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**ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR**



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THE RIGHT HON. A. J. BALFOUR, M.P.



# Arthur James Balfour

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

BY

BERNARD ALDERSON

*ILLUSTRATED*

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## P R E F A C E

MR BALFOUR'S acceptance of the highest position in the State forms a suitable opportunity to present the record of his public career. It may appear somewhat singular that no biography of Mr Balfour has hitherto been published, but this may be accounted for in some measure by the fact that he has shown a disposition averse to publicity, and in the past given no countenance to the work of recording the services he has rendered to his country during the last thirty years.

The object of the author has been not merely to produce a chronological record of Mr Balfour's career, but to review under various heads the manifold activities he has been engaged in, and to give an impartial estimate of his work as a Statesman, Legislator, Leader, Politician, and Colleague, and in his private life as an Author and Landowner.

The author is indebted to the Rev. Francis St John Thackray for many interesting reminiscences of Mr Balfour's schooldays; to the Rev. James Robertson, D.D., of Whittingehame; to Mr H. W. Lucy



## PREFACE

for his well-known Parliamentary diaries; to the *Times* for its verbatim reports of Parliamentary debates; and to other journals for their reports of Mr Balfour's public speeches.

He is also indebted to Messrs Bradbury, Agnew & Co., the proprietors of *Punch*; to the editor of the *Shamrock*; and to Mr F. Carruthers Gould, for permission to reproduce the cartoons which appear in this biography.



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# ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

## CHAPTER I

### LINEAGE AND BOYHOOD

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR was born at Whittingehame, Prestonkirk, East Lothian, on 25th July 1848. He is the eldest son of the late James Maitland Balfour, who married Lady Blanche Gascoigne Cecil, the fourth daughter of the second Marquis of Salisbury. On both his father's and his mother's side he has an historic lineage.

The Balfours are one of the oldest families in Scotland. A Balfour of Burleigh is said to have fought under Wallace, and the line of the Balfours of Balbirnie has an unbroken connection from the reign of Robert II. in the fourteenth century. Mr Balfour's grandmother, Lady Eleanor Maitland, was a descendant of Maitland of Lethington, one of the foremost statesmen of the sixteenth century. She married Mr James Balfour, M.P., the second son of Mr John Balfour of Balbirnie, who made a large fortune in India. Mr Balfour's father, Mr James Maitland Balfour, succeeded to the family estate in 1847.

An enthusiast for delving into family histories has discovered that Mr Balfour is a lineal descendant of King Robert Bruce. He may be correct, and possibly



## ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

England's Premier unconsciously has royal blood coursing through his veins. The subject of this discovery has, however, no knowledge of his royal descent, but probably, when he lays down the cares of State, he will devote his mellow years to testing the accuracy of this most interesting announcement. His fondness for philosophic studies will no doubt be a valued guide as he roams through the centuries in search of the missing link.

On his mother's side Mr Balfour is related to the great Cecil family, the present Marquis of Salisbury being his uncle. His maternal grandmother, Frances Mary, first wife of the second Marquis of Salisbury, played an important part in the society and public life of her day. She was the daughter and heiress of Mr Bamber Gascoigne. At the age of twenty she married the Marquis, who was known as a man of eccentric habits. Possessing a winsome personality, and being a woman of keen intellectual taste, her circle of friends included many of the most brilliant leaders of the day. One of these was the Victor of Waterloo, from whom Mr Balfour took one of his christian names. In her journals she left an interesting description of Queen Victoria's Coronation, and, referring to the Iron Duke, she wrote: "Though the lines on his face are deeper, he has a fresher colour and a brighter eye." She mentions the fact that the famous soldier, whom she greatly respected, expressed an earnest desire that no public homage should be paid to himself but only to the young Queen. "I think, however," she wrote, "though he always despises mob popularity, that he was gratified with the applause which came from the most respectable people—judges and privy councillors included—which attended his leaving the abbey. A feeling—real and sincere, though



## LINEAGE AND BOYHOOD

almost a romantic one—that the chief attention and homage is on all occasions due to the sovereign when present (the effect of that extraordinary devotion to the Crown which I never saw approached in any other person) diminished his gratification, and even gave him a degree of annoyance. He looked back to see if the Queen was coming, with an air of vexation, as if to say ‘This is too much—this belongs of right to her.’”

During the illness which led to her ladyship’s death in the spring of 1839, the great Duke proved himself a valiant friend, and the letter he wrote to her bereaved husband showed how much he felt her loss. Lady Salisbury was one of the few women the Victor of Waterloo admired, and after her death he cultivated a great fondness for her daughter, Lady Blanche. On one occasion he presented her with a watch, with the playful injunction that she must wind it up every morning. Another interesting gift he made the happy maiden was a plan of the field of Waterloo, copied from one made immediately before the great battle was fought. Whenever they met at the same evening party, the great soldier made a point of seeing his little heroine to her carriage. Lady Blanche was greatly honoured by this kindly interest and courteous devotion, and in after years treasured the friendship of her youth. It was as a token to his memory that she named her eldest son after the Duke.

Two of Lady Salisbury’s children have played an important part in the history of their country. Lord Robert Cecil rose to be Prime Minister, and the eldest son of Lady Blanche has now succeeded him.

As a girl Lady Blanche early gave promise of great beauty and rare intellectual gifts. In her eighteenth year she married Mr James Maitland Balfour, the



## ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

union being essentially a love-match, and one which was productive of great happiness to both.

For a short period Mr Balfour's father sat in Parliament, but his health subsequently prohibited him taking any prominent part in public work. When the future Premier was only eight years old his father died in Madeira after a protracted illness. The nursing of her husband and the heavy blow which followed proved a great strain to his mother, from the effect of which she never fully recovered.

But Lady Blanche did not allow her grief to interfere with her duties. The crisis brought into action her manifold qualities, and with resolute strength of mind she faced the great task which had now devolved solely upon her. From that moment she resigned herself to the promotion of the welfare and happiness of her children. They became the one object of her life. She sacrificed all society engagements which were likely to be a hindrance, and bestowed on their training a wealth of motherly love. In addition, she supervised the management of the estate, and showed a wonderful tact in directing its development.

The thoroughness of her work, and the zeal and energy she infused into every duty, however commonplace, was the more remarkable as her health was never robust and her strength many times threatened to give way. Only the exercise of a strong will and an implicit faith could have enabled her to accomplish what she did for her children. Unconsciously she was sowing the most prolific seeds, and little did she think that her devotion was to reap such a rich reward, and that one day the greatest empire in the world would be indebted to her for one of its most illustrious and brilliant statesmen. The connection be-





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LADY BLANCHE BALFOUR







## LINEAGE AND BOYHOOD

tween the unostentatious labours of a noble woman and the service rendered to his country by the statesman who is now at the head of affairs, provides food for much thought, and very appropriately the words of the familiar line may be changed to read: "The hand that rocks the cradle rules an empire."

With such a strong, sagacious, and loving nature to guide his early footsteps, it is not surprising that her eldest son made rapid progress. The example and teaching of his mother laid the corner-stone of his career, and on that sure foundation his great career has been built.

Lady Blanche herself taught her children their preliminary lessons, and it was from her they received the first grains of knowledge. When nine years old, Arthur was sent to a school kept by a Mr Chittenden at the Grange, Floddesdon. He remained there five years, during which impressionable period much of his leisure was spent in study and preparation for his future position as laird of the estate. As a youth Mr Balfour early recognised the responsibilities of his station in life, and manifested a keen interest in the affairs of the estate, which, during his minority, were capably managed by his mother and her chief bailiff Mr Smith.

The local papers frequently recorded that "Mr A. J. Balfour of Whittingehame had taken prizes for his agricultural exhibits." This early success as an exhibitor provides an admirable testimony to the painstaking efforts of his mother, who, being of a practical nature, and possessing an excellent judgment, devised many plans for the improvement of the farms on the estate and the promotion of the happiness and comfort of the tenants.

One of the customs was to convert the large granary



## ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

at Christmas time into a reception-hall, and to decorate it with holly and mistletoe and seasonable greetings. Here young and old met to spend a merry evening in singing and dancing, and after a good dinner or supper had been partaken of, rousing cheers were given for Lady Blanche and her son.

Mr Balfour made his first speech at the precocious age of twelve. The occasion was an open-air entertainment given in the park to the tenants and labourers on the estate. A large company watched the athletic sports, and when the prizes had been presented, in response to a resolution of thanks, the heir to the estate, on behalf of his mother, made a short speech. One chronicler of the events of the day wrote: "This young gentleman, who bears a marked resemblance to his late and much-respected father, returned thanks for himself and his mother in a most manly way."

Lady Blanche took a practical interest in the educational welfare of the villagers, and with characteristic thoughtfulness, during the winter evenings, arranged concerts and lectures on their behalf. In these worthy efforts she was assisted by her children, who willingly took part in the musical evenings, and probably they provided Mr Balfour with the first public opportunity of using his musical gifts.

The marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1863 was celebrated with great rejoicing at Whittingehame, and the event no doubt helped to kindle the first sparks of loyalty in the mind of the young heir. The celebrations were carried out on a large scale, and the enthusiasm and good-feeling which prevailed on every hand forms one of the bright spots of Mr Balfour's boyhood. Feasting and merriment were freely indulged in, and on the hills huge bonfires blazed at night. Lady Blanche entertained five hundred guests to a substantial dinner,



## LINEAGE AND BOYHOOD

and afterwards distributed presents of tea, sugar, and beef to the poor of the parish.

Although her children were far from strong in health, Lady Blanche lost no opportunity of increasing their knowledge and bringing them into contact with the scenes of every-day life. Upon one occasion she accompanied them while they inspected the mysteries of a coal mine. Under the guidance of the proprietor of the Drummon Colliery, the party descended the pit, and were shown the underground workings. The memory of that afternoon's expedition must still be fresh in the Premier's mind, and especially the delight it afforded him to scramble with his brothers through the darkness, over hard rock or through sticky mud, to where the miners were engaged upon their arduous and dangerous work. Nothing more serious than the extinguishing of the lights occurred, and after Lady Blanche had pointed out the fungus on the watery roof, and made it possible for beauty to be found even in a coal mine, the party began the ascent, the youngest entering the cage first, Mr Balfour and his mother bringing up the rear.

A typical instance of Lady Blanche's self-denial and practical views was shown during the Lancashire cotton famine. The hardships which the operatives underwent aroused her sympathy and that of her children, and to enable them to manifest it in a practical manner, and to provide them with a useful experience, she suggested that her daughters should take over the household duties. At first the experiment was attended with no small amount of inward pain, but the troubles of indigestion, and other minor details, did not deter them from carrying out their self-sacrificing scheme. While it must have been troublesome work for refined hands — the rougher



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work was done by two Lancashire girls—Lady Blanche herself must have suffered no slight inconvenience. As for Mr Balfour and his brothers, the boot-blackening, knife-cleaning, and cabbage-growing proved rare good fun, but they soon got tired of the quality of the rations the amateur cooks placed before them with such pardonable pride. The experiment also had its amusing side for others. As the vicar was leaving the house one morning, Lady Blanche humorously remarked: "I would ask you to stay to luncheon, Mr Scott, but my daughters are doubtful if the steak will be rightly done!"

Such incidents as these testify to the value of the practical training Mr Balfour received as a boy, and the great debt he owes, like other distinguished men, to the sound common-sense and untiring devotion of a gifted mother. Lady Blanche, being herself of a deeply-religious nature, early taught her children to cultivate noble aims and high resolves. Every day she read some portion of the Bible to them. These Bible-readings took a conversational form, and were a source of delight to her children. Her biographer, the Rev. James Robertson, in his book, "Lady Blanche Balfour: a Memoir," says they were "free, refreshing, yet reverent," and that she avoided making them tedious and dull. This homely study of the Scriptures was continued until her death.

The recreative side was, however, not forgotten, and during the long evenings she read to them tales from Dumas' and Shakespeare's works, and many were the peals of laughter which the amusing incidents evoked. Lady Blanche was a woman of keen intellectual tastes, and one who possessed an intimate knowledge of the standard works of literature. It was mainly as a result of her early teaching and





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F. M. BALFOUR

C. C. BALFOUR G. W. BALFOUR

Mrs H. SIDGWICK

A. J. BALFOUR

MISS A. B. BALFOUR

LADY B. BALFOUR

LADY BLANCHE BALFOUR

E. J. A. BALFOUR

LADY RAYLEIGH

## LADY BLANCHE BALFOUR AND HER CHILDREN







## LINEAGE AND BOYHOOD

example that her sons became so renowned in the world of letters in after years.

She was an ideal mother in every respect, and, although her own health was never strong, she was indefatigable in her efforts on behalf of her children, and many instances might be recorded of her self-sacrificing devotion. One of the most trying periods of continuous anxiety she underwent was the outbreak of diphtheria which took possession of the house at the beginning of one year, and when for several weeks Gerald's life was in danger. She nursed each of her children in turn through their illnesses, and afterwards attended one of her tenants who had caught the disease. The devotion of Lady Blanche Balfour for her children resembles that of the late Queen Victoria in many respects, and both have left noble examples of motherhood and personal self-sacrifice.

Under her wise tuition Lady Blanche's eldest son was fully equipped when the day arrived for him to leave his ancient home and continue his studies at one of the great public schools.



## CHAPTER II

### SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

LIKE many other distinguished men, Mr Balfour was educated at Eton, that great school which the march of events has taught us to look upon as our national nursery of genius and fame. If Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, many Parliamentary triumphs in the same respect have also been won within its walls. Fresh from the open-air life of Whittingehame, he entered the school when fourteen years of age, his brother Gerald following a few years later. His first tutor was the Rev. Augustus Birch, a man who took a keen interest in the educational progress of his scholars. Mr Birch resigned his position in 1864, and was succeeded by the Rev. Francis St John Thackray.

Under his new tutor the young student continued to make excellent progress, and upon one occasion carried off with honours a prize offered for the best paper on the Commonwealth period.

Mr Thackray was delighted with the essay, and, for a boy of his age, he described it as "a really remarkable piece of work, full of thoughtfulness, and containing the germs of intellectual power." The teacher naturally became attached to his promising scholar, and spared no effort to encourage him with his studies. Mr Thackray early inculcated into his mind a love for



## SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

knowledge, and it is to his painstaking efforts Mr Balfour mainly owes not only his scholastic triumphs, but the groundwork of his later successes in literature.

Mr Balfour was a quick worker, and maintained a good position in his form during each term of his stay at Eton. In the words of his tutor, "he developed a capacity for work of the first order." He had a keen perception, and he learned to use his eyes as well as his intellect. Previous to his entering Eton he had read a good deal more than most boys of his age. He had a natural liking for history and general knowledge, and this trait of character was considerably strengthened by his tutor. Mr Thackray's efforts were worthily supported by Lady Blanche Balfour, who frequently visited Eton, and watched with pride the marked progress her son made. With characteristic thoughtfulness, she devoted much of her leisure to study, so as to be of assistance to her sons when at home. But while most assiduous in his studies, Mr Balfour was not by any means a book-worm. As a youth he loved the country, and was never so happy as when embarked upon a long ramble into the heart of nature. His health was not of the best, and a certain amount of exercise between his school duties was necessary. The vacations were chiefly spent at Whittingehame, and here, with his brothers and cousins as companions, the days quickly flew along.

Mr Balfour did not enter into the school games with the same zest as his fellow-scholars owing to his indifferent health, but it is recorded that he often played for his school at football. Walking, however, was his favourite exercise. He does not seem to have gained the same distinction in sports as his fellow scholar, Lord Dalmeny,—his future political opponent. Nor does he appear to have entered with the same enthusiasm



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into the school debates, in which the young Primrose Earl manifested early evidences of oratorical power and debating skill. This abstention was probably due to Mr Balfour's reserved disposition. He followed with great eagerness the discussions which took place, but public speaking was not then quite as familiar to him as it is to-day. Amongst Mr Balfour's comrades at Eton were Sir Henry Maxwell, Sir Herbert Chermside, Colonel Kenyon Slaney, M.P., and Mr George Prothero, the editor of the *Quarterly*.

During part of his stay at Eton Mr Balfour was Lord Lansdowne's fag, and it is said he carried out his duties with the utmost credit. Little did his lordship think that one day his courteous fag would become his courteous chief and that he would serve under him as his Foreign Secretary. As our public men cast their minds back over the past, they must often indulge in a good laugh among themselves over the strange paths their individual lives have trod since they were boys together, serving with filial awe, or being served with the same lamb-like devotion.

Mr Balfour has always taken an interest in the public school of his youth, and watched with pride how, year by year, it has added to its long list of famous sons. In 1898 he attended the complimentary dinner given in honour of Lord Curzon, Lord Minto, and Bishop Weldon, but he refused to make a speech. Lord Rosebery, who presided, would not, however, exempt him altogether.

"We are privileged," he said, "by having amongst us the First Lord of the Treasury, Mr Arthur Balfour, though I am sorry to say he does not show the courage which he is apt to display on other occasions, and therefore he has entirely declined to take any part in the oratorical feast provided for us. But he cannot be



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exempted from the common duty of citizens, and therefore, as he will not speak, I will call upon him to fulfil the humble but necessary task of reading the list of apologies for absence."

When Mr Balfour rose to do his penance he was received with much good-humoured laughter. But if he was unusually reserved on that auspicious occasion, he made some interesting references to school-life in a speech he delivered at Ley's School, Cambridge, on 16th June of the following year. He said: "I do not believe anybody knows what the origin of the public school system in England is, as it is a very remarkable system. It flourishes, so far as I know, nowhere except upon Anglo-Saxon soil, or except among those who speak the English tongue. It owes its birth to no great Minister of Education, nor to the carefully-thought-out schemes of any great religious body such as those religious bodies who have done so much for good or for evil in developing education on the Continent. It would be hard, I think, to say whether the English school system has been made by the masters for the boys, or by the boys for the masters. In truth, it is as natural, and, therefore, as inexplicable, a growth of our English soil as the British constitution itself. For my part, I am a hearty believer in that system. I hold that, while a public school is the product of the English character, the English character has itself owed a great deal to the public school, and the merits of the public school are not to be adequately gauged either by the character of its curriculum or the success, however great, of the scholars whom it turns out. It has merits which nearly touch the character of the future of those never destined to excel in scholarship or any other branch of study, but who, by the character which



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they have formed under the influence of a public school, have gone forth into every clime and to every land, and have done honour to the country which gave them birth."

After spending four years at Eton, with a creditable record behind him, and with the good wishes of his tutor and comrades, Mr Balfour entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1866. He was now eighteen, and fast developing into the first stages of young manhood. He began his new studies full of hope and determination, and by unflagging zeal he gradually secured a strong position in his college.

He threw his whole strength into his work, and this eagerness for knowledge was especially noticeable in his scientific studies. It was during his Cambridge days that the love of research and analytical speculation was first manifested. His philosophical tastes made him an ardent student of science in all its branches, and his brother, Francis Maitland, found in him a helpful companion. Mr Balfour did not carry his scientific studies as far as his brother, but he cultivated a fondness for philosophical subjects, to which he has since devoted much attention, especially during the early part of his public career, when he wrote extensively and laid the foundation of his two great works, "Philosophic Doubt" and "The Foundations of Belief." The study of metaphysics has continued to prove the delight of his leisure hours.

He took his B.A. degree in 1870, with second-class honours in moral science, and his M.A. three years later. Like many other brilliant scholars, Mr Balfour's triumphs were not secured in the examination-room, but won in after years largely through the medium of private study and diligent toil.

In his speech at Ley's School, Cambridge, he referred





*Photo by Hills & Saunders, Eton*

MR BALFOUR AS AN ETON BOY







## SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

to the study of dead languages at universities. He said:

“I hold that, if it were probable, it would not be desirable that the dead languages, Greek and Latin, should be excluded from the place which they have occupied in the higher education of the whole of Europe for centuries past. But I think we have to recognise, and clearly the managers of this school have recognised, that we cannot quite look at education at the end of the nineteenth century with the same eyes that our forefathers looked at it at the period when science did not exist, and when no literature existed — no literature that had to be taken account of existed, except in the two languages, neither of which was a living language. From the nature of things they were driven to it, not merely because those authors are, and must always be, an admirable instrument of education, but because there was in their time literally no other field of human knowledge or of human research to which they could turn for subjects in which the youth of their age might be adequately educated. We live, and we happily live, in a very different period, and if it be true, as I think it is, that the classical languages still form most convenient instruments of education, let us be careful—let us who hold that view be careful that we do not put it on excessive grounds—that we do not press our case too far, and that in the face of many who think that the whole ancient scheme of education should be revolutionised, we do not give ourselves away by claiming for the classical system things which, after all, the classical system cannot give us. I hold, and I think almost everybody who has studied the question holds, that all education which is not in part, and in considerable part, a literary education, is



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necessarily maimed and one-sided—an education, that is to say, which does not make the person educated at home in some great imaginative literature, and which does not put him in sympathy with the great literary artists and the great thinkers of the past, and perhaps a very different epoch, is an education which must leave undeveloped some of the finer sympathies, some of the more valuable qualities, which education ought to develop. But let us be quite honest with ourselves. This literary education can only be really profited by fully, in those cases where the student is really at home in the language which embodies the literature which he is studying; and unless the headmaster and his colleagues are much more fortunate than those unhappy beings who had to educate me and my contemporaries, there must be, and I am sure there is, a very large portion of those who go through a classical training who do not gain that familiarity either with Greek or with Latin which surely is absolutely necessary if the real literary and imaginative qualities of those two great literatures are to be thoroughly assimilated and absorbed by the student.”

He went on to say that there should be no enmity between literature and science, as the study of both could be pursued at the same time. Mr Balfour's own career is a most eloquent proof of this view.

Mr F. St John Thackray, referring to a visit he paid to Cambridge in 1869, says: “Mr Balfour's rooms were evidently those of a student and a man of culture. The latest publications of note, and the best books on philosophy and history, were on the shelves of his study. An air of refinement and literature seemed to pervade his collegiate surroundings.”

Lady Blanche Balfour took the deepest interest in



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the studies of her sons, and during the vacations gave them valued encouragement and help, and took every precaution that they should not be disturbed.

Mr Balfour spent part of one vacation with some college friends on a canoeing trip amongst the Hebrides, and, as the expedition was enlivened by many exciting adventures, it was greatly enjoyed.

While staying at Whittingehame the young laird took a keen interest in the welfare and recreations of the tenants and villagers, and entered with great heartiness into their sports and social gatherings. In response to an invitation, he provided a literary evening during the winter session of 1868, and his first appearance in the capacity of a lecturer proved an unqualified success. With singular clearness he read passages from Robertson's "History of the Discovery of America," Tennyson's "May Queen," Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," a chapter from "Pickwick Papers," and Macaulay's description of "The Siege of Londonderry." Each reading was introduced with a few sentences of explanation.

The heir of Whittingehame came of age on 25th July 1869. The event was celebrated with great rejoicing for many miles around, as the young laird had rapidly won for himself a widespread popularity. Mr Balfour entertained the tenantry and a number of private friends to dinner. On his right and left were his two uncles, the Marquis of Salisbury and Mr Charles Balfour of Newton.

An elaborate menu had been provided by a French chef, and two double magnums of claret, presented by a relative at the birth of the young heir, were opened and drunk. The Rev. James Robertson, who responded for the Clergy, expressed his gratification that Mr Balfour was a member of the Church of Scotland. He



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referred to the young laird's intellectual abilities and moral qualities, which, he said, were full of promise for his future career. The toast of the evening, "Health, long life, and happiness to Mr Arthur Balfour," was proposed by Mr Harvey, a farmer on the estate, who, in a short speech which admirably reflected the esteem in which the young landlord was held by his tenants, said: "He is now in full possession of his large and beautiful property, not only in the Lowlands, but also in the Highlands, and I have every confidence that he will prove himself worthy of such a high position like his late lamented father, who was most popular in this county as a considerate landlord and as an intelligent and useful country gentleman. I can conceive no greater compliment that any gentleman can receive, than to know that he is honoured and respected by those amongst whom he resides. This is Mr Balfour's happy position at the present time, and I have no doubt it will increase as the years move on."

Mr Balfour made a brief speech by which he strengthened the bond of cordiality existing between himself and his tenantry. "It is needless for me to say that I feel deeply the importance of this occasion. Many of the gentlemen here present I have met this evening for the first time, but I hope our intercourse will be continued. Mr Harvey has referred to my lamented father. No one can be more conscious than I am of the truth of all that has been said regarding him, well knowing as I do that I could have no nobler example to follow. I trust that, to some extent at any rate, I may be able to do so, and that I may ever merit the respect of my tenantry and of all connected with Whittingehame."

The health of Lady Blanche Balfour was proposed by Mr Robertson, and responded to by her son in grace-



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ful terms. It was left for Lord Salisbury to make the humorous speech of the evening. He likened his young nephew to a sovereign who had just entered into his kingdom, and himself to a monarch who had been dethroned from his trustee-ship. "It is a source of the greatest gratification and comfort to me," proceeded the Marquis, "that he into whose hands the property has passed is fully able to take charge of it himself, able from his high intellectual powers to see and appreciate his responsibilities, and from his good sense and judgment to meet them. Mr Robertson has observed that the clergy have to speak so much on Sundays that very little ought to be expected from them on week-days. How much more might I claim exemption who am obliged to speak almost every day in Parliament and to be spoken at, which is a great deal more trying." Afterwards, in proposing the toast of "The Agricultural Interests," Lord Salisbury jokingly remarked that he was entirely ignorant of practical agriculture and was hardly able to distinguish a turnip from a cow.

The banquet proved a great success, and the unanimous opinion afterwards expressed was that the young host had acquitted himself with manliness and self-possession, and a readiness of speech, which were full of promise for the future.

The festivities were continued with great heartiness until late in the evening, when huge bonfires were lighted on the hills. The following day was also given up to rejoicing.

Mr Balfour entertained the tenantry on the Strathconan estate in Ross-shire a few weeks later. He met with a very hearty reception, the references at the dinner to his mother and himself being of a cordial nature, and truly appreciative of the improvements that had recently been effected.



