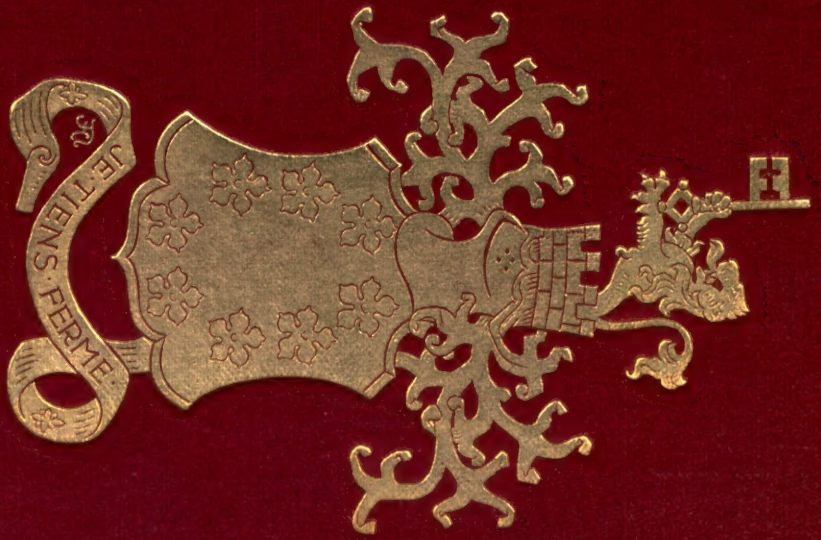


MR CHAMBERLAIN AS A YOUNG MAN

Photo DRAYCOTT, BIRMINGHAM.

The Life of

The Right Honourable

Joseph Chamberlain

BY

LOUIS CRESWICKE

AUTHOR OF

"SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR," "ROXANE," ETC.

WITH AN EXTENSIVE SERIES OF PORTRAITS, CARTOONS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

IN FOUR VOLUMES—VOL. II.

LONDON

THE CAXTON PUBLISHING COMPANY

CLUN HOUSE, SURREY STREET, W.C.

CONTENTS

Contents

Contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—VOL. II.

1885.

September 17.—Mr. Gladstone's Manifesto.
24.—Mr. Chamberlain at Victoria Hall discusses Lord Iddesleigh's comparison between "myself and Mr. John Cade."
October 1.—Speaks at Bradford.
7.—Lord Salisbury at Newport on Federation and on the Irish problem.
Visits Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden.
14.—Speaks at Trowbridge. Describes the political reforms achieved by "inveterate Cockneys."
20.—Addresses his constituents at Birmingham. "A policy of Chamberlain-and-water."
December.—General Election.
17.—Great dinner at Birmingham.

1886.

January 28.—Defeat of Lord Salisbury.
February 3.—Mr. Gladstone's Third Administration.
Contributes "A Radical View of the Irish Crisis" (*Fortnightly*).
Conditionally becomes President of the Local Government Board.
March.—He resigns.
April 8.—Home Rule Bill introduced.
13.—First Reading of Home Rule Bill.
14.—Patriotic union at the Opera House.
16.—Land Purchase Bill introduced.
June 7–8.—Home Rule Bill rejected. Dissolution.
17.—Inauguration of National Radical Union.
19.—General Election.
21.—Addresses Constituents.
August.—Lord Salisbury takes office. Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain object to coalition.
September.—Mr. Parnell's Tenants Relief Bill thrown out.
October.—Plan of campaign arranged.
December.—Resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill.

1887.

January.—Round Table Conference.
February 21.—Resignation of Sir Michael Hicks Beach. Appointment of Mr. Arthur Balfour.
March 7.—Publication by the *Times* of "Parnellism and Crime."
April.—Visits Scotland.
13.—Speaks at Ayr.
15.—Remarkable Experiences in Edinburgh.
16.—Visits Inverness.
18.—Goes to Dingwall.
October.—Visits Ulster. Is enthusiastically received by Ulster Protestants.
Is chosen with Sir Lionel Sackville West and Sir C. Tupper as H.M. Plenipotentiary to settle the fisheries dispute with America.
November.—Meets Miss Endicott at British Legation, Washington.
December 30.—Speaks at dinner at Toronto, of Confederation of the British Empire.

1888.

February 16.—Sends summary of position to Lord Salisbury.
29.—Speaks at Philadelphia. "Some American Columbus should undertake the discovery of England."
March.—Returns from America and receives enthusiastic welcome in Birmingham. Is presented with the freedom of the borough.
April.—Reviews at Birmingham the new position of parties.

Chronological Table

9.— Discusses Relations with United States and the Colonies.

May. — Becomes President of Liberal-Unionist Association.

14.—Speaks at London Chamber of Commerce on British Interests in South Africa.

November 15.—Marries Miss Endicott. Goes to the Riviera.

1889.

January. — Birmingham's welcome to Mr. Chamberlain and his bride.

Travels in Egypt and studies the old and the new régime.

1890.

March.—Debate on Report of Special Commission. Mr. Chamberlain on the Physical Force Party.

8.—Discusses at Birmingham Jeweller's Art at Dinner of Jewellers and Silversmiths Association.

24.—Confesses at Birmingham his mistakes regarding Egyptian policy.

December.—Writes "Shall we Americanise our Municipal Institutions?" (*Nineteenth Century*).

1891.

May.—Contributes "Favourable Aspects of State Socialism" (*North American Review*).

October 6.—Death of Charles Stewart Parnell.

1892.

February.—Contributes "Old Age Pensions" (*National Review*).

Irish Local Government Bill Introduced.

March.—Irish Local Government Bill withdrawn.

June.—Dissolution.

July.—Election. Personal triumph of Mr. Chamberlain. Victory of the Home Rule Party. Mr. Austen Chamberlain becomes Member for East Worcestershire.

27.—Becomes President of the Midlands Liberal-Unionist Association.

August.—Resignation of Lord Salisbury.

15.—Mr. Gladstone forms Fourth Administration.

November.—Contributes "Municipal Institutions in America and England" (*Forum*); "The Labour Question" (*Nineteenth Century*).

1893.

February 13.—Second Home Rule Bill introduced.

March 20.—Discusses Uganda. Advises the "pegging out of claims for posterity."

April.—Writes "A Bill for the Weakening of Great Britain" (*Nineteenth Century*).

July 27.—Remarkable scene in the House of Commons.

September.—Home Rule Bill rejected by the Lords.

1894.

January 22.—Discusses the state of the unemployed and the development of free markets.

30.—Dines at Edgbaston Conservative Club.

March.—Mr. Gladstone resigns. The Earl of Rosebery becomes Prime Minister. Mr. Chamberlain visits Edinburgh and attacks speech of the Prime Minister.

June.—Contributes "Municipal Government" (*New Review*).

September 5.—Speech at Liverpool on social reform as common ground for Conservatism and Radicalism.

Delivers at Leeds counterblast to proceedings of National Liberal Federation.

October 16.—Expresses his views at Durham regarding Church questions.

November 22.—Speaks at Heywood.

1895.

June.—Defeat of the Government.

July 13.—General Election.

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

Photo ELSDEN, HERTFORD.

THE LIFE OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

CHAPTER I

I.—DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN—MR. GLADSTONE'S MANIFESTO, SEPTEMBER 1885

ON the 17th of September, the day preceding that on which Mr. Chamberlain addressed the Crofters, Mr. Gladstone issued his manifesto. In this paper it was observed that Mr. Chamberlain's proposals were not included. The four main items of the "Grand Old Man's" deliverance dealt with reforms, but the agrarian schemes that formed the great features of the unauthorised programme he practically consigned to the shelf.

He reviewed the legislative work of 1880, and passed on to the Treaty of Berlin, defended the policy of the Government in regard to Afghanistan, South Africa, and lastly Egypt. His remarks regarding the blunders in the Soudan are of interest :—

"The chief sources of comfort, in reviewing a series of transactions generally painful, are that we have respected, to the utmost of our power, international laws and arrangements; have confined within Egyptian limits troubles which menaced the general peace; have used every administrative effort to support our gallant forces in maintaining the honour of the British arms; have, beyond all doubt, introduced most valuable improvements, too sorely needed, into Egyptian law and government; and, finally, have indicated provisions on a reasonable basis for the future government of Egypt, and the exercise of its legal autonomy, without foreign intervention.

"Even preceding topics have been touched but roughly in this Address; still more does the complexity of the Egyptian question defy any attempt to unfold it fully within the limits—even the extended limits—which I must observe. But in this slight outline I shall use no language which I am not able to sustain.

"Postponing for the moment, with a view to greater clearness, what relates to the Soudan, I affirm that every step that we took in Egypt, down to the

time of the operations against Arabi Pasha, in 1882, was the direct consequence of the agreement with France for reciprocal support, and for the maintenance of a native Government, which had been concluded in 1879 before our accession to office.

"The French Chamber, in the exercise of its undoubted right, rejected, in 1882, the proposal of its Ministry to take part in military measures. Sorrowfully, but without doubt, though I felt less than many of my countrymen the pressure of the argument from British interests other than that of honour, I held, and I still hold, that that paramount interest compelled us, in the execution of our pledge for the maintenance of a native Government, to re-establish the authority of the Khedive and the peace of the country, and to prosecute all the practicable reforms.

"Our judgment was sustained by public opinion. In November 1883 we had reached a point at which we were able to advise the evacuation of Cairo, together with the immediate reduction of the occupying force to a brigade in Alexandria and at Port Said. We had thus, in my judgment, a hopeful prospect of an early evacuation of the entire country.

"It was then that the disasters of an unhappy war in the Soudan, in no way due to us, produced a state of things so menacing to Egypt itself, that we found it our duty at once to take measures intended to prevent the extension of the disturbances beyond that region. But we insisted upon its evacuation by Egypt, and we offered our aid towards the withdrawal of the garrisons by peaceful means.

"Lord Hartington has lately, and justly, stated, in general terms, that he is not disposed to deny our having fallen into errors of judgment. I will go one step farther, and admit that we committed such errors, and serious errors too, with cost of treasure and of precious lives in the Soudan. For none of these errors were we rebuked by the voice of the Opposition. We were only rebuked, and that incessantly, because we did not commit them with precipitation, and because we did not commit other errors greater still.

"Our mistakes in the Soudan I cannot now state in detail. The task belongs to history. Our responsibility for them cannot be questioned. Yet its character ought not to be misapprehended. In such a task miscarriages were inevitable. They are the proper and certain consequence of undertakings that war against nature, and that lie beyond the scope of human means and of rational and prudent human action; and the first authors of these undertakings are the real makers of the mischief.

"However, as between political parties, the matter at length came to a pretty clear issue. At the beginning of the late session, in one of their innumerable motions of censure, the Opposition condemned us because we would not engage to keep the Queen's forces in the Soudan until we had effected the establishment of some regular government there. We, who had always deprecated the use of British force for such a purpose, refused the engagement. Further, and since the recent change of Ministry, the new Government has declared in Parliament that, though the process of evacuating the Soudan was too far advanced to be recalled or arrested, yet the measure was in itself to be regretted and condemned. Now, about the vast importance of this question there is no more doubt than about the positions of the two parties in regard to it. I know there are persons of no mean authority who have held that the expedition to Khartoum would have been the most arduous military effort undertaken by us since the battle of Waterloo. We thought the

evacuation necessary, wise, and just. The Tories thought it needless and deplorable. Either the country has been saved by the late Government from a most perilous and costly undertaking, to which the present Government had striven to commit it; or it has been deprived by us of a noble opportunity, which they would have used on its behalf. The principles of opposite policies are here pretty clearly brought out · let the country judge between them. So much for the Soudan. . . ."

He went on to treat of public expenditure, and then proceeded to the discussion of domestic affairs.

On the subject of procedure he launched some shots at the Irishmen who had lately execrated him :—

"Those who are reasonably so keen for legislation on one subject or another, should recollect that with regard to each and all of them the primary question is as to the sound working condition of the great instrument by which all legislation is accomplished. If that instrument is properly adjusted I believe the House can do its work; if that operation is defeated or evaded I am certain it cannot. The constituencies have now to choose a new House; and it depends entirely on their selection among candidates and on their treatment of candidates with reference to these questions whether that work shall be done or not.

"Meantime, I desire clearly to point out the three cardinal points of the question. First, the congestion of business, now notorious and inveterate, degrades the House of Commons, by placing it at the *mercy of those among its members who seek for notoriety by obstructing business*, instead of pursuing the more honourable road to reputation by useful service, or of those who, with more semblance of warrant, *seek to cripple the action of the House of Commons in order to force the acceptance of their own political projects.* Secondly, it disappoints, irritates, and injures the country by the suspension of useful legislation. And lastly, and perhaps worst of all, it defeats the fundamental rule of our parliamentary system that the majority shall prevail, and puts it in the power of the minority to prevent, by unduly consuming the time of the House, the passing of measures which it dislikes, but of which it is afraid openly to declare its disapproval. This country will not, in the full sense, be a self-governing country until the machinery of the House of Commons is amended, and its procedure reformed."

He discussed local government in the following terms :—

". . . In the reform of local government the first objects to be aimed at, in my judgment, are to rectify the balance of taxation as between real and personal property—to put an end to the gross injustice of charging upon labour, through the medium of the Consolidated Fund, local burdens which our laws have always wisely treated as incident to property; to relieve the ratepayer, not at the charge of the working population, but wholly or mainly by making over for local purposes carefully chosen items of taxation; to supply local management with inducements to economy instead of tempting, and almost forcing, it into waste; finally, and most of all, to render the system thoroughly representative and free. The gentry of this country have, especially in the counties, long and with justice been commended for the upright and intelligent discharge of local duty. I am confident that they will continue to enjoy this honourable distinction none

the less when our system shall have been placed throughout under effective control. . . ."

In regard to registration he said :—

". . . The law has fixed the qualification of voters in the three kingdoms. But the possession of the qualification has to be established in the case of each individual before he can vote. After this has been done, his name is placed upon the authenticated list, which we term the register. The subsidiary conditions under which he thus comes into practical possession of his title require to be reconsidered, and the whole subject demands review, in order that this essential process, the complement of the late Reform Act, may be carried through with certainty, simplicity, and the smallest possible expenditure of personal labour and of money. . . ."

Having dealt with the four legislative subjects that he considered had reached maturity, and supplied a scheme of present action for the party, he waived with eloquent words the questions of reform or reconstruction of the House of Lords, the abolition of payment for Primary Education, and the severance of Church from State, and passed on to Ireland. He well knew that all eyes were fixed in anxiety to note which way the weather-vane pointed.

"In my opinion, not now for the first time delivered, the limit is clear within which any desires of Ireland, constitutionally ascertained, may, and beyond which they cannot, receive the assent of Parliament. *To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people.* Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness, and strength.

"We have no right to expect that the remedial process in human affairs shall always be greatly shorter than the period of mistakes and misgovernment. And if in the case of Ireland half a century of efforts at redress, not always consistent or sustained, and following upon long ages for which as a whole we blush, have still left something to be attempted, we ought not to wax weary in well-doing, nor rest until every claim which justice may be found to urge shall have been satisfied.

"The main question is whether it is for the interests of all the three countries that the thorough and enduring harmony which has now been long established, but only after centuries of manful strife, between England and Scotland should include Ireland also. My personal answer to the question is this: I believe history and posterity will consign to disgrace the name and memory of every man, be he who he may, and on whichever side of the Channel he may dwell, that, having the power to aid in an equitable settlement between Ireland and Great Britain, shall use that power not to aid, but to prevent or to retard it. If the duty of working for this end cannot be doubted, then I trust that, on the one hand, Ireland will remember that she too is subject to the authority of reason and justice, and cannot always plead the wrongs of other days in bar of

submission to them; and that the two sister kingdoms, aware of their overwhelming strength, will dismiss every fear except that of doing wrong, and will make yet another effort to complete a reconciling work which has already done so much to redeem the past, and which, when completed, will yet more redound to the honour of our legislation and our race. . . ."

It is unnecessary to quote further from the "long and dreary document." Sufficient to say that for the time being it salved wounds and smoothed the surface of political things, however powerless it was to effect permanent healing. The great man stood between two fires, the Irish on one side—of which he was cautious, foreseeing the effect of the Franchise Act of 1884 on Irish representation—and his own disintegrating party on the other. The attitude of the timid Whigs and the conduct of the Socialist Radicals kept him in perpetual throes of anxiety, and he found it daily growing more hard to maintain his equilibrium—to balance himself comfortably between Lord Hartington and the decorous right wing of his party, and Mr. Chamberlain and the unorthodox left. There were hints, too, that Lord Hartington and the old-fashioned Whigs might co-operate with the Progressive Conservatives led by Lord Randolph Churchill—a development that would have been as entirely distasteful to Mr. Chamberlain as to Mr. Gladstone; but the hints eventually proved unfounded, for the Whigs, frightened as they were of Mr. Chamberlain, shied from the overtures of Lord Randolph Churchill, and on the principle of "better the devil you know than the devil you don't know," preferred rather to face the known vagaries of the unauthorised programme than confront the unknown audacities of the Tory Democrat.

The public were inclined to be surprised that Mr. Chamberlain should so cordially welcome Mr. Gladstone's manifesto, which practically ignored his pet projects; but the Radical leader loyally declared that, in common with every Liberal, he could recognise the importance of Mr. Gladstone's four great reforms. If they stood alone, he said he would be bound to lend whatever support and assistance he could to bring about their speedy adoption. But he gave it to be understood that these reforms did not stand alone, and the further development of the Liberal programme which he had been pressing on the attention of his fellow-men would continue to be put forward by himself, either with or without indication of the chief's support or approval. "I hold myself free, without any suspicion of disloyalty, to continue to press for those reforms which I believe are called for by the just expectations of the great majority of the population."

At such temerity the hair of the Opposition naturally stood erect, the Whigs' bristled: Mr. Chamberlain remained unmoved. His

language in addressing the Crofters had caused veritable tremors among politicians of the cut-and-dried order, but far from regretting the sensation he caused, the Reformer pursued the even tenor of his programme, directing at various times squibs, shots, or salvoes at those who were criticising him. In a notable speech delivered on his return from the North (Victoria Hall, 24th September), he said that he had been reading the flood of speeches poured forth by the Conservatives, and had failed to find in any of them an indication of definite policy. They protested against imaginary schemes of plunder and confiscation that no responsible politician would have put forth; they abounded in denunciation of the "very moderate" proposals he had suggested for the elevation of the working-class of the country; but from first to last, he pointed out, there was never a word of an alternative of the policy they condemned. He offered as an example the speech that had recently been made by Lord Iddesleigh in Scotland, and alluded to his having been dubbed Jack Cade—treating the thing in the easy cynical style that delighted his hearers. "Lord Iddesleigh is so good-tempered, such a courteous opponent, that I take it in very good part the comparison between myself and Mr. John Cade! Knowing as I do of what Tory misrepresentation is capable, I am inclined to think that Jack Cade was an ill-used, much misunderstood gentleman, who happened to have sympathy with the poor and oppressed, and who therefore was made the mark for the malignant hatred of the aristocratic and land-owning classes, who combined to burlesque his opinions and put him out of the way." This was a neat mode of advertising to various adversaries that he gauged, how entirely rejoiced they would be to get him too out of the way! He went on handling Lord Iddesleigh with gentle sarcasm—tearing his speech to ribbons, and finishing up his allusions to him personally with the remark: "Lord Iddesleigh is a student of Shakespeare. He seems to take his history from the immortal bard. I wish he would go also to his pages for philosophy, and remember that 'it is all men's office to speak patience to those who wring under the load of sorrow, but no man's virtue or sufficiency to be so moral that he shall endure the like himself.'"

Referring to the spirit in which the members of his own party should act, he said:—

"It is the duty of all of us to make sacrifices to secure the unity of the party which has been in the past the great instrument of reform and progress, and to which we look in the future for those further changes which we believe to be necessary to secure the welfare and the contentment of the population. The obligation lies upon leaders and upon followers alike, and I hope, before I sit down, to show you that I am prepared to practise what I preach. In the mean-

time, I would urge on all those electors who may attach the slightest importance to my opinion, that in every case in which two professing Liberals are standing for the same constituency the friends of each ought to insist that their candidates shall submit themselves to some such impartial tribunal as has been suggested by your chairman, and which, after full inquiry, may decide which of them is entitled to bear the Liberal flag at the next election. I see in the newspapers this morning that Mr. Bradlaugh has set us a good example by offering freely and without reserve to submit his own claim to such an arbitration, and I hope and trust that all the others will follow in the direction to which he has pointed. . . ."

Having declared the issues too vital to be sacrificed to individual pretensions or to personal vanity, he invited his audience to consider their importance in a fresh light.

"It is the more necessary to investigate them, because in recent times the ordinary lines of party demarcation have been confused and crossed until it is difficult to see the true bearing of the controversy. *The old Tory party, with its historic traditions, has disappeared.* It has repudiated its name and become Conservative. The Conservatives in turn, unhappy and discontented, have been seeking for another designation, and sometimes they have come before you as Constitutionalists, and then they break out in a new place as Liberal-Conservatives. Even this does not exhaust their kaleidoscopic changes, for many of them now, under the erratic guidance of Lord Randolph Churchill, are masquerading as Tory-Democrats. What is the meaning of all those numerous changes? I dare say you have heard of that immoral person who was brought up before the magistrate for having married seven wives, and who, when called upon for his defence, impudently said, 'It is all right, I was only trying to get a good one.'

"If the Tories are trying to get a good name (he went on) they have been singularly unsuccessful. When a private individual assumes a number of aliases it is not unfair to suppose that he is ashamed of his identity, and that his past life is open to suspicion. Of course it may be—and we ought to be willing to give him the benefit of the doubt—a sign of repentance and of grace; but it may be only a prelude to further misdoings. Now, the Tories have many previous convictions recorded against them. What proof is there that recent adversity has had a chastening effect? I will frankly admit, if I had known nothing of their past history, that I should not have been disposed myself to look unfavourably upon their recent performances. They are, as you know, the men in possession. They have been placed in their present situation by a combination which is still shrouded in impenetrable mystery. We have been solemnly assured that it is not the result of an alliance, that it is not a compact, and that it is not a bargain which has secured for them the support of the Irish National party in the House of Commons and in the country. No, gentlemen, it is a fortuitous coincidence that just on the eve of a vote of censure the whole Tory party became suddenly converted from the policy of repression and coercion, which up to that moment they had consistently advocated, to a policy of conciliation, which had previously only received the support of a few Radical members, like your chairman of to-night. I am willing to accept the explanation, improbable as it appears at first sight, and I do so all the more willingly because their surrender to Mr. Parnell is not more remarkable than

their submission to English Radicals on many points of home and foreign policy. . . ."

He then declared the vigorous foreign policy of the Tories had consisted in carrying into effect all the arrangements and proposals that the Liberals had made.

"In addition they have recalled Sir Charles Warren from the scene of his successes in South Africa, and they have surrendered the interests of Zanzibar to Germany. I do not say that this may not be a very safe and a very prudent policy for the Government to pursue, but it is not a very chivalrous one, and it is not what their language led us to expect. After all the accusations they have hurled at us because we took a conciliatory course with foreign countries, it is refreshing to find the young lions of the Tory party 'roaring as gently as any sucking dove,' and displaying unaccustomed virtues of meekness and humility. . . .

"There will be woe in the habitations of the Primrose League. There will be great lamentation in the houses of the Jingoes; but they will not be able—they dare not lift a finger or move a soldier in order to save their Eastern policy from an utter breakdown. Those," he said, "are things which may reconcile us to the temporary existence of this stop-gap administration, but the spectacle is not an improving or an elevating one. The Government has been living on its own words. It is passing its life amid the crumbling ruins of its old faith and traditions. If its policy be, as I think it to be, on the whole a just and a prudent one, what a pity it is they did not perceive it a little sooner when they were in opposition. Their conversion has been too sudden to give us confidence in its stability; and already I think I see signs that they are getting weary of well-doing, and, like a dissolving view, the Democrat is fading away and the Tory is coming back again. This change is curiously coincident with the indisposition of Lord Randolph Churchill. We all deplore the cause which is keeping the noble lord from the political arena, and we all regret its consequences, for when he is silent there is very little that is either interesting or exhilarating in the Tory oratory. I do not wonder that the managers of their meetings have found it necessary to provide a substitute, and in the absence of Lord Randolph they have varied amusements, such as burlesque acting, eccentric comedy, juggling performances, and conjurers' tricks. . . ."

Having thoroughly trounced the Tories he returned to the discussion of three items of his programme:—

"In the first place, I have pointed out that the incidence of taxation is at present unfair, and presses hardly upon the working-classes, and that it should be rearranged so as to secure equality of sacrifice among all classes of taxpayers in the country. On this point at any rate Mr. Gladstone's language is precise enough and leaves nothing to desire, for he says that the balance of taxation as between property and labour must be adjusted with a scrupulousness which, unfortunately, has been too often absent when property has had the exclusive control of parliamentary action. The second point to which I have attached importance relates to the subject of free elementary schools, which seem to me to follow as a corollary to our system of compulsory education. On previous occasions I have pointed out the hardships, the

unnecessary sufferings inflicted upon the industrious poor by the particular form which this taxation takes; and I have also called attention to the obstacles which it throws in the way of regular attendance and the spread of education. Now, if you will allow me a few words, I will endeavour to answer the particular objection which has been taken to this proposal. It has been said that the poor will not value that for which they do not pay. That may be so. But even in this case they will pay. They will pay their fair share from the rates and taxes, to which they contribute in common with all the other subjects of the Crown. The question is not whether there shall be payment, but it is how and when that payment shall be made. The question is whether it shall be made by means of the general taxation of the country, and be spread over the whole of a man's tax-paying life, or whether, on the other hand, it shall be a burden put on a particular part of his life and shall be pressed upon him just at the time when his necessities are greatest and the demands made upon him are most exacting. If we are now to assume that no public service will be valued unless it is paid for at the time, we have hitherto been proceeding upon wrong lines in most departments of our public affairs. We ought to make a charge for admission to the British Museum and the National Gallery. . . .

"Then the third point to which I have called attention is the proposal that local representative authorities should everywhere have power to acquire land compulsorily at its fair value for public purposes, and among those public services I have laid great stress upon the letting of land for allotments and for the creation of small tenancies. If we are in earnest in desiring to multiply the number of those who have a real and direct interest in the soil they till—if we wish to stop the continual flow of agricultural labourers to the towns, where they enter into competition with the artisan, and necessarily lower the average rate of wages, while they add to the overcrowding and the destitution which we all regret, we must—it is essential and necessary that we should—find some additional facilities for enabling agricultural labourers to obtain possessory rights. The local authorities in every case will be the best judges of their separate interests. They are not likely to act very hastily or to engage in any wild speculations. Where landlords are willing, as some of them have shown themselves to be, to fulfil their obligations, no external interference will be necessary; but where they are not willing or are unable, what can be the injustice, in view of the constant depopulation of the country and in view of the widespread desire on the part of the labourers to get back the land—what can be the injustice of proceeding on the lines of much of our recent legislation and of doing for the English labourer what we have already done for the Irish peasant? The latter certainly is not more worthy of our care and consideration than the former. . . .

"If I am right, these views will find their adequate expression, and they will receive due weight and attention from the party leaders. *If I am disappointed, then my course is clear. I cannot press the views of a minority against the conclusions of the majority of the party to which I belong.* On the other hand, it would be dishonourable in me, and lowering the high tone which ought to be observed in public life, if, after having committed myself personally, as I have done, to the advocacy of those proposals, I were to take my place in any Government which excluded them from its programme. In that case it would be my duty to stand out, and to lend loyal support to those who are carrying out reforms with which I agree, although they are unable to go with me a little

farther. The sacrifice will not be one of very great merit, for I have not found an official life so free from care that I should be unwilling to fall back once more into the ranks and to occupy a humbler position and to lend what support I can to the common cause."

At Bradford, on the 1st of October, Mr. Chamberlain opened the proceedings by alluding in graceful terms to his old enemy, Mr. Forster, who had been stricken down with illness. He said that it was no time to recall ancient differences of opinion which had at times politically separated them; he could only now recognise the great qualities, the indomitable energy and courage that Mr. Forster had expended in the service of his country. He alluded to the part he had played in the great constitutional changes that had been effected, and the magnitude of the revolution that had so peacefully been accomplished. But the great feature of his speech he kept for the end, when he reiterated his determination not to enter any Government that excluded the reforms he had been advocating.

Earlier he made a ferocious lunge at the Lords and the Tories, whose civilities to Mr. Parnell that gentleman had taken pains to hint at, and whose machinations were certainly suspicious:—

"The House of Lords," he said, "has always been the obsequious handmaid of the Tory party, and when a Conservative Government is driven by party exigencies to promote a Radical programme, the Peers develop an unsuspected capacity for Radical doctrines, and in these circumstances we should have no need to waste the time of the House of Commons in the endeavour to reform its procedure, the abuse of which has done so much to lower its dignity and to lessen its efficiency. The most admirable specific against obstruction is to put all the chief obstructors on the Treasury Bench; and it is astonishing how merrily the work goes on when the Tory-Irish party is allowed to play at Government under the watchful eyes of a Liberal majority. I am inclined to think that under the same conditions we should have very little difficulty about a Liberal programme. For the Tories have shown such a power of assimilating even the most advanced proposals, that I am strongly inclined to think that in a short time we should see even the measures that I have been advocating, which seem to some persons so extreme, elevated into chief items of the domestic policy of the Tory administration. . . ."

After reproaching them for the lack of a policy, he proceeded:—

"They have emptied our boxes, but what have they got in their own? Perhaps when Lord R. Churchill emerges from his temporary retirement he may tell us something on this subject, and he may let us know whether they are prepared once more to try and obtain votes by outbidding their opponents. In the meantime I do not think it is well to take too seriously these violent denunciations of the Liberal or even of the Radical programme, which may be only a preliminary, as they have been before, to its adoption. I was reading the other day a speech by the Attorney-General, which I thought rather suggestive, and which I am inclined to recommend to the consideration of those moderate Liberals who may be thinking of imitating the example of Mr. Dundas and

going over to the Tory party. The Attorney-General is new to political life, and he let the cat out of the bag in a way which a less ingenuous man might possibly have avoided, because he said, at the close of a long speech, that if the Conservative party had not done enough for the working-classes, let their opponents force them to go farther in the same direction, and they would be only too delighted to yield to the pressure. How considerate! There has been nothing like it since the time of the American stump orator, who concluded his harangue by saying, 'Those are my opinions, gentlemen; if you don't like them, they can be changed.'"

He then reverted to the problem of the poor:—

"I have not been, as some of my critics have asserted, indifferent to the services which have been rendered by great leaders of the people in the past—by Mr. Cobden, by Mr. Bright, and, greatest of all, by Mr. Gladstone. But where I differ from my censors—Mr. Goschen and others—is in the conviction that we also have our duties to fulfil, and that *we cannot discharge our duties by standing indolently by, with faint praise for those who have done the work in the past, and barren criticism for those who continue it in the present.* The great problem of our civilisation has been attacked, but it is still unsolved. We approach its consideration now under more favourable auspices than those who have toiled in these paths before. They had to appeal to a limited class, perhaps not altogether disinterested and unprejudiced; but now we have called the whole people into our counsels—those who suffer will have a voice in the discussion, and the search for remedies will be prosecuted with the co-operation of those who know most about the character and extent of the disease. Now, let me recapitulate the facts with which we have to deal. What is this problem? England is the richest country in the world, and the accumulation of wealth has gone on in the last generation in unheard-of proportions. It has been estimated that in twenty years the annual income of the United Kingdom has been augmented by six hundred millions sterling. Everywhere you see the evidences of this great prosperity. It is said that we are passing through a time of depression; but if you will go to London, to any one of our large towns, you will see everywhere signs of improvement—all the marks of vast expenditure and luxurious living. Not long ago there was a great sale of the furniture and works of art which came from the castle of a Scotch duke; and, in spite of the great depression, articles of not the slightest interest or utility to any one but the collector and the student were eagerly competed for at the auction at prices which counted by thousands of pounds. It is evident that there must be at least a fortunate class which depression has been powerless to reach. And during the same time, although with some fluctuations, the general bulk of our trade has multiplied many fold; the production of iron, of coal, of woollen goods, of cotton manufactures, of all our chief industries, has enormously increased; Invention has lent her aid to swell the general tide of prosperity, and new industries have been created by discoveries in chemistry, in photography, and in electricity. Everywhere the resources of the country have been increased, and its stored up capital has been augmented. Would not that be a pleasant picture if it were not for the reverse? Unfortunately, there is a pendant to all this luxury. There are among us continually, in spite of this growing wealth, nearly a million of persons who seek a refuge from starvation, from the restricted charity of the State; and there are millions more who are

hopeless of providing against any unforeseen misfortune—against illness, for instance, or old age. I am sure any one who has any experience of the poor knows with what patience and with what courage they bear the evils from which they suffer, and with how little of envy or irritation they regard the good fortune of those who are more prosperous than themselves. But their resignation ought not to blind us to their claims. I do not believe it is just. I sometimes think it is hardly safe to pass by those great inequalities, those flagrant contrasts, to speak of them as the result of unvarying causation, and the inevitable law of Providence, without even an attempt to raise the general condition of the poor, and to do something to lighten the lot of those who are most miserable among our fellow-creatures. If we do not at least make the effort, I think we may find, in the words of the Poet-Laureate—

> 'There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
> Shorn of his strength and bound in chains of steel,
> Who may in some grim revel raise his hand,
> And shake the pillars of our commonweal.'

. . . . . .

There are three things on which I have laid especial stress. In the first place, I have claimed a remission of taxation in order to remove inequalities which now, in my opinion, rest unjustly upon the mass of the necessitous classes. Upon that I will not say another word, because the subject is one which is adequately dealt with in Mr. Gladstone's manifesto, and I am perfectly content to leave it in the hands of one who, by common consent, is an unsurpassed master of the subject. And I have also had my say upon the great question of the reform of the land laws. I am not altogether satisfied to limit my aspiration to those two great branches of the subject which include the abolition of the law of settlement and the cheapening of land transfer. I think it is absolutely essential that we should go farther. If you want to raise the general condition of the whole people, you must begin with the lowest stratum; and at the present time I do not hesitate to say that the toil which is least remunerative is that of the agricultural labourer. Whether that is owing to the deprivation of his political rights I cannot say; but, at all events, now that he has been placed in possession of them, it is becoming, I think, sufficiently evident that he knows what is his greatest want, and how it may be supplied. Well, *I am myself convinced you can look for no improvement until the just claims of the labourer have been satisfied and the steady depopulation of the country has been completely stayed.* Why, England is no longer 'Merry England' since the labourer was divorced from the soil he tills. How to restore to him the land is the land question with which the great mass of the English are chiefly concerned. I saw that Lord Iddesleigh the other day said that he did not see how this could be done without plunder and confiscation; and, following him, other members of the party have gone farther, until Mr. Stanhope told a meeting the other day that the Radicals were going about promising to every labourer three acres of land and a cow. I do not know whether the Tories think that they will make the Radical programme unpopular by this description of it. For my part, it seems to me rather dangerous for the owners of property to confuse perfectly moderate, just, and reasonable proposals for effecting an object which everybody admits to be desirable with wild schemes of confiscation. They may chance to be taken at their word. They will go far to make confiscation popular if they point to it as the only means by which a natural desire can be gratified. But

about my own proposal there is certainly nothing of plunder. I have been anxious that the final settlement of this great question should be referred to those new local, popular, and representative authorities, which I hope it will be the first duty of any Liberal Government to establish throughout the length and breadth of the land, and to them I have suggested should be given power to acquire land by compulsion at a fair price for every public purpose. And among the public purposes, one of the chief I have in view is the letting of the allotments and the creating of small tenancies. I am convinced that at the present moment, in almost every village, there are one or two or more who are well qualified to take advantage of such facilities as these, and who would do well if they could only obtain, at a reasonable price, a fair quantity of the land that they cultivate for the advantage of others, and that have no hope at all for themselves.

"I assume that these men would begin, in the first instance, with allotments; and then, when they had amassed a little capital, their ambition would grow, and they might be educated to replace and replenish that yeoman class from whose disappearance we may date the rise of pauperism in the United Kingdom. What are the objections to the proposals which I have made? The landlords object—and they always do—to part with their land at a fair price. The right of refusing land for public purposes—for railways, for waterworks, for chapels and schools, for roads, and for allotments—has always been a cherished privilege, and whenever it has been invaded the landowning class have taken care to exact a heavy compensation for the restoration to the community of the power to re-enter upon its former inheritance. I refuse altogether to recognise this as among the sacred rights of property. I say it is a right which has no sanction in justice, and which ought not to have the support of the law."

And now, having disposed of his revolutionary projects, he came to what may be called the declaration of independence—the individual asserting himself above the level of a party:—

"Before I sit down, I would ask leave to say one word as to my personal position, which has been, I will not say misunderstood, but at all events misrepresented, by those who affect to be the guides and leaders of public opinion. The very same writers who a short time ago denounced me for raising this question in order to secure my personal advancement, are now equally indignant because I have stated my determination not to purchase the ordinary rewards of political ambition by the sacrifice of the cause that I have at heart. I am accused of dictating terms to the Liberal party and to its great leader, because I have said that I could not consent to enter any Government which deliberately excluded from its programme those reforms which I have been advocating as of prime importance throughout the length and breadth of the land. I may be mistaken in the weight that I attach to these proposals. I may have overestimated their popularity among the people, and, if so, it is quite right that others should lead where I have failed to obtain your support. But that I should purchase place and office by the abandonment of the opinions I have expressed, that I should put my principles in my pocket, and that I should consent to an unworthy silence on those matters to which I have professed to attach so great an importance, would be a degradation which no honourable man can regard with complacency or satisfaction. What is the complaint that

I have to make against the present Government? It is that they are acting and speaking in office in absolute contradiction to all they said and did in opposition. I say that that is conduct which is lowering to the dignity of public life, by whomsoever it is practised. I should like to quote to you the opinion of a great authority upon the subject, and who may perhaps not be unwilling to be reminded of his former expressions. It was Lord Salisbury who said, when he was Lord Cranborne and a member of the House of Commons: 'Our theory of government is that on each side of the House there should be men supporting definite opinions, and that what they have supported in opposition they should adhere to in office, and that every one should know from the fact of their being in office that these particular opinions will be supported. If you refuse that, you practically destroy the whole basis upon which our form of government rests, and you make the House of Commons a mere scrambling place for office. You practically banish all honourable men from the political arena, and you will find in the long run that the time will come when your statesmen will become nothing but political adventurers, and that professions of opinion will be looked upon as so many political manœuvres for the purpose of attaining office.' Lord Salisbury is now in office, but how far he and his colleagues are supporting the opinions they expressed in opposition let their actions and their speeches—ay, and their silence—tell. For my part I accept the precept and I reject the example. I am told that in so doing I make it impossible that I should ever again be called upon to serve the country. I imagine that is a decision which will rest with a higher tribunal than the editors of London newspapers. But in any case, office for me has no attraction unless it may be made to serve the cause I have undertaken to promote; and if that reward is denied me, or is beyond my grasp, I will be content to leave to others the spoils of victory."

On the 7th of October Mr. Chamberlain went to Hawarden. He held a long conversation with his chief regarding the troublous state of affairs. He pointed out three things that he considered indispensable to the starting of a Liberal Government—namely, his schemes in connection with a Local Government Bill for small holdings and allotments; his proposal for the readjustment of taxation according to the terms of Mr. Gladstone's addresses; and the question of free education, though he did not ask that it should necessarily become part of the creed of a new Cabinet. The question of Home Rule was discussed, and Mr. Chamberlain suggested a Local Government Bill, which he believed might come to satisfy Mr. Parnell. During the meeting the Irish question was paramount in Mr. Gladstone's mind; in Mr. Chamberlain's, his schemes for progress. Mr. Gladstone, his age heavy upon him, suggested that a great Irish question, with possibility of settlement, would exact his aid and service, but any less imperious demand on him, such as land laws, local matters, and the domestic questions that Mr. Chamberlain hung to, were matters of years which did not constitute a call upon him at the end of a long life. It was patent that Mr. Gladstone had no eyes, ears, nor mind for anything but the Irishmen. He didn't want their custom,

but, at the same time, he had to take care they didn't carry it to another market, while Mr. Chamberlain, with his wild agrarian dreams, could keep his ambitions packed away for a more convenient season, a season when Ireland should be pacified. It will be seen that both statesmen were wrapped up in their ideals, the younger visioning a species of co-operative proprietorship of the soil, the older the unheard-of phenomena of contented Irishmen!

At this time Mr. Parnell was playing a most brilliant game—*the* game of his life. Having managed to acquire the sympathy of Lord Randolph Churchill, and to make him (as he had formerly done Mr. Chamberlain) into the private ear of the Government in power, it was now his object to pour forth just as much or as little as he chose, for the purpose of creating the impression that each party was only too anxious to outbid the other for the vote of Ireland. Lord Randolph had evidently enlisted the sympathies of Lord Carnarvon, whose unique overture—the granting of an interview to the Irish obstructionist can be looked at as no less than an overture—served at least to imply a weighing in the balance of Irish demands. Mr. Parnell was so firmly convinced that the Tory pair meant business, that his warm imagination promptly hatched what he thought to be the egg of a concession, and the full-fledged figment of his brain he put forth as fact. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain were made aware that great things for Ireland were brewing in the Conservative camp, and naturally assumed that the movement must have the support, or at least the countenance, of Lord Salisbury. They were too prone to believe that the Tory chief was a figurehead piloted by his navigating lieutenant, and were attracted more by the brilliant quips and quirks of the last than by the upright character of the first. The influence of Lord Randolph was at that time undoubtedly very great, and Mr. Chamberlain not long before had asked, "Is Lord Randolph Churchill going to bow the knee to Lord Salisbury, or is Lord Salisbury going to pass under Lord Randolph Churchill's yoke?" But in this case neither Lord Carnarvon nor Lord Randolph Churchill could succeed by suggestion or persuasion in altering the attitude of the Prime Minister. Lord Carnarvon clung to the hope of converting him, but he was entirely mistaken in his man, and nothing could be more straightforward and definite than the pronouncement made by the Tory leader at Newport on the 7th of October. It was at one and the same time a dignified *noli me tangere* to the Irishmen and to those whose meddling had given ground for the aspersions of the Opposition.

Lord Salisbury mentioned having seen in the journals a remarkable speech from the Irish leader, in which he referred in so marked

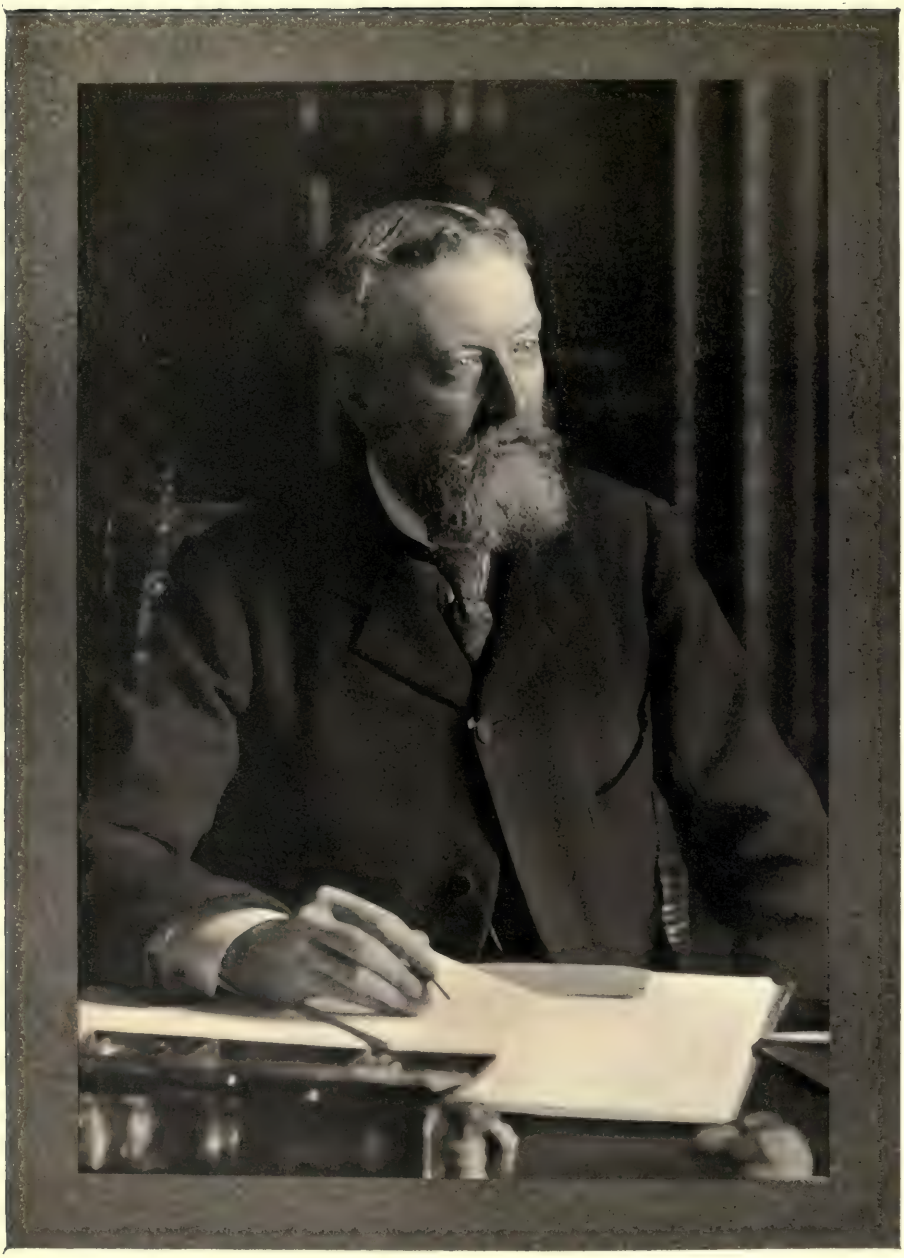
a way to the position of Austria and Hungary, that he gathered the words were intended to cover some kind of new proposition, and that some notion of Imperial Federation was floating in his mind.

"In speaking of Imperial Federation as entirely apart from the Irish question," he then said, "I wish to guard myself very carefully. *I consider it to be one of the questions of the future. I believe that the drawing nearer of the Colonies of this country is the policy to which English patriots must look who desire to give effect in the councils of the world to the real strength of the English nation, and who desire to draw all the advantage that can be drawn from that marvellous cluster of dependencies which distinguishes our Empire above any other empire which ancient or modern times record.*"

It is interesting to note in this utterance the thought that has been echoed so repeatedly, and to so much advantage, by Mr. Chamberlain in later years!

"Our Colonies," Lord Salisbury continued, "are tied to us by deep affection, and we should be guilty not only of coldness of heart, but of gross and palpable folly, if we allow that sentiment to cool, and do not draw from it as much advantage for the common weal of the whole of the English race as circumstances will permit us to do. I know that the idea of Imperial Federation is still shapeless and unformed, and it is impossible for any man to do more than to keep his mind open to a desire to give effect to aspirations which bear the mark of the truest patriotism upon them, and therefore I wish to avoid any language that may seem to discourage the plan in which perhaps the fondest hopes of high Imperial greatness for England in the future may be wrapped. *But, with respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan, or any suggestion, that will give me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any satisfactory solution of the Irish problem. I wish that it may be so, but I think that we shall be holding out false expectations if we avow a belief which, as yet at all events, we cannot entertain. To maintain the integrity of the Empire must undoubtedly be our first policy with respect to Ireland.*"

The Opposition, however, remained unconvinced. The early part of the pronouncement had contained some sort of apology for the abandonment of coercion—a somewhat lame one—which appeared to Liberal eyes as a flimsy blind to cover the machinations of Lord Randolph Churchill, and the effort of Lord Carnarvon to ingratiate himself with the Nationalists. Though appearances were certainly suspicious, it is averred by the Tory party that, apart from Lord Carnarvon and Lord Randolph Churchill, the activities of the Government were directed by a sole and patriotic object, that of pacifying Ireland and keeping Mr. Gladstone out of office. The public was sick of magnanimous policies that led to humiliation at Pretoria and Kandahar, of blunders in Egypt, and of bungles that put up the backs of now Turkey, now Russia, now Germany, Austria, and France; and Lord Salisbury's adherence to his post, which he felt



RT. HON. SIR MICHAEL E. HICKS-BEACH, BART.

Photo RUSSELL & SONS, LONDON.

to be fraught with responsibility without power, was due to the determined hope of saving the prestige of the country at a critical time.

But of this the inventor of the unauthorised programme recked nothing. He was intent on his domestic irons, some of which he feared might never become hot. He had no mind for anything but the principle of the reforms he meant to compass, in spite of whatever Lord Salisbury or Mr. Gladstone might advance to the contrary.

Of Ireland he was beginning to despair. Mr. Parnell's extravagant demands were growing daily under the hothouse of Tory sympathy, and it is not to be wondered at that Mr. Chamberlain, in view of this expansion, became more and more bitter against his opponents for having nursed the abnormal and impossible growth.

When Mr. Chamberlain visited Trowbridge (14th of October), he alluded to his recent meeting with Mr. Gladstone, and stated that the Chief was waiting with hope and confidence the result of the appeal he had made to his countrymen. He then recalled the fact that he had been dubbed "an inveterate Cockney" by Lord Salisbury, and proceeded to enumerate the phalanx of inveterate Cockneys who had been responsible for the progressive movements of recent years, winding up with Mr. Gladstone, "the son of a Scotch merchant settled in Liverpool," who had carried forth the great financial measures to which the prosperity of the country was due, and who had completed the grandest achievement of the Liberal party which enabled the bulk of the people to take their share in the government of the country. He resumed his arguments on the subject of the reforms he proposed, hitting out meanwhile at the Prime Minister and Mr. Goschen with a zest that cheered and delighted his audience. He accused the last of scenting out difficulties in the way of reform, and said that the business of a statesman was not merely the finding out of difficulties, but the overcoming of them. He wound up with the lines :—

> "It's a mercy we have men to tell us
> The rights and wrongs of these things anyhow,
> And that Providence sends us oracular fellows,
> To sit on the fence and slang those at the plough."

Fortunately Providence in this respect has continued for many years to be beneficent to Mr. Chamberlain. Whenever he has toiled at the plough—he has taken very little rest, too—there has been scarcely sitting room on the fence for the number of "oracular fellows" who have gathered together for the slanging chorus. But the ploughman, it must be admitted, has never been behind-hand. Despite his exertions, he had fitted himself to the music of the cheery idlers and given them solos worth listening to for their pains.

On his return to Birmingham he carried on the war. "What," he cried to his constituents on the 20th of October—"What has Lord Salisbury to offer us that should induce us to retain him in the position he now occupies under false pretences?" He jeered at the Newport speech, and quoted the member for Hackney, who had described the programme as "a policy of Chamberlain-and-water." Though the Radical then made merry over the quotation, there is no doubt that Chamberlain-and-water is now found to be an uncommonly good brew, its invigorating properties becoming the more potent and valuable to the constitution by reason of the benevolent dilution.

Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to pick to pieces the Prime Minister's reference to the land question, which he described as the greatest of the questions with which they had to deal. Lord Salisbury, he said, had appreciated the necessity of multiplying the number of those who have a practical interest in the soil, and had even seemed willing to consider practical suggestions for the attainment of this result. But a few days later he had apparently repented; he made no mention of the custom of primogeniture, and in regard to the question of entail he had expressed the opinion that the bill of Lord Cairns had effected everything necessary as regards settlement, and had seemed unwilling to limit the right of landed proprietors to tie up their land in the interest of their families. Though Lord Salisbury had admitted that the cheapening of land transfer might be in itself a desirable object, he had said that in his opinion it would but increase the tendency of the land to fall into the fewest possible hands. "So," cried Mr. Chamberlain, "you see what the programme comes to! While Lord Salisbury admits it is desirable to multiply the owners of the land, the only practical legislation he is prepared to propose will have, according to his own accounts, exactly the opposite effect." This he described as Toryism all over. "It is cynical, it is obstructive; it is selfish, it is incapable!" He then recurred to the proposals of the Radicals, that local authorities should be empowered to obtain land compulsorily at a fair price for public purposes, and that they should be authorised to let this land for allotments and small holdings. These proposals had been objected to by Lord Salisbury, but curiously enough Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had propounded an almost identical scheme. He had addressed an agricultural audience, and told them that every labourer ought to have a decent cottage and a garden at a fair rent; and that if by chance the gardens were not conveniently provided, the local authority might be empowered to step in and even purchase land with authority from Parliament for that purpose. Mr. Chamberlain invited his audience to point out the difference between the proposition of the Chancellor of the

Exchequer and his own. Of course it might be argued that Sir Michael Hicks Beach confined himself to allotments, while he went further and proposed to give local authorities power to let on small farms. Still Mr. Stanhope (his successor at the Board of Trade) had gone with him, in that he had told his constituents that the thing needed was a system of graduating an agricultural ladder, on which the labourer, having put his foot, might, by his own activity, attain to higher things. Where, he asked, in these schemes, which were tantamount to his own, were the fearful evils predicted by Lord Salisbury? He then said, "I think I can guess what is the real objection which Lord Salisbury, a great landowner himself, and a representative of the landed interest, takes to the proposal that has been made." He then explained what he imagined to be the "fearful evil" that had aroused his lordship's indignation. "It is the fair price that sticks in his throat! The other day he talked of the necessity under which local authorities would be of purchasing land that will only pay 2 per cent., and when I pointed out that that would mean buying land at fifty years' purchase, whereas the ordinary price of land was from twenty-five to thirty years' purchase, he said, with the noble scorn that is characteristic of these great proprietors, that really it would be well that the discussion should be confined to those who understood the subject. 'Mr. Chamberlain takes no account of the outgoings of the land,' Lord Salisbury had said."

According to him these outgoings were the moneys needed for revising the Land Laws, for providing buildings, and for general improvements. "I should like to know," argued Mr. Chamberlain, "the ordinary time when landlords made these improvements, and spend their money without a good return for this investment." He quoted innumerable cases where they actually borrowed from the State at 3 and 3¼ per cent., and then charged their tenants 4 and 5 per cent. for the accommodation. It was absurd of Lord Salisbury to talk of outgoings as though they were not in an investment in the land, for which landowners always expected to get a fair return. When he spoke of fifty years' purchase he was thinking of the price paid hitherto by local authorities when they had had to take the land of the country in order to secure the prosperity, health, and comfort of their constituents. "It has been one of the privileges of the landowners in these circumstances to exact an extortionate price!"

He then gave an instructive illustration, the circumstances of which are to be found in the pages of Hansard. It showed how a London landowner had demanded the insertion of a clause in a bill introduced by the Metropolitian Board of Works, which gave him the fullest price for his land (it was to be bought at its prospective

value); he was to have compensation for severance, he was to have 10 per cent. for compulsory sale, and, heaped on all this, he was to enjoy the advantage and profit which would naturally accrue from the turning of his property into the front land of a great thoroughfare. This proposal, altogether exceptional in its character, was rejected by the Committee of the House of Commons, but when the bill went up to the House of Lords the clause was inserted for the protection of this individual landowner, although many other landowners were affected by the same bill. Mr. Fawcett moved that the House of Commons should disagree with the Lords' amendment, and the resolution was carried without a division. The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works declared that if this clause were pressed it would imperil all further Metropolitan improvements, so greatly would it add to their cost; and another Tory member volunteered that such clause would be a fraud on the ratepayers. "And who do you think was the landowner the conduct of whose agents was stigmatised by the Tory members in the language I have quoted? It was the Marquis of Salisbury—the Prime Minister of England!"

Mr. Chamberlain having made this startling announcement, went on more gracefully to confess that he did not doubt that Lord Salisbury's agents acted for him without his interference, and that it was only fair to add, when the bill went back to the Lords, Lord Salisbury himself had concurred in the advice that the clause should not be insisted on. "Nevertheless," he went on, "if these are the rights of property, I say they ought to be limited and restricted in the future."

He wound up optimistically, expressed his belief that the feeling of the country was in favour of the proposals the Radicals had made, and urged all to work in order not to be left behind by the country districts. "Everywhere in the counties there is a great awakening; there is enthusiasm and expectation and hope. . . . I do not hesitate to predict that if the towns do their duty, there will be at the next election the greatest Liberal majority that the country has known during the last half-century."

II.—HOME RULE AND RULERS—MR. PARNELL ON THE WARPATH, AUTUMN, 1885

In a speech delivered at Hackney on the 24th of July, Mr. Chamberlain inveighed against the Tories, now they were in office, for their change of front in regard to the Irish and the administration of law in Ireland. He showed that the Tories had originally defended Lord Spencer, particularly in points where he was supposed

to be at variance with his Radical colleagues. Now all was changed. They had made a compact with the Parnellite party; the leaders had ostentatiously separated themselves from Lord Spencer, and had granted an inquiry (itself a condemnation of his justice and fairplay), which brought into question the whole course of the administration of justice in Ireland. By their one act, he averred, they had lessened the authority of the law in Ireland more effectually than the Radicals had done in five years.

At Trowbridge, too, he scoffed at the Prime Minister for "exhausting his ingenuity" in showing that the ordinary law was quite sufficient. "He says now that he has long been of opinion that the renewal of exceptional legislation has been quite impossible. If so, never was secret better kept! Not one hint did he give of this change of opinion while the Tory members, who are now the members of his Cabinet, were hounding on the late Government to proceed at once to the further work of coercive legislation."

It must here be noted that Lord Salisbury, on the 29th July, had replied to the charge of "coquetting with the Irish," and had justified the action of the Government on the conciliatory question by saying it was the natural outcome of the Franchise Act of 1884—"to extend the suffrage and to ignore the voice of the people" was impossible. This did not explain the tactics of Lord Carnarvon and Lord Randolph Churchill, who were known to be holding amicable correspondence with Mr. Parnell with a view to affecting an arrangement, which eventually Lord Salisbury refused to consider. It must be admitted that the attitude of Lord Carnarvon gave colour to the accusation brought by the Radicals, as it also gave impetus to the crescent hopes of the Parnellites. Soon after taking over the post of Viceroy, he announced the intention of the Government not to renew the Crimes Act; and Lord Ashbourne (Chancellor of Ireland) introduced a proposal, known later as the Ashbourne Act, for providing certain facilities for the sale of land. Then came his promise, on the motion of Mr. Parnell, to inquire into Lord Spencer's conduct with reference to the Barbavilla and Maamtrasna murders, a promise which was so direct a slur on a statesman whose task had been to support law and order in difficult circumstances, that it naturally roused the indignation not only of the Liberals, but of all who were punctilious in matters of taste. Mr. Bright was particularly bitter, and at a dinner given by the Liberal party in honour of Lord Spencer, and presided over by Lord Hartington, he denounced as disloyal to the Crown and hostile to the interest of Great Britain those who had so insolently assailed Lord Spencer. The Tory press, though not so loud in complaint, were decidedly shocked. The *Times* said: "It is not Lord Spencer alone whose good faith has been

impeached, but the Irish judiciary, the law officers of the Crown, the public prosecutor, the magistracy, and the police." The *Standard*, while admitting the force of the temptation to conciliate Mr. Parnell, said: "We do not at all dispute the probability that the simple expedient adopted will succeed. But that, in our opinion, is not enough to justify the tactics that have been employed."

Lord Carnarvon now, like Mr. Chamberlain, denounced the "hateful word coercion," but he proceeded farther (doubtless in the interests of peace), and arranged a secret confab with Mr. Parnell himself. This was in July. Mr. Justin M'Carthy acted as go-between, but he was not a witness of the interview. The result was that there are two differing versions of the scene that took place. But neither version—that of Lord Carnarvon or that of Mr. Parnell—was given to the public till nearly a year later (June 7, 1886). According to the account of the Viceroy, he expressed to Mr. Parnell that the responsibility of his action was entirely his own, and not shared in by any of his colleagues. His object was to obtain first-hand information, and not by any means to make any agreement or understanding, however shadowy; nor, as a servant of the Queen, would he listen to anything inconsistent with the maintenance of the Union between England and Ireland.

Mr. Parnell took a much broader view of Lord Carnarvon's aims. In the *Times* (June 12, 1886) he gave an account of this interview, in which he said:—

"My reference in the House of Commons on Monday, explanatory of the reasons which induced the passage in my speech at Wicklow regarding protection, has called from Lord Carnarvon a lengthy explanation with respect to my interview with him in July, as to which he makes certain positive, but chiefly a series of negative statements.

"It will, I think, be now generally considered desirable that some further positive information should be given to the public regarding the details of that interview—that the deficiences left by Lord Carnarvon should be supplemented, and that I should say how far my recollection coincides with his.

"But first it will be convenient that I should recall to mind the reference which I made on Monday to the Wicklow speech, and as to which the controversy, at first with Sir M. Hicks Beach and now with Lord Carnarvon, has arisen.

"His speech about protection at Wicklow was made at a time when he had every reason to believe that the Conservative party, if they had been successful at the polls, would have afforded Ireland a statutory legislature, with the right to protect her own industries, and that this would have been coupled with a settlement of the land question on the basis of purchase on a larger scale than that now proposed by the Prime Minister.

"What I have now to tell regarding that interview of July will, I think, be held fully to justify that reference.

"I regret that I am obliged to commence this recital by differing with Lord Carnarvon point-blank as to a question of fact.

"He says, in his explanation, that towards the end of last July it was intimated to him that if he were willing, I should also be willing to meet him in conversation; in other words, that I sought the interview.

"Now this I positively deny, and as a matter-of-fact the meeting was brought about by an intimation being conveyed to me exactly the converse to that which Lord Carnarvon alleges was conveyed to him.

"In this connection I may mention that Lord Carnarvon originally proposed that I should meet him at the house of a gentleman, now a prominent Conservative member of Parliament, who subsequently undertook a mission to Ireland, and obtained letters of introduction to several leading members of the Irish Parliamentary party, with whom he discussed in detail the species of Irish Parliament that would be acceptable to Ireland.

"I declined, however, to meet Lord Carnarvon at the house of a stranger, and suggested that if the interview was to take place at all, it had best be at his own residence.

"I must also take issue as to the correctness of Lord's Carnarvon's memory as to two of the 'three conditions' which, he alleges, he stated to me as the conditions upon which he could enter into communication with me—viz. that, first of all, he was acting of himself, and that the responsibility was his and the communications were from himself alone; and, secondly, that he was there as the Queen's servant, and that he would neither hear nor say one word that was inconsistent with the union of the two countries, and that I assented to these conditions.

"Now, Lord Carnarvon did not lay down any 'conditions' whatever as a preliminary to his entering into conversation with me.

"It must be manifest that if he had desired to do so, he would have intimated them when requesting the interview.

"He certainly made no use whatever of the terms of the two 'conditions' which I have repeated.

"There is, however, some foundation for his statement concerning the remaining one, inasmuch as he undoubtedly remarked at the commencement that he hoped I would understand that we were not engaged 'in making any treaty or bargain whatever.'

"Lord Carnarvon then proceeded to say that he had sought this interview for the purpose of ascertaining my views regarding—should he call it—'a Constitution for Ireland,' but I soon found that he had brought me there in order that he might communicate his own views upon this matter as well as ascertain mine.

"I readily opened my mind to him on this subject, and in reply to an inquiry as to a proposal which had been made to build up a central legislative body upon the foundation of county boards, I told him that I thought this would be working in the wrong direction, and would not be accepted by Ireland; that the central legislative body should be a Parliament in name and in fact, and that to it should be left the construction of whatever system of local government for the counties might be found necessary.

"Lord Carnarvon assured me that was his own view also, and that he strongly appreciated the importance of giving due weight to the sentiment of the Irish in this matter.

"He then inquired whether, in my judgment, some plan for constituting a Parliament in Dublin, short of the repeal of the Union, might not be devised and prove acceptable to Ireland, and he made certain suggestions to this end,

taking the colonial model as a basis, which struck me as being the result of much thought and knowledge on the subject.

"Then came the reference to protection. We were discussing the general outline of a plan for constituting a legislature for Ireland on the colonial model, when I took occasion to remark that protection for certain Irish industries against English and foreign competition would be absolutely necessary, upon which Lord Carnarvon said, 'I entirely agree with you; but what a row there will be about it in England.'

"At the conclusion of the conversation, which lasted for more than an hour, and to which Lord Carnarvon was very much the larger contributor, I left him, believing that I was in complete accord with him regarding the main outlines of a settlement conferring a legislature upon Ireland.

"In conversing with him, I dealt with the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, who was responsible for the government of the country.

"I did not suppose that he would fail to impress the views which he had disclosed to me upon the Cabinet, and I have reason to believe that he did so impress them, and that they were strongly shared in by more than one important member of that body, and strongly opposed by none."

On the whole, it will be seen that Mr. Parnell believed that he and his companion were in accord regarding the main outlines of a settlement conferring a legislature upon Ireland.

Lord Carnarvon in the House of Lords denied having given any undertaking. Mr. Parnell, however, adhered to his statement, that the nature of the conversation induced him to believe that the Viceroy—if not his party—was ready to come to terms. Doubtless, with Mr. Parnell the wish was father to the thought, and gave birth to hidden meanings in Lord Carnarvon's undoubted expression of interest in the subject of some form of self-government (not independent of Imperial control), such as might satisfy real local requirements and to some extent national aspirations. He very naturally assumed that Lord Carnarvon, holding the views he had indicated, would not have been selected for the post of Viceroy unless his sentiments were approved by the Cabinet. But it may easily be imagined that this interview, not generally known, but hinted at freely in certain quarters, gave just cause for Liberal insinuations against the tactics of the Tories at this momentous period.

Meanwhile Mr. Parnell had roused England with his assertion: "I hope that it may not be necessary for us in the new Parliament to devote our attention to subsidiary measures, and that it may be possible for us to have a programme and a platform with only one plank—and that one plank National Independence." The press broke into a tempest of denunciation. The *Times* declared the thing impossible. The *Standard* called on Whigs and Tories to resist the rebel chief. The *Daily News* declared that Great Britain could but be saved from the tyranny of the Irishman by a strong administration composed of advanced Liberals. The *Daily Tele-*

graph hoped that the House would not be "seduced or terrified into surrender." The *Manchester Guardian* howled for the punishment of any party who should follow in the course traced by Parnell, &c. &c. Lord Hartington, at Waterfoot (August 29), gave the belligerent keynote. He said that Mr. Parnell had for once "committed a mistake by proclaiming that Ireland's sole demand was an Irish Parliament. All England," he added, "would now unite in resisting so fatal and mischievous a proposal."

Mr. Parnell promptly flung defiance at the Whig leader. He concluded by saying: "If they have not succeeded in 'squetching us' during the last five years, they are not likely to do so during the next five years, unless they brace themselves up to adopt one of two alternatives, by the adoption of either one of which we should ultimately win, and perhaps win a larger and heavier stake than we otherwise should." He proceeded to declare that they would have either to grant Ireland the complete right to rule herself, or "they would have to take away the share—the sham share—in the English constitutional system which they extended to us at the Union, and govern Ireland as a Crown Colony." To this outpouring, it may be remembered, Mr. Chamberlain replied at Warrington on the 8th September, by declaring that if these were the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support were to be obtained, he would not enter into competition for it. He clearly stated that Mr. Parnell's new programme involved a greater extension than anything previously understood as Home Rule, and the powers he claimed for his support were beyond anything existing in the case of the State Legislatures of the American Union (the accepted model of Irish demands), and that if this claim were admitted all hope to maintain a united kingdom must be abandoned. About the same time Mr. John Morley protested against separation, while approving the scheme of Home Rule organised on a Canadian model.

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone was earnestly debating within himself how to "climb down" from the attitude which had turned against him the Irish vote, and how also to decoy the vote from the trap he suspected the Tories were warily laying. They on their side continued to point out that coercion had failed in its objects, and that now that the Irish were admitted to share in the extended franchise, it was absurd for Parliament to impose restrictions on their personal liberty. Lord Salisbury was acutely watched from both sides: lynx eyes spied eagerly to catch him tripping. Though he did not express himself in favour of Home Rule, it was obvious to the Opposition that he was adopting an extremely politic attitude. If, said his enemies, he was not absolutely "trafficking with disorder and disloyalty," he was prepared to close his eyes to the necessity of dealing with

it. He did not, like Mr. Chamberlain, make a brave stand against the Parnellites, and cry out definitely *non possumus*. He was respectful, even conciliatory. Mr. Parnell meanwhile winked, and went up another rung on the ladder of aspiration. He encouraged the courtship of Whigs and Tories, and deigned from his newly-acquired eminence to smile on the suitors ; it was pleasing thus to find both parties sidling towards Ireland, and to know that the hand of the fair could be bestowed to the wooer who should offer to make the larger settlement.

The phrase Home Ruler, it must be remembered, had not at this time the exact and full significance that is implied by the use of the term in the twentieth century. In 1880 it served to denote certain politicians who advocated the creation of a system of self-government for Ireland in the matter of her domestic affairs. Taken in this way the word Home Ruler might well have been applied to Mr. Chamberlain, who all along was in favour of local government and the sweeping away of authority at Dublin Castle.

In 1884 or early in 1885 Mr. Chamberlain, though averse from an independent Irish Parliament, proposed a National Councils scheme, which at the time was welcome to the Irishmen. His idea was to have a council in Dublin, another probably in Belfast, but if possible only one central council. It was to take over the work of all the Dublin Boards and deal with local matters—land, education, and the like—introducing its own bills, but submitting them eventually for the sanction of the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Parnell disapproved of this scheme. Cardinal Manning, whom Mr. Chamberlain consulted on the subject, stated that the bishops and priests were in favour of it—in fact, that they would prefer a National Councils scheme to an independent Parliament. When Mr. Chamberlain brought the proposition before the Cabinet it was rejected, though Mr. Gladstone personally was in favour of it. The idea spread abroad by his biographers that Mr. Chamberlain was on the point of being converted to Home Rule has been emphatically contradicted by Mr. Chamberlain. He asserts he was never near being converted to an Irish Parliament. Beyond the National Councils scheme he would not go. At that time he had every reason to hope that the Parnellites would be entirely satisfied, so far as "the divine discontent," which seems to be an Irishman's birthright, would allow them to be appeased. Mr. Chamberlain himself said : "No doubt there might have remained the national sentiment in favour of the establishment of a separate legislature, but if such council as I had suggested had been established and put in working order, and the interference of foreign authorities had been abolished, I believe that the old grievance would have died out, and that a

new generation would have arisen which would have been glad and willing to accept the obligation as well as the advantage which the union of the three kingdoms for Imperial interests is calculated to secure." It was impossible to foresee the Tory tactics of the summer, and how during this year of strife and hum, during these bandyings of civility and abuse, of biddings and bargainings, of conciliation and coercion, between Tories and Nationalists, and Liberals and Nationalists, the term Home Ruler, like the demand for Home Rule, developed till it became finally the jacket which essayed to cover the swollen proportions of Mr. Parnell's ambitious separation scheme.

Indeed, the idea had in the main some such foundation as Burke's when he said: "The Parliament of Great Britain sits at the head of a great empire in two capacities: one as the local legislature of this island, providing for all things of home immediately, and by no other instrument than the executive power; the other, and I think her nobler capacity, is what I call her Imperial character, in which, as from the throne of heaven, she superintends all the several inferior legislatures, and guides and controls them all without annihilating any. As all these provincial legislatures are only co-ordinate with each other, they ought all to be subordinate to her, else they can neither preserve mutual peace nor hope for mutual justice, nor effectually afford mutual assistance." Mr. Chamberlain, like Burke, would have covered by this more than the original Home Rule proposition; he would have relieved the congestion of the Imperial Parliament by giving Scotland and Wales each their inferior local legislature for the management of their immediate internal affairs.

The expansion of Mr. Parnell's programme, if such it may be called, grew with the increase of his power, and according to overtures privily or publicly made by members of both parties. In the speech of August, previously referred to, he alluded to an Irish Parliament almost as a *fait accompli*, dwelling and dilating on the powers that it would claim. These comprised a free hand, the building up and protecting of Irish industries, and the control of public education. A single chamber would satisfy him—his needs were modest!—and his motto, like Mr. Chamberlain's, was, "No Lords required." It was the magnitude of this, Mr. Parnell's revised demand, that had brought forth from Mr. Chamberlain at Warrington, on 8th September, an emphatic expression of his opinions, which is best quoted *verbatim*:—

"I suppose that moderate Liberals at least have some opinion upon this matter, but upon it Lord Randolph Churchill, although he spoke for an hour and a half at Sheffield, was significantly silent in view of the most important

declaration which has ever been made by any Irish leaders. Lord Randolph Churchill, the most influential member of the Tory Government, uttered not a word, gave not a sign to show what was the opinion of the party which he has educated, and which he has led with regard to the unhesitating and uncompromising demand which Mr. Parnell has made with regard to the separation of Ireland from the British Empire. I will say that the reticence of the noble lord is at least as eloquent as speech, and the moderate Liberals must be blind indeed if they do not see in it the natural consequence of the Maamtrasna alliance, and of the tacit compact by which the Tories have become possessed of office. I am not going to imitate the reserve of the Tory Minister, because I consider the time has come when every man should speak out on this question. He owes it as much to the Irish people as to the English and the Scotch, that there should be no ambiguity in his utterances on a matter which so vitally affects the interests of the three countries. I think I may claim to be in some measure an impartial witness upon such a matter. I have tried to be a friend of Ireland. I have felt the deepest sympathy with the Irish people in their struggle against oppression and against unjust laws; in their impatience with a system of government which is alien to their national sentiment, and under which many of their best and ablest and most patriotic sons have been excluded from the practical work of administration in Ireland, even in the subject to which I have been referring. I saw that Lord Randolph Churchill went out of his way to say that when Mr. Forster resigned it was in consequence of a discreditable intrigue which was principally the work of Mr. Chamberlain. Well, you know that there was no intrigue at all, and that Mr. Forster left office because he could not agree with the release of Mr. Parnell and his companions from Kilmainham, where they were confined without trial. I will only say upon that, that subsequent events have amply justified the policy of the Government, to which I gave my hearty support and approval; but I only refer to it now because I think, in common with many other things, it shows that I have not been personally an opponent of Mr. Parnell, or a prejudiced opponent of the cause to which he has devoted his life. Before I speak of the main points in his recent declaration, there is one matter upon which I think scant justice has hitherto been done him. On many previous occasions we have regretted that the Irish leader did not use the influence which he has deservedly acquired with his own people, in order to repudiate and denounce the outrages which have disgraced and stained an agitation in many other respects worthy of admiration and sympathy. But when he spoke the other day at Dublin he used language which for firmness and evident conviction left nothing to be desired, and he showed the folly and the wickedness of the cowardly crimes which have done so much to prejudice the Irish cause in the eyes of all honourable and honest men. I am glad to acknowledge that it is a point of good augury now that a new struggle is beginning that the Irish leader should have set his face so sternly against everything in the nature of riot and disorder. Well, now, what is Mr. Parnell's programme? *He says that in his opinion the time has come to abandon altogether all attempt to obtain further remedial measures or subsidiary reforms, and to concentrate the efforts of the Irish representatives upon the securing of a separate and independent Parliament, which is to consist of a single chamber, and whose first object it is to put on a protective duty against all English manufactures. Then he says, in the second place, that he expects Whig and Tory will vie with one another in helping him to a settlement on*

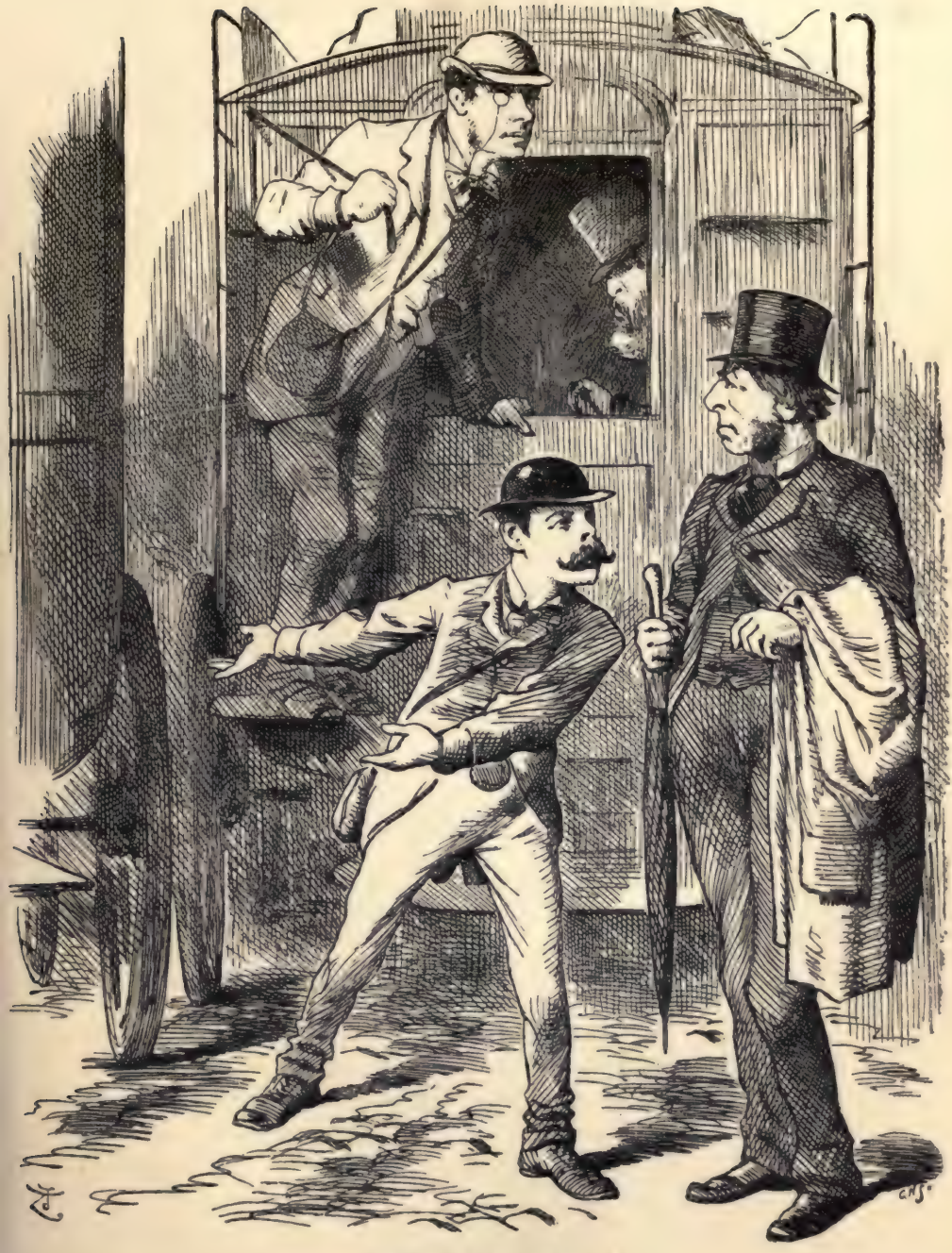
his own terms; and he says, in the last place, that if any party seeks to make this object impossible, he and his friends will make all things impossible for them. Well, gentlemen, I am not a Whig, and I am certainly not a Tory. But, speaking for myself, I say that if these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into competition for it. This new programme of Mr. Parnell's involves a great extension of anything that we have hitherto understood by 'Home Rule.' The powers he claims for his separate Parliament are altogether beyond anything which exists in the case of the State Legislatures of the American Union, which has hitherto been the type and model of the Irish demands; and if this claim were conceded we might as well for ever abandon all hope of maintaining a united kingdom. We should establish within less than thirty miles of our shores a new foreign country animated from the outset with unfriendly intentions towards ourselves. A policy like that I firmly believe would be disastrous and ruinous to Ireland herself. It would be disastrous to the security of this country, and under these circumstances I hold that we are bound to take every step in our power to avert so great a calamity. We will appeal to the Irish people. I cannot bring myself to believe that they are so prejudiced by the recollection of past wrongs that they will not recognise the anxiety of the present generation of Englishmen to do them justice—to remove every tangible grievance, and establish equal laws between the three kingdoms. I think if they are persuaded of this they will be unwilling to sever themselves from the common history of the United Kingdom, in which Irishmen have taken so great and glorious a part. I won't dwell upon the threats with which Mr. Parnell has accompanied his demand. I suppose they were intended for Irish consumption; but I think they were unnecessary and uncalled for. Mr. Parnell seems to me to forget the change which has come over our constitutional system. He is no longer dealing with interests and classes, represented in the British House of Commons altogether out of proportion to their number, but he is face to face with the whole population of England and Scotland, reinforced as it will be at least by one-fifth of the population of Ireland. To threaten millions of people with the vengeance of four millions—that is a rhetorical artifice which is altogether unworthy of Mr. Parnell's power and influence. But it is said by him that justice requires that we should concede to Irishmen the absolute right of self-government. I would reply that it is a right which must be considered in relation to the security and welfare of the other countries in juxtaposition to which Ireland is placed, and with whose interests hers are indissolubly linked. I cannot admit that five millions of Irishmen have any greater inherent right to govern themselves from the rest of the United Kingdom, or a greater right to self-government, than the five million inhabitants of the Metropolis. God has made us neighbours, and I would to Heaven that our rulers had made us friends. But as neighbours, neither one nor the other has any right so to rule his own household so as to be a source of annoyance or danger to the other. But subject to that limitation, I for my part would concede the greatest possible measure of local government to the Irish people as I would concede it to the English people. Some time ago—more than twelve months since—I proposed a scheme with the object of providing a proper representative authority throughout the length and breadth of the land, charged with the important duty of dealing exclusively with local work. I proposed also a national elective council to which might be given the supervision and the control which is exercised by some of the departments in

London, and which are commonly known in Ireland under the name of Dublin Castle. I proposed to sweep away all the networks of boards created by the English Government, and which in being carried out in Ireland caused much irritation and often natural annoyance. I had reason to believe at the time that some such scheme would have been welcomed by the great bulk of the Irish people as a full and satisfactory system of local government. No doubt there would have remained the national sentiment for the establishment of a separate Legislature, but if such councils as I had suggested had been established and put in full working order, if the hurtful influence of foreign authorities had been abolished, I believe that the old sense of grievances would have died out and that the new generations would have been willing to accept the obligation as well as the advantage their unity with England for Imperial interests is calculated to afford. My proposals unfortunately did not meet with the support of the moderate Liberals, and under these circumstances it would have been useless to proceed with them. What has happened—the opportunity has passed away. Mr. Parnell, encouraged by the Tory surrender, has raised his terms, and the national leaders have abandoned, at all events for the time, all care for local government properly so-called, in the expectation that one or other of the great parties, either from fear or from interest, will concede their demand for a national and a separate Legislature."

Already a large section of the Irish party had interpreted the clause regarding Ireland in Mr. Gladstone's manifesto as meaning that the veteran intended to take up Home Rule. They had also seen in Lord Salisbury's Newport speech a counter-move, and their excitement was intensified. As master of the situation, Mr. Parnell imagined he had but to formulate, and promptly one or other party would "cave in."

Though the unreasonableness of the Irishman's attitude was put down by Mr. Chamberlain to Tory intrigue, the Tories attributed it to Mr. Gladstone's very conciliatory attitude, and to his private yet obvious feelings in the matter. It was now reported in an American journal, doubtless inspired by Mr. Parnell, that Mr. Gladstone had made strides in the direction of a large measure of legislative independence for Ireland, and various British journals, too, harped upon what to Irish ears was a flattering tune.

An important pronouncement came on the 12th of October from Mr. Childers, who spoke, so it was supposed, as the mouthpiece of Mr. Gladstone. He declared at Pontefract his readiness to give Ireland a large measure of local government. She should legislate for herself, reserving Imperial rights over foreign policy, military organisation, external trade, post office, the currency, the national debt, and the court of ultimate appeal. The subject was carried farther on the 9th of November, when Mr. Gladstone started on his second Mid-Lothian campaign. He first declared that what Ireland may deliberately and constitutionally demand, unless it infringes the principle connected with the honourable maintenance of the unity of



"NOT FOR JOE!"

JOEY C. (*to* Mr. G-SCH-N).—"No room for you, sir!"
RIVAL CONDUCTOR.—"Here you are, sir! Jump in here, sir! Come along of *us!!*"

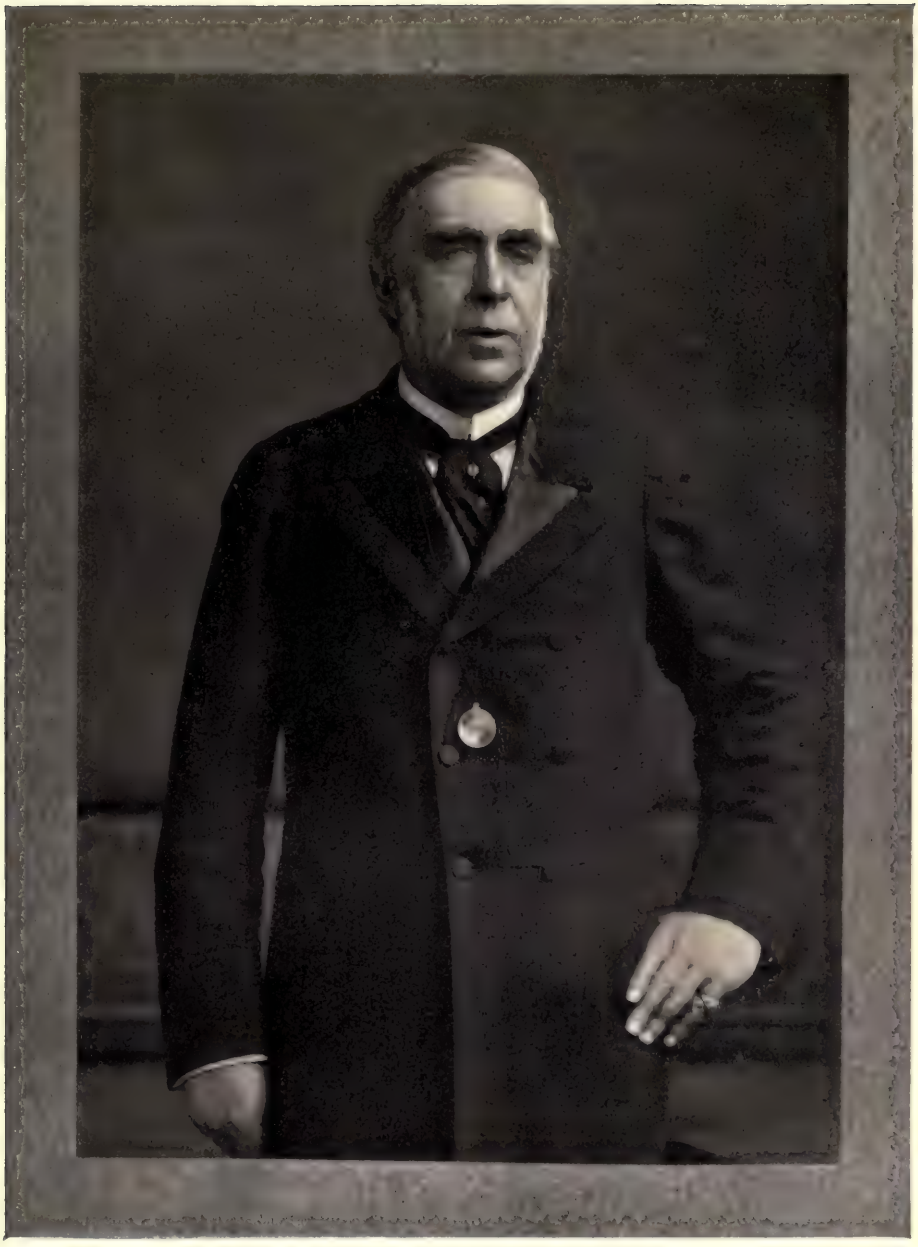
(From *Punch*, Nov. 14, 1885. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

the Empire, will be a demand that we are bound at any rate to treat with careful attention. To stint Ireland in power which may be necessary or desirable for the management of matters purely Irish would be a great error; and if she were so stinted, the end that any such measure might contemplate could not be attained. Secondly, he stated, throwing cold water instantly on the flame that he had just aroused in the Irish breast: "Apart from the terms Whig or Tory, there is one thing I will say, and will endeavour to impress on you, and it is this—*it will be a vital danger to the country and the Empire if at a time when the demand of Ireland for large powers of self-government is to be dealt with, there is not in Parliament a party totally independent of the Irish vote.*" This statement, ambiguous in the extreme after all that had gone before, brought most of his Irish hearers abruptly to the "As you were" position. But Mr. Parnell swallowed what he chose, and left what he chose. He pinned the leader to his Home Rule announcement, and congratulated him in a speech at Liverpool "on approaching Irish autonomy with that breadth of statesmanship for which he was renowned." But still Mr. Gladstone wavered; he nibbled indeed at Mr. Parnell's bait so long as to irritate him. At last the Irishman grew furious, and declared war to the knife between Liberals and the Irish. "Ireland has been knocking at the English door long enough with kid gloves. . . . Ireland will soon throw off the kid gloves, and she will knock with the mailed hand." In his manifesto of 21st November the Irish electors of Great Britain were called on to vote against "the men who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the schools, the freedom of speech in Parliament, and promise to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal administration."

This was a brilliant *coup* for weakening the Liberal party, and for creating a balance between the factions, which might subsequently be regulated by his personal touch. The animosities it aroused, the fierce antagonism and fiery passions it let loose, were of no consequence so long as for one brief term he became lord of the situation.

III.—ELECTIONS OF 1885, NOV. 23–DEC. 19—LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL IN THE LIONS' DEN

The election period was swept by a cyclone of political elements, the four winds of Conservatism, Liberalism, Home Rule, and Radicalism blowing from all quarters, and keeping the atmosphere of Great Britain seething with excitement. At Birmingham Mr. Chamberlain was everywhere received with enthusiasm, his con-



LORD GOSCHEN

Photo RUSSELL & SONS, LONDON.

stituents vying to demonstrate their approval of his past services, and of the prospective advantages of his unauthorised programme. Through his untiring efforts new voters were indebted for their political enfranchisement, and now they meant to show not only by word but by deed how keenly his labour on their behalf had been appreciated.

Now that the new Redistribution Act was in force, Birmingham was enabled to return seven instead of the usual three members to Parliament. As a natural consequence the home of "Our Joe" became the centre of the whirlwind—the candidates, Bright, Chamberlain, Dixon, Kenrick, Powell Williams, Cook, and Broadhurst, being each opposed by persons who were certainly not lacking in courage. These dared to beard the Radical lions in their den, and as reward reaped some exciting and not altogether pleasant experiences. Lord Randolph Churchill alone of the adventurous crew gained some little success by reason of an audacity and freedom of speech that savoured of the redoubtable Joe himself. But Lord Randolph was scarcely up to the mark, and his appearance, which had been looked forward to with considerable curiosity, was viewed as a comparative failure. Still his effort was bold, and Mr. Bright escaped defeat by a majority of 800 only.

Lord Randolph on the 30th of October addressed the electors of the central division of Birmingham at the Bristol Street Board School—a ticket audience, not, he said, because he was afraid of Birmingham, but because space was strictly limited. He therefore had a comparatively easy time, and was able to inveigh against the Birmingham idols with impunity. He attacked the principles of Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, declaring that while the first dealt with the very remote past, the second dwelt on the very remote future. "They cautiously avoid looking on their work of the past five years." He said :—

"When I was in Birmingham eighteen months ago I endeavoured to point out to those who were in the Town Hall at that time how great a change had come over the Radical party; that it was no longer the old philosophical Radical party, which possessed a sturdy independence and the peculiarities of English politicians, and, moreover, which controlled and opposed Governments quite irrespective of party; but I pointed out that it had become a party more of an advanced Socialistic type, more resembling the Socialism of France or of Germany, a party which believed it was the duty of the State to do everything for the people, and that the individual was to look to the State for protection and for guidance, and that the State was to mark out, with great closeness of definition and great rigour, the lines on which individual action should proceed. Well, that is a most remarkable change. I believe no one sees it more clearly, no one dislikes it more intensely, than Mr. Bright himself. I do not believe there is any sympathy of political sentiment or of political aspiration between

Mr. Bright as the representative of the old Radical and Mr. Chamberlain as the representative of the new. Mr. Chamberlain has more than once styled what are called the doctrines of political economy as a heartless creed—a selfish and a heartless creed. Well, you must remember that those doctrines which Mr. Chamberlain thus denominates were the doctrines of not only Lord Grey and Lord John Russell, but they were also the doctrines of Sir Robert Peel, they were the doctrines of Mr. Gladstone—and, for all I know, are still, although there was a momentary aberration on the Irish Land Act—still they were the doctrines of Mr. Gladstone; and it is under these doctrines of political economy, which Mr. Chamberlain so derides and so denounces, that England has enjoyed a greater measure of prosperity and of power than perhaps any other country in the world. Well, gentlemen, not only have the Radicals changed and the Tories changed—Tories have changed for the better and the Radicals for the worse—but the Whigs have changed. In the old days—in the days of Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston—the Whigs, who undoubtedly possessed very sound political traditions, and to whom, undoubtedly, the English people owe much of their freedom—in old days those Whigs dominated and controlled the Radical party. Now the position is precisely the reverse. The Radical party dominate and control the Whigs, and the Whigs follow in a humble, and, I think, a cowardly manner at the heels of Mr. Chamberlain and the Birmingham caucus. . . .

"Of course it was not possible for a Government like Lord Salisbury's, coming into office in the month of June, and having so short a time before them until the election was round—it was not possible for them to do much, or to produce any very great or startling effect upon the mind of the country. Nor, indeed, was that our object. The object of Lord Salisbury in taking office was to assume a great trust, which Mr. Gladstone had either thrown down or been compelled to throw down, and to carry on the affairs of the country in a creditable and a safe manner until the country could once more make its voice heard. Well, I have said, gentlemen, we could not do much; but I think we still have done a good deal. It is unnecessary to remind you that we have brought to a conclusion that most anxious dispute between ourselves and the Empire of Russia with regard to the frontier of Afghanistan. We have also brought to a conclusion those very delicate negotiations with other Powers which were necessary in order to save Egypt from bankruptcy. Well, the Government may say—the late Government may say—'You are only carrying out our policy.' Well, that is a very common expression among Liberals. They say, 'You are not entitled to any credit for what you have done, because you are carrying out our policy.' Well, I wish that anybody, if there is anybody in this room who is influenced by that argument, or if anybody who makes that argument in other public places should use it—I should be very glad if they will kindly inform us, and inform the public, what Liberal policy we are carrying out. I made a speech in London in the month of May, in which I proved, from facts and from history, that what with Ireland, what with South Africa, what with Egypt, and what with Afghanistan, Mr. Gladstone's Government had followed at different times no less than thirty-seven policies. . . ."

He then described his party policy as distinct from the lamentable muddle of the Gladstone Government, after which he proceeded to discuss Lord Salisbury's idea of Federation :—

"But there is another subject which Lord Salisbury alluded to in his speech

CALLING THEM HOME.

(From *Punch*, Nov. 21, 1885. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

at Newport, and which I alluded to in my address to the electors of this division—the question of Imperial Federation; a very large question, and one which, if it could be carried out, or if the foundations of it could be laid, would add enormously to the strength, and the solidity, and the prosperity of the Empire. Now, some of the leaders of the Liberal party—some of their most distinguished men—are greatly in favour of a policy which should have for its object something in the nature of Imperial federation. I take Lord Rosebery and I take Mr. Forster. They have attended meetings connected solely with this object, and they have advocated it as far as possible among the constituencies in the country. But now Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington are altogether silent on this subject. It does not appear to have entered into their heads that the project of Imperial federation, or a policy tending towards that consummation, is one which they would either consider or propose. But Mr. Bright is most bitter in opposition to it. Of course you quite understand that by Imperial federation is meant a closer and more practical union for the purpose of defence—perhaps for the purpose of commerce—between the colonies and the mother country. Now, what did Mr. Bright say about that? Mr. Bright made a speech in this year, on the 30th of January, and he said, 'What do the Imperial Federation League propose? That the British Empire—that is, the United Kingdom and all its colonies—should form one country, one interest—one undivided interest—for the purpose of defence. The idea, in my opinion, is ludicrous, the whole thing is childish, and will not bear discussion for a moment.' Well, that is a matter on which I hope Mr. Bright will explain himself more at length when he addresses the electors of this division. If you return Mr. Bright to Parliament you indorse these ideas, and you, as electors of this division, will pronounce that any more close and more practical union between the colonies and the mother country, for the purpose of defence or of commerce, is a ludicrous idea, one too childish to deserve attention. Well now, gentlemen, as I said, our foreign and our colonial policy, our programme of policy, deals very fully with all these matters. We do offer an intelligible policy to the people of this country, and we have been able, in the short time we have been in office, to give, as it were, an earnest to the people in this country of our power and our capacity to carry out that policy. Now, look at the Liberal programme. It seems to me absolutely barren of all ideas. They confine themselves almost entirely to domestic legislation. They turn away utterly from such questions as foreign policy and of colonial policy. Look at Lord Hartington's address. He hardly alluded to it. Mr. Chamberlain's address does not allude to it. Mr. Bright's address does not allude to these questions, and you can only judge of what the foreign policy of Mr. Gladstone's Government would be, if you put them back in office, by what the foreign policy of that Government has been, and you may fairly anticipate if you restore Mr. Gladstone to office you would have another event in the nature of Majuba Hill, another event in the nature of a surrender of territories of the Crown to rebels, you would have another series of events in the nature of the past events which have happened in Egypt, you would have still further encroachment by European Powers on your Indian dependency, and there is nothing to lead you to suppose that you would not have a repetition of trouble with Ireland."

As may be imagined Lord Randolph was not too comfortably situated, though undoubtedly the Radicals admired his pluck in poaching thus freely on the enemy's preserves. There was in his

manner what may be called an eloquent impertinence, which was distinctly piquant, and more than one of the audience wondered whether Lord Randolph had taken a leaf out of "Joe's" book, and whether the latter had revenged the theft by stealing a chapter from Lord Randolph's.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, in imitation of the Tory Democrat's style, provided an amusing sketch of the "clock faces," which served to enliven the monotony of electioneering *dicta*. He described the Conservative party as a great clock tower with four faces, each face telling a different tale as to the time:—

"One of the faces resembled Lord Iddesleigh, whom they might remember in times not far distant as Sir Stafford Northcote, but who was now in the House of Lords, lost to sight but to memory dear—on that face the hands were quite still; then on another, resembling Mr. Parnell, the hands kept a steady course, because Mr. Parnell knew his own mind and wished to carry out his policy in Ireland by the help of the Conservative party; then they came to the face resembling Lord Salisbury, and its hands moved forward jerkily or went back in order to accommodate themselves to the wishes of each spectator in turn; and last of all they came to the fourth face—that of Jack-in-the-box—and the hands on that face wheeled round so fast that the eye could not follow them."

Jack-in-the-box referred, of course, to the presumptuous personage who invited Birmingham to remove Mr. Bright from Westminster and substitute himself.

Later on the *Dart* gave its version of "The History of Joseph."

Some forty years or more ago
  At work I sat, thus musing:
How long must I as "Cobbler Joe"
  My time be thus misusing?

I meant to fight for higher game,
  Instead of pegging there so,
But how to climb the mount of fame
  By merit I'd no right to.

I tried the dodge of Johnny Bright,
  And worked upon his plan
Of always preaching "might was right,"
  Which pleased the working man.

He took the "bait," I stroked his back,
  As others had before done;
To Westminster, then, in a crack
  He sent me with the "old un."

Meanwhile Mr. Chamberlain set to work with a will. He got quickly in touch with his old friends, and at one meeting invited all

his old workmen who happened to be present to come on the platform and shake hands with him. "It is your fault," he said, "that I am no longer a screw-maker, and that I became a Cabinet Minister." And this genial invitation, spoken in the kindly fashion that he reserves for his friends, induced many of the old folks who had served with him to come forward and heartily welcome him among them. So hearty indeed was the demonstration that it was long before he was able to put forth all he had to say. The gist of it we already know. He dwelt always on his reform programme, and expatiated on the great and unusual opportunity now afforded to show how newly enfranchised opinion could shape itself for the propagation of the gospel of progress throughout the land.

Here in his own country Mr. Chamberlain was looked on almost as a demigod. Faith in him was unbounded. No matter the multitudes of detractors without, within, there were ardent worshippers the quality of whose admiration was stronger and more virile than the quantity of ignorant and impotent opprobrium of which there was never any lack. All his friends were generous in their approval of the speeches that have won such applause in the North, especially Dr. Dale, who wrote his hearty congratulations. Particularly admirable, he said, was the form apart from the substance of those speeches. The form, including rhetorical elements, "reached a level which I think you never touched before, and which I hope you will keep. *It is a great thing for a man to make an advance of this kind when he has touched fifty.*" Other evidences of the pride taken by Birmingham in their apostle were forthcoming from all sides, and it is a significant fact, which should afford food for reflection to his enemies, that here where the statesman was best known, most intimately criticised, and most acutely watched, he was and is most esteemed and most beloved.

But to return to the elections. These were now actively going forward, while the public with bated breath watched the course of events all over the country. There is no better mode of judging the opinions and emotions of this momentous epoch than by comparing the views of rival journals and noting the marvellous tints assumed by a single fact when viewed through the medium of party spectacles.

At the end of November the *Daily News* wrote :—

"Though the results of the elections so far as they have gone are in our view deeply to be regretted, as indicating an unsound and even dangerous political mood in large classes, there is no need for despair. Hitherto the distinction between town and country representation has coincided in the main with the division of Liberals and Conservatives. The general election which is now taking place was expected to reverse this state of things. It is doing so far

more thoroughly, we are sorry to say, with regard to the towns than even the most sanguine Conservative or the most desponding Liberal anticipated. It must do so with equal or with even greater completeness in the counties. It is still possible for the Liberals by strenuous exertion to retrieve, and more than retrieve, in the county constituencies the reverses that have befallen them in the towns. Above all things, it is necessary that there should be the closest union and the most cordial co-operation between the different sections of the party. Whig and Radical must be as one before the common enemy. Mr. Gladstone very properly refuses to be classed either among the moderate or the advanced Liberals. It is enough for him to be a Liberal, without heightening or restricting addition. He leads the Liberal party as a whole, and it is his business while informing it with his own views to give effect to its general spirit, which those views contribute largely to shape and direct. The average convictions and sentiments of the party can alone form the basis of common action. But an average implies a higher and a lower between which it strikes the mean. It is incompatible with a petrified identity of sentiment, with a dead monotony of ideas. To ask the advanced Liberals to lay aside the spirit of enterprise and innovation, or the moderate Liberals to abandon their temper of caution and circumspection, is to require from one or the other of them sacrifices which it is not only illegitimate to demand, but which it would be ruinous to the party to effect. Lord Hartington is quite right—it is in harmony with his temperament and with the traditions which he represents—to carry into political life the spirit of the punning, or as it is called in heraldry the canting, motto of his house, *Cavendo tutus*. It is not, perhaps, the most inspiring of sentiments, but it is one of the most essential; and the greatest warriors from Fabius to Washington, not to seek any later illustrations, have acted on it without imputation upon their courage. On the other hand, the Hotspurs of conflict, who from the nettle danger would pluck the flower safely, have their indispensable place in politics not less than in warfare. 'Not like in like, but like in difference' is a principle as essential to party as it is to conjugal union. Every organisation exists by the combination of dissimilar elements. A repetition of the same ingredients forms simply a loose mechanical aggregate without vital union. To drop metaphor, it is obvious that the attitude taken by such statesmen as Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke is essential to the association of the advanced with the moderate section of the party. If Radicals did not find spokesmen and representatives of their ideas in politicians of Ministerial rank their severance from the party would be inevitable. In renouncing the demand for immediate action upon their opinions they do not abandon the right of advocating and challenging discussion on them. While acquiescing in the principle that legislation must proceed on the average sentiments and convictions of the party, they are bound to do their best towards forming a higher level of average sentiment and conviction as the basis of future action. We therefore hold that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, in frankly speaking their minds on questions not yet ripe for legislation, are contributing, not to the disruption, but to the closer union of the Liberal party. It is precisely because the time for acting upon the proposals which Mr. Chamberlain has made has not come that the discussion of them is opportune, in order that a sound opinion may be formed when the decision has to be taken. His views with respect to taxation, free education, and allotments of land have been assailed as involving a violation of the principles of political economy. But this is to confound the principles of political economy with the doctrines of a

particular school of political economists, in which there is much truth, but not all the truth. Objectors do not see that sound principles may be limited by principles equally sound, and that there is a danger in making any one set of ideas absolute in the sphere of government. The doctrine of *laissez faire*, of individualism, and of non-intervention, which some moderate Liberals seem disposed to champion against Mr. Chamberlain, was erected into an absolute principle by the elder political economists, of whom James Mill was the principal."

