is at least probable that, if Unionist and Nationalist could have been brought to terms before the Great War, a settlement less costly and less dubious than that of 1922 might have been arranged, and the party of revolution might have remained unborn. If he had lived in Ireland, with his finger upon the pulse of events, for the twenty years before 1916, Lord Lansdowne might have succeeded where so many English Chief Secretaries—"transient and embarrassed phantoms"—failed. His associations, however disputable, with Sir Antony MacDonnell and the Irish Council Bill of 1906 indicate the sort of settlement which he might have supported. Probably it would have been an experimental settlement, and certainly, under any settlement that Lord Lansdowne might have contrived, Ireland would have escaped partition.

His speech on the third reading of the Free State Constitution Bill was his last effort in Irish politics. Afterwards he did not care to discuss them at all, even with his closest friends. He was a silent observer

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[623] William Thomas Cosgrave (1880–1965) was an Irish politician who served as the President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State from 1922 to 1932, Leader of the Opposition from 1932 to 1944, Leader of Fine Gael from 1934 to 1944, founder and leader of Cumann na nGaedheal, from 1923 to 1933, Chairman of the Provisional Government from August 1922 to December 1922, the President of Dáil Éireann from September 1922 to December 1922, the Minister for Finance from 1922 to 1923 and Minister for Local Government from 1919 to 1922. He served as a Teachta Dála (TD) from 1921 to 1944. He was also a Member of parliament (MP) for the Kilkenny North constituency from 1918 to 1922. (Ed.)

[624] This is a quotation from Andrew Marvell's *Ode to Cromwell* referring to Cromwell's behaviour at the execution of Charles I. (Ed.)

[625] *The Sibylline Books* were a collection of oracular utterances, set out in Greek hexameter verses, that, according to tradition, were purchased from a sibyl or prophetess by the last king of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, and consulted at momentous crises through the history of the Roman Republic and the Empire. According to ancient legend, an old woman, possibly a Sibyl from the oracle of Appollo at Cumae, a Greek colony near Naples, offered to Tarquinius nine books of prophecies at an exorbitant price; when the king declined to purchase them, she burned three and offered the remaining six to Tarquinius at the same price, which he again refused. Thereupon, she burned three more and repeated her offer, maintaining the same price. Tarquinius then consulted the Augurs (priests) who deplored the loss of the six books and urged purchase of the remaining three. Tarquinius then purchased the last three at the full original price, and had them preserved in a sacred vault beneath the Capitoline temple of Jupiter. (Ed.)

of the beginnings of independent government in the Free State and in Northern Ireland, and we may believe that, before his death, he admitted some modification of his hopes and fears. On the one hand, the Southern minority in the Free State is not suffering through lack of sufficient protection. It has adequate representation in both Houses of Parliament, is troubled by no menace of sectarianism, and has an influence beyond its numbers in the country's commercial and social life. The Southern loyalists' only real grievance to-day is the Government's foolish attempt to revive a dying language by processes of compulsion. On the other hand, Lord Lansdowne's last years found no encouragement for his hope that experience of self-government in both Irish States would create a joint demand for a united Ireland. He saw the steady growth of Border restrictions, the establishment of tariffs, the rejection of conferences on common issues, and other sad proofs that the hatreds of three centuries are not easily abolished. Lord Lansdowne, however, had studied in his family records the healing powers of time, and his memory was stored with many notable victories of plain sense over political prejudice. Slow but almost irresistible forces are working for a united Ireland, and, when it comes, history will not deny to Lord Lansdowne a share in the making of it.

APPENDIX II

A PERSONAL SKETCH, BY LORD ERNEST HAMILTON[626]

(Page 506)

As one who knew Lord Lansdowne during most of a lifetime, and who, in common with everyone else who knew him intimately, had for him the warmest affection and admiration, I have been asked by Lord Newton to put some of my impressions on paper. This I have, of course, been only too glad to do, though conscious in advance of my inability to give anything approaching a clear picture of a personality that was neither obvious nor self-asserting, in the demonstrative sense. By this I mean that Lord Lansdowne, or "Clan", as I propose to call him throughout these few lines, was not one of those who lay bare their souls for the inspection even of intimates. I don't think that he had any greater desire to shine luminously at the dinner-table among his relations and friends than he had to shine luminously in the eyes of the public. Both private and public virtues were, with him, their own reward, and the reward gained neither in size nor value because an irresponsible chorus joined in shouting what he already knew. Men who have held great posts—Governor-General of Canada, Viceroy of India, Foreign Secretary, War Minister, *etc.*—are, as a rule, men full of anecdotes of incidents and experiences that befell them during their tenure of office in East, West, North, or South. The central figure, if not the actual hero, of these anecdotes is usually the great man himself; and, either from the substance of the tale or the manner of its delivery, we get little glimpses of the man's soul within, white, black, or grey, as the case may be. But, in Clan's very occasional anecdotes, he was never his own hero—not so much, I think, because of lack of self-esteem as because, as I have said, the applause or appreciation of this man or that had little value for him. So those little windows to the soul that other men from time to time throw open, in his case remained permanently shuttered. Through the chinks in the shutters,

(Page 507) APPENDIX II

lifelong associates were, now and then, able to see and learn little things, so that, in time, they knew pretty well what was behind the shutters; but, to mere acquaintances, Clan was never clearly legible. Everyone, perhaps even those who knew him well, found the type small at first, though after a time clearer; but even the eventual clearness was not in plain characters, and so lessened in no way the difficulty of doing even partial justice to what was read.

When I was a small private-school boy and Clan was a smart young man at Oxford, he was the unconscious recipient of a large share of my youthful homage. I thought him very beautiful. He wore high collars, very open at the throat and with a pronounced flap-back, and he was always very neat and dapper. I think the collars were sometimes striped with blue, as the fashion was, at the moment, with young men of culture and taste. All this pleased my eye and stirred my young imagination nothing more than that. What really won my heart was the ever-kindly twinkle with which his eye acknowledged my insignificant presence. Other young men of his age who visited my father's house either looked over my head or passed me by, as they would a chair or a garden-roller. Sometimes, when they did not pass me by, they were cross; sometimes they were rude, and always they were superior and condescending: but Clan was different. Always his eyes twinkled on me with the same friendly light, in rain or sunshine, fog or snow. Later on, when I became bigger and bound for a public school, his kindly interest never failed to take a generous, golden shape. By that time he had become my brother-in-law, but, though I had five other brothers-in-law who tolerated my society with more or less resignation, not one of them assessed my schoolboy appetite quite so generously as did Clan. Little things these in themselves, perhaps, but, none the less, pointers not to be despised by the psycho-analyst.

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[626] Lord Ernest William Hamilton (1858–1939) was a British aristocrat, soldier, author, and Conservative politician who sat in the House of Commons from 1885 to 1892. He was the seventh son of James Hamilton, 1st Duke of Abercorn, and his wife, Lady Louisa Jane Russell. He was educated at Harrow School and Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He became a captain in the 11th Hussars. (Ed.)

When I grew into a young man and Clan sat in high political places, there was no waning in the kindliness with which those friendly and tolerant eyes twinkled at me. We had little, on the surface, in common—a polished statesman on the one side, a raw cavalry subaltern on the other; and yet, even at that date, the attraction that drew me to him was undeniable. I think it must partly have been his never-failing readiness to sink to my intellectual level. He never talked politics, and, through that one gateway alone, he gained the innermost shrine of my gratitude, and, indeed, of something more than gratitude. I had at

that time, three brothers in Parliament (later on, I reluctantly completed the quartet), and these three brothers talked without cease of Bills and debates and divisions and majorities, till my soul sickened at the very mention of Parliamentary procedure. In these forensic réchauffés,[627] Clan's voice played no part. He was naturally a silent man, and he had a rooted dislike to the heavy pabulum of Cabinet or Council being brought into the dining room or smoking-room; and with this I was, naturally, in very cordial agreement.

He was never one of the "jolly good fellow" fraternity. In eating and drinking, he was consistently restrained and careful, which, in the days of which I speak, was not only unusual but came very near ranking as a reproach. The days—or rather, the nights—were those of studied over-eating and over-drinking, and there was a tendency to vote those who held back as cold and unexpansive. In the brandy-and-soda sense, Clan was undoubtedly open to both charges. He was not one of those who waxed flushed and garrulous as the vintages made their tour, nor was he in direct sympathy with those that did. Well, all dances are not fox-trots nor all music a jazz. Beethoven at a Sussex bean-feast would, no doubt, have been voted a very cold fish. Not even the noisiest of roisterers, however, would have questioned the fact that, whether at breakfast or dinner, in the smoking-room, in the hunting field, or on the moor, Clan was ever the most courteous of listeners and the most intelligent of critics. They would no more have questioned this than they would have disputed that he was everything we mean when we use the word "gentleman". He was possibly the greatest gentleman of his day. I don't use the word in a *grand seigneur* sense, though he was that, too—very markedly—but in all the qualities that really make a great gentleman, he may be said to have stood out a little from his peers. Most people in society would, I think, have nominated him as our representative in any international competition for gentlemen. Such a distinction can hardly be attained or maintained without the sacrifice of many of life's most convivial moments. But though the port decanter may have passed him unnoticed, and, in fact, generally did, it was no gloomy ascetic that it left behind, but a uniformly bright and cheery neighbour, ready and able to talk on any subject in the world and always excepting the ponderous machinery of State.

In matters great and small, civic and domestic, his sense of duty and his meticulous observance of rectitude were quite

remarkable. I think those were the two standards at which he ceaselessly aimed—duty and rectitude; and so long as he consciously made good on both counts, the voice of the public, raised either in hoots or cheers, left him unmoved. Cheap popularity had no value for him, and, perhaps for that very reason, he was never one of the golden calves set up by the press for the worship of mobs. There are many acts for which this country and the Empire, as a whole, has to thank Lord Lansdowne, for which he never got printed praise or even credit. He didn't mind. It was enough for him that he had served his country. If others schemed for, and captured, the shouts in the forum, let them strut as they would and crown themselves with stolen laurels. His aims were higher and more impersonal. Such men never get their due till they are dead. Then the biographer, more greedy for fame than his subject, sets things right,

[627] Reheated dish. (Ed.)

and, possibly, sets the few thinking; but the many, who see nothing that is not flashed before them in illuminated signs, go on to the end sacrificing to the golden calves of Fleet Street.

These, however, are matters touching, in the main, public life and public achievement, and stretch far beyond the range of mere personal tributes to an admired friend. They are fully and adequately dealt with in the body of this volume. My mission is simply to try and sketch an impression of the man himself, handling guns instead of treaties, and fishing-rods for protocols.

In the country, away from the burdens of office and the ceremonies and problems of State, Clan was genuinely and boyishly happy. Fishing was his favourite relaxation, but all forms of wild sport interested him. He was a keen student of nature in all its branches, and his knowledge of birds and plants was wide and profound; but I always felt that one of his chief charms as a country companion was that—with all his knowledge of natural history and botany—he was never the opinionated pedant, holding forth from the professor's chair. He was as ready a listener to the theories and experiences of the rawest student as he was to those of the specialist. There was neither arrogance nor bigotry in his own conclusions, and though he would pass them on for such value as they had, he was ever ready to learn, even from the humblest.

Men who only knew him superficially were apt to find him formidable because of his restraint in manner and tongue. They were very wrong. Below the inherited formality of his address, there was nothing formidable either in intention or reality. The

boisterous *faux bonhomme* can, on occasions, spit venom freely enough. He may rank as a jolly good fellow, but he has his bilious moments when his tongue is acid and bitter. Clan's was never the one or the other. Whether at 10 p.m. or at 10 a.m., he was equally a tolerant and indulgent foe, and a warm-hearted and affectionate friend.