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The young laird entered upon his enlarged responsibilities under the most favourable auspices. His first work was to make a thorough survey of the estate to see where improvements were needed. The scheme he decided upon comprised the erection of several new cottages, the overhauling of others, and the renewal of leases. A number of alterations were also made at Whittingehame House, and a broad terrace and a flight of steps were added to the south-west front.

With the advent into his full rights, Mr Balfour began to take a more prominent part in the public life of the district. Amongst his early speeches at this period was one he delivered in his capacity of President of the Whittingehame Curling Club in February of the following year.

He congratulated the winners of Lord Elcho's Challenge Cup, and in reply to a vote of thanks, said: "The chairman has uttered too many kind things regarding me, but permit me to say, that while I am prepared to accept the rights of property, I am also resolved, as far as I am able, to discharge the duties as well. I have been taught to look upon the interests of landlord and tenant as identical, believing that what is loss to the one cannot be gain to the other. Their interests ought to go hand-in-hand together, the one developing to the utmost by scientific skill and other appliances the full resources of the land, and the other getting in return a fair value for the raw material which he puts into the hands of the farmers to be operated upon."

Addressing the East Lothian Agricultural Society two years later, in December 1872, he touched upon a few of the social questions of the hour, and made some outspoken comments on the disastrous effect of strikes on the trade of the country.



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“In all trades and industries in England,” he said, “strikes have become the fashion. Some people seem to regard them with a tolerance which almost amounts to approval. I cannot so regard them. Some people calling themselves friends of the working-classes speak of strikes as if they were the means of permanently raising the value of labour above its competitive price. I am persuaded that whether or not it be a good thing that competition should settle the value of labour, that settle it competition ultimately must, whatever machinery may be devised to prevent it; and surely a more costly and barbarous method of settling what is the competitive value of labour than strikes was never contrived by human ingenuity? This shaking of the whole commercial fabric, in order to find what is the stable equilibrium, seems to be as barbarous a mode of settling trade disputes, as trial by single combat used to be of settling family quarrels. It is as barbarous as it ought to be antiquated. For my part I regard this question with the utmost seriousness. It seems to me, that, considering the suffering and hardships inflicted on the families of working-men, the annoyance given to employers of labour, the ill-feeling which is excited between men of all classes—considering these evils only according to what they cost in pounds, shillings, and pence—strikes are about the most expensive luxury which a nation can possibly indulge in.”

Mr Balfour suffered an irreparable loss in the early part of 1872 by the death of his mother. She passed away on May 16, at the age of forty-seven, after a prolonged illness borne with heroic fortitude. Her end was a peaceful one. She fell into a quiet sleep, and her spirit took its flight in the midst of a beautiful stillness. Her death took place in London, but



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she was buried in Whittingehame Churchyard, and at her request the funeral was of an unostentatious character.

Among the small company of mourners was Lord Salisbury, her favourite brother, on whose support and advice she had relied since the death of her husband. A plain cross of red granite was placed over her grave, and on it was inscribed the appropriate text: "Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord." The grave is encircled by stately beech-trees, whose protection forms a beautiful resting-place for a beautiful life.

The Rev. James Robertson, in his little book, "Lady Blanche Balfour: A Reminiscence," says, "She had in very remarkable union the two opposite qualities of force and tenderness. She had a courage and resolution, and an intellectual vigour, which belong to few men, but it was nevertheless in tenderness and womanliness that she was richest. Cultivated as she was, it was her wealth of nature that was most eminent, and this was joined to Christian devotion and self-control. Her mind was at once most ideal and most practical. There was something in her manner which had a powerful influence, even upon those who only spoke with her for a little."

The loss of such a wise and devoted mother was keenly felt by Mr Balfour, and the memory of her beautiful life, with its manifold kindnesses and noble example, will ever remain his most cherished possession.



## CHAPTER III

### MEMBER FOR HERTFORD

MR BALFOUR was elected Member of Parliament for the Borough of Hertford on 30th January, at the General Election of 1874, which returned a large Conservative majority, and placed Lord Beaconsfield in power as Prime Minister for the second time.

Mr Balfour's candidature was unopposed, for the very good reason that the Borough was largely under the influence of the powerful Cecil family, and it would have been hopeless for any Opposition candidate to have expected success. The only feature of interest connected with the election was that it happened to be the earliest one held in the country, and consequently Mr Balfour had the distinction of being the first member elected to the new Parliament.

It would be difficult to state exactly the reasons that prompted Mr Balfour to submit himself as a candidate for Parliament. From his subsequent career, it may be safely assumed that he was not actuated either by personal ambition or by any burning interest in political affairs. In all probability it was simply owing to the desire of his uncle, Lord Salisbury, that the Borough of Hertford, as a preserve of the Cecils, should be represented by a member of the family, and also because Lord Salisbury was anxious to interest his nephew in the world of politics.



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Mr Balfour was at this time, as he has continued ever since to be, a great favourite with his distinguished uncle, who regarded his election to Parliament with feelings of intense pride and satisfaction. In presiding at a complimentary banquet to Mr Balfour held at Hertford, he publicly expressed in tones of emotion evincing his personal affections for the new member, his deep gratification at the fact that his nephew had entered upon a Parliamentary career.

Mr Balfour, in his speech on the same occasion, heartily thanked his supporters, and in the course of his remarks said that some of his friends had expressed much regret that no opposition had been made to his election, because if his return had been opposed they would have had an opportunity of demonstrating the overwhelming strength of the Conservative party in the Borough of Hertford. He, Mr Balfour, did not entirely endorse that view, because he was not sure that contested elections were always attended with good results to the community at large. Such contests often did more harm than good, for they frequently engendered a bitterness of feeling which previously did not exist, and separated friends who had before been perfectly united. "I believe this election," he concluded, "is the first towards the formation of the new Parliament, and I am the only member of Parliament now existing. Finally, I may express the hope that the good example which has been set by this Borough may speedily be followed by the country, and that in this way the contest with our opponents may come to a happy end." This speech indicates the genial, affable spirit in which he then regarded political affairs.

The town meeting, at which the election took place,



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was presided over by the Mayor, and Mr Balfour was proposed by Mr Samuel Neal, and seconded by Mr Adams, ex-Mayor. The official record reads as follows:—"I, William Baker, Mayor and Returning Officer of the Borough of Hertford, do hereby give notice that Arthur James Balfour, Esquire, of No. 4 Carlton Gardens, in the County of Middlesex, was this day duly elected to serve in Parliament for the said Borough. Dated January 30th, 1874."

Mr Balfour promptly demonstrated that he considered his Parliamentary duties were not of supreme importance. In the year following his election, he started on a tour round the world, embarking at Liverpool for New York, and proceeding from there to Montreal. He then travelled by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Salt Lake City, and on to San Francisco, calling at several of the towns on his way. From San Francisco he journeyed by steamer to the Sandwich Islands and New Zealand, returning home *via* Melbourne, Sydney, Ceylon, Aden, and Alexandria. This trip, with its varied experiences, must have done much to broaden his sympathies and widen his horizon of thought.

It is illustrative of his kindly relations with his tenantry, that on his return home he gave a delightful lecture on his tour to the villagers of Whittingehame in the Parish Church; and no doubt he considerably astonished his rustic audience by his vivid descriptions of the magnificent scenery and interesting experiences through which he had passed.

In Parliament, Mr Balfour for a long time gave no evidence whatever of any promise as a politician. On the contrary, he created an impression that he was almost devoid of interest in political affairs. He had the reputation of being a languid young aristocrat, who was without any particular ambition, and who



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was incapable of the sustained effort, the resolute determination, and, above all, the polite audacity that are indispensable to parliamentary success.

For two years after his entrance to Parliament, he remained silent; but, at length, in the third session of the 1876 Parliament he ventured on his "maiden speech." The speech was a "maiden" one in more respects than one, for the young orator blushed and hesitated with engaging shyness at finding himself the object of that curious attention with which the House of Commons always regards the first appearance of a near relative of a distinguished statesman. Despite his shyness, however, he passed through the ordeal without the occurrence of any untoward incident, and the House of Commons, as in the case of Mr Gladstone and many other eminent parliamentarians, never thought for one moment that it had just been addressed by one who was destined to become one of its most distinguished leaders.

The subject of his speech, the value of silver, was not one that excited much interest, and his remarks were unnoticed by the subsequent speakers in the discussion. It is curious that his "maiden" effort should have been concerned with a question, of which his devoted championship in later years was to be the cause of no slight irritation among his political followers.

From the first, Mr Balfour appeared as a stout supporter of the theory of Bi-metallism, and although the unpopularity of his views has increased rather than diminished, he has never abated one jot his attitude towards the question, nor has he at any time shirked discussion upon it.

In the course of his speech, Mr Balfour said it was impossible to form an estimate of the value of silver



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in the immediate future, because that value depended upon the demand and the supply. He then proceeded to give an approximate estimate of the probable demand, and warned the Government against the danger of being hurried by any pressure from India into any wild and extravagant schemes for remedying the evil to which they were now subjected. He condemned as unsound and impracticable the scheme proposed by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, and asserted that all attempts to raise the price of the rupee by artificial means would end in failure. In conclusion, he thanked the House for listening attentively to his remarks on so technical a branch of the subject.

His next intervention in debate was about nine months later, on May 17th, in connection with the Universities Bill. He evinced great interest in this measure, and his broad and enlightened views on the subject contrast sharply with the narrow and bigoted opinions that were expressed by various members in the course of the discussions. He had observed, he said, that the sphere of usefulness for women as educators was being largely extended, and he considered it a matter of high importance that the privileges given to men should be extended to women. Mr Balfour's uncle, Mr Beresford Hope, in commenting on the speech, humorously inquired whether the Member for Hertford was desirous of establishing as a new degree the title of "Spinster of Arts."

On June 7th, Mr Balfour was again discussing the status of women, but on this occasion as an opponent of a measure purporting to extend to them the Parliamentary franchise. He said there was no great demand for such a revolutionary change, and where woman suffrage had been adopted, it had not been an unqualified success. Political elections at that time were



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frequently the scenes of extreme rowdyism, and Mr Balfour asked how many women would go to the poll when passions ran high. Only a few, he thought, whose political ardour was so great as to induce them to brave dangers from which many men shrank. And as the boldest women, he continued, were not always the best, much of that bitter feeling which was created at elections among friends and neighbours who took different sides in the contest, would be sure to find its way into the home, and give rise to unseemly discord between husband and wife. He urged, further, that the subjects with which women especially liked to busy themselves were those that appealed to sentiment in opposition to the dictates of judgment and common-sense, and this fact rendered them unsuitable to deal with political affairs.

Mr Balfour made his first attempt at legislation in connection with a rather forbidding subject. In 1878 he brought forward a bill to amend the Burial Laws. Just previously, he had described himself as "a Tory of the old school," but this designation could hardly be accounted correct, for he was sympathetically inclined to progressive ideas, and in regard to both the Universities Bill and his proposals to amend the Burial Laws, he showed a fair and open mind free from prejudice. In fact, it was from the ordinary "Tories of the old school" that there proceeded the severest criticism of his proposals.

Mr Balfour, having carefully studied his subject, was convinced that the Nonconformists had a substantial grievance, in that they were compelled to bury their dead under a funeral service to important details of which they entertained profound conscientious objections. He boldly asserted that the position of the Church of England in this matter was



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an arrogant one, and he held that it would be to her own interests, as well as to the interests of Non-conformists, to have any injustices removed. He warned the Church that persistence in an intolerant attitude on this question would alienate from her the sympathies of a large number of moderate men, both inside and outside her communion, and if ever that happened the days of her establishment would be numbered.

The *Times* strongly supported Mr Balfour, although it did not consider the provisions in his Bill sufficiently drastic. The opposition came chiefly from the Conservative journals, and from members of his own party, especially from his brilliant relative, Mr Beresford Hope, who said that the Bill was entirely unacceptable to the clergy of the Church of England, and ridiculed his nephew's interest in the subject.

This was a very unusual attitude for Mr Beresford Hope to assume towards Mr Balfour. His affection for his nephew was well-known, and despite all discouraging signs he entertained a very high opinion of his Parliamentary abilities, and confidently predicted that Mr Balfour would advance to a high position in the councils of the nation. Mr Lucy, in his Parliamentary Diary, writes of the relations of the two men as follows: "It is a pity Mr Beresford Hope did not live to see the marvellous development of the genius and capacity in which he was a fervid and, as to its full extent, a solitary believer. When Mr Balfour was a somewhat unconsidered follower of Lord Randolph Churchill—the odd man of the Fourth Party—there was a certain pathos in the admiration with which his veteran uncle listened to his rare interpositions in debate. In the slim, tall youth, with his pleasant voice, his pleasant manner, and his picturesque appearance,



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the Member for Cambridge University, seemed to see the inchoate form of that Batavian grace of which he himself in his prime was accepted as the embodiment."

At this period, during the year 1878, England was consumed with interest in what is known as the "Eastern Question." The mutual suspicions of the Great Powers regarding each other's designs on the Turkish Empire had developed a situation full of menace to the peace of Europe. Fortunately, it was found possible to arrange a great international council at Berlin, which negotiated the famous "Peace with Honour" Berlin Treaty of 1878.

Mr Balfour accompanied the British mission to Berlin in the capacity of private secretary to Lord Salisbury. The experience he gained during his stay in the German capital was of incalculable value to Mr Balfour in arousing and stimulating his ambition, and in invigorating his somewhat languid nature. He was brought into contact with the most brilliant statesmen of the day, and had special facilities for observing the qualities that were the secrets of their greatness. In such circumstances, it would have been remarkable had he not been powerfully influenced by his visit. Under Lord Salisbury's guidance he had ample opportunities for using his quick intelligence for the fullest benefit of his character.

During the whole of the stay of the plenipotentiaries, Berlin was *en fête*. The distinguished visitors and their *attachés* were inundated with invitations to the numerous festivities arranged in their honour. For many of those who had more leisure than responsibility, the visit was one unbroken round of gaiety. What duties Mr Balfour had to perform, however, he executed promptly and efficiently, and



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his ability and demeanour attracted the attention of Lord Beaconsfield, who referred to him as one of the most promising embryo politicians of the day.

We are not concerned here with the result of that momentous gathering at Berlin, nor with the splendour and pomp which attended it. Suffice to say, that on their return, the members of the British mission were received with remarkable demonstrations of enthusiasm. Both Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury were honoured with the freedom of London, and throughout the country they were regarded with feelings of intense gratitude, and enjoyed an immense popularity.

But their period of triumph was destined to be of short duration. The Liberal Party was closing its ranks, it was led by men of great energy and ability, and, above all, it was associating itself with the aspirations of the great masses of the electorate. Before long, Mr Gladstone returned to public life, and strained to the utmost his matchless powers of platform oratory in his first Mid-Lothian campaign.

The dissolution was announced in the spring of 1880, and as a result of the General Election that followed, the Liberal Party came into power with a sweeping majority. There was some hesitation in the selection of the new Prime Minister. First one and then another of the nominal leaders of Liberalism were consulted by Queen Victoria, but eventually Her Majesty sent for Mr Gladstone, who had been the inspiration of his party during the struggle, and to whom more than to anyone else was due the victory that had been gained.

During the elections, the Liberal party was everywhere aggressive and enthusiastic, eager to try its strength on the most invulnerable of Tory strongholds, and even the Cecil Borough of Hertford was not exempted from attack.



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Mr Balfour's opponent, Mr E. E. Bowen, a brother of the famous Lord Bowen, and a distinguished Harrow Master, was the best type of candidate the Liberal executive could have secured. He rivalled Mr Balfour in his appeal to the cultured classes, and on the platform he was easily the equal if not the superior of his opponent.

With two such combatants the contest proved almost a model one. Though there was no lack of good-humoured banter and keen witty retort, as was to be expected from two such clever dialecticians, the controversy between them was maintained on a high plane. The greatest mutual courtesy was displayed, and the shady tactics common at elections were conspicuous by their absence.

Mr Bowen made a spirited fight, and as the polling day drew near, it became evident by the popularity of his meetings that the result would not be so one-sided as was at one time expected. On the other hand, Mr Balfour had the whole support of the powerful Cecil interest; and more than this, his winning personal charm had made him a popular and even beloved representative with his constituents.

The electorate at Hertford was a very small one, and only 964 votes were polled, 564 being given to Mr Balfour, and 400 to Mr Bowen, leaving the sitting member with a majority of 164 votes. The margin in Mr Balfour's favour was small enough in ordinary circumstances, but when the fact was taken into account that it represented almost exactly the number of houses owned in the Borough by Lord Salisbury, it was scarcely a victory of a very gratifying character, and no doubt it was far from satisfactory to the successful candidate.

During the last Parliament, Mr Balfour had made scarcely any impression on the House of Commons, and



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what little notice that assembly had taken of him confirmed its opinion that he was but an indolent young aristocrat, who attended Parliament occasionally for a change in his recreations, but who was not at all absorbed in its proceedings, and was untroubled with any profound political convictions.

It was not until he joined the Fourth Party that Mr Balfour showed any semblance of real interest in political affairs. The Parliamentary chronicler we have quoted before, who was certainly not an unfriendly critic of Mr Balfour, refers to him at this time in the following terms:—"Whilst yet unattached, Mr Balfour was always a pretty speaker, with a neat turn for saying nasty things. But as he sprawled on the bench below the gangway, he was taken for a Parliamentary *dilettante*, a trifler with debate, anxious chiefly, in some leisure moments, to practise the paces learned in the hall of the Union at Cambridge."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FOURTH PARTY

It is indicative of Mr Balfour's curiously-complex character that he should ever have joined himself to such stormy petrels as the members of the historic Fourth Party. Of a quiet, retiring disposition, with a positive aversion to publicity, he had, nevertheless, the spirit of the genuine fighter, and it was the brilliant combative qualities of Lord Randolph Churchill that attracted the Member for Hertford to his side.

When Mr Balfour joined it, the Fourth Party consisted of Lord Randolph Churchill and his two lieutenants, Sir H. Drummond Wolff, and Mr (now Sir) John Gorst. This little group was then in the first flush of its unmistakable power, and it had already impressed itself as a factor to be reckoned with in Parliamentary life.

The Tory Opposition, under the mild and forbearing leadership of Sir Stafford Northcote, had become dispirited and disorganised, and its leaders seemed incapable of bearing up against the onslaughts of the Ministerialists, who were favoured with an exceptionally strong array of powerful speakers, under the leadership of Mr Gladstone, who was then in the zenith of his unrivalled powers as a Parliamentary debater. Had it not been for the spirited action of



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Lord Randolph's quartette, ministers would have experienced little resistance.

In the absence of effective opposition from the proper quarter, the members of this gallant little band took upon themselves the congenial task of supervising the policy of the Government. Every act of the Ministry was keenly examined and mercilessly criticised, and any change of policy or apparent vacillation of action, especially in Foreign affairs, was immediately brought before the House and pitilessly condemned.

These four dauntless fighters pursued Ministers with a relentless vigilance and a dogged industry that compelled admiration. No trouble was too great, no work was too hard, if it supplied them with material for denouncing the Government and impeaching Mr Gladstone. Nor did their own apathetic leaders escape censure. Not infrequently the full flood of their biting invective was turned on Sir Stafford Northcote and his colleagues, who were taunted for their inactivity and lack of spirit. It was the supreme delight of Mr Beresford Hope to watch Mr Balfour sneering at his own leaders and speaking disrespectfully of Mr Gladstone.

The Member for Hertford, however, took only a slight part in the guerilla warfare that was carried on incessantly by his more enthusiastic and energetic colleagues. When there was a prospect of a big raid he could be depended upon to put in an appearance, but for the hard work of daily sniping, and the dry drudgery of preparing for it, he had very small liking. To Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Wolff, and Mr Gorst, the harassing of the Government was the only thing worth living for. Blue-books were ransacked, and old speeches looked up, to prove the inconsistency and folly of the



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Ministerial policy. Such spade-work, however, was not to the taste of the desultory political nature of Mr Balfour, who was summed up by the House as "clever but hopelessly lazy."

In one quality, however, he fully equalled his colleagues, and that was in the courage with which he attacked the most powerful members of the Ministry, and the unflinching spirit in which he endured their replies. He was frequently complimented on his courage by Mr Gladstone, who from the first took special notice of his speeches, and never failed to give him a word of praise and encouragement. On one occasion the venerable statesman said: "I was surprised in listening to my honourable friend, who is a man of great ability, and may look to obtain further distinction in the councils of the Empire, to find his experience of the world has not taught him how much wickedness there is in it, and the craft with which that wickedness is conducted."

Mr Balfour spread his attention over a variety of subjects, but he more particularly interested himself in Foreign Affairs (stimulated thereto, doubtless, by his visit to Berlin) and in Irish questions, concentrating his criticism, as indeed did all the Opposition, principally on Mr Gladstone, who seemed to draw upon himself like a magnet the almost undivided attention of his adversaries.

In regard to Home Affairs the Member for Hertford took the ordinary Conservative views, and showed some distrust of the democracy, and a lack of faith in the judgment of the people. In respect to Foreign questions, he severely censured the whole Egyptian policy of the Government as vacillating and lacking in firmness.

On 16th February and 12th May 1884, he moved votes of censure on the Government for not sending earlier an expedition to relieve General Gordon. On both



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occasions he made excellent speeches, full of the most trenchant and incisive criticism. The *Times*, in a leading article, commented on the first one as follows:—"Mr Balfour criticised the Government with much vigour, and expounded the views of the Opposition with a force that was sadly lacking in the opening speech of his leader."

His speeches were distinguished by a certain pungent sarcasm, and in a speech on the Eastern Question on 22nd May 1880, he said, referring to Mr Gladstone's Mid-Lothian campaign, that he quite admitted the Premier had taught them that the statements he made while an irresponsible candidate were not to be taken too literally when he came into office. Mr Gladstone, in his reply, asked for details of Mr Balfour's accusation, and on receiving a rather vague answer, said: "I shall be glad if, when he charges me with making attacks on anybody, my honourable friend will accurately specify those attacks." There was a sharp difference of opinion between the two men regarding the Government's Foreign policy, and, on one occasion, Mr Gladstone remarked that there was scarcely a single word in the speech of the Member for Hertford with which he could agree.

One of Mr Balfour's most interesting speeches at this time was made in the course of a debate on a Bill dealing with corrupt practices at Parliamentary elections. "All sympathised," he said, "with the desire to make elections cheaper, so that many who could not afford to do so might enter Parliament, for it was a melancholy reflection how many persons there were in the country anxious to spend their time for the benefit of the public, and able to distinguish themselves in that House, who were prevented from doing so solely by lack of means. Although the occupation was neither



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pleasurable nor easy, the position was so keenly sought after that many would give thousands of pounds to obtain it." In the same speech he referred to the electorate as, "what the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (John Bright) called the 'residuum' when he differed from them, and the 'people' when he agreed with them."

Some light was thrown on the relations understood to exist between the members of the Fourth Party by an incident which occurred during a discussion on the Malt Tax on 19th July 1880. Mr Balfour had objected to a reduction of a penny on the Malt Tax because it would cause an increase of a penny in the Income Tax, and would reduce the price of beer; and Lord Randolph Churchill, following him in the debate, said he would not have spoken but for the remarks of his honourable friend, who appeared to think that the remission of the Malt Tax was not needed in the interests of the agricultural population. That opinion was not shared by those who sat near his honourable friend, and who acted together more or less independently.

As time went on, the tactics of the Fourth Party became more and more audacious, and Mr Balfour's interest in his Parliamentary duties rapidly increased. On 21st August 1880 he was selected to move a vote of censure on the Government on the ground of their mismanagement of Parliamentary business. Mr Lucy comments on the choice of Mr Balfour "as a stroke of genius which goes some way to relieve the Fourth Party from a conviction rather growing in the House this week, that they are becoming a trifle dull."

Mr Balfour said that the Government might attempt to excuse themselves by alleging obstruction and loquacity on the part of the Opposition, but it was the long speeches of the Ministerialists, and not those



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of members on his side of the House, that had constituted undue opposition. The House, he asserted, was unfit to proceed with important business, it was thinly attended and utterly tired. ("No, no," from the Ministerialists). "Honourable members opposite may not be tired," he retorted, "but I am." The Marquis of Hartington in reply traversed Mr Balfour's statements, and said that six members of the Opposition had made no less than 407 speeches in that short session of three months, and out of that number, 247 had been made by three members of the Fourth Party, Mr Gorst contributing 105, Sir Henry Wolff 68, and Lord Randolph Churchill 74.

On most occasions, however, when the Fourth Party was attacked, it managed to effectively dispose of its critics. In July 1882 Sir Henry Wolff had complained that the Government did not give the Fourth Party opportunities to discuss the subjects they desired to bring before Parliament. To this Mr Goschen replied that "the reason for their inability to find the opportunity they desired was this, that, whether they had the sanction of their party or not, whether they had the sanction of their leaders or not, whether it was for the interests of the country or not, they had tried in season and out of season to force on discussions for which the House was not prepared. Their policy was a policy of attack by means of insinuating questions, and was most detrimental to the interests of the country." Mr Balfour rather caustically retorted "that no one acted more independently of his leaders than Mr Goschen, for so far as he had succeeded in making himself prominent in this session of Parliament, it was as the leader of a small knot of members who acted independently of their leaders."

On another occasion the tactics of this irrepres-



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sible group excited the severe condemnation of Mr Gladstone, who, in reply to some observations of Mr Balfour, said "it would be time to criticise when the papers on the subject had been laid before the House, but it seemed that information was not needed by gentlemen like the Member for Hertford, who were spurred on simply by animosity to the Government to condemn anything and everything."