The *Standard* at the same time dealt with the most important phase of the Home Rule complication and the quandary of the combatants :—

"It is too early to speculate about the effect of the reverses on the fortunes of the Whig-Radical combination. That England does not love coalitions is a hackneyed truth; but it receives fresh illustration in the events of the hour. Had the ill-matched colleagues scrambled back to place, the unnatural league would probably have been dissolved in the effort to frame a common plan of action. Disaster is a bad conciliator; and the Radicals will probably escape from the recriminations of the angry Whigs by protesting that the time has come for starting on their own account. But there is an immediate moral which concerns us more than the remote consequences. It is one which we desire every elector who respects the authority of Mr. Gladstone, and who has not yet recorded his vote, to lay very seriously to heart. The recognised leader of both sections of the Liberal party has taken extraordinary pains to define the supreme duty of Englishmen at the present time. It is, in brief, to place a Ministry in power, backed by a majority large enough to render it absolutely independent of the Home Rule vote. It is a matter of only subordinate importance whether the Government be Liberal or Conservative; *the paramount, the indispensable, condition is that it shall be in a position, not on Irish questions only, but on all questions, to rise superior to the menace or the solicitations of the Nationalists.* Mr. Gladstone, it is true, in applying this doctrine, insisted that the Liberal party was the one that ought to be strengthened. It was an incentive to unity—a persuasive to ardent Radicals and hesitating Whigs to cast away all party ambitions and all scruples of conscience, and to devote themselves heart and soul to piling up a huge party majority. But we feel sure that had Mr. Gladstone foreseen that the Tories would carry nearly everything before them in England, he would have exhorted the Scotch friends to discharge the primary duty of patriotism by siding with the strong. Circumstances may possibly prevent Mr. Gladstone from resuming the lapsed thread of his Mid-lothian discourse, but all who believe that he spoke from real conviction, that his appeal to national as opposed to partisan sentiment was honest and sincere, will act in the spirit of his emphatic and repeated entreaty. We need add no word of our own to supplement the warnings of Liberal statesmanship. Convinced as we are, on general grounds, that a reversion to the feebleness and fussiness of Liberal rule would have been fatal to the best interests of the country, we hold as strongly as Mr. Gladstone himself does, that no Government which lies, directly or indirectly, at the mercy of the Home Rule faction in the House of Commons can deal safely or effectually with the Irish menace. The Liberals have lost their own game; they will, according to Mr. Gladstone's own showing, place the unity of the Empire in danger if they persist in trying to reduce the number of points their opponents have still to score."

The *Times* took the opportunity to jump on Mr. Chamberlain, and to ascribe to him all the topsy-turvydom of the situation :—

"A great deal of time and ingenuity is likely to be expended by partisan apologists on the futile and unnecessary task of seeking far-fetched explanations for a very simple sequence of cause and effect. The Opposition have to thank Mr. Chamberlain, not only for their defeat at the polls, but for the irremediable disruption and hopeless disorganisation of the Liberal party, with its great historic past and its high claims to national gratitude. We have freely recognised Mr. Chamberlain's ability, the development of his powers as a speaker, the energy and persistence with which he pursues his ends, and the sincerity of feeling which may be held to excuse his violence, his rancour, and his disregard of scruples. But he has now accomplished something which, even a few months ago, seemed to be far beyond his reach. His achievement in destroying the Liberal party as an organised and united power in the State may give him such immortality as was won by the man who burned down the temple of Diana at Ephesus. Its nearest modern parallel is the ruin and the shame which the Whigs brought upon themselves when, during the gallant stand made by England against the military despotism of Napoleon, they threw their weight on the anti-national side. Mr. Chamberlain, no doubt, remains, for the time, without a rival as the leader of a new Radical party, distinct in its aims and its methods from the old Liberalism, or even the old Radicalism, with which his colleagues have been down to a very recent date exclusively identified. This sectional gain, however, has been purchased by the loss of the political elements which have for the past half-century made the Liberals in the truest sense the representatives of the sentiment and the judgment of the nation. Lord Hartington and others keep their places in the front ranks of the Opposition, partly from feelings of loyalty to the party cause or to Mr. Gladstone himself; partly, perhaps, from slowness of apprehension. But they have hardly anybody behind them. The moderate Liberals, alarmed by Mr. Chamberlain's attacks on property and on the Church, and by the weakness of the resistance to those fatal tactics among the other party leaders, have evidently recorded their votes for moderate candidates, who, owing to the blundering activity and coarse dictation of the caucuses, are now to be found mainly in the Conservative ranks. The defeats of Mr. Childers at Pontefract, of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre at Reading, of Mr. George Russell in Fulham, and of Mr. Holmes in Hackney, are scarcely more significant than Lord Randolph Churchill's poll at Birmingham and Sir Charles Dilke's narrow escape in Chelsea. If the close of Mr. Gladstone's long and illustrious political career is marked by disasters, which in the natural course of events he will have no chance of repairing, it is due, doubtless, in large measure to the discouraging record of the last Administration, but still more to the effect on the public mind of the Radical policy as enunciated by Mr. Chamberlain. But the Conservative party, and especially their leaders, have imperfectly learned the lessons taught in the severe school of adversity if they imagine that the verdict of the nation, recorded as a protest against the schemes of Radical politicians and the pretence of Liberal unity, gives any sanction to a reversal of Liberal policy or a return to the narrow ideas of a defunct Toryism. The formation of Lord Salisbury's Government, deliberately excluding, as it did, the reactionary elements, held out a promise which, it must be admitted, has not been broken, that Conservatism would be henceforward progressive, and would frankly

accept the result of democratic change. As we have all along maintained, there have been for a long time past only two rival policies before the country —the Liberal policy, most ably vindicated by Mr. Goschen, but practically accepted by Lord Salisbury and his party, and the Radical policy, preached with revolutionary passion by Mr. Chamberlain, and forced by the caucuses on candidates and constituencies alike. The event has shown already—whatever the future may have in store for us—that the English people, those of them at least who have had any experience in the exercise of political rights, are opposed to organic changes either in Church or State, though they are in favour of steady and rational progress on the old lines, in harmony with the traditions of true Liberalism, and with a view to the maintenance of the greatness as well as the freedom of England."

A tremendous tirade this, but one which nerved Mr. Chamberlain to action, and kept all the gladiator faculties which he so marvellously uses in emergency in first-rate trim. His energy, together with the "revolutionary passion" complained of, set his constituency humming with animation, and elsewhere he exerted himself to awaken voters to a sense of their duty to turn the Tories out. Early in December he went to Leicester, and spoke here, there, and everywhere in support of Mr. Paget, Liberal candidate for the Harborough Division.

So far, he said, the Liberals in the counties had justified the expectations that had been formed.

The majority, on the whole, had been conclusive for the Liberal party when the circumstances were taken into consideration under which the new votes had been given.

Never, probably, in the political history of this country had such great and such unworthy pressure been exercised upon the voters as during the present election; and he was glad to think that, on the whole, the new electors had been proof against such form of intimidation.

In face of the unsatisfactory results that had been recorded in the boroughs, it was reported, by people who appeared to gloat over it, that there was a great Conservative reaction. He, however, suspected their jubilation might be premature, and went on to explain how his party had had a most unusual and extraordinary combination against them, a combination he described as the five P's. These, taken in the order of their importance, beginning with the least important, signified Priests, Publicans, Parsons, Parnellites, and Protectionists!

Never before had such a combination been in force, and he doubted if history would ever repeat itself. Some classes had gone over absolutely to the Conservative side, a fact which needed to be recognised; but others were temporarily turned aside by circumstances which could not again occur. "*For instance,*" he said, the

well-known note of war in his voice, "*the Irish vote has been against us in all the boroughs, and has materially lessened our majority, and has lost a great number of seats, especially in Lancashire. Mr. Parnell makes it his boast that he has throttled the Liberal party. Well, I think the probability is that before long he will have occasion to regret that boast.*"

He went on to show that if it were true that Mr. Parnell had throttled the Liberal party, he then had throttled the one great machine for securing justice to Ireland; for, apart from the Liberal allegiance, it was not probable or possible for the remaining grievances of Ireland to be effectually or satisfactorily settled.

"But I do not believe in the permanent alienation of the Irish vote from the Liberal party, and therefore I say that that factor in the combination against us is likely to change its position on another occasion."

He went on to describe another most serious element in this election. That was the prevalence of bad trade, which caused very serious depression in a great number of districts.

People were dissatisfied with the existing order of things, and were inclined, by way of a change, to apply any quack remedy that might be proposed to them.

But, he thought, "after a short experience of the blessings of Conservative rule," the influence of bad trade would result in an opposite swing of the pendulum. The change then would be a change for the better instead of a change for the worse; and therefore, although there might be disappointment at the result in the boroughs, he was not discouraged, and looked forward with hope and confidence to the future.

"We shall in all probability have for a short time a weak Government, existing on the sufferance of their opponents. If it does no mischief, it may be permitted to live; but if it begins to do harm, I think we shall make a speedy end of it."

Mr. Chamberlain within his constituency worked like a Trojan.

As the days wore on excitement in Birmingham neared fever pitch. In seven quarters thousands of eager hearers were concentrating their energies to push the whole seven candidates, in spite of opposition, to a united victory. Birmingham was determined at all costs to retain her Liberal reputation, and retain it she did.

Never was there so great a stir as on the last night after the frantic turmoil of the day, after the terrific suspense of the counting of the votes, and the final thrills as return after return was posted on the Town Hall, it was found that the "favourites"—the whole seven of

them—had been elected, had vanquished with more or less brilliancy the daring outsiders who had ventured to contest the day. Each fresh triumph was greeted with roars of ecstasy: the multitude, packed tightly in the square, cheered itself hoarse, and at the club demonstrations so heart-stirring took place that some eyes even filled with tears, showing how earnestly ladies and men had watched the hard tussle, and how sincerely they rejoiced in the glorious culmination. Each member in turn received an ovation, and Mr. Chamberlain, whose majority was largest in the borough, and whose popularity was, if possible, more remarkable than ever, was overwhelmed by the fervent congratulations of his admirers and well-wishers.

Outside, the work grew more and more exciting. As the battle waxed hotter and hotter the Liberals, rampant, scoured the country, working hard that not one of the still unpolled seats should escape them. Among the most vigorous fighters was Sir William Harcourt, who vehemently denounced the suspected alliance between Conservatives and Nationalists, and in a speech at Lowestoft gave vent to a remarkable epigram that has not been permitted to drop into oblivion. Vociferously he condemned the Conservatives "to stew in Parnellite juice till they stank in the nostrils of the people!"

The pronouncement was about as unfortunate as that of the *Times* when discussing the Conservative successes in the towns. The great journal was all too ready to ignore the fact that, owing to the alarm felt regarding Mr. Gladstone's oscillations in favour of Home Rule, educated voters had ranged themselves on guard. Mistrusting the Liberal party as a whole, they voted for the Tories to avoid being misunderstood, and what success the Liberals finally attained was due, some said, entirely to Mr. Chamberlain; his "unauthorised programme," like Kellermann's unauthorised charge, practically won the political Marengo, though the grand old Napoleon got all the credit for the victory.

While the elections were drawing to a close, the Irish question naturally rose into greater prominence than ever. People looked in vain for something definite in the programme of the future. All politicians were agreed that something must be done to amend local government in the "distressful country." Yet the something remained nebulous but for vague outlines of concessions flitting through the speeches of the leaders of the parties.

Mr. Gladstone in his Mid-Lothian address had declared he was willing to give Ireland the fullest local control compatible with the maintenance of Imperial authority. Lord Hartington, following on the same lines, had added a proviso that protection must be secured to the loyal minority in Ireland; and Mr. Chamberlain had stuck to

his scheme of National Councils, applicable to Scotland as well as to Ireland, giving to each country control of its purely domestic affairs and relieving the Imperial Parliament from the mass of private legislation that pressed on it.

The Conservatives had done little more. Lord Salisbury at Newport, though he did not lean towards federation between Great Britain and Ireland on the Austro-Hungarian model, had not disposed of the idea as wholly inadmissible; and the other Conservative leaders had maintained a discreet and conciliatory silence.

Naturally, Mr. Parnell and his followers were in a frenzy of excitement, and the great leader grew hourly more confident of success. One thing, he said, was certain, that the Irish question would be *the* question of the session unless foreign complications should arise. He told an interviewer that he did not believe in the possibility of a coalition Government, and could see no converging lines between any considerable section of the two English parties. If such a combination were possible, however, it would not, as experience had shown, last long. Coalition Ministries in England had always been short-lived. He doubted whether the Conservatives could detach as many as twelve men from the Liberal ranks for the purpose of a coalition, and even if they could, the dozen or so detached would be, he thought, a very poor substitute for the eighty-six Irish votes. But the settlement of the Irish question, he expected, would come from the Liberals.

Assuming that they were about equal to the Tories and Nationalists combined, it lay in his power, upon their acceptance of his terms, to give them at once a majority of 170 votes, which, even making allowance for considerable defections from their ranks, would be amply sufficient to enable them to deal with the Irish question and every other question; whereas the Conservatives could not, even with his aid, get more than a bare majority, and would be always hampered by the action of their eighteen or nineteen followers from Ireland.

While Mr. Parnell was arranging to throw the Tories over, report said that they were busy inventing measures to conciliate him. It was hinted in the *Freeman's Journal* that Lord Randolph Churchill had prepared a special local self-government bill for Ireland—indeed, it seemed that everything that Mr. Chamberlain thought wise and diplomatic to do for the Liberals, Lord Randolph immediately attempted to outdo. The Tory bill was said to be disapproved by the Irish, for it followed lines laid down by Lord Castletown in the *Fortnightly Review*. This article (December 1885) declared emphatically against the repeal of the Union, the

concession of a separate Parliament, the right of independent legislation, and even against the establishment of a National Council.

All these schemes, it prophesied, would end in conflict with Great Britain, and in the gravest disasters to Ireland—possibly to an Irish civil war. The proposal was to abolish the Castle, to do away with the Lord-Lieutenant, to erect the Irish Privy Council into a species of Court of Appeal from the local bodies, and then to hand over the local government of Ireland to county councils, dealing with public works and general county administration, and to boards of guardians, dealing with the poor law and education.

Some limited power of taxation was to be given, and also some power of initiating and carrying local Acts for local purposes, subject first to an appeal to the Irish Privy Council, and finally to the Imperial Parliament. There were further details, but none of them approached the sum of Mr. Parnell's demands; and it was patent that if this were the nature of the Tory bait the Nationalists would soon cease to nibble, and after a short and stormy interval would turn for relief to any Liberal dose that might alleviate them.

At last the interval of tremendous suspense came to an end—the worst was known. The result was found to be exactly that which Mr. Gladstone had deprecated. The Grand Old Man had not been made independent of the Irish vote; he had been defeated by the combination of the five P's Mr. Chamberlain had spoken of. The *Dart* caught up the idea and waxed witty over it:—

"Oh, why are the Radicals looking so glum?
Has anything happened to 'rile' 'em?
Well, according to Joey, they've p's in their shoes,
And they haven't been able to 'bile' 'em!"

The Liberals had outstripped the Tories, it is true, but the figures when read out presented a curious sum and also a problem:—

Liberals	335
Tories	249
Liberal majority over the Tories .	86

The additional 86 were at the disposal of Mr. Parnell!

This remarkable man had, as he had prognosticated, become the pivot of political mechanism. His wonderful personality, the magnetism rather than the force of his will, had served to gather round him a tremendous following, antagonistic in detail but united in the patriotic desire to carry Ireland on their shoulders to victory. His army was described as composed of Parliamentarians in the centre,

with the Catholic Church for right wing and the Clan-na-Gael for left. With this force he had engaged in an enveloping movement, which swept the face of the Emerald Isle and carried all before it. The Whigs were wiped out; eighteen Conservatives only survived, while eighty-five Nationalists, elected by enormous majorities, flaunted the banner of Home Rule into Parliament. These carried every seat in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, save those for the University of Dublin. Ulster returned seventeen Nationalists and only sixteen Tories.

Thus, counting Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who had been returned for Liverpool (with eight Conservatives), Mr. Parnell found himself with eighty-six Home Rulers to his hand. If the Liberals had 335 votes and the Conservatives had 249, his following of eighty-six provided power in the future to make or to mar! He had but to give the word, and he could either neutralise the Liberal majority by joining the Tories, or back the Liberals and return Mr. Gladstone to power with a working majority of 172. Naturally, such a man was the hero of the hour; all eyes were turned towards him. How would he act?

Then came the corollary: How would Lord Salisbury act? How would Mr. Gladstone act? and finally, How would Mr. Chamberlain act?

Facing each other were two strong men—on either side were the leaders of parties.

To jump better at some sort of conclusion, it is necessary slightly to retrace our steps.

Early in December Mr. Gladstone had communicated to a leading Liberal that he was in favour of establishing a Parliament in Ireland; but beyond stating the fact that Home Rule was practically conceded, he admitted nothing.

The party naturally began to bubble with excitement and curiosity.

"How about Hartington?" said some. "Has he been consulted?" asked others.

It was gathered that only Lord Spencer and Mr. Robert Hamilton (Irish Under-Secretary) had been sounded, and were in favour of the scheme.

"Still," argued the cautious ones, "if Lord Hartington stands aside, Mr. Gladstone will be beaten."

Another suggested that Mr. Morley was at that time at Highbury propounding a scheme to Mr. Chamberlain. It was uncertain whether Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Morley might not come to some mutual understanding which would set Ireland on her feet. Later it was discovered the pair were not in accord—

that the prospects of Ireland were swaying still with the pendulum of excited opinion.

Mr. Morley was informed how Mr. Gladstone now viewed the matter, and was shown the Chief's letter. On being assured that it was genuine, he cried, "Then, if this be true, I will break with Chamberlain and join Mr. Gladstone."

The news was promptly swept into the Irish quarter, and there were cheers on hearing that "Morley is all right."[1]

If Mr. Morley was all right, Mr. Chamberlain was all wrong. If Mr. Chamberlain was all right, then Mr. Morley was all wrong. The problem had to be proved by time and by the verdict of the people.

At this critical period a remarkable thing happened. The *Standard* on the 17th of December announced that Mr. Gladstone was prepared to deal with the question of Home Rule on the following lines:—

The unity of the Empire, the authority of the Crown, and the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament were to be assured.

An Irish Parliament was to be created, and to be entrusted with administrative and legislative affairs.

There was to be security for the representation of minorities, and for the partition of Imperial charges. A certain number of Irish members were to be nominated by the Crown.

As may be imagined, the announcement created a tremendous stir; warnings of a coming earthquake could scarcely have caused a greater panic among London politicians. Nor was there much consolation to be found in the telegram which was instantly forwarded by Mr. Gladstone to the Central News.

He declared: "The statement is not an accurate representation of my views, but is, I presume, a speculation on them. It is not published with my knowledge or authority, nor is any other beyond my own public declarations." The excitement in the provinces grew intense, and the clash of press opinions resounded through the length and breadth of the land. *The sudden conversion of Mr. Gladstone to Home Rule* made the subject of the hour in Tory quarters. The *Daily News* seemed to favour the turn of the tide; the *Spectator* expressed the opinion that if we were not prepared for separation, any great step in the direction of Home Rule would be a greater mistake than passive resistance to Mr. Parnell, even should he turn out Government after Government.

While all this was going forward, the Liberals of Birmingham celebrated their electoral success at a banquet given on the 17th of December to the seven members of the Birmingham Reform Club.

[1] See "Life of Charles Stewart Parnell." R. Barry O'Brien.

MR. AND MRS. CHAMBERLAIN

Photo F. Macfadyan, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Dr. Dale presided, and the toast, "The Liberal Seven," was responded to by Mr. Chamberlain. In a brilliant speech he touched on the leading excitement, and summed up his independent position and his relation to the Liberal party.

He began by a reference to the *Times* newspaper, which had been confidently anticipating the defeat of the Liberal party, and had expressed a kind of qualified rejoicing in the fact that their majority had at least been diminished. He pointed out that although, of course, the *Times* could not be expected to condescend to details, there was little cause for regret. The details were these:—

"In 1880 the Liberal vote in Birmingham was 32,000. If you add to that one-ninth for the increase in the electorate, you will get 35,500 as the proportionate vote at the present time; from that you have to deduct 3000 Irish voters who went bodily over to the enemy under circumstances upon which I need not at this moment dilate. That leaves 32,500 as the proportionate genuine English vote which we had to secure in order to maintain our position. We actually polled 33,500, an increase of more than 1000 over the number that we polled in 1880, at the high flood of Liberal success and Liberal enthusiasm. It is quite true that our opponents increased their poll in even greater proportion. Making these allowances of which I have spoken, they polled 3000 more than they did five years ago. But that 3000 is not taken from the Liberal army. It came from the class which ordinarily is apathetic and indifferent at times of elections, and which on this occasion was swept into the Tory net by the fallacious and plausible promises of the Fair Trade candidates, and by the frantic exertions of the publicans and the parsons, who combined all the strength of their respective organisations in order to defeat the popular cause, and who failed in their effort, as they deserved to fail."

He saw no reason to doubt they would revert to the normal Liberal majority which characterised the borough of Birmingham. A very strange and unprecedented condition of affairs would shortly be discovered at Westminster. The Liberal party in all its sections would find itself constituting almost exactly one-half of the House of Commons. It would be in a great majority in England, in an overwhelming majority in Scotland and in Wales, and if it remained united and faithful to its leader, Lord Salisbury would hold office without any authority from the majority of the British nation, but by the grace of Mr. Parnell and by the madness of the Irish National party.

"How shall I describe the situation?" he asked. "I will not attempt it in my own words, but *I will call your attention to some remarks which were made a few years ago at Portsmouth by Lord Randolph Churchill, and the application of which I will leave you to make. He said: 'The destiny of the country is at the present time in the hands of a gang of political desperadoes, most of whom are aliens in race and religion. Mr. Parnell and his party represent the principles of the Land League. It is through them that the Government is enabled to remain in office.'* I have never

thought it necessary to apply language of that kind to Mr. Parnell or to his followers. I do not adopt it now, but I think it is expedient to remind Lord Randolph Churchill that Lord Salisbury is Prime Minister, and that he must owe his office and his position to the goodwill of those whom a short while ago he described as 'political desperadoes.' In face of a position such as this, it becomes of interest and importance to consider how far the various sections of the Liberal party are united in object and in aim, how far each of them may count upon the loyalty and the consideration of the other. Now, if I were to assume that the spirit in which this question has recently been discussed by some of the organs of moderate Liberalism really represented the attitude and intentions of that section of the party, I should despair for the solid co-operation which can alone form the foundation of party union."

He proceeded to describe how he had read, a short time ago, in a journal which professed Liberal opinions, that it was one compensation for the result of the borough elections that the "Chamberlain gang" had been signally discomfited. The same idea in more becoming language had dictated the more recent articles in the *Scotsman*, the *Leeds Mercury*, and the London *Spectator*—all of them journals conducted with the greatest ability, but without a spark of popular sympathy. Their views, he believed, were not shared by the responsible representatives of moderate Liberalism. They betrayed an incomprehensible ignorance of the results of the recent election, and a temper which, if it were really representative, would make united action impossible. The men, the statesmen, who might really claim authority to speak for their section of the party, were not likely to be deceived. These knew the true lesson of the recent polls, and they were not willing to exaggerate differences, or to force a split that would break the Liberal party into pieces, and would firmly establish, for some time at all events, in the seat of Government their Tory opponents. He then proceeded to estimate the forces which in a few weeks' time would be ranged under Mr. Gladstone's banner. The eight members from Birmingham and Aston would speak with a single voice the opinions and the aspirations of a great Radical community, and the result so satisfactory in Birmingham was still more so in the district of which Birmingham is the centre. In the six Midland counties which looked to Birmingham in some sort as their metropolis, were returned forty-three Liberals to twelve Tories—a result which could hardly be beaten anywhere out of Scotland.

"Where," he asked, "is the sign of the unpopularity of advanced opinions over which the *Scotsman* has been gloating, and the London *Spectator* has been musing and moralising according to its wont? Let us look farther afield—let us look at London. The elections in London have been unsatisfactory and discouraging. They are not creditable to London Liberalism. But then you have to recollect that London has only recently

been placed in possession of its full political privileges, and that it is a huge invertebrate agglomeration. It has never enjoyed the advantage or practised the habit of effective combination. I do not hesitate to say that in London fifteen seats at least were lost owing to the foolish divisions provoked by personal ambition and petty vanity, and owing to the utter lack of anything like a popular representative organisation. But even in London we have nothing to be discouraged about. Of its twenty-three Liberal members, I am assured there is not one who does not profess to belong to what is called the advanced section. But it is a curious coincidence that my brother, who is, I suppose, a member of the 'Chamberlain gang,' was returned by the largest majority that was given to any Liberal in the metropolis. Why, gentlemen, it is perfect folly to ignore the fact that in London, at all events, moderate Liberalism has no attractions for the constituency, and that the fight there will be in the future, as it has been in these elections, between Radicals and Tories."

And now he reminded his hearers that in many of the agricultural districts—in such counties as Wiltshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, and other places—the battle had been fought and won by the *advanced programme*. It had saved the Liberal party from disaster, and, under these circumstances, it was inexpedient and ungrateful to ignore the self-evident fact. The great majority of Liberal members had already committed themselves to the principle of free education; the majority of the county Liberals had pledged themselves to legislation which should have for its object to give facilities to the thrifty and industrious labourer, to obtain some more direct and independent interest in the soil that he cultivates; and twelve labour candidates had been returned, including Mr. Joseph Arch, who had defeated and badly beaten a member of one of the great territorial families in the country. Then there were four or five members who had been elected as especially representing the Crofters of Scotland, than whom there was not in the whole population a class more deserving of sympathy and support. The lesson of this election was, he insisted, that wherever Liberalism had been robust and thorough, and determined and definite in its aim, it had held its own against all the forces that had been brought against it; and the chief victories of the Tories had been in districts like the county of Lancashire and the metropolitan counties, which were the chosen home of moderate Liberalism, and where the managers shared the Tory fears concerning the intentions and the policy of what is sometimes described as the "Birmingham School." In the new Parliament the Radical party would be more numerous, more resolute, and more powerful than it had ever been in any previous House of Commons; and he ventured to say it would not allow this great business of politics to be degraded into a barren strife for place and power. It would not suffer it to be a miserable contention between tweedledum and tweedledee. The Radical party were honest by conviction; they

were the men in earnest. They would have in the future a great influence and a great importance in the councils and the policy of the Liberal party. But their opinion and wishes would not be thrust at all hazards upon unwilling recipients; there would be mutual concession, and the policy of the Liberal party ought to be governed by the average opinion of its members.

"The fastest walkers," he said, "are not the men to fix the pace of the army; but neither is the main body to be kept back perpetually by a few stragglers who are always half inclined to join the enemy."

He then proceeded to a discussion of the future.

"We don't know what are the intentions of the Government, if they have any. We don't know what are the plans of Mr. Parnell, and, above all, we don't know what are the wishes and intentions of Mr. Gladstone. I imagine, however, that there will be no great eagerness on the part of the Liberal party to assume office, or to relieve the Tories from the difficulty of the situation which they have made for themselves by their Irish alliance. On the other hand, their condition is so precarious, that it will be very difficult for them to keep on their legs. A change in the policy of Mr. Parnell, a personal caprice on the part of the Irish leader, might at any moment put them in a minority of 170; and it would be impossible, even if it were desirable, to save them from a crushing defeat. Well, would it be desirable? There is a great deal to be said on either side of the question. There are two reasons which strike me at once, and which would make me regret anything in the nature of a premature catastrophe. The first is, the natural feeling that I should like to see this Government drink to the dregs the cup of humiliation which they have filled for themselves. They have purchased office by a discreditable surrender of all their principles, and I should be glad to see them face to face with the difficulties of the situation. And perhaps a still stronger reason is, that at the present moment I cannot see a sufficient certainty that their place could be taken by a strong Liberal Government, able to deal with the claims of legislation; and I should imagine you would agree with me that a weak Tory Government, resting on the sufferance of its opponents, is for us a much better thing than a weak Liberal Government existing only with the support of the Tories. But then, on the other hand, there are also strong motives for desiring to get rid of this administration, born of shameless surrender of its convictions, and only kept alive by their sacrifice, or by the scornful forbearance of its natural opponents. . . ."

He then jibed at the Tories and the Government mouthpiece, Lord Randolph Churchill, and at their rumoured programme: A reform in the procedure of the House of Commons, an amendment in the law of registration, an improvement in the registration of titles, a cheapening of land transfers, and a popular democratic and representative local government, extended to the three kingdoms.

"What," he cried, "can be a more shameful instance of political immorality than this, that these people who have bought themselves into office by bidding for Parnellite support, should strive to maintain their position by

cribbing from the Liberal leader every single plank in his platform? If we are to have Mr. Gladstone's programme, don't you think we had better have Mr. Gladstone with it?"

He criticised the advisers of the Crown, who seldom recognised provincial merit, for having thought it desirable to recognise in a particular way the professional eminence of the Medical School of Birmingham. The school had existed for many years, and had an honourable reputation, and many of its members have been known far and wide beyond the confines of the borough; some having had even an European renown. If an honour had been conferred upon them, all would have rejoiced. But the favour of the Crown had been bestowed on the chairman of a ward committee which had endeavoured unsuccessfully to promote the election of Lord Randolph Churchill. For these reasons, and for others, he imagined all would be glad to turn out the Tory Government at the earliest possible moment that it could be replaced with a Liberal Government with a large majority at its back.

"*I hope we are also agreed that we should not like a Liberal Government to hold office at the mercy of Mr. Parnell, or to lend itself to its avowed intention and declared policy to turn out one Government after another in order to make all Governments ridiculous or impossible.* If there is to be co-operation between the Liberal party and the Irish party, it must be founded on common interests, and be publicly avowed and openly defended. I have hoped—*I have expressed publicly the desire—that the two democracies, the English and the Irish, moved by common aspiration and sympathetic appreciation, should march shoulder to shoulder along the paths of political freedom and progress. But Mr. Parnell by his recent action has done much to delay such a result—perhaps even to make it impossible.* He has alienated and embittered all sections of the Liberal party by the cynical indifference by which he has thrown the whole weight of the Irish vote in favour of the party which has for all time resisted and opposed every effort to redress the grievances of his country, and against the party to which Irishmen owe every scrap of liberty which they possess."

He then pointed out that we were face to face with a very remarkable demonstration of the Irish people, and that national questions of grave importance must not be prejudiced by personal considerations. The majority of the people were earnestly in favour of a change in the administration of their Government, and of some system which would give to them a larger control of their domestic affairs. The Liberals, by their public declarations and principles, were pledged to acknowledge the substantial justice of the claim. The newspapers gave an account of negotiations which are reported to have been proceeding between the leaders of the Liberal party in England and Mr. Parnell. In some of these papers it had been stated that he himself was a party to these negotiations, and that he approved of a scheme which it was alleged had been agreed upon.

"As far as I am personally concerned," he declared, "there is not a word of truth in that statement. I have had no part in any negotiations. I have expressed no approval of any scheme, and I think it very likely that the rumours which affect other prominent members of the Liberal party may be equally groundless. As to Mr. Gladstone, we know what his opinion is from his public utterances. He has said again and again that the first duty of Liberal statesmen is to maintain the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Crown; but that, subject to that, he was prepared to give the largest possible measure of local government that could be conceived or proposed."

Mr. Chamberlain then announced that he entirely agreed with those principles, and had so much faith in the experience and the patriotism of Mr. Gladstone, that he could not doubt that if his leader should ever see his way to propose any scheme of arrangement, he would be able conscientiously to give it his humble support.

"But," he continued, "it is right—it is due to the Irish people to say, that *all sections of the Liberal party, Radicals as well as Whigs, are determined that the integrity of the Empire shall be a reality, and not an empty phrase.* To preserve the Union, the Northern States of America poured out their blood and their treasure like water, and fought and won the contest of our time; and if Englishmen still possess the courage and the stubborn determination which were the ancient characteristics of the race, and which were so conspicuous in the great American contest, we shall allow no temptation and no threat to check our resolution to maintain unimpaired the effective union of the three kingdoms that owe allegiance to the present Sovereign. Speaking personally, I would venture to say that the time has hardly arrived when the Liberal party can interpose usefully or with advantage to settle this great question. *Mr. Parnell has appealed to the Tories. Let him settle accounts with his new friends. Let him test their sincerity and goodwill. Let him test their good faith and their tardy generosity, and if he finds that he has been deceived—if he finds that his aid and support have been accepted and used, and that the consideration for them is now withheld, then perhaps he will approach the Liberal party in a spirit of reason and conciliation.* In that case, it will be our duty to examine with care and impartiality any proposal he may bring on behalf of the Irish people, who have recently given him so remarkable a proof of their confidence, and if his proposals accord with the principles that Mr. Gladstone has laid down, it may yet be that there is still reserved for our leader the crowning glory of his public life—that he may bring back peace and prosperity to Ireland, and reconcile the races which are now united in these islands under the British Crown. . . ."

Lord Hartington on the 20th of December publicly denied that proposals for satisfying the demands of the Parnellites had ever reached him, and said that he saw no reason to depart in any degree from his previous declarations. Mr. Forster, who was still ill, wrote from Torquay indorsing these opinions. Mr. John Morley, though deeply in sympathy with the "wild Irishman," expressed at Newcastle on the 21st of December his fears for the future. "It will stir deep passions, it will perhaps destroy a great party. But

whatever may be the outcome, I say it is the duty of every one of us Liberals to view the question as calmly and steadfastly as he can, feeling that he is discharging as urgent a duty as has been imposed upon English citizens since the civil wars of the seventeenth century."

Mr. Campbell-Bannerman was in favour of dealing with the difficulty by conference between the leaders of the two parties and Mr. Parnell. And Mr. Gladstone, inspired by much the same idea, endeavoured to lure the Prime Minister into correspondence for the purpose of settling the Irish problem independently of party politics. Any arrangement for the sweeping from the earth of the Irish members would at that time have been by all most gratefully received. Mr. Gladstone, who was between the devil and the deep sea, considered his party's position "a bed of roses compared with that of the Government." He was pelted with telegrams of query, remonstrance, argument, and abuse till he scarcely knew whether he stood on head or heels, and sincerely hoped for support from within or without in his uncomfortable dilemma. On the 20th of December he wrote to Mr. Balfour, referring to a conversation they had had at the house of a mutual friend :—

"I wish under the very peculiar circumstances of the case (the urgency of it) to go a step farther, and say that I think it would be a public calamity if this great subject should fall into the lines of party conflict. I am sure the question can only be dealt with by a Government, and I desire, specially on grounds of public policy, that it should be dealt with by the present Government. If, therefore, they bring in a proposal for settling the whole question of the future government of Ireland, my desire will be, reserving of course necessary freedom, to treat it in the same spirit in which I have endeavoured to proceed with respect to Afghanistan and in respect of the Balkan peninsula."

Mr. Balfour in reply assured Mr. Gladstone that it was the desire of the leaders of the Opposition to treat the Irish question as a national and not a party one, though he cautiously expressed the fear "that under our existing Parliamentary system this will not prove so easy when we are dealing with an integral portion of the United Kingdom as it proved when we were connected with the remote regions of Roumelia and Afghanistan." Mr. Balfour framed his reply in as enigmatic terms as his correspondent. Save for the announcements in the *Standard*, he had no reason to decide whether Mr. Gladstone intended to support the policy of coercion as well as a policy of Home Rule, and the Conservative leaders had no object to serve in meeting Mr. Gladstone's proposals. Apart from the section that had got mixed up with Lord Carnarvon's and Lord Randolph Churchill's overtures to Mr. Parnell, the Tories were in favour of "a strong and resolute Government for Ireland."

On the 23rd December Mr. Gladstone again wrote, that "while expressing a desire that the Government should act, I am not myself acting." So long, he said, as he entertained a hope that the Government would take their decision, he should decline all communication of his own views beyond the circle of private confidence, and only allow to be fuliy known his great anxiety that the Government should decide and act in this matter.

Lord Salisbury, who appreciated the sentiment of the epistle, found that it suggested "a communication of the views of the Government, which at this stage would be at variance with usage." So Mr. Balfour replied that as Parliament would meet for business before the usual time it was thought better to avoid a departure from the ordinary practice, which might be misunderstood. Mr. Gladstone on the 5th of January declared that if his note had conveyed any suggestion in respect to a communication of ministerial intentions, it was entirely opposed to his intention.

Thus discreetly ended a futile palaver between diplomatic foxes!

Meanwhile round and about the ferment continued, voices from every quarter being raised to back up or knock down the man who should dare to say the decisive word.

Mr. Lecky the historian gave his opinion plump and plain. The essential fact of the question was that the present Irish party was "animated by two leading ideas—a desire to plunder the whole landed property of the country, and the inveterate hatred of the English connection in any form." The *Fortnightly Review* (attributed to Mr. Chamberlain) criticised the premature disclosures of Mr. Gladstone, and made three suggestions—first, that the land question should be settled in concert with the Parnellites on a possible scheme suggested by Mr. Giffen in the *Statist;* second, that failing the agreement of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Healy should be invited to assume office; and third, that Home Rule should stand over *sine die*—or, in other words, till more urgent questions had been decided.

Mr. John Morley on the 7th of January strenuously strove to gather the Liberal party together, and declared that Liberalism would be unworthy of "its great traditions and muscular vigour in dealing with difficult questions if it had nothing to say when a crisis such as this arose, requiring all the resources of constructive statesmanship to deal with it, and making such demands on our national fortitude and enterprise." A measure of land purchase he deemed absolutely necessary, but argued that order in Ireland and power in the House could best be obtained by the translation of the Irish members to their own field of action. In a large Irish Parliament, with important duties and large sense of responsibility, lay the future welfare of the country.

Lord Salisbury on his part gave confidence to a deputation of Ulster loyalists, by declaring his recognition of the responsibilities of the Government in regard to them; but Mr. Gladstone excused himself from receiving the deputation, on the ground that such a course might exhibit him as competitor with the Government in the field of labour and responsibility which at present was exclusively their own, "and would tend to accredit a statement, alike mischievous and groundless, which is now actively promulgated from quarters and with motives that I shall not attempt to describe, to the effect that I have signified an intention to make or adopt proposals with reference to Irish legislation."

So far, therefore, Mr. Gladstone remained outside the margin; but he was aware that Mr. Parnell kept open the hand of invitation, and that the Irish leader was beginning to despair now the elections were over of help from the Tories. These had found that the experiment of abandoning coercion had been a failure, and there was a hint that the Cabinet was divided between coercionists and anti-coercionists.

The hint seemed to be confirmed by the development of events. Soon after the meeting of Parliament on the 12th of January 1886, Lord Carnarvon, the Viceroy, and Sir William Hart-Dyke, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, resigned. The appointment of the last was hurriedly filled by Mr. W. H. Smith, who, on looking into matters in the "distressful country," found that in view of the recrudescence of boycotting, the executive must ask for extended powers.

The resignation of Lord Carnarvon gave rise to considerable gossip, but the late Viceroy, by way of explanation, declared that he had always had the intention of resigning after a few months of office. The public scarcely understood this excuse, but the inference was, that his had been a mere "stop-gap" service in a "stop-gap" Government. Sympathisers with the Irish formed their own conclusions however.

On the 21st of January it was found that in the Royal Speech was contained a definite declaration against Home Rule. "I am resolutely opposed to any disturbance of that fundamental law (legislative union), and in resisting it I am convinced that I am heartily supported by my Parliament and my people." Later the Sovereign said: "If, as my information leads me to apprehend, the existing provisions of the law should prove to be inadequate to cope with these growing evils, I look with confidence to your willingness to invest my Governments with all necessary powers."

A few days later (on the 26th) things approached boiling point. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the coming introduc-

tion of a Coercion Bill, to be followed by a bill for extending the Land Purchase Act of the foregone session. Naturally it became patent that now on the very first opportunity Lord Salisbury's Government would be thrown out by the united vote of Nationalists and Liberals.

The opportunity was not slow to arise. An amendment of the Address was proposed by Mr. Jesse Collings: "That this House regrets that no measures are announced by Her Majesty for the relief of the agricultural classes, especially for affording facilities to the labourers and others in the smaller districts to obtain allotments and small holdings on equitable terms as to rent and security of tenure."

Ministers endeavoured to postpone a division—a division which they knew would be fatal, till at least their Irish policy was settled and their opponents forced into a revelation of their programme. They failed. An animated debate brought to the front the question of the "unauthorised programme" that Mr. Gladstone in his manifesto had been pleased to ignore.

The Chief now discovered occult virtues in the scheme for benefiting the working-classes; it became the vehicle of carrying him to power, and through no direct effort of his own.

Mr. Chamberlain as it were took the stage; once more his cherished dream was propounded, and he fought with fervid fluency for his many F's. In course of the debate he said: "We support a hostile amendment; in the first place, because the condition and claims of the agricultural labourers constitute one of the great questions raised at the last election, and because it is our bounden duty to uphold those claims in Parliament; and, in the second place, because we have no confidence that the Government will either do justice to the agricultural labourers or to any other questions they may have to deal with."

Mr. Collings' amendment was carried by 331 votes against 252, and the Government were defeated.

The remarkable feature of the defeat lay not in Mr. Collings' "three acres and a cow" policy, but in the new revolution of the Irish question that that policy had permitted to take shape. While the Irish now joined the Liberals for the purpose—the sole purpose—of ousting the Tories who had countenanced Mr. W. H. Smith's innovations, Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, Sir Henry James, Lord Ebrington, Mr. Courtney, Sir John Lubbock, and others voted against their party in fear of assisting to power a leader who was more or less pledged to Home Rule. These at once put their foot down; others, Mr. Bright, Mr. C. P. Villiers, Mr. Leatham, Sir Julian Goldsmid, merely made themselves scarce on the critical occasion.

Elections of 1885

It has been argued that Mr. Chamberlain was entirely responsible for having brought the Home Rule Administration into power. Doubtless Mr. Collings acted with the approval of his friend, but did Mr. Chamberlain indeed believe that his revered chief would, in spite of his assertions to the contrary, cave in to Mr. Parnell in the way he did? It will be seen from the letter addressed a few days later accepting office that he had not conceived it possible that the change of Government would mean the introduction of the form of Home Rule he had deprecated, and that he had certainly no intention of returning to office to be made the instrument of the Irish in committing the country to the grave danger that threatened it.

CHAPTER II

I.—FIRST HOME RULE ADMINISTRATION COMES INTO POWER

ON the 28th of January Lord Salisbury tendered his resignation to the Queen, and Mr. Gladstone proceeded to London. His new Cabinet was thus constituted: Mr. Gladstone (First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal); Lord Herschell (Lord Chancellor); Lord Spencer (Lord President); Sir William V. Harcourt (Chancellor of the Exchequer); Mr. Childers (Home Secretary); Lord Rosebery (Foreign Secretary); Lord Granville (Secretary for the Colonies); Mr. Campbell-Bannerman (Secretary for War); Lord Kimberley (Secretary for India); Mr. George Trevelyan (Secretary for Scotland); Lord Ripon (First Lord of the Admiralty); Mr. John Morley (Chief Secretary for Ireland); Mr. Mundella (President of the Board of Trade); and Mr. Chamberlain (President of the Local Government Board).

Ministers outside the Cabinet were Lord Aberdeen (Viceroy of Ireland); Lord Wolverton (Postmaster-General); Sir Lyon Playfair (Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education); Mr. Heneage (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster); Mr. John Mellor (Judge Advocate-General); Sir Charles Russell (Attorney-General); and Sir Horace Davey (Solicitor-General). The Under-Secretaries were Mr. Broadhurst (Home Office); Mr. Bryce (Foreign Office); Mr. Osborne Morgan (Colonial Office); Sir N. Kay Shuttleworth (India Office); Lord Sandhurst (War Office); Mr. Acland (Board of Trade); and Mr. Jesse Collings (Local Government Board).

Members of the party who disassociated themselves from the new phase of affairs and refused or were not asked to take office were—Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Forster, Sir Henry James (Lord James of Hereford), Mr. Courtney, Lord Selborne, Lord Derby, and Lord Northbrook. To these were subsequently joined two from the Cabinet, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan, who only accepted office on certain conditions; and two from outside it, Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. Heneage (Lord Heneage).

Lord Hartington and other Liberals disapproving Mr. Gladstone's altered attitude towards Ireland had broken away for good, but Mr. Chamberlain still struggled to follow his chief. He did so,

however, with misgiving. His heart was set on his plan of domestic reform, so much so that, though offered the Admiralty, he declined the post as being unsuited to one whose social aims had but now been inviting the sympathy of the country. He had, as yet, no Imperial passion, and though he had been chaffingly called a Jingo by Mr. Bright, he was so merely by comparison with the Manchester school of politicians, the peace-at-any-price party. He preferred an office where his municipal capabilities would take a national complexion, where his seedling hopes might find field for fruition; but whatever the office he should hold he would accept it only on certain conditions. Those conditions unhappily threatened to make him diametrically opposed to Mr. Gladstone, who was the joy of his Radical group, and to fling him into consort with the fossil Whigs, whose effete principles he had systematically derided. The quandary was harassing in the extreme; but he thought by expressing himself definitely and thereupon joining his old chief, his weight in the Cabinet might be sufficient to direct the trend of affairs towards a more satisfactory issue.

It was no easy matter to sever himself in haste from the traditions of his life, from all hopes of reform, from the ambitions of an honoured party, and the thousand-and-one associations that for nigh on twenty years had bound him to the great figure whom he had never ceased to revere. He clung to the belief that all was not yet lost, that some form of Home Rule could be devised that would satisfy his conscience and also the earlier claims of Mr. Parnell, and that the "thinly veiled scheme of separation," as he had styled it, might not only be veiled, but shrouded to hide such scars as might be left by concessions on either side.

But his hope of influencing the "Grand Old Man" was fallacious. It must be remembered that at the elbow of Mr. Gladstone was now Mr. John Morley, whose appointment to the post of Irish Secretary was at once construed by the Parnellites into a move in the direction of concession. Mr. Morley during the electoral campaign had pronounced strongly in favour of some form of government for Ireland on the colonial model, had proposed the production of measures dealing with the land, and the exclusion of Irish members. Another active member in forming the new Ministry was Sir William Harcourt, whose recent harangue at Lowestoft did not prevent him from offering "indefatigable and effective help" in arranging the stew-pan for the Parnellite juice that was to "stink in the nostrils of the people." The only thing to account for the activity for which Mr. Gladstone cordially thanked him, is the presumption that since devotion to leaders has ever demanded martyrdom, Sir William Harcourt's fealty to the

great chief required of him the aromatic liquefaction he had so graphically described.

Mr. Chamberlain was not prepared to enter the stew-pan.

In a letter written to Mr. Gladstone on the 30th January, two days after the resignation of Lord Salisbury, he most emphatically gave his opinions on the subject of Ireland, and claimed the right to retain "unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection on any scheme" that might ultimately be proposed.

He wrote :—

"40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W.,
"*January* 30, 1886.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I have availed myself of the opportunity you have kindly afforded me to consider further your offer of a seat in your Government.

"I recognise the justice of your view that the question of Ireland is paramount to all others, and must first engage your attention. The statement of your intention to examine whether it is practicable to comply with the wishes of the Irish people, as testified by the return of eighty-five representatives of the Nationalist party, does not go beyond your previous public declarations, while the conditions which you attach to the possibility of such compliance seem to me adequate, and are also in accordance with your repeated public utterances.

"But I have already thought it due to you to say that, according to my present judgment, it will not be found possible to reconcile these conditions with the establishment of a national legislative body sitting in Dublin, and I have explained my own preference for an attempt to come to terms with the Irish members on a basis of a more limited scheme of local government, coupled with proposals for a settlement of the land, and perhaps also of the education question. You have been kind enough, after hearing these opinions, to repeat your request that I should join your Government, and you have explained that, in this case, I shall retain unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection on any scheme that may ultimately be proposed, and that the full consideration of such minor proposals as I have referred to, as an alternative to any larger arrangement, will not be excluded by you.

"On the other hand, I have no difficulty in assuring you of my readiness to give an unprejudiced examination to any more extensive proposals that may be made, with an anxious desire that the results may be more favourable than I am at present able to anticipate. In the circumstances, and with the most earnest hope that I may be able in any way to assist you in your difficult work, I beg to accept the offer you have made to submit my name to Her Majesty for a post in the new Government.—I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone, yours sincerely, J. CHAMBERLAIN."

In reading the clear and candid announcement of his intentions, it is possible to appreciate the wilful maliciousness of those—his enemies—who afterwards charged him with having joined the Government with a view to wrecking it. It was only when it became known to him that Mr. Gladstone, aided by Mr. John

"PAS DE FASCINATION,"

AS NOW BEING DANCED BY

MADAME JOSEPHINE, SIGNOR GLADSTONIO, AND SIGNORINA MORLEENA.

(From *Punch*, March 6, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the proprietors of *Punch*.)

Morley and others, had really embarked on a complete scheme for the propitiation of Mr. Parnell and his obstructive party, and, in fact, of settling their demands in full, that he realised how utterly impossible it was for him to fit in his enunciated plans for the local government of Ireland with the Home Rule Bill in its more modernised form.

Mr. Gladstone's policy consisted of a scheme for the creation of an Irish Parliament and defining its powers, together with another for dealing with the land question, which was supported by Lord Spencer and Mr. Morley, on the ground that it was only fair to relieve an embryonic Irish Parliament from the troubles of such a large question at the very outset of affairs. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan objected and threatened resignation, but Mr. Gladstone argued against such action being taken, in regard to the mere outlines of schemes that were as yet incomplete. Mr. Chamberlain objected to the new proposals regarding Irish representation, also to the grant of full rights of taxation to Ireland; he disapproved the surrender of the appointment of judges and magistrates; and he protested against the specification of the things that an Irish Government might *not* do, instead of the regulation of the things that it might do.

Respecting these outlines, Mr. Chamberlain, the critic of the Cabinet, as he was called, was not consulted till everything was practically decided. The Land Purchase Bill, involving the enormous outlay of British money on behalf of a country to be dissevered from England and no longer controlled by her Parliament, was to be followed by a Home Rule Bill which proposed the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin with very large powers, to which he knew he could never consent. To him there were in the bill two principles that he regarded as vital. The first was that of autonomy, to which he cordially assented; the second was the mode of securing that autonomy. He found that the Government had proceeded on the lines of separation or of colonial independence, while he would have advocated federation on the Canadian or some such pattern. He remonstrated, and explained his own schemes to no purpose; and at last, in spite of all invitations to reconsider his decision, he announced that he must inevitably break with the Government.

He resigned on the 15th March. To Mr. Gladstone he sent the following letter, and later, in the House of Commons, he explained the fine line he drew and had always drawn between the principles he had advocated for the largest possible extension of local government for Ireland and those which menaced the integrity of the Empire. But even then he was ready to come to terms, for he was

RT. HON. H. H. ASQUITH

Photo Elliott & Fry, London.

sincerely the well-wisher of Ireland and devoted to his own party. He invited Mr. Gladstone to modify and to reconsider the bill, and to remove the supreme point of objection, but without avail.

The letter of resignation ran :—

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I have carefully considered the results of the discussion on Saturday, and I have come, with the deepest reluctance, to the conclusion that I shall not be justified in attending the meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday, and that I must ask you to lay my resignation before Her Majesty.