The true thermometer of a man's heart, and, I think, the truest, is the bond between him and his subordinates. Diplomats and courtiers may wear convenient masks, but not keepers and boatmen. Their faces are an open book, as easy to read as a dog's. See a man in the company of his gillies and such-like, and you are not long in learning his local assessment: for, though there are sahibs in plenty who can command respectful service from those who wait upon their needs, only a few can win affection. No one who saw Clan in the realm of home sport could long doubt as to which class he belonged to. The answer shone from the gillies' eyes, in the same plain language, whether they were English, Scotch, or Irish.

Although he could hardly be said to be a man with a host of close friends, it is to be doubted if he had an enemy in the world; politically he may have, but certainly not personally. It would have been impossible for anyone to have disliked him personally. The timid stranger might be awed at first. The courtly manner might awe him, and might so awe him as long as acquaintance lasted: but even he could hardly fail to sense the human-kindness behind the formality. Close associates knew the formality for a thin cuirass, unwillingly worn, behind which the heart lay very warm—warm with affection and warm with an easy tolerance for short-comers. There was no man slower to speak or think evil of any; critical, of course, he was, for no mind with such an orderly balance could be other than critical: but whatever he may have felt, he gave no expression to it in words, or even in manner. If be lived up to a certain standard himself, it was because that was the way that his instincts, and perhaps even, to a certain extent, his inclinations, pointed. He took no credit for it, and certainly he never placed himself on any moral pinnacle. I think he was, at heart, humble-minded. Hostile press attacks and even malicious distortions of fact left him smiling and unmoved, while his friend knowing the truth—-chafed furiously. No man who was puffed up with self-esteem could have so behaved.

There is one mental photograph of Clan that I shall carry with me to my last day, and it is the last photograph of him in

my mental album. We were all gathered together at Bowood to celebrate his eighty-second birthday—close family connections and a galaxy of grandchildren. On the great night, after dinner, his health was proposed—not perhaps in quite the happiest vein. There were allusions to the passage of years and the attendant disabilities inseparable from such, which had been better unsaid. However, the manner of proposal had no effect upon the spirit in which Clan received and responded to the toast. The greater part of the company was composed of boys and girls with bright, smiling faces, happy because of the occasion and happy because the central figure was that of their beloved "Daddy Clan"; and his face, when he rose to respond, was as bright and smiling as any. It would, I am sure, have been hateful to him to have helped in any way to cast even a passing shadow over all those radiant young faces turned towards him. And, be sure, he did not. I can see him now, standing there erect and smiling, with the old, brave twinkle in his eyes. Without even a passing allusion to the grim milestones behind or to his own slender hold on life, his talk was all of the joy of the present gathering and of similar gatherings to which he looked forward in the future. "This year", he said, "you have done this and that, but next year, when you all come here to do honour to Daddy Clan's eighty-third birthday, I want you to go beyond even what you have done this time. I shall expect this and that of you." It was a masterly speech, clear and composed as that of a man of forty, and it was as gallant a pretence as any man ever put up. The boys and girls cheered and clapped their hands. "We will, Daddy Clan," they shouted. But, to many of us, who were not children, the thought occurred, as it inevitably must—that there might not be an eighty-third birthday; and to none, I am sure, did it occur with more settled conviction than to Clan himself.

Next morning we dispersed to our several goals; but before I left, Clan sent for me to his room. He was in bed, exhausted a little by the prolonged merriment of the night before. His sending for me was so unusual that I wondered at it; and wondered still more when I found that he had nothing to say, except goodbye, which he did in his usual brave, bright, smiling way. But I think he knew. I never saw him alive again.

INDEX

Abbreviations

sqq. means "and the following pages".
n. indicates that the reference is to an item in a footnote.
passim, everywhere
q.v. or *quod vide* referring the reader to another entry.

A

Abdul Hamid, Sultan, Armenian massacres of, 69, 303; and Macedonian reforms, 303, 306
Abdurrahman, Amir of Afghanistan, British relations with, 66 *sqq*., 101, 102, 106 *sqq*., 114; Russian intrigues with 66 *sqq*., 101-2, 271, 273, 310; the Durand Mission to, 114 *sqq*.
Abercorn, Duke of, 15. See also Hamilton
Adrianople, 302
Afridis, the, 70-1
Agadir Crisis, the, 431
Age of Consent in India, 124
Agra, Durbar at, 74 *sqq*.
Aguado family, the, 11
Ajmere, 74
Akers-Douglas, Rt. Hon. A., M.P. (later Viscount Chilston), 149
Alaska Boundary Dispute, 256, 261 *sqq*.
Albania, 302
Albe, Duc d', 12
Albe, Mlle, d', 11
Albert Hall Meeting (1911), of Unionist Associations, 434
Albrecht, Major, 175
Aldershot Command, the, 133, 185
Alexander III., Czar, 79
Alexandra Federovna, Czarina, 274, 326; visit of, to France, 210, 211
Alexeieff (Alekseyev or Alexeyev) Yevgeni Ivanovich, Admiral, 311.
Algeçiras, 196
Algeçiras Conference, the, 344
Ali Musjid, Fort, 70, 71
Aliens Immigration Act (Transvaal), 144
Alsace-Lorraine, 210, 464
Altham, Major, (later Lieutenant-General Sir Edward) 143
Alverstone, Lord, 261, 264, 265
Alwar, 74
Amanullah, ex-Amir, 109
Amending Bill, the, 437
America, U.S., Anti-British element in, 256; German advances to, 332, 334; and the Great War (see also Wilson), 479, 480, 483; William II. on, 199
Anatolian Railway Company, the, 252, 254
Ancestry, 1 *sqq*.
Anglo-American relations in 1902, 256 *sqq*.
Anglo-Boer War, see South African War
Anglo-French Agreement or *Entente*, the, 244, 279, 291-2, 309, 329, 334, 341, 343, 344, 440, 484, 489, 491; Secret Articles in, 290-1; true authors of, 293
Anglo-French Arbitration Treaty of 1903, 282
Anglo-French relations (*see also Fashoda*) in 1900, 208 *sqq*., 267 *sqq*., in 1903, 279, 281, 283
Anglo-German Agreement, in 1891, 148; in 1900, 205.
Anglo-German Alliance, a proposed, 198 *sqq*., 203, 207-8, 246, 247; Draft Convention for, 200-1
Anglo-German relations (1900-1905), 196-7, 198 *sqq*., 246 *sqq*., 329 *sqq*., William II. on, 333

Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, 503
Anglo-Italian relations, 1901-2, 211 *sqq*.
Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the, 218;
history of, 218 *sqq*., 246-7, 271, 291, 307 *sqq*., 344, 491; extension of, 327-8; true authors of, 293-4.
Anglo-Persian relations, 1901-5, 230 *sqq*.
Anglo-Russian Agreement, negotiations for, 214 *sqq*., 273, 285, 307, 328, 339, 340, 342
Anglo-Spanish relations (1900), 196
Anti-cow-killing agitators, India, 121, 123
Apaches, the, of Paris, 278
Apponyi, Count, junior, in British Columbia, 39 Arbitration, 263 *sqq*.
Ardagh, Major-General Sir John C., 56, 72, 76, 131, 132, 143, 145.
Argyll, 8th Duke of, K.G., 19
Armenian Massacres, 69, 301, 303
Army Council, resignations from (1914), 435
Army Reform Bill (1907), 365
Army Reforms of Cardwell, 17; Haldane, 365; Hartington Commission on, 137 *sqq*., 148-9
Army Service Corps, the, 177
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hon. H. O., 192
Asquith, Rt. Hon. H. H. (later Earl of Oxford and Asquith, K.G.), 365 *sqq*., 384, 395, 401, 402, 436; and the German danger, 113, 387; and the Education Bill (1906), 356 *sqq*; House of Lords Veto resolution moved by, 394; and Home Rule, 402; and the Parliament Bill, 417 *sqq*; at the Buckingham Palace Conference, 437, 502; letter to, on recruiting, 447-8; on peace terms, 451; resignation of, 453 *sqq*.
Attock, 72
Austria, annexation by, of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 271; and the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, 226; Near-Eastern policy of, 305; peace proposals of (Sept. 1918), 474, 479
Austro-German relations, *temp*. Bismarck, 373, and *temp*. William II., *ib*.
Austro-Hungarian Empire, the, 208; destruction of, 482
Austro-Russian Reform Scheme for Macedonia, 302 *sqq*.
Autocracy, incompetent, disaster of, 326
Aylesworth, Allen Bristol, The Honorable, K.C., 262

B

Baden, Prince Max of, Peace overtures of, 476, 480
Bagdad Railway, the, 249 *sqq*., 287
Bajaur, 102
Baker, Mount, 39
Baldwin Administration, the, and House of Lords Reform, 386
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Earl Balfour, K.G.), 5, 127, 287, 356, 370, 417, 418, 453 > 454, 467; and Army reorganisation, 149; and the Garter crisis, 237, 238; and Alaska arbitration, 264; and Tariff Reform, 295, 296-7; and the People's Budget, 382; and House of Lords Reform, 385, 394, 432; on Ordinary and Financial Legislation, 402, and on Constitutional Legislation, 403; memorandum by, on the House of Lords and the People's Budget, 407-8; on the creation of peers, 417, 418, 419; fall of his Administration, 346 *sqq*., and the People's Budget and Parliament Bill, 425-6; repudiated by the Die-hards, 426, 432; resignation of (1911), 432, 501; member of the second Coalition Government, 456
Intimacy of, with Lord Lansdowne, 49 2
Letters and Memorandum to, from Lord Lansdowne, on the appointment of Lord Roberts as C.-in-C., during the South African War, 165; Macedonian Reforms, 305; on Tariff Reform and the Unionist Party, 348, 349 and the reply, 351; on House of Lords Reform, 385-6; on his resignation, 432-3.
Letters from, to Lord Lansdowne, on taking office in 1902, 241; on King Edward as politician, 293; on the expected tactics of the Administration (1906), 354-5; on a weekly conference of both Houses of Parliament, as suggested by Lord Lansdowne (p. 353), 354-5; on the House of

Lords and life peers, 363; on the German danger (1908), 371; on peace matters, deprecating a proposed debate thereon, 464-5
Balfour, Rt. Hon. Gerald, 403, 500
Balfour of Burleigh, Rt. Hon. Lord, and Tariff Reform, 296, 347; and the People's Budget, 376, 382; letter to, on this topic, 378-9
Balfour-Knollys interview, the, 409, 418-19
Balkan War of 1912, 301, 306.
Balkans, the, 310
Balliol College, Oxford, Dr. Jowett's rule at, 6, 9
Baltic Coast, coast, a *canard re*, 343
Bariatinsky, Prince, 80
Barrère, M., 212
Barrington, Sir Eric, 214
Bashi-Bazouks, 302
Battenberg, Admiral Prince Louis of, 332
Bazaine, Marshal, 10, 12
Beaconsfield, Rt. Hon. Earl of, 17; on Lord Lansdowne in debate, 19-20
Beauchamp, Rt. Hon. Earl, 473
Beauclerk, Lady Osborne, 51, 57, 64, 490
Beaverbrook, Rt. Hon. Lord, 15, 441
Bedford, 11th Duke of, K.G.,and the Parliament Bill, 413, 422
Bedmar, M. de, 12
Belfast, 436
Belgian Customs Administration in Persia, 233, 243
Belgian Neutrality, 439
Belgian Territory, German violation of, 372, 487
Belgium, German plans for, 480
Belgium and the Congo Free State, 196
Belgium and Reparations, 467
Bell, Moberly, 335
Benares, 77; riot at, 82
Benckendorff, Count A. de, 271, 272, 287, 313, 314, 328; and the Dogger Bank incident, 315, 316, 317.
Bengal, jury system, 110, 111
Bengal, Lieutenant-Governor of (1880), 58
Beresford, Lord William, V.C., 94
Berlin, 131, 195, 204, 206, 246
Bertie, Rt. Hon. Sir Francis L., Viscount Bertie, 223, 276 *sqq*., 339, 340, 341
Bhamo, 119-20
Bhopal, the Begum of, 91-2
Bhurtpore, Maharajah of, 74-5
Big and Little Loaf cry, 346
Bills, difficulty of passing, 73, 74
Birch, Mr., master at Eton, 4-5
Birmingham speech of Chamberlain (1903), 295
Birrell, Rt. Hon. A., 356, 395
Birthday Parade of 1896, 136
Björko meeting of Kaiser and Czar, 334, 336 *sqq*.
Black Mountain Expedition, the, 71
Blackfoot Indians and their Chief, 35-6
Black Sea-Baltic, canal scheme, 314
Blenheim Palace, 8
Bloemfontein, 171, 174; occupation of, 177
Blood Indians, Reserve of, 34-5
Boer Generals in London, 236