On 10th July 1884, Mr Balfour came into conflict with Sir William Harcourt on some remarks of the latter reflecting on the "Fourth Party." "From the somewhat pompous and inflammatory style of the right honourable gentleman," he said, "I think he must have forgotten he was addressing this House, and have thought that he was already engaged in that campaign against the Tory Party and the House of Lords to which he is looking forward with such satisfaction"; and, referring to Sir William's taunts of obstruction, he remarked that it would be "easy to quote instances from the right honourable gentleman's career of very gross obstruction, and similar instances might readily be cited from the career of the right honourable gentleman (Mr Chamberlain) who sat next to him."

During this Parliament, Mr Balfour frequently intervened in the Irish debates, taking up the attitude which he afterwards adopted as Irish Secretary. He condemned the Land Law (Ireland) Bill of 1881, as calculated to lead the Irish people to believe that legislation was produced by agitation, and because the Bill was saturated with Socialism. In criticising the Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill of 1882, he asserted that it would perpetuate the evils arising from the increase in the poorest class of the population, and he described the Bill as legislation extracted by blackmail, and as a weak surrender to violence and intimidation. Two



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days later, he was again denouncing the Government for the lack of thoroughness displayed in the provisions of its Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill, and said that the Bill did not give sufficient powers to prevent the fomenting of agitation by secret societies.

His most trenchant and effective criticism of the Government's Irish policy, and one that caused a break in his friendly relations with Mr Gladstone, was made on 15th May 1882, on the occasion of the release of the Irish members from Kilmainham gaol. The speech made a great impression on the House of Commons, arousing the enthusiasm of the Conservatives by its vigour, its courage, and the directness of its charges, and it immensely lifted Mr Balfour in the estimation of his party as a Parliamentary speaker. "The Government and the Prime Minister," he said, "persisted in reiterating the assertion that there had been no treaty or agreement. It appeared to him that this was very much a matter of words. In a comedy of Molière's, the hero declares that he had not sold his goods, but only given them to a friend, who, in exchange, had given him some money. There was no sale; there had simply been an exchange of gifts. In the same way, the Government had not, indeed, entered into a compact with the honourable gentlemen behind them (Irish members); they had only given those honourable gentlemen something they very much desired, and the honourable gentlemen, on their part, had given the Government something they very much desired. Each party before the transaction took place knew perfectly well what they were going to give and what they were going to receive. The Government were going to give honourable gentlemen their liberty, and a Bill with regard to arrears; the honourable gentlemen were going to give the Government



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peace in Ireland and support in Parliament. This, he believed, was the cause of Mr Forster's resignation, because, though Parliamentary support and temporary peace in Ireland would be gained, the honourable gentlemen would, by asking the organisation which produced the outrages to stop them, be weakening the powers of this Government and every successive Government by dealing with Irish disloyalty and Irish disaffection. He did not think that any such transaction could be quoted from the annals of our political or Parliamentary history. It stood alone—he did not wish to use strong language, but he was going to say—it stood alone in its infamy. He believed that the executive Government of this country had been degraded by treating on equal terms with men whose guilt they so fervently believed in, that they felt themselves justified in imprisoning them for months without trial, by negotiating with men who they had asserted in the past were steeped to the lips in treason, by negotiating with men who had used their organisation for illegal purposes, and to prevent men doing not only what they had a right but what they were in duty bound to do. They had negotiated with Treason; they had carried on the negotiations in secret; and the particulars had only been revealed by what he might call Parliamentary accident; and, almost worst of all, it appeared that one of the things which the Government had, in their own words, reasonable grounds for believing they would obtain by letting out of prison the men they had put in, who would give no pledge for their future conduct—one of the things the Government expected to gain was their Parliamentary support.”

This piece of vigorous plain speaking, with its stinging



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accusations, sent home by ringing cheers from the Opposition benches, roused to a high pitch the enthusiasm of the Conservative party, and provoked the Ministerialists to demonstrations of strong disapproval.

Mr Gladstone rose immediately to reply, and his tones of passionate indignation showed that the incisive speech of the Member for Hertford had cut him to the quick. "I cannot help congratulating the honourable gentleman," he began, "on the height to which he has at length wound up his Parliamentary courage," and in cutting manner he satirised Mr Balfour's "witty and recondite reference to Molière." "The honourable Member," he continued, "says that there was a substantial compact between the Government and the honourable Member for Cork, and he has not the slightest hesitation in flatly giving the lie to a body of gentlemen who were as entitled to be believed as he was, and who, having grown grey in the service of their country, feel it but a slight matter as far as their character or reputation is concerned, that these rash accusations, should be hurled upon them from such a quarter. I say, sir, that the honourable Member for Cork, so far as the Government knows, never knew he was to be released until he was released, and I defy the honourable Member for Hertford to bring a shred of evidence to disprove what I say. . . . My first statement, then, is that the Member for Hertford is bound, after making these charges, to go through with them. He declares that the honourable Member for Cork knew that the Government was going to release him. I call upon him to prove it. I deny it. . . . The honourable gentleman says we knew there was to be peace in Ireland brought about through the Member for Cork. Sir, I would to God I had known it. . . I set a value upon peace in Ireland very different from that which is set



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upon it by the Member for Hertford, who seems to treat all expectations relating to it as simply matter to be used in making out a charge of guilt against his adversaries. . . . The honourable Member has come out into the field, and he has been cheered by the late Home Secretary. Let him remain in the position he has assumed. Let him prove his charges, or else with honour let him abandon and express his regret for them. . . . I ask the honourable gentleman whether it is desirable that charges of this kind should be made and not be sustained. I say this in conclusion, that if they are so made, and are not sustained, they are disgraceful to those only who make them."

It is pleasant to record that the coolness caused by this debate between Mr Gladstone and Mr Balfour was of short duration, and not long afterwards their normal relations of warm friendship and mutual affection were resumed.

As he came more prominently before the House, Mr Balfour, by his engaging charm of manner, became very popular with all sections. At the beginning of the session, Mr Lucy wrote of him "as one of the most interesting young men in the House. He is not a good speaker, but he is endowed with the rich gift of conveying the impression that presently he will be a successful Parliamentary debater, and that in the meantime it is well that he should practise. He is a pleasing specimen of that highest form of culture and good-breeding which stands to the credit of Cambridge University. He is not without desire to say hard things of the adversary opposite, and sometimes yields to the temptation. But it is ever done with such sweet and gentle grace, and is smoothed over by such earnest protestations of innocent intention, that the adversary rather likes it than otherwise."



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Sir William Harcourt, with whom he was in constant conflict, and whose political views were about as antagonistic to Mr Balfour's as they possibly could be, said, in the course of a reference to him, that "the honourable Member for Hertford always seems to be actuated by the best motives. His great object seems to be to facilitate the business of the House. This belongs to the general amiability of his nature, and I give him credit for sincerity."

During Lord Randolph Churchill's absence in India in the Spring of 1885, the activity of the Fourth Party slackened considerably, and its division from the regular adherents of the Conservative Party became less sharply defined. Its members gradually merged themselves into the forces of the official Opposition, and Mr Balfour in particular showed a disinclination to persist in acting in a too isolated and independent manner.

It may be suitable at this point to consider the influence exercised on Mr Balfour by his association with Lord Randolph Churchill. There can scarcely be any question that it was a fortunate impulse that led Mr Balfour to identify himself with the Fourth Party. By so doing he immediately gained a certain prominence in the House, which it is possible, with his reserved manner and retiring disposition, he might not otherwise have attained; and it is certain also that his close contact with Lord Randolph Churchill's forceful personality stimulated enormously his interest in politics, and awakened within him aspirations and ambitions that had hitherto been dormant.

The brilliant leader of the Fourth Party was the kind of man best fitted to inoculate Mr Balfour with the qualities necessary for Parliamentary success. Whereas Lord Randolph Churchill was, perhaps, a



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trifle too audacious and reckless, Mr Balfour was certainly inclined to be too self-effacing and cautious, and his leader's influence tended to make him more adaptive to his surroundings.

When Lord Randolph declined the invitation of the Conservative party in Manchester to become their candidate, he recommended them to secure, if possible, his friend, Mr Arthur Balfour. In later years, the two men were often critically compared, and many speculations were made regarding their future careers. But from the day that Lord Randolph Churchill resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer there could be no comparison between them. From that time forward the fortunes of the two formed a vivid contrast. Just as rapid as was the downfall and decay of the one, was the ascent and growth in power and popularity of the other. The black shadows that fell around Lord Randolph and enshrouded in forgetfulness his once all-conquering, fascinating personality, only served to bring into clearer relief the dazzling flood of light that descended on Mr Balfour, as he swiftly advanced to become the idolised leader of his party and the most popular statesman of the day.

Loyalty to his friends has ever been a distinguishing feature of Mr Balfour's character, and his old leader's resignation must have caused him the deepest pain and the keenest regret. In a speech made at Manchester shortly after the event, he said that "no Government however powerful, and no Cabinet however rich in ability, could afford to lose one of its members, and the loss was doubly severe when that member was one who, like Lord Randolph Churchill, united in such an eminent degree the power of appealing to large masses of his countrymen, and the gift of influencing the House of Commons by his readiness,



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tact, and dexterity in debate. I feel the loss myself with exceptional severity, for during seven eventful years, I sat on the same bench with the noble Lord, and enjoyed the closest intimacy with him."

The decay of Lord Randolph's great mental talents, and his increasing physical decrepitude, were watched by Mr Balfour with feelings of pained sympathy and intense sorrow. In April 1894, on one of the last occasions when his Lordship addressed the House of Commons, Mr Lucy gives us the following pathetic picture of Mr Balfour's anguished figure as he listened to his former chief, who was wont in other days to enthrall his audiences, speaking in halting tones and jumbled sentences on the claims of the Duke of Coburg: "With head bent to the level of his knees and both hands tightly clasped around the back of his neck, Mr Balfour sat abashed, as if desirous of shutting out all sights and sounds."

Ten months before Lord Randolph's sad death, Mr Balfour spoke at a meeting held at Bradford in support of the noble Lord's candidature for one of the Parliamentary divisions of that city. In the course of an eloquent tribute, he said: "He has stood in the front of many a great fight. He has borne your standard to many a great victory, and supported your cause on many a hard-fought field. His performances are part of the historic traditions of the Tory party."



## CHAPTER V

### MINISTER OF THE CROWN

IN June 1885 the once apparently invulnerable Liberal Government was defeated by a majority of 12 votes on an amendment to the Budget moved by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. There was a remarkable scene in the House of Commons when the figures of the division were announced, Lord Randolph Churchill and many other members standing on their seats and waving their hats, while the chamber resounded with the tumultuous cheering of the exultant Opposition. The defeat of the Government was really due to the ripening discontent of many of its adherents with its Foreign policy and its administration of Ireland.

After a fortnight's negotiation between the leaders of the two parties, Lord Salisbury, on receiving conditional assurances of support from Mr Gladstone, undertook the formation of an Administration.

The announcement of the appointments to office in the new Government showed that Lord Salisbury considered the tireless industry and unflagging zeal of the members of the Fourth Party deserving of some reward. Lord Randolph Churchill was made Secretary of State for India, Mr John Gorst became Solicitor-General, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Persia, and Mr Balfour was



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given the post of President of the Local Government Board.

The *Times*, in commenting on the constitution of the new Ministry, observed that "the little group, which in the session of 1880 gained the half serious nickname of the 'Fourth Party,' has won, after the conflict of the past five years, a substantial share of recognition and power."

Mr Balfour, in his speech to his constituents on 26th June on his appointment, stated that the defeat of the Government was due to incurable decay and not to Tory efforts. "We have all been intensely amused," he added, with dry humour, "by the catalogue of Liberal excuses. It appears that of the numerous abstentions from that fateful division of Monday, those few who were not suffering from sudden and unavoidable pain were on their honeymoon, but a party that is in a healthy state does not suffer from these mysterious visitations." Referring to the post to which he had been appointed, he expressed the hope that not only the Housing Question, in which he took a deep interest, but also the whole question of Local Government in the counties, would receive attention before he had to relinquish his office. There was nothing he should be more proud of, he said, than to have, directly or indirectly, charge of legislation connected with these two great and complicated subjects.

On the assembling of the new Parliament, Mr Jesse Collings, in the course of the debate on the Address, moved his famous "Three Acres and a Cow" amendment, which expressed regret that the Queen's Speech contained no announcement of any measures affording facilities to agricultural labourers to acquire allotments and small holdings. This vote of censure was carried by 329 votes against 250.



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Meanwhile, Mr Balfour had accepted an invitation from the Conservatives of Manchester to contest one of the two existing Parliamentary divisions of the city. The requisition was sent him on 3rd January 1884. It referred in very complimentary terms to his political career, and continued as follows:—“Knowing how highly you prize the leisure and retirement that afford you an opportunity for pursuing your congenial tastes and habits of a studious life, we feel that the acceptance of our invitation may seem to involve a sacrifice on your part, but a Balfour and a Cecil well knows how to respond to the call of duty, honour, and public usefulness, come what may; and in this confidence we ask you to come among us to advocate our great national principles with all your energy and ability.”

Mr Balfour replied on 5th January in the following terms:—“I need not assure you of my profound sense of the honour which the Party have done me in selecting me to fight their battle at the approaching dissolution; yet it is an honour which, involving as it does serious difficulties and grave responsibilities, I might shrink from accepting, if I did not feel that the importance, in relation to Imperial politics, of the Conservative Party in a constituency like Manchester is such that all secondary considerations must yield to any general conviction that the Party may entertain with reference to the best method of promoting its success. Holding this opinion, I cannot hesitate to undertake the duty which the Conservatives of Manchester have pressed upon me in such generous confidence, and which you have urged upon me in terms far more flattering than I deserve. Believing as I do that to no part of the Empire is the triumph of Constitutional principles so important as to the great



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industrial centres of Lancashire, and believing also that the triumph of those ideas in Lancashire is a sure prelude to their triumph throughout the United Kingdom, the Conservative Party in Manchester may rest assured that I shall do all in my power to deserve the honour which they have conferred upon me in asking me to be their candidate. It is unnecessary for me to add that, should their cause be successful, and should Manchester again return two Conservative Members of Parliament, every section of the constituency will find in me a representative anxious in all ways to promote the interests of the city."

Between the date of this correspondence and the General Election a Redistribution Bill passed through Parliament, which allotted Manchester six seats, and Mr Balfour became the candidate for the East division.

His election address was dated 27th October 1885, and in it he ably set forth his views on the political issues of the day. "It will be the first duty of the Conservative Government, should they retain the confidence of the country after the General Election, to bring in a Bill for extending to the counties representative institutions for the management of local affairs such as are at present enjoyed only by towns. To the elected bodies created by the Act should be handed over many of the powers at present exercised by Quarter Sessions, as well as many of the powers now exercised by the central authority. To secure order, freedom, and safety for the minority as well as for the majority of the Irish people, and to do so, as far as possible, by the administration of equal laws, should be the first object of any Ministry responsible for the government of that country. But I shall resist to the uttermost any attempt to loosen the connection which has subsisted so long between Ireland and Great Britain, under



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whatever disguises that attempt may be made. I shall offer uncompromising resistance to any measure which may deprive the Established Church of any portion of its property or influence, or which may throw obstacles in the way of the teaching of religion in elementary schools. I will not consent, in the name of religious freedom, to banish religion from education; or, in the name of religious equality, to plunder the Church. In my opinion it is unjust that voluntary schools, which are doing and have done so much in the cause of elementary education, should be placed under any disadvantage in comparison with Board Schools, and I should hail with satisfaction the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the working of the Elementary Education Acts in this connection. In all questions of Foreign policy, I advise a firm, consistent, but conciliatory attitude toward the other Powers of Europe." After referring to other matters he concluded as follows:—"It will be for you to judge whether the vast interests involved in the maintenance of the Empire should be entrusted to the guardianship of those who have miserably neglected their duty during the past five years, or those who, during their short tenure of office, have been able in no slight degree to restore the damaged credit of the Empire."

Mr Balfour had a distinguished opponent in the person of Professor A. Hopkinson of Owens College, a gentleman well known and greatly esteemed in the Lancashire metropolis. On the other hand, the people of Manchester knew very little of the President of the Local Government Board, and he was under the disadvantage of not having any local connection with the constituency.

Both candidates worked very hard, and as the



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polling-day drew near, they were engaged almost every night at meetings in various parts of the constituency. In one of his opening speeches, Mr Balfour said: "There is a strange superstition abroad that Conservatives are only to be found among the well-to-do classes, and that the working men of this country are to be found to a man in the Liberal ranks. If that was so, I should not the less be a Conservative. I am not one of those that think that wisdom necessarily resides with the majority, but though I should not give up my opinions if Conservatism was confined to a minority, I should despair of their ultimate triumph. . . . At all events, none can say of me that I shrink from asking working men's support. I don't believe you will find in the four corners of the United Kingdom a constituency more emphatically composed of working men than that of East Manchester. One of the reasons that most influenced me to come to Manchester was my desire to represent a working-class constituency."

His frank, open manner, and the good humour with which he received the heckling he had frequently to encounter at his meetings, combined with his thorough canvass of the constituency, gained him the goodwill of the electorate.

The fight was conducted on both sides with admirable temper and courtesy, and was free from unpleasantness of any kind. The *Manchester Guardian* described Mr Balfour as "a fluent, though not a dashing, speaker, with a cultivated intellect and somewhat fastidious tastes, which prevent him from throwing himself into the business of politics with the boyish zest and energy of a demagogue like Lord Randolph Churchill."

The results of the elections in Manchester constituted a great triumph for the Conservative Party. Mr Balfour was elected by the handsome majority of 824



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votes. In his speech at the Conservative Club after the announcement of the poll, the new member, after cordially acknowledging the admirable spirit in which his opponent had fought the election, made an important declaration on the relations of the Government with the Irish Party. "Glad as the Radical Ministers would be," he said, "to purchase office at any moment by yielding to Irish pressure, there is not one cardinal principle of their policy that they hold in common with the Irish people. That is not the case with the Conservatives. There is one principle which the Conservatives hold as earnestly as the party to which Mr Parnell belongs, and for which they may well be found fighting side by side, and that is the principle of religious education. On that question the Tory Party and the Roman Catholic Party and the Parnellite Party are absolutely at one. . . . The Irish policy and the Foreign policy of the late Government were wholly without excuse, and so long as Mr Parnell and his friends confine their attacks to the Irish policy and the Foreign policy, they will find no great difference between themselves and the Conservative Party."

Events have proved how true Mr Balfour's statement was as regards religious education, but in respect to Irish policy and Foreign policy he was soon to have exceptional evidence that the Irish and Conservative criticism of Liberal deficiencies was grounded on entirely different principles.

The General Election, including the Irish vote, resulted in a Liberal majority of 170. The country, however, was shortly afterwards again in the throes of another General Election, for the new Government was defeated on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, which was rejected by a majority of 30 votes. Mr Gladstone immediately appealed to the judgment of



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the people, which pronounced against him, and Lord Salisbury was requested by Queen Victoria to form an Administration.

Mr Balfour was opposed in East Manchester by Professor Munro, but he retained his seat by a majority of 644 votes. The result of the Elections throughout the country converted Mr Balfour into a political optimist, and dispelled the political pessimism engendered in his mind by the long dominion of the Liberal Party. During the Elections he was in much demand, and addressed a large number of meetings in various towns in England and Scotland.

In the new Government, Mr Balfour accepted the post of Secretary for Scotland without a seat in the Cabinet. The *Times*, commenting on the constitution of the Ministry, considered that Mr Balfour had shown much public spirit and disinterested concern for his Party by accepting office without Cabinet rank. The *Scotsman* was even more emphatic, asserting that he ought to have been included in the Cabinet, not simply because he was an able man, but because Scotland required him to be there.

His exclusion from the "inner circle," was, however, only delayed for a few months, for in the following November it was announced that he had been appointed to Cabinet rank.

He had not been long in his new office before he had to answer an attack on the administration of the law in the North of Scotland. The problem to be dealt with, known as the Crofters Question, resembled in many respects the problem of the West of Ireland. It was the old difficulty of poverty, privation, agitation, and disorder. Mr Balfour first set himself to break the power of the agitators who had formed a Land League, and he told his critics



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that until order was restored remedial legislation was impossible.

Subsequently he was able to take steps to relieve the distress, but on more than one occasion he stated that the only remedy for the destitution of the Highlands was emigration.

He had studied the question very closely, and, through his residence in Scotland, he possessed a practical acquaintance with the problem. He was most earnestly desirous of alleviating the sufferings of the people, for whom he had the deepest sympathy. "No man feels it more than I do myself," he said in the House of Commons. "I love, and have always loved, the Highland population. I have known it from my youth. I have lived among them, and I defy anyone to live among them and not to love them. They have to contend with inclement skies, with stormy seas, and a barren soil; and their worst enemies are those who would hinder their superfluous population from seeking in other climes a happier home."

In a speech on 9th October, he said that the office he occupied was now represented by one who was concerned exclusively with Scottish affairs, and referring to the Union of England and Scotland, he said that the most glorious annals of Scottish history dated since the Union with England. There was no fear, he thought, of Scotland losing her individuality.

During his term of office, Mr Balfour evinced a keen interest in Scottish education. In a debate in the House of Commons in September 1886, he declared that the Education Act of 1872 had resulted in enormously increasing school attendance in Scotland, but the condition of affairs as regarded the training colleges was not so satisfactory, and he thought it was desirable



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that a Royal Commission should be appointed to consider the matter.

His first public appearance in Scotland was at a meeting held in one of the Board Schools in Edinburgh, at which he made an appeal to wealthy Scotsmen to support Secondary Education and the Scottish Universities. "If I could in anyway," he said, "influence those wealthy and public-spirited men who have done, and are doing so much for education in Scotland, I would ask them to endow Secondary Schools, which provide the means of preparing the Scottish youth for the Universities." He referred to the poverty of the Scottish Universities, and said it was regrettable that the number of professorships was so small, and those that existed so badly paid, a state of things that contrasted unfavourably with the position in England and Germany. He intended to press upon the Treasury the necessity for a grant to the Scottish Universities, but he said Scotland must do all she could to help herself, otherwise external aid would be useless.

In December 1886 the political world was startled by the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill, who, as a result of the last General Election, had been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. For a time the Conservative Party was thrown into confusion, and many critics predicted its disruption; but Lord Salisbury faced the crisis with admirable coolness and courage, and he fortunately found it possible to induce Mr Goschen to fill the breach at the Exchequer, while Mr W. H. Smith became Leader of the House of Commons.

Following the defection of Lord Randolph Churchill, the Government suffered a further loss in the retirement of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach from the position



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of Irish Secretary, owing to ill-health and failing eyesight.

The same communication, dated 6th March 1887, that announced the resignation of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach contained also, to the astonishment of the political world, the information that his successor was the Secretary for Scotland. Mr Balfour took the most momentous step in his public career when he accepted the post of Irish Secretary, which was destined to be the means of rapidly lifting him into the front rank of British statesmen and leading him eventually to the highest office in the state.

Writing about his political standing at this time, Mr Lucy says: "Up to the day when all the world wondered to hear that Mr Balfour had been appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, he was a person of no consequence. His rising evoked no interest in the House, and his name would not have drawn a full audience in St James's Hall."

Mr Balfour was himself responsible for this obscurity. He never made any effort to gain prominence, and never indulged in those extraordinary artifices and eccentric attitudes by which some politicians have in their early days endeavoured to attract to themselves public notice. If he had cared, with the aid of his powerful connections, he could easily have acquired an empty notoriety, but nothing would have been more averse to his refined, reserved nature. It may truly be said that popularity, fame, and greatness came upon him unsought. He would never have intrigued for them, and they would never have been his, had they not been found in the path of duty. His hatred of shams was too real and intense; he was steeped too much in the genuineness and the reality of things, and his spirit was too choice to



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allow him to angle for the fleeting favour of popular applause. It was largely owing to this fine temper of mind, and to this self-effacing attitude, that up to his appointment as Chief Secretary for Ireland he was an unconsidered personality and a negligible quantity in political affairs. To the great masses of the electorate, his name was almost unknown.



## CHAPTER VI

### IRISH SECRETARY

THE appointment of Mr Balfour as Secretary of State for Ireland was unquestionably a great experiment. The position was one that had strained to the breaking point the ability and endurance of the most talented men and toughest fighters of both political parties. Out of eight statesmen of the front rank, who had occupied the post since the beginning of the Home Rule controversy, only two had survived their tenure of office unaffected in health and temper by their arduous experience. That exceptional couple was Mr (now Sir) Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Mr J. Lowther. Both these politicians were of a phlegmatic temper, and sat unperturbed by the seas of vituperation that swept down upon them from the Irish benches. Unlike Mr Balfour, they did not attempt to repel the fierce onslaught of their critics, but sat smiling and indifferent, enjoying equally with the lookers on the recital of the eternal grievances and the emittance of the unending abuse.

But on other natures the strain of the Irish office had proved intolerable. Mr Forster's brilliant career was shattered by the difficulties he had to contend with; and Sir George Trevelyan, harassed beyond endurance, aged noticeably under the pitiless cross-fire from the Irish benches. The retirement of Sir



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Michael Hicks-Beach was immediately claimed by the Irish as another triumph. "Another English statesman," wrote *United Ireland*, "broken upon the wheel of Irish misgovernment: another career ruined, perhaps a life sacrificed. Once during the fierce attack under which he winced and writhed, he actually wept. It was impossible not to feel pity for him, poor Mickey the Botch. It did not take long to break him up." All this, of course, is the most absolute rubbish, but it serves to illustrate to what lengths the leading Irish journals went in their comments on British politics.

The outlook at the time of Mr Balfour's appointment was scarcely propitious. The Irish Party was at the zenith of its power. Large subscriptions from America were flowing into the treasury of the National League, supplemented by liberal donations from the Colonies and lavish grants from the Irish branches to headquarters. In addition, special funds were started to meet every special emergency, and each met with generous support. In half of Ulster, and throughout the whole of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, there was not a town, village, or parish without its branch or branches of the League. The country was seething with disorder and disaffection, and the people were absolutely under the dominion of the agitators. In October 1886 *United Ireland* announced the "Plan of Campaign," with the explanation that it was a plan by means of which "practically half-a-year's rent from any estate is put together to fight the landlords." In plain English it meant the inauguration of an infamous system of agitation, intimidation, and outrage, carried out with the most abominable cruelty and brutality.