"You will remember that in accepting office I expressed grave doubts as to the probability of my being able to support your Irish policy. Up to that time, however, no definite proposals had been formulated by you, and it was only on Saturday last that you were in a position to make a communication to the Cabinet on that subject. Without entering on unnecessary details, I may say that you proposed a scheme of Irish Land Purchase which involved an enormous and unprecedented use of British credit, in order, in your own words, 'to afford to the Irish landlord refuge and defence from a possible mode of government in Ireland which he regards as fatal to him.'

"This scheme, while contemplating only a trifling reduction of the judicial rents fixed before the recent fall in prices, would commit the British taxpayer to tremendous obligations, accompanied, in my opinion, with serious risk of ultimate loss. The greater part of the land of Ireland would be handed over to a new Irish elective authority, who would thus be at once the landlords and the delegates of the Irish tenants. I fear that these two capacities would be found inconsistent, and that the tenants, unable or unwilling to pay the rents demanded, would speedily elect an authority pledged to give them relief, and to seek to recoup itself by an early repudiation of what would be described as the English tribute.

"With these anticipations I was naturally anxious to know what was the object for which this risk was to be incurred, and for what form of Irish government it was to pave the way.

"I gathered from your statements that though your plans are not finally matured, yet that you have come to the conclusion that any extension of local government on municipal lines, including even the creation of a national council or councils for purely Irish business, would now be entirely inadequate, and that you are convinced of the necessity for conceding a separate legislative assembly for Ireland, with full powers to deal with all Irish affairs.

"I understood that you would exclude from their competence the control of the Army and Navy and the direction of foreign and colonial policy, but that you would allow them to arrange their own customs tariff, to have entire control of the civil forces of the country, and even, if they thought fit, to establish a volunteer army.

"It appears to me that a proposal of this kind must be regarded as tantamount to a proposal for separation.

"I think it is even worse, because it would set up an unstable and temporary form of government, which would be a source of perpetual irritation and agitation until the whole demands of the Nationalist party were conceded.

"The Irish Parliament would be called upon to pay three or four millions a year as its contribution to the National Debt and the Army and Navy, and it

would be required, in addition, to pay nearly five millions a year for interest and sinking fund on the cost of Irish land.

"These charges would be felt to be so heavy a burden on a poor country that persistent controversy would arise thereupon, and the due fulfilment of their obligations by the new Irish authority could only be enforced by a military intervention which would be undertaken with every disadvantage, and after all the resources of the country and the civil executive power had been surrendered to the Irish National Government.

"I conclude, therefore, that the policy which you propose to recommend to Parliament and the country practically amounts to a proposal that Great Britain should burden itself with an enormous addition to the National Debt, and probably also to an immediate increase of taxation, not in order to secure the closer and more effective union of the three kingdoms, but, on the contrary, to purchase the repeal of the Union and the practical separation of Ireland from England and Scotland.

"My public utterances and my conscientious convictions are absolutely opposed to such a policy, and I feel that the differences which have now been disclosed are so vital that I can no longer entertain the hope of being of service in the Government.

"I must, therefore, respectfully request you to take the necessary steps for relieving me of the office I have the honour to hold.—I am, yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

The Home Rule Bill was at first to have been introduced on the 22nd of March, but it was postponed till the 1st of April, and then to the 8th of April. A matter involving so many conflicting interests, Mr. Gladstone said, needed delay. During this interval various negotiations had been taking place between the chief and his mutinous colleague. Mr. Gladstone was now distraught, not solely by the attitude of Mr. Chamberlain but by that of Mr. Trevelyan, who had resigned at the same moment, and for an identical cause. (Mr. Chamberlain objected more to the Land Bill, while Mr. Trevelyan tabooed the whole Home Rule principle.) Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, and various other Liberals previously mentioned were ranged on the other side for the express purpose of putting a spoke in the wheel of Gladstonian machinations, and now two others threatened to leave the fold unless some form of modification as regarded the proposed Dublin Parliament could be arranged. But unfortunately Mr. Gladstone had gone much too far to recede. It is difficult to pat and to rub at the same time, and while he endeavoured to rub off the rust from Irish tempers, it was impossible to pat down the plumage of his ruffled colleagues. His position was unenviable in the extreme, and though he fumbled with the bill, and Mr. Chamberlain submitted as an alternative his original and improved scheme for the establishment of a National Council in Dublin—a council subject to the Imperial Parliament yet free to manage its internal affairs, to

make bye-laws, and levy rates (but not taxes), the result was a failure.

Mr. Chamberlain now stood at the parting of the ways. Though Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen were openly in sympathy with Lord Salisbury and Mr. W. H. Smith, his face was still turned in the direction of his old allies. There is no doubt that the Radical leader endeavoured to cling to the ties by which he had been bound during the whole of his political life; that he hoped when this temporary storm was passed, again to resume the old relations, again to march forward to progress under the party banner for the honour of which he had worked for twenty years so faithfully and so well. Lord Hartington, though his dissent was more loudly pronounced, though he declared that 86 members must not presume to dictate to 584, and had identified himself with the Opposition, was actuated however by much the same personal feeling for Mr. Gladstone as was Mr. Chamberlain. In a speech delivered at the Eighty Club he said, "I think that no one who has read or heard during a long series of years the declarations of Mr. Gladstone on the question of self-government in Ireland can be surprised at the tone of his present declaration. Lord Randolph Churchill, himself an attentive student of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, can find no date later than 1871 in which Mr. Gladstone has spoken strongly against the demand of the Irish people for greater self-government." He went on to say that when he looked back on the declarations made by Mr. Gladstone in Parliament, and the increased definiteness of these declarations in his Mid-Lothian speeches, and the other evidences of the conclusions he had formed, and the ideas he was considering in his mind, he felt neither he nor any one else had any right whatever to complain of the tone of the declarations made by Mr. Gladstone on this subject.

Meanwhile Lord Randolph Churchill, who previously had been actively employed in the overtures that gave rise to the charge against the Tories of "coquetting" with the Irish question, was creating a sensation in the United Kingdom—a very disunited kingdom in all but name! He descanted on the subject of the Unionists and Separatists, as he called those who opposed and those who advocated Home Rule, and drew an emotional picture of the Protestants of Ireland giving proof of their loyalty to the British throne. "I believe," he said, "there will be found hundreds and thousands of English hearts and hands who will be beside them and around them and behind them—who will be of opinion that, before the unity of this United Empire is for ever shattered, before the sun of England shall begin to set, a blow will have to be struck, the sound of which shall go into all lands, the echoes of which shall

reverberate to the uttermost ends of the earth!" This "high falutin," as it was called, was vastly appreciated at the time, for it was an era of ferment, and at such periods the intoxicating properties of verbosity are at their strongest. In Ulster the Tory Democrat waxed poetic, and after denouncing Mr. Gladstone for having clutched power by a "profligate manœuvre," and after propounding an effective "no surrender" policy, fired off as his last salvo the lines—

> "Wave, Ulster, all thy banners wave,
> And charge with all thy cavalry."

While all this was going forward the party managers were inquiring into the conduct of the Liberals who had voted against Mr. Jesse Collings' amendment, and those that were at variance with the Chief. Birmingham naturally received full satisfaction from the explanations of Mr. Chamberlain, who looked forward to reunion of the party in the near future, but Lord Hartington was less fortunate. The Liberal Council of the Rossendale division of Lancashire invited an explanation from him of his attitude, and his constituents, on hearing his able defence of his opinions, maintained a reserved neutrality—neither approving nor censuring the course pursued—but expressing the hope that such measures would be passed as would lead to the peace and prosperity of Great Britain and Ireland.

On the 27th of March Mr. Chamberlain's resignation was accepted, and his place was subsequently filled by Mr. Stansfeld. On the retirement of Mr. Trevelyan, Ministers sat thirteen at table, and those given to superstition dreaded the worst. As may be imagined, while so much talking was going forward the press were not silent. The split in the Cabinet set tongues galloping—that Mr. Gladstone's scheme should be too extreme for Radical Chamberlain struck all as amazing. The *Times*, the *Standard*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Daily Chronicle* were aghast. They thought things must be madder than mad to be tabooed by the great "Jo-a-head." The *Times*, alarmed, feared they had to deal with a situation in which were avowed schemes so extravagant that they were rejected by Mr. Chamberlain as well as by Lord Hartington! The *Daily Chronicle* argued that "the Liberal Cabinet cannot be so demented as to consign Ireland to anarchy and ruin!"

On the 8th of April the Home Rule Bill was introduced, and the gong sounded for the most exciting controversy of the Victorian era. No such scene is remembered within the ken of parliamentary man. Shortly after daybreak frantic and fasting members were seen scudding to the House to secure seats, some one hundred and

fifty of them breakfasting there. By noon every place was appropriated, and lunch for three hundred had to be provided.

In view of the unparalleled demand for places, the Speaker had taken the precaution to limit members to a hat apiece, consequently those who had deposited as hostages their headgear on their seats were constrained to remain in the building or to wander about Westminster thatchless! Many whose patience would not allow them to remain inactive till the afternoon, and whose craniums were well covered by nature, walked airily abroad; but others, who had no desire to provide "skating rinks for flies," remained forlornly within, cogitating the upshot of the night's event. Later in the day notable visitors began to troop in, and the buzz of the eager inquisitive throng stirred the air. By this time crowded benches filled the floor of the House from the mace to the bar, and an overflow of Irishmen even trickled into the Conservative ranks. In the place reserved for strangers was a curious medley of nineteenth-century personages—Cardinal Manning, Mr. Samuel Morley, Mr. Schnadhorst, the moving spirit of the caucus, Mr. Buckle, the editor of the *Times*, and others. The lobbies were thronged with princes and potentates of high degree. The Royal party was composed of the Prince of Wales and Prince Albert Victor, Prince Christian and the Duke of Cambridge, and the hidden presence of the Princess of Wales and Princess Beatrice, followed by duchesses innumerable added a chastened lustre to the assembly. Mr. Gladstone from Downing Street was escorted to the House by a cheering mob, whose roars resounded without the ancient walls like the thunders of a stormy sea. His entry was the signal for tremendous enthusiasm, the Liberals rising to hail him, for the time at least, sovereign of the situation; the Irishmen—as an apostle, a saviour. They waved and cheered and yelled with all the vigour with which, but a few short months before, they had tumultuously execrated him, and designedly wrought his overthrow. Not one soul in the House but hung on the movements of this grand old man, seen now by some as a grand old adventurer, by others as a valiant desperado, but by all acknowledged as the greatest orator the century had known. Curiosity—hopeful, regretful, critical, condemnatory, admiring, or lamenting—was visible on every face. Emotion of other kinds betrayed itself in the bearing of Ministers, comrades, friends, and colleagues; in that of the many members who had won their seats, as the saying is, "by the skin of their teeth," and thought they were successfully placed for a good six years; in that of the men who had been his rivals, of the men who were to replace him, of those who had made their reputations, and of others who had theirs yet to make; in the bearing of all was amazed conjecture, a thrilling, silent, almost awe-struck expectation.

The great man spoke. The silver volume of his oratory flowed out—persuasive, argumentative, explanatory; the tone of his voice, with the majesty of his glance, was such that on hearing it the soul contributed artistic assent before the understanding could determine so much as a "yea" or a "nay." It was a magnificent *tour de force* —the charge of heart and intellect and genius—the charge of his whole flesh against relentless guns; the guns of Imperial duty thundering resistance. His speech, which he himself thought would never end, lasted three and a half hours; it was, first, a marvellous exhibition of Demosthenian art, and, second, an astounding feat of physical endurance. For any man, far less one treading towards the borders of octogenarianism, the performance was a marvel. He argued, first, that the policy of Home Rule and that of the land question could not be divided, and that Ministers had arrived at the conclusion that the Irish question must be faced in its entirety. Their object, therefore, was to restore to Parliament its liberty of action, and establish satisfactory relations between Great Britain and Ireland. He dilated on the agrarian crime, stating, to the joy of the Nationalists, that had the same causes been found in Scotland and England similar results might have occurred. In respect of coercion, it could not be tried till all else had failed. All had not yet failed, for as yet the law in Ireland had not been invested with a domestic character. By giving both legislation and administration into Irish hands, the hatred of the law might be overcome. Other countries had gained rather than lost by independent government—Sweden and Norway, Austria and Hungary, for instance—and, said Mr. Gladstone, the great expedient was to promote "the establishment, by the authority of a Parliament, of a legislative body sitting in Dublin for the conduct both of legislation and administration, under the conditions which may be described by the Act defining Irish as distinct from Imperial affairs." With all this Mr. Gladstone proposed to arrange for the preservation of the unity of the Empire, the peace of the minority, the political equality of the three countries, and the equitable distribution of Imperial burdens. He declared the impossibility of admitting to Westminster members empowered to debate only on Irish questions. There was no choice but to keep Irish members for all purposes or to dispose of their services altogether, and that being the case, it had been decided by Government to exclude them altogether from the British Parliament. Then, since the English could not force on Ireland taxation without representation, the taxing power would be placed in the hands of the Irish Parliament, while customs and excise duties appertaining to customs would be controlled as usual, save that Ireland's share would be handed over for her use. He then minutely

entered into the constructive portions of his plan, and after describing how the various offices should be filled, and the constabulary eventually raised, he passed on to the subject of finance. From exhaustive and complicated details he returned to the oratorial mood, and declaimed: "I rely on the patriotism and sagacity of this House. I rely on the effect of free discussion. I rely, above all, on the just and generous sentiments of the two British nations; and looking forward, I ask the House to assist us in the work we have undertaken—to believe that no trivial motives could have driven us on, to assist us in the work which we believe will restore Parliament to its dignity, and legislation to its free and unimpeded course.... I ask that we should practice—as we very often preach—in our own case, with firm and fearless hand, the doctrine that we have so often inculcated upon others, namely, that the concession of local self-government is not the way to sap or to impair, but the way to strengthen and to consolidate unity." Then the speaker's voice grew mellow with a pathetic note of exhortation: "I ask," he said, "that we should rely less on merely written stipulations, and more on those better stipulations that are written on the heart and on the mind of man. I ask that we should apply to Ireland the happy experience which we have gained in England and Scotland, where a course of generations has now taught us, not as a dream or theory, but as a practice, or as life—that the best and surest foundation we can build on is the foundation afforded by the affections, the convictions, and the will of men; and it is thus, by the decree of the Almighty that, far more than by any other endeavour, we may be able to secure at once social peace, and the fame, the power, and the permanence of the Empire!"

While they listened to this wonderful flow of verbiage even his opponents were touched—their reason was arrested, their minds were lifted from the Slough of Despond, Ireland, to the wonderful possibilities put forth by the genius of this marvellous man, whose very voice thrilled with the ardour of the cause he had persuaded himself was a righteous and a just cause. But presently came to them a mundane vision of stumbling-blocks: Ulster trampled on and unprovided for; of judges and constabulary ineffective owing to their dependence on an elective Parliament of pronounced Irish-American influence; and an Expropriation Bill that threatened to ruin all save the wealthier landlords. All these things were put forth by Mr. Trevelyan and others; and when all was said and done, Mr. Parnell was not satisfied. His was one of the speeches of the debate, and he described the financial propositions that Mr. Gladstone had set forth as a "hard bargain," only acceptable to Ireland by reason of her ardent craving for Home Rule. His peroration was memorable for its sincerity—it

was not an oracular masterpiece; it was the being of the man pouring itself forth for the cause of his people.

Mr. Chamberlain expressed his opinion of the bill, and attempted to read the letters that have been quoted which bore on his attitude in regard to joining the Cabinet, but since Mr. Gladstone objected to the introduction of matter connected with the, as yet, undiscussed Land Purchase Bill, he had to content himself by raising the whole storm of his well-known objections to Mr. Gladstone's full-fledged scheme.

A trying ordeal was the explanation of his attitude in relation to it. But his pale face, lifted above the simple violets that adorned his buttonhole, his calm, keen glance and trenchant, incisive enunciation, denoted that a strong man confident in his strength and in his reason stood before his fellows.

He assured the House that no act of his public life had been so painful as the tendering of his resignation. "I am told that by taking that step I have wrecked my political prospects—destroyed all hope of future usefulness." He proceeded to say that he could view that prospect with equanimity, but it was more hard to reconcile himself to a departure from one whom he for so many years had followed and honoured, and to leave personal friends and political associates with whom he had no other cause of difference whatever. "I can assure the House," he earnestly said, "I find it a more difficult task to leave a Government than to enter one." Then came a noble expression of respect for the Chief. "I admit that if any difference of opinion has arisen between myself and my right hon. friend with his unrivalled experience, his vast knowledge of public affairs, his long and tried devotion to the public service, the natural presumption is that he is right and I am wrong."

He had yielded on many occasions to that presumption. But on this occasion, one where the issue was of such vital importance and where a mistake if made would be fatal and irrevocable, it seemed to be his duty—the duty of every man, however humble—to bring to its consideration an independent judgment. Private feeling —personal friendship, political ambition—the cherished object of a public life—these, every one of them, must be set aside before the claim of still higher and more important issues.

"Since I have been in public affairs I have called myself—not altogether without reason—a Radical. But the title has not prevented me from giving great consideration to Imperial interests. *I have cared for the honour, the influence, the integrity of the Empire. It is because I believe these things to be in danger that I have felt myself called upon to make the greatest sacrifice any public man can make.*"

He then proceeded to read the letter containing his stipulation on joining the Cabinet, described again his opinions on Home Rule, and

said: "If now, sir, to my deep regret, and with the greatest possible reluctance, I have felt compelled to sever myself from the Government of my right hon. friend, it is because in my heart and conscience I do not think the scheme which he last night explained to the House maintains the limitations that he has always declared himself determined to preserve."

Mr. Chamberlain's explanation of his exact views is best given in his own words:—

"I hope I am not going beyond the limitation which has been imposed on me, when I say briefly my objection is not to one portion of the scheme, but to the scheme as a whole. I object to either part of the scheme. I object—I will not say to the proposal of my right hon. friend, because I do not know what it is—I shall not know until he has explained it in the final form which it has received—but I know this, that whatever it is I shall object if it lays—" [here he was disturbed by the ironical cheers of the Irishmen]—"I must say that the zeal of hon. members opposite overleaps itself." He then went on: "I am not hostile to the scheme of land purchase. It would not be right of me to state my views on that subject; but I will say at once that I am prepared for a scheme of land purchase. What I was going to say when I was interrupted was, that I should object to any scheme which laid on the British taxpayer a tremendous liability, and what I thought to be an excessive risk. Above all, I should object to any scheme that was intended only as a bribe to Irish landlords to induce them to modify their hostility to a scheme of Home Rule, and which did not give evidence of an essential and considerable advantage for Irish tenants, who are a class, the poorer tenants especially, deserving of sympathy and assistance. Then I objected to the new authority proposed to be created, because it was certain to become practically independent. *The scheme was one for separation and not for Home Rule.* I objected to the two together, because they seemed to me to combine the maximum of risk and the minimum of advantage, and the utmost possible sacrifice for an object which I did not believe it to be worth our while to strive to attain. I do not wish to be misunderstood—the object, of course, being the creation of a separate statutory Parliament in Dublin. I wanted to have said something more about the land, but I pass over that. Only I will say this—a perfectly general remark also, and applying almost to any scheme of land purchase—that we shall be asked to consider any scheme of land purchase as an inseparable adjunct to a scheme which, in my opinion, practically will place Ireland in the position of Canada. Now I want to test that illustration of Canada. Canada is loyal and friendly to this country. Ireland, I am sorry to say, at the present time is not loyal, and cannot be called friendly. But if Canada came to this House and asked for any large use of British credit in order to buy Canadian land or to carry out public works in Canada, why, it would be scouted from one end of the kingdom to the other.

"Well, then, how can it possibly be right for us to give to Ireland what we refuse to Canada, when the sole result would be to try and put Ireland in the position in which Canada has been for several years. I said I shall object to any scheme that involves the British taxpayer in excessive risks. Why is the risk of any scheme excessive? I have been myself an advocate of large schemes in England and Scotland intended by the use of public money to

turn a small tenant into the proprietor of the land that he tilled. I have not been unwilling to take the risk in such a case. *But what I object to is to take a risk for what I believe in a short time will be a foreign country.* For an integral part of the United Kingdom I am prepared to take a risk. I am not prepared to take a risk in order to promote what is in my judgment a thinly veiled scheme of separation. The fact is that the key to the whole situation is the proposal to exclude Irish members from this House. I do not wonder that that is a proposal which has many attractions, both for Liberal and for Conservative members. The hon. member for Cork has often shown that he can be in this House a most agreeable colleague; but I am sure he will not think me offensive if I say that he and his friends have also shown that they can be very disagreeable at times. He in one of his speeches threatened that if his demands were not complied with he would make all legislation impossible."

Mr. Parnell challenged this statement, declaring that he had made no such threat; but Mr. Chamberlain replied that he would send to the hon. member if he liked the passage, the date, and the place where the speech was alleged to have been made.

"But I do not want to press that, and I readily accept his statement that he never said so. However, whether he said it or not, there are many people who think he would have the power to do something of that kind, and that fact weighs very much with English and Scotch members in the desire that they at all events should be left alone to carry on English and Scotch business without Irish assistance. It is quite unreasonable to turn out Irish members from this House and leave them entirely unrepresented in reference to matters in which Irish interests are largely concerned, and which are dealt with by an Imperial Parliament. Just consider that under the scheme of the Prime Minister the customs and the excise are to be taken from their control; all the prerogatives of the Crown are to be removed from their competence to deal with, as are also the Army and the Navy and foreign and colonial policy. Are the Irish members of opinion that the Irish people would be permanently content to be shut out from all part in the Imperial policy of this country? I am going to quote the hon. member for Cork again, but also from memory. He will tell me if I am wrong. I think that in one of his speeches he said something to the effect that he would never be satisfied until Ireland took her full place among the nations of the world. That is, I think, a patriotic aspiration, but I would point out that it never can be realised under the scheme of my right hon. friend. How can Ireland take her place among the nations of the world when her mouth is closed on every international question? Ireland is to have no part in the arrangement of commercial treaties by which her interests may be seriously affected. She will have no part in deciding the policy under which war may break out, in which her sentiment may be seriously engaged on one side or the other, or which may put in serious peril her own coast. She is to have no part in the control of the Army and Navy of this country. That is extraordinary, because *the annals of our army show that there have been no more illustrious members of that army than Irishmen; and Irishmen under this scheme are to be content to be sent to battle and to death for matters which Irish representatives are to have no voice in discussing or determining.*

"I say that Ireland under these circumstances is asked to occupy a position

of degradation, and I venture to predict that, whatever hon. members may do now in order to obtain this instalment of their demands, their own countrymen will never rest satisfied with such an inadequate concession. Again, Ireland is to pay a fixed contribution to the Army and Navy in which she is to have no part, but that contribution is not to be increased if England gets into difficulty or into war. It may be that in the most terrible crisis of the fate of the Empire Ireland is expected to be indifferent and unaffected, contributing not one single penny in order to secure the safety of the realm of which she is supposed to form a part. Where, in all this, is the integrity of the Empire? In my view the solution of the question should be sought in some form of federation, which would really maintain the Imperial unity, and which would at the same time conciliate the desire for a national local government which is felt so strongly by the constituents of hon. members opposite. I do not suppose that the circumstances of the case are the same, but I say it is on these lines, not on the lines of our relations with self-governing colonies, that it is possible to find a solution of the difficulty."

He then referred to his own position in this critical period. "There are some persons, servile partisans who disgrace political life, who say that I have been guilty of treachery because I have resigned an office which I could no longer hold with honour. What would these men have been entitled to say if, holding the opinions that I do, which I expressed before joining the Government, and which I have expressed to-day, I had remained on that bench pretending to serve my country with a lie upon my lips? I do not assume—Heaven knows I do not pretend to dogmatise on a question of this kind—I do not presume to condemn those who differ from me; but of one thing I am certain, that I should have been guilty of an incredible shame and baseness if I had clung to place and office in support of a policy which in my heart I believe to be injurious to the best interests of Ireland and Great Britain."

The first reading of the bill (13th April) passed without a division, but not without rough handling from Tories and Lords.

On the 14th of April a meeting organised by the Loyal and Patriotic Union was held at the Opera House. Lord Salisbury was present, so also was Lord Hartington, and the world began at once to discuss the fusion of Whigs and Tories that for some time past had been prophesied. But Mr. Chamberlain yet held aloof. He was disinclined to identify himself with the Whig secession, though it was impossible to ignore the fact that such a consummation might eventually become inevitable.

The question of the exclusion or retention of the Irish members had become by degrees the crux of the Home Rule argument. Mr. Chamberlain had stood out for the retention of the Irish members, and Mr. Gladstone had refused to alter his clause. While this remained there seemed small chance of the reconciliation that Mr. Chamberlain desired.

Meanwhile the Irishmen among themselves were in a considerable state of turmoil as to how the dissensions in the Liberal camp would finally adjust themselves.

"Gladstone plus Chamberlain can carry Home Rule, but Gladstone minus Chamberlain cannot." Such was the verdict. What then would happen to Gladstone if Chamberlain and Hartington joined hands against him? cried the Nationalists, and a tremor of anxiety ran through their ranks.

When the Land Bill was introduced, Mr. Chamberlain attacked the whole policy of the bill as impracticable. He thought it unwise to make grants to the Irish which could not be extended to Scots and English people of the same order. He explained also that since his resignation great changes had been made in the Home Rule Bill, changes in which "I rejoice to see an approximation beween the views of my right honourable friend and myself, which I did not dare to hope for at the time I left the Cabinet."

He then dwelt on the precedent that would now be made by borrowing many millions of English money to pay off Irish landlords. The demands of depressed trade would, he feared, increase; and a precedent of State aid, if it were created, might become irresistible. If there were no other objection to the scheme, there was the bare fact that ere long England would need the money herself. The people of Scotland—the crofters and others whose misery equalled that of Ireland; the labourers of England, who should be given opportunities to secure a direct interest in the soil they cultivated—all were refused, and what was refused to these could not well be granted to the people of Ireland. These considerations he thought should be weighed before the second reading of the bill. Then amid cheers from the Gladstonians, he cried, "I recognise the spirit of conciliation with which the Government has tried to meet some of the objections already taken to the scheme. I need not assure my right hon. friend, or my friends around me, that the difference which unfortunately for a time—I hope it may be only a short time—have separated my right hon. friend, have not impaired my respect for his character and abilities. I am not an irreconcilable opponent. My right hon. friend has made considerable modifications in his bill. All I can say is, that if the movement should continue, as I hope it may, I shall be delighted to be relieved from an attitude which I only assumed with the greatest reluctance, and which I can only maintain with the deepest pain and regret."

On this night Mr. Chamberlain was free to read his letter of resignation that has been already referred to.

At Easter Mr. Chamberlain visited Birmingham, addressed the Birmingham Liberal Association—the Two Thousand—and put before his constituents the facts of the case. His coming had been anxiously looked forward to, the rights of his attitude hotly discussed. In face of the great man, excitement grew intense. He,

too, was not a little perturbed as to what the future would bring forth. The most staunch members of the Liberal party were weighing and arguing. Were they to go with Lord Hartington and Mr. Bright, who stood definitely apart from the bill? with Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan, who were in the thick of a fight whose end was not yet determinable? or were they to close eyes, ears, and mind, and go nose-led by any string that Mr. Gladstone should fasten to them? So implicit was their faith in the Grand Old Man that they were uncertain whether they could venture to accept the judgment of Mr. Chamberlain—which, however, they felt to be as sincere as it was disinterested. "He would have been a traitor to us, a traitor to his chief, a traitor to his country, if he had not given it frankly," Dr. Dale, the apostle of Birmingham, told them.

It was no question of leadership now. Mr. Gladstone was the leader of the party, but—ah! that the party were forced to think, to act, to speak for themselves. In years gone by Mr. Chamberlain, in all matters save his own speciality, his almost sacred F's, had followed as a procession follows in the wake of the High Priest, repeating duly the appointed word. Now, to his cost, he made his stand, and the block in the procession created a *mêlée* for which he was held responsible. He had now to prove to his constituents and to the country that his act was no wanton act of aggressiveness, no mean plan of desertion for ulterior ends, but an obligatory duty which could not be shirked or temporised with —a duty to his country which surmounted every personal consideration. On the 21st of April he explained to his constituents his miserable dilemma. "Fifteen years ago I was drawn into politics by my interest in social questions—by my desire to promote the welfare of the great majority of the population." These, he went on to describe, thrifty, hard-working artisans and labourers, he saw condemned by bad laws, by neglect of their rulers, to a life of exacting toil—with none of the advantages afforded by education, weighted by conditions that he thought unfair and unjust. To the Liberal party he looked as a means of remedy and redress—as a great instrument of progress and reform. From that hour he worked with all his might, sacrificing money, time, labour—even opinions—to maintain the organisation, and to preserve the unity of the Liberal party.

The expression "I have made sacrifices of my opinions" fell strangely on the ear, and those who had marvelled at Mr. Chamberlain's apparent apathy in regard to what may be called out-of-door-questions, began to wonder how far this man of men had consented to follow at a time he knew he could not hope to lead. His speech went on:—

"And even now—in this time of discouragement and anxiety, when personal friends and political ties are breaking down under the strain of the dissensions which have been raised among us—I entreat you so to continue this discussion that when the time of trial is past, we may once more unite without embittered memories, without unkind reflections, to carry forward the great work upon which we have hitherto been absolutely unanimous."

Mr. Chamberlain then turned the attention of the audience, who fervently applauded him, to the social questions which at the last election had filled their minds. The change in the situation—the waiving of that engrossing theme—how had it come about? It was the result of "the force of character, of the determination, the courage of one illustrious man," which qualities, while admired in themselves, were in the result never more deplored. He then went on to speak of Mr. Parnell. "I have never, either in public or in private, spoken with other than respect of Mr. Parnell. I believe him to be sincere and patriotic. I think very often he has been mistaken in his course, but at least I give him credit for perfect honesty of purpose, and I recognise in him a man who knows his mind!" In this last word of appreciation we have Mr. Chamberlain through and through. He is a man who knows his mind—reveals it; and if perchance that mind has changed, looked forth on the scenery of life from higher windows, he as readily describes the new view that he has been privileged to enjoy.

He returned to the bill. He objected to it as a symbol of separation. Mr. Parnell had said, "None of us will be satisfied till we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England." This bill proposed Imperial taxation for Ireland without Imperial representation; yet England might be struggling for very existence —in the very throes of death—while Ireland remained unconcerned! Under the new constitution she would be unaffected—there could be no call on her for aid; she would be irresponsible save for a fixed contribution settled upon a peace estimate of the cost of the army and navy. Further, Mr. Chamberlain pointed out, coercion, far from being dead, would revive in its worst form. On one side of Ireland was the loyal minority—industrious, prosperous—who were bitterly opposed to the scheme. They believed that neither property, religion, nor life could safely be entrusted to a National Parliament in Dublin. "Well, for my part, I hate coercion," he said, "and I am not disposed to coerce these men by British soldiers." He went on to say he thought the Land Bill a bad one. "I would sooner go out of politics altogether than give my vote to pledge the capital of the country and the future earnings of every man in the United Kingdom, in order to modify the opposition of a

small class of Irish proprietors to a scheme which, if it remain in its present form, will, I believe, infallibly lead to the separation of Ireland from England." He then pointed out that his resignation, far from being unique, had precedent in the action of Mr. Gladstone himself, who had more than once separated himself from a Government whose policy was disapproved. If for private interests or personal ambition he had been false to his convictions and disregarded the vital interests of his country—then indeed might he be condemned, then indeed might he be despised, but as it was, to be consistent with the sincerity of his convictions, he had no recourse but to act as he had acted.

The explanation to all appearance was a satisfactory one. Mr. Schnadhorst, the President of the Liberal Association, proposed a vote of confidence in Mr. Chamberlain, and said that the meeting, recognising his honesty in the course he had taken, placed on record its judgment that in fulfilling his conditions he had been guided by a high sense of personal honour and public duty.

Further, Dr. Dale moved a second resolution, which practically committed Birmingham to a Unionist policy. While appreciating Mr. Gladstone's efforts as leader of the party to settle the Irish question on the lines proposed, the undoubted demand for the maintenance of Union demonstrated that the meeting of Liberals were greatly at variance with Mr. Gladstone's scheme. Finally, the resolution was triumphantly carried, and even those who at the onset had been ready to swallow anything prescribed by the great physician for Ireland, began to believe that there are other cures for disease than amputation, and to understand that Mr. Chamberlain's zealous precautions were after all the most calculated to promote the healthful adjustment of affairs.

The Two Thousand pledged themselves to follow Mr. Chamberlain, to reject the Land Bill, and entertain only such revised Home Rule Bill as he should approve! The Birmingham *Free Lance* was very jocose at Mr. Chamberlain's expense, and brought out a cartoon of the Grand Old Nurse William with the twin baby Bills in arms. Approaching them was Surgeon Chamberlain with a knife:—

"NURSE GLADSTONE.—Oh dear! oh dear! What are you going to do with them?

"MR. CHAMBERLAIN.—Only a little operation. You should have consulted me before."

By Mother Gladstone's skirts, sleeking, rubbing itself, and purring, was a tame cat marked "Morley"; in the distance a crowd of wondering surgeons, rivals, and professors arguing the points of the case. On the wall was a placard: "*The* 2000 *Liberal students are*

cordially invited to assist at a lecture on the use of the knife.—J. C." And also a notice: "*Coroner's inquest on the Land Bill —The Verdict.*"

II.—AN EVENTFUL MAY—MR. GLADSTONE'S MANIFESTO

Mr. Chamberlain even at this juncture had not entirely given up hopes of being reunited to his party, and his constituents still upheld him manfully, believing that he might yet be induced to come to terms with the Chief. In a manifesto issued by Mr. Gladstone—which began a series of political May meetings—the veteran modified his programme. The Land Bill was smoothed over (he recognised that tactically it was a blunder), and the Home Rule Bill had merely, as an essential point, the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin for the purpose of making laws for Ireland as distinct from Imperial affairs.

His programme had naturally the effect of an effort to repair the rift in the lute, but later, events happened which put Mr. Chamberlain on his mettle, and showed him that if he was meant to stand alone, he could do it with a will. On the 5th of May the National Liberal Federation—the "caucus" that Mr. Chamberlain had reared and nourished and vivified—carried by a huge majority a series of resolutions supporting the Government. Mr. Schnadhorst, the man whose career practically owed its fashioning to Mr. Chamberlain, went over to the enemy, and nearly all the local associations in the country followed suit. This action was said by some to be due to party principle merely, but others declared that such was the magnetism of Mr. Gladstone's marvellous personality that it was difficult to apply political reasonings in the presence of so commanding a hero. There was then an attempt to oust Mr. Chamberlain from what may be called his own territory—Birmingham—an attempt which failed, and taught the lesson that their man, once having mounted the political Pegasus, meant to sit tight, and was not to be unseated by political buck jumpings.

Naturally the public looked askant at such temerity. There is a certain amazement, bordering on disapproval, that takes possession of mediocre minds when brought face to face with an independent spirit. Mr. Chamberlain's bold moves produced an effect similar to that caused by Hampden when he put his foot down against the Naval tax in 1636. "Till this time," said Clarendon, "he was rather of reputation in his own country than of public discourse or fame in the kingdom; but then he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and prosperity of the

THE GRAND OLD FALCONER.

WILLIAM (*a trifle husky*).—"Oh, for my falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!"

(*From the other* WILLIAM—*adapted.*)

(From *Punch*, May 1, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

kingdom;" and later, referring to him, the historian said, "The judgments proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned than to the King's service." In like manner to Mr. Chamberlain the adverse and hostile voices redounded advantageously and caused people to ponder what manner of man he was who dared to cut himself adrift from the mighty vessel of Liberalism and prepare to weather the gales alone.

For he had at the moment little prospect of anything but wreck. Every one predicted that the result of his action would leave him under a ban of unpopularity for years, that his abandonment of Mr. Gladstone would cost him certainly Nonconformist support, and possibly the loss of the very political friends and associates whom he held most in esteem. The future was frowning on all sides, but against his settled convictions there was no going back. On the 6th of May, in a letter to Mr. T. H. Bolton, Mr. Chamberlain said that "the key of the position was to maintain the representation of Ireland in Parliament and her responsibility in Imperial affairs." He believed that if this key were accepted, the fatal breach that threatened to take place in the Liberal ranks might be happily averted. It was a last act of propitiation, but so inflated had Mr. Gladstone and his advisers become by their successful capture of the caucus that they underestimated Mr. Chamberlain's influence with the country and set to work to defy him. The action of his quondam friends merely showed that conciliation had become impossible. Mr. Chamberlain had tried the *suaviter in modo*. He replaced it by the *fortiter in re*. Meetings were arranged for the 12th, 14th, and 15th of May to plumb the opinions of the mutineers of the party, and what was to be their combined action in regard to the second reading of the obnoxious bill. And thus gradually came to pass the curious commingling of forces that brought about the change in Mr. Chamberlain's outlook. He, and the Radicals who adhered to him and to Mr. Bright, now found themselves in accord on a vital subject with the Whigs who followed Lord Hartington; the two sections, widely different in so many matters, uniting naturally in the face of a common danger.

Rumours were now afloat that the Government meant to "hang up" the bill provided the second reading was carried. Mr. Parnell vigorously objected. He remonstrated at headquarters, declaring that the Government ought to show that they were in earnest in the matter. By hanging up the bill the position of the dissenting members would be strengthened and that of the assenting ones weakened. Moreover, the people of Ireland would be inclined to believe that if the bill were dropped it would be dropped for ever.

The Liberals remained in the utmost state of disturbance; some

thirty-four of their members had gone over to the Liberal-Unionist Committee, thirty-nine more determined to fight, and about the same number remained in a state of painful oscillation.

On the second reading of the bill (10th May) Lord Hartington

EASTER EGGS.

THE GRAND OLD HEN.—See what beautiful Eggs I've laid!
THE GRAND YOUNG BANTAM.—Yes, and see how I've smashed one of them.

(From the *Birmingham Owl*, by permission.)

moved a simple amendment in the form of rejection. He hammered the thing flat, stigmatising it as "a mischievous measure," and the weight of his right arm, propelled by the uprightness and sincerity of his character, struck conviction into many wavering minds.

The increase in popularity of the dissentient spirit may be judged from the results of the meetings that took place while the debate

dragged its weary length till June. That on the 12th of May, inviting members favourable to the Home Rule principle but opposed to the present phase of the bill, was attended by only thirty-two members. At another meeting held by Lord Hartington at Devonshire House on the 14th, the number almost doubled itself, and it became evident that shortly a formidable force of dissentient Liberals would stand between the country and the objectionable innovation. Meanwhile, both inside and outside the House, the pros and cons of the bill never ceased to be discussed, weighed, or wrangled over, each critic repeating faintly or forcibly, according to individual disposition, the arguments that had been propounded by both parties in the debate, which arguments, with commentaries from the press *ad libitum*, were now fodder for the man in the street. The whole knotty problem of Ministers and Opposition was thrashed out in club and railway carriage, in dining-room and office. People went back to Pitt and Grattan and Burke to verify quotations, and delivered them pat in support of their particular views. A few Tories dismissed the whole thing summarily; it was not to be mentioned. The thin end of the wedge to let in an Irish Republic? Never! Solid and square-toed minds nodded approval over the emphatic pronouncements of Lord Hartington, who both on the first and second reading (April 9 and May 10) forcibly rejected the scheme in terms that were unequivocal and entirely sincere; they rejoiced that the integrity of the Empire was safe in his hands. Some were agreed there was virtue in the bill; but it did not go far enough, it would not secure a peaceful and contented Ireland; others averred that there might have been virtue in the bill had it not gone too far. The Irish leader was a first-rate huckster, they said, and little by little the Prime Minister was going up and up; he had begun by offering to let the Irish contribution to the Imperial Fund be one-fourteenth part, and by-and-by Mr. Parnell, with another tweak of the screw, would stand out for the payment of less than a twentieth part. The idea of content coupled with Ireland was generally scouted; had not Grattan said that the "King, lords, and commons of Ireland only could make laws to bind Ireland." Was it likely that the men who had made themselves so designedly unpleasant in the House of Commons would change their tactics when set up on their own soil? Had the great leader taken leave of his senses? asked one. Was he so enamoured of power that he turned traitor? said another. Was he sincere, or was it merely a mask? cried a third. Sincere to the core! declared a fourth. Mr. Gladstone never attempted to convince others without first convincing himself; he was sincere, and desperately in earnest. He was ready to weep tears of blood for the sake of Ireland! "And the Irish vote," added a cynical Tory.

An Eventful May

In practical circles Mr. Gladstone's estimates were commented on with considerable acrimony. The £1,718,544 which was set down for Civil Service salaries in Ireland were denounced by some as "the Great Bribe," by others as "a magnificent present that Mr. Gladstone proposed to lay at the feet of Mr. Parnell." Certainly this sum was justly described as the key to the situation, for it was stated in certain quarters that the bill would hardly have been looked at across the water, especially after Mr. Gladstone's reservations, save for the bait of the Civil Service salaries and the judicial and magisterial emoluments. It was said, moreover, that every branch president or secretary to the National League expected before the end of the year to get a Government situation, and that, compared with Mr. Gladstone's wholesale transaction, the secret corruption of Grattan's Parliament was a bagatelle!

Mr. Chamberlain's actions also were being virulently criticised. Some asserted that he was actuated by a natural antagonism to Mr. Gladstone; others hinted of dark ambitious designs that were hatching in the Radical's brains. But in reality Mr. Chamberlain was cutting himself adrift to float upon an unknown sea. He had resigned his post as member of the Cabinet, and with it he threw up his generally recognised position as heir-presumptive to the leadership. And these prospects he set aside—for what? His passages at arms with Lord Salisbury yet buzzed in Tory memory; his quips at the expense of the moderate Liberals were repeated on every hand. He had made no single move to ingratiate himself with the Mammon of Unrighteousness, so that when the end came they should receive him in their houses. Why then did he act as he did? Why, when a little trimming of the sails of his convictions would have enabled him to retain the brilliant berth that it had taken him years to acquire—why did he cut himself adrift to sail in the open practically alone? Some of his detractors hinted that his object was to drive Mr. Gladstone from his throne, and with such Liberals as he could muster support a coalition Ministry in which he and Lord Hartington would take prominent positions. The journals even went so far as to plan out a phantom Cabinet, in which the names of Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, of Mr. Goschen, Sir Henry James, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Courtney, Lord Selborne, Lord Northbrook, Lord Derby, and the Duke of Argyll figured. The outline afforded ample food for gossip, and people drew fantastic dialogues that were supposed to take place between the partial Home Ruler, Mr. Chamberlain, and the solid Unionist, Lord Hartington; between Rip Van Winkle, the orthodox representative of Whig tradition, and Jack Cade, the unorthodox inventor of unauthorised ideals. It was all very humorous—exciting for the Press, stimulat-

ing for companies at the breakfast table, and tickling to the palates of amateur politicians, but to Mr. Chamberlain it was vital! Blondin crossing on his rope the Falls of Niagara carried his life in his hand; Mr. Chamberlain balancing himself on the fine line between the call of Imperial duty and his long-cherished scheme for the welfare of Ireland, risked not life, bald and simple, but life as it appeared to him, full of fine issues immatured, yet budding with a thousand hints of promise soon possibly to be blighted.

On the 15th of May Lord Salisbury also held a meeting, and dispersed any nebulous whispers regarding the solidity of the Tory party and its relation to the dissentient Liberals. He instructed the Conservatives that in the coming division the victory lay with them, and also the responsibilities of it; with them and not with the allies whose assistance they would gladly accept, and to whom, should they desire it, assistance would be rendered.

Till now Mr. Bright had not expressed himself in any way on the subject of the bills, and there was a lingering hope in the Radical party and among the Irishmen that he by his silence might mean consent. This hope was shortly dispelled, when in an interview with Mr. Barry O'Brien at the Reform Club he stated his objections both to the Land and to the Home Rule Bills.

He announced that he did not object to the bill on the ground that it might lead to religious persecution, because he thought the days for that kind of thing were past, and, moreover, that Ireland, if disposed to persecute, would find herself too contiguous to a Protestant country to attempt it. He laid stress on the fact that the Protestants were well able to take care of themselves, and that it was the Catholics and not the Protestants who had come under the harrow of the League. The idea of separation he scouted as absurd in view of the increasing population of England and the diminishing population of Ireland. "I do not know that separation would be a bad thing if you could separate far enough," the great orator said; and Mr. O'Brien, with the happy whimsicality of his nation, helped him out still further with a quotation from one of his own famous speeches: "*If we could be moved two thousand miles to the westward?*"—and Mr. Bright, smiling, nodded assent. He offered no varnish, but declared that "Many of us would be glad to get rid of you; but we have been thrown together by nature, and so we must remain."[1] He further stated his objection to the bill because he believed it went either too far or not far enough, and would lead to friction between the two countries, and the Irish Parliament would be perpetually agitating to break the bars of "the statutory cage" in which it was confined. He considered the most pleasing clause

[1] "Life of Charles Stewart Parnell." R. Barry O'Brien.

of Mr. Gladstone's bill that which Mr. Chamberlain objected to. It excluded the Irish members from Westminster. It was curious how widely different were opinions in this particular matter. Mr. Bright was only too anxious to purge Westminster of the Irish members, and Mr. Chamberlain fought to retain them. Mr. Gladstone favoured their exclusion, and Mr. Parnell was in agreement with him. He saw in the arrangement more than appeared on the surface. He imagined that the Irish Parliament would thus acquire an independent character, which was highly desirable. But the matter to him was one of detail, and not as it was to others, a vital hinge of the machinery.

In other respects Mr. Bright found the bill wanting. His desire was so to legislate as to divert Irish energy in Irish party warfare, and give no party leader a chance to take up the anti-English cry. An optimistic programme doubtless, but one which would have deprived Ireland of its main stimulus towards existence. Finally, in bidding Mr. O'Brien adieu, Mr. Bright regretted that he could not be of his party, though he had been all his life on the Irish side. But so little did he desire to work against the Irish cause that he even then doubted whether he should act at all. Hitherto, he said, he had refrained from speaking on account of Mr. Gladstone—he had abstained out of personal regard for him.

In the same way Mr. Chamberlain also hesitated before making a final stand.

By this it will be seen how the political and social ramifications of society lapped or crumbled, sometimes through the personalities of individuals, sometimes through the principles of parties. No longer was Tory opposed to Whig and Whig to Tory alone, but Whig fought Whig and Radical fought Radical, and Tories turned cold shoulders on even the discussion of the "infamous plot" that menaced the Empire. In some of the political clubs it was said to have "rained blackballs," and certainly in many socially inclined drawing-rooms the word Ireland was tabooed. The mention of Gladstone started a chorus of execration. The Prime Minister by the time the Royal birthday arrived was in sore straits to know how to send forth the usual invitations, so few peers, even of the lower rank, were now available. The Duke of Argyll, old friend as he was, had privately been invited, and refused to be present. Perplexity reached its height when the question of hiding the "nakedness of the land" from the Prince of Wales came to be considered. Fortunately the Prince was not present, though young Prince Albert Victor was, and a sufficiency of bigwigs put in an appearance and saved the situation. Still from day to day the buzz grew louder, the mystification and misinterpretation more

intense. Suggestions, problems, arrangements, concessions, plans, and counter-plans echoed on all sides, till politicians came almost to change their opinions with their shirts. Men's minds floated, in fact, like feathers propelled by the last breath of the political spokesman.

Many Radicals decided not to think for themselves, but to take their cue from the colossal figure of Mr. Bright. Out of sympathy for the Chief he still made no public utterance, but privately he washed his hands of the new policy; and though he disapproved of Mr. Gladstone's project, Mr. Chamberlain's shadowy scheme of federation was no more acceptable to him. He would not consent to the Home Rule measure, "a measure so offensive to the Protestants of Ireland"; and the Land Bill he objected to for reasons stated. He indeed expressed himself incapable of viewing without hostility any of the subjects which were supported by "the rebel members," men who for six years past had insulted the Queen, torn down the national flag, declared the Lord-Lieutenant guilty of murder, and "made the Imperial Parliament an assembly totally unable to manage the legislative business for which it annually assembles at Westminster." Elsewhere he told his friends that if Mr. Gladstone's tremendous weight were not attached to the bills, he doubted if twenty persons outside the Irish party would support them.

The Prime Minister called a meeting of the Liberal party at the Foreign Office on the 27th of May. The circular was addressed to those Liberals "who were in favour of the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin for the management of affairs especially and exclusively Irish." The meeting was attended by some two hundred and twenty members. Mr. Gladstone discoursed for an hour, and pointed out that the bill must not become a mockery; that members not entirely in agreement with the whole scheme might still vote for the second reading of the bill with a view to its amendment in committee; that the Land Bill could be made a separate question; that he would consider any plan for the retention of Irish members consistent with the liberty of the Irish legislative body; and that in regard to procedure after the second reading, they could either hang up the bill and defer committee till the autumn, or wind up the session, prorogue, and reintroduce the amended bill in October. To hanging up the bill we know Mr. Parnell objected strongly, and his objections he again forcibly put before Mr. Gladstone, who was already aware of them.

With Mr. Gladstone's eloquence the Foreign Office gathering was content—waverers were almost caught again in the toils. But a debate that followed speedily removed the good effect created. The Opposition asked uncomfortable questions. Sir Michael Hicks Beach required to know whether the bill was to be withdrawn or

THE FINISH!!

CH-MB-RL-N	GL-DST-NE	S-L-SB-RY	H-RT-NGT-N
on	on	on	on
"UNITY."	"AUTONOMY."	"COERCION."	"WHIG."

(From *Punch*, May 29, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

postponed? If withdrawn, that would mean that the vote on the second reading would be a farce; if postponed, the administration of the law in Ireland would be at a standstill. The contemplation of such trifling with a vital question, such paralysing of schemes for restoring order in Ireland, worked the objector to great heights of indignation, till at last he declared that a bill read a second time on such conditions could be called merely a Continuance in Office Bill!

Mr. Gladstone, with convenient dignity, refused to discuss the crude impeachment, after which arose a heated discussion as to whether or not Ministers had undertaken to remodel the bill. Lord Randolph Churchill pursued his usual tactics, and argued that the word used was "reconstructed." Promptly the subject of reconstruction was denied, the Prime Minister declaring that there was but one clause touching the future of the representatives of Ireland to the Imperial Parliament that remained to be considered. Finally, it was announced that if the bill were read a second time Ministers would advise prorogation, introducing the bill amended, reconstructed, and remodelled in October. Thus every one was made aware that the Government was decided to go to the country with the scheme as it stood rather than court fresh entanglements by striking out in new and possibly more dangerous directions.

On the 31st of the month Mr. Chamberlain presided at a meeting of members who, being in favour of some sort of autonomy for Ireland, disapproved of the Government bills in their present shape. The great question of moment was, should they abstain from the division or vote against the Government? By abstaining they might still repair the rent that was beginning to gape in the party, and Mr. Chamberlain even now sought for means of averting complete rupture. But the "death warrant," as it was called, came from Mr. Bright. Though he was not present, he now definitely expressed by letter his intention to vote against the bill. At a subsequent meeting of Lord Hartington's followers feeling against the bill was even more pronounced, and, as a result, it was found that a total of some eighty-eight Liberals were ready to go into the lobby against the Government.

It was not till the last that Mr. Chamberlain himself decided to vote against the bill, and his defence for the decision which caused so much turmoil and animosity he put forth in a speech delivered on the 1st of June. He alluded to the personal attacks which doubtless relieved the monotony of the debate, but he declared them "below the level of the great constitutional discussion in which they were called on to take part." These proposals, he said, had been admitted by the Government to be the gravest and most

startling that had been presented to Parliament during the life of the present generation.

