1890

Wednesday 1 January (Highclere)

Il capo d'anno, and after a spell of unusually good health I am laid up by a sharp pain in my side, great malaise, difficulty to draw breath, altogether poorly and in pain. I was kept in bed till late and felt very miserable when up. Meanwhile nothing could exceed, for winter, the beauty of the day – a brilliant sun and blue Italian sky.

Thursday 2 January (Highclere)

Better, though not well. The morning spent in much discomfort, the afternoon in the Library, making a commencement of my Herbert Memoir, if I ever go on with it, a useful thing for the Family.[1158]

Sunday 5 January (Highclere)

There is a great deal of sickness everywhere and the accounts of the "Influenza" epidemic are bad. It is now in London. Salisbury has had it very severely, and our expedition to Greece must clearly be given up. I hope we may escape it, but it seems hardly likely.

Thursday 13 February (London)

Aubrey, Mervyn[1159] and I have had the influenza. Aubrey much the most severely, I very lightly, dear Mervyn short but sharp. All plans are disturbed. Elsie has a tiresome cough, but Dr. Granville[1160] does not think much of it and I trust it will go.

[1158] *The Herberts of Highclere*, printed for private circulation, was published by John Murray in 1908.

[1159] Mervyn Robert Howard Molyneux Herbert (1882–1929), Carnarvon's second son by his second marriage, later an attaché in the diplomatic service.

[1160] Dr Joseph Mortimer Granville of 16 Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, London.

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Saturday 8 March (Porto Fino)

We are back in our Mediterranean home,[1161] rather a cloudy day but everything looking very beautiful. We saw Dr Breiting[1162] before leaving Genoa, and the Consul paid us a little visit just to tell us that he was coming on Tuesday to welcome us.

Now for the next six weeks I hope that we shall have a time of very pleasant quiet reading and writing, and fresh air. It is a charming place, and perhaps we ought to do more with it than we do.

Saturday 15 March (Porto Fino)

Randolph Churchill has been getting into great trouble with his own Party. He is not wise about this. He gets irritated, feels the isolation of his position and possibly the slights put on him and then makes an attack on the Government as he has done in the present case on them in reference to the Special Commission.[1163] Then at once all the Party newspapers open on him and the breach becomes still wider.

If he is not careful it will end in a real quarrel and he will have to go to the Radicals.

Tuesday 25 March (Porto Fino)

Herbert writes me word that Salisbury is supposed to be unwell. I wrote a long letter to him last Thursday or Friday[1164] which I sent

[1161]The Carnarvons finally left England on 5 March, staying in Paris en route (Diary, 5 March 1890).

[1162]This person has not been identified.

[1163]The Report of the Parnell Commission was made public on 11 February; it exonerated the Irish members from some of the charges made against them in *The Times*. W.H. Smith, as Leader of the House, moved a resolution on 3 March that the Commons should adopt the Report and thank the Commissioners for their impartiality. In the subsequent debate on 10 March, Randolph Churchill bitterly attacked his former colleagues, losing the support of many of the Party. The Government had a majority of sixty-two in the division that followed. See Sir H. Maxwell, *Life and Times of the Right Honourable W.H. Smith, MP*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1893), II, pp. 264–272; *Hansard*, CCCXLI, 3 March 1890, Smith, cols 1656–1670; *Hansard*, CCCXLII, 10 March 1890, Churchill, cols 11–25.

[1164]Carnarvon complained of a paragraph in the *Standard* concerning a forthcoming debate in the Lords on Salisbury's motion on the Special Commission. Carnarvon wrote, 'Whenever you have spoken on the subject [of my relations in '85 with Parnell and the Irish Party] the impression has been left – very unintentionally, I doubt not – that more remained to be said, that we were not in agreement and that differences between us were extremely serious.' He also reminded Salisbury that 'it was your own opinion and wish, in

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to Herbert with authority to suppress or forward and this letter from Herbert today had been written before the receipt of mine.[1165]

Wednesday 2 April (Porto Fino)

I wrote my answer to Salisbury;[1166] the correspondence is now I think complete, unless he makes any reply. I do not know that it will do much good, but I do not think it can possibly do harm, and it has been a fair attempt on my part to make the personal relations, once so intimate, better. I think this was worth an effort.[1167]

It is curious that this has happened twice before to me with two Prime Ministers – Lord Derby and Disraeli. In each case I was on most friendly terms, in each case political reasons dissolved the feeling; in each case I went to see them a short time before their death and we had a *fair* reconciliation. But in these two cases I knew they had not long to live and I did not like the idea of parting ill friends.

Wednesday 9 April (Porto Fino)

I have not been feeling well, but I think I have today virtually finished my translation of *Prometheus*.[1168] What I shall now do with it is, as the Italians say *altra cosa* – not very easy for me to determine.

We are beginning to think of our homeward move.

which I agreed, that the affair should remain private' (Carnarvon to Salisbury, 20 March 1890: Hatfield House Papers, 3M/E).