In Parliament, the General Election of 1885 had increased the number of Irish representatives to 86,



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and the Dissolution of 1886, which proved so disastrous for the Liberal Party, sent this force back undiminished in numbers and improved in discipline. They acted together like a machine, and were directed by the skill and power of Mr Parnell. Most of them received salaries, and they submitted to their leader with unquestioning obedience. The defeat of the Home Rule Party in England rendered them desperate, and they returned to Westminster determined to make English government of Ireland impossible; and led as they were by men of great ability, they undoubtedly formed a formidable combination.

Moreover, to add to the difficulties of the new Secretary, the immediate work at hand was of the most controversial character, and was open to the Irish attack in its most united, deadly and overpowering form. The first task of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's successor was the introduction of the Crimes Bill, and following that, of almost equal difficulty and danger, the carrying through Parliament of a Bill dealing with the inflamed question of Land Tenure in Ireland.

And what was the general view of the man selected by Lord Salisbury to fill the most difficult post in the Government, a post requiring iron nerve, great debating skill, exceptional powers of endurance, unremitting industry, high courage, and an unshakable will? The chosen Minister was the Secretary for Scotland, who, though a member of the Cabinet, had made scarcely any impression on the political world. As a member of the militant Fourth Party he had caught some of the reflected glory of his associates, but even then he was universally regarded as the embodiment of laxity and indolence. Since his accession to office, he had done nothing to distinguish himself, and the general



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impression of him as "Balfour the *debonair*" remained almost unaltered.

It was, therefore, not surprising that the appointment came like a "bolt from the blue." The Opposition received it with unconcealed scorn and amusement. The Irish Members were convulsed with laughter at the thought of this languid, delicate young man directing an administration that had been disastrous to the careers of so many eminent statesmen of large Parliamentary experience. Such old warriors as Messrs Parnell, Dillon, and Tim Healy, openly jeered at the idea of this inexperienced stripling contending against their venomous attack, and they professed keen disappointment that a foeman more worthy of their steel had not been selected.

The Nationalist press derided his appointment as a huge farce. They scoffed at his culture, they sneered at his training, at his delicacy, at his personal appearance, and they revelled in the certainty of his speedy destruction. "It seems," wrote the *Freeman*, "like breaking a butterfly on the wheel to extend Mr Balfour on the rack of Irish politics. He is an elegant, fragile creature, a prey to that aristocratic languor which prevents him from assuming any but the limpest attitude. We are as convinced of his inevitable failure as we are of our own existence." *United Ireland*, in its polite way, described him as follows:—"The new Chief Secretary, who is a man of languor and culture, and a person of exceedingly long, loose, and almost disjointed frame, reminds one of nothing more, when he throws himself horizontally back on the bench with his feet on the floor, than that species of spider known as Daddy Long-legs." The *Annual Register* for 1887, which professed to render a colourless record of events, stated that "the selection of Mr Arthur Balfour was



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interpreted as an act of despair done by ruined politicians." Other journals referred to him as "a lisping hawthorn bird," a "palsied masher," a "scented popinjay," and not one had the slightest doubt but what this "hot-house flower," this "lily gathered yesterday," would be speedily crumpled up.

And among British journals that were supporters of the Ministry, the appointment was received with much misgiving, and grave doubts were entertained of its success. The *Times* alone seemed to have a true insight into his character, and to recognise that under his languid exterior there was a mind of exceptional power and a will of steel. But even the *Times* was not wholly confident, and it recommended the assistance of an Under Secretary. "We are sure he will bring to the investigation of the Irish problem in its present phase the powers of a fresh, clear, and alert intelligence. There is no man in the House of Commons less likely to be tempted to trifle with the paramount necessities of Ireland, with the obligations of the law, the rights of property, and the deliverance of the masses from the cruel and ignoble thralldom of the League. The only point on which pardonable anxiety may be entertained is the strain on Mr Balfour's health." The writer pointed out that the office was a very trying one, involving as it did the most arduous Parliamentary duties and the government of Ireland, which necessitated frequent journeys between Dublin and London. Moreover, it was highly probable that the pressure of work would be largely increased in the immediate future. The article concluded by suggesting the aid of a Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and it nominated Colonel Saunderson for the post.

The *Spectator* thought that he "was scarcely strong enough in health for such a post," and there was









*By kind permission of the Editor of "The Shamrock"]*

### CROMWELL IN PLASTER-OF-PARIS

UNCLE SALISBURY.—“There! our Arthur looks for all the world the born image of Oliver Cromwell. If he only gets time enough, he will frighten the Irish people into fits”—of laughter?



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certainly much justification for such a fear. The far from arduous work of the Scottish Office had nearly shattered his health during the previous session, and when the House rose his pale and haggard face was the subject of general remark. To place him at the Irish Office, which had broken up men far more robust than he, seemed almost like sending him to his doom.

Mr Balfour had not, however, accepted the post recklessly and without considering his fitness to undertake its trying duties. Before he gave his decision, he submitted himself to a close personal examination at the hands of Sir W. Jenner, and that distinguished physician not only pronounced him completely sound, but assured him that, so far as he could judge, no better prescription could be ordered for the maintenance of his health than "the steady collar work" of an all-absorbing department of the Administration. Mr Balfour took his doctor at his word, and the result abundantly justified the soundness of his medical adviser's judgment. During the whole period of his occupation of the Irish Office his health never failed him. The daily abuse he was subjected to acted upon him as a positive tonic. His sleep was sounder, his appetite keener, and his general health improved wonderfully from the day he faced the concentrated attack of the Irish Party.

But such a result was the reverse of what outside observers could be expected to look for, and among the Ministerial Party the appointment was received with trepidation almost amounting to dismay. This feeling of dread and misgiving would undoubtedly have found articulate expression had it not been for the fact that the appointment was regarded as merely the temporary makeshift of a bewildered Premier.



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Certainly no one outside Lord Salisbury and a few intimate friends, who knew the true grit that underlay his languid bearing, had any great confidence in Mr Balfour successfully maintaining his position; much less did anyone dream that he would develop into a second Cromwell, and become the author and executor of the most thorough-going, firm, unbending Irish policy of modern times.

There is no instance in recent history of such a rapid advance, and such a surprising political development, as is furnished by the career of Mr Balfour. From an "unconsidered" Minister, who had no influence in the House of Commons, and whose name had no weight in the country, he advanced in twelve months, and in a rapidly increasing degree in two years, to the rank of one of the foremost of parliamentary debaters and successful statesmen. He reached the distinction of being unquestionably the most prominent Minister of the Government, his name became one to conjure with in Conservative centres throughout the country, and he was probably the most popular politician of the day.

His policy was practically the sole topic of political controversy. As Lord Salisbury said, the politics of the day were summed up in the word "Ireland." His popularity may be judged from the fact that on 14th December 1887, he found it necessary to publish a letter in the *Times* expressing his regret at the impossibility of answering all the resolutions which poured in upon him from all parts of the United Kingdom, warmly congratulating him on the firmness and wisdom of his administration, and the policy of the Government in Ireland.

His appointment to the Irish Office was the deciding factor in his career. But for that opening it is quite



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possible he would never have attained any great distinction in the political world, inasmuch as his nature was not of the calibre that forces itself forward and makes a position. While he had transcendent political abilities, he did not possess that dominating personality which, somehow or other, as if by magic, forces itself into prominence. His natural inclinations were towards quietude and ease, but he had a fine, genuine, combative spirit, and sincere aspirations, which only needed rousing, to engage in uprooting evil and promoting reform. The duties of the Irish Office, and above all the opposition and difficulties he met with, provided the necessary stimulus, and spurred him on to the most courageous action and persistent industry. The more violent the abuse heaped upon him, the more fiercely agitation was fostered, the more diabolical the outrages committed in Ireland,—and the more inflexible and thorough became his rule. The venom of the attacks upon him simply acted as a tonic, and braced up his whole nature to its utmost strength.

When Mr Balfour took up the reins of Irish administration, he at once proceeded to minutely diagnose the condition of the unhappy country he had to rule. He came to the conclusion that the cancer which was sapping away the vitality of Ireland was not so much political injustice, as the extreme poverty and wretchedness of its people. He satisfied himself that its evils were mainly economic, and he determined to subordinate and direct his whole policy to the end of bringing a comfortable livelihood within the reach of the Irish peasantry.

But his analysis of Ireland's condition also convinced him that the country was a prey to the clerical and political agitator; and he saw plainly that there



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was no possibility of Ireland settling down to steady, peaceful industry so long as intimidation and outrage were rampant and unchecked throughout the country. Therefore he set himself to relentlessly crush out the forces that fomented disaffection, and he made it his first duty to establish law and order in the land. During the whole of his Irish administration this was the governing principle of his policy, and through abuse of foes and murmurs of friends, he unswervingly held to his course, and gave no quarter to those who deliberately encouraged discontent and disloyalty.

The instrument at hand for the execution of his policy was the Irish Constabulary, and he used this force without hesitation wherever it was needed. In return for its faithful service, for the rigid execution of its duties, he gave it his undivided support. The perfect mutual confidence that existed between him and the Irish Constabulary was essential to the effectual execution of his determined policy of eradicating what he termed the "agrarian poison" from the Irish system. Had he wavered in his confidence in the police, his administration must have instantly fallen into inextricable confusion, and his policy must have been superseded by an entirely different one.

Undoubtedly occasional injustice resulted, but in the circumstances, that was inevitable. Had he, however, heeded the libels against the police, which were sedulously propagated by the foes of law and order, he would have rendered himself powerless to effectively control the elements of disaffection and riot. If, on the one hand, the police were occasionally guilty of issuing unjustifiably severe reports, it is unquestionable, on the other hand, that it was utterly impossible to place any reliance whatever on the statements either



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of the Irish Members or the Irish press, who distorted and unscrupulously misrepresented every circumstance of Irish government, and maliciously calumniated every official engaged in Irish administration.

Nothing so exasperated the Irish Party as the cool way in which Mr Balfour disposed of their violent charges against the magistrates and the police. It was maddening to them that, after they had passionately denounced some alleged injustice, the Irish Secretary should rise from his place with a winning smile, and in reply, read a telegram from the resident magistrate denying the "facts" they had brought forward. Enraging them still more, he would then declare the incident closed, or offer to make further inquiries. Here is a description, taken from *United Ireland* of an encounter he had with one of the Irish Members soon after he assumed office. "When Mr P. J. O'Brien," wrote this veracious organ, "calling attention to the fact that Baron Dowse at Nenagh had declared the North Riding of Tipperary to be singularly free from crime, asked that the extra police in that district should be removed, Mr Balfour replied that he was glad to have such testimony from the learned judge as to the efficiency with which the extra police discharged their duties, and that just in consequence he should not think of removing officers whose presence had brought about such a happy state of things. It was flippancy like this," continued the courteous writer, 'that the lamented Jemmy Lowther came his cropper at. Yet Jemmy was a full-blooded, rough-riding, pachydermatous, devil-may-care official, not at all a silk-skinned sybarite whose rest a crumpled rose-leaf would disturb. It will be an interesting, if somewhat ghastly experience, to watch the wilting of his delicate lily in the fiery furnace into which it has so boldly



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ventured. Mickey the Botch (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) will enjoy the sight if his eyesight lets him."

Once Mr Balfour had decided on his purpose of putting down agitation and violence, the only safe course of action open to him was the one he adopted and followed out with indomitable courage to a successful termination. He considered exhaustively the whole problem of the government of Ireland, and he made himself master of every important detail of Irish administration. He measured with calmness the danger involved in his policy, he took account of the peril that surrounded his position, he remembered the failure of the eminent statesmen who had wrecked their careers on the work he had undertaken, and having considered all these things, he deliberately drew up *his* "plan of campaign," and with untiring industry, wonderful tenacity of purpose, and splendid courage, he bent his whole being to the attainment of his object. He turned neither to the right nor to the left: he was influenced neither by fierce abuse nor by fulsome flattery.

His record is that of the most unflinching and inflexible Irish Secretary of modern times, who never hesitated to punish with equal severity the crimes of ruffian and M.P. alike. The forces of outrage and blackguardism were crushed under his iron heel, and the loyal and industrious inhabitants were protected and encouraged.

But although this sternly repressive phase of his policy was that which had to be enforced before all else, and was naturally that which impressed the popular imagination and raised the most heated controversies, there was another phase, which, by the encouragement of industry, had for its object the uplifting of the people and the amelioration of their



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unspeakable wretchedness. Mr Balfour himself, when questioned as to the grounds he had for hoping to succeed where so many had failed, said: "Cromwell failed because he relied solely upon repressive measures. That mistake I shall not imitate. I shall be as relentless as Cromwell in enforcing obedience to the law, but, at the same time, I shall be as radical as any reformer in redressing grievances, and especially in removing every cause of complaint in regard to the land. It is on the twofold aspect of my policy that I rely for success. Hitherto, English Governments have stood first upon one leg and then upon the other. They have either been all for repression, or all for reform. I am for both; repression as stern as Cromwell: reform as thorough as Mr Parnell or anyone else can desire."

It was inevitable that such a policy, especially the "repression as stern as Cromwell," should arouse intense antagonism in the ranks of the Irish Party. The avowed purpose of the Irish Members was to render the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland untenable and intolerable. From the first it was war to the knife between them and Mr Balfour. They were quickly disillusioned from the assumption that they had an indolent, limp-spirited aristocrat to deal with. The scornful jeers with which they received the announcement of his appointment speedily gave place to anguished howls of hatred at the punishment he meted out to them; and then set in a serious and determined effort to wreck him and foil his policy. A certain few of the wilder spirits openly boasted that they would harass Mr Balfour to his grave. All sections were united in a bond of hatred against the author of the coercionist *régime*, and, thus united, they were formidable foes.



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In the House of Commons they had leaders of great ability, who were masters of obstruction and parliamentary tactics, and who were unhampered in their actions by any consideration, either for the dignity of Parliament, or the common courtesies of debate. Night after night they poured forth a torrent of abuse. Every incident of his coercion policy was magnified into an iniquity and an enormity of unrivalled heinousness. He was harried and harassed by every means within their power, and violent imputations on his personal honour were freely levelled at him in the garb of irreproachable parliamentary language. But it was all absolutely futile, and the futility of it was intolerably galling.

The intensity of their venom and hate could not find adequate expression in Parliament. There they were compelled to curb, to some extent, their vulgarity and insolence, but in their constituencies in Ireland they gave free rein to their passionate invective. In the press, cartoons of the most offensive character represented him as the author of massacre and desolation. The favourite mode of depicting him was as a murderer and a ruthless tyrant. Instead of a "scented popinjay," he was now compared to "Heliogabalus," the Roman voluptuary, who was in the habit of recruiting his debilitated energies in a bath of children's blood. "It is not the first time," wrote *United Ireland*, "that the weakest and most effeminate of tyrants has been also the most bloodthirsty and cruel. The ruffians who roam about at night, with blackened faces, shooting people in the dark, are not a whit more revolting objects than this Epicurean aristocrat, languishing in his silks and perfumes, who issues his heartless *Fusillez moi ces gens là*, as lightly as if the lives he is sacrificing were as grateful to his nostrils as the aroma of his cigar." According to the *Freeman*, he had become "the meanest mortal who had ever directed



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the policy of the English Government in Ireland. To steal the clothes of one political opponent, to do another to death, and to make merry over the achievement in after-dinner speeches, to confine political prisoners to a fever den—such are the methods of his statesmanship." "Base, bloody, brutal Balfour," was the style of reference to him commonly used by his critics in the Irish press.

On the platform, too, all the decencies of discussion were violated. The public speeches of the Irish Members of Parliament were almost entirely composed of violent abuse, and they did not hesitate to countenance and propagate the most abhorrent libels and falsehoods about the Irish Secretary. The epithets shrieked at him, however, only served as a source of amusement. He often humorously alluded to them, and in one of his speeches he recited a list of epithets applied by Hibernian orators and editors to himself and those engaged in Irish administration. They were described, he said, as perjurers, assassins, murderers, fools, knaves, tyrants, burglars, robbers, brigands. He himself was referred to as "that bloody tyrant Balfour," "a bloody wretch," "a paid liar," "a cowardly ruffian," "a chief murderer," and an "assassin."

Whenever these adepts at calumny ventured to make concrete accusations accompanied with definite details, their false concoctions were immediately exposed by one of those "open letters" with which Mr Balfour tore to shreds the gross charges howled forth in tones of passionate indignation to the frenzied mobs throughout the country. These letters remain as an eloquent testimony to the close attention Mr Balfour paid to his duties, and the determination which he showed in justifying his policy. They were by no means the least effective of his methods of attack and defence, for they



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were models of cogent reasoning, incisive criticism, and stinging retort.

In Parliament, Mr Balfour met with imperturbable composure the furious onslaught of the Irish Members, who had perfected themselves in the art of baiting Chief Secretaries. One after another of Hibernia's war-like sons would hurl at him his vitriolic abuse, would bitterly taunt him, and at last grossly insult him. But to it all he returned a smile of winning sweetness, glancing aside their heavy attack, and maddening them with his cool, stinging, sarcastic replies. The more fierce the attack, the more extended became his sprawl on the Treasury Bench: it seemed impossible to confuse and distract him. No better method of treating his foes could have been devised. This cool unconcern of their simulated fury was exasperating beyond endurance, and provoked them to extremes of vindictive feeling. That this "silk-skinned sybarite, whose rest a crumpled rose-leaf would disturb," whom they had expected to dispose of without an effort, should treat with contempt their hitherto all-conquering crusade of worry and slander, and should pursue successfully, without the slightest alteration, the very policy they had vowed to foil and destroy, was the most humiliating experience they had ever endured.

But as outrage and violence became more abominable, and as, in consequence, Mr Balfour became more relentless and rigorous in his enforcement of the law, the parliamentary encounters became more heated and bitter. At one time no less than six Irish Members were simultaneously undergoing imprisonment for seditious speeches. During such periods Mr Balfour had a short respite: but the "martyr" returned with intensified hate, determined at all costs to destroy the "oppressor."





*By kind permission of the Editor of "The Shamrock"*

**"YOU" DIRTY BOY!"**

The Dirt-throwing, Blood-spilling Balfour caught at last!

*(With apologies to Messrs Pears)*

PEGGY DILLON (the midwife).—"I'll scrub ye clane, ye dirty little savage, though I have to take the skin off with the dirt."







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Affairs at one time reached such a state that Mr Balfour declined to hold direct communication with the Irish representatives. He appointed Colonel King-Harman, a popular Irish landowner, as his parliamentary secretary, to read out from slips of paper his answers to the questions of the Irish Members. At the call of the Speaker, King-Harman rose, read out with passionless intonation his chief's replies, and then sat down. It was futile for the Irish Members to shout and rave. Mr Balfour's deputy had done the work he had been instructed to do: he was unable to do more, and there was an end to the matter.

This was the culminating step in Mr Balfour's disdainful treatment of the Irish Party. Nothing he had done previously aroused such bitter resentment and indignation. Night after night, there were stormy scenes at question time; and the rising of Colonel King-Harman was greeted with angry cries of "Balfour! Balfour!" Occasionally, after the uproar had raged for nearly an hour, the Chief Secretary would stroll in, pale and defiant, viewing contemptuously the proceedings, and then he would take his place on the Treasury Bench, to meet single-handed the furious assault of his enraged opponents.

But though this exhibition of iron determination and steadfast courage compelled admiration, it was not the way to facilitate either the business of Parliament or the business of Irish administration, and when it became apparent that the strain of his task was wrecking the health of the hapless King-Harman, Mr Balfour abandoned his aloofness, and, like his colleagues, attended personally to his parliamentary duties and obligations.

In time, when agitation and violence had largely abated, the concentrated bitterness of feeling between



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the Irish Members and Mr Balfour almost disappeared. Later on, we find him paying the keenest attention to the arguments and suggestions of the Irish Party, and frequently in Committee on his Land Purchase Bill he accepted amendments moved by them, and on the occasion when he announced the intention of the Government to introduce an Irish Local Government Bill, he pointedly went out of his way to invite the co-operation of Mr Tim Healy in making it a really useful measure.



## CHAPTER VII

### HIS IRISH LEGISLATION

WHEN Mr Balfour took up the Irish Secretaryship, the position was one of no little personal danger. The assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the reckless, inflammatory language used by the Irish Members and the Irish press, engendered a feeling of anxiety among his friends regarding his safety. Night and day, wherever he travelled, it was considered necessary that he should have a bodyguard of two detectives. His London residence in Carlton House Terrace was so near Westminster that he made a rule of walking home at the close of the House, and as he crossed the Palace Yard with his long, swinging stride, two figures emerged from under one of the archways and followed him at a distance of twenty paces. He gave no sign of having noticed them, and they went their way with a studied appearance of casually walking in the same direction; but, as a matter of fact, they were keenly on the alert, keeping watch and ward over the tall, spare figure that preceded them. And not only in London and Dublin was this friendly surveillance exercised, but even during his holidays, when he retired to a quiet village on the Firth of Forth for a month's golfing, a small *possé* of police in plain clothes accom-



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panied him, guarding his lodgings by night, and following him about the golf links by day.

On the occasion of his visit to Manchester, in December 1887, to address a great meeting of his constituents in the Free Trade Hall, the police arrangements were of a character without precedent in that city. Not only was a considerable force of men kept on duty near the door of the hall, but the approaches by several streets were protected by double lines of barriers for some hundreds of yards along the centre of the roadway. These precautions were not rendered necessary by the mere magnitude of the crowds, but were due to the authorities having received warning that an attempt might be made on the life of Mr Balfour during his stay in Manchester, and it was even deemed necessary not only to guard his progress through the streets, but that he should sleep in the civic residence at the Town Hall. It was on this occasion that he gave a solemn warning to the Irish Members. "Mere abuse," he said, "could be treated with contempt; but when it comes to open advocacy of crime, when men who come over here and speak softly to the English people, go back to Ireland and urge the excitable peasantry of that country to resist the law, then, I say to them, you have passed the bounds of political discussion; then, I say, you have ceased to be politicians, and you have become criminals, and as criminals I shall proceed against you."

There can be no question that Mr Balfour took up his appointment as Secretary of State for Ireland with a set determination to do all in his power to advance the happiness and prosperity of that distracted country, and it was with great reluctance that he came to the conclusion that he "must first be cruel in order to be



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kind." But he saw clearly that the storm must precede the calm, and that a stern and thorough enforcement of the law was of supreme importance to the best interests of Ireland. Therefore, on his accession to office, he made it his first duty to frame and pass into law a Crimes Bill that should enable him to put a stop, once and for ever, to the organised intimidation and outrage fomented by the tyranny of the "Plan of Campaign."

On 22nd March 1887 Mr Smith moved for precedence for Mr Balfour's measure. Mr John Morley moved the Opposition amendment, and Mr Balfour replied in defence of the motion for precedence. This was his first important speech as Chief Secretary for Ireland, and it was made under exceptionally trying conditions, in consequence of which he craved the indulgence of the House. He had received only twenty-four hours' notice of Mr Morley's amendment, an amendment that amounted to a vote of censure. "I make no complaint," said Mr Balfour, "I merely state the fact. Since that time, I was in the House till a quarter to four this morning, and had to return at 10.30 and make two speeches before breakfast. The House did not rise till 1.30 P.M., and at 1 P.M. there was a Cabinet meeting." Mr Morley rose to move his amendment at 4 P.M. Under circumstances of such great difficulty, Mr Balfour made a most trenchant and luminous speech. He had been taunted with not having introduced the Government's proposed Land Bill before proceeding with his Crimes Bill. His reply succinctly summed up his policy. "If the effect of passing our Land Bill, or any Land Bill, would lead to such a change that juries would cease to be intimidated, and that witnesses would come forward and give their evidence, then every one of my colleagues would hasten



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to forward such a measure. But what chance is there that if we put off this Criminal Bill, when Ireland is weekly going to the worse, when Society is crumbling to its original atoms, what chance is there that we shall restore the sanctity of contract and respect for law by introducing any Land Bill?"

The Crimes Bill was introduced by Mr Balfour on 28th March in an animated speech, in which he gave numerous instances of the cruel boycotting and social tyranny which were then rampant in Ireland. "For the first time in the history of this country," he said, in his peroration, "the victims of oppression, of outrage, and of murder, have called upon the Government to protect them, and the Government has not been supported by the English minority. Many of those who are most devoted to the cause of liberty pay but a cold and frigid respect to the cause of order. I will not ask whether, under some circumstances, these two great principles are or are not ever opposed; but I will say, and say boldly, that in this case they are united, and if I appeal to one rather than to the other, it is in the cause of liberty that I ask this House to support us in breaking the yoke under which so large a part of Ireland is now groaning."

In the course of the debate Mr Parnell had the audacity to move an amendment to the effect that a further investigation into the state of Ireland should be made before proceeding with the Crimes Bill. He received a richly-deserved castigation from Mr Balfour, who, in reply, said: "I am afraid that the House is already but too well acquainted with the state of Ireland, and if anybody entertains doubts as to the condition of that country, surely it is not the honourable Member for Cork and his friends. They, at all events, if no other Members of this House, should know to what



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an unhappy state the country is reduced. They should know the condition of Ireland as an artificer recognises his own handiwork."

With splendid tenacity of purpose and unflagging industry, Mr Balfour piloted his Bill through the House of Commons, and had the gratification of seeing it pass the third reading within the session. The discussions on the Bill were prolonged and bitter, and the Chief Secretary had frequently to invoke the aid of the Closure in order to overcome the grossly obstructionist tactics of his opponents. Throughout the contest he was keenly watched by Mr Gladstone, and he was well aware that if his Bill failed it would spell disaster to his career. But he showed a firmness of decision and a keenness of intellect, an untiring zeal and a brilliant talent for debate, that disconcerted his opponents and delighted his friends. The misgivings of the Ministerialists in his powers of endurance quickly gave way to feelings of admiration and confidence, which found expression in the most loyal and devoted support.

