# 1889

Tuesday 26 February (London)

For the last few days all London has been concentrating on the Parnell Commission where the question whether or no the famous letters were forgeries have been tried. For some days the matter has [been] very critical, and the whole affair has turned on the evidence of Pigott,[1122] a very great rascal who supplied the letters to *The Times*. Today after a vast amount of lying Pigott has absconded, having previously made and signed a confession to Labouchere[1123] that the letters were forged by him.[1124] The excitement has been great – the exultation of the Parnell party unbounded, the despondency of the Unionists great. It is anyhow a tremendous blow to *The Times*, and from the Government having tied themselves on to *The Times*, to them also. It is hardly possible to anticipate the full force of the reverse: and it remains to be seen whether the system of party which is now established in England or the democratic impulsiveness of the constituencies will prevail. A few years ago when party influences and organisation were much less it would have been easy to foretell the result. It is now more difficult. It is anyhow likely to create still more violence and bitterness on both sides.

Wednesday 27 February (London)

The break down of *The Times* case is complete and everyone is full of it and every one is very wise after the event and after lauding the action of *The Times* for the last few months they are now open mouthed upon the indiscretion which led them into such a trap. It is as strange

[1122]Richard Pigott (1828–1889), journalist.

[1123]Henry Du Pré Labouchere (1831–1912), Advanced Lib. MP for Windsor (1865–1866) and for Northampton (1880–1906), proprietor of *Truth*.

[1124]When Pigott failed to appear in Court on 26 February, Sir Charles Russell made the startling announcement that Pigott had, after his disastrous cross-examination, called on Labouchere on 23 February and dictated to him a full confession. See A.L. Thorold, *The Life of Henry Labouchere* (London, 1913), pp. 356–357.

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and complete a break down as I can remember in the whole of my public life.[1125]

I think I have made all arrangements for the publication of the Chesterfield MSS.[1126]

I am considering rather anxiously what my next step should be as regards the Bishop of Lincoln's case.[1127]

Saturday 9 March (London)

Stead came and dined quietly with Elsie and me alone as he wished to talk to me. His first object was to talk over his own action with regard to the naval augmentations proposed by the Government. He wishes for the increase, does not much like the manner in which it is proposed, believes that he can, and he alone, stir up the country, as he did before in Northbrook's, but thinks that either this will oblige the Government to withdraw their scheme or will compel a dissolution when they will be beaten. He wished to have my advice on the subject.

He believes Randolph Churchill desires to attack the Government on their mode of proceeding, perhaps to see them turned out and then to pose as the one Tory statesman who warned them and whose advice, if they had followed it, would have saved them.

I think his view as to the Government is correct.

It is not really a large one, though in the country it will be represented as £21,000,000. It makes no provision of increasing blue jackets for the new ships, nor for guns, and is founded on a septennial principle which will be open to much objection. It is really inadequate.[1128]

[1125]On 1 March, Pigott shot himself through the head in a Madrid hotel when police entered his room (F.S.L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (London, 1977), p. 422).

[1126]The Memorandum of Agreement between Carnarvon, the University of Oxford, and the Clarendon Press for *Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Godson, with Notes and an Introduction by the Author* was dated 11 August 1889 (Highclere Castle Archives, Box 1).

[1127]Edward King (1829–1910), Bishop of Lincoln, had been accused by the Church of alleged ritualist practices. Edward Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had disinterred an old spiritual tribunal, the Court of Audience, to try the case. Carnarvon, together with many others, deplored this illiberal move. See Hardinge, III, p. 304; G.W.E. Russell, *Edward King, Sixtieth Bishop of Lincoln* (London, 1912), pp. 162–163.

[1128]The Naval Defence Act, introduced in March, signalled the entry of Britain into the naval armament race. The Act provided for the building of eight first-class battleships, two second-class battleships, nine large and twenty-nine smaller cruisers, four fast gunboats, and eighteen torpedo gunboats, at a cost of £21,500,000. See A.J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: a history of British naval policy in the pre-dreadnought era, 1880–1905* (London, 1940), p. 143; Hamilton, *Parliamentary Reminiscences and Reflections, 1886–1906*, pp. 110–114.