He alluded to the difference of the public attitude in regard to his own conduct and that of Mr. Bright. Yet Mr. Bright was going into the lobby to vote against the bill—against the friend, the associate, the leader whom he had followed with loyal devotion for many years of his life. Why, he asked, was he himself in a different position? No one doubted the honour of Mr. Bright. He reminded his audience of his Warrington speech on the 8th of September, and quoted the passage about his determination not to purchase Mr. Parnell's support on Mr. Parnell's conditions. He was thanked by many friends for what they called that plain, frank, courageous declaration; and now—a very few months later—he was accused of personal and unworthy motives. He pronounced the charge "unjust—ridiculous." "There is not a man here," he cried, "who does not know that every personal and political consideration would lead me to cast in my lot with the Prime Minister. Why, sir, not a day passes in which I do not receive dozens or scores of letters urging me for my own sake to vote for the bill and 'dish the Whigs.'"

He proceeded to say that the temptation was no doubt a great one, but, after all, he was not sufficiently base to serve his personal ambition by betraying his country; and felt convinced when the heat of the fray was over Liberals would not judge harshly those who had pursued what they honestly believed to be the path of duty, even though that path led to disruption of party ties and the loss of the influence and power which it was the legitimate ambition of every man to seek among his political friends and associates.

This speech, energetic and uncompromising as it was, served to sweep away any hopes that might have been entertained regarding possible concessions and reconciliations within the Liberal camp. The Unionist Liberals, it was evident, were determined not to be entrapped into voting for what Mr. Gladstone at one time put forward as a vague principle, yet at another propounded as a complete and "mischievous" scheme. If the second reading of the bill were to be carried, those who should vote for it might, they suspected, be committed in the autumn to support, not a remodelled nor revised measure, but, to all intents and purposes, the identical thing!

Sir Michael Hicks Beach now announced that the front opposition bench would take no further part in the debate, and interest was removed to the speeches of Mr. Goschen, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Parnell, till the night of the 7th brought forth one of the grandest displays of oratory that had been heard for years.

But, in view of the final issue, pressure of all kinds was brought to bear on Mr. Chamberlain for the purpose of making him pocket his convictions and reunite himself with his party. On the 5th of June Mr. Labouchere wrote to him thus :—

"MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—At the desire of a large number of Radical members of Parliament, I write to make an appeal to you with regard to your attitude upon the Government for Ireland Bill.

"They are all of them among your warmest admirers, and they have always looked to you as the leader of their phase of political thought.

"They advocated your 'unauthorised programme' at the last general election, and they have persistently defended you against the attacks and aspersions of all who have denounced you and your views upon political or social issues.

"With much that you have said upon the Irish Bill they agree, and they think that they have a right to ask you to give a fair consideration to any request that they may make to you in order to maintain the union which they are so anxious should exist between you and them.

"In your speech upon the second reading of the bill you said that you were in favour of the principle of a separate domestic Legislature for Ireland, with due reservations, but that you did not consider that Mr. Gladstone had made it sufficiently clear that voting for the bill would mean nothing but a recognition of this principle, and would leave its supporters absolute independence of judgment with regard to the new bill that he might introduce in an autumn session.

"I think that he has met this objection in his letter to Mr. Moulton that has been published to-day.

"We think, therefore, that perhaps you could now respond to our wishes, and either vote for the bill, or, if you could not go so far as this, abstain from voting.

"The issue of the division on Monday is, we believe, entirely in your hands.

"Should the bill be lost, there will be a general election at once, which will disturb the trade and commerce of the country, and it will take place at a time which, as no doubt you are aware, will be the worst period of the year for the Radicals, owing to the registration laws now in force.

"It is impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that a general election without you on our side may lead to a Whig-Tory or Tory-Whig Government, which would relegate to the dim and distant future all those measures which you and we so ardently desire may become law.

"Under these circumstances is it too much for us to ask you to make an effort to avert all these contingencies ?

"When Achilles returned to his tent the Greeks were defeated. What would it have been had Achilles lent the weight of his arm to the Trojans ?

"I fully recognise how conciliatory your attitude has been, and how anxiously you have sought to see your way from disruption during all the discussions which I have had with you.

"I still cannot help hoping that, in view of the distinct assurances of Mr. Gladstone in his letter to Mr. Moulton, and in view of the wishes of so many of your warmest admirers in the House of Commons, you will see your

way to defer to the request which, through me, they make to you.—Yours truly,
H. LABOUCHERE.

"THE RIGHT HON. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Esq., M.P."

Mr. Chamberlain's reply was straightforward—decisive.

"40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W.,
"*June* 5, 1886.

"MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I thank you for your letter of this morning, and sincerely appreciate the spirit in which it is written, but especially your recognition that my attitude has been conciliatory throughout these unfortunate differences, and that I have been at all times most anxious to prevent the disruption of the Liberal party.

"You do not give me the names of the friends on whose behalf you write, and who now urge me to vote in favour of the second reading of a bill with many of my objections to which they themselves agree.

"I do not know, therefore, whether or no they have already pledged themselves to take the course which you urge upon me; but I assume that this is the case, as I have not myself received any communications in the same sense from any of those who have declared their inability to support the second reading.

"I am unable to accept your reference to my speech as quite accurate, but I adhere on every point to the words of the original report.

"I quite admit that Mr. Gladstone has given ample assurance that he will not hold any member who may vote for the second reading as committed thereby to a similar vote for the second reading of the bill when reintroduced in October; but the question still remains—whether such members will not be obliged to take this course in order to preserve their own logical consistency.

"Up to the present time Mr. Gladstone has given no indication whatever that the bill to be presented in October will be materially different from the bill now before the House.

"On the contrary, he has distinctly stated that he will not depart from the main outlines of the present measure.

"It is, however, to the main outlines of the present bill that the opposition of my friends and myself has been directed, and it appears to me that we should be stultifying ourselves if we were to abstain at the last moment from giving effect to our conscientious convictions.

"We are ready to accept as a principle the expediency of establishing some kind of legislative authority in Ireland, subject to the conditions which Mr. Gladstone himself has laid down; but we honestly believe that none of these conditions are satisfactorily secured by the plan which has been placed before us.

"I share your apprehension as to the result of a general election at the present time; but the responsibility for this must, I think, in common fairness, rest with those who will have brought in, and forced to a division, a bill which, in the words of Mr. Bright, 'not twenty members outside the Irish party would support if Mr. Gladstone's great authority were withdrawn from it.'—I am, yours very truly,
J. CHAMBERLAIN.

"*P.S.*—As I understand that many Radical members are cognisant of your letter, I propose to send it, together with my reply, for publication.[1]

"H. LABOUCHERE, Esq., M.P."

[1] *The Times*, June 7, 1886.

Here was the ultimatum of a man, brave as he was sincere. He deliberately sacrificed himself in the very blossom of his brilliant career—resigned his chance of heirship to Gladstone, and yet saw no absolute certainty of success with the Conservatives. Some predicted a humiliating fall to the ground between the two stools; others hinted at pulverisation as a result of the impact of contending parties; but Mr. Chamberlain saw all the dangers, and faced them, determined never to become the man to let "I dare not" wait upon "I would."

III.—REJECTION OF THE HOME RULE BILL, JUNE 8, 1886

On the night of the 7th of June the greatest historical scene that has been witnessed since the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 was enacted in the House of Commons. As a natural consequence of the interest that had been growing daily hotter and hotter, an unprecedentedly large audience clamoured for admission, and at prayer time all available places were crowded by an eager, excited company. When business began there was scarcely breathing space, and the galleries from floor to roof were packed with all the most notable personages that London could muster. A tense, almost unnatural passivity seemed to prevail—all appeared to be gathering themselves together in almost breathless expectation of a tremendous crisis. Presently the suspense was broken by cheers for the goodly form of Mr. Bright, who, for the first time during the proceedings, was in evidence, and then by more cheers, this time for Mr. Gladstone and for Lord Hartington.

The adjourned debate was resumed by Mr. Goschen, who expressed his regret that the issue had become confused by the events of the last fortnight, until scarcely any member knew precisely what he was going to vote on. None knew whether the bill was to be reconstructed or not, and the general confusion illustrated the drawback of coming to a vote on explanations, and not on the bill itself. He characterised the bill as, in fact, a bundle of impossibilities. Information on many points was still necessary. For instance, were this bill and the Land Bill still inseparably connected? was the twenty-fourth clause to be struck out altogether? and was there to be any separate treatment for Ulster? At the root of the matter lay the supremacy of Parliament, and he contended that it was seriously impaired by the bill, and dependent entirely upon clauses and conditions in the bill which, in all probability, the House of Commons never would assent to. Another important point was the position of the Roman Catholics towards the university; but he believed that the Irish laity would be at a great disadvantage in being

deprived of the assistance of England in their struggle with the clergy to get the control of education. The fiscal arrangements of the bill were certain to produce friction, and finally the legislative, commercial, and executive friction certain to result from the bill must lead to separation. As to Grattan's Parliament, he pointed out that it was no precedent, inasmuch as the executive then constituted the link of union between the two countries; and moreover, Grattan's Parliament was not given spontaneously but extorted from us at a period of great difficulty. Reverting to the influence which had been brought to bear to secure the passing of the bill, he protested warmly against Mr. Gladstone's reckless language about "classes and their dependants," and predicted that he had kindled a flame for the purpose of getting up the steam to pass his bill, which might lead to serious consequences. After some remarks on the financial part of the question, he protested against the strained interpretation put on the word "coercion," and concluded with a vigorous appeal to the new democracy not to be hustled into an irreparable breach of the foundations of the constitution.

Mr. Parnell's was the speech of a statesman, finely reasoned, masterly. He twitted Mr. Goschen with having been the supporter of many lost causes, deprecated with him all outrages, whether enacted in Kerry or Ulster, and attributed recent crime to the language lately used by Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain. Turning to the bill, he admitted that he would at one time have preferred the restoration of Grattan's Parliament, but he now saw advantages in an Irish Legislature established for home government only, being limited and subordinated to the Imperial Parliament.

He maintained that under the bill the British Parliament would retain unimpaired the same power and authority with respect to Ireland that it now possessed; and in answer to the objection that the bill contained no element of finality, he insisted that the bill had been freely, cheerfully, and gladly accepted by all the leaders of national feeling both in Ireland and America. Dealing next with the question of Ulster, he refused to assent to its separation from the proposed scheme. With regard to the retention of the Irish members, he preferred to keep his mind open. Personally, he had no objection to their retention, but he believed that great difficulties would ensue, and that ultimately it would be the English members and not the Irish who would object to their being retained. "If," he said, "I had regard to the spirit with which the right hon. member for West Birmingham has dealt with the question, I should have been hopelessly alienated from the plan of retaining the Irish members. He has dealt with it in a way to attach an apparent

stigma of inferiority to us, and in order that he may have the excuse for constantly meddling in our affairs, checking us, thwarting us, and keeping us under his thumb. The Irish people will never submit to that!" This declaration was delivered with great dignity, and many persons, marking the bearing of the man, were inclined to question which was the hero of the evening, Mr. Gladstone or "the Uncrowned King." The general verdict was in favour of the sincere, the earnest, the devoted Irishman! He now astonished every one by saying that before the general election the leaders of the Conservative party distinctly offered, in the event of their obtaining a majority, to submit not only a plan for the complete autonomous government of Ireland, but also a scheme of land purchase on a much larger scale than that proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and predicted that if the bill were lost coercion of a more stringent nature than that hitherto adopted would have to be resorted to.

"What has been the effect of coercion during five years?" he asked; and he proceeded to deal with the past actions of the Government and the brutality of the police. "You have fined the innocent for offences committed by the guilty; you have taken power to expel aliens from the country; you have revived the Curfew law and the blood-money of your Norman conquerors; you have gagged the Press, and seized and suppressed newspapers; you have manufactured new crimes and offences, and applied fresh penalties unknown to your law for those crimes and offences. All this you have done for five years, and all this and much more you will have to do again." He went on to speak of the provisions in the bill for the exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament and the objection taken to it, quoting Mr. Trevelyan, who had said that there is no halfway-house between separation and the maintenance of law and order in Ireland by Imperial authority. In his judgment, he declared that there was no halfway-house between the concession of legislative autonomy to Ireland and the disfranchisement of the country and her government as a Crown colony. Perhaps the most telling feature of his speech was his final appeal when he looked round the House on all the rapt faces of members, who, whether they agreed or disagreed, were drinking in his words—an appeal whose fervour was devoid of any hint of drama: "I am convinced there are a sufficient number of wise and just members in this House to cause it to disregard appeals made to passion, and to choose the better way of founding peace and goodwill among nations; and when the members in the division lobby come to be told, it will also be told, for the admiration of all future generations, that England and her Parliament in this nineteenth century were wise enough, brave enough, and generous enough to close the

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

Photo RUSSELL, LONDON.

strife of centuries, and to give peace and prosperity to suffering Ireland."

Mr. M. Howard argued that since the Union the commercial prosperity of Ireland had materially increased, maintaining that there was no evidence that the industrial classes of that country desired Home Rule. Mr. Menzies and Mr. E. R. Russell supported the bill, while Mr. Muntz opposed it. Mr. Cowen, a lifelong supporter of Home Rule, ardently advocated the bill, and expressed his conviction that it would not affect the unity of the Empire.

The debate was wound up for the Opposition by Sir Michael Hicks Beach, whose zeal and patriotism caused him to deliver an unusually effective utterance. He complained that, important as the bill was, its history was more important. It did not embody the policy of a party nor of its leaders. It was the output of one man, and that one man had not been converted to his opinion till he had discovered he could not get a majority in the new House of Commons without the aid of the Irish members!

He then challenged Mr. Parnell's statement that he had reason to expect from the late Conservative Government a statutory Parliament, with power to protect Irish industries. He indignantly repudiated the assertion, and said that for himself and his colleagues he categorically denied that they had ever any such intention![1] There was now great cheering from the Opposition, in the midst of which Mr. Parnell promptly rose, and asked whether the right hon. gentleman denied that that intention was communicated to him by one of his colleagues, a Minister of the Crown.

Sir Michael Hicks Beach earnestly and sincerely replied, "Yes, I do deny it!" He further added, that if any one had made such a statement, it was without authority. Thereupon arose loud cries of "Name, name," and the utmost excitement prevailed. Sir Michael Hicks Beach said that Mr. Parnell would confer a favour on the late Government if he would state the name of the person who had made the statement. Cheers and counter-cheers now rent the air, and when it was possible to be heard Mr. Parnell spoke. He declared the appeal to be a safe one, but expressed a willingness to give the name of the right hon. gentleman's colleague when that colleague accorded him permission. Sir Michael indignantly retorted that the Irish members had established a curious code of honour, which prompted them to stop when insinuation was insufficient and proof was required. He then proceeded with his speech —commented on the unusual prolongation of the debate with the

[1] This was unfortunate, for Sir Michael Hicks Beach was not aware of the interview with Lord Carnarvon that has already been mentioned. Only owing to this passage at arms did the overture become public property.

assent of the Government, and on the manner in which the delay had been used to bring persuasion, and even intimidation, to bear on those Liberals who could not change their minds as rapidly as the Government. For all practical purposes, he asserted, the bill did away with the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and handed it over to the Parliament in Dublin.

In regard to the presence of the Irish members, the proposed alterations, while they would irreparably injure the Imperial Parliament, would not affect nor remove the main objections to the bill. The Protestants of the North, he insisted, were justly alarmed at the bill, because they dreaded not so much legislation as unfair administration. The question of Ulster was the primary difficulty, and the Conservative party would decline to give to the Roman Catholic majority a power over the Ulster men—a power which, in its effects, would be worse than any Coercion Act which had ever been passed. He finally asserted that the measure destroyed the advantages of the Union, while it failed to satisfy the national sentiment, and he felt he could safely prophesy that the decision of the country would be unanimous against it.

Then came Mr. Gladstone's turn. Amid cheers he rose to reply, his eye alight with the fire of enthusiasm, his marble-pale handsome visage ennobled by the earnestness of his cause. First he described Sir Michael Hicks Beach's "facts" as foundationless, and then proceeded to the measure itself. He denied that he solely was responsible for the bill, and repeated his previous assertions that the principles and not the particulars were the question. The twenty-fourth or any other clause might be altered—amendments might be proposed; the Government was prepared carefully to consider everything. He characterised as vulgar slang the Unionist name of Separation Bill, and quoted various instances to show that, apart from the intervention of a third Power, the grant of local independence had never been followed by severance. The severance of the Government of Ireland for local purposes only, he maintained, would be a mode of union rather than disunion.

Then with some bitterness he attacked Mr. Chamberlain, who was the most silent though the most vital figure of the moving drama. He alluded to his opponent's statement that a dissolution had no terrors for him. "I do not see," he sarcastically remarked, "how a dissolution can have any terrors for him. He has trimmed his vessel, and has touched his rudder in so masterly a way that in whichever direction the winds of heaven may blow they *must* fill his sails. Supposing that at an election public opinion should be very strong in favour of the bill, my right hon. friend would then be perfectly prepared to meet that public opinion and tell it, 'I

declared strongly that I adopted the principle of the bill.' If, on the other hand, the public were averse from the bill, he again is fully armed, because he says—'Yes, I voted against the bill.' Supposing again public opinion is in favour of a very large plan for Ireland, my right hon. friend is perfectly provided for that case also. The Government plan was not large enough for him, and he proposed in his speech on the introduction of the bill that we should have a measure on the basis of federation—which goes farther than this bill. Lastly, and now I have nearly boxed the compass. Supposing that public opinion should take an entirely different turn, and instead of wanting very large should want very small measures for Ireland, still the resources of my right hon. friend are not exhausted, because he is then able to point out that the last of his plans was for four provincial circuits controlled from London. All these alternatives and provisions were visibly creations of the vivid imagination, born of the hour and perishing with the hour, totally unavailable for the solution of a great and difficult problem."

Having delivered this telling thrust he proceeded to address the House in earnest accents of appeal, mingled with the inspired note of the born orator. Now, he said, was one of the "golden moments" of our history; here was an opportunity that might never recur. "Ireland stands at your bar, expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a blessed oblivion of the past, and in that oblivion our interest is deeper even than hers. Mr. Goschen asks us to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By Irish traditions? Go into the length and breadth of the world; ransack the literature of all countries—find if you can a single voice, a single book, even a single newspaper article, unless the product of the day, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated save with profound and bitter condemnation. . . ." Passionately he went on, his voice growing more and more mellow as he pleaded for Ireland. "She asks also a boon for the future, and unless we are much mistaken it will be a boon to our honour, no less than a boon to her happiness, prosperity, and peace." Then his tone grew solemn in final exhortation. "Think, I beseech you! think well, think wisely, think not for the moment but for the years to come, before you reject our plan."

By this time the House was wrought to a state of emotion so tense as to be tremulous. As Mr. Gladstone sat down, after having spoken for an hour and a half to a breathless assembly, a gasp of relief broke forth, followed by a quick revulsion of supernatural excitement.

The Speaker immediately put the momentous question, and

instantaneously from Radical and Irish benches came forth with thunderous reverberation the cry, "Aye."

Then from the Opposition the response—boisterous, stentorian, "No."

The Speaker readily declared that the "Ayes" had it, but amid a turmoil of cheers and counter-cheers and cries of "Agreed" from the Nationalists, his decision was formally challenged.

The bells clanged, the House grew more and more crowded, the Speaker again put the question. Again the thunder of assent and dissent. Quickly the Ayes moved to the right, the Noes to the left. Mr. A. Morley and Mr. Marjoribanks were named tellers for the first, and Mr. Brand and Mr. Caine for the last. Hastily, almost feverishly, the members filed out, and in some ten minutes' time began to return to their seats, Sir Charles Dilke leading the Ministerialists. At this time the attention of the assembling house was bent in fascinated curiosity on the faces of the Liberals that passed the threshold of the "No" lobby—stern, troubled, flushed, angry faces. Presently came another attraction—Mr. Gladstone, singularly pale, a marvellous figure, making his way from the division lobby. The crowd pressed back to make way for him, and an Irish cheer rang through the air.

Then came Mr. Chamberlain—cold, calm; perhaps the calmest figure in the whole throng. A hostile demonstration from the Irishmen met his ears, but he turned neither to right nor to left, passed along in front of the Treasury Bench, and then waited for what he knew was to come. The Aye tellers had returned. The Noes, however, had not yet finished entering. The anxiety, the suspense, the impatience grew terrific. Then came the denouement. All eyes were fixed on the clerk as he handed the paper to Mr. Brand. There were men who trembled, so great was the tension of that final pause. The next moment the pent-up excitement burst forth; one sustained cheer—ominous, thrilling—broke from the triumphant Unionists!

In vain the Speaker rose and beckoned for silence. In vain he strove to quell the storm of rejoicing. The four tellers in line had merely to stand and wait. At length, when human throats could do no more, the Speaker, in clear, level tones, made his announcement:—

Ayes	311
Noes	341

Then followed a scene of frenzy passing description. The Conservatives roared with triumphant lungs, jumping on their seats and

waving their hats in exultation, while some of their rapture was reflected even in the Liberal benches.

Ministers bore their defeat with dignified resignation. (It was not till later that the Grand Old Man bent under the crushing burden of his disappointment.)

And amid the whirlpool of conflicting passions Mr. Chamberlain sat immovable. His was the hardest part to play of all, for the penalty of might is enhanced responsibility; but he played it unflinchingly to the bitter end.

The Irish *en masse* uprose. "Three cheers for the Grand Old Man," they cried; and right lustily they, with many others, responded. Then came the words, "Groans for Chamberlain." That call, too, was responded to from the Irish quarter. It was an ordeal that none but a brave man could have endured—none but a brave man supported by his sense of duty. Mr. Chamberlain faced his foes—like a Briton—one man to 86!

At last, at two o'clock on the morning of the 8th of June—the anniversary of the ill-omened date that saw Mr. Gladstone's Government overthrown by the Irish in 1885—came the end of this marvellous scene. The excitement within the House was then carried out of doors, the infection spreading to the anxious crowds, who on hearing the result broke into cheers as each prominent actor passed the historic portal. Lord Hartington received so fervid an ovation that it needed the protection of the police before he could escape from his admiring fellow-countrymen. The veteran leader, too, for auld lang syne—and sympathy for his years rather than for his cardinal effort—elicited enthusiastic cries that mingled with sounds less welcome to his ears. Presently some one more pacific sang out, "God Save the Queen." The effect was magical. The anthem was quickly caught up by others, and gradually the hoarse strains ascending round the ancient pile grew louder and louder, proclaiming far and wide the marriage of Tory and Unionist, the death of the Home Rule Bill, and the moral justification of the man who killed it!

IV.—GENERAL ELECTION—DEFEAT OF MR. GLADSTONE, 1886

After this crushing disappointment several Ministers inclined towards resignation, but Mr. Gladstone would not hear of it. He thought such action would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and of mistrust in themselves. There was no instance, he argued, of a Ministry defeated on a great policy such as his failing to appeal to the country. The country, he felt confident, would go with him, and he had no idea of implying by word or act abandonment of the

cause. So a dissolution followed, and the length and breadth of the land was once more swept by the hurricane of politics.

Only eight months before the Liberals had blown blasts of denunciation at Ireland and Mr. Parnell; now the wind had veered round, and zephyr-like breezes carried the epithalamium of Parnellites and Liberals to the four quarters of Great Britain. The great, the only question was now that of union or separation, and Mr. Gladstone himself threw down the glove when he said, "If I had twenty votes I would give all the twenty against the man who votes against Ireland and our policy."

Though his Irish policy was undisclosed, though the form of the bill of the next session was inchoate, Mr. Gladstone confidently expected that the Liberal party would give him a majority in favour of his scheme, in favour of the shadow that was to develop into a scheme. The veteran had "got the bit between his teeth," as the saying is. He was prepared to run straight ahead, trampling over everything that might chance to block his course; he was ready at all costs to proclaim war to the knife with any of his old adherents who should dare to disagree with him. No wonder, then, the Liberals who so ventured began to arm themselves and prepare for combat in earnest, and that Mr. Chamberlain, who with or without reason had been held as the responsible mover of the dissentient party, should decide that if war there was to be, the thing should be carried through with vigour that should startle Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley, and Mr. Schnadhorst who buoyed them up with false hope of the power of the Irish vote in the English constituencies.

On Mr. Chamberlain fell the brunt of battle as had fallen the brunt of abuse. Why he should have been selected as special target for the enemy it is difficult to say; it is a riddle that has astonished impartial observers. Certainly a large personality is easier than a little one to aim at, but his large personality did not stand alone. With him were Lord Hartington, Lord Selborne, Sir George Trevelyan, Sir Henry James, and Mr. Goschen, together with the imposing figure of John Bright, whose "moral weight" was declared to have been the factor in sending down the scale. These thought and acted as he did, yet he was singled out as the criminal, the arch-traitor, the double-face, and that despite the speeches he had made at Warrington and elsewhere clearly pronouncing his views regarding a parliament or national council for Ireland, and the extent to which he was prepared to go. The attempt to force his hand made by Mr. Gladstone naturally aroused his antagonism, and thrust on him the obligation to fight implacably against a bill which contained a colourable imitation of his own ideas in a spurious, unpatriotic shape.

In regard to his determined attitude Mr. Chamberlain freely expressed himself in an interview with Mr. Barry O'Brien, the author of the "Life of Charles Stewart Parnell." They had a conversation (Feb. 1898) regarding Mr. Chamberlain's original proposal of National Councils for Ireland and the subsequent negotiations between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell, and the effort of Mr. Gladstone to persuade Mr. Chamberlain to his views.

Then Mr. O'Brien said: "I should now like to talk about the Home Rule Bill. I have come to the conclusion after giving the matter—your speeches and all that has been written and said upon the subject—the best consideration I could, that you were never a Home Ruler in one sense; but there are some points which I should feel obliged if you would clear up for me. You opposed the exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament. I thought at that time, and I think a great many other people thought too, that you were in favour, or that ultimately you came to be in favour, of the principle of Mr. Gladstone's bill, but that you objected to the exclusion of the Irish members as a matter of detail. What I should like to ask is, if you objected to the exclusion as a matter of detail or if you really used that clause for the purpose of attacking the bill? Was it really your aim to turn Mr. Gladstone's flank by attacking that point?"

"Mr. Chamberlain.—'I wanted to kill the bill.'

"And you used the question of the exclusion of the Irish members for that purpose?"

"Mr. Chamberlain.—'I did, and I used the Land Bill for the same purpose. I was not opposed to the reform of the land laws. I was not opposed to land purchase. It was the right way to settle the land question, but there were many things in the bill to which I was opposed on principle. My main object in attacking it, though, was to kill the Home Rule Bill. As soon as the Land Bill was out of the way, I attacked the question of the exclusion of the Irish members. I used that point to show the absurdity of the whole scheme.'

"Well, I may say, Mr. Chamberlain, that that is the conclusion I have myself come to. It was strategy, simply strategy."

"Mr. Chamberlain.—'I wanted to kill the bill. You may take that all the time.'"

Mr. Chamberlain assured Mr. O'Brien that he had never been near being converted to an Irish Parliament, the National Councils' scheme having been the extreme limit to which he had been prepared to go. Whatever his actions subsequently, they were designedly arranged to oppose the bill, which overstepped that limit. Indeed, it seemed that the very fact of his responsibility for having

propounded or fathered the National Councils' scheme forced on him the responsibility to reject the introduction of a spurious offspring. Thus, then, we find the key to the vituperations and abuse that mark this period of Mr. Chamberlain's career, and that at the time caused him intense pain and annoyance. He not only had to defend his country from the bill—as his colleagues, the dissentient Liberals, had had to do—but it behoved him to defend himself from appearing to accept the thing as the prime outcome of his mind. His was the duty to unmask the alien and disown it.

But the blasts and the blizzards had their value, and Mr. Chamberlain reaped his reward. Mr. Gladstone's indignation at his colleague's secession from the ranks of his disciples, the Irishmen's fury at the loss of the main pillar of their Home Rule edifice, the lampoons of the press, the diatribes of the Gladstonian journals, the cartoons of caricaturists—what were they all but testimony to the weight of a great man in the history of our own time? Before this date he was formidable, after it he was colossal. Every effort to minimise the power of the statesman merely enhanced it, and he gained daily in force to meet the perpetual demand made upon him.

The election period of 1886 was perhaps the greatest period of his life. He threw himself into the work with unparalleled vigour, upheld as he was by the justness of his cause, united to the personal pride which refuses to acknowledge defeat.

Never was so keen a struggle, never was tug of war contested inch by inch with more zest, more thew, and more earnestness. Great voices rang above the uproar of contest; the huge voices of Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain, the aristocratic tones of Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington, and the chanticleer note of Lord Randolph Churchill. "For the sake of this message of peace," put forth the last, "this farrago of superlative nonsense, the British constitution is to be torn up, and the Liberal party shivered to fragments! And why? to gratify the ambition of an old man in a hurry." He described the Prime Minister under various aliases—"The People's William," "The Grand Old Man," "The Old Parliamentary Hand." "Now," he wrote, "in the part of the grand electioneering agent he demands a vote of confidence from the constituencies. Confidence in what?—In the Liberal party? No! The Liberal party as we know it exists no longer! In his Irish project? No! It is dead, to be resuscitated not either wholly or in part, just as it may suit the personal convenience of the author. In his Government? No! They are a mere collection of items whom he does not condescend to consult! In himself? Yes. This is the latest and the most perilous innovation in our constitutional practice. A pure unadulterated personal *plébiscite*, that is the demand—a

political expedient borrowed from the last and worst days of the Second Empire." Though the document was lacking in finish and grace, it was not devoid of truth. Mr. Gladstone's great popularity, supported by the statements of Mr. Schnadhorst, who submitted figures showing that the Irish vote in the English constituencies would carry the elections in favour of the Government, led the unfortunate Veteran to expectations of a personal triumph that were far from justified by the results.

From the first the contest threatened to be uneven. Men of wealth and standing had gone with the Liberal-Unionists, who in face of a dreaded danger agreed to act in concert, and arranged that no Conservative or Unionist should come in collision over the same seats; while the Gladstonites, blind followers of the blind, were crippled for want of the brains and the means to carry on any serious warfare. Theirs was a forlorn hope, and many of them knew it. Meanwhile Mr. Goschen brilliantly held forth; Lord Hartington gave out his sound, steady-going opinions; Mr. Bright expressed the strong feelings already described in his letter. Mr. Chamberlain, in this turning-point of his career, gathered to himself new life, new courage to fight the fight that had been forced upon him. Like a war-horse the sniff of battle nerved him. Whatever the future might hold, his cause to-day was a high cause, and the combat against the greatest living statesman was worth the winning.

In his election address (21st of June) he explained that during the last few months he had gone through a time of great trial and anxiety :—

"I have had a great responsibility cast upon me, and I have incurred much odium and abuse in consequence of the course which I have thought it my duty to take. In public life one gets accustomed to a good deal of strong language from one's political opponents. I remember a story of the great French statesman, M. Thiers, of whom one of his political adversaries said that he was the most profligate scoundrel and ruffian on the face of the globe, and one of his rather fussy friends came to M. Thiers, and he called his attention to this language, and he asked him whether he was not going to take some notice of it. M. Thiers said, 'No, why should I? That is only the way in which this gentleman expresses his difference of opinion.' Gentlemen, although one easily becomes case-hardened to the ordinary abuse of one's political opponents, I will confess to you that I have been pained and grieved by some of the language which has been used by those with whom for so many years I have been co-operating in public life. I have been wounded in the house of my friends, and my foes have been those of my own household, and sometimes I have asked myself whether this game is worth the candle, and whether I was called upon to pursue to the end this bitter struggle which is foreign to all the objects with which I entered public life—objects which are now indefinitely postponed by this new controversy which has been sprung upon us."

At other times he told his supporters that he had not given

up all hope of promoting the welfare of Ireland in the fashion he had originally sketched out. Though determined in their opposition to a separate Parliament for Ireland, Liberal-Unionists, he declared, were anxious to meet so far as possible the "legitimate aspirations of the Irish people, shared, as they believe them to be, by Scotland and by Wales, for greater independence in the management of their local affairs. He laid stress on four points which should stand at the bottom of any satisfactory arrangement for Ireland: the relief of the Imperial Parliament by the removal of purely Irish concerns; the full representation of Irish opinion on matters of local Irish interest; the opening of opportunities for the display of Irish ambition and patriotism; and the removal of irritating and harassing interference on the part of England. His idea was to establish a system of local government for the three kingdoms, and a wider scheme by which not only Ireland, but all the segments of the British Isles might be subject to the authority of Parliament, and obtain enhanced control of their purely local affairs.

His plan for dealing with Ireland he had very explicitly described on the 9th of April. The first thing would be to bring out a bill to stay all evictions for six months, leaving any arrears to be settled in connection with the final settlement. Then he would throw on the Government the duty of lending to those landlords who might have any need of it such a proportion of their rent as would save them from privation and necessity. The sum he proposed to set aside for this purpose would be about four millions. Further, he would pursue the inquiry which had been begun by the Prime Minister and the Government, but it should no longer be carried on by a single individual however colossal his intelligence might be—nor even by a single party, but, with the co-operation and assent of all parties in the House, by a committee that would represent all sections of the House. He again declared that "In my view the solution of this question should be sought in some form of federation which would really maintain the Imperial unity, and which would at the same time conciliate the desire for a national local Government."

On the capture of the caucus by Mr. Gladstone in May, Mr. Chamberlain founded the Radical Union to replace his lost allies and to oppose them in their support of Home Rule, and cement the varying sections of the dissentient group. The Radical Unionists had for creed the original idea of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain before the seesaw of the Irish vote turned the heads of the party. They were "willing to accept Mr. Gladstone's statement of the Irish problem as it was presented by him before the last General Election," and their ambition was to return a Liberal majority suffi-

A Little Dinner in Arlington Street. ("One of those things which are not so strange, that, though they never did, they might happen."—Sheridan.)

Lord S-l-sb-ry.—"If you'll come to me, I'll give you my Recipe for this Dish."

Mr. Ch-mb-rl-n.—"No, thank you, my Lord. There's such a lot of pepper in it, that it quite overpowers the pleasant flavour of the union."

(From *Punch*. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

cient to carry a good and safe measure that would reunite the Liberal party. The programme of the Union followed the lines of Mr. Chamberlain's address—in fact the provisions advocated for Ireland were such as might be applied at any time to Scotland, Wales, and even to provinces of the United Kingdom. Mr. Chamberlain attended on the 17th of June the inaugural meeting of the new union, and discussed the question of how to appease the Irish Americans or Mr. Parnell; the Irish people themselves were more reasonable and more loyal. But the question was whether at the present time the word local government was properly understood, since all provisions for that purpose in Ireland had been so inadequate and so unsatisfactory. If, he said, opportunity were afforded for local patriotism and local ambition—if they were given the management or proper conditions of their domestic business, and if Irish ideas and sentiments were allowed full play in such legislation as did not come into collision with the reasonable rights of individuals and classes or the paramount interests of the Empire—then, he doubted whether they would allow their representatives to refuse the chance that was afforded them. While Mr. Chamberlain worked in his usual fashion addressing meetings of various kinds here, there, and everywhere, the peers too emerged farther from their seclusion and delivered themselves in public of brilliant and immemorial sayings in defence of the union of the Empire. Lord Salisbury compared his own twenty years of resolute government with that of Mr. Gladstone's "when he imprisoned a thousand men without trial for a political object." Lord Hartington effectively combated Mr. Gladstone's statement that for the previous fifteen years he had expressed no disapproval of Home Rule.

"What," asked he, "had been the attitude of Mr. Gladstone to his followers and his Cabinet? To his Irish Secretary had he communicated any inclination to accept the system? And why, if such inclination existed, had he appointed to the post of Irish Secretary Mr. Forster, who had been prominently opposed to Mr. Butt's Home Rule Bill? If, indeed, Mr. Gladstone had for this lengthy period been harbouring the belief that Home Rule was the remedy for Irish disaffection, he was guilty of great responsibility in having silently acquiesced in the arguments of his colleagues who were in favour of resistance to the measure. Lord Spencer dilated on the Land Purchase policy of the Government, and Mr. Morley discussed the exclusion of the Irish members from the English Parliament, while Mr. Gladstone at Mid-Lothian, Manchester, and Liverpool in defence of his measure poured out rivers of words with skill and conviction that would have roused the envy of Demosthenes.

Mr. Chamberlain proceeded in his usual plain-speaking, lucid

fashion, propounding his antagonism to the bill as it had been elaborated by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell, but still adhering to the principles of the party to which (when the smoke of battle should have passed away, and these principles were more clearly seen) he hoped again to belong.

One of the greatest days of his life was that prior to election, when he addressed an enthusiastic crowd of sympathisers and admirers, and frankly put before them the harassing features of his new position. He called on his supporters to remember that this moment was an unexampled crisis in our national history; it was necessary to choose, to examine, and to decide. It was one thing "to grant the wishes and to meet the requirements of the Irish people," another "to drop on your knees to conspirators in America." To-day, he reminded them, the British democracy was on its trial. The brilliant traditions of the past were theirs; theirs, too, the honour of defending their country. "Your action," he said, "is being watched with the keenest interest by every dependency—in every quarter of the vast dominion that your ancestors have established." He went on to describe how in India and the Colonies some hundreds of millions of men—men acknowledging the sway of England, not alone for the display of force she was enabled to make, but for the bravery, boldness, and endurance with which they accredited her—these millions of men were watching the upshot of the proposal that excited the alarm of the friends and the sinister interest of the foes of England.

"These two islands," he said, "have always played a great part in the history of the world. Again and again, outnumbered, overmatched, confronted with difficulties and danger, they have held their own against a world in arms; proudly, stubbornly, they have resisted their enemies, and scattered them as chaff before the wind. Well, if now you are going to yield to the threat of obstruction and agitation, to tremble at the thought of responsibility, or shrink from the duty cast on you; if you are willing to wash your hands of your obligations, if you will desert those who trust to your loyalty and your honour, if British courage and pluck are dead within your hearts, if you are going to quail before the dagger of the assassin and the threats of conspirators and rebels—then, I say, indeed the sceptre of dominion will have passed from our grasp, and this great Empire will perish with the loss of the qualities that have hitherto sustained it!"

As may be imagined, the audience rose in a body, wildly cheering this man who, himself having stated his hatred of coercion, had found himself a victim of a more subtle, more deadly form of the thing organised against him by his erstwhile political friends. These

people had heard the bitter accusations and taunts and sneers that had been flung at him from all sides; they had wondered perhaps, and wavered perhaps, but, after all, British of bone and lovers of fairplay, they had come to reason that this man, against whom a multitude spent its sticks and its stones, must have something in him—some marvellous stuff that should so attract opprobrium, yet endure stoutly in the face of all. They saw all this, and said to themselves, Here is a man of men; we back him to the last! So, after all, Mr. Chamberlain was set up by the very force of the animus that went to knock him down. By the sheer ferocity of the torrent that would have wrecked a frailer craft, he, strong and adventurous of heart, was kept afloat. After all, then, he may count himself the debtor of his enemies!

It became daily more clear that it would be the Ministerialists and not the Liberal-Unionists who would have to fight tooth and nail for their seats. The Unionists gathered together all that was best of the Liberal party, and the country owed them a debt of gratitude for having maintained their stand so staunchly in face of pressure and difficulty, and averted a national calamity. Lord Hartington by his conspicuous courage in leading the Opposition to the bill, Mr. Goschen by his unflagging energy and powerful criticisms, Sir Henry James's unselfish patriotism, Mr. Trevelyan's fine courage, Mr. Bright's weighty arguments, and Mr. Chamberlain's cautious and unassailable tactics that brought about the happiest results, were matters that excited the admiration of all save those absolutely bound over to the bill.

Five of the Liberal-Unionists that stood for Birmingham were elected without opposition, the two members who decided to stand as Gladstonians were successfully routed, and finally Mr. Chamberlain and his supporters enjoyed the triumph of cheering seven Unionist members to victory.

By the end of July the elections were over. The figures stood thus:—

Tories	316	Liberals	191
Liberal-Unionists	78	Nationalists	85
Total against Home Rule	394	Total for Home Rule	276

It will thus be seen that the Unionist majority numbered 118, and that the optimism of the Secretary of the Liberal Federation had led his leader towards destruction. Still the Grand Old Man gallantly kept his head up, and said in his grandest manner: "There is nothing in the recent defeat to abate the hopes or to

CROSS-ROADS.

S-L-SB-RY.—"Hullo! aren't you fellows going farther with me?"

(From *Punch*, July 31, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

modify the anticipations of those who desire to meet the wants and wishes of Ireland."

On the 30th of July Mr. Gladstone had his final audience of the Queen; and soon after Lord Salisbury held a conference with Lord Hartington with a view to forming a Government. But the Whig leader was averse from coalition, preferring only to act in concert with the Tories so long as their line of action was in accord with his own.

There were many reasons why the idea of the coalition suggested by Lord Salisbury appeared to be impracticable. Lord Hartington, to begin with, had too small a following to balance the Tories in the event of his becoming Prime Minister, and the Tory majority could scarcely be expected to appreciate a leader who so lately had been associated with the Opposition. Again, in view of the fact that Lord Hartington, Lord Salisbury, and Mr. Chamberlain only a few months since had been actively engaged in attacking each other at party meetings, it seemed impossible for them on so short a notice to sink their differences of character and conviction, and agree together to let bygones be bygones. The action of time could alone be relied on to smooth the numberless ruts that had been formed by the wheels of political machinery in the last election; so both sides acted with masterly discretion, giving and taking just so much as necessary for the Imperial cause which had brought them together, yet agreeing to differ in such minor matters as had previously separated them.

A Conservative Ministry was then formed. Lord Iddesleigh became Foreign Secretary; Mr. W. H. Smith, Secretary for War; Sir M. Hicks Beach filled the post of Irish Secretary; and Lord George Hamilton that of First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Randolph Churchill was promoted to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and Leadership of the House of Commons; and Mr. H. Matthews, Q.C., was chosen as Home Secretary.

Parliament met on the 5th of August, on which date a meeting was held at Devonshire House. Here Lord Hartington clearly defined his position by announcing that the reunion of the Liberal party depended solely on the question of Home Rule being done away with. Until that consummation was achieved, there was no chance of effecting any compromise.

Mr. Chamberlain agreed to regard the necessity for supporting Lord Salisbury to ensure the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's project, but he leaned towards some form, vague and shadowy, of reconciliation. He as ever was in sympathy with the Irish measure; he had still a lingering hope that something might be accomplished for Ireland which would bring the old party together again.

MR CHAMBERLAIN'S HOME, HIGHBURY, BIRMINGHAM

Lord Salisbury, in his turn, at the Carlton Club described the nature of the overtures made to Lord Hartington, and stated that after a short session for purposes of supply Parliament should be prorogued until the following year. Elsewhere (at the Mansion House) he said his party came back as a bearer from the people of the country of a mandate irrevocably deciding the question which had wrecked the peace of the neighbouring island: the question of an Independent Government for Ireland had been referred to the only tribunal that could determine it with authority—determine it without appeal. By this it is evident that Lord Salisbury believed that Home Rule had received a death-blow. In effect the measure was simply scotched!

Meanwhile the National Liberal Federation was keeping itself warm with the calculation that the electoral figures were more satisfactory than the result of the polls, and that 1,338,718 votes had been recorded for Home Rule, while 1,416,472 were given against it. They issued an address to the effect that the Liberal party, having committed itself to the work of effecting a union between England and Ireland on the basis of the concession of the right of self-government to the Irish people, would never relinquish their efforts till the goal was reached. The Irish question occupied, they averred, the foremost place in the politics of the day, and no Government nor Parliament could afford to ignore it. No progress till that subject was settled could be looked for, nor would it be possible for the Conservatives "to indulge in a congenial inactivity while such problem remained unsolved." It was one of the unfinished questions that had no respect for the repose of nations!

CHAPTER III

1.—CONSERVATIVES IN POWER, 1886–87—PLAN OF CAMPAIGN—RESIGNATION OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL—THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE—THE CRIMES BILL, MARCH 1887—MR. GOSCHEN LEADS THE WAY

WHEN the Queen's Speech was delivered (19th August) little allusion was made to the Home Rule Bill, and none to Belfast riots that had recently caused considerable trouble in Ireland. But a Commission was to be appointed to inquire into the resources of the island; and soon Sir Redvers Buller was to visit the scene to investigate the nature of the outrages that had taken place and devise a remedy. On the 24th of August the debate was enlivened by Mr. Parnell, who moved an amendment showing the loss sustained by the farmers owing to the fall in the price of Irish produce, and the resulting inability to pay the required rent. He further announced that he had merely supported Lord Ashbourne's Act so long as he had believed the Tories would back it by a Home Rule Bill, and added that now the State could not be guaranteed from loss under the Act.

Mr. Gladstone excused himself from taking part in the division on the plea of awaiting the report of the commission on rents, but Mr. Chamberlain came into collision with the Irish leader and defended the Government's refusal of his proposals. Thereupon came a torrent of abuse from the Irish quarter—a torrent that caused many that might not otherwise have been in sympathy with Mr. Chamberlain to become firm upholders of him.

Mr. Parnell then turned his attention to a Tenants Relief Bill, which occupied the remainder of the session. He made three propositions:—The abatement of rents fixed prior to 1885, provided tenants who could not pay in full were ready to pay half the amount and arrears; that leaseholders should enjoy the benefits of the Act of 1881; and that the proceedings for recovery of rent should be suspended on the payment of half the rent and arrears. But the Nationalists by their methods had estranged even their well-wishers, and partly owing to this cause and to the hostile attitude of Lord Hartington (who showed that under the provisions of the bill the

payment of just rent would be practically suspended in Ireland), and the definite assertion of Sir Michael Hicks Beach that he would never consent to the government of Ireland by "a policy of blackmail," the bill was rejected by 297 votes to 202. As a result of this rejection an agrarian war was threatened by the Irishmen, and

CHAMBERLAIN PASHA;

OR THE SULTAN OF TURKEY'S LATEST CONVERT.

(From *Punch*, Nov. 20, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

promptly in September the plan of campaign was started by Mr. W. O'Brien and Mr. Dillon, without the sanction of Mr. Parnell, however, who at the time was "sick unto death." The idea was, that if the landlords should refuse to make required reductions the tenants should refuse to pay, these "strikers" being supported in the interim by money provided by local men and the League in Dublin. After this an amendment was made to the effect that the

tenants should offer fair rents, which, if refused, should be banked, while a managing committee by fair means or foul should bring the landlords to terms. The system of arranging affairs disgusted not only the Tories and Unionists, but many of the Gladstonians, and not a few of the sympathisers with Home Rule began to harden their hearts.

Finally the Irish Government proceeded against the authors of the plan, which was by now creating much havoc in all parts of the country, and Mr. Dillon was warned that in default of finding sureties for his good behaviour he would be committed to prison. But Mr. Dillon's violence increased rather than diminished, and finally he, together with his colleagues, were lodged in gaol, their cash and ledgers being confiscated.

Mr. Chamberlain, who was abroad, and evidently longing to reunite himself to his old friends, proposed that the two sections of the Liberal party should discuss the question of concessions to Ireland, but his suggestion was received with little warmth. Lord Hartington maintained his stern attitude regarding the mutinous crew, and at a meeting which took place at Willis's Rooms emphasised the necessity of keeping up the alliance between the Liberal-Unionists and Conservatives.

The end of 1886 was marked by the somewhat astonishing resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill, an action which caused Mr. Chamberlain considerable concern. The Tory Democrat, as we have seen, was the connecting link between the late Radical leader and Lord Salisbury's party, and with his departure Mr. Chamberlain began to fear a retrograde movement, which would carry the Government back to old habits of strait-waistcoated Conservatism, and lead to proposals "that no consistent Liberal would be able to accept." It was fear of this prospect that made him propose what was known as the Round Table Conference. The Liberals, he said, were in accord on ninety-nine points of their programme and disagreed solely on one. He therefore declared his belief that almost any three men, leaders of the Liberal party, seated round a table and coming together in a spirit of compromise and conciliation would be able to effect some scheme for the restoration of the party amity, and though the Home Rule Bill was impossible some solution might yet be found in the question of Irish land. But Mr. Chamberlain deceived himself. His proposition was accepted it is true, and in January 1887 the conference was held. He and Sir George Trevelyan represented the Dissentients, Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley the Home Rulers, while Lord Herschell acted in the capacity of umpire.

Mr. Chamberlain at the outset was optimistic. Speaking at

YOUNG KING COAL!!

(And his "Fiddlers Three.")

(From *Punch*, Dec. 4, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

Harwich on the 22nd of January he said: "I am well aware that even if we are as successful as we hope in bringing about a common agreement among ourselves, our task will be but half accomplished unless we have the sanction and approval of others more influential than we. But," he declared, "it is a prospect that does not discourage me. I am not hopeless of an appeal to the patriotism of our statesmen. Has not this question of Ireland been long enough the sport of parties, a playground for British politicians and for Irish agitators? May it not be possible to arrange even now a national settlement of what is after all a national difficulty?" He went on to make a suggestion on the lines of Mr. Justin M'Carthy's idea, by which the relations between Ireland and the Imperial Parliament might be modelled on the plan of the Canadian provinces and parliaments.

The whole month was spent in honest but impossible efforts to adjust the differences of the parties, and then in February things were brought to a crisis by the following letter addressed by Mr. Chamberlain to the *Baptist*:—

"The cause of Welsh Disestablishment has made a great advance in recent years, and there are now very few Liberals, and not many Tories, who believe that the connection between Church and State in the Principality can be much longer maintained.

"In a Nonconformist newspaper it is unnecessary to argue in favour of the great principle of religious equality which is everywhere slowly undermining the fabric of ecclesiastical privilege. This principle is fatal to all State Churches, and it will surely be applied to the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, as well as to the Church in Wales. But undoubtedly in Wales the grievance is more serious, the sentiment of the people on the subject is more unanimous, and the anomalies of the present arrangement are more striking and more irritating than elsewhere. Wales, therefore, has the first claim on the sympathy and the support of Liberals in its efforts to free itself from a burden which recent events, and especially the tithe agitation, have shown to be almost intolerable to the vast majority of its population.

"Unfortunately, at the very moment when the prospects of redress seem to be most favourable it has been overshadowed and darkened by the sudden introduction of a new subject of political contention, whose settlement may be long delayed, but to which we are now told everything, including the just and pressing demands of 'poor little Wales,' must give way. Poor little Wales indeed if this be true, and if its people accept this summary dismissal of their claims.

"In 1885 the Principality sent twenty-eight members, and in 1886 twenty-three members out of thirty as supporters of Mr. Gladstone. It was a remarkable demonstration of loyalty and confidence, of which the great leader of the Liberal party has good reason to be proud. But what was its exact meaning? If the Welsh constituencies intended to show their approval of Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy, and to support his contention that no legislation for Scotland or Wales could be undertaken, or even contemplated, until the Irish question had

"IS THE OLD MIN FRIENDLY?"

Mr. Dick Swiveller in the "Old Curiosity Shop." (From *Punch*, Jan. 15, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

been settled on his lines, then they have no right whatever to complain of the delay of their hopes, and they must wait patiently until the country has changed its mind, and is prepared to hand over the minority in Ireland to the tender mercies of Mr. Parnell and the Irish League. The conversion of the country to the justice of such a surrender may be, and probably will be, slow and protracted. It may take ten or twenty years, or may even never be accomplished; but whether the process occupies a generation or a century, 'poor little Wales' must wait until Mr. Parnell is satisfied and Mr. Gladstone's policy adopted.

"They will not wait alone. The crofters of Scotland and the agricultural labourers of England will keep them company. Thirty-two millions of people must go without much-needed legislation because three millions are disloyal, while nearly 600 members of the Imperial Parliament will be reduced to forced inactivity because some eighty delegates, representing the policy and receiving the pay of the Chicago Convention, are determined to obstruct all business until their demands have been conceded.

"Is it possible that the Nonconformists of Wales are prepared to accept such a situation? They have hitherto supported, without much examination, the Irish bills of Mr. Gladstone, apparently under the impression that by so doing they would arrive more quickly at the realisation of their own hopes. They will soon learn, if they have not learned already, that the policy which was to hasten the redress they seek is really the one insuperable obstacle in its way. So long as the majority of the Liberal party is committed to proposals which a large section of Liberals and Radicals firmly believe to be dangerous to the best interests of the United Kingdom, unjust to the majority of the Irish people, and certain to end in the disruption of the Empire, so long the party will remain shattered and impotent, and all reform will be indefinitely postponed. Some of the best friends of the Dissenters and of the most earnest supporters of Disestablishment are to be found in the ranks of the Liberal-Unionists. They have hitherto consistently advocated the policy of religious equality. They have publicly supported it even at a time when the majority of Liberals were turning the cold shoulder, or were afraid of committing themselves; yet the leaders of Welsh dissent have been branding these men as traitors and deserters, and have thrown all their influence into the scale of those who have in the past done much to discourage and defeat the aims of the Liberationists.