The Crimes Act gave the death-blow to the infamous agrarian movement in Ireland, and put an end to the reign of terror that had existed through the tyranny of the "National League." The machinery of the Act was composed of a Court presided over by two Stipendiary magistrates, who were empowered to pronounce sentences up to a limit of six months' imprisonment with or without hard labour. The sentence of this Court could be appealed against to the County Court judge of the district, whose decision was final. The supreme value of the Court consisted in the fact that it was entirely independent of local Nationalist influence. The whole of its procedure was most prosaic, and it was altogether a most plain, business-



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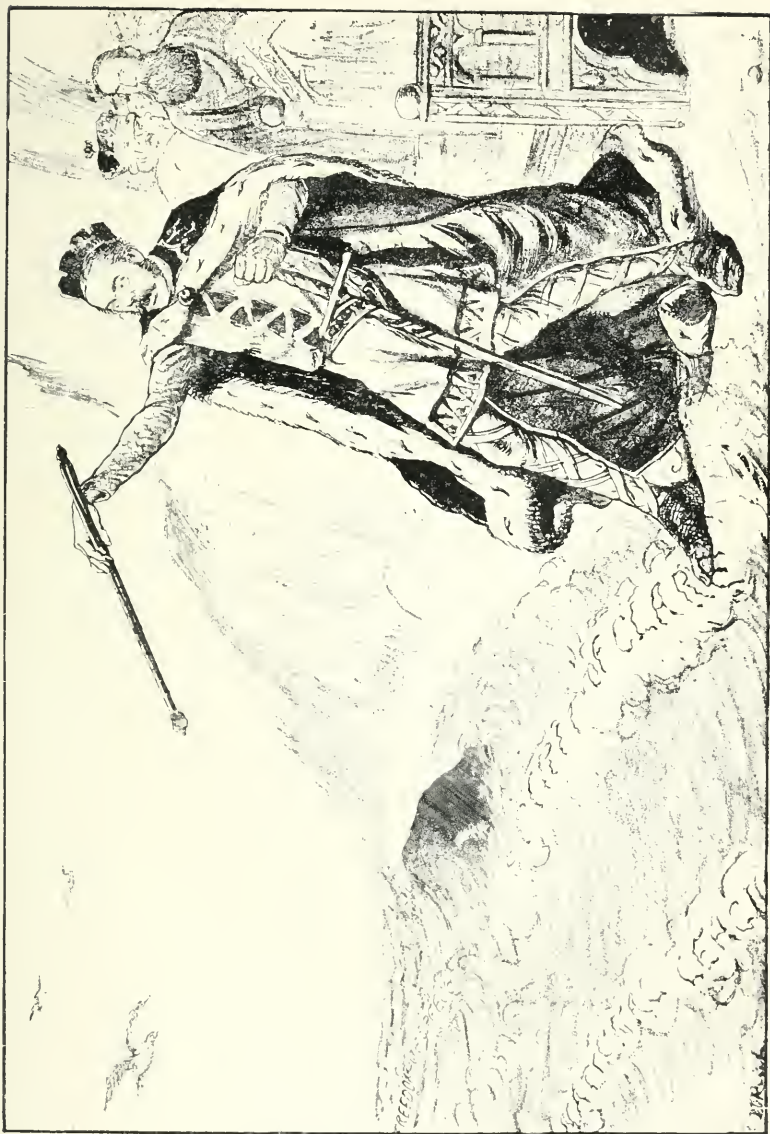
like affair, resembling a police-magistrate's Court in Dublin or London. There was no incentive to vanity in being tried before such a tribunal; no cheap fame to be gained from imprisonment under its decree; for political offenders were not treated as first-class misdemeanants. The imprisonment was real. It was a punishment, and it acted as a deterrent, as it was intended it should do.

Only Messrs Dillon and O'Brien, among the Irish leaders, were foolish enough to fight the Act, and their inglorious experience of no fuss and plenty of hardship did not encourage others to follow their example. The same punishment was meted out to all offenders alike. Priest, Member of Parliament, and peasant received exactly the same treatment. It was by this fearless administration of even-handed justice that the Act accomplished its purpose of preserving the peace and establishing confidence in the administration of the law in Ireland.

During 1887 Mr Balfour passed a second Bill, the Land Law (Ireland) Act, by which the leaseholders, who had been excluded by Mr Gladstone from the benefits of his Land Act of 1881, were admitted to all the privileges of that measure, and middlemen whose sub-tenants had obtained reductions in the Land Courts were allowed to break their leases. He also carried a Bill in the 1888 session, by which a sum of £5,000,000 was advanced to supplement the amount given under the Ashbourne Land Purchase Act of 1885.

The greatest of Mr Balfour's legislative achievements as Irish Secretary was his Irish Land Purchase Bill, which passed through the House of Commons on 15th June 1891, the third reading being carried by 225 votes to 96, the Irish Members supporting it without distinction of party or class.





By kind permission of the Editor of "The Showcock."

### THE MODERN CANUTE

Canute Balfour, unlike Canute of old, *believes* his flatterers when they tell him that he can command the ocean to cease rolling in upon the shore; but he finds he is mistaken.







## HIS IRISH LEGISLATION

Right through the debates, from the day when he introduced the Bill, Mr Balfour showed a most sympathetic spirit towards the views of the Irish Members, which was reciprocated by the adoption of a conciliatory attitude on their part, and Mr Balfour gracefully acknowledged that the controversy, though prolonged, had been conducted in a business-like manner. The skill and success with which Mr Balfour conducted this great and intricate measure through the House of Commons finally established his reputation as a parliamentary tactician of the highest order.

The Bill is too complicated to explain in detail here, but, summarised briefly, it may be said that it provided for the issue of £23,000,000 of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. stock by the Imperial Government for buying out the interests of those Irish landlords who were willing to part with their property, and who could persuade their tenants to purchase it. The tenants who bought obtained at once, for the first five years, an immediate reduction of 20 per cent. in their rent, and after that five years a further reduction, corresponding to the difference between their old rents and 4 per cent. on the purchase money.

The Bill was criticised because it did not propose to buy out all landlords in Ireland at one stroke; and replying to this complaint, on 4th June, Mr Balfour made an important announcement. "I have heard many gentlemen," he said, "representing Nationalist opinion in Ireland, state, within the last few days, that the present measure of Land Purchase, large and generous as it is, will not ultimately prove adequate to the interests of Ireland; and they have been bold enough to prophesy that, when the money has been exhausted, new money will not be forthcoming to accomplish the task of converting the Irish



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occupier into an owner. Well, my business has been to frame a Bill of which it can truly be said that it does not endanger, by the fraction of a penny, the pockets of the tax-payers of this country, and I have framed such a Bill. Therefore, when the thirty millions advanced under the Bill are exhausted, if it is found that the loss to the locality is so insignificant that it may be ignored, I, for my part, if Ireland still forms an integral portion of the United Kingdom, will not be averse to seeing some increase. . . . The experiment will by that time be conclusively proved to have been successful or unsuccessful."

The principal objection urged against the Bill was that it created an inequality, which would be fruitful of discontent, between the two sections of tenants in Ireland—those whose landlords were willing to sell, and those whose landlords were not willing to sell; but it is not easy to see how this difference could have been entirely obviated without recourse to financial proposals of almost impracticable dimensions.

The comment on the Bill as a whole was almost unanimously favourable. Mr Parnell, speaking at Limerick on 24th May 1891, while the measure was still under discussion in the House of Commons, said: "What will this measure do? It will do two things. It will enormously benefit the Irish tenant-farmers, and it will greatly benefit the Irish labourers. . . . How will it benefit the Irish farmers? It will enable about 200,000 of the 520,000 Irish tenant-farmers to become the owners of their holdings at a reduction of about 40 per cent. That is to say, the man who now pays £50 a year will get his holding for considerably under £30 a year, and others in like proportion; and at the end of forty-nine years he will have his holding for nothing. . . . Let me now explain what it will do for



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the labourer. It will give to the Irish labourer, for the purpose of building houses and fencing in small plots of land, the sum of £115,000 a year in perpetuity—that is to say, the £115,000 will every year be spent under the provisions of this measure for the building of cottages for Irish labourers.” And Mr John Redmond, the present leader of the Irish Party, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review* for May 1892, wrote: “In spite of its defects it must be acknowledged that the Land Act of last year is a great measure, and for my part I do not grudge Mr Balfour any meed of praise he may be entitled to on its account.”

Such eulogiums, coming from men who for years had strained every nerve to destroy his reputation and thwart his policy, must have been very gratifying to Mr Balfour. After so many years of wearying toil, of patient industry, and of hard fighting, Mr Balfour must have experienced feelings of deep satisfaction and genuine thankfulness in successfully achieving his object of bringing happiness and prosperity to the country whose affairs he was called upon at such a critical time to administer, by passing legislation which constrained the blessing of the Irish leaders and the profound gratitude of the Irish people.

Under a section of this great Act, a Congested Districts Board was constituted, the work of which is dealt with in a separate chapter.

The following is a list of the Irish measures passed into law during Mr Balfour's term of office as Irish Secretary:—

1887. The Crimes Act, which proclaimed the worst districts.

The Land Act, authorising the revision of judicial rents.



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1888. Land Purchase Act, an amending Act voting an additional £5,000,000 on the terms of the Ashbourne Act of 1885.
1889. Improved Drainage and Light Railways Act.
1891. Supplementary Act giving further facilities for the construction of Light Railways.  
Land Purchase Act and Congested Districts Act.  
Long Leaseholders admitted to advantages of Land Purchase Act.
1892. Effected by Mr Balfour after his accession to the leadership of the House of Commons:—  
Introduction of Local Government (Ireland) Bill.  
Passed second reading by majority of 92.  
Withdrawn in March just prior to the Dissolution.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HIS TOUR IN IRELAND

ON his accession to the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr Balfour, with admirable foresight, clearly recognised that whatever the political grievances of Ireland might be, no radical change for good could be effected in the condition of the people until the economic problem of the country had received attention. While Irish politicians were bent on exacting vengeance for their country's wrongs by violent agitation, Mr Balfour set himself to permanently alleviate her sufferings by common-sense legislation.

When Mr Balfour assumed the reins of Irish administration, he found the transit facilities of the country were so entirely inadequate, and those that existed so primitive and disorganised, as to render absolutely impossible the proper development of its resources. Until cheap, direct, and efficient means of transport to market centres were established, the profitable extension of the fisheries, the development of agriculture and live-stock breeding, and the introduction of new industries, were obviously impracticable.

Mr Balfour determined, therefore, to draw up a scheme of Light Railways, which found legislative form in the Light Railways Act of 1889. In the construction of the railways, Irish labour was employed as far as possible, thus relieving much of the distress



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that was then prevalent in the country. The chief engineer in charge of the construction of the railways testified to the beneficial influence which the regular employment exercised on the habits of the people. At the beginning, men were so slovenly as to be almost worthless; but under the supervision of the English foremen they quickly improved, and they eventually developed into labourers of first-rate quality, equal to any in the United Kingdom. This was the first step in a policy that has been productive of the highest good to the Irish nation.

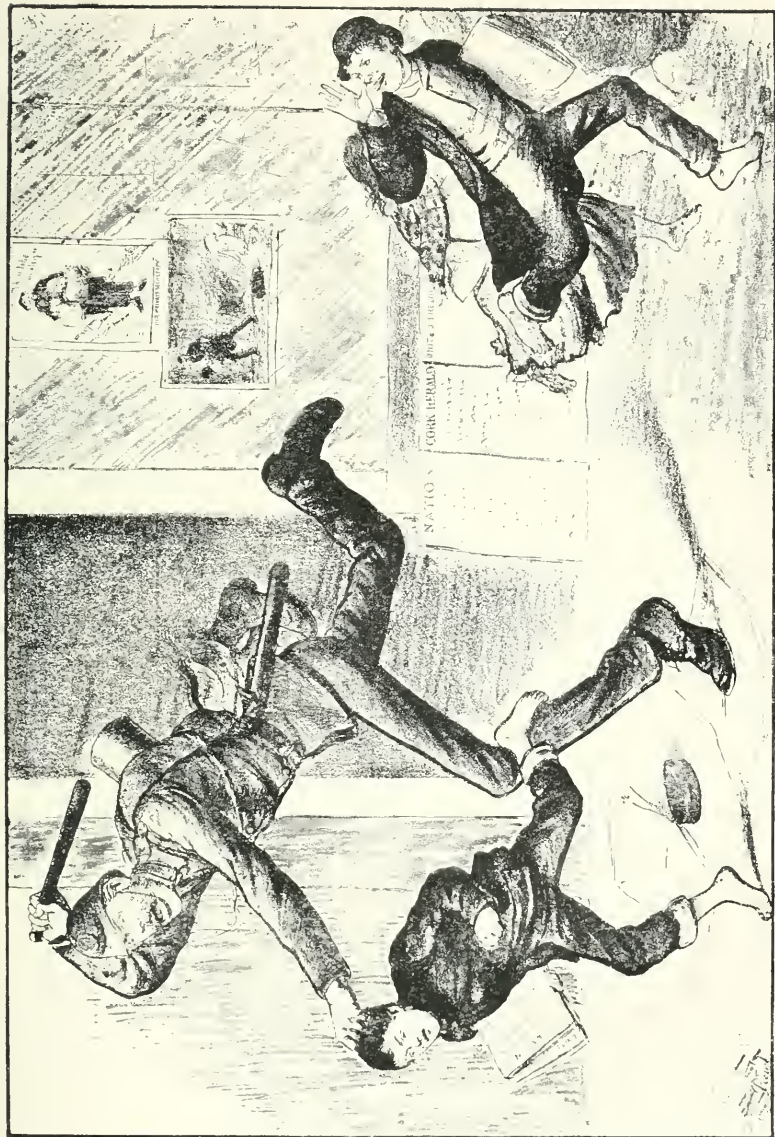
An incidental benefit conferred by the construction of these railways has been the opening of the wild and beautiful coast of Western Ireland to a profitable and rapidly-increasing tourist business.

But, to his everlasting credit, Mr Balfour did much more than authorise the use of money and read reports of what was being done: he proceeded himself to the scene of operations, to supervise the expenditure of the grants, and to gain a practical acquaintance with the needs of the Irish people.

Leaving Dublin on 26th October 1890, he started on a tour through the congested districts of the West of Ireland. He was accompanied by his sister, Miss Balfour; his Under-Secretary, Sir West-Ridgeway; and his two private secretaries, Mr George Wyndham, M.P., and Mr Browning. The object of his journey was the furtherance of his Light Railway schemes, and the consideration of the local claims and representations of the inhabitants of the districts he visited.

It was freely predicted that, owing to his coercionist *régime* and the campaign of agitation conducted against his general policy, he would meet with a hostile reception. Happily, his experience was just the reverse: everywhere he went he was received with





*By kind permission of the Editor of "The Shamrock."*

## HOW BALFOUR MAKES WAR ON THE NATIONAL PRESS







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heartly enthusiasm and genuine goodwill. At the railway stations, and at his hotels, he was welcomed by cheering crowds, and in his drives through the country the people never failed to treat him with the greatest respect and cordiality.

All the deputations that waited upon him thanked him heartily for the great benefits that had accrued to the country from his Light Railway policy, and begged him to extend it as much as possible. In his interviews he encouraged the delegates to lay before him in the frankest manner any grievances they wished to complain about, and he listened with the keenest attention to their proposals regarding the extension of the Light Railways.

He mixed freely with the people and the priests, and his bearing to them was characterised by the utmost geniality and respect. On one occasion, when crossing a field, he happened to break a portion of the fence, for which he apologised to some peasants close by. One of them, a woman with a creel of potatoes on her back, quickly reassured him: "We would have knocked down all the walls," she said, "if we had known you was coming"; and one of the men, who seemed to know the purpose of the Chief Secretary's visit, added with ready humour: "Begorra, I would have made his honour a railway into the field."

Many of the priests also expressed their grateful appreciation of his beneficent work. The Rev. Canon Fleming said: "We honour you for the active part you have taken in promoting the construction of Light Railways, not only because it has helped to tide over temporary difficulties, but because it will confer lasting benefit on the country." Another priest, the Rev. Michael Martin, spoke of him as one of the best Chief Secretaries Ireland had ever had, and said that history would yet



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record the great services he had rendered to the Irish people.

The cordiality of Mr Balfour's welcome was all the more significant because the Irish Members and the Irish press had warned the people against showing any enthusiasm, as it would be interpreted, so they alleged, as evincing approval of the Government's policy. The *Freeman*, in its bitter chagrin at the hearty welcome he had received, wrote: "It is hard to blame the wretched people, who have hunger staring them in the face, if they gathered together to cheer the Chief Secretary, who, they are told, comes as a ministering angel to relieve their distresses. Naturally a few shopkeepers fawn upon Mr Balfour, nor is it so monstrous as at first sight appears, that an occasional priest should be induced by anxiety for the people under his care to hold intercourse with Mr Balfour."

On the same day that Mr Balfour was being welcomed with tumultuous cheering in Donegal, Mr W. Redmond, M.P., was addressing a meeting of the National League in Dublin, and his furious disappointment at the attitude of the people found expression in the following foolish comment:—"Mr Balfour's tour is one of the meanest of his acts. He dare not go to face the men of Mayo without his sister, for he knew that no matter in what light they regarded him, they would not do anything discourteous to a lady."

Speaking on his tour at Londonderry, where he had a reception of extraordinary enthusiasm, Mr Balfour said: "Everywhere I have found the liveliest gratitude for the proposals of the Government, and the greatest interest in the projected schemes for the amelioration of the material condition of the peasantry."

It is notable evidence of Mr Balfour's genuine love for the Irish people that he undertook so cheerfully



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the hardships this tour involved, for it was by no means a pleasure excursion for him. He worked almost night and day at the execution of his administrative duties, amid all the discomforts of his travels, which were far from being insignificant and would have severely tried a more robust constitution than his. The weather throughout was extremely unfavourable, the party experiencing some of the worst thunderstorms ever known on the coast. The roads, too, were exceedingly rough, and it was frequently found necessary to walk over large tracts of boggy country. To add to his personal difficulties, early in his travels, Mr Balfour unfortunately broke the thumb of his right hand in attempting to lower an awkward window in one of the cars he used for travelling in, and the injury caused him considerable pain.

On his return to England, he made a speech at Liverpool on 19th November 1890 on the problem of the congested districts, and gave a delightful and most interesting description of his tour. "The general impression," he said, "left upon a casual traveller is that you are dealing with a population not congested in the sense of being crowded, but congested by not being able to draw from their holdings a safe and sufficient livelihood for themselves and their children, whose condition trembles constantly on the verge of want, and when the potato crop fails goes over that margin and becomes one of extreme and even dangerous destitution." Referring to his reception, and the object of his tour, he said: "Although I have been vehemently attacked by Irish Members of Parliament, and the Irish press, in respect to my short tour, let me say that I not only have no reason to complain of the reception given me by the population more immediately concerned, but I have every reason



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to be gratified with it. I did not go with any political object. I went with the distinct purpose of seeing the distress where distress was said to prevail, of judging, so far as I could judge by personal inspection, of the accuracy of the reports I had received, and of forming in my own mind the best scheme I could for meeting the difficulties which presented themselves. That was the spirit in which I went, and that was the spirit in which I was received. They were people—and I speak not merely of the people, but of those who are largely the leaders of the people in those districts, I mean the priests—who spoke to me as rational men, about a difficulty in which both were equally and vitally concerned. They met me with the most perfect good taste; they met me with the utmost frankness; they never concealed their own opinions any more than I concealed mine. They met me with a courtesy, a kindness, and a business spirit which I will not thank them for, because I am sure it was natural to them, which I am sure that any man who had the good of the people at heart would have felt; but they met me in a spirit very different from the Dublin politicians. Few things in my experience as Irish Secretary—and I can assure you it has been a very entertaining one—few things have entertained me more than the shriek of fury and indignation of the Nationalist press, and the Nationalist Members sat up when they found I was travelling in Galway, in Mayo, and in Donegal.”

He charged the Irish Members with adopting tactics that were ruining the country, and, speaking of the condition of the peasantry, he said: “The people have not the habits of continuous, almost painful industry, which some small holders in other countries show. Their system of agriculture is a wretched system, and





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## THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

BLOODY BALFOUR.—"All England is gazing at these horrors: I must put out the light and stab the torch-bearer, or the game is up."







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their fishing, compared with Scottish or Manx, is wretched. They have not got the boats, nor the knowledge, nor the seamanship, though I think all these may be given to them. Speaking broadly, the peasant of the congested districts is either a fisherman, a labourer, or a farmer; and I say that, if you are to raise him out of the condition in which he is at this moment, you must make him a better farmer, or a better fisherman, or a better labourer." He condemned intermittent spasmodic outbursts of charity as tending to rob the recipients of self-respect. "The task," he continued, "is a great one, and not alone one of public works or expenditure, but one of changing in a large measure the habits of a people, and though this can be effected by kindly means it will not be very rapid." "Take that to heart and fear not," he added in tones of determined cheerfulness. "For my own part, this problem of the West of Ireland, and the analogous and connected problem of the West of Scotland is one which for many years has engaged my earnest thought and attention. The result of all that I have thought upon it, and all that I have read upon it, is not to root out the germ of hope in my heart. On the contrary, I believe that if we all co-operate—in England and in Ireland—if the people themselves can be got to see wherein their own salvation consists, the problem itself, though slow, is sure of solution. I, at all events, for one will not shrink from it."

He then proceeded to draw a vivid picture of one of the scenes he had witnessed: "I would that some of you could have accompanied me upon one walk which I took to the south coast of County Donegal. We were no searchers after the picturesque; but on one occasion we walked through a village on this stormy coast, at which we were told was one of the



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finest pieces of scenery on the West Coast of Ireland. We walked up between the poor hovels and wretched holdings, looking at the people digging out their black and rotten potatoes, and watching the wretched twice-shorn sheep attempting to get a living on the poor pastures that surrounded these people's homes. We walked on, and over the brow—not a thousand yards from these houses—we came to the scene, from which you could not see the dwellings and habitations of man. We looked down, and we saw before us some of the finest cliff scenery, I believe, in the United Kingdom. We looked down, and we saw the long rhythm of the Atlantic coming in beneath us strongly from the west, and I think that to every one of us who saw that, the bitter discord between the poverty, the narrowness, and the squalor of the scene just passed through, as compared with the spacious splendour of the scene we were looking on, brought home to us how the work of man, or rather the carelessness and the indifference of man, had marred some of the most magnificent of Nature's handiwork. But I think that had you been there with us, you would have felt, as I assuredly felt at the time, that we, the British people, are bound to do our part—not a small part—towards remedying a state of things which can be remedied, and which, if it is not remedied, will redound to the discredit, not of British statesmanship alone, but of the manhood and of the strength of Ireland.”

This speech, throbbing with sympathy and an intense desire to relieve the distress of the Irish people, shows how deeply Mr Balfour had been impressed by his tour, and how acutely he felt the responsibilities and obligations of his position.

The relief works undertaken during Mr Balfour's



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administration for the immediate relief of exceptional distress, were excellently well planned and executed, and have been of permanent benefit. They included the construction of harbours and piers, the laying of roads, and the erection of other public works of great usefulness in opening up and developing the country.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD

THE Irish Secretary was not the man to waste the experience and knowledge he had gained by his tour in the Congested Districts of the West of Ireland, nor to create expectations he did not intend to fulfil. The result of his travels in the West of Ireland was a great extension of his Light Railway Schemes, and the creation of the Congested Districts Board constituted under a section of the Land Purchase Act of 1891. In Mr Balfour's words: "It was the first organised attempt to deal with a most difficult and anxious problem," and he anticipated that it would confer incalculable benefits upon Ireland.

The Act provided that the sum of £1,500,000 drawn from the surplus of the Irish Church Fund should be placed at the disposal of a Congested Districts Board. The Board consisted of a body of Irishmen predominantly unofficial, and was equipped with powers to stimulate and improve agriculture in all its branches; to supervise the breeding and to improve the standard of live-stock; to direct migration and emigration; to develop the fisheries, and to introduce new industries that had prospects of becoming sources of wealth to the community. The Board was allowed the widest possible discretion both as to projects and methods; in fact, it had practically a free hand to do everything



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possible with the money at its disposal to ameliorate the misery of the Irish peasantry in the congested districts. "What the Board has to do," said Mr Balfour, "is to consider in its whole scope and bearing the question of the great poverty and misery of the West."

It is difficult to speak too highly of the wisdom and sympathy with which the Board grappled with its gigantic task. Its first proceeding was to institute a searching and comprehensive investigation into the distress; to ascertain its causes; and then out of the experience thus acquired to formulate proposals for its permanent relief.

After months of the most thorough examination the Board issued its report on the congested districts. The report stated that the people existed in a condition of semi-starvation amid the most filthy and miserable surroundings. The hovels they inhabited were badly ventilated, the accommodation was inadequate for decent living, and the sanitary arrangements were altogether defective. The furniture and bedding were of the crudest character; the clothing of the people was so ragged that it scarcely covered their bodies; their diet consisted solely of vegetables and perhaps a little salt fish; and almost without exception all the lower classes were verging on starvation. No provision was made against bad seasons, and any failure in the potato crop meant immediate economic disaster, and often a lingering death by starvation. The methods of agriculture were of the clumsiest and most primitive character; the drainage was entirely inadequate; the supply of manure was far too small, and the weeding of crops was quite neglected.

Keeping in view the fact that their business was



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not to administer charity but to encourage industry and self-help, and to provide instruction for those who were willing to improve themselves, the Board entered upon its beneficial work of applying permanent remedies for the wretched state of affairs its investigation had disclosed. Its policy was admirably set forth by Mr Balfour: "If the Congested Districts Board," he said, "is to do any good, it must not only provide the machinery of production, but it must also teach the people how the machinery is to be used."