Bolshevism, 479
Bombay, in 1888, 56-7; in 1892, 95 *sqq*.
Boni, Signor, 277
Bottomley, Horatio, 478
Bourbon, Prince Sixte of, 479
Bowen, Mr., 259-60
Bowles, T. G., M.P., 254
Bowood, 24, 25, 127, 224, 442-3, 485, 491
Boxer Rebellion, the, 196, 214, 225
Brackenbury, Chief Commissioner, of Burma, 117
Brackenbury, General Sir Henry, 103, 152
Bradlaugh, C., M.P., and Indian politicians, 60
Brandenburg, Professor, *cited*, 336-337
Brassey, Lord, 110 *sqq*. 121, 128
Breeding, virtues of, belief in, 40
Briand, Aristide Pierre Henri, French Premier, 160
Bristol University, 487
British Army debt of, to Lord Lansdowne, 191, 193, 194, *see also* Army Reforms Compulsory
    Service adopted, 447-8
    Expeditionary Force, 193-4, 440-1
    Man-Power Committee (1914), 442
    Recruiting for (1915), 447-8
    Selection System in, 194
    Voluntary System in, 192, 447.
British Colonies, German commercial relations with, 329
British Columbia, 34 *sqq*.
British Democracy and India, 61, 112-13
British Document on the Origin of the War (Gooch and Temperley), *cited* 195 *et alibi*
British Fleet, in 1898, 152; at Algeçiras, 196; in German ports, 330
British Isolation in 1901, 196, 207, 217
British Maritime annoyances from Russia, 1904-5, 313-14, 315 *sqq*.
British Navy, letter on, from the Kaiser, 367
British Oversea possessions, possibilities of, 53
British Prestige, recovery of, 153
British Red Cross Society, headship of, 442
British Soldiers and the Peace Letters, 475
British War casualties (1914-18), 451
Broadwood, General, 179, 180
Brodrick, St. John, see Midleton.
Brook Street, No. 65, 488
Bryce, Rt. Hon. Viscount, and the Committee on a Reformed Second Chamber, 462; and the Peace
    negotiations, 485
Buckingham Palace, 236, 246; the Conference at (1914), 437, 502
Buckmaster, Rt. Hon. Lord, on Lord Lansdowne's retirement, and the reply, 461-2
Bulgaria, and Macedonian unrest, 301, 304, 305; Declaration by, of Independence, 371
Buller, Rt. Hon. General Sir Redvers, 103, 130, 131, 133, 203; and the South African War, 155, 158,
    159 *sqq*. *passim*, 177 *sqq*; in command at Aldershot, 185
Bülow, Count (later Prince), 197, 199, 204, 205, 207, 246, 247, 342; as peacemaker, 335-6; and the
    Björkö Treaty, 338, 339.
Bülow-Chamberlain controversy, the, 206, 246
Burke, Mr. Thomas Henry, murder of, 23
Burmah, annexation of, 59; Viceregal tour in, 115; women of, 118
Burmo-Chinese frontier problem, 103, settlement of, 124, 125
Burmo-Siamese frontier problem, 103
Burnham, Lord (later Viscount), 466

Burns, Rt. Hon. John, resignation of, 442
Bushire, 231, 243
"Business as usual!" 441
Butler, General Sir William, 154

C
Cahirciveeb, 498
Caine, —, M.P., 110
Calcutta, 57 *sqq*., 72, 78 *sqq*., 121, 126
Calgary, 36
Calne, War Memorial at, unveiled, 488
Cambon, Jules, 471
Cambon, Paul, 226, 267, 268, 269, 282, 285, 286, 287, 290, 293, 343, 485
Cambrai, 478
Cambridge, H.R.H. F.-M. the Duke of, and Indian Army Reforms, 103; successor of, question of, 130 *sqq*, retirement of, 135 *sqq*.
Campbell, Rev. Lewis, 5-6
Campbell-Bannerman, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry, M.P., administration of, 135, 355; tactics of, 357 *sqq*.; death of, 365
Camperdown, 3rd Earl of, and the Parliament Bill, 428-9
Canada, Governor-Generalship of (1883), 24 *sqq*., 52, 53, 491, 497, 499, Riel's second rebellion in, and fate, 32 *sqq*.; Jubilee celebrations in, 44
Canada and the Alaskan Boundary settlement, 261, 265
Canadian-American Fisheries dispute, 28, 40 *sqq*., 53
Canadian-American Reciprocity schemes, 28, 47, 53.
Canadian Pacific Railway, the, 28, 34, completion of, 54
Canevaro, Admiral, 212
Canmore, scenery near, 37
Canterbury, Archbishop of (Dr. Randall Davidson), and the Education Bill of 1906, 356, 3575 and House of Lords Reform, 361, 423; and the Peace Letter, 472
Capitulations, the, in Egypt, 283
Caporetto, 478
Cardwell, Rt. Hon. Viscount, Army Reforms of, 17, 191
Carson, Sir Edward (Rt. Hon. Lord Carson), 426, 437, 453; Durham speech of, 436; in the Second Coalition Government, 456
Cascapedia River, salmon fishing of, 29-30
Casement, Sir Roger, 469
Cassini Convention, the, 274
Cavendish, Lord Frederick, murder of, 23
Cawdor, 4th Earl of, 356, 362, 395; and the People's Budget, 380
Cecil, Lord (Lord Robert Cecil), 413, 484
Central Europe, starvation in, 484
Cesarevitch, heir to the Russian Empire, (*see also Romanov*) 78
Chaman railway, the, 67
Chamberlain, Austen, M.P. (Rt. Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain, K.G.), 349, 395; and Compulsory Military Service, 448
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. Joseph, 241; and the Canadian Fisheries question, 47, 48, 49; and affairs in South Africa (1897), 141, 144, 145, 156; and Army reorganization, 149; attempt at Anglo-German Agreement, 198, 205, 206; and the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, 220; and the Bagdad railway, 254; and Colonial Preference, and Tariff Reform, 295 *sqq*., 347 *sqq*.; resignation of, 296, 297, 298
Channel Tunnel, Joint Committee on, Chairmanship of, 20
Charnwood, Lord, 266
Chenab weir, the, 98
Chez Paddy, 46

Chilian Ironclads, purchase of, 287
Chin Chiefs, a deputation of, 117
China, an Anglo-Russian Agreement on, proposed, 214; Russian relations with, 214 *sqq.*; Boxer rebellion in, 196, 214, 225; Concessions obtained from, 218; German proceedings in, 205, and views on, 219, 310, 329; integrity of, question of, 219, 221, 225, 226; International military expedition to (1900), 214-15, 219; Italian interests in, 211-12.
Chinese Amban, a visit from, 77-8
Chinese Eastern Railway, the, 218
Chinese Indemnity negotiations, 203
Chinese Princes, execution of, 211
Chinese Slavery cry, 346
Chino-Japanese War, the, 216, 218
Chirol, Sir Valentine, 204-5
Chitral, 102
Choate, H.E. Joseph, 263, 486
Churchill, Lord Randolph, resignation of, 42
Churchill, Rt. Hon. (later Sir) Winston, 441, 455, 477
C.I.V. Mounted Infantry, the, 176. (City Imperial Volunteers)
Clanmaurice, Viscount, earlier title of 5th Marquis of Lansdowne, 3, 4
Clarence, H.R.H. the Duke of, visit of, to India, 80
Clarke, Sir C. Mansfield, 189
Classics, the, solace of, 485 *sqq*.
Clemenceau, M., 480
Cleveland, President, and the Fisheries Treaty, 49
Coaling Facilities, denial of, to Russia (1904), 314, 318, 319
Coalition Governments
First, 446, 494, Lord Lansdowne in, 442; unpopularity of, 449. Second, Cabinet of, 455-6
Coast Range, British Columbia, 38
Coinage Bill of 1870, 14-15.
Colenso, Battle of, 163 *sqq*., 178
Collett, General, 86, 87
Colonial Preference policy of Chamberlain, 295
Colvin, Sir Auckland, 91, 103
Combes, Émile Justin Louis, 279, 342
Commander-in-Chief, appointment of, 186 *sqq*., 201
Commercial War, after peace, deprecated, 464, 467
Common Sense, and the Peace Letters, 470, 473, 477
Compensation for Disturbances [Ireland] Bill, 18-19, 497
Compiègne, 210; a visit to, 10 *sqq*.
Compulsory [military] Service, 447-8
Concert of Europe, the, 301, 302
Congo Free State, 196.
Connaught, H.R.H. the Duke of, K.G., 56, 57, 133, 197, 198; and the post of C.-in-C., 130, 131, 187.
Connaught, H.R.H. Prince Arthur of, K.G., K.T., Garter Mission of, to Japan, 240
Conservative Peers, Die-hard views of, 423-4
Constitutional Conference, the, 395 *sqq*.
Constitutional Legislation and the Committee, 398-9
"Continental Combine", the, 336, 337, 339
Conversion Economies, the, 283, 285
Corea, (Korea) Japanese interest in, 216, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 228, recognition of, 325, 327
Coronation Naval Review, the, 249
Cosgrave, President, of the Irish Free State, 504
Cotton Duties, speech on, 128, 129
Council of Elder Statesmen, Japan, 224

"Council of the Far East", the, 311
Courtney of Penwith, Rt. Hon, Lord, 362
Cox, Harold, letter to, from Lord Lansdowne on his intended resignation (1911), 434-5
Craig, Captain J. (Rt. Hon. Viscount Craigavon), 437
Crete, 328
Crewe, Rt. Hon. Marquis of, K.G., and the Education Bill of 1906, 356, 357; and House of Lords Reform, 361, 362; leader of the House of Lords, 366, 394, 399,400-1, 428, 446, 452, 456; on Lord Lansdowne's Peace terms, memorandum, 449
Cripps, Sir C. (Lord Parmoor), 413
Cromer, Rt. Hon. 1st Earl of, 31, 113, 147; and Anglo-French relations, 280, 283 *sqq*., 289; and Tariff Reform, 367, 375; and the People's Budget, 376, 427
Cromer, 2nd Earl of, 478
Cronje, General, 168, 175
Cronje, Mrs., 176
Cross, Rt. Hon. Viscount, and the Amir of Afghanistan, 67; and Indian Councils Bill, 73; insularity of, 78; letters to, on the Indian visit of the Cesarevich, 79-80; and the Manipur affair, 82 *sqq*.
Crowfoot, Blackfoot Indian Chief, 35-6
Curragh affair of 1914, 436
Currie, Lord, on Anglo-Italian relations in 1900, 211-212; letter to, on the same, 213
Curzon of Kedleston, Rt. Hon. Marquis, 10, 203, 424, 448; Viceroy of India, and Persian affairs, 230 *sqq*.; 239, 243; on the Bagdad Railway, 251, 284, letter to, on this topic, 254; and House of Lords Reform, 363, 391; return of, to Parliamentary life, 365, 443; and the Parliament Bill, 422, 423-425, 429; memorandum by, on the treatment of the Opposition during the War (Jan. 1915), 443 *sqq*.; Compulsory Service urged by, 448; letter from, on a Cabinet convulsion (1916), 452; in the 2nd Coalition Cabinet, 456, 457.
Czernin, Count O., Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, 467, 481; Peace overtures of, 474; on the peace motives of the belligerents, 480