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Alternatively, his conclusion was that he would offer Gladstone his co-operation and support if G. and the Liberal leaders would pledge themselves to such an increase as would make matters safe and would attack the form rather than the substance of the Government's proposals.

Thursday 21 March (London)

My debate in the House of Lords came off on my bill for disqualifying unworthy Peers – a full house and very attentive but evidently reluctant to adopt my proposals. A certain amount of adverse criticism was met by a good speech by Lord FitzGerald[1129] for me, and finally Salisbury made an attack on it and moved the previous question. He began quietly by saying his first disposition was in favour of it, then he proposed to postpone it: finally he assailed it. I replied by pointing this out, and said that as he had invited me to deal with the question and that as my bill was framed on the lines of his own measure of last year, his sudden face about was somewhat astounding. He did not like my remarks, I would see, and hoped that I could not divide; but I would not fall into this trap and compelled him to divide. We were 14 to 73, so the bill was lost.[1130] Another curious illustration of his falsity and untruthfulness. He is as false as he can be.

Friday 29 March (London)

I made a longish speech in the House of Lords on Army matters, praising Stanhope but arraigning the whole system of War Office organisation in almost all its branches.[1131] The Government did not much like it; but they could not complain as I worded my attack on the system rather than the individuals. Harris[1132] answered and did his

[1129]Lord John David Fitzgerald (1816–1889), Irish judge, Lib. MP for Ennis (1852), Solicitor-General for Ireland (1855–1856), Attorney-General for Ireland (1856–1858, 1859), Justice of Queens Bench, Ireland (1860–1882), Lord of Appeal and created Baron Fitzgerald (1882).

[1130]House of Lords (Discontinuance of Writs) Bill, second reading: *Hansard*, CCCXXXIV, 21 March 1889, Carnarvon, cols 333–345, Fitzgerald, cols 345–350, Salisbury, cols 353–357. Cranbrook noted the following day, 'At the House, we had Carnarvon's "black sheep" Bill, wh. was riddled with many compliments to the mover & eventually crushed by the previous question' (Johnson, p. 729).

[1131]Royal Commission on Naval and Military Depots: *Hansard*, CCCXXXIV, 29 March 1889, Carnarvon, cols 1125–1131.

[1132]George Robert Harris (1851–1932), 4th Baron Harris (1872), Under-Secretary of State for India (1885–1886) and for War (1886–1889); ibid., cols 1133–1138.

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work well. But there is so poor a report even in *The Times* that the effect of what I said cannot be great in the Country.

I think that there is much discontent and some apprehension in the Government ranks. Howorth is very much out of humour and represents a certain amount of opinion, and from all I hear, R. Churchill is on the eve of a junction with Chamberlain and the Liberal Unionists in Birmingham as a first step probably to a separation from the body of the Conservatives.[1133]

Saturday 30 March (London)

We dined at the old Duchess of Marlborough,[1134] where Randolph and Lady R. were. He was extremely and unusually civil and talked a good deal to Elsie on *general* politics. He is, almost without disguise, very much out of humour with the Government and Lady Randolph does not hesitate to abuse them pretty freely. The old Duchess is not more complimentary to them, so it is not difficult to see in what direction the wind is setting.

But the Enfield Election which is rather a moral victory for the Government is disappointing to them.[1135]

Thursday 4 April (London)

Lord Justice FitzGibbon[1136] from Ireland called on me and we had an interesting conversation on Irish matters. The substance of it was briefly this:

[1133]John Bright had died on 27 March and, on the following day, Churchill told the Birmingham Conservatives that he intended to stand for selection for the constituency. Chamberlain was in fact keen for Churchill not to be invited, but the latter left the decision to Hicks Beach and Hartington. Their advice was far from encouraging and Churchill turned down the invitation. See P.T. Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: entrepreneur in politics* (New Haven, CT and London, 1994), p. 315.