The Board concentrated its energies on the improvement and encouragement of those industries natural to the country—namely: Fishing, Agriculture, Live-stock Breeding, and the purchase and development of Model Estates.

When the Board instituted its investigation, it found that the people on the West Coast of Ireland were extremely ignorant and superstitious. On the islands, especially, the inhabitants lived in a state of semi - barbarism that one would have thought impossible in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century. Smuggling and illicit brewing were common sources of livelihood, and the general life of the people was deplorably low. They lived on the crudest form of food, supplied by the crudest methods. The superstition of the people was remarkable. They believed that the priests were invested with wonderful powers, and could raise the dead to life. One frequently heard statements such as this: "He's a good Father Lavelle: he has never turned a man into a goat on this island."

Both on the islands and along the West Coast, the inhabitants had no idea of the wealth contained in the seas that washed their shores; and even if they had known it, they were utterly unable to use the knowledge



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to their advantage. An expert well acquainted with the districts writes: "I have seen the sea boiling with shoals of mackerel off Achil Island, and no one putting out to catch them. Further, even when they have made a large take, I have seen heaps of mackerel rotting on the beach, because the people were ignorant how to ream and cure it, and had no system of marketing it."

A typical instance of the development of the fisheries by the Congested Districts Board on the West Coast is furnished by the island of Arran. The natives were fairly good fishermen in their own crude way, but they had neither the inclination nor the equipment to exploit the wealth of their fishing grounds. The Congested Districts Board therefore subsidised seven boats from Arklow, manned by experienced skippers and crews, in order to give the Arran waters a fair trial. As the islanders were so unenterprising and stupid, two philanthropic ladies, Miss Skeritt and Miss Mansfield, chartered boats at their own expense, and manned them with natives from the mainland.

A steamer from Galway was subsidised to carry the fish, ice hulks were moored off the island, and all preparations were made for properly conducting the operations. Unfortunately, at the beginning, severe weather rendered all efforts futile, and for some time no success was achieved. Eventually, however, the weather became favourable, and in a single night 73,000 fish were netted and safely despatched to market. The Arklow boats earned from £300 to £400 each, while Miss Skeritt's and Miss Mansfield's boats, manned by untrained natives, earned only £70. This success was followed by many more, and after a time the spectacle of strangers carrying away hundreds of pounds worth of fish had its effect on the islanders and the inhabitants



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of the western coast, and the value of the Arran fisheries is to-day an established fact.

Originally great obstacles had to be overcome, for the natives had practically to be forced to engage in the work. The greatest difficulty was experienced in manning the boats provided by Miss Skeritt and Miss Mansfield, but at length an enlightened Catholic priest, who was in cordial sympathy with the aims of the Congested Districts Board, by exerting every influence in his power, persuaded six men, greatly against their will, to accept service, and took them out to the boat. On their arrival, one of them was so terrified that he obstinately refused to go on board, and despite all the pressure of the priest, who pronounced against him the worst threat he could, namely, "that he would marry him to a widow," he persisted in returning ashore. In the rough weather which the boat encountered, the five men became so terror-stricken that they had to be put under hatches in order to prevent them from being drowned. But eventually they gained confidence, and their comparatively large earnings attracted others. Before long there was no lack of men ready to man the boats.

Another instance of remarkable progress is furnished by Downings Bay, in the district of Carrigart, where great success has resulted from the joint efforts of Lady Leitrim and the Congested Districts Board. The record of progress here reads more like romance than hard fact. In 1888 a few donkeys with panniers, and occasionally a cart, were sufficient to market the fish caught. Ten years later, in 1898, two special chartered steamers went backwards and forwards to Glasgow daily with full cargoes of fresh fish, and these steamers took away only a portion of the fish caught. Twelve boats under the charge of the Board's instructors sold, in the space



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of eleven weeks, £1846 worth of herrings over and above the catch of the local boats that were without instructors. Previous to the Board going to Downings Bay, a local fisherman would have been particularly fortunate to dispose of his small take throughout the entire year for £5, whereas the average cash receipts per man for the best eleven weeks of the year 1898 averaged £30, 15s. 4d. The earnings in these few weeks mean comfort and ease of mind for an entire year to the families who have their bread-winners serving on the boats in charge of the instructors.

Similar successful work has been done by the Board right along the West Coast: at Tory Island, the Rosses, and the Glenties. Since the Congested Districts Board undertook the development of the Rosses, the results have been surprisingly good. In the year 1892 only a few hundred pounds were earned by all the fishermen in the district, whereas the earnings during 1897 amounted to nearly £15,000.

And at the present time everywhere down the coast, where it is possible to do so, fishing facilities are being extended, and new ones initiated; harbours are being improved; cheap but serviceable piers are being built; curing establishments are being set up, and expert Norwegian fish-curers have been engaged by the Board to give instruction to the people free of cost; systematic transport arrangements are being arranged; and an efficient system of marketing is being organised. The improvement in the moral and intellectual stamina of the inhabitants by this provision of regular employment has been very striking, and some of them at anyrate know the statesman to whom they owe the change.

The Board, however, with admirable foresight, has not restricted its efforts to the creation of new sources of livelihood: it has also taken steps for the



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education of the people and their children, and for the reformation of their mode of living. The aim of the Board has been to uplift the people in every direction, morally, physically, and commercially; and to engender self-respect and habits of cleanliness, industry, and thrift. In numerous schools the most useful technical instruction is now being given by experienced Arklow captains engaged for the purpose. The children are taught how to construct and mend nets, and are generally prepared to efficiently engage in their future occupation.

The work of the Congested Districts Board in regard to Agriculture presents similar features to that of the Fisheries. At the outset, it found that the standard of living among the peasantry was extremely poor, and the repulsive and unwholesome custom of housing cattle along with the family was very general. Their diet was entirely inadequate to maintain health; and the habitations were utterly wretched and comfortless. The whole income from every source of many families did not exceed £15 a year, and on this pittance they eked out their existence. It is a marvel how such a small sum could possibly cover the payments for rent, taxes, clothing, and food, and all the other expenses of a family for a whole year; and it is no wonder that the rent was often not forthcoming.

Throughout large areas there were no resident landlords or gentry, the chief man in the locality being the parish priest, who, with the exception of the doctor, was usually the only person in the community who had received a good education. The people had no knowledge of scientific farming: the soil was in a greatly deteriorated condition, the fields were choked with weeds, the quality of the





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## RIDING THE PIG







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seeds used was poor,—even the potatoes were sown wrongly; and in every respect the most primitive methods were in vogue.

Although changes were tardily adopted, the Board soon effected a great improvement. Up-to-date methods of agriculture were taught, scientific farming knowledge was imparted, fruit-trees were planted, and thorough and comprehensive operations were initiated. Areas of ground were purchased, and model plots developed as practical examples to the natives. Forestry was also encouraged in those parts that suffered from drought, and irrigation works were commenced. The efforts of the Board have been crowned with great success, and many of the districts are now in a comparatively flourishing condition, and in none of them need widespread famine be feared.

Another important phase of the Board's work has been the encouragement and improvement of live-stock breeding. Their inquiry revealed the fact that the deterioration in the quality of the cattle of all sorts had been most alarming, the live-stock on the farms being composed of the most diminutive, wretched, scraggy lot of animals imaginable. The Board took measures to stop the propagation of these inferior beasts, and to greatly improve the breed by the importation of first-class cattle. They had to contend with the greatest difficulties, and to overcome the rooted prejudices of the people, who were incredulous of their beneficent intentions, and regarded their efforts and advice with intense suspicion. But this distrust gradually gave way before the persistent efforts of the Board and the beneficial results obtained, and was superseded by the utmost willingness to learn and co-operate, and the deepest gratitude for the advantages conferred.



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One of the most successful features of the Board's work has been the introduction of new industries. In order to give the people a proper training, technical schools were established, and instruction given in all kinds of needlework, weaving, and carpet-making. The pupils showed remarkable aptitude, and many prizes have been won by the schools for excellence of work. Classes for general domestic training were also formed; and the men and boys, besides receiving instruction in making and mending nets, were taught carpentry and other useful arts. In order to make the teaching thoroughly useful and practical, factories were erected by the Board, and fitted up with the most modern machinery, and all the instruction given in the schools was thus exemplified by practical illustrations. By this means a most thorough and valuable training was secured, and the superior skill shown by the pupils in their work at the factories has abundantly justified the most sanguine expectations. The wool-spinning and weaving industries have been a particularly gratifying success, and bear testimony to the wisdom of the Board in its selection of fresh industries.

The work that has been done, and is being done, by the Congested Districts Board will remain a lasting monument to the wise and sympathetic statesmanship of Mr Balfour. To him belongs the credit of having uplifted large numbers of the Irish people from the "slough of despond" into which prolonged and successive periods of depression and wretchedness had plunged them.

By his beneficent administration Mr Balfour has not only educated them to a cleaner and higher mode of life, but he has given them the means to attain it. Instead of being sunk in degrading superstition,



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and living with their cattle in foul hovels unfit for human habitation, many of them are now comfortably housed, and their cattle are lodged in separate tenements. Education and steady industry have resulted in security of income, and imparted a freshness and vigour to their lives. There is now a spring and joy about the inhabitants that has long been absent from their feelings, and they have proved that under proper treatment there are no more steady or efficient work-people, and no more peaceful and contented subjects than the Irish peasantry. No wonder that, despite the vilest misrepresentation, the name of Arthur Balfour is blessed in many an Irish household, and that there is no other statesman more beloved by the Irish people.

The results of Mr Balfour's policy through the Congested Districts Board are written large in the prosperity and happiness of considerable portions of Ireland, which, previous to his accession to the Chief Secretaryship, were places of utter misery and desolation. The results attained have also a high political importance that cannot be ignored by any student of Irish politics. They prove that the truest friend of Ireland is not the political and the religious agitator, but the man who promotes her commercial prosperity; who enlightens the inhabitants to the possibilities of their country and generously helps them to develop its resources; and who educates the people to a higher mode of life and improves their daily environment.

Mr Balfour justly claims that the Congested Districts Board "has shown, by innumerable successful experiments on land and sea, the lines upon which the solution of this anxious and difficult problem is ultimately to be found." The causes of Irish distress needed no heroic measures, but a practical, common-



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sense remedy, and that remedy has been discovered and applied by Mr Balfour's Congested Districts Board, and there is no one to-day who questions the efficacy of its work, or the nobility and industry of its agents.

At the beginning, some very impatient and unjust criticisms were passed upon the Board because it did not directly proceed to administer relief to the distressed districts. But its members acted far more wisely in first instituting a thorough and searching investigation, which furnished them with the experience and the accurate knowledge on which alone was it possible to base a scheme that could be fraught with such immediate blessing and permanent benefit to the Irish people.

To-day, all shades and sections of politicians unite in its praise. Mr Davitt, in supporting a Bill proposed by the Irish Party for largely extending the powers of the Board, said: "On work of this kind I base the strongest hope of a successful remedy; it has been attended with good results wherever tried." Mr W. Redmond spoke of it as "the only Board in Ireland which receives anything like confidence, and I appeal for an extension of its operations." Mr Dillon, the late leader of the Irish Party, eulogised it as "the only really successful remedy that has ever been applied."

No greater praise of Mr Balfour's policy could possibly be desired than these tributes from the Irish leaders, who thus prove, by their own speech, the falseness of the predictions they made when the Act was introduced that the Board would be a failure.

It is not the least gratifying feature of the Board's achievement that it has raised its work above the passion of party politics. The development and administration of its policy have never been tainted or influenced in



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any way by partisan or political considerations. Conservative and Liberal Ministers alike have worked with a single desire to forward its noble mission, and have left it free to act with a single view to the welfare of the Irish peasantry in the congested districts, for whose sake Mr Balfour created it.



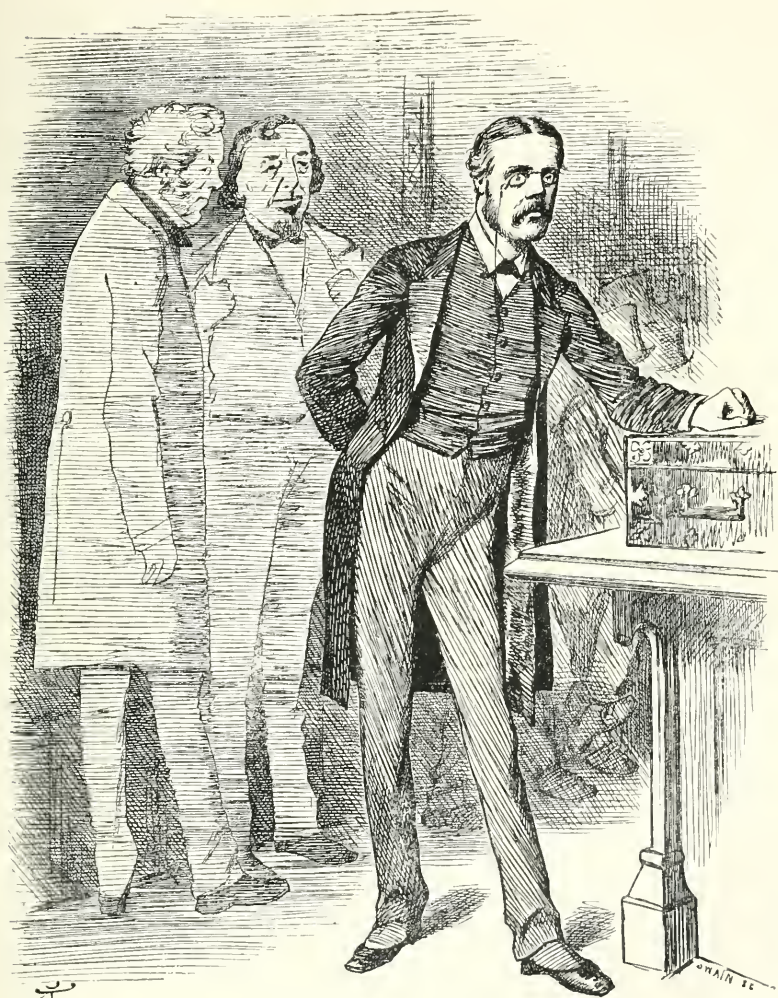
## CHAPTER X

### LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

THE death of Mr W. H. Smith on 6th October 1891 left vacant the coveted position of Leader of the House of Commons. There were three candidates for the post—Mr Goschen, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and Mr Arthur Balfour. The preponderance of public and Parliamentary opinion ran strongly in favour of the popular Irish Secretary, whose resolute administration of Irish affairs had proved him to be a statesman of rare qualities, and a parliamentary leader of great promise such as the Conservative Party needed. He was pre-eminently the favourite of the hour, and the man for the post, and by offering his nephew the leadership, Lord Salisbury wisely interpreted the prevalent feeling in his party, and the choice of the country. Under the most promising auspices, and with the unanimous approval, not only of his own party but also of the Opposition, Mr Balfour stepped into a position which so many illustrious statesmen in the past had filled.

One of Mr Goschen's most enthusiastic supporters for the leadership was Mr Balfour himself, who regarded his colleague as a masterly debater and a man of wide experience. But the Chancellor, recognising the peculiar fitness of his younger friend for the post, in his speech at Cambridge, amidst loud cheering, said





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### "THE COMING OF ARTHUR"

SHADE OF PAM.—"H'm! A little young for the part, don't you think?"

SHADE OF DIZZY.—"Well, yes! We had to wait for it a good many years. But I think he'll do."







## LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

there was a universal desire that Mr Balfour should lead the Unionist forces in the House of Commons. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach also waived his claim, and on 18th October Mr Balfour was officially appointed leader of the historic assembly of which he had already proved himself to be a distinguished ornament. He succeeded to the position purely on the ground of merit and personal fitness for its duties. At the time, he was adverse to the members of the Salisbury family occupying too prominent a place in the Government, but had Lord Salisbury again pursued the policy he adopted in 1886, when Mr Balfour was deprived of Cabinet rank for this same reason, he would have gone against the unmistakable opinion prevalent in Parliament, and the generally expressed desire of the Unionist Party.

Mr Balfour had the powerful support of the *Times*, which, quoting Shakespeare's words: "England loves a man," ably advocated his claims. In a leading article on the day following the official announcement of his appointment it said: "To proved administrative capacity, the powers of a forcible and dexterous debater, and a high unswerving courage, the new First Lord of the Treasury adds a popularity and a personal influence that no one else on his own side possesses in anything like the same degree. Mr Balfour can rally to him, as nobody else can, the militant strength of both sections of the Unionist Party. He can organise their forces for defence, and can lead them with inspiring energy against the enemy's position. . . . Only the dullest malignity of partisanship can pretend that Mr Balfour has not amply earned his promotion to the highest position in the Unionist Party after that of the Prime Minister. It is absurd to talk of nepotism when it is notorious



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that Lord Salisbury could no more lift his nephew above the heads of other men if the claims of Mr Balfour had not been supported by an overwhelming body of Unionist opinion, than Mr Gladstone could or would have made either of his sons his Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1869 or 1880."

The *Spectator* also urged his claims, but with a slight mixture of admonition. The Liberal Party received the announcement with general satisfaction. So strong a partisan as Mr W. T. Stead, writing at the time, said the Liberal Party and the nation ought to feel "a patriotic pride and a national self-satisfaction at the thought that the party which was discredited by Mr Disraeli's theatricality, and compromised by the acrobatic antics of Lord Randolph Churchill, has at last become respectable under the leadership of an honest, patriotic, and high-souled gentleman." Everybody, he said, trusted Mr Balfour, and the Conservatives could not do without him. "He is a man of conviction as well as a man of genius, whose patriotism is neither a theatricality nor a phrase."

It was amidst a chorus of such generous approval and appreciation that Mr Balfour, at the comparatively early age of forty-three, entered upon his onerous and responsible duties. Parliament met on the 10th of the following February. Mr Balfour's first appearance in the House was the signal for a storm of cheers. Sir William Harcourt, in the absence of Mr Gladstone, congratulated the new Leader on his appointment. He said the leadership of the House was the highest position which a subject could hold, and one which required high qualifications. "No doubt, in the course of our debates in the honourable contest of Parliamentary warfare," he continued, "we shall often cross swords with the the right honourable gentleman, but



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we shall always be ready to render him, as we would expect from him, every assistance in maintaining the dignity and privileges of this House."

Mr Balfour, who on rising to reply met with a great reception, thanked the Leader of the Opposition for his remarks, and, proceeding to move a vote of condolence with the Royal Family on the death of the Duke of Clarence, he said the people of this country feelingly entered into the joys and sorrows of the Royal Family, to whom they were attached by bonds of loyalty and affection. In the sorrow which had fallen upon her, the Queen had the sympathy of the nation.

The Leader of the House next referred to the death of Mr W. H. Smith, by whom the House had been "so ably led, and by whom our debates have been conducted with such admirable discretion and wisdom." His earnest desire, he said, was to walk in the footsteps of his predecessor. He paid an eloquent tribute to the value of his late leader's sympathy and advice, and his claims to the admiration of the House, irrespective of party, and described him as one who had "done his duty in maintaining the dignity and in promoting the usefulness of the greatest representative assembly in the world."

The remainder of Mr Balfour's speech dealt with Sir William Harcourt's criticism upon the Queen's Speech, and the Irish Local Government Bill. The *Times*, in its leader, remarked that Mr Balfour had entered upon the duties of his new office with "a zest and spirit that are of good omen for the future."

On 18th February 1892 Mr Balfour introduced his Irish Local Government Bill, which passed its second reading by a majority of ninety-two. The Leader of the House, who showed a complete mastery of a very



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complicated and technical measure, took charge of the Bill when it went into Committee, but a dissolution was impending, and the time proved too short for it to pass its third reading.

Mr Balfour issued his election address on 24th June 1892. It mainly dealt with the Irish Question. "Through six eventful years," he said, "we have stood between you and the manifold injustices, dangers, and absurdities of any scheme of Home Rule involving a separate executive for Ireland. We can say, with confidence," he continued, "that an Irish Parliament controlling an Irish Executive cannot itself be controlled by an Imperial Parliament, and that, so far as the security of the loyalists in Ireland is concerned, the proved supremacy of the Imperial Parliament in such a constitution could be nothing better than a sham." The only crimes of the minority in Ireland, he said, were their religion and loyalty, and the policy of Mr Gladstone would only result in increasing the difficulties of the Irish Question and retarding social reform in England. After referring to the legislative record of the Salisbury Administration, he proceeded to outline its future programme, which, he said, would include Local Government for Ireland; the encouragement of thrift; the protection of workmen; provision for the poor in old age, and the redistribution of seats.

Not only on their past Parliamentary record, but on their courageous conduct of Foreign Affairs, as a member of the Government, he once more asked for that confidence from his constituents "which in the past it has been my proudest boast to have secured and retained."

Mr Balfour opened his campaign at Manchester with inspiring vigour and enthusiasm on 28th June.



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He spoke twice on 30th June; and on 1st July, in his speeches, he replied to Mr Gladstone, and answered a number of questions from his constituents. On 3rd July he spoke at Leek on behalf of the Unionist candidate, and on the 5th addressed two meetings of working-men in his own constituency. The following day he visited Wigan, and returning to Manchester in the evening had the satisfaction of hearing the figures announced recording his victory, amidst a scene of the wildest enthusiasm. They read as follows:—

Balfour, A. J. ( <i>C.</i> ) . . . .	5147
Munro, Prof. ( <i>L.</i> ) . . . .	4749

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Conservative majority . . . .	398
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Speaking at the Central Conservative Club from the staircase after the declaration of the poll he said: "The phalanx of Unionism in Manchester had remained unshaken and their ranks unbroken. The election had drawn closer together the two wings of the party." He concluded by heartily thanking those who had worked to make the victory possible.

Parliament met on 4th August, the General Election having given Mr Gladstone a majority of forty. There were 355 members returned pledged to Home Rule and 315 against. The latter included forty-six Liberal Unionists, their number having been reduced by twenty as a result of the election.

Mr H. W. Lucy in his Diary of 1892 wrote, that when Mr Balfour stepped briskly into the House he was "hailed by a ringing cheer from his supporters. He wore a pale pink carnation, and as he beamed upon his applauding friends, and shook hands with those who pressed around him, he looked much more



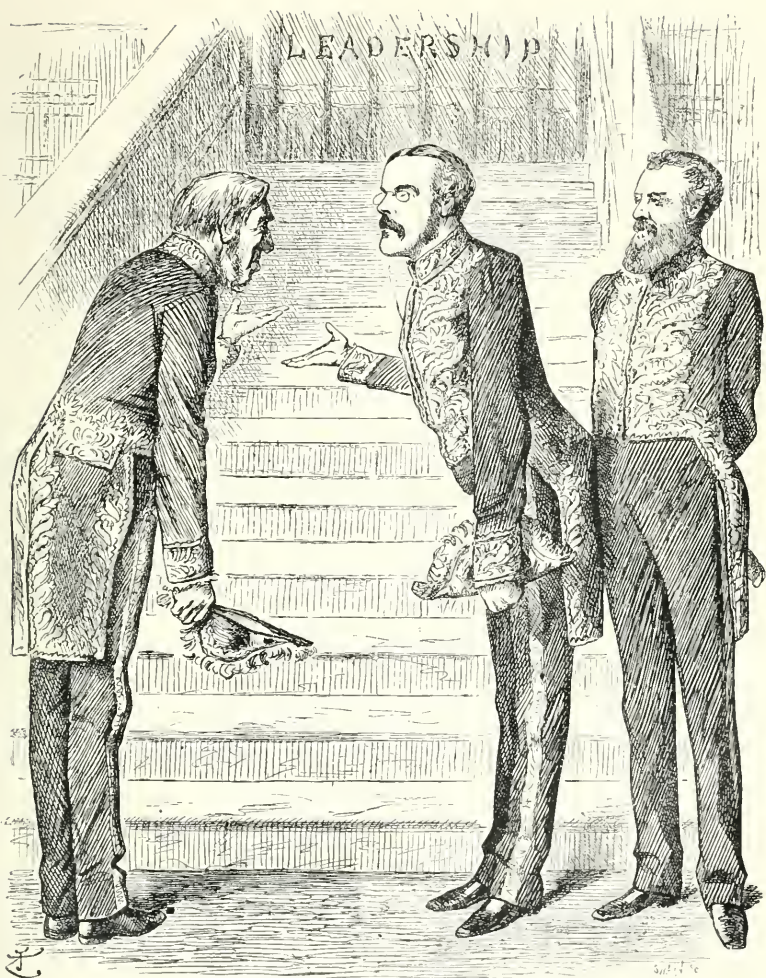
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certain of approaching victory than conscious of pending defeat."

Business began in earnest on 7th August, when Mr Asquith moved an amendment to the Address, stating that the Government did not possess the confidence of the country. Mr Balfour spoke the following evening after Mr Gladstone had delivered his last speech as Leader of the Opposition, and in a vigorous reply he said his party had retained office because they had a right to know what were the terms of the Irish alliance, and the policy to be pursued towards that country in the future by their opponents. The Unionist Party, although defeated, looked forward with hope and confidence to the future, while nothing but dismay and perplexity lay before a new Government. Striking a truly optimistic note, he remarked that the Unionist Party knew they would, before long, be called upon to carry out their programme of social reform. The country had given its verdict, believing that the Newcastle Programme would be carried through, but he believed it was destined to be greatly disappointed.

The fatal division was taken on 11th August just before the stroke of midnight. The House was densely crowded, and the greatest excitement prevailed. Mr Balfour was desirous of mustering his full strength; but three of his supporters unfortunately did not arrive to time. The House was clamouring for the division, but its determined young leader was not in a humour to capitulate without a struggle. Mr Chaplin was delegated to hold the bridge until the three stragglers arrived. He was greeted with a hurricane of dissent, and an exciting three-quarters of an hour followed. Howl after howl arose from the crowded benches opposite, but the speaker doggedly stuck to





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**"AFTER YOU!"**

"He believed that every one of them would prefer that someone else should hold that high and honourable office."—Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH at Stockton-on-Tees.