D

Daily Telegraph, The, the Peace Letters in, 462 *sqq*., 498
Dardanelles, the, 314, 334
Dawson, Geoffrey, 465-6
de la Valette, Comte Wells (Sammy), 11
Delcassé, M., 209, 210, 226, 267 *sqq*., 279 *sqq*., 285 *sqq*., 289, 294, 339; resignation of, and visit to London, 341 *sqq*.
de Mouchy, M. and Mme., 10, 11
Denbigh, 9th Earl of, anti-pacificist motion of, 475
Derby, 15th Earl of, 25, 28
Derby, 17th Earl of, 452; letter to, on an Irish settlement, 435-6
Derby Recruiting Scheme, the, 448
Derreen, 29 n., 55, 127-8, 489-90, 504
Desborough, Lord, K.G., 490
Deutsche and Imperial Ottoman Banks, draft Agreement between, 252
de Valera, Mr., 499
Deville, Alphonse, 278
Devonshire, Duchess of, born Fitzmaurice, 51, 65; marriage of, 95; letter to, on the Cabinet crisis of Dec. 1916, 454-5, and on the Peace Letter, 472
Devonshire, 8th Duke of (Marquis of Hartington), 18, 19, 20, 43, 135, 238, 241-2; resignation of, 295, 297, 299; on divergent views within the Unionist Party, 347; House of Lords Reform, 361; leadership of, 456, 457
Devonshire, 9th Duke of (Victor Cavendish), 352, 472; marriage of, 95
De Wet, Christiaan Rudolf, 141
Dewey, Admiral, U.S.N., 257, 258
Dholepore, Raja of, 75
Die-hard Peers and the Parliament Bill, 422-3, 424, 429

Digby Colonel Everard, 40
Digby, Lady Emily, 40, 76, 77
Dillon, John, 437
Dillon, John Blake, M.P., 500
Diplomacy, secret, 195, 229
Dogger Bank incident, the, 315 *sqq*., 335
Dorchester House, 236
Douglas firs, in British Columbia, 40
Downe, 8th Viscount, Garter Mission of, to Teheran, 238 *sqq*.
Draper Lewis, W, 265
Dual Alliance, the, 196
Dublin, Parliament at, 1921, 503
Dudley, 2nd Earl of, Viceroy of Ireland, 501
Dufferin and Ava, Marchioness of, 58
Dufferin and Ava, Marquis of, K.P., 34, 49, 50, 57, 58, 115; on Indian clamour for self-government, 59; on the French Press, 210
Dukedom, proposed, for Lord Lansdowne, 129
Dumba, Dr., 268-9
Dundee, Natal, occupation of, 184
Dundonald, Lieut.-General Earl of, 176, 177
Dunkirk, 210
Dunne, John, 46
Dunraven, 4th Earl of, 501
Durand, Sir Mortimer, 196, 280; Mission of, to Kabul, 114-15
Durbar, a, 81, 83, 85-6, 87
Dutch attempt at mediation during the South African War, 240

E

Eckardstein,, Baron von, and Anglo-German relations, 198 *sqq*., 203, 207
Education Bill of 1902, 241; of 1906, 355 *sqq*., 359
Edward VII., 197, 206, 241, 246, 257, 272, 312, 322; at Compiègne when Prince of Wales, 10 *sqq*.; and William II, relations between 198, 257, 330 *sqq*., 336; visit of, to Germany, 203-4; Sipido's attempt on, 209; illness of, 236; and the Shah's visit and Garter, 233, 234, 236 *sqq*.; coronation of, 240; visit of, to Paris (1903), 267, 275-6, 278-9, 292; Mediterranean cruise of (1903), 275 *sqq*.; visit of, to the Pope, 276, 277; place of, in politics, 292, 293; a misunderstood conversation with, 308-9; letter to, from the Czar, averse to mediation, 312-13; and Delcassé, 342; and the 1908 Licensing Bill, 368-9; and the People's Budget, 380, 386, 388, 389; death of, 394
Egypt, British occupation of, and the Egyptian question (see also Fashoda), 279 *sqq*., 285, 286, 290
Eight Hours (Coal Mines) Bill, 367
Elgin, 9th Earl of, K.G., Viceroy of India, 114, 123-4, 230
Elizabeth, Queen of the Belgians, 449
Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, Gilbert John, 4th Earl of Minto, 261
Elliot, Rt. Hon. Arthur, 296
Elliott, Sir C., 103
Elphinstone College, Bombay, 96
Emperors and mere statesmen, the Kaiser's attitude to, 320
England, Anti-German feeling in early 20th century, 258, 260; sole sympathizer with Christians under Turkish rule, 303; visits to, of Oriental princes, 108-9
English Press, William II. on, 335
Erivan-Bagdad railway, 253
Erroll, Brig.-General, 19th Earl of, 176. (This is believed to be an error as the 19th Earl died in 1891 and the index refers to an event in 1900.
Esher, Viscount on the Peace Letter, 470-1
Eton College, 4-5

Eugénie, Empress of the French, 11, 13
Europe in early 20th century, 195 *sqq*.
Ewart, Captain, R.N., 248

F
Factories Bill (1891), 89
Far East, the Great Powers in (1895), 219
Fashoda affair, the, 148, 152-3, 209, 210, 283, 287
Faure, Felix, French President, 210
Female Suffrage movement, the, 367, 435, 437, 438
Fenian plots in America, 28
Fenn, —,97
Ferdinand, Prince (later Czar), of Bulgaria, 304
Fez, 341
Finance Bill (1909), 379, 380; debate on, 381, *sqq*.
Financial difficulties, 18, 21, 24-5, 40, 46, 48, 51, 55; improvement in, 129
Finlay, Sir Robert (Viscount Finlay), 413
Fiscal Reform, a campaign on, 365
Fisher, Admiral of the Fleet, Lord, 307, 334-5, 446, 488
Fisheries Treaty (1888), fate of, 49
FitzGerald, Judge, 21
FitzGerald, Lady, 498
Fitzmaurice family, the, 1 *sqq*.
Fitzmaurice, Lady Beatrix, see Beauclerk, Lady Osborne
Fitzmaurice, Lady Emily (Lady Emily Digby), 40, 76, 77
Fitzmaurice, Lady Evelyn, see Devonshire, Duchess of
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond, 4, 498
Fitzroy, Sir Almeric, on Lord Lansdowne's speech (Feb. 21, 1910), 390
Flahault, Emily de, 4th Marchioness of Lansdowne, 2-3
Flahault, General Count de, 3, 11
Flanders, Irish gallantry in, 503
Food Taxes, bogey of, 434-5
Foreign Office, 471; tenure of, 190 *sqq*., 348, 442, 451, 491; summary of, 344-5
Foreign Office Archives, post-war publication of, 195
Foreign Policy, campaign on, 365
Forster, Rt. Hon. W. E, 22, 497
France (see also Anglo-French relations), Anglophobia in, 208 *sqq*.; attitude of, to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, 226, and to Macedonian Reforms, 304; and the Björko Treaty, 339; gains of, in China, 218; German attack via Belgium, anticipated by (1911), 390 n.; King Edward's visit to (1903), 267, 275-6, 278-9; and Morocco, 267 *sqq*., 279, 281, 283, 291, 333, 334, 337, 340 *sqq*., 485, 488; Navy of, demoralized, 270-1; the Republican Coalition in, Peace ideals of, 474; visit to, of the Czar, 210-11; war-weariness of, 450, 471
Franchise Bill of 1884, 31
Franco-British North African Convention, 211.
Franco-Italian Commercial Convention of, (1898), 212
Franco-Italian relations (1905), 339-340
Franco-Russian Alliance, the, 286
Franco-Russian relations (1900), 199, 339
Frazer River, canon of, 38
Free Trade, renounced by Chamberlain, 295
Free Trade Hall, Manchester, incident at, 460-1
Free Traders, Unionist, 434
Freedom of the Sea, question of, 465, 468
French, General Sir John (Field Marshall. Earl of Ypres), 171, 177
French Advance on the Upper Nile (1897), 147, *see also* Fashoda

French Congo, British firms in, ill- treated, 269
French Language, fluency in, 26, 27-8
French Naval preparations (1898), 152
French Possessions in India, 94
French Press, the, 210; on the Peace letters, 470, 476
Friedrichs, Baron, 324. (Count Adolf Andreas Woldemar Freedericksz)
Frontier questions in 1892, 103
Frontier States, Indian policy on, 101, 102
Futtehpore (Fatehpuri) Sikri, 76. (A town in India)

G
Gambetta Administration, the, 208
Gambia, the, 287, 288
Garibaldians, Anglophilism of, 212
Garrod, Sir Alfred B., 17
Garter, Order of the, 129; conferred on the Shah, 233, 237, 238 *sqq*., and on the Emperor of Japan, 239-40
Gatacre, General, 163, 170, 179, 181
George, King, of Greece, 79
George, Prince, of Greece, 79-80
George V., H.M., as Prince of Wales, 206, 246; as King, and the Parliament Bill, and creation of Peers (q.v), 389 *sqq*., 406 *sqq*., 410 *sqq*., 417 *sqq*., 424, 425, 430; the Buckingham Palace Conference initiated by, 437
George, Rt. Hon. David Lloyd, 366, 381, 382-3, 395, 437, 450, 479, 480; and his People's Budget and the Parliament Bill, 374 *sqq*.; 402, 407, 417, 418, 425; in favour or Compulsory Service, 447; and the War Committee, 452, 453, 454; and the second Coalition Government, 455 *sqq*.; on restatement of War aims, 474
German Advances to Japan, 332, 334
German-American relations (1902), 256-7
German Danger, the (1908), 113, 371
German Navy, the, 208, and naval programme, 247, 248
German Offensive of 1918, 475
German Reparations, 467, 482
Germany, Anglophobia in, 198, 206, 208
Attitude of, to the Anglo-French Agreement, 329, 340
Attitude of, to Macedonian affairs, 303-304
Coaling-stations needed by, 286
Conditions in (1918); Allied ignorance of, 477
Dismemberment of, 464
Far Eastern Policy of, 214,and the seizure of Kiao-chow, 218, 219, 273-4
Isolation of, 285, 339, 373.
Kiao-chow seized by, 214, 218, 273-4
and Morocco, 285, 286, 332 *sqq*., the Agadir Crisis, 431,
Parties in, 311
Political susceptibility of, 248,
Situation of, in 1909 and 1914, similarity of, 372-3
and the Venezuelan Question, 255 *sqq*.
Gibraltar, 332
Girouard, Sir Percy, 174
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E., 13, 31, 74, 114, 115, 130; posts offered by, 16, 24, 499; estimate by, of Lord Lansdowne's political value, 44; generous action of, 24; Irish policy of, 18, 20, 497; last administration of (1892), 99-100; Queen Victoria on, 45, 100; speech by, described, 22; on the position of an Under-Secretary, 19
Golconda, 105
Gooch, Dr., 195