[1134]Frances Anne Emily Churchill (1822–1899), widow of John Winston Spencer-Churchill, 7th Duke of Marlborough.

[1135]After a hard fight, the Conservative candidate, Captain H.F. Bowles, obtained 5,124 votes and his Gladstonian Liberal opponent, W.H. Fairburn, 3,612, a majority of 1,512 (*The Times*, 1 April 1889, p. 6).

[1136]Gerald Fitzgibbon (1837–1909), Solicitor-General for Ireland (1877–1878), Lord Justice of Appeal (1878). He was a friend of Churchill.

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(1) It turned out that he had called, not merely *proprio motu*, but at the instance of Randolph Churchill who wished him to talk to me.[1137]

(2) He is dissatisfied with the present system of coercive or restrictive policy. He says that Balfour seems to aim only at enforcing law as a matter of Executive, and that nothing even to small improvements and necessary changes have been made. He complained a good deal of the impossibility of getting the smallest matters of improvement effected.

(3) He said that the general feeling in Ireland was in favour of some constructive measures now being taken; but he thought the opportunity had been lost and that the only measure now in prospect was a dissolution of Parliament.

(4) He said that there was a good deal of money in the country and that matters were in a fairly prosperous condition in consequence; but that one result of having given the tenants so much more interest in their holdings – and in fact of having virtually multiplied holdings – was a great increase of litigation. This however was perhaps unavoidable.

(5) He said the landowners, though much restricted in means and money, were accommodating themselves to the changed circumstances.

(6) I talked to him on self-government and he is evidently quite prepared for self-government in its subordinate features and institutions. He would not I think object to Provincial Councils provided they do not assume the character of Parliament. If only they could be bodies representing in some limited way the subordinate and more local boards of the Counties he would not, as I understand, greatly object; but on this point he was less clear than he might have been.

(7) He did not speak adversely of Ashbourne's Act[1138] but he said it was the means – and he cited a case of the Salters Company in the North where they had sold their property for £240.0.10 and taken it out of the Country – of removing from Ireland much that it was desirable to keep there.

[1137] From early 1888, Fitzgibbon urged Churchill to embark on a new initiative for Ireland. See Foster, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, pp. 351–353.

[1138] The Land Purchase Bill, introduced by Ashbourne in the House of Lords on 17 July 1885.

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Sunday 7 April (London)

A curious and interesting conversation with Randolph Churchill who called on me at my invitation, that invitation being the result of the fact mentioned to me by FitzGibbon that Randolph wished to see and talk to me. I mentioned this when we met as the reason of my offer.

He was of opinion that the time had come when some constructive policy in the shape of local self-government should be given to Ireland. He said he was willing to give everything short of a Parliament. I pressed him as to Provincial Councils. He did not express the same rooted objection to them as to a General Parliament, but much preferred not to go beyond County Councils. He said he was satisfied that unless something of this kind be given the Conservative majority must go, that recent elections proved nothing on this point.

His proposals were (1) that we should make a joint move in both Houses to call attention to the state of Ireland or (2) that he should collect in the House of Commons what sympathisers he could and that I should do the same and that we should meet to confer: or (3) that he and I should draw up a memorandum and present it to Salisbury.

Of these the first seemed in both our opinions most likely, but it would need, I said, and he quite agreed, very great consideration, but in any case I said I thought the first move should be a confabulation with Hartington, and this I said I was willing to undertake if after more thought I saw no objection.

He was very friendly and anxious to please, and our conversation turned upon past as well as our present matters. He said that he much regretted in regard to my famous conversation with Parnell that the Cabinet had not been informed. I said that it was Salisbury who prevented me from communicating it, as he afterwards had induced me to remain silent, till I felt myself obliged for my own sake to explain what had passed.