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his guns, using every known oratorical artifice. At the end of twenty minutes, wrote Mr Lucy in his description of the scene, news reached the Treasury bench that one of the strayed revellers had arrived. Mr Chaplin turned to his notes with renewed energy, and twenty minutes later Mr Akers Douglas signalled another sail in sight. At ten minutes to twelve, in a sudden lull in the roar of multitudinous voices, Mr Balfour, who had been enjoying the scene with as complete *abandon* as if no black shadow hung over Downing Street, was heard to remark: "That'll do, Chaplin. All in."

The murmuring and shouts now merged into a mighty cry of "Divide! divide!" The Speaker put the question, both monosyllables being returned in an emphatic and vociferous manner.

Mr Balfour returned early from the division, and, taking up a blotting-pad and a sheet of paper, began his letter to the Queen, just as on a memorable June night in 1885 Mr Gladstone had done. But whilst Mr Gladstone on that famous occasion steadily wrote on, so that when the division was announced he had nothing to do but fill in the figures, Mr Balfour toyed with pen and paper, and smilingly watched the excited throng.

The announcement of the figures — 310 for the Government, and 350 against — by the Speaker was the signal for a great outburst of cheering by the Opposition, who had a few minutes previously lionised their venerable leader. When Mr Balfour rose, his followers, not to be outdone, sprang up *en masse*. The ringing cheer they gave him proved a fitting tribute to the personal power of the young leader whose dauntless courage and brilliant gifts had frequently illumined the otherwise dull progress of the dead Parliament.



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It was a great hour for him, and a good augury for the future; but as he moved "the adjournment of the House until Thursday next" there was no sign of emotion in his face and no inflexion in his voice. Thus ended one of the most exciting and historic of Parliamentary scenes, which brought to a close Mr Balfour's first term as Leader of the House of Commons.



## CHAPTER XI

### HOME RULE

MR BALFOUR entered upon his duties of Opposition Leader in the Parliament of 1893 in buoyant spirits, confident in the belief that the career of the new Ministry, beset as it was by all kinds of difficulties, would be of short duration.

And unquestionably he had good grounds for his optimism. The life of the Government rested entirely on the fidelity of the Irish Nationalists, and even should this prove to be unshakable, their small majority of 40 votes, meagre in itself, was exceptionally precarious, because of the congeries of groups of which the party was composed, each group insisting on their own pet schemes of reform having pre-eminence in the Ministerial programme.

The one great reassuring feature to well-wishers of the Government was the presence of Mr Gladstone, in the full enjoyment of his great talents, as Prime Minister and Leader of the House of Commons. In that one figure all their hopes were centred. He was, in truth, their leader and champion; in him they had boundless confidence; and so long as he remained with them they did not fear the many threatening omens of disaster that were plainly visible on their political horizon.

On the other hand, the Opposition were in the



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highest spirits. The fusion of the Liberal Unionists and the Conservatives had made steady progress, and the leaders of the two parties in the House of Commons were genuinely anxious to act in concert. The imminence of a common danger to the principles they both held bound them together in a common determination to set aside all minor differences that existed between them and to unite in a concentrated resistance to the Irish policy of Mr Gladstone.

At the head of the Opposition was a leader who possessed the absolute confidence of the whole of its now united forces. Mr Balfour could rely upon the enthusiastic loyalty of his followers. Eager for the fray, they were ready and anxious to follow him, jubilant at the prospect of engaging under his leadership in a fight to the bitter end against the Home Rule proposals of the Government.

And while the rank and file were animated by this high spirit, there was no lack of men of great ability and skill to command them during the conflict. The united Conservative and Liberal Unionist chiefs were, indeed, a formidable combination, either for operations in Parliament or in the country. First in political ability among Mr Balfour's lieutenants stood Mr Chamberlain, with his great debating talents and his powers of destructive criticism; and forming a magnificent support were such masters of Parliamentary discussion as Mr Goschen, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr T. W. Russell, and many others. There was, indeed, plenty of material for a battle of giants, and both sides prepared themselves for a prolonged conflict of the keenest and bitterest character.

When Mr Balfour rose on 31st January to take part in the debate on the Address, he was received



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with a remarkable outburst of enthusiasm, in which were united the public admiration and personal regard of his followers. He commented in strong terms on the constitution and action of the Commission appointed to inquire into the position of the evicted tenants of Ireland, characterising it as unfair and attacking its Chairman as one entirely unfitted to impartially execute his duties. He referred to Home Rule as a policy that ran counter to the whole lesson of history, and he said it was regarded with feelings of hatred and aversion by a majority of the people of England and by one-third of the people of Ireland. Against it would be offered the most uncompromising opposition.

On 13th February the Prime Minister introduced his famous Home Rule Bill, or, as it was termed, "A Bill to amend the provision for the Government of Ireland." It was early in the afternoon when the venerable statesman, having passed through the cheering multitude outside, entered the House of Commons. Every seat in the Chamber was occupied, and, as on the last occasion when Mr Gladstone brought in a Home Rule Bill, chairs had to be requisitioned for a number of Members who could not be seated on the benches. The two side galleries, the Distinguished Strangers' gallery, the Diplomatic gallery, and the Peers' gallery were all crowded to excess.

Mr Gladstone's entrance into the House was signalled by a remarkable demonstration. The whole body of Liberal and Irish Members rose to their feet, vociferously cheering, many of them standing on the seats and waving their hats. The applause lasted for several minutes, Members still standing. When it subsided, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were seen taking their places over the clock in



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the Peers' gallery beside the Duke of Teck. At this moment the only vacant seat in the House was that of the Leader of the Opposition, who strolled in just after Mr Gladstone had risen.

The appearance of the Prime Minister at the table drew forth another outburst of extraordinary enthusiasm, his followers again leaping to their feet with thunders of applause.

The Premier's speech lasted two hours, and through it all his magnificent voice showed no sign of exhaustion. His exposition of the Bill was a model of lucidity, and he concluded with a peroration of noble eloquence delivered in tones of deep emotion. "Let me entreat you," he said, "—if it were with my latest breath I would entreat you—to let the dead bury its dead. Cast behind you every recollection of bygone evils, and cherish, love, sustain one another through all the vicissitudes of human affairs in the times that are to come."

When Mr Balfour rose to make his reply on the following day, all the galleries were again crowded to their utmost capacity, with the royal party occupying the same places in the Peers' gallery as on the day previous. Mr Balfour's interposition was received with prolonged and enthusiastic cheering by his supporters, and he rose to the occasion with a speech that ranks as one of his finest Parliamentary efforts. It was distinguished for its trenchant criticism, its great reasoning power, and a luminous analysis of Mr Gladstone's proposals, and it drew forth, again and again, the cheers of his delighted followers. At the outset, he said, before considering whether the measure was good or bad, they had a right to inquire why any Bill was needed on the subject at all. Mr Gladstone was compelled to give the question in 1886 a different



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answer from that which he now returned. Seven years ago he rested the whole strength of his argument upon the absence of social order in Ireland, and urged that the alternative was Home Rule, or else the constant operation of drastic coercion laws. But the dilemma presented in 1886 had been shown by experience to be no dilemma at all, so that a Bill of this magnitude was not justified by the existing condition of affairs in Ireland. Everyone admitted the necessity for having in reserve the power of the Crimes Act, and that necessity arose either out of the chronic agrarian condition of Ireland or out of the fact that it is possible, owing to the unhappy condition of the land question in that country, for persons with a political object to serve to stir up the embers and arouse the flame of criminal agitation. Both these alternatives pointed, not to any necessity for Home Rule, but proved its impossibility. "It points conclusively to the fact," he said, "that until this agrarian question be finally put out of the way, it is criminal to attempt to set up in Ireland a legislature which is to be practically independent of the Imperial Parliament." With reference to the proposals in the Bill concerning the Constabulary, the Civil servants and the Judges, he asserted that public engagements would be disregarded; and, passing next to a consideration of the new electoral machinery created by the measure, he ridiculed the complicated arrangement under which three different kinds of constituents were to be introduced in Ireland. He was unable to see how the projected Legislative Council could afford adequate protection to the owners of land. "It is hard to administer justice," he observed, "when the legislature have a personal interest in the result. How could it be expected that justice would be done



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to the minority who formed the easiest objects of plunder?" Under the new constitutions the Irish representatives in the House of Commons would have a turning voice in regard to the formation of the British Cabinet, and the vital question as to what Bills should be introduced would be determined, not by those who were interested in that legislation, but by eighty gentlemen who were not. Commenting on the financial proposals, he said the House would never consent to hand over to another body its power to deal freely with its own taxation, and nothing less than that was involved in the Bill. After seven years of careful meditation the Premier had only been able to produce this strange abortion of a measure, and the reason why the right honourable gentleman had not succeeded better was because he had attempted an impossible task, and had reversed the process of evolution by which all great empires had been built up and maintained. "But, though the harm that has been done in the past," he concluded in a stirring peroration, "and the harm the right honourable gentleman has done by his proposals cannot be exaggerated, though I believe our children and our grandchildren will still feel the effects of the revolution in Ireland and the betrayal in England, yet I think we have it in our power in the House of Commons and in the country to say that the process shall no further go; and that, much as we have suffered from vacillation in the past, we, at all events, will with our free consent put an end to this project, absolutely impossible of execution in its details, and even worse in its general principles, by which the right honourable gentleman, under the cloak and guise of drawing into closer harmony the different parts of the United Kingdom, is going to frame institutions which must tend, ever and



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ever, as time goes on, to separate us both in temper and mind, and ultimately in nationality."

Mr Bryce, who followed Mr Balfour, referred to the speech "as a piece of vigorous and incisive criticism listened to on all sides with admiration."

During the Parliamentary recess, the opposition to the Bill was carried on with great energy, and was led with splendid spirit by Mr Balfour. He proved an inspiring leader, indefatigable in his efforts and unsparing in the use of his powers. He delivered a large number of speeches in various parts of the country, but the most notable of his movements was his visit to Belfast to preside over the famous Ulster Demonstration on 5th April 1893, which was organised as an expression of the ineradicable aversion entertained by the loyalists of Ireland to Mr Gladstone's measure.

The Demonstration was also a tribute to Mr Balfour, who was the central figure of scenes of extraordinary enthusiasm. His progress through the streets was accompanied by a perfect storm of incessant applause. The whole city was lavishly decorated in his honour, and mottoes of warm welcome and hearty appreciation were everywhere profusely displayed.

Immediately Mr Balfour's carriage issued from the station it was surrounded by an immense crowd, numbers of which insisted on shaking his hand. The scene in York Street was a veritable triumph. At times the road was blocked with a concourse of people so dense that progress seemed impossible. But at the approach of the carriage the mass of people divided, and a way was made with perfect order.

At the top of the street stood an enormous grand stand, draped in scarlet, bearing the inscription: "One God, One Country, and One Empire"; and from



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this point of vantage Mr Balfour reviewed the political army that marched past him in peaceful array for more than four hours. The great platform held 800 persons, and the competition for seats had been tremendous. In the centre of the platform was a reserved space occupied by the more distinguished visitors, amongst whom were some 70 Peers and Members of Parliament, with many ladies of distinction.

The spectacle was wonderfully picturesque and impressive. From the platform alone one could see packed between the houses of the noble street in front of it a seething mass of people estimated to number at least 80,000 persons. Handkerchiefs waved from hundreds of windows, and innumerable flags and mottoes of all kinds were displayed on every side.

The march past began at 12.30 noon. Through the midst of the vast concourse of people came first the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, the Water Commissioners, the members of the Board of Guardians, and various provincial corporation representatives. Then was heard the resonant booming of the Protestant drum ushering in the numerous forces of Trinity College, Dublin, and other Irish Universities, all in cap and gown. At their head an official copy of the Home Rule Bill, torn to tatters, was carried upon a pole, and the cheers of platform and crowd were drowned in Homeric laughter when, immediately under the grand stand, a match was applied to the document, and it was burned amid roars of applause. After the University men came the Scottish Unionist clubs accompanied by pipers, whose music was lost in the ceaseless roar of the people. Then came the Belfast Unionist clubs, and following these an endless stream of Rechabites with gilded banners gleaming



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in the sun. Next marched past a long procession of Free Gardeners, Shepherds, Oddfellows, and Y.M.C.A. associations of various kinds. Last of all came the great Orange contingent, composed of 20,000 Irishmen accompanied by fifty bands of music, at the head of which rode a waggonette containing the Bishop of Clogher, Lord Erne, Colonel Saunderson, and Dr Kane. The reception given to this group was indescribable, Mr Balfour joining in the magnificent demonstration by enthusiastically waving his handkerchief. As the carriage passed before him he greeted the occupants with a genial salute, which Colonel Saunderson appropriately acknowledged.

In the evening a great meeting was held in the Ulster Hall. Mr Balfour's entrance on the platform was greeted with a hurricane of cheers, the audience springing to their feet as one man and waving their handkerchiefs. The hall was abundantly decorated with bunting, and mottoes such as: "Balfour, Ireland's greatest benefactor"; "Nothing shall separate us."

His speech was frequently punctuated by outbursts of applause, and the following passage in particular, delivered with great energy and fire, roused his hearers to an exhibition of almost savage enthusiasm:—"I would venture, in so far as I can," he said, "to appeal to you to recollect that you do not stand alone, that you have not been abandoned by Great Britain, and that the Home Rule Bill has not yet become law. I do not come here to preach any doctrine of passive obedience or non-resistance. You have had to fight for your liberties before. I pray God you may never have to fight for them again. I do not believe you ever will have to fight for them. I admit that the tyranny of a majority may be as bad as the tyranny of kings; and that the stupidity of a majority may be even



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greater than that of kings, and I will not say, and I do not think that any rational or sober man will say, that what is justifiable against a tyrannical king may not under certain circumstances be justifiable against a tyrannical majority." (Great demonstration, the audience springing to their feet with tumultuous cheering.) "I hope and believe," he continued, "that this is but the utterance of a mere abstract proposition, and that circumstances which would justify such a state of things may never arise in this country."

The second reading of the Home Rule Bill was moved on 7th April by Mr Gladstone, but it was not until the twelfth night of the debate, on the eve of the division, that interest reached its highest pitch. Mr Gladstone had followed the whole of the discussion with keen attention, but, unfortunately, Mr Balfour had been confined to his house by an attack of influenza.

When Mr Balfour rose on the twelfth night to make his speech, the House presented an extremely animated appearance, and was again favoured by the presence of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. It was the culminating scene of a debate that for two weeks had roused the fiercest passions of political partisanship. The atmosphere of the House was pervaded with that sense of electrical expectancy which always fills it on occasions when a decision is about to be given on a momentous issue.

The time at Mr Balfour's disposal was limited, as he did not rise until 10-15 P.M., and Mr Gladstone desired to speak about 11 P.M., in order that the division might be taken, if possible, just after midnight.

The Leader of the Opposition had an inspiring reception, and admirably adapted himself to the circumstances. He grappled directly with the vital issues of the great controversy, and with refreshing vigour



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delivered an extremely able, lucid, and forcible speech, At the commencement he burdened himself with a voluminous bundle of notes, to which he occasionally referred, but as the interruptions of the Ministerialists poured in upon him, he gradually discarded his papers, and concentrated his attention on answering the hot challenges of his adversaries. Cheers and counter-cheers rattled forth, as, with magnificent coolness and admirable control of temper, Mr Balfour turned again and again on his interrupters with effective retort. It is questionable whether he has ever made a more brilliant fighting speech, marked with greater readiness and aptitude of retort and finer debating power. His followers were roused to repeated demonstrations of unrestrained enthusiasm, and every face in his audience showed the intense interest with which his words were followed.

He opened his argument by proving that agrarian crime in Ireland had been much more prevalent before the Union than it had been since, and the measures for its repression had been far more rigorous. Ireland owed all the prosperity and progress it could boast of to its union with Great Britain. The truth was that before the English power went to Ireland that country was a mere collection of tribes who were constantly waging internecine warfare, and all its present law and civilisation was the work of England. If this pernicious measure passed, he continued, there would be two Committees of Supply, two Appropriation Bills, and two Chancellors of the Exchequer, and beyond that we should not be able to touch the customs and excise without altering all our relations with Ireland in a manner unjust to British tax-payers. As to the so-called supremacy of the British Parliament, alleged to be established by this Bill, it was a sham. After referring



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to the financial proposals of the Bill and the position of the Constabulary, he commented on the character and record of the politicians who would probably compose the majority of the Irish Parliament, and said it was often forgotten that these men had long been engaged in a steady propaganda of doctrines in regard to land, property, and government, which were wholly inconsistent with any government at all. In conclusion, he appealed for a different solution, and uttered a grave warning: "Ninety years of union have proved to the Protestant minority that happiness consists, and must consist, in their consolidation and union with this country. Why should not another generation see the same blessed process carried out with regard to the Catholics of Ireland? Nothing shall make me believe that it is impossible. Nothing shall make me believe that it is beyond the power of this Assembly; but if you choose in your madness to commit this crime, and make yourselves responsible for this irreparable national loss, then all hope of a peaceful and united Ireland will vanish, and vanish for ever."

Mr Gladstone, whose marvellous voice was in perfect form, followed with a powerful speech. At one point he turned to Mr Balfour, and directing at him with dramatic gesture his outstretched arm, he said, amid a storm of applause: "Never again will you have a majority of 120 at your back to enable you to coerce Ireland against the wishes of her people." He was destined to see that prediction within a short period decisively falsified.

The figures of the division read as follows:—347 for and 304 against the Bill, which gave the Government a majority of 43.

The House went into Committee on the Bill on 8th May, and there set in an obstinate struggle over its



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details. A period of hard, dreary work was before Members, for Mr Gladstone, apparently incapable of fatigue himself, made no allowances for the frailty of others. The measure, however, did not make much progress; try as Mr Gladstone would, he could not shake off the bitter, relentless opposition; and it became evident that sooner or later recourse would have to be made to the Closure. This course was decided upon on 29th June, when Mr Gladstone moved his notorious guillotine resolution, which conferred upon him the power to arbitrarily Closure whole clauses of his Bill.

On the first night when the Closure was put into operation, there were some stormy scenes. Mr Balfour made a spirited protest against the action of the Government, which he asserted was entirely unjustified, and under the circumstances constituted a gross infringement of the liberties of the House.

As the Bill progressed, and the Closure came into frequent use, the bitterness of party feeling became intensified to a dangerous degree, and the hooting at the rival leaders that occasionally broke out, showed to what a pitch of animosity Members were worked up to. At length the tense feeling found vent in an exhibition of violence which will for ever stand as a disgrace to the British House of Commons.

The explosion occurred on 27th July, on the last night of the Committee stage, when, in the turn of events, Mr Chamberlain happened to be the Member to have his speech abruptly terminated by the operation of the Closure. It was a great opportunity, and the Member for West Birmingham was the last man in the world to waste it. He made an extremely bitter speech, scornfully taunting the Ministerialists with rendering slavish obedience to Mr Gladstone, and, at the end of a vivid piece of descriptive oratory,



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dramatically comparing the Premier to the blasphemous Herod.

The Extremists on both sides were excited to madness by this opprobrious comparison, and the wild cheers of the Opposition were answered by savage cries of "Judas" from the Irish benches. The Chairman proceeded to put the question, and ordered the House to be cleared for the division. The Opposition refused to move, heated altercations occurred between individual Members, and then followed a scene of indescribable riot and confusion, Members rushing across the House and assaulting one another in the most ferocious manner. Neither the Chairman, nor Mr Balfour, nor Mr Gladstone, could quell the irresistible storm of feeling that had broken out, and order was not restored until the tumult had raged for twenty minutes, and the Speaker was brought back to the Chamber.

Mr Gladstone and Mr Balfour made speeches rebuking the combatants, and deploring the scene that had occurred. The division was then taken, and amid loud and prolonged cheers from the Government benches, the Home Rule Bill passed through Committee.

On 21st August Mr Gladstone surprised the House by announcing that he had decided to adopt a resolution, which he smilingly said Mr Balfour was familiar with, ordering that a week hence the process of closing the report stage of the Bill should begin. This was promptly met by an amendment, and Mr Balfour strenuously protested against what he asserted was the tyrannical use by the Government of their majority. "The question," he said, "is whether or not this House, if prevented from carrying on its duties, can retain the position it now holds in the estimation of the country." And then with delightful raillery, innocent



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of even a tinge of bitterness, he wittily rebuked the Prime Minister as being the greatest sinner of all by the prolixity of his speeches. He said the venerable statesman had charmed and cheered them through the hot weather and protracted debates by speeches of which he would say that they were the only thing that could have consoled him for the deprivation of a holiday, which he had been taught by long experience to expect at that time of the year. But, however much those speeches had been distinguished for qualities of readiness, dexterity, eloquence and charm, they were sadly lacking in relevancy. He, Mr Balfour, remembered one occasion when he had made a rash observation scarcely worth answering. What was the result? The Prime Minister sprang to his feet and launched out into a prolonged denunciation of the Tory Government of 1887 and their Land Bill. He could not restrain himself, and the House was delighted, but time was wasted, and the business of the House was delayed.

On 25th August, by the force of the Closure, the Bill passed the report stage, and on 30th August, Mr Gladstone moved the third reading.

The great statesman made a speech of surpassing eloquence and power, replying again and again with crushing effect to the interruptions of his opponents. In his peroration, he said: "We deny that the brand of incapacity has been laid by the Almighty upon a particular and noted branch of our race. . . . We have faith in national liberty and in its efficacy as an instrument of national education. We believe that experience, widespread over the vast field—hardly to be traversed at every point—encourages us in our work; and, finally, we feel that the passing of this great measure through the House of Commons, after eighty days and more of debate, does and must constitute



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the greatest achievement of all the steps that have hitherto been achieved towards the attainment of its certain and early triumph."

Mr Balfour did not intervene till 1st September, by which time the majority of Members were thoroughly tired. Mr Balfour, however, came up fresh and vigorous, as if it was the first night of the debate, and his speech was marked by unusual brilliancy and fire. In direct, telling phrases, without mincing of words, he denounced the Bill and the methods by which it had been forced through the House. In his keen logical way, he sifted the measure and tore its proposals to shreds, exposing its weaknesses and dangers in the most masterly and effective fashion.

He frankly avowed that his object was to destroy the Bill, and he denied that it would be accepted as a settlement of the Irish question. All Members, he said, must look back with regret on the session as they noted the evidences it gave of the beginning of the decadence of the dignity of Parliament. By their insane action Ministers had done more than a hundred Tory Governments could do to demonstrate the necessity for the House of Lords. "Until England and Scotland," he asserted, "the great contracting parties with Ireland in the Act of Union, are satisfied that the dissolution of that Union is for their best interests, that dissolution can never take place."

The amendment to the Bill on the third reading was negatived by 301 votes against 267. The measure was then sent up to the House of Lords, and after some days of discussion, was rejected on 9th September by an overwhelming majority of 378 votes, 41 Members voting for it and 419 against it.

The following statistics of the discussions on the Home Rule Bill are of interest. Up to the end of the



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report stage the debates had occupied 82 days, 913 speeches being made against the Bill, taking up  $152\frac{3}{4}$  hours, and 456 speeches in favour of it, occupying  $57\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The length of the whole controversy in Parliament established a precedent, the nearest to it being the discussions on the Reform Bill of 1831, which lasted 47 days.



## CHAPTER XII

### OPPOSITION LEADER, AND RELATIONS WITH MR GLADSTONE

MR BRYCE once referred to Mr Balfour "as a master of vigorous and incisive criticism, so much a master, indeed, that I sometimes think he must prefer his position on the Opposition benches, where criticism can be exercised with greater freedom."

As Leader of the Opposition during the Home Rule Parliament, Mr Balfour considerably enhanced his already high reputation as a Parliamentarian of exceptional ability. His position was by no means an easy one, and a less able and winning personality might have made a disastrous failure. He had to reduce to the lowest point possible the friction which was inevitable in the working of the new alliance between the extreme wings of the combined Conservative and Liberal Unionist forces, and in Mr Gladstone he had to contend against an antagonist of superlative talents and untiring industry, perhaps the greatest and most eloquent Parliamentarian of modern times.

In one respect he was certainly fortunate. The all-absorbing political question of the day happened to be one of which his knowledge was most comprehensive and profound. He was, and is to-day, the greatest authority on the subject of Irish administration, and Mr Gladstone found in him his most formidable opponent. His practical acquaintance with the Irish



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problem, and his complete grasp of the machinery of Irish administration, rendered him the foremost and most effective critic of the Home Rule proposals. It may be said, without partiality, that to him, more than to any other man, was due the defeat of Mr Gladstone's proposals.

As Opposition Leader, Mr Balfour demonstrated that he possessed all the qualities necessary for exceptional success in his position. From beginning to end of the Home Rule Bill he preserved an urbanity of manner and courtesy of tone that were most creditable in the circumstances.

But, at the same time, he proved himself a relentless and vigilant critic and an implacable foe. His criticism in the main was lucid, vigorous, well-informed, and extremely destructive; but when occasion called for it, he was sharp, biting, and unsparing. His keen, alert, logical mind, enabled him to frequently riddle his opponents' case through and through, and he was wonderfully adroit in his method of attack and defence, rarely losing an opportunity of piercing his adversaries guard. While he showed great tenacity of purpose and unswerving adherence to bed-rock principles, so that it was impossible either to cajole or trap him into negotiation on matters of fundamental importance, no one could charge him with obstinacy or bias; for whenever there was a prospect of a reasonable compromise, as was the case in the Parish Councils Bill his frank and open nature responded to it with alacrity, and if agreement was possible, there was no one more willing and better able to secure it.

One of the most notable features of his leadership was his unflagging industry. Night after night he followed the dreary discussion on the Home Rule Bill, always on the alert, ready to seize the slightest



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opening for attack. And the deeper the monotony became, and the more weary grew his followers, the keener and the more vigorous was his leadership.