Gore, —, 17
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John, on the House of Commons and Indian Affairs, 60 *sqq*., awkward speech by, 88-89
Goshen, Rt. Hon. 1st Viscount, 43, 44, 49, 347, 487.
Goshen Sir Edward, 308
Granville, 2nd Earl, 13, 14-15, 17, 19, 20, 31; despatches to, on the Canada-America fishery dispute, 41
Great War, the (1914-18), outbreak of, and opening years of, 438 , 439 *sqq*.; casualties during, 451, 466, 475; effect of, on Ireland, 503; origins of, writings on, 195 *sqq*., 293
Greece, and Macedonia, 301, 305
Grenfell, Field Marshal Francis Wallace, 1st Baron Grenfell, 160
Rt. Hon. Sir Edward (Viscount Grey of Fallodon, K.G.), 152, 290-1, 328, 441, 454, 469, 484-5; on Single Chamber Government, 394; on the despatch of the Expeditionary Force, 441; on missed opportunities for Peace, 482
Griesbach, Captain, Carl Ludolf, 68
Griffin, Sir Lepel, 91
Griffith's Valuation, 21
Grimwood, Mr. Frank, Political Agent, Manipur, 81 *sqq*., murder of, 86
Grimwood, Mrs., 85
Grosvenor House meeting of the Halsbury party, 426
Guildhall speech of Asquith (1916), 451

H
Hague Tribunal, the, 258
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Viscount, K.T., 193, 228, 446; Army Reforms of, 365; on the despatch of the Expeditionary Force, 440-1; on the Peace Letter, 470
Halsbury Banquet, the, 426
Halsbury Club, the, 432
Halsbury, Rt. Hon. Earl of, 353; and Reform of the House of Lords, 361, 362, 391, 392; and the Parliament Bill, 422 *sqq*.
Hamid, Abdul, 303
Hamilton, Lady Maud (Marchioness of Lansdowne, *q.v.),* marriage of, 15.
Hamilton, Lord Ernest, a Personal Sketch by, of Lord Lansdowne, 506 *sqq*
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord George, 156; resignation of, on Tariff Reform, 296, 297-8
Hanotaux, M., 267
Harbord, Frank, William, 97
Harcourt, Vicomte d', 11
Hardinge, Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur, 79 on Persian affairs, 232 *sqq*., 243-4, 245
Hardinge, Sir Charles (later Lord Hardinge of Penshurst), on Russian affairs, 235, 310, 313 *sqq*., 320 *sqq*., 338
Hardinge, Lady, 239
Harmsworth (Northcliffe) Press (*see also Times*), 198, 441, 469, 478
Hartington, Marquis of, *see* Devonshire, 8th Duke of
Hartington Commission, the, 134
Hatzfeldt, Count, 201, 203, 207, 214, 330
Hay, Hon. John, 256, 257, 261, 262, 263
Hayashi Count (later Viscount), 219-220 *sqq*., 229
Hazara Rebellion, the, 107, 109
Healy, T. M., 500
Heligoland, 74
Henderson, Rt. Hon. Arthur, 456
Herat, 204, 243
Herbert, Sir Michael, 256, 258, 260, 261, 262, 263
Herschell, Rt. Hon. Lord, 73
Hertling, Count, 474

Hervey, Mrs., 11
Hicks-Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir Michael, *see* St. Aldwyn
Hilmi Pasha, 302, 306
Hirst, Francis W., 470, 485-6, 489-90; on the personality of Lord Lansdowne, 494
Hispano-German relations, 285
History of Ireland, 1798-1924 (O'Connor), 498
Hlangwane Hill, 163
Holden, Sir Edward Hopkinson Holden, 1st Baronet, 8
Holkar, Maharajah of Indore, 92, 93
Holland, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry (Lord Knutsford), letter to, on Canadian affairs, 47-8
Holleben, Dr. von, 257-8
Holstein, Baron von, 204, 207, 247
Home Rule Bill, passed, 443
Home Rule question, the, 384, 401, 403> 435 *sqq*., 438, 500 *sqq*.; crisis of 1913, 502.
Honours received, 129, 487
Hope, Sir Edward, 7
Horace, *Odes* of, 486
House, Colonel, 471
House of Commons, Delegation of, 397; discipline in, 458; disorderly scenes in, 435
House of Lords, the Parliament Bill, and Reform of the House of Lords, 360 *sqq*.; 385 *sqq*. *passim*; "backwoodsmen" of, 381,415; effect on, of the passing of the Parliament Act, 433-45; peculiarities of, 458-9; speeches in, 128; and Tariff Reform, 348 *sqq*.; tributes from, to Lord Lansdowne, 491; veto of, proposed abolition of, 384, 394
House of Lords Reform, and the Constitutional Conference, 395 *sqq*.; Lord Lansdowne's views on, 385 *sqq*. *passim*, and speech on (1921), 487-8; Select Committee for, 362-3, Report of, 364
House of Lords Reform Bill, speech introducing, 414-15
Houses of Parliament, co-operation in, of the Unionist Party, 353, 354; differing of, proper procedure at, 425
How the War Began (Loreburn), *cited*, 484
Howth, gun-running into, 503
Hulton Press, the, 469
Hyderabad, Nizam of, envoy of, in London, 60; visited, 104-5

I

Imperial Confederation, counsels on, 53; a pioneer of, 29
Imperial Defence, 53
In the World War (Czernin), *cited*, 479-80
Inchcape, Viscount, 489. James Lyle Mackay, 1st Earl of Inchcape
India (*see also* Opium question), 222
Administration in, as affected by British democracy, 61, 112-113
Advance on, Russian and German views on, 317-18, 319
Anglo-Japanese Treaty (1905), and, 327
Budget outlook for 1893, 104
North-West Provinces, official tour in, 69 *sqq*.
North-West Frontier questions, policy on, 102; problem of defence, 93-45 settlement, temporary, 59, and more lasting, 114, 125
Official sport in, 97 *sqq*.
Presidential Armies in, 124, 125
Under-Secretaryship for, 18, 19, 497
Viceroyalty of, 56 *sqq*., 500,success of, 123, 124 *sqq*.
Visit to, of Nicholas II. as Cesarevitch, 78 *sqq*.
Indian Affairs, interference in, by the House of Commons, 60, 61, 112-13
Indian Cantonments Act, 62, 112, 123
Indian Clamour for Self-government, Dufferin on, 59
Indian Command, appointment to, 187, 189

Indian Contingent, the, in the South African War, 156 *sqq*.
Indian Councils Bill, 72 *sqq*., passed, 102, 125
Indian Currency question, 103, 124
Indian Factory Bill, 89
Indian Juries Bill, 110-11, 124
Indian Mints, closing of, 128
Indian National Congress, the, 59
Indian Public Works, achievements in, 125
Indore, a visit to, 91, 92-3
Indus, the, 72
International Arbitration foreshadowed, 465
Interpreters, expansionary skill of, 78
Ireland, state of, in 1908, 366, and in 1914, 435, 436, 437; exempt from Compulsory Service, 448; Lord Lansdowne and, 497 *sqq*.
Irish in Canada, threats of, 499
Irish Convention of 1917, 503
Irish Council Bill of 1906, 501, 502, 505
Irish Estates (*see also* Derreen), 21, 24, 25, 129, 497-8
Irish Free State, established, 503
Irish Free State Constitution Act, speech on, 503-4, 505
Irish Free State Senate, Lord Kerry in, 504
Iris Jury Laws, Committee on, Chairmanship of, 20
Irish Land Bills and Acts
1880, 21
1881, 497, 498
1896, 144, 500
1903, 499
1909, 457.
Irish Land Commission, the, 499
Irish Land System, defence of, 498
Irish Land War, the, 497
Irish Language, imposition of, 490
Irish Loyalists, speech supporting, 489
Irish Nationalists, 429, 500, 501, 503; rancour of, 499
Irish Questions, knowledge of, 18, 19 365, 497 *sqq*.
Irish Settlement, letter on, 435-6
Irish Tenants Arbitration Bill, speech on, 128
Irish Tributes to Lord Lansdowne, 504
Irish Unionists in 1903, 501
Irrawaddy, the, a journey on, 115 *sqq*.
Ispahan (Isfahan) 231
Isvolsky, M., 307 *sqq*.
Italians, the, 485
Italy, attitude of, to the Anglo- Japanese Agreement, 226, and to an Anglo-Russian one, 339-40; neutrality of (1914), 439; the Caporetto disaster, 478} war-weariness of, 449
Ito, Marquis, 223, 227, 228

J

Jacobite Insurrection of the ’45, 3
Jamaica-Canada Federation Scheme, 28
James, C. W., 486
James of Hereford, Lord, 149, 376
Jameson, Dr. (Sir S. L. Jameson), 139, 140, 141
Jameson Raid, the, 139 *sqq*.; results of, 140 *sqq*. 192, 208; the Kaiser’s telegram on, 139, 198

Japan (*see also* Anglo-Japanese Agreement, Corea, (Korea) Manchuria, *and* Russo-Japanese War), Garter Mission to, 239-40; German advances to, 332, 334; Pro-Russian party in, 228
Jelalabad, 70
Jetté, Sir L., 262 (*in footnote*)
Jeypore, 74
Jodhpur, 74, 78 *n*.
Joffre, Marshal, 391 *n*.
Jowett, B., 8; views of, on Lord Lansdowne, 6, 7, 9-10
Joynson-Hicks, Rt. Hon. Sir W. (Viscount Brentford), 461
Junior Lordship of the Treasury (1868), 13

K

Kabul, Durand Mission to, 114-15
Kabul Province, 102
Kachins, the, 117, 119. Chiefs of, a deputation of, 121
Kamloops, 38
Kapurthala, Maharajah of, 108
Karens, the, 116
Karl, Emperor of Austria, Peace proposals of, 479
Keith, Admiral Viscount, 3
Kelly-Kenny, General Sir Thomas, 182
Keppel, Lieut.-Colonel, 11, 12
Kerry, 55, 498
Kerry, Earl of (present Marquis of Lansdowne), 64, 77, 98, 443, 488; in the I.F.S. Senate, 504
Kerry, the Knight of, 498
Kerry, the Lords of, 1-2
Kerry, R.C. Bishop of, 498
Khaki Election of 1900, 346
Khalifa, 152
Khan, Abdur Rahman, 66
Khartoum, advance to, various views on, 146 *sqq*.
Khattak Tribe, 69
Khedivial Decree, the, 329
Khyber Pass, the, 69 *sqq*.
Khyber Rifles, the, 71.
Khorassan, 243
Kiao-chow, German seizure of, 214, 218, story of, 273-4
Kicking Horse River, 37.
Kilbride, Dennis, eviction of, 499.
Kimberley, 1st Earl of, K.G., at the India Office, 100 *sqq*., 113; letter to, on Indian affairs, 101 *sqq*., and his reply, 104
Kimberley, South Africa, siege and relief of, 160, 171, 177
Kinnaird, Lord, 14, 15
Kipling, Rudyard, 258
Kitchener of Khartoum, F.-M. Earl, and the reconquest of the Soudan, 146 *sqq*.; in the South African War, 160, 165, 166, 169, 171, 182, 185, 240; Indian Command of, 189, 203; in the Great War, 444, 445, 447
Knollys, General Rt. Hon. Sir William T., 12
Knollys-Balfour meeting, the, 409, 418-19
Kohat Pass, 69, 82
Komura, Count, 221
Kroonstad, South Africa, 184
Kruger, President, and the Jameson Raid, 139, 142, 144, 197, 198, 209, and the South African War, 154-5, ultimatum of, 1595 escape of, 177
Kühlmann, Dr., 481