"How long is this condition of things to continue, while the State Church profits by our dissensions? The only wise and prudent course for Welsh Nonconformists is to press on their leaders the absolute necessity for reuniting the Liberal party, so that this great instrument may once more be brought to bear with unimpaired efficiency to secure the reforms on which Liberals are practically agreed. The plans and methods for settling the Irish question which have been rejected by the country must be laid aside, and some alternative must be found which will take account of the objections conscientiously entertained by so many good and consistent Liberals. The breach which has been made must be repaired, and this can only be done by conciliatory action, and not by threats of expulsion or charges of treachery.

"The postponement of Mr. Dillwyn's motion is an incident without serious importance. No practical result could possibly be expected from it as long as the party is rent in twain by serious differences on a vital point of Imperial policy. Let all efforts, then, be directed to removing this cause of contention. Then no real time will have been lost, and a united party can proceed

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

[NEW VERSION.]

"WILL you walk into our parlour?" said the Spider to the Fly;
"'Tis the cosiest little parlour, friend, that ever you did spy.
The way into this parlour is quite wide, as you're aware,
And, oh! we'll do such wondrous things when once we get *you* there!
Then, won't you, won't you, won't you, won't you, Pretty little fly?"

Now, as I've heard, this little fly was young, but wary, too,
And so he thought, I'll mind my eye—the thing may be a do!
So "No, no!" said that little fly; "kind Sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your parlour, and I do not wish to see."
"Then, won't you," &c.

That Spider he was portly, and that Spider he was bland,
And he played the part of siren for an even Older Hand.
Says he, "Oh, Fly, you must be tired of being on the shelf,
Why don't you just step in awhile, if but to rest yourself?
Then, won't you," &c.

"Our parlour's snugly furnished, for expense we never spare,
We've such a nice Round Table; you shall have an easy chair.
It seems incomplete without you as a sort of settled guest;
Turn up solitary buzzing now; step in and take a rest.
Now, won't you," &c.

That little Fly looked longingly. Thinks he, "I *do* feel tired,
I'm fond of cosy parties, and I like to be admired.
Yet I have a slight suspicion that the thing may be a trap—
I twig something in yon corner—I distrust that fat old chap.
With his won't you," &c.

So "I'll wait a little longer," to the Spider said the Fly,
As he spread his wings (with friend COL-LINGS), and fluttered towards the Skye.
But whether he'll come back again, and try that parlour yet,
Is a thing on which a cautious man would hardly like to bet.
"Then, won't you, won't you," &c.

(From *Punch*, March 19, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

immediately to the consideration of the important questions which await settlement.

"Some of the former leaders of the Liberal party are now engaged in this necessary work of reconciliation. They require, and they ought to have, the support and sympathy of all who desire that remedial legislation should be at once resumed. The issue of the Round Table Conference will decide much more than the Irish question. It will decide the immediate future of the Liberal party, and whether or no all Liberal reform is to be indefinitely adjourned."

After the publication of this letter the conference broke down. Various parties to the "confab" considered that by expressing his opinion while matters were, so to speak, *sub judice*, Mr. Chamberlain had put a stopper on legitimate discussion. Mr. Gladstone declared that an unexpected obstacle had been presented in the way of any attempt to sum up the Round Table communications, and proposed to Sir William Harcourt that the subject should be allowed to stand over to a more convenient season.

The convenient season has never arrived. Mr. Chamberlain decided not to return to the Round Table, and in the following communication, addressed to the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, Unionist candidate for the Bridgeton division of Glasgow, gave his version of the abortive transactions :[1]—

"40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W., *July* 27, 1887.

"MY DEAR ASHLEY,—You will observe that Trevelyan does not deny your statement that no conclusion was actually arrived at by the conference and that the Gladstonian members did not agree to any definite proposals. You may safely challenge Trevelyan to prove that he obtained during the conference, or from any of its members, any pledge that Mr. Gladstone and his friends were now prepared to accept any one of the conditions which from time to time have been laid down as essential by Lord Hartington and myself. No doubt it is true that the discussions were friendly and pointed to the probability of agreement so far as the members of the conference were concerned. This is confirmed by Harcourt's speech, in which he said that the differences disclosed were 'secondary and few,' while the subjects of agreement were 'great and many.' This brings us down to the 14th of February, and Trevelyan repeats and adopts the allegation of the Gladstonians that my letter in the *Baptist* newspaper was the cause of the breaking off of the conference. I admit that this has always been put forward by Harcourt and Morley, but I deny that it is or can be the true reason. In the first place, my letter was not of a character to give reasonable cause of offence; and secondly, even if it were, that would not justify the Gladstonians in refusing to give the undertaking which would have reunited the Liberal party, although it might have justified them in declining further personal communication with myself. In other words, if they sincerely believed that the conference showed that an agreement for reunion was possible, it was their duty in the interests of the country and the party,

[1] Differing accounts were given by Mr. Morley at Wolverhampton, April 29, 1887; by Sir G. O. Trevelyan in the *Times*, July 26, 1887; and by Sir William Harcourt, February 27, 1889.

NEW FRIENDS.

RIGHT HON. JOEY C.: "Mr. Bung, I looks towards you!" MR. BUNG: "Sir, I catches yer h'eye!!" [*They carouse.*

(From *Punch*, June 9, 1886. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

and for the settlement of the Irish question, to make their conclusions public, to state clearly the concessions they were prepared to make, and in this way to secure the adhesion of the great body of Liberal-Unionists without the least reference to my individual position or opinion. It is important to note that Harcourt's speech, from which I have already quoted, in which he spoke in the most encouraging terms of the state of the negotiations, was made at the Schnadhorst banquet on the 9th of March, twelve days after the publication of the *Baptist* letter, which is now alleged to have been the cause of the failure. My view accordingly is that the *Baptist* letter was a pretext and an excuse, and that the real reason for the failure of the negotiations was that in the interval between their inception and the 14th of February the Gladstonians had come to the conclusion that they would get their own way without the necessity of yielding anything to us. Trevelyan goes on to quote a passage from your speech in which you say that during the month after the 14th of February no answer came from Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley. Your statement is true in the sense that no answer came to my demand that they should state their views and their reply to our representatives. It is the fact that during the whole of this time an active correspondence was going on between Harcourt and myself in which I was continually pressing for such a statement, and Harcourt was as continually putting me off on the ground of the irritation caused by the *Baptist* letter, and also on another ground which, in the course of the correspondence, I was able entirely to dispose of. This correspondence is marked 'Private,' but I have not the least objection to its publication if Harcourt agrees. You are mistaken in saying that a letter was written to Harcourt and Morley with the sanction and consent of Trevelyan. The correspondence was carried on by myself alone, and it was only on the 9th of March that I was able to communicate the final result to Trevelyan. I should add that from first to last—that is to say, from the date of the first meeting of the conference until within the last few weeks—Trevelyan never wrote to me a single word disapproving of anything which I had publicly written or stated during the negotiations. He never complained of any asperity on my part; on the contrary, I have a letter from him highly approving the two public speeches which I delivered at Harwich and at Birmingham, and which were at the time complained of by Harcourt and Morley. I am forced, therefore, to the conclusion that his present contention is a mere afterthought, brought into the controversy in order to justify his extraordinary change of front. In conclusion, let me summarise the facts of the case as they appear on the showing both of Trevelyan and myself. The conference met in order to see how far agreement was possible, and in any case to minimise differences. The discussion at the conference showed that, as far as its members were concerned, agreement was not impossible, and that the points of difference were, in the opinion of Gladstonians, secondary and unimportant. When, however, in order to bring the matter to a conclusion, it became necessary for the Gladstonians to state clearly whether, or how far, they were prepared to meet the wishes of Trevelyan and myself, they refused further communication on grounds which are clearly inadequate and indefensible. Their motives must be matter for speculation. It may be that, being only agents in the matter, they found insuperable difficulties in obtaining the assent of their principals to the concessions which were necessary to secure reunion; or it may be, as I have myself supposed, that the introduction of coercion changed the position, and filled them with hope that they would secure the

OUT OF IT; OR, UP IN SKYE.

"HARK, HARK, THE LARK!"

(From *Punch*, April 23, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

breaking up of the Unionist party without being obliged to offer any consideration for this result. I should add that, from the first introduction of the Home Rule Bill, Trevelyan's strongest point of objection was the creation of an Irish Executive and the surrender of responsibility for law and order to an Irish Parliament. I defy him to give one tittle of evidence to show that either at the conference or subsequently he has obtained any assurance that his demands in this respect will be accepted by Mr. Gladstone. In going over to the Gladstonians and accepting a Gladstonian candidature he has therefore absolutely and unconditionally surrendered the main point for which he sacrificed his position in the Cabinet and his seat in the House of Commons. You are at liberty to make any use you please of this letter.—Yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

By this time Mr. Goschen had accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and thus the first move of the Liberal-Unionists in a Tory Cabinet was effected. But it was a move in an opposite quarter to Mr. Chamberlain, for Mr. Goschen and other Liberal-Unionists of the right Liberal wing grew more in accord with the Tory Government, as Mr. Chamberlain and the left Liberal wing (acting now without the cementing influence of Lord Randolph Churchill) drifted apart.

But in spite of all this the curiously arranged elements contrived to pull fairly evenly alongside of each other, and indeed, by reason of the Prime Minister's tact and diplomacy, the Liberal-Unionist and Radical leaders, shy and suspicious as they were, were thrown into a species of give and take alliance that caused the second administration of Lord Salisbury (which had threatened to be but a shaky concern) to work finally with remarkable smoothness and success. While these events were taking place—while the Irish were making their country a scene of ravage and disorder, while politicians were discussing the pros and cons of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation and the probable collapse of Lord Salisbury's Government, while the Round Table Conference was going forward at Sir William Harcourt's house—Mr. Chamberlain's future was forming the subject of excited speculation. Some averred that he had proposed the conference as a stepping-stone to reconciliation, others prophesied an entire climb down to the Home Rule plane, while some declared that he was politically extinct, that in fact between the two stools he was coming gently but inevitably to the ground.

These reports and rumours affected the object of them not at all. He clearly made it understood that he was anxious to rejoin his former friends; he would do a great deal, concede much to meet them on the old footing, but there were limits to concession. Unless the reasonableness he and his party were prepared to display was reciprocated by the other side, then on their shoulders would

rest the responsibility for such disaster and confusion as would fall on the Liberal party.

They took this responsibility, and not long after this date the Gladstonians became hand and glove allies of the Nationalists. Then the Home Rule question assumed a social as well as a political shape. The Irish members now became small lions in certain circles; they were invited to assist with their roar their Liberal friends at the election contests—the whilom rebels of the Land League—the pariahs of Parliament of some twelve months back were now, according to Mr. O'Brien, darlings of the Liberal drawing-rooms. "Send us an Irish member," was the stereotyped order despatched periodically by the provincial Liberal Associations to the Irish Press Agency in London. "Irishmen who had been in jail were in special request," says the author of the Life of Charles Stewart Parnell. "Irish members swarmed in the English constituencies preaching 'peace and goodwill'; Liberals overran Ireland sympathising with the victims of the Castle and glorying in the heroes of the Plan of Campaign."

In a speech at Bradford (September 1888) Mr. Chamberlain, while protesting against the assertion that the Unionists had parted with Mr. Gladstone only on a matter of detail, alluded to the effect of this singular friendship. "There has been a change which has made it possible that I (who all my life have been a Radical and have not changed one of the opinions I have ever expressed) should support heartily a Government, every member of which, with one exception, is a Conservative—a change which has made it possible for the Liberal party to transform themselves into the allies of Mr. Parnell, to be hand and glove with the men whom three years ago they denounced from every platform as the enemies of this country, and whose policy and methods they repudiated with scorn and with indignation." He went on to show that these were the men who a short time since prayed publicly for the success of the Zulus and for a Russian war, and asked: "Are you certain that these men would bear their fair share of the sacrifices which would be entailed in such an emergency?"

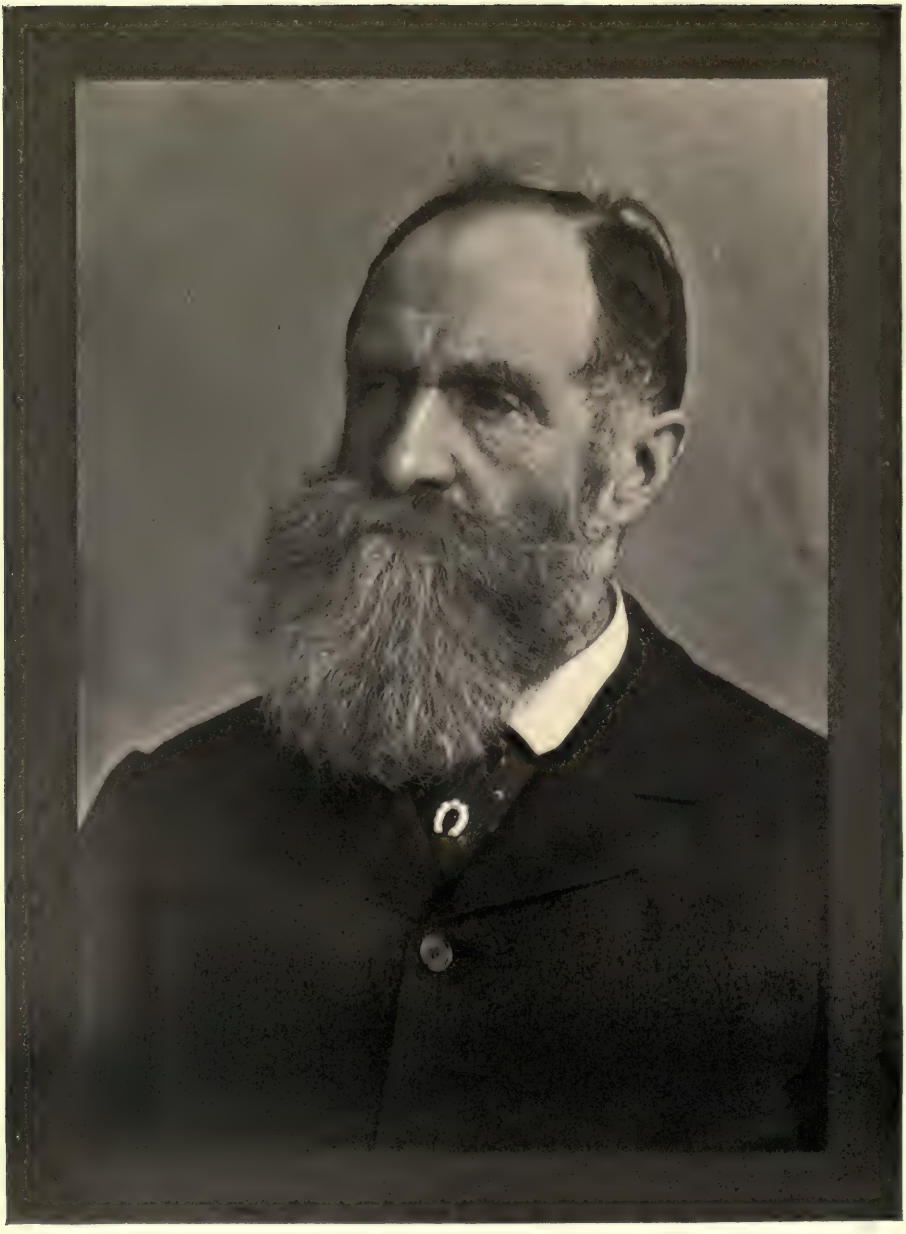
All this effervescence on the part of the Gladstonians was a counterblast to the action of the Conservatives and to Mr. Balfour's demand for the Crimes Bill.[1] Mr. Chamberlain, much as he had been averse from coercion, had been gradually converted by the Irishmen's tactics to a belief that the Plan of Campaign must be met by drastic measures, or the future of Ireland would become a tale of mutiny and outrage disgraceful to civilisation.

At Birmingham in January, before the bill was proposed, he

[1] Mr. Arthur Balfour succeeded Sir M. Hicks Beach as Irish Secretary in March 1887.

criticised the methods of the originators of the Plan of Campaign and the remarks of certain Radicals who declared it not only a right, but a duty to disobey a bad law. He characterised their arguments as inconsistent with true Radical principles. Passive resistance, he admitted, was justifiable in some cases; for instance, if Church rates should be reimposed, he himself would refuse to pay them—he would permit his goods to be taken into execution. But there were things he would not do—things such as barricading his house, throwing hot water on police, shooting at the parson from behind a hedge, or denouncing the officers of the law who were merely doing their duty. "To justify violent resistance to a law that one disapproves is destructive of all law." No law ever existed which the law-breakers did not deem bad, he said. While the law existed it must be respected. If bad it should be amended, but so long as it was law it must be accepted as the collective expression of society, the security of the weak against the strong, the safeguard of the few against the many. He went on to point out that if the law, which was the highest expression of the democratic theory of equality, were disregarded, there would remain but anarchy on the one hand and despotism on the other. He referred to the immediate state of Ireland, the violence, the open abuse of the law there. It was not, he showed, either the law of rent or of eviction that was in question (these he admitted might be amended, made less stringent, more merciful), but it was the law against assassination, the law against intimidation, and the law against theft that were continually being violated. "For this violation there is no excuse." But in spite of this statement Mr. Chamberlain admitted that he was unprepared to support such measures as the establishment of martial law, or the suspension of Habeas Corpus, or any measures for the restriction of the liberty of the subject. But, if necessary, in order to strengthen the ordinary law of the country, he was ready to give full consideration to any proposal to achieve the object that might be made. He then proceeded to back his arguments by quoting Mr. Morley (the late Chief Secretary for Ireland), who had said: "Murder and outrage are not to be allowed in Ireland any more than they are to be allowed anywhere else. If there is a general attack on property all along the line it will be resisted. The question is, how you are to suppress and punish murder and outrage, and how the Government is to deal with organised attack on property. The answer is, by a vigorous execution of the law as it stands, and by a regular and formal alteration of the law if it demands alteration."

None at this time could argue that the law did not need alteration, and consequently when the Crimes Bill was introduced Mr. Chamberlain admitted the necessity for it. In a speech at Birming-



EARL SPENCER

Photo RUSSELL & SONS, LONDON.

ham (March 12) he said: "I have no sympathy with outrage and intimidation; none with the scoundrels who shoot old men in the legs, who cut off the hair of young girls and pour pitch on their heads because they speak to a policeman, who hoot and jeer at the widow of a man who has been assassinated, and are without mercy on her sufferings or respect for her sorrow, and who even refuse to provide or allow to be provided a coffin to contain the murdered remains. With such men I have no sympathy, and I am perfectly prepared to do anything that will secure to the law the power of punishing them for their infamous offences."

On the subject of this bill party feeling fanned itself into new flame. Mr. Gladstone, with eloquent vehemence, denounced it as "the worst, the most insulting, the most causeless Coercion Bill ever submitted to Parliament," and the Nationalists cursed it as the death-blow to their mischievous and intimidating activities. The most important features of the Crimes Act were that when a crime was committed, though none was in custody on charge of committing the crime, an inquiry on oath might take place; that trial by jury might be substituted by trial by magistrate in cases where part was taken in criminal conspiracy punishable by law, in cases where violence was used, in cases of riot and unlawful assembly, in cases of forcibly seizing premises from which tenants had been evicted, interfering with the officers of the law in the discharge of their duty, or inciting to any of the above offences. The Lord-Lieutenant was empowered to proclaim disturbed districts and dangerous associations. The right of appeal was given in cases where the sentence exceeded a month. The worst feature of all, from the Irish point of view, was that now the Act had no limit in duration, it would exist just as long as it was found necessary, and only be suspended in such districts as had been restored to order.

To the surprise of many who had been inclined to view Mr. Arthur Balfour as an engaging, easy-going politician, he now appeared as a man of energy and of singular courage in the most trying and critical circumstances, and so well did he sustain his arduous duties in a period of exceptional turmoil, that eventually he had the triumph of witnessing an almost complete defeat of the agrarian conspiracies, a defeat for which the subsequent Liberal Government received much of the credit. Mr. Chamberlain, who was as yet far from sympathising with the policy of Lord Salisbury's Government as a whole, reluctantly confessed the value of the measure. During a short tour in Scotland, whither he had gone to get at the root of the Crofter Question in which he had been interesting himself for years, he explained his views and put before his hearers the position that gave rise to them—the two

systems of criminal law and procedure that were causing turmoil in Ireland. You have, he said, on the one hand, the Government of the Queen (the security for law and order, the protection of the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects); on the other, the Government of the League, a government subsidised and guided by the funds of the Chicago Convention. He told them how, under one law, the first, the liberties of the country were developed, how the nation secured its position as the first in the world; and how, under the second, they had an unwritten law that contrived to lend itself to private vengeance and rebellion. Finally, on the one hand, they found the official and judicial tribunal of the United Kingdom, with a system built up by generations of intellectual and patriotic men, so contrived as to protect the innocent; while on the other were secret tribunals pursuing their processes by means of masked assassins, and meting out arbitrarily punishments, fines, torture, death. It was a case of war between these two forms of government, and it behoved the legal Government to suppress the illegal one unless it was itself prepared to be suppressed.

As may be imagined Mr. Chamberlain grew more and more unpopular with the Nationalists, and at times his very life was in danger; yet he, like Mr. Balfour, maintained a front of fine British courage, and pursued unflinchingly the duty he had set himself. At Ayr (13th April) he described the odious outrages that had made the Crimes Bill obligatory, and while he descanted on some of the almost inhuman actions that had taken place, a remarkable scene occurred. A voice from the multitude cried out: "Watch yourself."

Immediately the place became charged with passion. There were cries of "Turn him out," and louder calls for the assistance of the police. But Mr. Chamberlain's composure quelled the uproar. "Bring the man up here," he said. He then made the individual an object-lesson to his audience. "Here," he said, "you have before you an instance of the demoralisation of politics which has been caused by the action of the leaders of the Liberal party. I relate facts that it would be supposed would be listened to even by opponents with shame and horror. I tell you of assassination, and here you find a man who says, 'Watch yourself.' Has the time come when political matters cannot be discussed in this country without hearing threats of assassination?" He then proceeded on his course, relating various cases of outrage and disorder which had caused the Crimes Act to be introduced. "You are told that the Crimes Act is a bill for the repression of liberty. Liberty to do what? Liberty to commit theft? liberty to injure women? liberty to ruin industrious men?" He wound up by showing his audience that since they must have coercion of or by Moonlighters, it was their duty to make a choice.

THE BRUMMAGEM OLYMPIANS.

Wonderful performance of "Joe and Jesse" at Birmingham in the presence of Her Majesty, who is said to have enjoyed the entertainment even more than "Jock and Jenny" at Olympia, Wednesday, March 23.

(From *Punch*, April 2, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

There is no doubt that in many of these speeches made in Scotland Mr. Chamberlain displayed unusual acrimony and heat. But at this time even the well-wishers of Ireland were embarrassed and were at a loss to know how to defend their friends the Nationalists, while these refrained from prosecuting the *Times* for certain statements which if untrue constituted a libel.[1]

It is impossible to trace the various currents of emotion that extended throughout the political world from the source of the *Times*' "Parnellism and Crime" revelations. Though it is easy to be wise after the event, it was not so easy for Conservatives and Unionists, and even some Home Rulers, to escape the influence of the narrative of murders and instigations to murders at a time when atrocities of all kinds were going actively forward in Ireland. Speeches that would now be read as immoderate and heated utterances were the natural outcome of burning indignation fired by some passing event united to uncontradicted accusations against Nationalist leaders. The Conservatives were openly gratified to trace the Nationalist complicity with crime, to place the whole noisy obstructive crew on the same level as the violent American adventurers who were paid to sow the whirlwind; but not so the Radicals and Unionists. They were sincerely moved and deeply indignant when they recalled how lately they had been in sympathy with those whose advocacy of assassination, or whose indifference to murder, if nothing worse, contributed to the appalling state of affairs in Ireland.

Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, maintained that the burden of proof rested on those who brought the charges. Unless they could supply evidence to bear the test of investigation, and that would carry with it at the least a highly rational probability of the truth, they were then "wanton calumniators, and should be shunned as pests to society." Sir William Harcourt, Lord Spencer, and Sir George Trevelyan were of the same opinion, and refused to believe that in the criminal proceedings any of the Irish members had been accessories after the fact.

II.—1887—"PARNELLISM AND CRIME"—THE FINAL CLEAVAGE—MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S ISOLATION—HIS VISIT TO ULSTER

A few days later (April 18th) the *Times*, which for a month past had been publishing the "Parnellism and Crime" revelations, gave publicity to a letter purporting to be written by Mr. Parnell. It ran:—

"DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us.

[1] On March 7, 1887, the first of a series of articles, "Parnellism and Crime," was published in the *Times*.

To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned that, though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also; but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons.—Yours very truly, CHARLES S. PARNELL."

As may be imagined, this remarkable epistle cast a bomb in the Liberal ranks, and did not improve the position of the Nationalists with the Tories. All London was agog with the scandal. Society fermented, then burst with indignation, and it was prophesied that Home Rule would be "blown to smithereens." So an Irishman expressed it. Mr. Parnell, however, took the matter composedly, and explained to the House when he became acquainted with the fact that a letter bearing his signature was published in the *Times*, that he supposed a blank sheet containing his signature had fallen into hands for which it had not been intended, and that it had been misused. "When I saw what purported to be my signature, I saw plainly that it was an audacious and unblushing fabrication."

He went on to compare his signature with that of the forgery, and said he could not understand how "the managers of a responsible, and what used to be a respectable, journal could have been so hoodwinked, so hoaxed, so bamboozled, as to publish such a production as that as my signature, my writing." He entered into various particulars regarding the nature of his own caligraphy and the flaws in the spurious manuscript, and that done, he made no further attempt to refute the charges made by the *Times*.

Consequently, the excitement over the series of articles continued to simmer, with the result that the whole of the Unionist and Parnellite parties now lived at daggers drawn—the former accepting for gospel all the revelations made by the journal, and the latter accusing their enemies of forging and libelling them for party ends.

Mr. Chamberlain was much incensed by these tactics, and in various speeches discussed the latest phase of Irish policy with some heat. On the 15th of April he addressed at Edinburgh a most turbulent meeting, and his opponents made themselves conspicuous by a ceaseless uproar. In the town an effigy of the visitor was erected in a cart—top hat, eyeglass, and coat of patched blue and white cloth, styled "Joseph's coat of many colours." On one arm was written, "There's nothing like coercion"; on the other, "Would-be successor to the G.O.M." This insulting specimen was driven along, followed by a hooting and hostile mob.

But Mr. Chamberlain, undisturbed, pursued his course, and at Inverness, wholly regardless of the demonstrations organised by the

Nationalists, proceeded to animadvert on the sensation that had taken place the night before in the House of Commons.

"There was," he said, "a scene of a character which was absolutely new to our great assembly, and which, if allowed to continue, will bring it down to a level lower than has been reached by any other representative assembly. What happened last night? Colonel Saunderson, an Irish member, accused some of the Irish Nationalist members, and accused them truly, of keeping company with men who are known to be murderers, or men who have connived at murder. He accused them of that boldly and frankly in the face of the House of Commons, and thereupon several members flung an accusation—a violent and brutal accusation—at him across the floor of the House, and one member who is distinguished for that sort of thing became so violent that he had to be suspended. . . . I think it is high time that the opinion of the people of Great Britain was made known about these scenes, and about the men who make them, and that the representatives of the people were informed that their constituents will not forgive any man who gives them his sanction or encouragement. The violence of the scenes in the House of Commons, and the conduct of particular members, is due to the encouragement, the tacit but sometimes active encouragement, that they sometimes receive from members, and even from leaders of the Liberal party. I think you will fully agree with me that the state of matters we have to contemplate is not very satisfactory. How has it been brought about? What is the cause of the differences which have brought us to this pass? I should say that the cause is to be found, first, in the method in which the policy has been forced upon us, and, secondly, in the character of the policy itself. It is to be found in the method in which this policy was introduced, because the method is absolutely unparalleled in the history of this country. Never before was it attempted to settle a great question—an extraordinary and almost revolutionary proposal—without discussion in the country and without a full knowledge of it. Take, for instance, the great case of the repeal of the corn laws. Those laws were repealed almost suddenly by Sir Robert Peel under the pressure of famine, but the question of the repeal of the corn laws had been discussed beforehand for years and years in every town and county and village and hamlet in the three kingdoms; and before the repeal took place it was perfectly known that the vast majority of the people of the United Kingdom were in favour of it. Take, again, the cause of education. Our national system of education was only established by the Imperial Parliament after years—after a generation—of discussion upon it. Or take the oldest and greatest of the reforms with which we are acquainted—the reform of the franchise. For nearly twenty years we had been discussing the importance, the necessity, and propriety of extending to the counties the franchise which had already been enjoyed by the boroughs. And it was not until all the arguments for and against the proposals were fully known to every man of intelligence in the kingdom that Mr. Gladstone found himself able, or thought himself justified, in bringing forward proposals in the House of Commons in order to give legislative effect to these reforms. Why, I ask, was there a change in connection with this question? Why was it sought at a moment's notice to force a revolution upon us? Why were we not taken into the confidence of our great leader? You will recollect that so suddenly was this great matter brought forward, that within a few months before the bill was introduced into the

House, it was bruited about that there was some change in Mr. Gladstone's policy. The *Daily News*, the recognised organ of the Liberal party, completely contradicted the statement as an infamous libel—an invention of the Tories—but within a few months of the time that this infamous libel was written it proved to be true, and this great change had been effected. We know now what was in the mind of our late leader, and, as I say, without discussion and consultation we were precipitated into a controversy the evils of which I have attempted to describe. Then, in the second place, the cause of our differences is to be found in the nature of the plan which was submitted to us. We were prepared—I think we all of us were prepared—to make large changes in connection with the government of Ireland. I myself, at all events, was prepared for the most extensive development of local liberties that was consistent with the interests of the Empire. I stood as a Home Ruler upon that footing twelve years ago, when for the first time I solicited the suffrages of a constituency, and I have never wavered in my opinion that it is desirable to increase the local responsibility of Irishmen, and that such a development of our local institutions would be an education of which they stand very much in need. But it never entered into my conception —I could not have believed it possible—that an English statesman, the leader of the party to which I myself belonged, and whom I loyally followed for so many years, would be found prepared to press a measure for granting to Ireland a Parliament which, if not independent, was certain to become independent in a very short time afterwards. That was not a proposal for Home Rule; it was a proposal for separation."

The turmoil and strife of words, suave ironies from the Tories, reproachful and recriminative sallies between Unionists and Parnellites, continued till June, and the breach between the dissentient Liberals and their old colleagues became irreparable. Mr. Morley declared the impossibility of hurrying to reconciliation with the dissentient friends who were mainly responsible for the disastrous and shameful policy of coercion in Ireland, and who doggedly, defiantly, and steadfastly went into the division lobby against modifications of it, and "in favour of making the bill as drastic as they can." This from his old friend touched Mr. Chamberlain deeply. He now fully recognised that any effort to rejoin his late colleagues would prove futile—that it was indeed the parting of the ways.

His position was far from a happy one. He was off with "the old friends," the Gladstonians, yet far from "on with the new," the Tories. With Lord Hartington he was merely in accord on the broad, simple question of the unity of Great Britain, while with the Irishmen, who had cultivated for him a wild hatred that drowned all recollection of his past good service in their cause, there was no hope of anything but war. Mr. Chamberlain was not one to be prodded at without defending himself, and on the 1st of June delivered somewhat bitterly certain truths that revived party passion and perturbation, and proved that between himself and his old colleagues a very great gulf was fixed.

". . . What," he said, "is the use of making believe in conciliation, when our opponents give us not the slightest practical proof of it? Mr. Gladstone has been appealed to again and again, and Mr. Gladstone has persistently remained silent. I draw my own conclusions from the silence. It is significant. But if it is not sufficient, what has been said by some of his principal supporters, who have been less reticent than himself, is still more significant. Lord Rosebery spoke the other day at Glasgow. He described Sir George Trevelyan as a repentant sinner. I do not think that the observation was in good taste, although it shows the spirit in which these Gladstonian converts are prepared to welcome their old colleagues back again. But I quote it now because I infer from it that it is Sir George Trevelyan, and not the Gladstonians who are assumed to have made concessions. Lord Rosebery went on to say that the time for reconciliation had not yet arrived, and in this statement he was confirmed by another distinguished Gladstonian, Mr. John Morley, who spoke last week at Norwich. I think Mr. John Morley's speech has hardly received the attention which it deserves. It will be found hereafter to have marked the turning-point of the controversy. I will not dwell on the personal part of the speech. I suppose it cannot be avoided in a controversy of this kind that, as it proceeds, it tends to become more bitter, more irreconcilable. But Mr. John Morley complained that it was he and his friends who had reason to object to the conduct of the Liberal-Unionists. He said, 'Conciliation has been offered to us, but it is at the point of the bayonet, with frowning brows and in tones of thunder.'"

Mr. Chamberlain characterised this assertion as the delirium of rhetoric, and drew a picture of Sir George Trevelyan on his knees appealing with outstretched hands and bated breath and whispered humbleness for peace and union, while Mr. Morley sternly turned aside, spurning the suppliant, and imitating the meekness of Oliver Cromwell, while declaring that he was not the man to be bullied into submission.

"But," he went on, "Mr. Morley said more than that. He said that all hopes of reunion must be postponed until the Crimes Bill—the Coercion Bill, as he calls it—had been passed and failed, until we recognised the error and offence into which we had been betrayed. At its present rate of progress it will be some time before the Crimes Bill is passed into law, and I venture to tell Mr. Morley that it will be much longer before either the Liberal-Unionists or the country accept Sir George Trevelyan's dictum that the game of law and order is up in Ireland, or Mr. John Morley's own advice to risk a squalid version of the Thirty Years' War. But this statement of Mr. Morley's means an indefinite postponement of all efforts at reconciliation, and even then, even in the dim and distant future to which he is pleased to relegate us, he does not give us much hope of concession. What does he say? He picks out from the four conditions which Lord Hartington has laid down the one on which there is the greatest unanimity—the one as to which Sir George Trevelyan has told us he does not believe even twenty Gladstonians would insist upon it—I mean the question of the retention of Irish representation at Westminster. Mr. Morley picks this out and tells us that if we are truly repentant, and provided that it does not mean what it certainly does mean—anything short of

the full and complete concession of Irish autonomy, then he and his friends will be prepared to give to it a careful consideration. When you couple this frank avowal—for Mr. Morley, I am glad to say, is always frank and plain—when you couple this frank avowal with his further insinuation that, in asking Mr. Gladstone to tell us what are the details of the modification which he proposed to introduce into his measure, we are engaged in a crafty attempt to set a trap for him, I think you will agree with me that short of a flat refusal to have anything to do with us, it would be absolutely impossible for Mr. Morley to put in clearer language the irreconcilable attitude which he and his friends have determined to adopt towards us. What Lord Hartington said in his letter was evidently the case. Gladstonian Liberals have made their choice, they prefer an alliance with the Parnellites to any chance of reconciliation with their old colleagues and old friends. The men who have surrendered everything to the Irish party and to their American allies now slam the door in our faces, and in the faces of all who will not join them in their abject surrender. I do not know what effect this revelation of the present attitude of the Gladstonians may have upon Sir George Trevelyan, but I say that for us our course is clear. We have to recognise the fact in all seriousness and in all sadness, that we have been too sanguine in hoping that reflection and discussion would remove the differences which have arisen. Reflection has not softened in any way the tone or temper of our past friends—now our bitterest assailants—and as for discussion, we are not allowed to discuss. In the country discussion becomes tumult and violence. It is only in the House of Commons that discussion proceeds, and there it is protracted until it becomes a factious obstruction. It is not the Irish question alone which now divides us. That might have been settled; upon that an agreement was possible if we had been met in the spirit in which we offered our advice. I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that there is no desire for reunion on the part of the Gladstonian Liberals, and that the cleavage of the ranks of the Liberal party has become complete and irretrievable."

Naturally this carrying of the war into the enemy's camp did not serve to smooth matters, and Mr. Chamberlain's position in the political world became as unenviable as can well be imagined. He made a survey of it, however, with that stoical calm which appertains to the men who know how to wait, and on the 14th of June, at the dinner of the Liberal Union, he summed up the situation as he then saw it.

He decided that if reunion with the majority involved the acceptance of the Parnellite yoke, he would prefer to keep his neck free, to refuse to accept a servitude which had daily become more galling and intolerable to those who had so hastily accepted it. Still he did not abandon the hope that the bulk of the Gladstonian Liberals would before long return to their senses, for their position could not be a happy one. They were engaged in founding a church which had no elements of permanence whatever. Theirs was a sect without a creed.

"They have a religion with no articles, they have a faith, but I defy them to say what their doctrine is. They profess to be the only orthodox exponents

by apostolic succession of the Liberal party, and in the course of a brief time they have passed through almost every phase of political heresy. In the brief space of a few years they have been called upon to oppose coercion and to support it. They have been required to denounce boycotting as public plunder, and to defend it as the only perfect redress of an oppressed nationality. They have denounced the immorality of refusing to pay rent, and they have been silent when the Plan of Campaign has been proposed. A short time ago they repudiated Home Rule as tending to the dismemberment of the Empire, and now we are to assume that they believe that it is the only sure and certain guarantee of a perfect union. And lastly, they have been taught to denounce obstruction as the greatest of Parliamentary offences, and then to sit silent while it was advocated as a sacred duty of a constitutional Opposition. If that is their past experience, what have they to hope for the future? The Home Rule Bill to which they were committed has disappeared—has been abandoned. . . ."

He went on to say that the Unionists did not want to be absorbed in the old Toryism—it was a dead creed; nor did they intend to surrender to the new Radicalism, which he looked on as the English imitation of Nihilism, whose only dogma is opposition to all government and to all authority. But when they had secured their position, they would be ready to ally themselves with all whether they had hitherto called themselves Conservatives, or Liberals, or Radicals—who accepted their objects, and were prepared to carry these objects out by constitutional methods. In these circumstances he thought they would have no difficulty in holding their own against all the forces of obstruction and disorder.

Meanwhile Mr. Balfour was working with adamantine resolution to smash the rebellious conspiracies in Ireland—a task with which Mr. Chamberlain did not whole-heartedly sympathise. For instance, when it was proposed to proclaim the National League he failed to support Ministers, feeling doubtless unwilling to move further in a coercion policy which had never, save in the greatest emergency, met with his approval. The National League was proclaimed in September, and shortly afterwards agitators, including Mr. William O'Brien and some other Irish members, were thrown into prison for inciting tenants to resist eviction. The scenes surrounding this tempestuous period require a volume to themselves; they do not concern Mr. Chamberlain, who indeed, despite the vindictiveness of the Irish members, despite the disclosures of the *Times*, which continued to attract considerable attention and credence, determined to work for the welfare of Ireland, and to save her interests from being overshadowed by the feelings of personal hostility that now existed between himself and the Nationalists.

Since reference has been made to the *Times* articles, and since it is impossible to ignore their importance in colouring the political

"SHUT IN!!"

THE OLD JOCKEY (*sotto voce*): "Hang it all! I can't get through!"

GL-DST-NE on "*Home Rule.*" CH-MB-RL-N on "*Radical Unionist.*" S-L-SB-RY on "*Government.*" H-RT-NGT-N on "*Liberal Unionist.*"

(From *Punch*, May 28, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

complexion of the time, a brief summary of the origin of the notable case and the disposal of it may serve to enlighten those who cannot wade through the investigations of the Special Commission appointed a year later to inquire into the charges against Parnellites made by the great journal.

The story is a complicated one, and can be studied, if desired, in detail by referring to the report of the proceedings, but when it is stated that the three judges sat from the 17th of September 1888 to 22nd of November 1889, that four hundred and fifty witnesses were examined, and ninety-eight thousand questions were put to them, and that one counsel held forth for five, one for seven, and one for twelve days, and finally that the record of the tribunal fills some eleven folio volumes, the present abridgment may be considered merciful.

Owing to various private causes, Mr. Parnell, after disposing of the question of the *fac-simile* letter in the House of Commons, allowed the matter to drop. The *Times* pursued its charges and the publication of incriminating letters till finally matters came to a head, and the Irish leader was forced to vindicate his character. Sir Richard Webster represented the *Times*, and Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Parnell. In the course of the investigation it appeared that one Richard Pigott, professing patriotism and connected with Irish journalism, having arrived in low water, invited purchasers of his services from either side. With both parties he established some sort of connection with a view to feathering his own nest. He did feather his nest. He curried favour with Mr. Forster, who sympathetically gave him money on account of his "patriotism" and the straits to which he was reduced. He then attempted to blackmail the Land Leaguers by threatening to sell documents for publication (mainly "fabricated"), which, savoured as they were by an unpleasant peppering of truth, promised to wreck their cause with sympathisers. Having failed in his object, he then set to work to collate materials for a pamphlet called "Parnellism Unmasked," for which he found a ready purchaser. Mr. Houston not only purchased the documents, but contracted with the needy vendor to provide further evidence "connecting the Parnellite movement with the crime prevalent in the country." A vista of golden guineas rose up before the wretched adventurer; he had only to track the enemies of Parnell—Fenians, many of whom longed for the fall of the Irish leader—in Paris, New York, Lausanne, and extract from them matter suited to his purpose. He was not slow in finding politicians to finance him. Before long incriminating letters from Parnell and Egan were forthcoming, and were transferred to Mr. Houston, who, fully believ-

ing them to be genuine, handed them to the editor of the *Times*. For some time the newspaper sniffed at the suspicious morsel, various persons were consulted, and finally, after an expert in handwriting had pronounced the letters to be genuine, they were purchased and made use of, as we know. A year passed, and nothing was done till Mr. O'Donnell took proceedings against the *Times*. Then Mr. Parnell put his back into the matter, and proved the letter supposed to be signed by him to be a forgery. To cut the matter short, a trap was laid for Pigott (October 1888), and he fell into it. The tale of his ingenious misdoings was extracted from him bit by bit, and before the final humiliation came he scuttled to Paris and on to Madrid. There he made the most graceful *amende* he could; he put a bullet through his brain. Behind him he left a confession showing how elaborately he had manipulated the letter, the main pivot of the charge, and naturally the Commission found the thing published by the *Times* to be a forgery. Thus ended one of the most sensational episodes of a sensational era. Mr. Parnell became the hero of the hour, and all who esteem remarkable character, wherever found, were rejoiced at the upshot of the investigation so far as he was concerned. His compatriots did not, however, come so well out of the ordeal, for much direct or indirect incitement to crime was traced home to them, and though it was said that the finding of the judges related to venial and trivial offences, in the eyes of those who understood the workings of the Physical Force party which had given rise to the Crimes Act, the charges assumed a different aspect. In 1887 the tale of violence and lawlessness was far from trivial, and when the *Times* connected the actions of the American adventurers with the Irish leader and his party in Parliament, things looked very black—a blackness which did not wholly disappear because the most damnable blot of all was expunged.

When the Report of the Special Commission came to be discussed in the House of Commons (12th March 1890), Mr. Chamberlain made a forcible speech, in which he showed how intimately Nationalist members had been in touch with the Physical Force and Clan-na-Gael conspirators. These last, according to Mr. Asquith, represented a "friendly society," but certainly their amity had quaint ways of demonstrating itself, and reminded onlookers of the old song—

> "It's all very well to dissemble your love,
> But why did you kick me down stairs?"

Mr. Chamberlain's attitude in regard to the matter may be gauged from his speech.

"The finding of the Court that acquits Mr. Parnell of all connection with the Invincible conspiracy is a finding of fact. But by what process of reason can you say that it is legitimate to accept a finding of that kind, and reject a finding as to the co-operation and assistance which he has received from the Physical Force party? They stand on the same footing. They have equal authority and equal weight, and you must either reject all the findings or accept them all. There is a much more serious contention, if true. It is said that these findings related to venial and trivial offences. Let us see what they are. There are three findings which stand together. The finding that the respondents invited and obtained the assistance and co-operation of the Physical Force party; the finding that there was no denunciation by Mr. Parnell of the action of the Physical Force party; and lastly, the finding that Mr. Davitt was in close and intimate association with the party of violence in America. Is that a trivial offence? What was the Physical Force party? It was a party whose publicly avowed and professed object was to assassinate public men in this country, and to lay our chief cities in ruins."

These transactions had been compared with the history of the agitations which led to the passing of the Reform Act and the repeal of the Corn Laws, but Mr. Chamberlain declared he found no parallel to any popular or patriotic movement in the history of the world. There was no case in which men professing to carry on a constitutional agitation met their opponents in fair debate, and at the same time were in close and intimate alliance with men who by their published newspapers declared that their object was to assassinate those same opponents, and cause injury and ruin to the countrymen of those so-called constitutional leaders. "Is no reparation due to us, who for months and years were followed by police even into our homes in order to protect us against the agents of the friendly society of the hon. member for East Fife?" he asked. He proceeded to say that to compare action of this kind to the action of Bright and Cobden was simply an insult to the memory of those men. . . . After a passage at arms with Mr. T. P. O'Connor, he discussed the finding of the judges upon the matter. He said:—

"No proof has been given, and we do not believe that there was any intention on the part of the respondents or any of them to procure any murder, or murder in general to be committed; and, further, we believe that even those of them who have used the most dangerous language did not intend to cause the perpetration of murder. But while we acquit the respondents of having directly or intentionally incited to murder, we find that the speeches made in which land-grabbers and other offenders against the League were denounced as traitors, and as being as bad as informers—the urging young men to procure arms, and the dissemination of the newspapers above referred to—had the effect of causing an excitable peasantry to carry out the laws of the Land League, even by assassination.

"I do not think," said Mr. Chamberlain, "that that is a judgment which the House will think errs on the side of severity. But it is impossible that you can deal with some of these findings and take no notice of the others. It

THE MESSENGER OF PEACE.

(*With apologies to the Shade of the Author of "Al Aaraf."*)

[I have read . . . . that I have come to Ulster to revive religious bigotry, to rekindle the embers of party strife, and to revive ancient feuds which are now in a fair way to be forgotten. I can assure you that these are not the objects which I propose to myself. (Laughter.)—*Report of Mr. Chamberlain's Speech in Belfast.*]

Erin's Guardian Angel sings:—

I came (by the steamer)
Across the wild spray.
No bigot, no dreamer,
To moon time away.

BRIGHT lingers to ponder,
And make tart replies;
But I come, from yonder,
Drawn down from the skies.

With love I am laden,
Peace sits on my brow.
No, sweet Ulster maiden,
My game is *not* row.

(From *Punch*, Oct. 22, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

is said that the others are of less importance; there is the dissemination of newspapers, the indiscriminate defence of prisoners, and the payment of persons injured in the commission of outrage. But these amount to condonation and connivance, and I say, therefore, that these serious charges, though less serious than those of which they have been acquitted, which have been proved against hon. members opposite, cannot be passed over without any notice being taken of them. But then there is another argument. It is said that these offences may be proved, but that there is palliation and extenuation for them. We are told that we ought to take into account the wrongs and misery of Ireland, and the valuable result in the way of legislation. I am willing to admit the force of these arguments, but they are outside the present question. I say that the wrongs and misery of Ireland might have justified agitation—they did justify agitation—and even might have been an excuse for insurrection; but they cannot justify outrage, and it is this that makes the distinction between the agitation of hon. members opposite and those of Bright and Cobden. You may have had outbursts of popular agitation, but never before did you have an organised system of intimidation leading to crime. I think we are bound to make this protest, and to say that assassination and outrage of the character described are things which even an injured people have no right to employ."

Having now traced the tale of "Parnellism and Crime" from the day in March 1877—when the letters first appeared, to that in March 1890, when the Report of the Special Commission was discussed in the House of Commons—it is possible to appreciate the cause of the bitterness that underlay most of Mr. Chamberlain's political pronouncements during these three years, and the strained relations between himself and the Nationalists.

In October 1887 he paid his long promised visit to Ulster, to the delight of the Protestants, who welcomed him right royally, and to the corresponding fury of the Parnellites.

These, resenting the courage that carried him at so critical a period into their midst, to openly offer his always consistently expressed sympathy for their chosen foes, determined in some way or another to make themselves offensive. They cast about them, and found a good field for operation in America. Their allies over there could be trusted to put a spoke in the diplomatic wheel that Mr. Chamberlain, it was reported, would shortly hope to turn smoothly at Washington. Soon mischief, not only on this, but on the other side of the Atlantic, was brewing.

Meanwhile Mr. Chamberlain won the hearts of the loyalists. At Belfast (October 11) he put before them that they were unfairly represented in Parliament, that loyalty provided seventeen members, and sedition eighty-six, and in Ulster even the loyalists gained only one more than half the number of seats. He then discussed the questionable innovation demanded by the majority of the population, declaring that the minority, the 2,000,000 or so of the people who

RT. HON. SIR W. VERNON HARCOURT

Photo RUSSELL & SONS, LONDON.

THE GLADSTONE BAIT.

"As regards Home Rule for Ireland, I may say I am prepared to go as far as Mr. Gladstone's own words warrant."—*Times*, Nov. 9.

JOE, the Incomplete Angler (to himself): "I think I'll catch 'em with this."

The Incomplete Angler singeth:—

It was all very well when afar from the "swim,"
With tackle unready, and plans rather dim,
To go in for splashes and plunges.
Though, whether Lord S-l-sb-ry thought it so well,
I am not quite assured. How the papers did yell
At my whirls and my whisks and wild lunges.

But now on the spot with the fish all about,
The Waltonian *rôle*, there is not the least doubt,
Befits a diplomatic angler.
I must not dance war-dances, shy heavy stones,
Or talk in the strident stentorian tones
Of a partisan public-house wrangler.

(From *Punch*, Nov. 19, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

objected to it, comprised in a large degree the wealthier, more intelligent, and more enterprising of the community. Elsewhere he descanted on the thorny topic of Home Rule, showing how from the onset he had fully recognised the loyalists' position, and had proposed, while a member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, to place Ulster outside the jurisdiction of the National Council. The Ulstermen, he told them, had invariably enjoyed his sympathy, and he had in the matter of religion a fellow-feeling for them, since his whole life had been spent in combating all forms of religious ascendency by whatever sect it might be obtained. The claims of Protestant Ulster had been repeatedly upheld by him, and their loyalty extolled. He spoke decidedly of the effect of creating a practically independent Parliament, and prophesied that such Parliament would in a short space of time mean the absolute independence of Ireland, and the severance of all ties with Great Britain. And the great question of such result would be the effect on the country. Ireland, he pointed out, needed capital for the development of her resources, for the completion of her communications, for the encouragement of industrious farmers. Great Britain possessed that capital. Millions of money were invested in foreign countries, whose interests British capital had done so much to promote. If Ireland were tranquil, with a certain permanent order and security, some of this capital would naturally be poured into the country. As things were—when the persons who claimed the future government of Ireland, and declared that it would be in their hands in a few months, were doing everything in their power to show the law was only made to be broken, and that no contract was sacred—as things were, was it likely, was it reasonable to suppose that capitalists—the most timid of men—would unbutton their pockets? No, there could be no progress in such circumstances, and Mr. Chamberlain maintained that such agitation, and still more, any practical result of the agitation, was doing much to destroy the credit of Ireland, and to injure every one of her inhabitants.