He said that he believed Parnell was, for whatever reason, ready to accept very moderate terms, and he denounced Justin McCarthy as wholly untrustworthy.

He is obviously very sore with Salisbury and he said, which was quite new to me, that in /85 when forming the Government, Salisbury had sent Wynn to submit to Parnell three names for the Irish Secretaryship, Dyke, Chaplin, and he could not remember the third. I believe this must be true for Salisbury tried to persuade me to take Chaplin, which I refused and then he fell back on Dyke.

He frankly acknowledged that he had conferred with Parnell. I am not sure that he had not negotiated with him, but this was before he

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was in office and he seemed quite aware that at that time Salisbury was quite open to consider terms with the Home Ruler.[1139]

Wednesday 10 April (London)

A very long conversation with FitzGibbon who called to see me after having evidently talked over with Randolph my late conversation with him. The conversation came mainly to this:

(1) FitzGibbon chiefly looked at the matter in Randolph's interest and from a personal aspect. He desires his reunion with the Government because he thinks the Government policy will go to pieces without Randolph and because R. alone can save them and assume the lead on Smith's retirement.

(2) He is all against any pronouncement in the House of Commons because R. would be beaten, alienated and thrown into the arms of the Gladstonians.

(3) He prefers that he should state his policy at some public meeting, hoping the Government will accept it.

(4) He evidently fears Salisbury as an enemy to R. but says Beach and W.H. Smith are friendly.

(5) He caught at the idea of Hartington's intervention.

(6) He repeated that there is a large party in Ireland very anxious for a settlement, that trade and industries as much as landowners fear confiscation at the end of "the three years" lease remaining to the Government.

(7) He is strongly opposed to Provincial Councils and would only give County Councils – the less the better in short.

Friday 12 April (London)

Randolph Churchill came to me by appointment. I told him I had thought over the whole question, had gleaned information and had spoken to FitzGibbon and that if he allowed me I would speak quite frankly to him on the personal aspect that his relations with the Government were strained; that any action on his part either in the

[1139]Carnarvon considered the conversation on the state of Irish affairs so important that he postponed a planned visit to Germany in order to meet Churchill again (Carnarvon to Churchill, 7 April 1889: Randolph Churchill Papers, Add. MS 9248/23/3113).

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H. of C. or at a public meeting would strain them more; that on the other hand by maintaining silence he would not really conciliate; but that any attack on Balfour who has at this moment a remarkable popularity would be ascribed to jealousy, that on the whole I believed it was best to profess his want in patience and wait and watch, that in so doing it might be possible to ascertain who agreed and to draw them together. Meanwhile that I will see Hartington if he liked, tell H. my own views and let him know his, Randolph's.[1140] To all this he cordially assented and said that I was free to tell H. that his opinions and mine on the situation were "identical". He was very friendly, said that he did not desire to return to office at present, but preferred his position of critic.

He then went on to speculate on future events, said that he believed Salisbury's health was very bad, that he probably had Bright's disease, that he sometimes thought that he would retire and hand over Prime Ministership to Balfour or do this and simply retain the F.O. I said that I doubted the probability of this; but that a Hartington Administration was more probable which would allow of a fresh departure in Irish policy. He agreed that this was not impossible or improbable, and that Hartington might play the role of Palmerston over again.

His feelings to Chamberlain are not very friendly. He thinks that his first object will always be his own interest.

Friday 17 May (London)

A long conversation with R. Churchill and interesting. He is as much dissatisfied with the Government as ever, but he feels that he can hardly make any move safely as regards himself. The "Tory Party" he says are just now devoted to Balfour in the H. of C. but the constituencies he believes are out of joint and growing demoralised. He believes that we should very likely lose many Landowners. He had last night a conversation with Beach, who, he said, agreed with him and with me as to the inexpediency of the present policy, and who told him that he greatly regretted that he had ever re-joined the Government. Beach and Salisbury do not hit it off. Beach very nearly resigned on the Budget, the brewing regulations and the new succession duty on real estate being very repugnant to him.