Kuropatkin, General, 239, 311
Kuwait (Koweit), 203, 204, 251, 252, 253

L
Labouchere, Henry, 152
Labour Party, triumph of (1906), 358-9; and the Parliament Bill, 430; members of, in the first Coalition Cabinet, 446; objections of, to Compulsory Service, 447; support of, to the Peace Letter, 474-5
Ladysmith, 202; siege and relief of, 171, 176, 177
Laffon de Ladébat, General, 391 *n*.
Lagrange, Comte Frédéric de, 11
Laing's Nek, proposed occupation of (1897), 144, 145
Lamsdorff, Count, 215, 216, 224, 227, 235, 271 *sqq*., 275, 307, 308, 310, 311, 315, 316, 317, 327, 328
Land League, the, 25, 26, 46, 47
Langelier, M., 26
Lansdowne, Emily, Marchioness of, 2-3, 25, letters to, 8 *sqq*. *passim*, death of, 129
Lansdowne, Maud, Marchioness of, 15-16, 26, 56 *sqq*., *passim*, 126, 148, 454, 490
Lansdowne Committee, the (1918), 473 *sqq*.
Lansdowne Estates in Ireland, *see* Irish Estates
Lansdowne House, 7, 25, 44, 46, 48, 51, 55, 129 279, 442, 488; meetings at, 351, 370, 371, 419, 420, 421, 423, 438; address presented at, on the Peace Letter, 472
Lascelles, Rt. Hon. Sir Frank, 196-7, 199, 200, 204, 246 *sqq*., 329 *sqq*., Kaiser's treatment of, 335-6
Lasmarismas, Mme. de, 11
Laurier, Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid, 261, 262
Law, Rt. Hon. A. Bonar, 413, 433, 452, 455; the Buckingham Palace Conference, 437, 502; letters to, on the Unionist position in 1915, 445; resignation considered by, 434-5, 449, 452-3; views of, on Home Rule, 436
Leadership of the House of Lords, 456, 457, 459, 492-3
League of Nations, the, 471; hopes for one, 474
Legislation, division of into
Constitutional, 348, 402, 403
Financial, 398, 402.
Ordinary, 402
Leo XIII., Pope, visits to, of William II., and of Edward VII., 276, 277
Leper Asylum, Bombay, 96
Lewis, W. Draper, *cited*, 265-6
Leyds, Dr., 233
Liao-tung Peninsula, the, 218
Liberal Government (1880), resignation from, 18 *sqq*., 497,498; the first visible rift in, 20
Liberal Party, attitude of, to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 227, and to Indian affairs, 110 to *sqq*.; also to the Trade Disputes Bill, 358, 359
Liberal Peers, attitude of, to House of Lords Reform, 361
Liberal Unionist Meeting (1906), 349
Licensing Bill of 1908, 3675 memorandum on, 368-9
Life of Parnell (O'Brien), *cited* 498
Life Peers, 363-4
Lincolnshire, Marquis of, 113-14
Lineage, 1 *sqq*.
Lloyd, Rt. Hon. Lord, 439
Lockhart, General Sir William S. A., 82
Locusts, a plague of, 85
Lodge, Senator, 261, 26
London, 223; visit to, of the Shah of Persia (1902) 233 *sqq*.
Long, Rt. Hon. Walter (Viscount Long of Wraxall), 149, 395, 445, 449, 455

Longchamps, King Edward at, 278
Loreburn, Rt. Hon. Earl, 449, 473; on pre-war diplomacy, 484
Lorne, Marquis of, 26
Los Islands, the, 290
Loubet, M., President of the French, 267, 275, 278, 279, 320, 342
Lowe, Rt. Hon. Robert (later Viscount Sherbrooke), 8; letter from on duties of a Junior Lord, 13; Coinage Bill of, 14-15
Lowther, Rt. Hon. James, the Speaker (*see also* Ullswater), at the Buckingham Palace Conference, 437
Lucas, Lord, 444
Ludendorff, General, 480-1
Luggacurran, the Plan of Campaign at, 45, 46, 47, 55, 499
Lundi Kotal, 70
Lyall, Sir Alfred, letter to, 68
Lyddite, 175
Lyons, Rt. Hon. Viscount, 31
Lyttelton, F.-M. Sir Neville, cited on Buller and the South African War, 159, 163-4, 169, 177-8
Lytton, 2nd Earl of, on the People's Budget, 376, 377-8

M

Macdonald, Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay, 474
Macdonald, Rt. Hon. Sir John, 26, 29, 34, 41, 43; pioneer of Imperial Federation, 29
Macdonald, Sir Claude, 219, 222, 224, 225, 239, 240
MacDonnell, Sir Antony, 500, 501, 505
Macedonia, 328; jumble of races and creeds in, 301, 302, 303
Macedonian Campaign, the (1916), 450
Macedonian Rebellion of 1902, 301
Macedonian Reform, 302 *sqq*.
McKenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald (1918), 449
Mackenzie, —, 78
Mackenzie, Sir Alexander, 87
MacLeod, Sir Reginald, 385
Madras, 104
Mafeking, relief of, 168, 176
Magersfontein, 171
Majuba Hill, 146
Maltese Language question, the, 212
Manchester School, views of, on Oversea possessions, 53-4.
Manchuria, Russian and Japanese interests in, 205, 215, 216, 218, 220, 221, 223, 232, 307, 310, 325
Mandalay, 118-19
Manipur affair, correspondence on, 80, 81 *sqq*.
Manner and the Oriental, 243, 244.
Man in the Street, the, 182
Maracaibo, German bombardment of, 255-6
Marchand, Jean-Baptiste, 151
Marconi Scandals, the, 435, 438.
Margharita, Queen of Italy, 277.
Marienbad, Edward VII. at, 330
Marion, Mlle., 13
Marismas del Guadalquivir, Marquess of 11
Marlborough House, 236.
Maxse, Leopold, 254, 265, 360, 439
Maxwell, Major, Henry St. Patrick, 90
Mecca, Pilgrims to, steamer accommodation for, 96
Mediterranean Powers and Morocco, 269

Meikleour Estate, 3, 129, 488
Melgund, Viscount (later 4th Earl of Minto), 26, 32, 36, 261
Memories and Reflections (Oxford and Asquith), cited, 439, 446
Mercer family, the, 3
Mercer Nairne, Lord Charles, killed in France, 443, 488
Mercy d'Argenteau, Comte, 12
Mesopotamian Campaign, 255, 450
Methuen, Field Marshall Lord, 160, 163, 176
Metternich, Count Paul, 207, 249, 257, 285; on the Kaiser's views on Anglo-German relations, 331-2
Middleton, General, Frederick Dobson, 32, 33
Midleton, Rt. Hon. Viscount (St. John Brodrick), 151, 191, 192, 203, 263, 421, 424, 449; letter to, on House of Lords Reform, 413-14
"Mill", the, by Rembrandt, sale of, 488
Milner, Sir Alfred (later Rt. Hon. Viscount Milner), 146,425; and the South African War, 154, 156, 157, 174, 240; on the Licensing Bill, 370; and the Parliament Bill, 424 Ministerial Irresponsibility, theory of, 113
Minto, Earl of, Gilbert John Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, 261
Modder River, 170, 177
Mohammereh, 231
Moltke, Comte de, 12
Money Bills, Lords' right to amend, 378, or reject, 395
Monroe Doctrine, the, and the Venezuelan crisis, 256 *sqq*.
Mons, Retreat from, 503
Monson, Sir Edmund, 209, 210, 267 *sqq*., 275, 286, 287-8, 290; on French feeling in the South African War, 146 Morel, E. D., 291.
Morel, Edmund Dene Morel (born Georges Edmond Pierre Achille Morel Deville), 291
Morley of Blackburn, Rt. Hon. Viscount, 366, 457; on the Lansdowne amendment rejecting the People's Budget, 381; and the Parliament Bill, 419-20, 428, 429; resignation of, 441-2
Morley Memorandum, the, 441
Morocco (*see also* Spain), 204; French policy regarding, 267, 268 *sqq*. *passim*, crisis of 1905, 340 *sqq*., 485, 488; rebellion in (1902), 269; spheres of influence in, 291; Mulai-Abd-el-Hafid, Sultan of, 80, 291, 333:William II.'s visit to, 332 *sqq*.
Morocco Agreement, the, 333, 334, 337, 484, 487
Moschus, a translation of, 486-7
Moscow, 310, 321-2
Mouchy, M. and Mme. de, 10, 11
"Mrs. Grundy", 98
Murat, Prince and Princess Achille, 10
Muravyov Count, 274, 324, 325. (Lord Newton quotes the spelling as Muravieff in the index but Mouravieff in the text.)
Mtirzsteg Convention, the, 302
Mysore, Maharajah of, 104, 105-6

N

Nairne family, the, 3
Napoleon I., 3
Napoleon III., a visit to, 10 *sqq*.
Nasrulla Khan, in London, 236
Natal, and the South African War, 155 *sqq*. *passim*
National Gallery, the, Trustees of, 449, 485
Near East, the (see also Macedonia); Austrian policy and, 305; race admixture in, 301, 302, 303; William II. on, 333-4
Nelidoff, M., 324
Netherlands South African Railway, claims of, 203
Newchwang, Russian action at, 216

New Derreen, 29
Newfoundland, Treaty Shore question, 279, 281, 288, 289-90
New Hebrides question, 279, 281
Newton Anmer, death at, 490
Nicholas II., Czar (*see also* Russo- Japanese War), 214, 224, 272, 274, 325; visit of, to India, when Cesarevitch, 78 *sqq*.; the Kaiser's estimate of, and influence over, 199, 273, 309, 325, the Willy-Nicky letters, 304, 311-12, 318 *sqq*., 323-4, 325, 333, and the Björkö Treaty, 335, 336 *sqq*.; visit of, to France, 210-11; Anglophobe entourage of, 310, 320, 328; chauvinism of, 311; circular of, and letter from, to Edward VII., rejecting mediation, 311-12; French mediation refused, 199; and Witte, 324-5; peace-making opposed by, 324, 326
Niger territory, French claims to, 288
Nind, Mr., 4
Norfolk, 15th Duke of, K.G., on the Parliament Bill, 422, 423, 499
Norman, Sir Henry, 113, 114
Northbrook, Lord (later Earl), 16, 202
Northcliffe, Viscount, and his Press during the War (*see also* Times), 441, 445, 469, 470, 471, 478; attitude of, to the Peace Letter, 469.
Northumberland, 7th Duke of, and the Parliament Bill, 361
Nottingham speech on Dunraven's devolution scheme, 501

O
O'Beirne, Sir H., 278
O'Brien, R. Barry, 498
O'Brien, William, 501; crusade of, against Lord Lansdowne, 44, 46, 497, 499. Queen's letter on, 45
O'Connor, Sir James, 498
O'Conor, Sir Nicholas R., 303, 304
Odessa, 252
Office offered in 1887, why declined, 43 *sqq*
Officers' Families Fund, the, 442
Old Age Pension Bill (1908), 367, 3 74, Lords' amendments to, 369
Omdurman, Battle of, 152
Onon, (*sic*) M., 78, 79, 80. This is probably C. Onou, with the M. being Monsieur
Onslow, 4th Earl of, on the People's Budget, 376
Oodeypore, 74
Opium question as affecting India, 104, the Brassey Commission on, 109 *sqq*., 121, speech on, 128
Orange Free State, the, 143, 145, 159, 170, 173, 175, 202
Order in Council of 1895, and the post of Commander-in- Chief, 188, 201, 202
Oriental Monarchs, visits of, to England, 109
Osborne, William II's. visit to (1901), 197-8
Ottawa, 27, 29; an infernal machine at, 28
Oxford University, a prank at, 15; Chancellorship of, of Lord Curzon, 365; twice declined, 487