CHAPTER IV

I.—A DIPLOMATIC MISSION, 1887–8—THE IMPERIALIST NOTE—KILLING TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE—"THE LAMP TO LIGHT THE PATH TO THE CONFEDERATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE"

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S uncomfortable political position—there were those who declared he was "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring"—was relieved by a happy turn of events and the ingenious device of Lord Salisbury. The Prime Minister, in full appreciation of the powers of his old enemy, and realising the awkwardness of the anomalous situation occupied by him, found a niche in which to place him, one that seemed entirely appropriate to Mr. Chamberlain's unfailing sagacity. A century-old dispute between Great Britain and the United States, relating to North American fisheries, came again on the tapis. The Washington Government agreed to appoint a new Commission, and the Prime Minister at one and the same time saw a chance of utilising Mr. Chamberlain's business-like qualifications and of translating him temporarily from a sphere which, to use the popular phrase, was getting rather too hot to hold him. Accordingly Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Lionel Sackville-West, and Sir Charles Tupper (representing Great Britain) met in November (1887) Secretary Bayard, Mr. Putnam, and Mr. Angell (representing the United States), and proceeded to seek a solution of the fisheries difficulty which so long had been stirring up differences between the two nations. The Commissioners deliberated till February 1888, when a treaty was signed and a mixed Commission appointed to delimit the waters of Canada and Newfoundland, where, according to an ancient treaty, American fishermen were not permitted to take or to dry fish. Mr. Chamberlain proposed a compromise. The preserve was limited to three miles in bays and harbours that did not exceed ten miles in width, and from the low water-mark in open seas. Permission to land, sell, or replenish supplies was extended to all fishermen in the event of stress of weather. They were allowed (on condition that taxes on Canadian fish products were abandoned by the United States) to buy bait in Canada. The treaty was signed after certain discussions by the Legislatures of Canada and Newfoundland, but, in spite of

President Cleveland's approval of its provisions, and as though on purpose to harass the administration or gain the Irish American vote, the treaty was rejected by the American Senate. Some declared the rejection was prompted by the desire of Irish partisans to checkmate Mr. Chamberlain, others averred that the Republican majority hoped by this means to force the Canadians into a political and commercial union with America. This contrariness, however, produced little or no effect, for Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues had arranged a *modus vivendi*, which removed the existing causes of friction between the two parties, and which has acted conveniently to this day.

But in other ways Mr. Chamberlain's travels had left an indelible mark. While diplomatically engaged he grew fully alive to the tremendous ties that unite Britons at home with their brothers over the seas. He began to view British responsibility from a new standpoint, and to note that the mother country could no longer leave her children to be "dragged up," but that they must be "brought up" consistently with the development of the Imperial Estate.

His ideas now were merely the natural developments and growth of the theories of his youth. Then, he strove to alter the attitude of the State to the people, to force on it the parental duty; now he hoped to influence the attitude of the country towards colonies and dependencies; to impress on the nation the almost forgotten axiom that "blood is thicker than water."

During his visit to Canada the envoy attended the annual dinner of the Toronto Board of Trade (Dec. 30), and there discussed the commercial interests of the Empire. In the course of his speech he described how much he had been impressed with the importance of the destiny that is reserved for the Anglo-Saxon race, which he viewed as "infallibly destined to be the predominating force in the future history and civilisation of the world." He, who was once ranged on the side of the "Little Englanders," went on to show how dwarfed was patriotism that did not embrace the vigorous young nations which carried throughout the globe the knowledge of the English tongue, the love of liberty and law. "We are branches of one family," he told the company. "In regard to the older and the younger peoples we could say, 'our past is theirs—their future is ours.'" He went so far as to declare that there never could be controversy between members of the English-speaking race that would not be capable of adjustment. What Canada needed was the rapid development of her illimitable resources, and to get population on the land. Then having multiplied producers, there would follow a vast population of consumers, together with powerful

"ON HIS OWN HOOK."

JUDICIOUS JOE: "A bit rough—but, pleasanter than *home* waters—just now!"

(From *Punch*, Sept. 10, 1887. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

industries that would prosper "whether there be any tariff or not." He quoted Matthew Arnold, who had likened Great Britain to a Titan staggering beneath the burden of the obligations of the Empire! "Obligations, forsooth! We will not lighten them by cowardly surrender, by mean betrayal of the interests entrusted to our care." He went on to say that the confederation of Canada "might be the lamp to light our path to the confederation of the British Empire."

This speech is remarkable in that it is one of the earliest Imperial notes struck by the man who was to be the greatest Colonial Secretary of any age; the first responsible announcements of his personal acceptance of the obligations of Empire.

In an address delivered to members of the "Order of the Sons of St. George" (February 29, 1888), in Philadelphia, he referred to the work that had taken him to America, and to the ties that must for ever bind Americans and English. (There was good reason for the warmth of his remarks regarding the two nations, as we shall see anon!)

"I believe," he said, "that the friendship of unbroken amity between Great Britain and the United States is the best guarantee for the peace and civilisation of the world, and it was to promote that object that I came to this country, accepting at twenty-four hours' notice the difficult and delicate mission with which I was charged by the Queen. That mission has accomplished its purpose, and the result of our labours is now submitted to the judgment of the American people. It is not a mere treaty of fisheries we have made, it is a treaty of amity and good neighbourhood. Great Britain has held out the right hand of fellowship to the United States, and I believe that every patriotic American who can rise above party bias will be in favour of grasping the hand thus held out. If you want to appreciate the treaty, you must first appreciate the spirit in which it was submitted, and in which those who negotiated it came to this work. We do not regard this long-standing difference as a dispute between hostile or rival nations, but rather as a difference of opinion between friends mutually anxious to remove every cause of dispute. Under these circumstances, to speak of concessions which have been made to us, or which are made by us, as an ignominious surrender on either side, is an abuse of language. There has been no surrender on either side of anything that it was honourable to maintain. . . ."

He went on to say that he had been pained at some expressions which have been publicly used by individuals, and especially by language which he had seen in the press concerning his country. "We are treated as though we were a foreign and rival nation," he exclaimed; "I decline to be considered a foreigner in the United States! I feel much as a distinguished American diplomatist, who once told the Prince of Wales that the world was divided into three classes, Americans, Englishmen, and foreigners! I am astonished at men who boast of an unbroken line of British descent, and who are proud of the purity of their speech, when I hear them fouling the nest from which they sprung, and imputing to Englishmen a policy of malignity, duplicity, and an arbitrary character only existing in their diseased imaginations. . . ."

Then whimsically he declared that sometimes when he saw different views presented to the American public by those professing to be its guides, philosophers, and friends, he was inclined to think that the time had come when some American Columbus should undertake the discovery of England; not the England so frequently depicted as the dreary, tyrannical, cruel government which is on the downward road to speedy, well-deserved extinction, but the England of to-day, the true England, the mother of nations greater than herself, existing under a popular Government in which all are represented, and the England which in her glorious maturity wields the sceptre of dominion over hundreds of millions of contingent subjects.

On the whole the mission was considered a highly successful one, and Mr. Chamberlain's part in this matter—his diplomatic ability and business-like mode of tackling the complicated questions connected with international fishery disputes—was highly appreciated by Lord Salisbury. The Queen was prepared to offer Mr. Chamberlain recognition of his services, but he preferred to remain plain Mr. Chamberlain, and the distinction was courteously declined.

And now it must be recorded that the envoy while conducting negotiations and establishing cordial relations in America, accomplished a delicate stroke of business on his own account. He made the acquaintance of a charming lady, the daughter of the Hon. W. Endicott, Secretary for War in Mr. Cleveland's Administration, and became engaged to her.

But nothing was said of the matter, and he returned to England in March 1888, to be fêted by his constituents, presented with the freedom of the borough of Birmingham, and inundated with addresses from all sections of the community.

In one of his speeches he made a review of the situation since his departure, and described the prospect opening in front of the hard-working Government. Never, he thought, had their position been stronger or more firmly established. Domestic legislation in England and Scotland, and even in Ireland, was proceeding with steady strides,—a substantial measure of relief had been accorded to miners, to agricultural labourers, to Irish tenants during the last session. In Ireland peace and prosperity were slowly returning—matters would be helped further by the Local Government Bill, a bill of which any Liberal Minister might be proud.

He represented the political world now as but composed of two parties—Unionists on the one hand, Parnellites on the other. Party lines had disappeared; the old party names might be used, but they no longer stood for the old party ideas, and that fact the

country had begun to appreciate. A common danger had united Liberal and Tory against a common foe, and there existed not two parties, but one party—a National Party. "A future historian may write of the bitter controversy that has divided us, that its evils have cheaply purchased the knowledge that the great majority of the British nation are proud of the empire, the glorious and united empire, to which they belong. They are sensible of the responsibilities which its citizenship entails, and of the privileges which it confers, and they will never either be tempted or bullied into their surrender."

Mr. Chamberlain's *résumé* was no empty boast. A great change had indeed come over the political climate. The storms across the water had served to clear the air and relieve the tension between the conglomerated political parties. Before this there had been considerable embarrassment at times on both sides, for, though the Conservatives outnumbered the Gladstone-Parnellite faction, there remained to be considered a sufficiently large party of dissentient Liberals, whose vote might at any time become hostile to Ministers. There were also cliques that adhered to the Hartington wing, and cliques that held to the Chamberlain wing, not to speak of some few believers in Mr. Goschen, who, according to Mr. Gladstone, influenced "next to nobody," yet who served to make the solidification of a party no easy achievement. It was only natural, as Mr. Chamberlain remarked, that at first there should have been a certain amount of mistrust between those who had been lifelong opponents. But with time there had come a change; much of the distrust had disappeared, and in its place had arisen a real sense of the advantage of the alliance, and a determination to maintain it. Of this sense was begotten the virtue of toleration, and the principle of mutual concession by which the curious groups were enabled to amalgamate into a solid and serviceable working mass, guided by a Tory Prime Minister, yet conscious of the deference of that Minister to the multifarious political prejudices that underlay the one cardinal policy of depriving Mr. Gladstone of the power to make himself the instrument of the Parnellites.

In a speech delivered at the beginning of 1888, while Mr. Chamberlain was in America, Lord Salisbury had made no secret of the art used in the handling of the "ribbons" by which he contrived to make restive leaders and wheelers keep a steady pace along the ministerial road. He warned the Tories that since the Government had no preponderating majority, all measures must necessarily bear a certain colour of the Unionists who afforded them their valuable aid. "If for the sake of a great public object, an object transcending all other objects," he said, "you are maintaining the

Government on the support of that which is not a coalition but an alliance, you must not wonder, you must not blame us if, to a certain extent, the colour of the convictions of the Unionist Liberals joins with the colour of the Conservative party in determining the hue of the measures to be submitted to Parliament. . . ." Governments, he pointed out, were forced to resign on votes of want of confidence, and whether the vote was or was not one of confidence depended on whether they regarded it as a matter of public interest that they should appeal to the electors or not. "I do not venture to prophesy, but from all I can see as matters stand, my impression is that we would rather exercise our discretion in the sense of deferring an appeal to the electors till the result of our recent measure in Ireland can be more permanently displayed to the minds of the people."

By this it will be seen that Mr. Chamberlain did not go one step nearer to the Tories than they advanced towards him. He was too well versed in the science of politics to forget that it is useless to dash your head against a brick wall; he admitted that "you must take the best thing you can get at a given moment," and be thankful for it. The best thing he could get in 1888 was the ear of a Tory Government, partially educated to democracy, and he took care to pour into that ear sufficient of his social programme to beneficently colour the legislation of the period between 1887 and 1892.

In return, he came out of his insular groove and gave his mind to international questions. Incidentally he was awakened to the vast importance of the opulent youth of the British dominions over the seas, to the magnificent rights of British motherhood, and the corresponding responsibilities of it. The eye that had pictured the capital of the Midlands developing from an "overgrown village," now saw as in a vision a transcendent Improvement Scheme—a gigantic confederation of the Empire, the developed territories of Great Britain acting as trustees for civilisation for the commerce of the world. The problems that now presented themselves to the municipal mind merely took on themselves a newer and larger dress—the idealist of Little England became the idealist of Great Britain, and he dreamed of a Greater Britain still. This was the step he took in return for Tory socialism. The Tory Socialists and the Radical Imperialists might well have shaken hands on so equitable a bargain.

This mind-phase of 1887–8 is diagnosed at length, since it is desirable to emphasise Mr. Chamberlain's pronouncements, more particularly that made in Canada, where he spoke of the Confederation of Canada as a possible lamp to light the pathway to the

Confederation of the British Empire. Especially must it be pointed out that Mr. Chamberlain's Imperialism was the natural emotion born of experiences gained by acting as Envoy of the British Government, and not, as his critics aver, a sentiment adroitly acquired to meet the demands of the post offered to him in 1895.

Undoubtedly he returned home deeply enamoured of the race to which he belongs; and added to that sentiment, he mixed the alloy of commercialism and common-sense, which is politically needful if dreams are to be made into durable realities. The admixture was at its best in a speech made at the Devonshire Club on his return (9th April 1888). After describing the Conservatism he had marked in America and the success of his mission, he came to the question of strengthening our possession of our Colonies. At risk of being charged with being a sentimentalist, he said he could never entertain any policy that would tend to weaken the ties between the Anglo-Saxon race.

"I feel," he declared, "a natural pride in the restless energy and dauntless courage which have created this great Empire; a satisfaction in the constant evidence which is given us of the affectionate attachment of our fellow-subjects throughout the world to their old home. It seems to me that it would be unpatriotic to do anything which would discourage this sentiment—that it would be cowardly and unworthy to repudiate the obligations and responsibilities which the situation entails upon us."

Then, putting his sentiment on the lowest possible grounds, he explained that experience teaches us that trade follows the flag, that even in commercial questions sentiment is a powerful influence on the question of profit and loss.

"A great part of our population is dependent at the present moment upon the interchange of commodities with our colonial fellow-subjects, and *it is the duty of every statesman to do all in his power to maintain and increase this commercial intercourse, and to foster the attachment upon which, to a large extent, it is founded. We have to watch for opportunities to strengthen the ties between our colonies and ourselves.*"

Here was a dominant note in the new key that had been struck, and from it the Imperial tune flowed serenely out, confident—inspiriting! He hinted at the word Confederation—declared he was almost afraid to mention it—for that had been declared the fantastic vision of fools and fanatics :—

"I am well aware that up to the present time no practical scheme of federation has been submitted or suggested, but I do not think that such a scheme is impossible. There are two points which have to be prominently borne in mind. There is the question of commercial union, and the question of union for defence. I have heard it argued that the Colonies would be very foolish to allow themselves to become mixed up in our old world policy, and

"JOSEPH'S SWEETHEART."

(*A Fieldingesque Fragment of a Tale of Love and Loyalty. Adapted to the Situation.*)

Showing how our Hero rejects with scorn the proffered Title at the hands of Lady Tory Diplomacy, and clings to the object of his First Love, Dear Democracy.

(From *Punch*, March 31, 1888. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

to concern themselves with wars in which they can have no possible interest or advantage. But I may point to the action of the Colonies not so very long ago in the case of the Egyptian War, when they exhibited a sentiment which I think we should all be ready to appreciate on the occasion of a war in which they certainly had nothing but a sentimental interest. But I will go farther. I suppose the colonists read history; and if they do they will know that every great war in which this country has been engaged since the great French war at the beginning of the century, and that every dispute which has seriously threatened our peace, has arisen out of the concerns and interests of one or other of the Colonies or of the great dependency of India. And under these circumstances it appears to me that it may be at least as much to the interests of the Colonies as to those of the Mother Country that we should seek and find a concerted system of defence."

He went on to explain that the difficulty in the case of commercial union was no doubt much greater, for it was of no use to expect that our Colonies would abandon their custom duties as their chief and principal source of revenue.

"It is hardly to be hoped that the protected interests fostered by their system will willingly surrender the privileges which they now enjoy. All we can do is to wait until proposals are made to us; to consider those proposals when they come with fairness and impartiality, and to accept them if they do not involve the sacrifice of any important principle or of any interest vital to our population. Meanwhile we ought not to do anything to discourage the affection or to repel the patriotic and loyal advances which are made to us by our fellow-subjects and fellow-kinsmen, who are proud of the glorious traditions of our country, who share with us our history, our origin, and our common citizenship in the greatest and freest Empire that the world has ever known."

II.—1888–90: STUDYING THE EMPIRE—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POLICY—"WHAT SHOULD THEY KNOW OF ENGLAND WHO ONLY ENGLAND KNOW?"—WHO IS TO BE THE DOMINANT POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA?—THE OCCUPATION OF EGYPT AND THE POLICY OF "SCUTTLE"

While Lord Salisbury was bending his mind to the vagaries of Socialist legislation, Mr. Chamberlain was expanding his to gauge the importance of the Imperial questions on which the far-seeing eye of Lord Beaconsfield had been steadily fixed. His visit to Canada caused him now, as an independent onlooker, to pursue an inquiry into the political conditions that connected the British with South Africa and Egypt, and he came to conclusions which would have startled him had they been expounded by his colleagues of 1880. The work of colonisation became now a paramount question with him. Quite naturally the man who had clamoured for land for the agricultural labourer devoted himself to the possi-

bility of filling illimitable acres with British emigrants who would be able to breathe and to enjoy the free light of heaven instead of swarming into cities to live, packed like herrings in a barrel, till they perished from slow asphyxiation of mind and constitution.

The trend of his thoughts he revealed while addressing a meeting at the London Chamber of Commerce (May 1888). He asked how were to be prescribed conditions under which the work of colonisation should be carried forth, how was to be determined the protection of natives forming the vast majority of the population in South Africa, and who, in fact, was to be the dominant power in that country. Such questions had not then become party questions, and he believed they could be discussed fairly all round. All Governments and both parties were equally responsible for the policy or the want of policy which had hitherto prevailed, and he firmly believed that all Governments would be ready as himself to acknowledge their error of judgment. "I beg you to believe," he said, "that I am not casting any blame upon any one, and if I were inclined to do so—if blame indeed does attach—I am here frankly to admit that, so far as my limited parliamentary life is concerned, I am perhaps as great an offender as any." Here was a frank and characteristic admission, doing honour to the courage and brain of the man who made it. He confessed that the policy of successive Governments for a long period of time had been the policy of shirking. The concession of self-government to the Cape Colony, the premature and ill-advised attempt to secure Confederation, the war with the Transvaal, and the subsequent retirement from that country, the transfer of the Basuto people to the Cape Colony, the indifference to the recent acquisitions on the West Coast by Germany, every one of those things and many other parts of British policy were all dictated by the same desire on the part of successive Ministries and successive Governments—the desire to wash their hands of the whole business. But even this system had not been consistently and logically carried out, and it had also been a most conspicuous failure.

". . . If this policy of shirking is to be continued," he said, "do let us understand what it means, and do let us carry it out to the end. If the British public have made up their minds that they have no interest in South Africa beyond the interest in maintaining a naval station at the Cape, if they think that they can honourably throw off all the obligations which they have contracted to the great populations that have trusted to us, if they think they can afford to give up the large trade that we enjoy, and the prospect of larger trade in the future, then let us squarely face the issue. Let us say to all the world that we intend to retire, that we intend to leave Boers and British and natives to fight out their quarrels as best they may, and that whatever happens, whatever bloodshed and turmoil may be the result, that we will not move a British

soldier nor spend one farthing of British money in order to put things straight. That, at all events, would be a consistent policy. It would not be a very noble policy. It might, however, find defenders, although I confess I should be very sorry to argue for it myself. . . .

"There is only one alternative," he went on, "and that is that we should frankly accept our obligations and responsibilities. We should maintain firmly and resolutely our hold over the territories that we have already acquired, and we should offer freely our protectorate to those friendly chiefs and people that are stretching out their hands towards us and seeking our protection and our interference. I have no doubt that a policy of this kind would enable us with much less risk than has attended the policy we have hitherto pursued to prescribe the conditions under which in the future this necessary work of colonisation and civilisation shall go forward. . . . By such a policy alone can we secure the interests of the great majority of the population, and justify our position as a nation. . . . We know how many of our fellow-subjects are even at this moment unemployed. Is there any man in his senses who believes that the crowded population of these islands would exist for a single day if we were to cut adrift from the great dependencies which now look to us for protection and assistance? . . . If to-morrow it were possible, as some people apparently desire, to reduce by the stroke of the pen the British Empire to the dimensions of the United Kingdom, half at least of our population would be starved, and at a time when a policy of disintegration is openly preached by high authorities, it is well to look the consequences squarely in the face."

The speeches made at this period of his career, immediately after his tour in America, are vastly interesting as the first emphatic pronouncements of the Imperial spirit which has lifted Mr. Chamberlain to the unique position which he now occupies. Before 1896, when he was discussed by his critics and men called him a *Great Statesman*, there were found many to declare that he was a *Great Member of Parliament*. After this date such declaration was left for the use of his enemies alone.

In November 1888 Mr. Chamberlain gave himself a holiday, and travelled to New York. Very soon the public was apprised of his impending marriage, which took place in Grace Church, Salem. The ceremony was attended by many New York "bigwigs" from President Cleveland downwards, and the happy couple left for the Riviera.

On Mr. Chamberlain's return to Birmingham in January 1889 the ardour of his reception was delightful to witness, and the general nature of his reply to the complimentary addresses received showed that the scars of conflict had healed, and that he was rejoiced and deeply touched to find how, through good report and ill, faith in him had remained unshaken in the hearts of his friends. After referring to the second treaty it had been his good fortune to make in America, and describing how he had attempted to

persuade Mrs. Chamberlain to relinquish her own nationality and become an Englishwoman, he spoke of himself :—

"I can only say that all the pleasure I have ever felt in political strife, all the strength that has been given me to pursue it, has been increased by the sense that has never failed me, that I have had behind me the support of the people who have known me best, who have made me what I am, whose unfailing support in every time of difficulty has laid me under a weight of obligation which I am only too anxious to acknowledge, and which I feel I can never adequately repay."

Later in the year he went to Egypt, there to study the condition of the country and the political intricacies of the questions arising continually between England and France. With tremendous energy he went into the history of long-lost civilisations, and with peculiar zest he traced the political events that had led to action on the part of the Government of Mr. Gladstone of which he had formed a part. The account of the then state of neglect, corruption, ignorance, revealed to him how beneficent had been the intervention of Great Britain—how mistaken had been the policy of "scuttle," to which he had been all too prone to give his consent.

In August 1888 there was a recrudescence of trouble with the Mahdists, Osman Digna having threatened Suakin. Colonel Kitchener was engaged in chasing him, and nearly effected his capture, when finally Osman fortified himself so strongly that General Grenfell telegraphed for reinforcements. An expedition was sent out, the battle of Jemaizah was fought, and the dervishes were completely routed at the point of the bayonet. These operations were vital if Suakin was to be retained, but regarding them there were the usual animated discussions in Parliament, some arguing that the expedition was unnecessary, some that it was run "on the cheap," some that the Government had no intention of reconquering the Soudan, others that the policy of fighting and going away again was foolish and unprofitable in the highest degree. Mr. Chamberlain's policy was to fight and not to go, to retain our hold on that we had sacrificed so much to effect.

At Birmingham (March 1890) he told the tale of the occupation of Egypt, and confessed the blunders he had been guilty of.

"We had told the present Khedive, who had come unexpectedly and perhaps unwillingly to the seat of power after the forced abdication of his father, Ismail Pasha, that if he would follow our advice we would maintain his authority. In the disorder which followed the state of things to which the country had been reduced by its previous Government, in the confusion which prevailed and with all kinds of petty and personal ambitions seething all round, a military insurrection broke out. This insurrection led to disorder at different times and in different places. There was a massacre of Christians and Europeans

in which many scores, and probably many hundreds, perished; and it became absolutely necessary to interfere. Every attempt was made by France and England to prevent anything in the nature of armed intervention, and peaceably to settle the difficulties that had arisen. But Arabi Pasha, who was himself the tool of others less honest even and probably more self-seeking than himself, had his head turned by the success which followed his first efforts, and finally he defied the Powers of Europe and began to fortify Alexandria against the foreign fleets. There were then two alternatives open to us. We might have retired from the scene altogether; we might have abandoned the Khedive, who had depended upon our pledges, and who had wholly followed the counsel which we had given him. We might have left Egypt to anarchy, to disorder, to massacre, and we might have allowed all the great European interests—not merely the interests of the creditors of Egypt, but the interests of all who had honestly invested capital in industrial enterprises in that country—to go to ruin. If we were not to do that, the only alternative was by an armed intervention forcibly to restore order. We decided that our honour and our duty required us to take the latter course; but at that moment France, which had recently undergone a change of Government, suddenly altered its policy, retired from all share in the business, and threw upon our shoulders alone the whole responsibility of restoring Egypt once more to its proper place among the nations of the world. I think that the policy of France was hardly worthy of a great nation. I think that it was a short-sighted policy, and I know that it was taken in direct opposition to, and in defiance of, an eloquent protest by M. Gambetta, who was one of the greatest of French statesmen and patriots. But when that policy was taken it left to us no alternative. The duty was cast upon us. We had to go alone or be unworthy of our mission. We decided to go on and endeavour to carry out the work of regenerating Egypt. That was the state of things only eight years ago. Those were the Augean stables which England had to reclaim, and I say to you, after having inquired into this matter on the spot, after having consulted not merely the official persons, whether Egyptian or English, but having taken the opportunity of conversing with every native with whom I could come in contact, and with representative men who were well able to express their opinions—I say to you that the state of the fellaheen of Egypt was more miserable than the condition of any similar peasantry on the face of the earth. Eight years after what did I find when I went to Egypt? I found a total change. I found the finances restored; I found an equilibrium between revenue and expenditure; I found the deficit turned into a surplus, which was being used for the reduction of taxation, and for the promotion of public works and national education. And remember that this surplus, which is already a large one, might have been much larger but for the action of the French, who have refused their consent to the conversion of the debt, which would have enabled the interest on a portion of the debt to be reduced, and consequently the burdens on Egypt to be diminished."

He further related how Courts of Justice had been established throughout the country, and although perhaps not perfect, yet there was, at all events in theory, a complete code of equal justice, and corruption at any rate had almost entirely become extinct. Taxation had been revised. Payment had been fixed at dates to suit the

DR. DALE

Photo ELLIOTT & FRY, LONDON.

THE CHALLENGE: OR, THE RIVAL CHANTICLEERS.

Grand Old Chanticleer (*fortissimo*).

Cock-a-doodle-do-o-o! Cock-a-doodle-do-o-o-o!!!
Gather round me, hen-birds all—pretty Partlet crew!

Chorus of "Women's Liberal Federation" Hens.

Cackle! cackle! Grand Old Bird! Where's the fowl dares tackle
Such prodigious spurs and beak? Cackle! Cackle! Cackle!

Grand Old Chanticleer.

Ladies, thanks for your response to my stirring clarion.
Fancy there's a business here I alone can carry on.
Fighting Cocks are plentiful, game birds some are terming 'em,
But I really think you need a change of breeds in Birmingham.

Brummagem Bantam.

Well, it's like his impudence! And on my own walk, too!
But I'll beat the Old Bird yet, and by a long chalk, too!
He talk of Monopoly? Well, that's really queer;
He who'd rule *all* roosts alone, Grand Old Chanticleer!
Well, I'll fight him! As for you, poor Partlet-Chorus—pooh!
They shall find that two can play at Cock-a-doodle-do-o-o! [*Makes ready.*

(From *Punch*, Nov. 10, 1888. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

convenience of the peasant class, when the harvest had been gathered and they were best able to meet obligations. The time had gone by when the local officials could extort from the peasant one farthing more than his legal obligation. The corvée forced labour was gradually reduced during several years, and now it had been abolished altogether. The army, under Sir Francis Grenfell, had been made a most efficient machine for the defence of the country. Conscription had been gradually reduced. The army was about one-fourth of the number at which it stood in the time of the late Khedive, and now the men were only taken for short service, and then returned to their families. During the service they were well paid, well cared for, and well looked after. The irrigation had been reviewed and renewed from first to last. New works had been established. More water had been procured for the purpose, arrangements having been made to secure an equal distribution of it. The rich and poor stood exactly on equal terms; each man, according to the extent and character of his land, could depend upon having a proportionate amount of what is truly in Egypt the water of life, and all of this had been done in seven years.

"I do not say," he went on, "that there is not still a great deal to do; but at least you will well understand what a change has been effected in the condition of the peasantry of Egypt by the operations which have taken place under the British occupation. One of the Ministers said to me when I was in Cairo the other day, 'This is not a reform, this is a revolution and a new birth.'"

He proceeded to make the confession previously referred to,[1] and to show that we had now no right to abandon the duty we had undertaken. The Egyptian people were not able to stand alone, nor did they wish to stand alone; they asked for continued support and assistance, and without it, it was absolutely impossible to secure their welfare.

"If you were to abandon them your responsibility and obligation would be followed by an attempt once more to restore the old arbitrary methods and the old abuses, which in turn would no doubt be followed by anarchy and disorder; and then in time there would be again a foreign intervention, this time the intervention of some other European country. I have too much confidence in the public spirit of the country to believe that it will ever neglect a national duty. A nation is like an individual; it has duties which it must fulfil or else it cannot live honoured and respected as a nation, and I hope that, as we have been singled out for the performance of this great duty, the whole nation, without distinction of party, will resolve to carry it to a triumphant issue."

[1] Vol. i. p. 134.

III. — 1887–92 — CONSERVATIVE LEGISLATION WITH A RADICAL FLAVOUR—THE UNAUTHORISED PROGRAMME AUTHORISED

By degrees the influence of Mr. Chamberlain became evident—his alliance with the Government, though said to be only existing by virtue of the Unionist question, brought forth fruits that were curiously akin to the seed cast to the winds in the Unauthorised Programme. The quantities of measures passed during the period between 1887 and 1892 were more or less conspicuously coloured with the democratic hue that in earlier days had made the eyes of the Tories and those of even some of the Liberals blink. Now the hue was mellowed by judicious compromise to a harmonious whole that served admirably for the benefit of the masses, yet brought prodigious credit to Lord Salisbury's Government. Mr. Chamberlain, before his parliamentary days, had indulged in the optimistic dream of free education for the multitude; he had advocated local government, he had clamoured for free land. These three items of his programme for improving the condition of the people he now pressed on the notice of his new allies, and though they sniffed uneasily they swallowed them. After all, these were the most practical and the most feasible subjects to be put forward—subjects that did not jeopardise the amalgamation that was setting to work to frustrate Irish machinations, and which, moreover, met the crying needs of the poor. There were other matters, however, that had to be dropped as inappropriate to the curious nature of the newly cemented alliance between the two parties—the Disestablishment of the Church question, for instance, which would have brought about friction and produced no result save a fresh opening-up of the cracks that threatened the dismemberment of the Empire. This danger all members of the party realised, and therefore all in the interests of the paramount cause of unity made remarkable concessions. Here indeed is to be found the simple solution of what some persist in calling the mysterious tractability of the Tories, or the unwarrantable inconsistency of Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain carried with him the Midlands vote, and in return for the goodly party who held to their apostle it behoved Lord Salisbury to give ear to principles he not long since had characterised as those of the "inveterate cockney." Thus it came to pass that in 1887 the useful and reasonable Coal Mine Regulation Act, the Merchandise Marks Act (which in a measure expressed Mr. Chamberlain's Merchant Shipping Scheme that had failed in 1884), and the Allotments Act (the outcome of Mr. Chamberlain's

and Mr. Jesse Collings' agitations on behalf of the agricultural labourer and small tenant, and whereby the exodus from village to city might be arrested) were well met by the Tories, and became law with little demur. The moderate Conservatives agreed also, if grudgingly, with the Radical Unionists regarding the bill for the relief of Irish tenants, whereby they were allowed to bring up their rents for revision. Mr. Chamberlain supported the matter with great zeal, adhering always to his principle of working for Ireland's interests, even when Ireland herself was doing her best to estrange her supporters. He bargained for further concessions to tenants, and that all tenants (other than leaseholders in perpetuity) should benefit by the bill, that bankruptcy clauses should be given up, and that the revision of rents should operate till a Purchase Bill should be introduced. His views on a Unionist policy for Ireland were explained in some articles that originally appeared in the *Birmingham Post*, and were published under the auspices of the National Radical Union. These views he endeavoured to impress on the Government, and since the practical value of them was recognised by both the Prime Minister and Mr. Arthur Balfour, a rough outline of the purport of the articles in question may lead to an appreciation of the Acts for the amelioration of Irish conditions which were passed in the 1886–1892 Administration. These articles suggested a practical solution of the problems arising from Mr. Gladstone's bills—a solution which should provide a safe policy for Ireland, and, while preserving the unity of the three kingdoms, secure such practical reforms and extension of local government as might be deemed essential to the interests of the disturbed country. As Mr. Chamberlain in a preface pointed out, after securing the observance of the law, it was the duty of the Government to see that such law was just, and in harmony with the sentiments of the majority of the people. In taking a stand against those who would weaken and divide a beneficent Empire, he argued that even at the risk of being called traitors and impostors they (the Liberal-Unionists) were doing a duty, and holding steadily to the ancient ways of Liberalism, but at the same time it was also their duty to consider the causes underlying the dangerous agitations, and to seek to remove the grievances which originated it. "Does there exist statesman or politician who is not convinced that the material causes are economic and agrarian?" he asked. The great poverty of the population, their dependence on the land which provided them with insufficient subsistence, was at the bottom of the difficulty; and though perhaps a more enterprising race might have changed their plight, since the nature of the race could not be changed, the alternative was to change the conditions. "If," he said, "we con-

tinue to govern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, we must do for Ireland as much as a patriotic and capable Irish Parliament would accomplish." He then proceeded to discuss in what ways the resources of Ireland might be developed by the action of the State—by means of public works, such as sea fisheries, arterial drainage, railway consolidation and extension, and by a scheme of land purchase, and finally by a convenient form of local government. By Lord Ashbourne's Act landlords and tenants could enter into voluntary agreements for the sale and purchase of estates, the cost of purchase being advanced by the State to the purchaser (repayable over a term of forty years), and one-fifth of the purchase-money being left by the landlord in the hands of the Land Commission as guarantee against failure to pay up instalments by the purchaser. Parliament had agreed to set aside £5,000,000 for advances to purchasers, but this amount having been appropriated, unless further provisions were made no additional transfers could be effected under the Act. Mr. Chamberlain therefore propounded (28th May 1888) at Birmingham a plan consistent with the proposals that had appeared in the *Birmingham Post.*

The proposals were these :—

1. To make the tenant practically the owner of his holding, subject to an ultimate fixed payment, or land tax, of a moderate amount, and to conditions which it may be in the interest of the State to impose, in order to prevent subdivision and the growth of encumbrances.

2. To give to the present owner of the land its fair capital value in a security easily marketable at par.

3. To relieve the British taxpayer from all risk of loss.

4. To interpose a local authority as creditor of the tenant, with direct interest in enforcing payment of any rent or tax which may be imposed.

5. To make the tenant debtor to an Irish local authority, instead of to an individual landlord, often an absentee.

6. To secure the proper use of the land, and prevent undue subdivision, by the action of the local authority, in the interest of the whole community.

7. To ascertain the true market value of estates as a basis for compensation, with special regard to the circumstances of each estate.

8. To secure present relief to the tenant by an immediate reduction of rent.

9. To relieve congested districts by a rearrangement of the smaller holdings where these are insufficient to provide means of existence for a family.

AN EXHIBITION MATCH

Between the Brummagem Bruiser and the Paddington Pet.

ROUND THE FIRST.

A Fragment from Contemporary Fistiana.

* * * * * *

Much interest has of late been excited in sportive circles, and especially among Corinthian amateurs of the fistic art, by the doings and sayings—especially the *latter*—of the two lads above named.

Two more promising "scrappers" have, perhaps, not appeared in the pugilistic arena for a considerable period than the "Brummagem Bruiser" and the "Paddington Pet."

When the "Cracks" peeled, considerable disparity in their size was observable, yet by the knowing ones it was thought that the superior "beef" of the Bruiser might be more than compensated for by what, in semi-Byronic phraseology, may be designated the "dancing devilry" of the indomitable "Pet."

As they shook hands it was seen that the Brum stood well over his man, looked longer in the reach, and gave promise of greater propelling power in the proper quarter. The cheers for his game little opponent, however, were vociferous, to an extent indeed which seemed somewhat to nettle the "Bruiser," who at once let fly with his right, but was out of distance, and nearly fell with the force of his own blow. At any rate he appeared to do so, though thus early in the fight whispers of "barney," "kibosh," "a put up job," &c., went surreptitiously round the ring.

(From *Punch*, May 4, 1889. Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

10. To provide, if necessary, for a fluctuating annual payment, varying with the price of the principal kinds of produce.[1]

Mr. Chamberlain expressed his belief that the Irish land question could never be satisfactorily dealt with till the majority of the occupiers of the land had been transformed into owners of the soil tilled by them, and that the time was come for considering a scheme based on the principle of using Irish credit, and for the purpose of converting tenants into owners. He thought a growing expansion of the Ashbourne system of purchase might lead to transactions as effective as Mr. Gladstone's proposed bill, and far less dangerous than that measure.

It is impossible here to enter into the complicated arrangements laid down by Mr. Chamberlain for the complete rectification of existing grievances in Ireland. Sufficient to say that Mr. Balfour's bill for the extension of the Ashbourne Act was a great step in advance, as it empowered the Irish Executive to assist tenants to purchase their holdings by an advance of £5,000,000. Mr. Madden (Solicitor-General for Ireland), in introducing the bill, expatiated on its durability, and explained the signal success that had attended Lord Ashbourne's Act. In regard to this measure, Mr. Chamberlain declared there was "nothing like it in the whole history of the land legislation of the world," but naturally there were found plenty of cavillers to differ from him on principle. Eventually, after discussions that would fill a chapter, the bill was passed on the 29th of November 1888.

Prior to that date the Local Government Bill, which has been described as the "*pièce de résistance* of the Ministerial programme," was introduced (March 19, 1888) by Mr. Ritchie, whose conservatism had ever a frankly Radical flavour. The powers of the new County Councils were very much in accord with Mr. Chamberlain's early projects which had shocked the Tories when in opposition. These Councils were to control the police, to levy county rates, maintain roads, bridges, &c., local institutions—such as schools, reformatories, lunatic asylums—to test weights and measures and the adulteration of food, and in conjunction with the sanitary authorities enforce the Rivers Pollution Act. The Local Government Board would surrender its powers in the matter of gas, water, lighting, locomotion, boundaries, market tolls, and harbours. The Councils were empowered to enlarge the incidence of the contributions towards the support of paupers, and advance money to emigrants. Further authority would be given by the Privy Council as time and necessity might suggest. District Councils would subsequently replace the Local Boards. County Councils would

[1] "A Unionist Policy for Ireland." Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.

accord with the main divisions of counties, and in cases where a municipal or sanitary district overlapped the line of demarcation, it would belong to the county owning the bulk of its population. The counties would be divided equally for electoral purposes, each division returning one member.

London was to form a distinct county, with its especial Lord-Lieutenant and Commission of the Peace. The Board of Works was to be done away with. The control of the police would rest with the Home Office; the civic functions would remain as they were, though certain administrative duties would be handed over to the County Council. Large cities, such as Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, &c., were to become counties, and those owning over 10,000 inhabitants would be entitled to the management of their own police. Further useful provisions were made and approved, but one clause, a licensing clause, aroused the temperance champions, who promptly made war on what was called the Public House Endowment clause, and defeated it. The original idea was to issue beer and spirit licences by means of committees of the councils, who would be empowered to refuse renewals and enforce Sunday closing. In the event of non-renewal, compensation was to be given, and the funds for such compensation were to be obtained by raising the licence duties 20 per cent. It was this last suggestion that kindled the ire of the temperance party, some of them putting forward that the suppression of each public house would cost some £3000, and that altogether under the bill the recognition of the clause of the licence holders would involve the expenditure of £200,000,000.

This bill was treated by many as the death-knell of the Tory régime; they bemoaned the destruction of the influence of the country gentleman in local affairs, declaring it to have been incorrupt and inexpensive. Their antagonists, on the other hand, rejoiced in the removal of methods which they did not hesitate to denounce as cheap and nasty. There was something to be said on both sides, and consequently when the bill came into force, and squire and parson either took their places as part of the progressive machinery or were ousted in cases where their services were not held in esteem, some form of substantial reform was arrived at.

Meanwhile the Parnell inquiry was going forward, and little by little, as the hateful tale of Pigott came to light, a revulsion of feeling in favour of the Irish leader began to pass like a wave over the face of society. Though Pigott's iniquity was proven at the time of his suicide in 1889, the report of the Commission was not made to the Crown till the 13th of February 1890. The result of the acquittal of the great Irishman caused a fluctuation in political circles which

contributed to the revival of confidence in the Gladstonians, and a further rapprochement between the grand old man and the grand young one, which, unhappily for the last, was to be of short duration.[1] For the time being the sentiment of cordiality arising from a sentiment of sympathy for the Irish, together with dissensions among the Unionists, threatened disastrous consequences when electoral decisions came to be settled. Rumour of pending trouble was found in the defeats at Kennington and Rochester, and the vacancy created by the death of John Bright was not filled without considerable excitement. Mr. T. A. Bright, the son of the late member, came forward as the Liberal-Unionist candidate, but the Conservatives who were under-represented at Birmingham clamoured to nominate Lord Randolph Churchill as representative of the coalition. Finally, Lord Randolph was prevailed on to make way, and Mr. Bright completely routed the Gladstonian candidate. Passages at arms continued, however, between Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain, the former twitting the latter with being dependent now on the goodwill of the Birmingham Conservatives, "a party kept by the caucus and the genius of Mr. Schnadhorst in a state of intolerable subjection," while Mr. Chamberlain returned the compliment by likening Lord Randolph's policy to crazy patchwork—"socialism from Mr. Burns and Mr. Hyndman, local option from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Egyptian policy from Mr. Illingworth, metropolitan reform from Professor Stuart, and Irish policy from Mr. John Morley."

In 1891 another great feature of Mr. Chamberlain's "young dream," as it was called, Free Education, came triumphantly to the fore. Though the Tories had been very free in their denunciation of the system, they could produce but windy jeremiads against the solid fact that it was tyrannous almost to force a man to send his offspring to school and then wring from him fees for that which he would have preferred to do without. The State assumed an obligation, the Radicals argued; it was the duty of the State to see that it maintained authority with as little despotism as possible. Fathers of middle-class families growled. They did not see why they should be charged with the cost of the education of children of many persons who could afford to pay for it; but on the other hand it was argued that it was better in some cases that even the undeserving should share in the profit than that the deserving should be deprived of a valuable stepping-stone to self-support. Lord Salisbury was won over. Having gone so far on the road to free education—"assisted" education he delicately termed it, so as to avoid too start-

[1] Proceedings in the Divorce Court were followed by the political desertion of Mr. Parnell by his friends, and by his untimely death (October 6, 1891).

ling a title—he thought it diplomatically advisable to "go the whole hog," as the saying is. The Radicals would be salved, the country would have cause to be grateful for the innovation, the Birmingham Unionists in a body would support a Ministry that conceded a point on which they had laid some stress. It was decided the Government would come to terms provided the voluntary schools were not menaced, for, as Lord Salisbury explained, the destruction of denominational schools in the interests of free education was a move to be deprecated—indeed to be viewed as a curse rather than a blessing.

In this opinion Mr. Chamberlain had no share. His theory of a system of education was built up on his early experiences where religious knowledge had been imparted by private means, and he himself had gladly assisted in providing such moral instruction as the poor of his community required. Still, now that he saw before him one of his ideals on the verge of becoming a fact, he, like Lord Salisbury, was ready to overlook all excrescences in the way of objection, and proceeded to effect a compromise which both believed would be advantageous to the moral health of the nation and to the solidity of the party. Mr. Chamberlain personally adhered to his Nonconformist leaning towards purely secular free education, but the unity of the anti-separation party was of such cardinal importance, that, at the risk of offending Nonconformist friends, of being called traitor or turncoat by them, he accepted what it was possible to get rather than run the risk of getting nothing at all.

Speaking on this subject in 1890, he said :—

"Free education is essentially a Birmingham question. Free education was first raised into practical politics by Mr. Dixon, and by the Education League in 1870, and since then free education has remained one of the prime objects of every educationist and of every true Radical. I must say that when the Liberal Government were in power the question had very scant support from the official chiefs; and, as you know, it has no place at all in the authorised programme. But now that it has been taken up by a Conservative Government there is no restraining its importance to these gentlemen. They are ready to turn out the Government at once because it will not do in twenty-four hours what, when they had the opportunity, they refused to do at all. I am a practical man, and as one of those with whom this question of free education has been, I might almost say, the main object of my public and political life, I prefer to trust to the promise of the Government in power rather than to the new-fledged enthusiasm of an Opposition which has shown itself perfectly ready to play with this question in order to catch votes, but which would undoubtedly be put aside if the party came into power and had to deal with its Irish programme. And I am confirmed in my preference when I think of the spirit in which the Opposition have approached the question. They do not come to it as educationists like Mr. Dixon ; they come to it as partisans. They do not love free education for its own sake, but they adopt it because they

believe that by its means they can destroy or injure the voluntary schools. Sydney Smith said that the Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators; and in the same way I would say that the Gladstonians love free education, not because it is good for the children, but because they think it would be bad for the Church. . . .

"I think, however, that even in the brief survey which I have taken of the field of politics, you will have been impressed with the magnitude and the importance of the work which is still left for us to do. We, as Liberal-Unionists, are associated to carry out this work on the old Liberal lines. We recognise, as our leaders in the past, Russell and Cobden, and Mill and Bright, it never entered into their minds that politics could be divorced from morality, and we, their followers, also share their conviction that no nation can be truly great, and no people can be happy, whose statesmen found themselves upon such an ignoble conception of public duty. . . .

"Mr. Dixon has expressed a hope that I might be spared to render you a quarter of a century of public service. If I may date the beginning of the service from the time when I entered the Town Council, already the greater portion of it has expired. It is now nearly twenty years ago since I commenced my apprenticeship to public life in the Town Council of Birmingham. Long before that I had gained my Liberalism from the traditions of your city; and it will be my pride when I lay down my armour that I have endeavoured to maintain those traditions in their integrity. I am always happy to be among you, happy to be with my own people, but I am especially happy in this, that I think Birmingham never stood higher than it does at the present time. When, a few years ago, Liberals throughout the country were hesitating between measures and men, hesitating to follow an old and revered leader who had gone astray on an untried path, then Birmingham stood firm, and the influence of Birmingham was widely felt throughout the country. We have to maintain the fortress and the flag of Liberalism, and I believe that we have the spirit of our predecessors, and I hope that we have the ability to do it. We have to maintain the ancient traditions against the novelties which have been imported from the Convention of Chicago. I do not like these principles of expediency. I do not like to treat national politics apart from morality. I sometimes think that the Gladstonians are getting to the condition of that negro congregation for which a substitute minister was appointed, who, before he was called upon to preach, went into the vestry and spoke to the pastor, and asked him if he had any counsel to give him; and the old man said, 'Well, nothing particular, but if I was you I should touch very lightly on the Ten Commandments.' Against the condition to which the new Liberalism has reduced itself I hope that Birmingham will continue to protest, and as long as I have health, and you are willing to accept my services, I need not say that they will always be at your disposal."

The bill was received with favour. To make up for the payment by parents a grant of ten shillings a head was made, and this sum proving inadequate, further aid was granted to the Voluntary Schools (1896) and to such Board Schools as were unable to meet the strain upon their resources.

Mr. Chamberlain, at Birmingham in April 1891, expressed opinions

regarding denominational schools which accounted practically for the relaxation of his antagonism, and the compromise he made with the Tory party in respect to them. To upset the system would, he estimated, cost some £40,000,000, and this in itself was sufficient excuse for his abandonment of his earlier entirely secular ambition. But his mind remained the same, and if the money had been forthcoming he would have organised an ideal system of national instruction independent of all creeds, and absolutely utilitarian in all its branches.

It is impossible here to enter into Mr. Balfour's extremely complicated Irish Land Purchase Bill, the particulars of which he explained at length on the 24th of March 1890. Lord Salisbury declared that the bill would create a peasant proprietary which was naturally a law-abiding class. The Duke of Argyll commended the measure, Mr. Parnell received it with qualified approval, and Mr. Chamberlain complained that the principle of local control was not carried far enough. Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Morley, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Knox, Mr. Healy clamoured for amendments, some of which were defeated and some accepted. The third reading took place on the 14th of July 1891, when it was generally acknowledged that the scheme possessed many merits.

During the autumn of 1891 Mr. Chamberlain put forth more of his pet projects, and endeavoured to show that the Government should now deal with the creation of district and parish councils, and take in hand the matter of artisans' and labourers' dwellings. He also mooted the subject of old age pensions, which he considered as the development of the "ransom" theory that had so startled the public in 1885. His plan was to promote first a voluntary system, then a deduction of a farthing per shilling from wage-earners of £1 a week, to which the State would contribute an identical sum, thus providing some five shillings a week to each person on attaining the age of sixty years.

Further elaborations of this scheme he propounded in an article in the *National Review* (February 1892). He proposed that every person under the age of twenty should invest in a savings bank five pounds, to be supplemented by three times the amount by the State. To this "nest-egg," as it were, the insurer should add £1 for forty years. In consideration of this arrangement the insurer was to receive at the age of sixty-five, five shillings a week, or in the event of death the sum would be transferred to a representative.

The scheme has remained in embryo in consequence of Mr. Chamberlain having been practically removed from the sphere of purely domestic politics.

In December Lord Hartington succeeded his father as Duke of

Devonshire, and his place as leader of the Liberal-Unionists in the House of Commons was taken by Mr. Chamberlain. This adventurous spirit lost no time in issuing a manifesto suggesting that Welsh Dissenters who should vote for a Gladstonian at the next election would be effecting the postponement of Welsh disestablishment and land reform, a declaration that drove the Tories into renewed quakings.

Mr. Chaplin's Agricultural Holdings Act (February 22, 1892) was the outcome also of Mr. Chamberlain's agrarian projects. The bill was an experiment for the purpose of benefiting the yeoman class and linking them to rural life. It was proposed that the County Council should borrow from the Public Works Loan Commission for the purchase of land to be subsequently divided into holdings. A fourth of the money was to be paid, another fourth to be secured by a perpetual rentcharge, the remainder to be paid by instalments. The County Council might, if landlord and tenant desired, advance three-quarters of the funds for the purchase of the holding. Mr. Jesse Collings suggested a valuable amendment, which was accepted, and no further opposition was offered. It may be as well to note that this experiment and the allotment system have neither of them been entirely successful, nor have they fulfilled certain hopes cherished by their promoters. The exodus from the villages continues, and some persons are of opinion that the free education movement and the agrarian policy of the Radicals cannot be made to work in double harness. The natural result of education is to draw to the desk those who have hitherto been employed in manual labour, and until some means can be found of profitably using mental labour in conjunction with agrarian development, an excellent enterprise must be worked in a half-hearted way. Better results will doubtless be obtained when the violence of cheap foreign competition is reduced, and farmers, labourers, small tradesmen, and the like will gain sufficient to encourage them to invest their savings in the manner proposed by their well-wishers.

Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour were agreed that so soon as the Crimes Act should have done its work in Ireland, remedial legislation should be proceeded with. In 1890 Mr. Balfour, who in the pursuit of his coercion policy had proved himself as adamant against the execrations of the Opposition, decided to visit Ireland and ascertain for himself the true condition of affairs. This decision was a memorable act of courage on the part of a Minister, for he had been called "bloody" and "base" and "brutal," and Mr. Gladstone had vehemently likened him to Bomba, the Neapolitan king, who some thirty years before had loaded prisoners with chains,

separating them only on payment of money from murderers and criminals.