Randolph had also talked to Hartington who had listened to him very attentively. He told H. that he had talked to me and what my

[1140]The meeting with Hartington did not take place, owing to Hartington being out of the country and Carnarvon being laid up with an attack of gout. Carnarvon noted, 'I do not, however think that, as matters stand, there is any real loss by a short delay' (Carnarvon to Churchill, 19 April 1889: Randolph Churchill Papers, Add. MS 9248/23/3124).

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general opinion was. It was finally settled that I should see and talk to Hartington. R. leaves London for the month of June to fish, but really he finds no opening for him at this moment.[1141]

Friday 24 May (London)

I had this afternoon an important and interesting conversation with Hartington on Irish matters and the Government policy.

I explained to him the feeling and the capacity in which I went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, to fulfil a special mission, the enquiries I made as to what could and should be done, my own conviction that it was impossible to stand for much longer on the old lines and my interview with Parnell.

I explained to him my own notions, a concession of Local Government, County Councils, educational complaints considered, development of Irish industries, land settlement, though it would not be possible to do this by a mere extension of Ashbourne's Act to which he agreed.

As regards County Councils I said I should prefer to go further and accept Provincial Councils as almost the only means of protecting Ulster. He asked if I should object to two instead of four, making *Protestant* Ulster one. I said I would readily agree to this and in fact preferred it to the four. As regards land settlement I suggested that the local authorities should become landowners making some Irish tax such as Customs and Excise the first security for paying off the owners, and in fact applying it to that purpose.

He did not object, was most friendly and listened and talked with great patience and attention.

I said that for some time I had looked upon him as nearer my standpoint than everyone else and that I desired his opinion as to whether or no I should raise the question this year. He would not give an immediate answer, but desired time to consider.[1142]

[1141] After the meeting, a ten-point memorandum was drawn up by Carnarvon as a basis for future action in Ireland. It included the extension of the Local Government Act of 1888 to Ireland 'by bodies not less than County Councils', possibly to be extended to provincial councils; provisions for the purchase of freehold by the occupier; improvements in education; and the gradual relaxing of control of the police and resident magistrates by the imperial parliament and future transference to provincial councils (Carnarvon, 'Heads of changes in Irish policy drawn up in May/89 after conversation with R. Churchill': CP, BL 60828, fo. 26).

[1142] Hartington was much occupied at this time as chairman of the Royal Commission on the Civil and Professional Administration of the Naval and Military Departments, to which he had been appointed in June 1888. A preliminary report, recommending important changes in the organization of the Admiralty and the War Office, and the need for greater

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Monday 27 May (London)

Not feeling at all well again, but a good deal of business [. . .].

A conversation after dinner with R. Churchill, who dined here, as to my recent conference with Hartington.[1143] He said that Rothschild had told him that Hartington had informed him of my conversation with him and added that whether one agreed with me or not there was great force in my arguments.

Randolph also said that he had reason for believing that the Parnellites are meditating a parliamentary session – a contingency certainly indicated in Parnell's recent speech – but an unwise move on their part. Randolph most friendly and amiable.

Tuesday 25 June (London)

Elsie and I went up. I went almost direct to the National Society where I made a speech against the New Code.[1144] A large meeting and pretty much agreed with me on what I said. The Archbishop of Canterbury[1145] in the Chair.

Later in the House we divided against the Land Transfer Bill. The Government were all but beaten – 113 to 103 – and the 113 were almost entirely their best and most devoted supporters. Salisbury looked very much annoyed. When speaking he did not receive a single cheer from his own side.[1146]

co-ordination, appeared in July 1889. See P. Jackson, *The Last of the Whigs: a political biography of Lord Hartington, 8th Duke of Devonshire* (Rutherford, NJ and London, 1994), pp. 282–283.