P
Paardeberg, 171 *sqq*., 182
Pachmarhi, 98
Pakenham, Colonel, Hercules Arthur, 97
Panjab, official tour in, 74
Pankhurst, Mrs., 442
Paris, 210, 223; visit to, of Edward VII. (1903), 267, 275, 278, 279, 292
Paris Conference (1917) 466
Paris International Exhibition, 210
Paris Press, the, 210
Parliament, first clash between the two Houses of, 355 *sqq*.; joint-sitting of, suggested, 397, 398
Parliament Act (1911), failure of, 435; tyranny of, 502

Parliament Bill, the, 457, evolution of, 384 *sqq*., introduction of, 394 sqq., and proposed creation of peers, 406, 410, 411, 417 *sqq*., 425, 430; Die-hard peers on, 422, 423, 424, 429; letter explaining his action written by Lord Lansdowne to a friend, 430-1; public apathy concerning, 431; Rosebery Resolutions and, 364-5, 390-1, passing of, 433-4
Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, the, 444
Parnell, C. S., 22, 555; *Life of, cited*, 498
Party Leader, success as, 492-3
Party Votes, variant views on the importance of recording, 31
Patiala, 74
Peace Letters, the
Nov. 1917, 450 *sqq*., 462, 463 sqq,; mixed reception of, 468 *sqq*., Press attitude to, 469 *sqq*.; a personal justification of, 471; general view of, 482-3
March, 1918, reception of, 474 *sqq*.
July 1918, 476
Peace Tentatives, Austrian (1918), 474, 479; German, 476, 480, 481; Government attitude to, 450
Peace Terms, memorandum on (Nov. 1916), 449, 450 *sqq*.
Peers, part taken by, in the General Election (1910), 383-4; proposed creation of, *see under* Parliament Bill
Peking, 220, 232
Pelletan, Camille, 270, 278
People's Budget, the (1909), 374 *sqq*.; opinions on, of various peers, 376, of Lord Lytton, 377, of Lord Lansdowne, 378-9; rejection moved by Lord Lansdowne, 380 *sqq*.
Persia, 287
Belgian Customs Administration in, 233, 243.
Protection of, against Russia, correspondence on, 93-4, 230 *sqq*.
Shah of (1891), proposed visit of, to India, 80
Shah of (1902), wish of, to visit England, 230, the visit, and the desire for the Garter, 233 *sqq*.
Persian Cossacks, Russian officers of, 231, 232
Persian Gulf, the, Russian steamers in, 231; British policy for, 232, 243; *débouché* on, for the Bagdad Railway, 250; question of a port on, 244.
Persian Loans, refused, 230, 233-4
Persian People, susceptibilities of, 243, 244
Perso-Afghan frontier, a demonstration on, advised by the Kaiser, 319
Personal aspect of Lord Lansdowne, 493 *sqq*., sketch of, by Lord Ernest Hamilton, 506 *sqq*.
Peshawar, 69 *sqq*.
Petty, Anne, Lady Kerry, 2
Petty, Sir William, 2
Phoenix Park murders, the, 23
Pietri, M., 11
Plan of Campaign, the, in action, 21, 45 sqq., 55, 499
Plehve, Vyacheslav Konstantinovich, 311
Plural Voting Bill, the, 358, 438, 444
Poincaré, Raymond, 291
Poland, re-creation of, 464
Politicians and the War (Beaverbrook), referred to, 441
Polo at Agra, 75
Poplar Grove, action at, 177
Port Arthur, Russian seizure of, 214, 218, 232, 314; fall of, 320, 321; cession of, 325
Portsmouth, the Shah at, 236-7
Portsmouth, N.H., Peace Conference, at, 324 *sqq*.
Pretoria, 185
Pretyman, Major-General, 176
Prussia, H.R.H. Prince Henry of, 249, 256
Pwé dance, in Burma, 116, 117, 119
Pyne, Salter, Thomas, on Afghanistan in 1893, 107-8

Q
Quebec, 26-7
Quetta, a Durbar at, 72
Quinton, Mr. James Wallace, murder of, 81 *sqq*.

R
Rabat, 285, 286
Raikes, Mr., 263
Railway Strike of 1911, 431
Railways, strategic, problem of, 93, 94, 101
Rajput states, official tour in, 74
Rainpur, murder at, 82
Rangoon, 115 *sqq*.
Raper, —, 9
Rawlinson, General Lord, 184, 185
Recruiting, and Voluntary Service, letter on, 446-7
Red Cross Societies, Russian method with, 310, 311
Red Crow, Blood Indian chief, 34-5
Reddersburg, reverse at, 179, 181
Redmond, John E., 389, 437, 503
Red Sea, the, 286
Registration Bill, the, 448
Reid, Sir James, 198
Rensburg, 177
Repington, Colonel à-Court, 477
Retrenchment Committee, the, 449
Revelstoke, Rt. Hon. Lord, 250, 252
Rhodes, Rt. Hon C. J., 176; and the Jameson Raid, 142
Richthofen, Baron von, 197, 329
Ripon, 1st Marquis of, K.G., 59, 83, 84, 366
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. C. T. (later Lord Ritchie), 149, 242, 295, 296
Robartes Bill, the, 353
Roberts, Frederick, Field-Marshall, Earl, V.C., K.G., 190; C.-in-C., India, 69, 70, 103; C.-in-C., Home Forces, 130, 131, 186 *sqq*.; Irish Command of, 133; proposed mission of, to Afghanistan, 107; and the South African War, 146, letters of, during this period, 161, 162, 169 *sqq*., C.-in-C. South Africa, 165 *sqq*., the matter of despatches and telegrams, 178 *sqq*.; on an anticipated German violation of Belgium in event of War, 390 *n*.; on an English visit for Abdurrahman, 108
Robertson, Field Marshal Sir William, 466
Rohan, Cardinal Prince de, 279
Romanov, Nikolai Alexandrovich, Nicholas II, last emperor of Russian, 78
Rome, visits to, of Edward VII., and William II., 276, 277
Roosevelt, President, U.S.A., and Venezuela, 257, 258; and the Alaska Boundary, 261 *sqq*.; and the Russo-Japanese War and Peace Conference, 322, 324, 325, 341
Root, Elihu, 261, 262
Rose, Holland, book by, *cited*, 293
Rosebery, Rt. Hon. 5th Earl of, K.G., K.T., 48, 55, 115, 130, 202, 242, 493; and the Anglo–Japanese Agreement, 227; and the Anglo- French Agreement, 292; attitude of, to House of Lords Reform, 360 *sqq*.; and the People's Budget, 381, Glasgow speech on this, 375-6; and the Parliament Bill, 390 *sqq*., 429, letters exchanged on, with Lord Lansdowne, 392, 394-5
Rosebery Committee, the, 362 *sqq*., 385, 386-7
Rosebery Resolutions, the, on House of Lords Reform, 364, 390, 391 *sqq*.
Roszjestvensky, Admiral, 315
Rothermere Press, the, 15, 469
Rothschild, Lord, 250

Roumania in 1915, 450
Rouvier, M., 342
Royal Rank and democracies, 279
Russell, T. W., 46, 47
Russell of Killowen, Lord (Sir Charles Russell), 498
Russia (*see also* Anglo-Russian Agreement, *and* Nicholas II.), aims of, as to Thibet, 272-3, 287, 307; and the Armenian atrocities, 303; attitude of, to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, 226, 227; capitulation of, in 1909, and the reverse in 1914, results of, 373; conditions in, in 1916, 450, 479, and in 1917, 471; corruption in (1904), 311; demonstration by, on the Afghan border, suggested by William II. (1904) 319; gains of, in China (1895), 218; government methods in, 100-1, 271, 273, 274, 275, 285, 325; and Manchuria, 205, 216 *sqq*., 232, 307, 310, 325; out of the War (1918), 478; protection of Persia against, 93-4; views on, of William II. (1901) 199
Russian Baltic fleet and the Dogger Bank incident, 315 *sqq*., coaling facilities denied to (1904), 314, 318, 320
Russian Black Sea Fleet, the, 314, advice on, of William II., 318, 333-4
Russian Chauvinists, 215, 272, 311, 320
Russian Fleet, annihilation of, 1905, 244, 245
Russian Grand Dukes, chauvinism of, 215, 272; visits of, to India, 78-9
Russian Hostility to England, 328
Russian Intrigues with Afghanistan, 66 *sqq*., 100-1, 271, 273, 310
Russian Memorandum of 1900, 271
Russian Royal Family, the, 215, 274
Russo-Afghan frontier question, 102, 108, 123, 271
Russo-British relations in 1900-1, 196, 214, 215, 216, and in 1904 and after, 307 *sqq*. *passim*.
Russo-French Alliance, the, 210, 215, 308
Russo-German Treaty, suggestions for, of William II., 312, 318, 319, 320; one signed at Björkö, 337 *sqq*.
Russo-Japanese Agreement of 1898, 221
Russo-Japanese Agreement, proposed, in 1901, 223
Russo-Japanese War, the, 199, 215, 273, 274; outbreak of, 217, 274, 307 *sqq*., repercussion of, on Persia, 243 *sqq*., mediation sought by Russia, 322-3; Peace Negotiations Conference, 324 *sqq*., William II. on, 332, 333
Russo-Persian relations (1901 *sqq*.), 230 *sqq*.

S

Sackville-West, Sir Lionel, 29
Saghalien, Island of, 325
St. Aldwyn, Rt. Hon. Viscount (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), devotion of, to economy, 136, 138-9, 149, 241-2; Free Trade views of, 347; in the Rosebery Committee, 363; letter from, on the People's Budget, 376; on the Parliament Bill and creation of peers, 413, 421, 427
St. Petersburg, 220, 224, 316; the Embassy at, declined, 129; secret archives 195; State prison of, 321
Salisbury, Rt. Hon. 3rd Marquis of, K.G., 17, 31-2, 42; offices offered by, 43; the Indian Viceroyalty offered by, 49-50; letter from, on the Indian Councils Bill, 73-4; and the protection of Persia against Russia, 93; a message to, from Abdurrahman, 115; War Secretaryship offered by, 130, 500; letters from, and views of, on the Commander-in-Chiefship, 131, 132, 153, 186, on Army affairs, 139, on the Jameson raiders, 140-1, 142, on reinforcements for South Africa, 145-67 on the Soudan Campaign of 1898, 147-8, on Lord Lansdowne's proffered resignation, 150-1; and the Fashoda settlement, 153; letters from, on Indian troops for Natal, 156 *sqq*., on the South African War, a subordinate for Buller, 160, and on peace negotiations, 240, on Kitchener's Indian appointment, 189; attitude of, to Anglo-German Alliance, 200-1; the Isolation policy of, 200, 207; letters of, on support for Italy, 214, on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 228; overture made by, to Russia (1898), 214; attitude of, to Persian affairs, 230, 233; resignation of, 214, 229, 240-1, 242; dominance of, 456; on the Italian character, 485; death of, 487
Salisbury, 4th Marquis of, and the Parliament Bill, 422, 423
Salisbury Plain, 143, 155