[1165]Sir Robert Herbert to Carnarvon, 24 March 1890: CP, BL 60795, fos 188–189.

[1166]Salisbury answered Carnarvon's letter of 20 March, assuring the latter that 'I wished to dissipate from your mind the idea that I have been on any occasion backward to support your statements against the Parnellites incomparable falsehoods [. . .]. I have always deeply regretted that there should have been any divergence between us on political questions; but I should regret it much more deeply if I thought the result of it had been outside of politics, you thought more unkindly of me than you used to do' (Salisbury to Carnarvon, 27 March 1890: CP, BL 60760, fos 140–146).

[1167]Carnarvon replied, 'Your letter was very welcome to me because it expresses plainly both in tone and substance the continuation of the old feeling between us on your part, and for this reason I am glad that I wrote though under the false impression of an unfounded newspaper statement.' Nevertheless, he pointed out to Salisbury the differences that still existed between them (Carnarvon to Salisbury, 2 April 1890: Hatfield House Papers, 3M/E).

[1168]*Prometheus* was published posthumously in 1892 by John Murray.

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Monday 28 April (Dover)

We left Brussels by a 10.30 train and had a prosperous journey [. . .].[1169]

I have a return of this detestable influenza, and what I took for rheumatism is, I do not doubt, only that. I have all the old muscular pains, and very badly. I wonder whether and when they will die out. At present I am fit for very little.[1170]

Saturday 3 May (London)

I went to the Academy dinner;[1171] the representation pictorially seemed to me very poor, the speeches except Salisbury's not very good. Salisbury's had a good deal of humour in it, and J. Morley[1172] who tried to answer it had not the lightness of touch to make the reply of the airy, easy kind that was wanted. Granville's had a ring of the *senescens equus* in it, with some of the old ease. Salisbury's faults are harshness of voice and a want of the little refinements of oratory, which link on one part of the speech to the other and with which the late Lord Derby was so endowed.

Tuesday 6 May (London)

We dined with the Jeunes, R. Churchill there, very friendly with me, and we had a good deal of general talk. He is very clever. He believes that by the end of June the Government will find themselves in a deadlock in the House of Commons, and that when the Elections take place they will be in great straits. His dislike to Salisbury is very great. He declared to Mrs. J. that there was not a Cecil who had a particle of heart or thought of anything but himself.

[1169]The Carnarvons arrived back in London on 28 April.

[1170]The following day, in conversation with his doctor, Carnarvon was told that he was still not well, 'apparently, an effect of the influenza' (Diary, 29 April 1890).

[1171]'Royal Academy Banquet', *The Times*, 5 May 1890, p. 10.

[1172]John Morley (1838–1923), Lib. MP for Newcastle upon Tyne (1883–1895) and for Montrose Burghs (1896–1908), Chief Secretary for Ireland (1886, 1892–1895), Secretary of State for India (1905–1910), created Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1908).

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Wednesday 14 May (London)

I have had a really terrible time since Sunday[1173] – rheumatic gout, or rather gouty neuralgia – in one knee – pains in one side of my body everywhere – hopeless torment at night, unable to sleep – always changing position. Altogether I think the worst pain for several consecutive days that I have ever had.

Thursday 15 May (London)

Rather better but very little.

I had a visit from Gladstone[1174] who came to talk to me about Acton's Library which is to be sold.[1175] He is extremely interested in the matter and threw himself with the intense earnestness of his whole nature into it – as if he had nothing else to think of.

I also saw Verdon[1176] and said goodbye to him – probably for the last time.[1177]

[1173]On 9 May, Carnarvon was seen by Dr Granville. 'He says I shall be well again in a short time, and substantially there is really nothing the matter, but I have felt low and poorly all day' (Diary, 9 May 1890).

[1174]Gladstone called on Carnarvon at 43 Portman Square on more than one occasion during Carnarvon's last illness. His final visit was only ten days before Carnarvon's death. See Carnarvon to Gladstone, 19 June 1890: Gladstone Papers, BL 44510, fo. 106.

[1175]John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton (1834–1902), 1st Baron Acton (1869), historian, Regius Professor of Modern History, Cambridge University (1895–1902). At the end of 1889 and the beginning of 1890, Acton was almost bankrupt. He proposed to pay off a bank loan by selling his Library at Aldenham, consisting of 70,000 volumes. To avoid this happening, Gladstone persuaded Andrew Carnegie, the philanthropist, to buy the Library for £9,000, with Acton having full use of it during his lifetime. When Acton died in 1902, Carnegie gave it to John Morley, who, in turn, presented it to Cambridge University. See R. Hill, *Lord Acton* (New Haven, CT and London, 2000), pp. 289–292; J. Morley, *Recollections*, I, pp. 231–232.

[1176]Sir George Frederic Verdon (1834–1896), politician and banker, Agent-General for Victoria (1868–1872). Verdon had had 'an important talk' with Carnarvon the week before on the latter's Sydney property (Diary, 8 May 1890).

[1177]Carnarvon died on the evening of 29 June.

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