[1143]Among the matters discussed with Hartington was whether Carnarvon should raise a debate in the House of Lords in an attempt to obtain a declaration of policy on Ireland from Salisbury (Hartington to Carnarvon, 31 May 1889: CP, BL 60828, fo. 21). Hartington advised Carnarvon 'not at this moment to stir up the question' (Carnarvon to Churchill, 5 June 1889: Randolph Churchill Papers, Add. MS 9248/24/3170).

[1144]The New Code of 1889, issued by the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, was an attempt to liberalize the system of 'payment by results' for elementary schools and allow more freedom for teachers on the subjects taught: building requirements were completely changed and class sizes were to be reduced. The voluntarists saw this as an attack on Church schools. After a bitter campaign, the Code was withdrawn. See G. Sutherland, *Policy-making in Elementary Education, 1870–1895* (London, 1973), pp. 266–277.

[1145]Edward White Benson (1829–1896), Archbishop of Canterbury (1882–1896).

[1146]Land Transfer Bill (No. 8), third reading: *Hansard*, CCCXXXVII, 25 June 1889, Salisbury, cols 687–688, Carnarvon, col. 690.

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Thursday 27 June (London)

Herbert came. Murray[1147] had been with him and had told him that there was a great desire on the part of the Cape people to have me there, if only for a short time. Loch[1148] does not go till Christmas and the satisfaction would be great if I could go till then, more as a visitor than anything else. But they would not do anything without first ascertaining my wishes in the matter. Herbert rather balanced on the subject, on the whole more against it. After thinking it over, I saw H. at the Colonial Office in the afternoon; he had become, on consideration, even less in favour of my going, but agreed that if I thought at all of it, I had best first talk it over with Loch.

Sunday 14 July (Highclere)

A great deal of conversation with Randolph on many subjects.

He has no love for Salisbury and amongst other things mentioned that since his resignation he had been tabooed by the Queen, which he said he probably owed to Salisbury. In foreign affairs he is convinced that Boulanger[1149] will be at the head of things in October. He has seen a good deal of him and next Wednesday he has Boulanger to dinner and the Prince of Wales who desires to meet and talk to him. In Servia [*sic*] he believes that the storm must soon break: there are forces there beyond the power of Russia to control – race forces – and he anticipates as almost certain war in the spring of 1890. One of his anticipations is a war between France and Italy, the rest of Europe looking on, Germany being held back by Russia. This would be a very serious contingency, for France would certainly crush Italy.

He gave me a curious account of his interviews with the Czar, when he was in Russia.[1150] He talked to him for nearly an hour and left the impression on his mind of a very straightforward, simple, home loving, peace loving, rather commonplace but resolute man.

We had a long conversation as to his own course of proceedings. He proposes to speak at Walsall and Birmingham at the end of the month and then to take a line as to Ireland, much in the way of our

[1147] The identity of this person is not known.

[1148] Sir Henry Brougham Loch (1827–1900), Governor of Victoria (1884–1889), Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner in South Africa (1889–1895), Baron Loch (1895).

[1149] Georges Ernest Boulanger (1837–1891), French soldier and statesman. Served in Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), Minister of War (1886–1887). Committed suicide in Brussels.

[1150] For Churchill's own account of his meeting with the Czar, see W.S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, 2 vols (London, 1906), II, pp. 359–366.

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previous conversations in London. I advised him caution both for the sake of his object and of himself.[1151]

He said he intended to speak out, telling his audience that he could not speak freely in the House of Commons. I urged him to be very careful as to this, because he would have the House of Commons to deal with anyhow for another two years and that it was of no use to get quite angry with them. He thanked me much for all my advice, took it in excellent part and was altogether in most amiable mood. He spoke like a man who has been greatly sobered by his past reverses, with some bitterness occasionally of his old colleagues, but not very much, and he talked of his ignorance and inexperience at the time he resigned.