Under Mr. Balfour's régime prison discipline had gone little further than to keep "Mr. O'Brien struggling for his clothes, and Mr. Harrington mourning for his moustache," yet in spite of the fury occasioned by his policy, Mr. Balfour pursued his investigations in the seething country, interviewed parish priests, and found out native grievances, and determined so soon as the people were fit for it to bring forward a Local Government Bill, that should give the nation control over its intimate affairs. This project seemed to become feasible in 1892. Before that date Lord Salisbury had intended to dissolve Parliament, but Mr. Chamberlain had strongly desired the introduction of the Local Government scheme, which embodied his original outline for National Councils. How Ministers could have hoped for the success of this measure at such a time it is difficult to say. The Gladstonians were daily growing in power, and the mind of the country had been agitated first by the pros and cons of the Parnell Commission, then by wrangles with France, Germany, and Portugal about spheres of influence in Africa, differences with America regarding the Behring Sea Fisheries, shilly-shallyings in regard to Egypt, and various misfortunes, such as the disaster at Manipur and the failure of the Sugar Bounty Convention. Added to this, the result of the elections for the London County Council (which had been contested on party lines) were ominous, and everything pointed to a change of political feeling throughout the country. The bill itself was received, Mr. Balfour said, with "howls of stupid invective." Mr. O'Brien during the debate held it up to derision, and offered to "swop" it for a dissolution, a suggestion which Mr. Chamberlain jumped at as a Liberal offer to which he called the attention of Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Balfour was also goaded into the sarcastic admission that the measure was scarcely equal to the Crimes Act! The tale of the progress of this unfortunate measure it is unnecessary to enlarge on—sufficient to say that it never reached Committee, and on the 9th of June its abandonment was formally announced by Mr. Balfour.

Before passing on to the General Election which followed, note may be made of various minor measures which were carried during the preceding years—the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (1889) has been productive of immense good in regions where persons are sunk too deep in degradation to recognise the first duties of humanity, and indeed occasionally in higher circles where some abnormal twist of mind has caused parents to make undue use of their authority. The Housing of the Working Classes Act (1890) served to assist the local authorities in acquiring land or

habitations for the labouring classes, while empowering them to check the wilful indifference of owners to sanitary conditions. Various other socialistic measures, such as the Police Pensions Act (1890) and the useful and humane Factory and Workshops Act (1891), may be ascribed to the influence of the Unionists' legislators. Those who have taken the pains to read Mr. Chamberlain's doctrines as expounded between 1883 and 1885 will readily observe the consistency with which these doctrines were sustained and nourished in an atmosphere distinctly unfavourable to them. And the wonder is, not that some of his early ambitions were nipped, but that any should not only have survived, but flourished and flowered in a frigid Tory zone.

Not content to rest on his laurels—the steps he had gained with his new allies—Mr. Chamberlain further developed his schemes of reform, and published them in the *Nineteenth Century* (Nov. 1902) for the socialistic education of all who were inclined to profit by them. He looked indeed to the Tory party for further concessions regarding labour questions, and in his article expounded exactly what he required. The Conservatives thought his demands what is vulgarly called "rather a large order," and shrugged their shoulders. Some, the antiquated among them, hinted that Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour were "being led by the nose," but these last not being Little Englanders, had learned to think Continentally, and were inclined to follow a line of policy which found an example in Germany, whose State Socialism (as invented by Bismarck) has succeeded in rendering what—comparatively—may be called an infant Empire into a very formidable competitor in the European ring.

Mr. Chamberlain's new programme was an extension of the "unauthorised" one. He suggested :—

1. Legislative enforcement of proposals for shortening the hours of work for miners and others engaged in dangerous and specially laborious employments.

2. Local enforcement of trade regulations for the earlier closing of shops.

3. Establishment of tribunals of arbitration in trade disputes.

4. Compensation for injuries received in the course of employment, and to widows and children in case of death, whenever such injuries or death are not caused by the fault of the person killed or injured.

5. Old-age pensions for the deserving poor.

6. Limitation and control of pauper immigration.

7. Increased powers and facilities to local authorities to make town improvements, and prepare for the better housing of the working-classes.

RT. HON. W. E. FORSTER

Photo ELLIOTT & FRY, LONDON.

8. Power to local authorities to advance money and to afford facilities to the working-classes to become the owners of their own houses.

He took the opportunity to eulogise Tory aptness in dealing with social problems, saying that in social questions the Tories had been always more progressive than the Liberals, and that the Conservative leaders, in their latest legislation, had only gone back to the old Tory traditions. Almost all the legislation dealing with labour questions had been initiated by Tory statesmen, and most of it had been passed by Tory Governments. The Factory and Workshop Acts, the Mines' Regulation Act, Merchant Shipping legislation, the Acts relating to sanitation, artisans' dwellings, land purchase, allotments and small holdings, and free education, were all Conservative measures, and it was therefore historically inaccurate to describe the Tory party as opposed to socialistic legislation. This was no mere compliment arranged, as some declared, for the purpose of buttering down those who had conceded points to preserve the new alliance.

It may be remembered that in July 1885, speaking of Tory transformation, Mr. Chamberlain said much the same thing from an opposition standpoint: "They have bettered my instructions, they have given effect to my opinions, they have stolen my ideas; but I forgive them the theft in gratitude for the stimulus they have given to the Radical programme, and for the lesson they have taught to the weak-kneed Liberals and to the timid politicians who strained at the Radical gnat and now find themselves obliged to swallow the Tory camel."

CHAPTER V

I.—GENERAL ELECTION, 1892—MR. GLADSTONE'S FOURTH ADMINISTRATION—THE HOME RULE BILL AGAIN—THE GUILLOTINE—FREE FIGHT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

MEANWHILE, fighting tooth and nail, both parties had contested the political ground for a good three weeks—during June and July. The Liberal-Unionists exceeded all others in activity, the Duke of Devonshire vigorously supporting Lord Salisbury's foreign policy, while Mr. Chamberlain took care to ward off the enemy from his stronghold. His seat was contested by Mr. Corrie Grant, who secured only 1879 votes, as against 6297. Thus it was proved that whatever else might befall the Tory-Unionist combination, Mr. Chamberlain's personal popularity was more than sustained. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, whose political ability has not yet been alluded to and whose light is apt to become paled in the presence of his brilliant father, was again returned for East Worcestershire, the constituency in which his home is situated. The Unionists, though fortunate in Birmingham, suffered dismally elsewhere, and when the struggle was ended it was found they numbered 47, while the Conservatives numbered 268. There were at last 274 Gladstonians backed by 81 Nationalists, therefore Mr. Gladstone prepared in pathetic triumph to return to the scene of his activities—to the reconstruction of his Home Rule Bill, of which some had foretold no resurrection.

Mr. Chamberlain meanwhile determined still to adhere to his party in name and to maintain an organisation separate from the Conservatives in being, if identical in interests. The Midlands Liberal-Unionist Association was founded by him in order to maintain his independent position, in clearly defined antagonism to Liberalism as pursued under the immediate Gladstone régime. Though he had no desire to rejoin the Liberals he was still averse from amalgamating entirely with the Tories, and for this reason recruited under the new banner only such persons as had never formed part of any Conservative Association, and might be relied on not to "sink themselves" in the predominant mass.

Lord Salisbury had decided not to resign, but to await the verdict of the House of Commons. Parliament met in August, and

in due time Mr. Asquith having risen "respectfully to represent to your Majesty that confidence is not reposed in your Majesty's present advisers," a division was taken amid growing excitement, and the Gladstonians were discovered to have secured a majority of forty (350—310).

But prior to the division a spirited encounter took place between members of the Opposition and Mr. Chamberlain. One of these had twitted the Tories with having taken in hand their advanced legislation in order to conciliate "a small and dwindling band of dissentient Liberals." Dwindling was an aggressive word and it struck home, for the Unionists, as said before, numbered now only forty-seven. Mr. Chamberlain fired up, and Mr. Healy with considerable hardihood endeavoured to suppress him. Mr. Chamberlain at once "polished him off." "Whenever it is desired to exhibit personal discourtesy towards any man——" a significant pause—"or any woman——" another pause more emphatic than the first—"the honourable and learned member always presents himself to accomplish it." The allusion was prompted by remembrance of an attack made by Mr. Healy on the lady for whom Mr. Parnell had sacrificed his career—an attack entirely inconsistent with far-famed Irish chivalry.

Mr. Chamberlain having dealt this thrust to an accompaniment of cheers from the Conservatives, went on to show that it was the duty of the Opposition leaders to unfold their policy and set forth particulars of their domestic programme. He expressed a hope that Lord Rosebery would be entrusted with foreign affairs, otherwise we might be startled by preparations for the evacuation of Egypt. He commented on the silence of the Welsh members and that of the Labour members—and as for the Independent Labour Party—well, he said he would believe in it when he saw it. As regards Home Rule there seemed to be some discrepancy of opinion. Mr. Labouchere, who was presumably preparing for office, proposed to shelve it indefinitely, while Sir George Trevelyan had at one period refused to sanction it till all constitutional methods had been exhausted. Here was a strange state of things, and he wondered how the Irish party approved of having two Cabinet Ministers who would endeavour to prevent the Liberal party from becoming a Home Rule party. He then pointed out that if the new Government should keep faith with England it must break faith with the Nationalists. He ended by urging the Gladstonites to reconsider their impossible position—to no longer allow legislation to be made "ducks and drakes of" to oblige the Irishmen.

After a week the Veteran had formed his fourth Cabinet. He took on himself the duties of First Lord of the Treasury and Lord

Privy Seal. Again Mr. John Morley was at his elbow as Irish Secretary. Lord Herschell was Lord Chancellor, and Sir William Harcourt—who had stewed in "Parnellite juice" till many political cooks said he had been "done brown"—remained as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir G. Trevelyan was back again meekly in the fold as Secretary for Scotland. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, as before, was Secretary for War. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre was Irish Commissioner of Works. Lord Rosebery, whom Mr. Labouchere characterised as a "Tory watchdog," and who fortunately set his face against the policy of scuttle in Egypt, reigned at the Foreign Office, and Lord Ripon at the Colonial Office, while Lord Kimberley acted as Secretary for India and President of the Council. Mr. Arthur Ackland became Vice-President of the Council, and Mr. Asquith rose into prominence as Home Secretary. The post of First Lord of the Admiralty was held by Lord Spencer. Mr. Mundella became President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Bryce Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Mr. Fowler President of the Local Government Board, and Mr. Arnold Morley Postmaster-General. Mr. Labouchere, who was not appointed, as had been expected, to this last office, revealed in *Truth* his differences with Mr. Gladstone, and proceeded to make his journal conspicuously in demand by reason of the characteristic candour with which he discussed the new Ministry.

Of the Irish there were seventy-two anti-Parnellites—the men who had forsaken their leader in his downfall, and nine Parnellites, followers of Mr. Redmond. The former were ready to meet the Gladstonians half-way, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. The latter stuck manfully to the bargain, the Home Rule bait that had been dangled before their eyes during the long interim of Tory government. Nothing much in regard to Ireland was accomplished, however, during 1892. Mr. Morley went to Dublin and devotedly exerted himself to sweep away the remaining clauses of the Crimes Act. He effected also the release of four prisoners who had pleaded guilty to the murder of Inspector Martin, and promptly their compatriots by way of evincing their appreciation exploded a bomb straight under his windows!

The new Parliament had been prorogued soon after the change of Ministry, and not till 1893 did they receive the report of the Evicted Tenants Commission (gazetted in October) formed for the purpose of reinstating the evicted tenants.

Mr. Chamberlain was not slow to jeer at the pathetic inactivity of Mr. Gladstone's Government, save in the matter of "stuffing" the Local Board in Ireland with partisan nominees. In regard to the Home Rule Bill the motto of the Government seemed to be

only Irish need apply, and the anti-Parnellites were apparently *the* select advisers. He admitted that even such compromises as had been proposed were now inadmissible to him. Though the forthcoming Home Rule Bill might provide for the retention of the Irish members, it was valueless. He would never subscribe to a policy which, beginning with the betrayal of the interests of the Loyalists, would end by the betrayal of the interests of the Empire.

Much had occurred since the question of Home Rule for Ireland had been first discussed, and now the word embraced far more than amity and sympathy for Ireland. It barely cloaked active hostility to England, which might at any time—in time of war particularly—become dangerous. Mr. Chamberlain's experience in the United States had shown him the ingenious shapes that hostility might assume—his excursion into Canada had impressed on him the importance of a defensive alliance, inspired him with a dream of the Confederation of the British Empire, and left him with the determination to concede not a jot nor a tittle to any who should propose to defer the promotion of closer relations between all parts of the Queen's dominions.

Parliament met on the 13th of January 1893. The Queen's Speech made allusion to foreign politics, which showed that with Lord Cromer in Egypt and Lord Rosebery in England the nation might be at ease regarding the occupation of Egypt. A Commissioner was appointed to report on the state of affairs in Uganda, and Ireland was said to be progressing favourably. The principal measure was described as designed to "content the Irish people, secure relief to Parliament, and furnish additional security to the strength and union of the Empire." Various articles of the Newcastle programme were put forth, most of which died a natural death, and were duly mourned by the authors. Two measures of the twelve mentioned in the Queen's Speech were subsequently passed—the Parish Councils Act, and Railway Servants (Hours of Labour) Act.

The Home Rule Bill was resuscitated on the 13th of February in a scene of almost as intense excitement as that which had witnessed its introduction. So great was the desire not to miss a renewal of the scenes of April and June 1886, that people actually knocked each other down in the scramble for seats, and staid members of Parliament appeared to have taken leave of their senses. The Peers outvied the Commons in disorder, and their behaviour was so rampagious that an extra force of police had to be employed to keep them in order!

The bill, in deference to objections from all sides which had

been pressed on the notice of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley, had now assumed a somewhat different form.

An Irish Legislature was to be established. It was to be composed of a Council and Assembly, empowered to make laws on Irish affairs.

Supreme authority would remain with the Imperial Parliament, who reserved the right of decision in all matters connected with the Crown, peace and war, dignities and titles, the law regarding treason and aliens, and that concerning external trade.

Religious or personal freedom could not be interfered with.

A Viceroy, nominated by the Crown for six years, would have a Cabinet (an Executive Committee of the Irish Privy Council), and have the power to veto bills on the advice of such Cabinet, yet subject to the instruction of the Crown. The office would be subject to no religious disabilities. The Council (members of which would sit for eight years) would consist of forty-eight members, elected by voters rated at over £20 a year.

The Assembly would consist of 103 members, returned for five years.

The validity of an Irish Act might be questioned by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State.

The determination would rest with the Privy Council.

The Irish Constabulary were eventually to be superseded by local police.

And now came the much discussed clause. The Irish members were to remain at Westminster, but they were to vote on no question relating to Great Britain or taxation not levied in Ireland.

Some £2,500,000 was to be Ireland's contribution to Imperial purposes, while on the credit side was placed some £5,500,000—the £5,000,000 for the expenses of civil government, the surplus for the starting of the Irish Exchequer.

Though the bill was changed, Mr. Chamberlain's attitude remained the same. He was avowedly hostile; indeed, he practically led the army of opposition. He would look at it from one standpoint only—the point of Imperial Unity. He drew attention again to the geographical position that precluded Ireland from benefits such as those enjoyed by the self-governing colonies, and questioned whether an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin would come to our aid in the event of war. She would owe a debt to England, but would she not also owe a debt to France and to America? If we were at war with these countries, on which side would Ireland be? As for the abandonment of Ulster, for whom no effective safeguards were provided, he denounced it as a national crime. "Never in the history of the world has a risk so tremendous been undertaken

with such light-hearted indifference to its possible consequences." Thus the "fighting debater" went on, his attacks growing in strength and pungency from day to day.

Outside the House he was as antagonistic as within it. At Birmingham, in April, he made what has been called the speech of his life. "We cannot exist as we have existed in the past, or as we exist at present, if we disperse the unity of Parliament, the power of the Executive, the responsibility that now rests on the Imperial Parliament. . . . It may please Mr. Gladstone in a spirit of abasement, as a conscience-stricken penitent, to wrap himself round in a white sheet, to proclaim to the civilised world the injury which England has done to Ireland. It may please him to offer to break off a piece of our Imperial structure, and to hand it over to the Nationalists as an atoning gift; but we, the responsible citizens of to-day, are conscious of no such guilt, and will take part in no such ceremony of surrender."

On 11th May the Prime Minister made memorable retaliation. His declamation, "prolific of all the resources of the actor's art," was one of the most remarkable performances of his career.

He pointed a deprecatory finger at his formidable adversary, and in dramatic tones warned the Irish to beware of him, to watch the fowler who would inveigle them into his snare. Most effectively, but unnecessarily, he explained Mr. Chamberlain's purpose, declaring his policy to be none other than a policy of obstruction. Which it was.

Mr. Chamberlain looked on the bill "as a happy-go-lucky way of breaking up an old Constitution," and under the title "A Bill for Weakening Great Britain," again discussed its aspects in the *Nineteenth Century* (April 1893). He showed all along, as he had shown in the House, that "Ireland for the Irish may be very plausible, but England for the English is better."

The lengthy debate on the much threshed out Home Rule Bill is of little interest now save for the passages at arms between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain, which became daily more and more spirited and personal. Mr. Chamberlain, goaded by the Irishmen, grew bitter and scornful, Mr. Gladstone irate, and finally "ferocious." Mr. Chamberlain, it must be admitted, lashed mercilessly at his adversary. Besides attacking the bill in all quarters, he alluded to the Irish members as "the men who pull the strings of the Prime Minister of England. Under the threats of his Irish master, under the pressure of his least experienced supporters, he comes here to move a resolution that is contrary to all the principles of his public life." He went on to show that the Government was afraid to submit the details of the bill to the people, from whom its

defects were carefully hidden, and that they were ready to sell the Empire by private treaty so long as the Irish were satisfied. Naturally the thermometer went up. Debates grew hotter and hotter, and little progress was made. Mr. Labouchere ingeniously suggested that time would be saved if the Ministerialists talked less, leaving the solos for Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley, and Sir William Harcourt. In a few days he presumed the Unionists would grow weary of having no one to fight, and some advance would be made. The damming principle was attempted, but the result of the restraint was an increased tendency to explosion on the part of some members of the House. Progress was finally enforced by the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's guillotine system, or closure by compartment, a system originated in the early Crimes Bill days, when, as Mr. Balfour humorously remarked, Mr. Gladstone had closured every one who happened to disagree with him. This summary method of plugging the free fountains of argument had a further fatal effect on tempers whose irascibility was by no means on the decrease. By now the encounters between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain had lost their scientific cunning; the parliamentary carte and tierce of tongues if more animated had become less discreet, less dainty in its deadliness.

On the 12th July Mr. Gladstone admitted there were inconveniences in relation to the in-and-out arrangement regarding Irish members at Westminster, and thereupon arose a brisk engagement, during which the Prime Minister declared that the question of the Irish members' presence at Westminster was not a vital one—it was a matter which should be directed by the judgment of the country. Thereupon Mr. Chamberlain promptly snapped—

". . . How do they intend to take the free judgment of the country? Are we at last enabled to hope that the Government have in contemplation an immediate dissolution? No announcement would give us greater satisfaction." At this lunge sounds of rapture came from the Unionist and Conservative ranks. Mr. Chamberlain informed them that nothing of the kind was contemplated. "But," he said, "if the opinion of the country is not to be taken in the only way in which its present opinion can be freely and fully expressed, the only alternative is to take the opinion of the representatives of the country. My right hon. friend has said on more than one occasion—I gave him chapter and verse for it—that in this question of the retention of the Irish members the British people were to have a determining voice."

Promptly Mr. Gladstone defended himself: "I said as soon as they got a determining voice—when there were 590 of them, including Irishmen."

Mr. Chamberlain thereupon returned: "We will test that at once. The right hon. gentleman says Great Britain is to have the determining voice in this Parliament because its representatives have a majority in the House. The other night we took a division upon the question whether all the Irish members are to be excluded from this House? There was a majority against our amendment of thirty-one. That was a majority of the House as expressed in the ordinary way by a division; but of British members—of English, Scotch, and Welsh members—there was a majority of twenty-nine in favour of that amendment. The opinion of Great Britain was unmistakably expressed on that occasion by the representatives of Great Britain, and if my right hon. friend sticks to what he said in the country on more than one occasion, he is bound in honour to give force to that pledge. My right hon. friend went on to say that these are questions of minor importance. He complained of the quotation of the leader of the Opposition, and said the alternatives which we have been discussing were not the minor considerations to which he referred. He is certainly mistaken." He then quoted Mr. Gladstone's words:—

"I think that other sections of opinion will appear, and defenders of various interests will arise, that are not dreamt of; and the substitution of a system of representation giving greater scope to varieties of opinion for one that gives little or no scope to the exhibition of such variety will greatly diminish the likelihood of the inconveniences of any such combination as that I have referred to. In any case, what we have felt throughout is this—that whatever plan you adopt it is our duty to confess any possible inconvenience attending that plan. We have a paramount object in view of such Imperial weight and importance that none of these minor considerations ought to be allowed to influence our course." Having sent his shaft home, Mr. Chamberlain proceeded: "If the English language means anything, these minor considerations refer to considerations previously stated, and that is to say, the inconveniences attending the three several courses; and one of these inconveniences was pointed out by himself—that under this system our ordinary parliamentary practice would be interfered with, and there would be constant intrigues between the Government of the day and the delegation from Ireland."

Mr. Gladstone here stated that he never said "intrigues"; he said "possible danger." Whereupon Mr. Chamberlain retorted: "I do not understand the heat with which my right hon. friend repudiated the interpretation put on his words by the leader of the Opposition. At all events, my right hon. friend admits the possibility of a state of things which would be absolutely destructive of

all the best traditions of our parliamentary life; and he says that it is a minor consideration when contrasted with the passing of a Home Rule Bill. My right hon. friend went on to say: 'When was the non-retention of the Irish members a principle of our policy? It never was a capital article in that policy that either inclusion or exclusion should be a determining point of our policy.' On the last occasion when he introduced this amendment he made a statement to a similar effect. He said: 'We have undoubtedly given pledges, which we cannot ignore, to the country in regard to the retention of members. We are pledged to adopt the retention of members in some form.' And he said further: 'I do not think we have ever given a pledge as to the manner in which they shall come back, as to the purposes for which they shall come back, or as to the powers which they shall have in this House.' But that is not the case. He has given a definite pledge, to which I wish to hold him. Speaking in Manchester on June 25, 1886, after the Home Rule Bill had been defeated, when he was declaring what was to be the future policy of himself and of his party, he referred to this question of the retention of the Irish members. He admitted that the Government would be willing to consider the possibility of their retention, and he said: 'I will not be a party to a legislative body to manage Irish concerns and at the same time to having Irish members in London acting and voting on English and Scotch questions.' That is a distinct pledge, which has been so understood in the country, and the views expressed by my right hon. friend have been expressed by almost every man on that bench. They have formed the subject of speeches which have been delivered by many members to their constituencies, and I cannot understand how, in face of a pledge of that kind, the Government can now call upon the Committee to adopt this great change. We are asked at a moment's notice, only a few hours before the closure, which will prevent any adequate debate, to accept a proposal which is at variance with the original bill. It is not the bill which passed the first and second reading which we have now to consider. The bill has been changed in its most vital points. There were two cardinal matters which any Government had to face in dealing with this matter. There was, in the first place, the effect of any scheme of Home Rule upon our Constitution. There was, secondly, the question of what price the British electors were to be asked to pay for the advantage of conferring Home Rule on the Irish people. In regard to both these points great changes have been made in the bill at the last moment, and we begin to understand why they have been delayed so long. The tactics which have prevailed

throughout the whole course of these discussions from 1885 down to the present day have been the same, and they are unworthy of the Government. We know how Home Rule was introduced to the people of this country; how kites were sent up to test how the wind was blowing; how straws were set floating to see the direction of the currents. The country was treated like a timid horse. It was brought up to the stream and allowed to smell it, and then when it was found that opinions were hardened, then the endeavour was made to rush the bill through in a hurry. Now, precisely the same treatment is meted out to the supporters of the Government. I do not believe that they were consulted before these changes were introduced, for if they had been consulted I do not think that there would be twenty of them who would have supported such a proposal as that now before them. If any one disputes that, I will refer him to the Chief Secretary. He said at Newcastle that this was a proposal which would weaken the Legislature in Ireland, which would demoralise the Legislature in Great Britain, and that he did not believe there were twenty members in the House of Commons who would vote for it." After this skilful home-thrust Mr. Chamberlain said that "for weeks there appeared statements in the papers indicating a change of front by the Government, but when they were asked whether there was any truth in these statements, or whether it was their intention to stand by their original proposals or vary them, they have always evaded the questions or refused to answer them." To this Mr. Gladstone replied by a telling "Hear, hear." Quickly Mr. Chamberlain retorted: "My right hon. friend says 'Hear, hear.' He thinks that is a proper treatment for the House of Commons!"

"I perfectly understood the purpose of the questions of my right hon. friend, and I was determined to defeat it," returned Mr. Gladstone, amid the cheers of his admirers.

Mr. Chamberlain resumed: "Yes, he was determined to defeat it; but how? By allowing the House of Commons and the country to be deceived. I am very glad that at all events now the policy of the Government is unmasked and that we have got a clear issue, the issue that the House of Commons will have to decide—crippled and paralysed, it is true, by the closure—but, after all, it will be able to decide, although it will be impossible to discuss details of these proposals. The issue is whether the interests of Great Britain are to be controlled by delegates from Ireland nominated by priests, elected by illiterates, and subsidised by the enemies of this country. Upon that issue we shall appeal confidently to the verdict of the country—for that verdict which you are striving to delay, but from which you cannot escape."

There was another brisk skirmish over Ireland's contribution to the Imperial Exchequer when Mr. Chamberlain put himself to the pains to prove that, according to the Government plan, Ireland would pay some £800,000 per annum less than her due, and a still sharper verbal duel when the Prime Minister with unwonted rancour attacked his adversary in terms which stimulated the spirits of the Nationalists and rejoiced the hearts of Ministers. He said that "his right hon. friend had examined the subject in the same spirit of exaggeration and hostility which had invariably marked his investigation of any portion of the plan of the Government. . . ." He then described him, amid laughter and cheers, as the Devil's Advocate. "The peculiar function of this gentleman," he explained, "was to go through the career of the proposed saint, to seize and magnify even human failing or error, to misconstrue everything that was capable of misconstruction, and when the able and ingenious devil's advocate had, like his right hon. friend, his heart in the cause, then it became reasonably certain to the satisfaction of impartial and dispassionate men that everything had been said against the candidate for spiritual honours that could possibly be said, and not only so, but a great deal more than could be sustained."

This speech has been described as not creditable to the Prime Minister and derogatory to Parliament. Many, however, declare that it was rather the force of Mr. Gladstone's effective utterance than the importance of the thing said that was the cause of offence. Naturally Mr. Chamberlain's fighting instinct was whetted—naturally he decided to return a *quid pro quo* for what he characterised as a "ferocious" speech. Never backward in repartee, he accepted with alacrity the gauntlet that the veteran had savagely thrown down. Bitter and brilliant was his reply made on the 27th (made a few moments before the hour appointed for the application of the guillotine) to an accompaniment of cheers and counter-cheers which pointed each pungent remark. The hands of the clock were travelling towards ten when Mr. Chamberlain said: "And now we have come to the last scene of what I think I may call this discreditable farce to which the Government have reduced the proceedings of the Mother of Parliaments. . . ." He went on to jeer at the sycophant attitude of the Grand Old Man's disciples, declaring that the bill had been changed in its most vital features, and yet it had always been found perfect by hon. members below the Treasury Bench. "The Prime Minister calls 'black,' and they say 'It is good.' The Prime Minister calls 'white,' and they say 'It is better.' It is always the voice of a god. Never since the time of Herod has there been such slavish adulation." The last words were lost—a voice drowned them.

"Judas!" cried some one in the crowd.

The word was spat out. Then, quick as thunderclap after the flash burst forth a storm of sound, deafening, confused, a typhoon unprecedented in the equatorial atmosphere of the House of Commons. Mr. Chamberlain still standing essayed to make himself heard, but on all sides the shout went up: "Judas!" "Progress!" commingled with infuriated calls on the chairman's attention. Mr. Mellor, helpless with concern and dismay, affected not to have heard the offending epithet, or made an effort to ignore it, but finally, however, so great was the commotion, he was prevailed on to take it down.

Meanwhile the floor of the House was growing crowded with members amused, curious, indignant, according to their political proclivities, but all arguing, inquiring, or explaining, and none able to hear another by reason of the buzz of the ever-increasing excitement. Some "sanguinary adjectives" contrived to be audible, and in the foreground, in face of a member on the front Opposition bench, was to be seen Mr. Logan, who, with warlike gesticulations, had crossed the floor. He then sat himself plump in the seat usually occupied by Mr. Balfour, and aggressively close to Mr. Carson. The next moment the disputant was seized by the collar from behind, Mr. Hayes Fisher having hit on this means of removing him from the Conservative neighbourhood. The signal was instantly followed by a rush to the rescue made by certain Irishmen who—they afterwards explained—were prompted by the blessed zeal of the peacemaker. At the same time came a corresponding advance of certain young bloods of the Opposition—gallants determined not to be behind-hand in any activity that might be brewing. In less than a minute the opposing squadrons had charged, and a confused tangle of undignified humanity—brawling and struggling and spluttering—occupied the floor of the House.

The long worn-out dam of emotion had burst! The guillotine might clip tongues, but arms and legs were still free! Hammer and tongs went the makers of the nation's laws; hat smashing, coat rending, fists scientifically and unscientifically cuffing to right and to left, determined to make their mark somehow—anyhow—on opposition noses, while the *mêlée* was enhanced by the advent of sundry well-meaning and pacific personages who, in the endeavour to stem the tide of conflict, were caught up *nolens volens*, spun round and round in the whirlpool, and thus forced into an offensive and defensive activity as grotesque as it was unseemly.

"A disgrace to the nation," stormed some.

"A first-rate rehearsal for a Dublin Parliament," jeered others.

For a good twenty minutes the disorderly rampage proceeded;

proceeded to a chorus of hisses and boos from the gallery, and vehement indistinguishable remonstrances from the more staid members of the House, till, finally, the Chairman, nerveless and despairing, sent for the Speaker.

Of this crisis no distinct or determined impression can be recorded. In the black panting vortex, the white waistcoat—rent in twain—of Sir George Sitwell, the auburn locks of Mr. Redmond dodging assailants, the energetic fists of Colonel Saunderson pounding right and left on the principle of "wherever you see a head hit it," Mr. Bowles and Mr. Healy engaged in animated combat, young Tories lunging here, there, and everywhere, and meek and purple visaged old gentlemen (who had left their seats with the intention of entering the division lobby) struggling with sorry success to protect cranium and centre-piece—such were the main features of the ignoble picture left on the retina!

Meanwhile the two prime factors of the stir—the two who had acted the part of fuse to the explosion—watched with pallid faces the remarkable scene; Mr. Chamberlain, the cries of Judas ringing in his ears, Mr. Gladstone facing in his hoary age the words "Traitor! You are the cause of this," which were hurled at him from many throats. Both statesmen looked on at the unparalleled tornado with scarce concealed emotion. Mr. Chamberlain waited—an apology was due to him—and presently when the Speaker appeared and with admirable firmness sustained the dignity of the House, it was forthcoming. With his advent, the battle magically subsided: the ringleaders slunk to cover, as it were. Then it behoved the chief delinquents humbly to cry peccavi, and absolution having been pronounced, the House was restored to a superficially equable frame of mind. But a more un-English scene has never been witnessed within the walls of Westminster!

The third reading of the bill (September 1, 1893) was carried by 301 against 267. Excluding the Irish there was an adverse majority of 23. Taking England and Wales alone the majority against the bill was 48. But the Lords promptly threw out the bill, only 41 of their number being in its favour. The result was a foregone conclusion, and the country took the rejection of the measure apathetically, though the Liberals indulged in fervid tirades against the tyranny of the Lords. The Irish question was played out—people pronounced themselves sick of it—and the Lords were looked on as deliverers of the nation from a blight that had threatened, like locusts, to leave the mind of the country a wilderness.

The Social Programme

II.—THE SOCIAL PROGRAMME, 1893-4—"PEGGING OUT CLAIMS FOR POSTERITY"—THE NEW RADICALS—A DINNER WITH THE EDGBASTON CONSERVATIVES

Mr. Chamberlain meanwhile stuck firm to the study of social problems, writing many articles,[1] which may be referred to by those interested in the origin of measures which have been looked at as examples of State Socialism. But outside this field his large mind was finding fresh food for contemplation. His visit to Egypt had drawn his attention to Africa, and events had caused him to become spokesman in the affairs of Uganda. In January 1893 Sir Gerald Portal, H.M. representative at Zanzibar, was appointed to inquire into the course to be pursued by Mr. Gladstone's Government. The question arose whether the British East Africa Company, in spite of the state of anarchy there, should stick to the terms of a treaty made with the King, or retire and avoid responsibilities that were growing harassing. In March, in connection with this expedition, Mr. Labouchere as a matter of principle moved a reduction of £5000 in the estimates, and Mr. Chamberlain promptly advanced arguments, which showed first the impassable barrier that now existed between him and his quondam friends; and second, how slowly and surely his mind was evolving the principles of Imperialism, which some declare were merely assumed as a convenient uniform to suit the dignity of Colonial Secretary.

"I confess," he said on the 20th of March, "that when I listened to my two honourable friends (Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Storey) I thought that their primary object was to show to the Committee the difference between Liberals in office and Liberals out of office, between Liberals above the gangway and Liberals below the gangway; and I certainly think they proved that while Liberals above the gangway are extremely latitudinarian in their acceptance of Liberal principles, Liberals below the gangway remain rigidly sectarian as long, at all events, as there is no prospect of their being transferred above the gangway. That is no doubt an extremely interesting question, but it is one on which I think a stranger, an outsider like myself who has been excommunicated from the congregation, has really very little right to offer an opinion!" This caused a good deal of merriment; then he went on: "I do not like to interfere in domestic squabbles. I know the proverb which says 'It is wrong to put your finger between the bark and the tree,' and therefore I shall leave my hon. friends to settle this private question with my right hon. friends upon the Government bench."

He then proceeded to talk of Radicals and Radicals, of some who were not opposed to the expansion of the Empire. Mr. Storey said he was not prepared to spend money on wild expedi-

[1] See Chronological Table.

tions that might be spent on the slums, whereupon Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to ask him how he reconciled his intense sympathy with the poor "with the vote which purposed on Friday night to spend some £300,000 a year in paying members of Parliament, who do not live in slums, and who do not want to be paid." He then went on to discuss the policy of expansion, of which he had of late become peculiarly impressed.

"Does my hon. friend believe, if it were not for the gigantic foreign trade that has been created by this policy of expansion, that we could subsist in this country in any kind of way—I do not say in luxury, but in the condition in which, at the present, part of our population lives? Does he think that we could support in these small islands forty millions of people without the trade by which a great part of our population earns its living—a trade which has been brought to us by our ancestors, who in centuries past did not shrink from making sacrifices of blood and treasure, and who were not ashamed—if I may borrow the expression which has been referred to more than once to-night—to peg out claims for posterity? Are we, who enjoy the advantages of the sacrifices which they made, to be meaner than those who preceded us? Are we to sacrifice that which those who went before have gained for us?"

He thought that if the doors by which new trade was to be admitted were closed, we must then keep the population stationary, and said that the claims that our ancestors had pegged out were not in their time more promising than those proposed to be marked out by the present generation.

"This is not a question of Uganda only, but we are asked to reverse our whole policy in Africa—a policy which has been upheld by the vast majority of this country—and to relinquish the vast advantages which have accrued to us by treaties and engagements with foreign States, and to secure which our country has made sacrifices, in the belief that we were in return getting a *quid pro quo*. That *quid pro quo* we are now asked to sacrifice, and are asked to give up all share in what has been called the partition of Africa. . . ."

He described it as a curious fact, and one which he had never been able to explain, that we of all the nations in the world were the only one which had been able to carry out the work of colonisation without cost to ourselves. He took the case of France, which had been ruling for so many years in Algeria at a cost to the French exchequer of large sums annually.

The same thing, he showed, applied to Tunis, to the German possessions in Abyssinia, and also the foreign possessions of Italy. Rule was an expensive luxury. Except in the case of Spain, in the early discovery of America, this was the case with the possessions of all foreign countries; they had not been able to carry out their colonisation permanently without expense to their subjects. It was necessary to look this matter in the face, and to be prepared

for some such sacrifice of life and money as was needful for the starting of such enterprises.

We should not consider life so sacred that it may not be sacrificed to save life, he declared; both life and money might be sacrificed if we could see before us a prospect of good and ultimate reward. This country, by large majorities, had expressed its conviction that it was our duty to take our share in the work of civilisation in Africa. Therefore we were not prepared to sympathise with those who counted a cost which, in the long run, would prove to be well expended.

In the matter of Uganda our honour was pledged, and whatever might be thought of the matter, it was too late to go back. The Government, of course, were in a state of suspense. They always were in a state of suspense, he parenthesised; and they had his profound sympathy for endeavouring, as usual, to ride two horses, and to promote two different policies.

But in Uganda they could not go back if they would. By a charter, giving to a company certain powers, not only was the company entrusted with discretion, but distinct pressure was put upon it to go forward and to prevent other countries from coming in and taking possession of territories which were within the sphere of British influence. Rightly or wrongly, the company yielded to that pressure of public opinion—they went forward, and broke up such government as there was in Uganda, broke up the authority of those who were held to be chiefs among the people—and the British came in at a cost which was trifling in comparison with the results achieved. We had, he said, secured for Uganda the *pax Britannica*, which has been so beneficial in India. What existed in Uganda prior to that date were anarchy and civil war of the worst kind. Had we not been there thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands, of people would have been cruelly massacred; and after the victory of one party, what remained of the other would have been cruelly tortured. Captain Lugard was on the spot, and at this juncture he undertook a work of the highest responsibility. In the subsequent confusion, 400 lives at the outside were sacrificed—a deplorable fact; but that sacrifice cheaply purchased the peace, the pacification, and temporary civilisation which followed. But for the presence of the English, long before now the people would have been at each other's throats.

"You gave a charter to the company; you have never disavowed them," he declared, "and now you cannot leave that country whatever it cost you, if it cost you another expedition. You are bound at all costs to fulfil the obligations of this country, to maintain the faith of this country to the people to whom it is pledged. What would happen if you left? Would not the

Protestants, Catholics, and Mohammedans be at one another's throats? and would there not be a massacre almost unparalleled in the history of Africa? And who would suffer most? Those who have been our allies; they are the people whom we have disarmed, and who would now fall an easy prey to their enemies. I do not think my hon. friend contemplated such an abandonment as that. He was quite ready to protest against any further extension of the Empire. But we are dealing now with what has taken place and cannot be recalled; and I say it would be a greater disgrace than ever befell England if you were to retire from a country whose prosperity and the lives of whose people depend absolutely upon your continuance of the hold you have upon them."

He went on to show that in the duty of protection it was unworthy of the British to count the cost—that it was impossible to say, "If it will cost £10 we may protect their lives, but if it will cost a million we had better keep the money in our pockets." The cost of the matter had been ludicrously exaggerated. All the evidence went to show that the peace of Uganda and of the neighbouring countries could be secured at a comparatively small expenditure. The climate of the place was excellent, the country could produce almost anything, and the sole difficulty lay in the want of transport. "How," he asked, "could we expect the commerce of Uganda to thrive when the cost of traffic between that country and the coast amounts to nearly £200 per ton?" But what would have been said about the cost of carriage to the North-West of Canada a hundred years ago? Until the North-West of Canada Railway was constructed, there was scarcely any trade in those great dominions of Canada, and he maintained that the prospects of Uganda were quite equal to those of the North-West of Canada fifty years ago.

By this it will be seen that Mr. Chamberlain was already keenly interested in the development of the resources of the Empire, and that the wisdom of the policy of Imperial expansion had forced itself upon him. In the same year he said at Birmingham that it was the duty of the country to take every opportunity of extending foreign trade and developing it, and of securing new markets, which were also free markets, for the introduction of our goods. We were landlords of a great estate, and it was the duty of a landlord to develop his estate. What was the good of our having a country like Uganda, which would grow almost anything, and which was—as regarded a considerable portion of it—capable of receiving British inhabitants, if we would neither give to that country nor to those who would colonise it the opportunities that were necessary to the purpose? All this trade depended on the existence of satisfactory methods of communication. Without that, how could it be expected that trade would be created? And he gave the cost of bringing the produc-

tions of Uganda to the coast. He said that in his opinion it was a wise course for the Government to use British capital and credit in order to create an instrument of trade in all those new and important countries, and he firmly believed that in doing so they would not only give immediate impetus to British trade and industry in the manufacture of machinery, but—although they might lay out their money for a few years, which in the history of a nation counted as nothing—they would sooner or later earn, directly or indirectly, a large reward.

At another time, in discussing the question of the unemployed, a question just then painfully pleading for solution, he advanced the policy of Imperial expansion as the alternative to that of municipal workshops, which would not give more work to bootmakers, and might probably take away that which the bootmakers at present secured.

"What you want to do," he said, "is not to change the shop in which the boots are made, but to increase the demand for boots. If you can get some new demand for boots, not only those who are now working but those out of employment may find employment. That should be our great object. In addition to the special point before me, you must remember that, speaking generally, the great cure for this difficulty of want of employment is to find new markets. *We are pressed out of the old markets—out of the neutral markets which used to be supplied by Great Britain—by foreign competition. At the same time, foreign Governments absolutely exclude our goods from their own markets, and unless we can increase the markets which are under our control, or find new ones, this question of want of employment, already a very serious one, will become one of the greatest possible magnitude, and I see the gravest reasons for anxiety as to the complications which may possibly ensue.* I put the matter before you in these general terms; but I beg you, when you hear criticisms upon the conduct of this Government or of that, of this commander or of that commander, in expanding the British Empire, I beg you to bear in mind that it is not a Jingo question—which sometimes you are induced to believe—it is not a question of unreasonable aggression, but it is really a question of continuing to do that which the English people have always done, to extend their markets and relations with the waste places of the earth; and unless that is done, and done continuously, I am certain that, grave as are the evils now, we shall have at no distant time to meet much more serious consequences."

He returned to this theme in 1894 (January 22), pointing out that the remedy was not to be found in the establishment of municipal workshops or the limitations of the hours of labour, but in the development and extension of the free markets for British manufactures. He created much merriment by saying that he refused to be called a Jingo. None, he said, could be called a Jingo for believing it his duty to uphold the dominion and Empire we now possessed. England was entirely unable to support her population,

which was maintained by the assistance of foreign trade; it was therefore necessary to secure new markets. If things were left to the Little Englanders they would refrain from taking legitimate opportunities to extend the Empire. Indeed, it was doubtful whether they would be at the pains to preserve even the heritage our ancestors had bequeathed to us. He pointed out that what Uganda wanted was merely what Birmingham had—an improvement scheme—and gave examples to show that India would never have been developed as it has been save by the enterprise of the Government. Private individuals could not, and must not, be relied on to provide the railroads—the arteries and life-blood—without which countries languish and die. He wished, he said, to look beyond the mere palliatives for immediate distress, and to promote the establishment of a trade that might, for generations to come, afford employment to the working population of the country.

On the 30th of January 1894 a somewhat unusual event took place. Mr. Chamberlain, whose life had been spent in combating the Conservatives in Birmingham, was now a guest at their Club. No better proof of the smoothing of the surface of political relations can be found than this exchange of courtesy, and Mr. Chamberlain's speeches on that day and the one preceding it proved how entirely in many ways he was advancing to meet the views of his allies. He discussed the new Radicals as distinct from the old, describing the first as never contented unless they could render others uncomfortable. Their affection for the Home Rule Bill was only surpassed by their hatred of the Protestant and British minority in Ulster. Their interest in temperance took the form of an endeavour to ruin the publicans; their advocacy of compensation for workmen was tempered by the wish to injure the employer; and even their love for parish councils was conditional on their hostility to the Church. Elsewhere, later in the year, he declared that their ambition was to bring everything to the level of uniformity; a very different ambition to that of the old Radicals, whose aim it had been to lift and benefit those who were minded yet unable to lift themselves. According to the new school, the vagrant and feckless and dissolute would share alike with the hard-working and honest. He condemned collectivism as a principle of confiscation which spared neither capital of the rich nor savings of the poor. There were further evidences of his growing sympathy with and support of the party of his adoption, for when criticising the claims made by the Liberal Government to be the originators of the free education movement he referred to the contests of 1870 (showed how Mr. Gladstone, far from supporting the Birmingham Education League, had assisted Mr. Forster to defy it), and also to his "unauthorised

programme" of 1885, and the many F's which formed the basis of it; thus demonstrating clearly how poorly his ideal project had fared till it had been taken up by the Conservatives.

III.—RESIGNATION OF MR. GLADSTONE, MARCH 3, 1894—THE EARL OF ROSEBERY AS PRIME MINISTER—A "TOTTERING ADMINISTRATION"

Early in March 1894 Mr. Gladstone resigned, and was replaced by the Earl of Rosebery. Then was sounded the knell of Home Rule, though its spirit had passed a considerable time before. On the 6th of October 1891 Mr. Parnell breathed his last, and gradually the hopes of Ireland perished. The rousing clarion note was dumb, stilled for ever, for Mr. Parnell's loss could never be repaired. He was a patriot, true to his country, sincere and single in motive, skilful in action, and firm in resolve, and Great Britain, however opinions regarding him may differ, was the poorer by a Man. When Mr. Gladstone retired from the political stage, the Home Rule question, which he had set on foot, "exclusively at the call of Ireland," remained unanswered. The great voice was silenced, that call was now merely an echo—a memory. The echo, the memory Lord Rosebery accepted, though he was never at heart a Home Ruler. The Union of 1800 he considered not only as an inevitable but a great act of statesmanship, but he had no enthusiasm for the principle. For him it was no matter of fanaticism, of sentiment, or of history as it had been with others. With Mr. Parnell it had been a question of life and death, with Mr. Gladstone it became a question of power, with Lord Rosebery it was merely a question of policy. So by degrees the lamp of Erin flickered out. Lord Rosebery, it is true, declared that with Mr. Gladstone's departure there would be no change of measures, merely of men, but the Parnellites sniffed uneasily when he went so far as to advocate beside Home Rule for Ireland some similar arrangement in respect to Wales and Scotland. This looked to them like postponement *sine die*. Mr. John Morley assured them there was no intention to hang up the bill. Mr. Chamberlain, however, looked on the matter as shelved. He detected in Lord Rosebery's attitude a reflection of his own, and commented on the fact that the new Prime Minister differed from the old in that Mr. Gladstone succeeded in convincing himself the more he tried to convince others, while Lord Rosebery was not convinced, nor did he think it necessary that others should be convinced. Presently Lord Rosebery retaliated by pointing out the inconsistencies of Mr. Chamberlain to his Radical-Unionist friends in Birmingham, inconsistencies regarding the House of Lords, the Church, the

Registration Bill, and Local Veto. On various occasions Mr. Chamberlain defended himself, re-expressed (Liverpool, 5th September) his ideas regarding the co-operation of Conservative and Radical ideals which have been quoted earlier. He showed how perfectly compatible were the old Tory traditions with his own theory of Radicalism. As for the House of Lords, he had attacked them once, and was ready to attack them again, in cases where they resisted rather than protected the rights of the majority of the people. Still, he admitted later on the need of a Second Chamber to save the country from dependence on a majority in the House of Commons, one which perchance might not even be a British majority, but one subsidised by foreigners.

In the matter of social legislation Mr. Chamberlain's position was an exceedingly difficult one. As champion of the Unionists, and fighting debater against Home Rule, he stood on definite ground, but in relation to social measures, some of which had grown from seeds of his own planting, his attitude had to be regulated by the spirit of compromise that had acted as a potent cement to the alliance of Conservatives and Radical-Unionists. For instance, though he was ever in sympathy with the principle of providing for the compensation of workmen for injuries received in the pursuance of their duty, when the Employers' Liability Bill came to be discussed he supported Lord Dudley's amendment, which provided freedom for master and men to adhere to existing satisfactory contracts for the settlement of compensation in the event of injury or death. But policy apart, the bill Mr. Chamberlain considered faulty in many respects. He had always admitted that the provision for compensation for injury was one of the first duties of trade, in exactly the same way as provision for wounds or death incurred in its service in respect to soldiers and sailors is one of the duties of the State. Though this bill proposed to make the employer liable not only for any accident that might be caused by his own negligence or the negligence of persons whom he had directly appointed, but for any accident caused by the negligence of the fellow-workman of a workman employed, Mr. Chamberlain declared it did not go far enough. He argued that compensation should be afforded not merely for accident in the event of negligence, but accident pure and simple; the great object being to offer pecuniary help to a man who happened to be injured in the pursuance of his employment, or to his family in the event of his death in the same circumstances. A man who chanced to be injured by some unexplained accident—otherwise the act of God—was, he thought, quite as much entitled to assistance as any other man.

Again, though he had ever been in favour of Welsh Disestab-

lishment, he and some fifteen Liberal-Unionists decided to abstain from voting for Mr. Asquith's bill. As a fair reason for not supporting the measure, he showed there was no definite majority in favour of it, and that in regard of all the Government programme people voted for one thing because it embraced another. The Welsh voted for Home Rule because they hoped to get Disestablishment, the teetotallers voted for Disestablishment because they wanted Local Veto, and the Labour Party voted for anything that might ensure the Eight Hours' Day.

But he stuck to his personal opinion in the matter, and declared that Welsh Disestablishment must inevitably come. It was merely a question of securing to the Welsh Church generous terms. That done, he believed that it would rise to a position of usefulness and influence never before enjoyed. His attitude in the matter was defined in a speech made at Durham on the 16th of October 1894.

In regard to the Local Veto Bill, it was merely the nature of the temperance legislation that he fought about. He still harped on his Gothenburg System as applied to England, but adhered to his theory that the licensed victualler should be compensated for the loss of his trade.

At Birmingham, and again at Heywood (November 22, 1894), he put forward his new programme, which contained his old ideas in a less extravagant dress. He proposed moderate temperance reform, sanitary improvements effected by extension of the Artisans Dwellings Acts, advances of money to enable workmen to purchase their holdings, the creation of tribunals of arbitration, and compensation for injury. In all these matters most of the Conservatives, though not enthusiastic, met him reasonably. Lord Salisbury was of opinion that the idea of enabling workmen to become owners of their holdings could but act locally, while some sections of the Conservative force wagged their heads, and acidly wondered what the country was coming to!

Reports gradually got abroad that a split might shortly be expected in the Unionist party, reports that were assiduously circulated by disappointed Tories whose wish was father to the thought.

But these rumours were quickly dispersed by the statements of both Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour (April 26, 1895). The first expressed himself and his party as most grateful for the disinterested and straightforward loyalty with which Mr. Chamberlain had devoted his "great authority" and "splendid powers" to the service of their common cause, while the last declared that it was unnecessary to contradict statements that disagreement had arisen between himself and Mr. Chamberlain, for never had any man been so loyally supported as he had been by the Unionist leader, and never was their

relationship more cordial than at the present time. Mr. Chamberlain expressed reciprocal sentiments on the 22nd May, repeated his early doubts as to the success of the union, and said that, even had it involved the sacrifice of reform for a time, the sacrifice would have been excusable in view of the necessity to protect the country from the danger that menaced it. Fortunately such sacrifice had been unnecessary; and he proceeded to show that the reforms secured by the combined forces in the years 1886–92 compared satisfactorily with those effected by all previous Governments.

The session of 1895 was chiefly occupied with an effort to secure Welsh Disestablishment, and in a display of animus against the Lords, who, it was hoped, might be induced to commit suicide or vote for their own extinction. Two measures out of the eleven mentioned in the Queen's Speech of 1894 were passed—Equalisation of Rates in London, and Local Government, Scotland.

On the 21st of June 1895 Lord Rosebery's "tottering" Administration came to an end, much to the relief of the chief, for whose army of malcontents he was found either too fast or too slow. The Government, after an uneasy fifteen months, was defeated by a majority of seven for not having kept the army properly supplied with cordite. Very shortly the country was again in the throes of a General Election, and the following effective placard, exhibited at Inverness, purposed succinctly to sum up the activities of the Gladstone-Rosebery Administration :—

WHAT THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT HAVE DONE SINCE 1892.

1892.

Came into Office.
Made Peers.
Made Promises.

1893.

Home Rule Fiasco.
Made more Peers.
Made more Promises.

1894.

Passed a Local Government Act.
Increased the Death Duties.
Won the Derby.
Lost their Leader.
Made more Peers.
Made more Promises.

1895.

Again won the Derby.
Made still more Peers.
Made still more Promises.
Resigned.

TOTAL.

1 Act, 2 Derbys.
15 Peers.
Promises innumerable.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh and London