Salonika, 302, 450
Samoa, 329
Sandeman, Sir Robert, 87
Sanderson, Lord, on Peace Letters, 478-9; letter from on the Anglo-French *entente* and Morocco, 488
San Mun Bay, 212
Sannah's Post, ambush, 179
Sassoon family, silk factory of, 97
Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, H.R.H. the Duke of, death of, 188
Scindia, Maharajah of Gwalior, farewell visit from, 122
Scott, Sir Charles, correspondence with, 215, 271, 273, 274-5
Scottish Land Bills (1908), 367
Secunderabad, 105
Security, the true war aim, 467
Seistan, 239, 273
Selborne, Rt. Hon. 2nd Earl of, K.G., Die-hard views of, 422, 423, 426; and Compulsory Service, 448
Selby, Rt. Hon. Viscount, 363
Senapati, the, of Manipur, 80 *sqq*.
Sen-bo, Shan village, 120
Serbia, and Balkan unrest, 30.
Sex War, *see* Female Suffrage
Seymour, Admiral Sir Michael Culme, 39
Shantung Province, 273
Shelburne, Earl of, 1st Marquis of Lansdowne, 2, 3
Shell shortage, the, 446
Shimonoseki Intervention, the, 219
Shiraz, 231
Shushwap lakes, salmon of, 38
Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon, 116
Siam and the frontier question, 103, 209, 222, 267, 269, 279, 281, 283, settlement of, 244
Siam, King of, and the Garter, 239
Sikkim Treaty, the (1890), 77, 78
Simla, 63 *sqq*.
Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir John, 448
Single Chamber government, 379, 393
Sinn Fein, 469, 503
Sipido, the anarchist, 209
Smith, F. E. (Rt. Hon. Earl of Birkenhead), 426
Smith, Rt. Hon. W. H., 49
Sokoto Boundary question, 279, 281, 287, 289
Somaliland Hinterland, the, 213.
Soudan, the, reconquest of, 146 *sqq*.
South Africa, British reinforcements for, 144, 145; deportations from, 203
South African Committee, the, 142 South African Compensation question, the, 329
South African War, the, anticipations of, 142 *sqq*.; history of, 154 *sqq*., 192 *sqq*., 240; alleged preference in, for unmounted men, exploded, 158, 166; the Black Week in, 168; European public opinion on, 196, 210, 211; guerilla phase of, 184, 185; and the Khaki Election, 346; other references to, 201, 230, 234, 247, 312, 492
Spain and Morocco, 269, 270, 280, 291, 340
Speaker, the (Rt. Hon. James Lowther), see Ullswater.
Spectator , the, 254, 287
Spencer, 5th Earl, 202, 242
Spion Kop, reverse at, 169, 174, despatches on, 18 1 *sqq*.
Spithead, 249
Spring-Rice, Hon. Sir Cecil, 273, 331
Stamfordham, Rt. Hon. Lord, letter to, on the Irish trouble (1914) 457

Standish, Henry, 10
Stanhope, Rt. Hon. Edward, Colonial Secretary, 42
Steyn, President, 177
Stoessel, General, 321.
Strachey, J. St. Loe, 254
Straits Settlements, the, 222
Streatfeild, junior, (Colonel Sir Henry Streatfeild) 64
Stuart, Professor, and the Indian C.D. Acts, 62
Sudan-Erythrea Boundary, the, 212
Suez Canal, the, 250
Sunday River, 178.
Symons, General Sir William, 155

T

Taft, ex-President, on the Peace Letter, 471
Taj Mahal, the, 75
Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, 3
Tangier, 270; visit to, of the Kaiser, 332 *sqq*., 340
Tariff Reform Controversy, the, 295 *sqq*. 347 *sqq*., 438; attitude to, of Balfour, 346, 432; fission due to, among Unionist, 347-8, 367, 375
Tehirschky, Count, 337
Teheran, 231, 232; Garter Mission to, 238 *sqq*.
Temperley, Dr., 195
Territorial Force, the, 365
Thayer, W. R., cited 265
Thomas, Clément, Governor-General of French India, 94-5
Thompson, Hon. J. S. D., 48
Thuja trees in the Rockies, 38
Tientsin Concession, 218
Tilak, W., and the Age of Consent, 124
Tibet (Thibet), Russian projects concerning, 272-3, 287, 307
Times, The, 204, 501; and the Peace Letter, 465, 469; letter to, on the Irish Land Bill of 1881, 498
Times History of the [South African] War, chronology in, 165
Tithe Rent Charges Bill, speech on, 128
Toronto, William O'Brien at, 44, 499
Tower, Sir R., 337, 338
Trades Disputes Bill, 353, 358
"Transcaspian" Railway, the slip concerning, 204
Transvaal, the, 202; the Jameson Raid in, 139 *sqq*.; post raid doings in, 142; annexation of, 187
Trench, Townsend, struggle of, with the Plan of Campaign, 45, 46
Trinity College, Dublin, Provost and Fellows of, 498
Triple Alliance, the, 196, 208, 212, 277
Tripoli, Hinterland of, 211
Tsushima, naval disaster of, 323
Tugela River, the, fighting on, 163, 171, 174, 183
Tulliallan estate, the, 3, 129
Tummel Bridge, 6, 8
Turkestan, rebellion in, 68-9
Turkey, and Macedonia, 301 *sqq*.; disarmament avoided by, 482
Turkish Customs Tariff, the, 251, 253
Turkish Empire, partition of, 205
Turkish Revolution of in 1908, 306
Turner, Senator, 261
Tweedmouth, Lord, the Kaiser's letter to, 367
Twenty-five Years (Grey of Fallodon), cited, 482

Tyrone, County of, stumbling- block of, 437

U
Ullswater, Rt. Hon. Viscount, book by, cited, 369; on the Buckingham Palace Conference, 437
Ulster frontier, delimitation difficulty, 437-8, 503
Ulstermen and Home Rule, 435 *sqq*., 502-3
Under-Secretaryship for India(1880), 18; resignation of, 18 *sqq*.
Under-Secretaryship for War (1872), 16 *sqq*., 497
Unionist Associations, Annual Conference of, 1911, 434
Unionist Party, the, divisions in, over Tariff Reform, 295 *sqq*., 347 *sqq*., 367, 434; and House of Lords Reform, 360, 396; division in, over the Parliament Bill, 423 *sqq*., 427 *sqq*.; defeat of, chief cause, 431
Leaders' offer of full support to the Government in the event of War, 439-40
Position of, in 1915, Lord Curzon on 433 *sqq*.
Whips action (1911), 423

V
Vaal Krantz, action at, 169
Vancouver, 34
Venezuelan Question, the, 255 *sqq*.; arbitration resorted to, 257 *sqq*.
Vereeniging, Peace of, 240
Versailles, Allied Conference at, (1918), 474
Versailles, Peace of, results of, 481-2
Viceroy, returned, eclipse of, 128
Victoria, British Columbia, 39
Victoria, Queen, 19, 20; letter to, on Riel's execution, 33; Jubilee of, Canadian celebrations of, 44, the Queen's letter on, and on O'Brien's agitation, 45; views of, on Gladstone, 45, 100; the Indian Viceroyalty suggested by, 49; attitude of, to the Manipur princes, 88, and erroneous ideas held by, on British Officials in Native States, 89 *sqq*.; Indian Munshi of, suspicions of, 90, 91; attitude of, in 1892, to a Liberal government, 100; views of, on the post of Commander-in-Chief, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137-8, 153, 187-8, letter to, on this subject, 134; and the Birthday Parade of 1896, 136; interest of, in Army Reforms, 137-8, and in Army matters in general, 153; Lord Roberts's South African appointment disapproved by, 167; views or, and letters of, on the South African War and the replies, 179, 180, 182-3; and Kitchener's Indian appointment, 189; the Foreign Office post suggested by, 190; illness of (1901), 197; death of, 229; tomb of, 236
Vienna, 195
Vincennes, 278
Vittorio Emmanuele III., King of Italy, 211, 277
Viviani, Jean Raphaël Adrien René, French Premier, 160
Volunteers, the, 194

W
Waldeck-Rousseau, M., 267
Waldeck-Rousseau Government, the, 209
Waldersee, General Count, 215
Wales, Prince and Princess of (Edward VII., *q.v.,* and Queen Alexandra), at Compiègne, 10 *sqq*.
Wallace, Sir Donald Mackenzie, 56, 79, 80
Walton, Sir Lawson, 358
Warburton, Colonel Sir Robert, 70
War Committee, the, consulted on terms of Peace, 448
War Office Secretariat, 130 *sqq*. *passim*, 435, 491, 492, 506, resignation offered, 149 *sqq*. 191
Warren, General Sir Charles, 178, 179, 182, and Spion Kop, 169, 181
War-time activities of Lord and Lady Lansdowne, 442-3
War-weariness of the Allies, 450, 468, 471
Waters, Colonel, 326

Waziristan, 102.
Wei-hai-wei, 214.
Welsh Church Bills, 438, 443
Wheat, foreign, duty on, 434
White, General Sir George, C.-in-C., India, 103; and South African War, 158, 164-5, 170-1, 174, 178
White, Henry, 264, 265
Whitehead, Mr., 220
Wicklow, 7th Earl of, letter to, on the Parliament Bill, 430.
Wiesbaden meeting of Czar and Kaiser, 273-4
Wilhelmina, Queen of Holland, 145.
William, German Crown Prince, 330.
William II., ex-Kaiser, 131, 145, 210, 249, 256; and the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, 226, 227, 247; Anglophobe entourage of, 247; Anglophobia of, 331-2, 334, 335-6, 338, 341; and the Bagdad Railway, 251-2; celebrated letter of, to Lord Tweedmouth, 367; contempt of, for the British Army, 131, and for British Ministers, 203, 246-7, 335; conversation of, with Prince Louis of Battenberg, 332 *sqq*.; desire of, to acquire a Fleet, 146; desire of, for a military British Ambassador, 132; eclipse of, in 1914, 480; famous Osborne visit of, 197 *sqq*., 205; gross incivility of, 335-6; increasing irresponsibility of, 372, 373; influence of, over Nicholas II., 273 309, 325, the Willy-Nicky letters, 304, 311-12, 318 *sqq*., 323-4, 325, 333; and the Björkö Treaty, 335, 336 *sqq*.; and the Jameson Raid, 139, 198; praise from, of the British and Egyptian forces, 152; and the proposed Anglo-German alliance (*q.v.*), 203, 204, 207-8; relations of, with Edward VII., 198, 257, 330-1, 333, 336; Roman visit of (1903), 276 *sqq*.; and the South African War, 168, 205; "Shining Armour" oration of, 372; and Venezuela, 258; visit of, to Tangier, 332 *sqq*., 340; views of, on Russia (1901), 199, 332-4; Witte's enthusiasm for, 326, 338; wish of, to visit England (1904), 330-1; on Ferdinand of Bulgaria, 304; on Morocco, 333, 337
Williams, —, 9
Willoughby, Sir John, 140, 141, 142
Willoughby de Broke, Lord, and the Parliament Bill, 422, 423, 424
"Willy-Nicky" Correspondence, the, 304, 312, 318 *sqq*., 332
Wilson, Major-General Sir Henry, 439, 477
Wilson, Woodrow, President, U.S.A. Peace proposals of, 467, 472, 473, 474, 476, 477; the Fourteen Points of, inspiration of, 481
Wiltshire, Lord-Lieutenancy of, accepted, 129
Windsor Castle, 236
Witte, M., 214, 224, 272, 313, 322, at the Peace Conference, 1905, 324-7; on Björkö Treaty, 338-9
Wittgenstein, Prince, 337
Wodehouse, John, 1st Earl of Kimberley, 101, 122
Wolmarans, Chief Commandant, 176
Wolseley, F. M., Viscount, Commander-in-Chiefship of, 130 *sqq*., 187; Army increase demanded by, 143, 191; Army Reforms set on foot by, 194; and reinforcements for South Africa, 144; on the Jameson raiders, 140; views of, on the Soudan campaign (1898), 147, 148; and the South African War, 155-6, 179, 183, 201; on the Order in Council of 1895, 201 *sqq*., 459
World Crisis, The (Churchill), *cited*, 477
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George, 426; Land Act of (1903), 499; and the Wyndham-MacDonnell episode, 347, 500, 501

Y
Yangtze River, European interests on, 199, 218, 222
Yellow Peril, the, 332, 340.
Young Turk, the, 306
Yunnan, French Concessions in, 218

Z
Zinovieff Letter, the, 346