He is very clever – it is impossible to doubt this – and he has a very considerable attraction when he desires to put it out. He told Elsie that he had very much enjoyed his conversation with me; and I believe that it was so, for he came back half an hour before dinner to resume it, and would have talked on much longer had time allowed. I fancy that he is so cut off from his old party and friends that he is really glad of a friend, though probably he would throw the friend over without much remorse if circumstances seemed to require it.

Wednesday 24 July (London)

I lunched with the Spencers. We were alone and after lunch I had an interesting talk with Spencer for some time on Irish affairs. He seemed anxious and perplexed, not denying the improvement in affairs generally, but believing the recent disaffection to remain much the same. We touched on Ulster and Provincial Assemblies. As to Ulster he has really no expedient to suggest. He merely dwelt on the fact that Ulster is not really the Protestant Community which it is supposed to be and that an exclusion of Ulster from a general Home Rule Ireland would mean the disqualification of nearly one half the population of the province.

As to Provincial Assemblies he is not disposed to them, believing that this solution of the question would not go far enough. This I expected. The variety of opinion on this point is curious, Hartington inclining to them, Randolph thinking they go too far, Spencer not far enough.

[1151] His speech on domestic legislation at Walsall on 28 July roused the anger of publicans over the temperance issue. This overshadowed the Birmingham address on Irish policy two days later (ibid., pp. 397–398).

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Monday 12 August (London)

I came up alone, and made my Egyptian speech in the House of Lords.[1152] Neither Salisbury nor the Government much liked it: at the same time it was not easy to find fault with it. Salisbury indeed misrepresented me in one part seriously by saying that I favoured repudiation, which obliged me to contradict him unequivocally,[1153] but beyond this there was nothing of consequence.

Saturday 9 November (London)

In the evening Randolph Churchill came to me and had a long talk. His notion still is that the Government is losing ground, that the bye elections show this, and that they do nothing to avert the catastrophe which is imminent. There are, as he truly says, only three men in the Cabinet who are not very inferior – Salisbury, Balfour and Goschen.

We talked much on the possibility of social reform, and I laid down in the broadest language the necessity for a policy which would at one and the same time give confidence to owners of property and would show the working classes that it was the full intention of the Government to ameliorate their lot. This I said was a difficult matter, but quite a possible one. He agreed after a good deal of conversation and said that amongst other means to such an end a Government should be formed of men, or rather containing men, who would inspire confidence to both of the two great bodies in the country.

He suggested one or two ingenious ways in which the great municipalities might be induced to undertake the sanitation of the poorer parts of large towns.

He ended by asking my advice on the following matter. When Wolff was in England he it seems spoke to Salisbury about Randolph and one day suggested that if Lytton should be obliged by health to give up Paris, whether Randolph could not go there. Salisbury said no, but added that he had thought that possibly he might go to St Petersburg, if he liked it.

[1152] Egypt. Military Operations against the Dervishes. Future Policy: *Hansard*, CCCXXXIX, 12 August 1889, Carnarvon, cols 993–1001.

[1153] Ibid., Salisbury, cols 1002–1004. Salisbury had written to Carnarvon a week earlier, at the last moment, when Carnarvon intended to introduce a debate on the Egyptian situation. 'So I sent him a few lines, good-natured but with a sting, saying I was much obliged for the letter but should have been still more grateful if he had given me an earlier intimation' (Diary, 5 August 1889; Carnarvon to Salisbury, 5 August 1889: Hatfield House Papers, 3M/E).

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On this he wished for my opinion and apparently he had consulted no one else, for he said rather sadly, "I have no friend to whom I can talk." I said that I should prefer to sleep on the matter and answer him tomorrow, but *on the whole* my impression would be in favour of acceptance. He asked whether it would not cut him off from Parliamentary life, and damage him.[1154]

I said certainly not the first, and I quoted Canning accepting India and returning just as he was going; and as regards the latter I did not see that it could *really* worsen his position.

Sunday 10 November (London)

Randolph called on me this evening with regard to the question of a possible firm offer from Salisbury of the St Petersburg Embassy. I told him that I thought there were *against* acceptance:

(1) risk of political changes in the Government during his absence – undesirable.

(2) risk of his being superseded or forgotten – not very grave.

(3) risk of want of proper support at home especially if war should break out and difficulties arise. This might be avoided by great care on his part, but was a distinct risk.

On the other hand *for* accepting:

(1) it would be employment and very interesting.

(2) the difficulty of steering a safe course at home was so great that it might be well to be out of the way.

(3) it might even be easier to resume his position two or three years hence if he were now to go abroad.

But I said that taking everything into account, if the offer should be made in a fairly handsome manner I should advise acceptance. He thanked me much, said that this could determine him, and that he should accept. He said the old Duchess was averse to his going and that she was the only other person to whom he had spoken, but that what I said seemed conclusive.

[1154]Two years later, when Lytton gave up the Paris post, Balfour, after being approached by Churchill, urged Salisbury to fill the vacancy with Churchill: 'It would take him out of a sphere where, in these days of reckless electioneering promises, he is really dangerous, & put him in one where he would be relatively powerless for mischief.' Salisbury, however, would not contemplate the idea. See R.R. James, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London, 1959), p. 356.

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He talked a good deal about Salisbury, whom he neither likes nor trusts, and he reminded me in reference to Parnell of what he had once told me before – that *previous to the formation* of our Government in '85, he had talked freely to Parnell on the subject of Ireland and home rule. He said he was certain that about the time that I had my interview with Parnell, Salisbury was quite ready to go into Home Rule, but that he was deterred by the fear that he, Randolph, would turn round and trip him up.

Monday 23 December (Highclere)

We had our tenants ball, which passed off with very great success, and gave I think great satisfaction.

Froude came down from London to talk to me about Disraeli's correspondence on which he had previously written much to me. He had paid a visit to Lord Rothschild who showed him all the letters with a view to his editing them.[1155]

The letters run from about 1851 to 1861 and they commence with a curious correspondence between Disraeli and old Mrs. Willyams[1156] of Torquay, who at first gave him £1,000 and afterwards left him a considerable fortune. They are, Froude says, very interesting and greatly to Disraeli's credit. There is not a word of calumny or misrepresentation or malignity he says in them; they are very amusing and do justice to heart and head. Altogether it is clear that Froude is much inclined to undertake the task of editing and believes that in this particular period – from 1851 to 1861 there is nothing in Disraeli's career or this correspondence with which he would be seriously at variance.

Froude has consulted the Duke of Rutland as to Disraeli's character, but the Duke does not seem to have been able to throw much light on it, and indeed it was not likely that he should be able to do so. It is like asking a rush light to make clear an oil lamp: and from what I know of the two men I cannot conceive that Disraeli would ever feel anything but a benevolent but slightly contemptuous goodwill for John Manners. Froude is I think in want of literary work; he is

[1155] In fact, the volume was published as a narrative in *The Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria* series, in octavo format, with a modest amount of quotations from Disraeli's correspondence: J.A. Froude, *The Earl of Beaconsfield* (London, 1896).

[1156] Mrs Sarah Brydges Willyams (1769–1863), Sephardic Jew, wealthy widow, and owner of an estate near Torquay. She was over eighty when she first contacted Disraeli and there was a copious correspondence between them for many years. He inherited much of her estate after her death and she was buried, as she desired, at Hughenden. See Blake, *Disraeli*, pp. 414ff.

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naturally taken with this correspondence and with the subject of it and I think that the end of his doubts will be to edit it. Those parts of Disraeli's career to which Froude mainly objects in 1877–8 will not come in. I thought it right to intimate, as he had virtually asked my opinion, that if he undertook to edit the correspondence he would not be at liberty to write as freely of Disraeli as he otherwise [would] be on those parts of his career outside the decade in question, and to this he quite assented.[1157]

[1157]Carnarvon commented on the project, 'I have been wary in giving advice though I have talked more or less freely of past events' (Diary, 24 December 1889).

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