So long as the topic of controversy is one of real importance, Mr Balfour is an alert and assiduous critic; but he is incapable of simulating passion or using clap-trap for the purpose of gaining popularity. He is intolerant of sham debates; mere word-spinning and beating of the air excite his open contempt, and it is because he has not always been prudent enough to conceal his feelings on the many occasions when the House of Commons is so occupied, that unfavourable critics have been able to write him down as "bored and languid" and capable of industry only by fits and starts. No greater mistake could be made, and no censure could be more unjust. When there is important work to be done, either in conducting a measure through the House or in criticising the policy of his opponents, there is no more persistent and indefatigable leader and no more capable and strenuous fighter than Mr Balfour.

But splendid as Mr Balfour's labours were as Leader of the Opposition, no one will deny that his great success was due, in no small measure, to his exceptionally winsome personality. In fact, it may be said, without derogation to him, that his influence as the chief of the Unionist Party, in its fight against the Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons, was even more powerful and valuable as a cohesive than as an inspiring force. His geniality and unfailing buoyancy of spirits never left him through the darkest and dreariest days. He was, throughout, an optimist of the optimists, and his example of cheerfulness and unfaltering courage exercised a stimulating influence on





*By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

### BETWEEN THE ROUNDS

PETTERBURNED OLD PAIRTY (*long*).—"Which, Arthur, my dear, you've treated him too delicate in first round! You'll have to pull yourself together if you're a-going to do any good."







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his jaded followers. His frank and open smile, and his engaging charm of manner, rendered it easy for the most humble of his supporters to approach him; and perhaps there has never been a leader who has enjoyed in a greater degree the devoted personal affection of his followers.

His popularity, too, was by no means restricted to his own side of the House. He was on terms of intimate friendship with nearly all the members of the Government, and between him and the Prime Minister there existed the most genuine mutual regard and affection. Mr Gladstone had been a friend of Mr Balfour's father, and from the first he took a deep interest in the son's career. In the early days he never missed an opportunity of encouraging his interposition in debate, and there can be no doubt that Mr Balfour owes much to the kindly notice and marked regard which were bestowed on him by the distinguished statesman.

The relations between the two men became somewhat strained at times, as was inevitable, and occasionally they were even broken off. Perhaps it was during the early part of Mr Balfour's term of office as Irish Secretary that any suspension of their friendship was most prolonged. Mr Balfour, at that time, was working at high tension amid great difficulties and no slight personal peril, and he did not measure too nicely the terms in which he condemned Mr Gladstone's speeches, which he believed were doing incalculable injury to the cause of law and order in Ireland.

At Birmingham, on 4th November 1887, he spoke of the "extraordinary and unblushing perversion of fact by which Mr Gladstone attempted to support his conclusions," and in another passage, he said: "He (Mr Gladstone) attacks the police, he palliates crime, and he encourages lawlessness with the same glib dexterity as



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if he had been all his life a follower of Mr Parnell." The *Birmingham Daily Post* and other Liberal Unionist organs somewhat severely censured Mr Balfour for what they termed the unnecessarily personal bitterness of his references to the venerable statesman.

Towards the close of the heated coercion controversy, however, their relationship resumed its normal state of mutual attachment and esteem, and the Home Rule issue was fought out with excellent temper by both. On one occasion, through a misconstruction of his meaning, he aroused the indignation of the Ministerialists by an apparently insulting reference to their beloved leader, and they hotly demanded an apology. Mr Balfour rose immediately, and with an inclination of his head to the Premier, which was graciously responded to, said: "Mr Gladstone is the last person in the House whose feelings I should desire to hurt."

The two distinguished statesmen had many interests in common, and Mr Balfour several times spent a short holiday at Hawarden. Neither was entirely absorbed in politics: both devoted much of their leisure to literature and philosophy, and in these two subjects their views were only sufficiently at variance to make discussion pleasant and interesting.

No one felt a keener sense of personal loss than did Mr Balfour when Mr Gladstone retired from the House of Commons. His touching tribute, delivered in a passage of sustained eloquence, showed how intensely he regretted the departure of his venerable antagonist from the Parliamentary arena: "He has been within the memory of every single individual whom I am now addressing, ever since they entered the House, the great example of all that is most splendid and most brilliant in the conduct of Parliamentary debate and in the use of every species of Parliamentary eloquence; and leav-



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ing all questions of party politics on one side, deferring or rather putting out of view any attempt to estimate his great public career, I feel that every Member of this House owes to the late Prime Minister a debt of personal and public gratitude in that he has maintained, through all the great Parliamentary and social changes, the high standard of public life which he learned to admire in a different age, and in that he has continued to uphold the great traditions of the House of Commons, with which, I feel, no small part of the dignity and the utility of the assembly is inseparably bound up."

During his Leadership of the Opposition, Mr Balfour emulated the good example set by Mr Gladstone in the readiness with which he encouraged rising talent, and in the eagerness with which he seized any opportunity to show his appreciation of an opponent. An instance of this was given on 9th February, when Mr Asquith made his first speech, as a Minister of the Crown, on the treatment meted out to the imprisoned dynamiters. Mr Balfour intervened in the discussion, and said:

"I rise merely for the purpose of expressing my hearty concurrence with the speech delivered on behalf of the Government to-night by the Home Secretary, my hearty concurrence in the substance of the speech, and my great admiration of the manner of the speech. I am sure it has scarcely ever fallen to the lot of any Minister of the Crown to make his first effort in this House under circumstances more difficult and to come out of those circumstances with greater honour. The right honourable gentleman has shown himself a master of clear statement, a master of eloquence, and he has shown something far more—he has shown himself a man capable of conducting the business of his office in a courageous spirit, and of explaining to this



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House without circumlocution and without ambiguity the principles on which he has acted."

On 17th May 1893, at a public meeting in Manchester, Mr Balfour was presented by his constituents with a receipted bill for the costs involved in resisting the petition of Professor Munro against his election in 1885, and accompanying the receipt were two pictures painted by Benjamin Basker (1776-1838), which were purchased by the surplus of the "petition fund." Sir W. Houldsworth presided, and the leading Conservatives and Liberal Unionists of the city and district were present on the platform. The Chairman said that Mr Balfour had been put to a cost of £1200, and the fund raised by the Unionists to cover this had reached £1500. The pictures were two Mr Balfour had seen in a private gallery and expressed a great liking for. Mr Balfour, in returning thanks for the gift, said that the petition would leave an element of bitterness, but so far as he was concerned he was willing to let bygones be bygones.

It may be stated that the petition brought no personal charge against Mr Balfour, all complaints being directed against his agents. The judge, in dismissing the petition, said: "Such petitions are generally of a very vague character, and the one in question was, if anything, rather more vague than usual."

During his visit to Manchester in January of 1894, Mr Balfour, as is customary with him, devoted one evening to answering questions which his constituents had been invited to send up to him. There is no other prominent statesman who adopts such a method of free interchange of views with his constituents in public meeting. Mr Balfour in all his platform speeches is always tolerant of hecklers, and he has no superior in the readiness and wit with which he handles his interrupters.



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On this occasion he was examined pretty keenly, and some of the questions put to him were not of the easiest type for one in his responsible position to dispose of. The first one he had to deal with was "whether he was in favour of the payment of Members," to which he returned a decided negative. In reply to a request for his views on Imperial Federation, he said he would do all in his power to bind closer the tie that at present united the mother-country to her Colonies. He returned a favourable opinion on the subject of Old Age Pensions, and referred to Mr Chamberlain as one "who has done more than any other living politician to bring this topic before the attention of his countrymen." Other subjects he dealt with were: Socialism, the Employment of Army Reserve Men, Bi-metallism, and Reform of the House of Lords.

On 17th June 1894 he laid the memorial stone of a new Wesleyan School at Beswick, Manchester. After the ceremony, he gave a short address on religious teaching. "The Wesleyans," he said, "have always been most honourably distinguished by the earnestness with which they have advocated the view that the training of the young cannot and ought not to be in matters of religion left wholly either to the family or to occasions of public worship and public service. Those who think that the teaching in schools should be entirely secular make a profound mistake. Among the questions looming in the future as of pressing and of paramount importance is a broad issue between secular and religious education."

One of Mr Balfour's most felicitous speeches as Leader of the Opposition, was made in the House of Commons on 14th July 1894, on the occasion of the wedding of the Duke of York. Mr Gladstone had, as usual, made an admirable oration, and Mr Balfour's



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charming speech formed a worthy companion to it. "It is a peculiarity," he said, "of our English public sentiment that we look upon the affairs of Her Majesty and of the Royal Family with something of personal regard. We feel for them in their sorrows and we sympathise with them in their joys. We hope that this auspicious occasion may be for them the beginning of a long life of domestic happiness, and we believe that the event we are now celebrating will not only conduce to their personal happiness, but will build up the security of the Crown in the affections of the people for many, many years to come."

Meanwhile the relations of the Government toward the House of Lords were becoming very strained. The rejection by the Upper House of several Bills, including the Home Rule Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill, had engendered a feeling of intense bitterness among the rank and file of the Ministerialists, who were extremely aggravated at seeing all their labours thus rendered fruitless.

The Government were determined not to submit tamely to such treatment, and on 1st March 1894, when the Parish Councils Bill came before the House with the Lords' amendments to it, the storm burst forth. The occasion was notable also as being the last appearance of Mr Gladstone in the House of Commons, although only a privileged few were aware of the fact at the time.

The Prime Minister made a vigorous attack on the action of the Peers, and said that the operation of sending the Parish Councils Bill backwards and forwards had continued long enough. They showed a readiness not to modify but to annihilate the work of the House of Commons. The question, he continued, was enormously large, it had become pro-



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foundly acute, and it required a settlement and must receive that settlement at an early date at the hands of the highest authority.

Mr Balfour rose instantly to reply, and had an unusually warm reception from his supporters. He made a forcible and cogent speech, and displayed much animation in its delivery. He said that Mr Gladstone's statement was a declaration of war against the ancient constitution of these realms. "For the first time," he added, "the people of Great Britain have become aware that their interests are not safe in the hands of a party majority unless that majority be controlled by another assembly whensoever it betrays the interest of the nation." In answer to Mr Gladstone's challenge, he said: "Let me tell him that we look forward without dismay to the fight, and that we are not perturbed by these obscure threats."

On 21st June 1895 the Government were unexpectedly defeated by a majority of twelve votes on an amendment moved by Mr St John Brodrick to the Army estimates, which censured the War Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, for neglecting to keep in stock an adequate supply of cordite.

Mr Balfour had taken only a slight part in the debate, and as he passed into the division lobby he remarked to Mr Chamberlain: "I suppose they will have their usual majority."

The resignation of the Ministry was announced by Sir William Harcourt on 24th June, and on 8th July Parliament was dissolved.



## CHAPTER XIII

### PARLIAMENTARY TRIUMPHS

THE defeat of the Rosebery Government in June 1895 led to the opening of Mr Balfour's second era of leadership. With characteristic promptitude he issued his election address on 6th July.

Parliament, he said, was on the brink of dissolution, and the choice before the country was a simple one. Did they desire again to see in power a Government which ended its inglorious career a few days ago he asked; or would they support the policy consistently advocated by those who had accepted office? The late Government, he continued, had attempted much, but accomplished little. Their policy was to sever the legislative connection between Great Britain and Ireland, to disendow the Church of Wales, to deal with the licensing question in a manner destined to produce gross hardship and injustice, and, finally, to destroy the House of Lords. The objects of the Unionist Party were not so revolutionary in their designs, and they believed their time would be better employed in furthering legislative changes touching the daily lives of the people. Amongst the measures, he went on to say, a Unionist Government would give their attention to were, the better housing of the working-classes, the encouragement of freehold occupancy, the amelioration of the lot of the aged



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poor, the protection of agricultural tenants in their improvements, the preservation of Voluntary Schools, the provision of compensation to injured workmen, and the easing of the burden on British agriculture. In addition to the promotion of beneficent legislation, the Unionist Government were better fitted to undertake the work of developing the Empire's resources.

He concluded by saying: "The record of my public life is before you. To that I venture to appeal, but I appeal with greater confidence to the unfailing kindness which alike in times of prosperity and adversity East Manchester has invariably extended to me, to the affection of my friends, to the candour of my opponents, in the earnest hope that the trust which the constituency has so long reposed in me may not now be withdrawn."

Mr Balfour entered upon his campaign on 8th July with great energy, and at his first meeting answered a number of questions according to his usual custom, and in one answer he gave, he said aid would have to be given to Voluntary Schools. On 9th July he addressed two meetings, and on the following day spoke at a workmen's dinner-hour meeting and one at night. After visiting St Helens, he addressed a Unionist gathering in Manchester the same evening, 12th July. In the dinner hour of the next day he visited some large works in his constituency, and at night at an enthusiastic meeting in the largest hall in the district, closed his campaign with a retrospect, and a glance at his party's future programme. On the day of the polling, 14th July, he spoke at Birkenhead.

In Professor Munro he had a courteous and honourable opponent, who, as at the last election in 1892, fought with great determination. Mr John Morley spoke on his behalf, but the Independent Labour Party,



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in strict conformity with their unbroken law of stagnant petulance, abstained from voting.

Mr Balfour returned to Manchester at night, and once more had the satisfaction of being congratulated on a great victory, the figures reading as follows:—

### *East Division*

Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, (C.) . . .	5386
Prof. J. E. Munro, (L.) . . .	4610
	<hr/>
Conservative majority . . .	776

The result of the poll showed an increased majority of 378 on that of 1892. The announcement of the figures aroused the greatest enthusiasm. Professor Munro afterwards declared that, while he should have liked to have won, there was no other opponent whom he would have preferred to represent the constituency than Mr Balfour.

The victorious member subsequently made a tour of the constituency, and spoke a few words at each of the conservative clubs. At the largest club in Ardwick he received a tremendous reception. He referred to the fact that Manchester had returned five Unionist Members out of six, and had thus “covered itself with glory” by its splendid example. He thanked his workers for their untiring zeal and energy. Mr Balfour afterwards left by the midnight train for Scotland to continue his campaign. He spoke at a number of meetings on behalf of Unionist candidates. He addressed a great Unionist demonstration at Glasgow on 16th July and one at Dalkeith on the following day. On the 19th he spoke at Duns, and, travelling from there to Northumberland he addressed a large meeting the same evening in Sir E. Grey’s constituency.

If there is one possession Mr Balfour values, it is





*From the "Pall Mall Budget"]*

## THE GOOD UNCLE







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the unbroken confidence of his constituency, and he never loses an opportunity of showing how much he appreciates the efforts of his supporters. In addition to his annual visit, generally in November or at the beginning of the year, on many occasions he visits the great cotton city, and by opening halls, institutes, and bazaars, and entering into social questions and discussing public affairs with his constituents, he has gained their steadfast loyalty and admiration, and made his position secure. Although Prime Minister, Mr Balfour does not neglect his duties as a Member of Parliament, and in this respect he has set an example which others with less work to do might follow. As showing his appreciation for his supporters' labours on his behalf, Mr Balfour visited Manchester on 23rd November and personally thanked his workers and supporters for valued assistance.

The General Election resulted in a great victory for the Unionist Party, who mustered 411 Members against 177 Liberals and 82 Irish Members. This gave the Government a majority of 152 over the combined votes of the Liberals and Irish.

Parliament met on 12th August, and as the Leader of the House came from behind the Speaker's chair, he was accorded a singularly hearty welcome. These cheers were renewed when a few minutes later Mr Chamberlain took his seat for the first time next to Mr Balfour on the Treasury bench.

Mr Balfour's leadership of the House was destined to be a memorable one. Before it was many months old the announcement that Dr Jameson and his troopers had entered the Transvaal was flung like a thunderbolt upon the public. On the reassembling of Parliament the South African question began to assume a difficult complexion, and after numerous



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debates and prolonged negotiations the climax was reached three years later by the issue of the Boer ultimatum. But in addition to the discussions of Imperial questions of a somewhat unique character, the legislative achievements of the Unionist Government during Mr Balfour's leadership of the House were of an important character, and comprised many measures which demanded constant vigilance and statesmanlike guidance. Amongst the principal Measures passed were, the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Irish Local Government Act, the London Government Act, the Clerical Tithes Bill, the Money Lending Bill, the Companies Bill, Housing of the Working-Classes Act, and the Australian Commonwealth Bill. The speeches Mr Balfour made on these measures, and the support he gave them as the leader of the Unionist Party, greatly accelerated their progress through the House. His management of the Irish Local Government Bill and the London Government Act elicited the unstinted praise of all parties. At the close of the session in 1900, Unionists could look back over the past five years with unalloyed satisfaction; and it spoke well for Mr Balfour's leadership that notwithstanding the additional work which the House had been called upon to carry out, and the complex Imperial questions which had been brought up for discussion, his tenure of the office had witnessed the passing of so many beneficent Acts of legislation in the interests of the masses. During a period which will rank as one of the most momentous in English history, he fulfilled the exacting and responsible duties of his position with a skill and diplomacy, which not only justified in a most striking manner his appointment, but enhanced considerably his reputation, and made still more secure his claims to the Premiership.

During the Parliament of 1895-1900, in his capacity



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as Leader of the House, Mr Balfour delivered a large number of speeches, many of the most conspicuous being on the South African question, which is dealt with in a subsequent chapter. Two events, both of historic interest, occurred, however, which called forth speeches that stand prominently out in Mr Balfour's long list of Parliamentary triumphs.

The first was his speech on the Address to Queen Victoria, congratulating her upon her Diamond Jubilee. When the House met on 21st June 1897, Mr Balfour, on rising to speak, was greeted with hearty cheers from the distinguished assembly present. Contrary to his usual habit, he provided himself with a small sheaf of notes. His speech only lasted ten minutes, but, though commendably brief, it contained many eloquent passages and effective references.

Having alluded to the principal events which had occurred since Her Majesty's accession to the throne, he proceeded to speak of the passionate devotion and loyalty with which the Queen was held by her people.

He said: "In celebrating this Jubilee we are not ministering, I believe, to the sentiments of national vanity, or to the vulgar feelings of national complacency, but we are really offering up from our hearts a homage to the great lady who rules over us. . . . It is because in her public life she has been an example to every sovereign, and in her private life an example to every citizen. It is because she has shared our anxieties and shared our triumphs, and throughout her life been animated and inspired by our national ideals, that the nation and this House delights to do her honour." Sir William Harcourt also spoke, and after a characteristic outburst of disloyalty on the part of a few Irish Members, the Address was carried by 411 as against 41.



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May 19th 1898 will always be regarded as a memorable day in English history. The passing of the greatest statesman of the Victorian era was an event which deeply stirred the nation, and as leader of the legislative assembly which had witnessed the chief of Mr Gladstone's triumphs, and occupying the same position he had filled with such transcendent genius for so many years, it fell to Mr Balfour's lot to move a vote of condolence. As the dead statesman had been one of the first to recognise and encourage him in his early Parliamentary days, and with whom in later times he had been engaged in the most important and vigorous debates, the task was at once an appropriate and a difficult one. But, possessing that charm of literary grace which eminently distinguished Mr Gladstone's speeches, the Leader of the House proved worthy of his appointed duty, and paid royal honour in eloquent language to the life-work of his illustrious opponent and friend.

As on a similar occasion, when Mr Gladstone made his memorable speech on the death of Lord Beaconsfield, for some minutes the sombrely-dressed assembly awaited with anxious forebodings the arrival of the Leader of the House. At first it was thought Mr Balfour's health would not permit the strain, but all fears were dispersed when, with a pale face, he quietly walked to his seat. At the time his health was far from good, but, true to his brilliant record, he rose to the full height of a great occasion, and in a speech distinguished by its beautiful passages and uncommon expressions of sympathy, he unstintedly praised and lauded the dead statesman. He held a few notes in his hand, but these he scarcely used as he slowly and impressively delivered his oration. Forming as it does a memorable landmark in his Parliamentary career, it is only fitting to give his speech in full, and



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thus preserve the unbroken harmony of his beautifully conceived sentences.

Mr Balfour said: "It is now seventeen years and more since a Minister rose in his place to discharge the melancholy duty which now falls upon me. It then fell to the lot of one of two great contemporaries divided in political opinion, opposed to each other for more than a generation, separated, it may be, even more conclusively by differences of temperament. The task which then fell to Mr Gladstone was one of infinite difficulty, for he had to propose an address similar to that which you, Sir, will shortly read from the chair, at a time when the controversies which had just been ended by death were still living in the immediate recollection of everyone to whom he spoke, before the dust of battle had had time to sink, and when the noise of it was still in every ear. How Mr Gladstone performed that great task is, I am sure, a living part of the recollection of every Member of the House who was at that time a Member of Parliament, and I am only glad to think that, difficult as is the task which I have to perform to-day, impossible, indeed, from certain aspects, at all events the difficulties with which he then had to contend do not beset my path. I shall have no difficulty in inducing even the most scrupulous to join in an address which we shall, I believe, unanimously vote this afternoon, for all feel that the great career which has just drawn to a close is a career already in a large part a matter of history, and none of us will find even a momentary difficulty in forgetting any of the controversial aspects of that life, even though we ourselves to some extent had been involved in them. I have said that Mr Gladstone's great career is already in a large part and to most of us a matter of history, for he was a Cabinet



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Minister before most of us were born. I believe there is in this House at the present time but one man who served under Mr Gladstone in the first Cabinet over which he presided as Prime Minister; and even Members of the House who were colleagues of Mr Gladstone's, and who were Members of the Parliament of 1868 to 1874—even those form now but a small and ever-dwindling band.

“This is not the place, this still more is not the time nor the occasion on which to attempt any estimate of a career which began on the morrow of the first Reform Bill, which lasted for two generations, and which, so far as politics were concerned, was brought to a close a few years ago, during the fourth time of Mr Gladstone's tenure of office as Prime Minister. But, Sir, during these two generations—during those sixty years—this country went through a series of changes, revolutionary in amount, not by procedure, changes in science, changes scientific, changes theological, changes social, changes political. In all these phases of contemporary evolution Mr Gladstone took the liveliest interest. All of them he watched closely, in many of them he took a part, in some of them the part he took was supreme,—that of a governing and guiding influence. Sir, how is it possible for us on the present occasion to form, I will not say an estimate of a life so complex as that—a life far from being exhausted by political considerations, a life exuberant outside the work of this House, the work of party politics, the work of Imperial Administration—how is it possible, I say, for anyone to pretend to exhaust the many-sided aspects of such a life even on such an occasion as this? I feel myself unequal even to dealing with what is perhaps more strictly germane to this address—I mean Mr Gladstone as a politician,



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as a Minister, as a leader of public thought, as an eminent servant of the Queen; and if I venture to say anything, it is rather of Mr Gladstone as the greatest Member of the greatest deliberative assembly, which, so far, the world has seen.

“Sir, I think it is the language of sober and of unexaggerated truth to say that there is no gift which would enable a man to move, to influence, to adorn an assembly like this that Mr Gladstone did not possess in an supereminent degree. Debaters as ready there may have been, orators as finished. It may have been given to others to sway as skilfully this assembly, or to appeal with as much directness and force to the simpler instincts of great masses in the country; but, Sir, it has been given to no man to combine all these great gifts as they were combined in the person of Mr Gladstone. From the conversational discussion appropriate to our work in Committees, to the most sustained eloquence befitting some great argument and some great historic occasion, every weapon of Parliamentary warfare was wielded by him with the sureness and ease of a perfect, absolute, and complete mastery. I would not venture myself to pronounce an opinion as to whether he was most excellent in the exposition of a somewhat complicated Budget of finance or legislation, or whether he showed it most in the heat of extemporary debate. At least this we may say, that from the humbler arts of ridicule or invective to the subtlest dialectic, the most persuasive eloquence, the most cogent appeals to everything that was highest and best in the audience he was addressing, every instrument which could find place in the armoury of a Member of this House, he had at his command without premeditation, without forethought, at the moment and in the form which appeared best suited to carry out its purpose.



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“I suppose every one of us who has had the good fortune to be able to watch any part of that wonderful career must have in mind some particular example which seems to embody the greatest excellences of this most excellent Member of Parliament. Sir, the scene which comes back to my mind is one relating to an outworn and half-forgotten controversy now more than twenty years past, in which, as it happened, Mr Gladstone was placed in the most difficult position which it is possible for a man to occupy—a position in which he finds himself opposed to the united and vigorous forces of his ordinary opponents, but does not happen at the moment to have behind him more than the hesitating and somewhat timid sympathy of his friends. On this particular occasion, however, there was one of those preliminary debates—I ought to say, serious debates—which precede the main business of the evening. In this debate Mr Gladstone had to speak, not once, nor twice only, but several times, and it was not until hour after hour had passed in this preliminary skirmishing that, to a House hostile and impatient, and utterly weary, he got up to present his case with that conviction that he was right, which was his great strength as a speaker in and out of this House. I can never forget the impression it made on my mind. As a feat of physical endurance it was almost unsurpassed; as a feat of Parliamentary courage, of Parliamentary skill, of Parliamentary endurance, and Parliamentary eloquence I believe that it was almost unique.

“Sir, alas! let no man hope to be able to reconstruct from our records any living likeness of these great works of genius. The words, indeed, are there, lying side by side with the words of lesser men in an equality as if of death; but the spirit, the fire, the inspiration



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are gone, and he who could alone revive, he who could alone show us what these works really were, or reproduce them for us, has now been taken away. Posterity must take it on our testimony what he was to those friends or foes whose fortune it was to hear him. We who thus heard him know that though our days be prolonged, and though it may be our fortune to see the dawn or even the meridian of other men destined to illuminate this House and to do great and glorious service to their Sovereign and their country, we shall never again see anybody, never again in this assembly see any man, who can reproduce for us what Mr Gladstone was—who can show to those who never heard him how much they have lost. It may, perhaps, be asked whether I have nothing to say about Mr Gladstone's place in history, about the judgment we ought to pass upon the great part which he has played in the history of his country and the history of the world during the many years in which he held a foremost place in this assembly. These questions are legitimate questions. But they are not to be discussed by me to-day. Nor, indeed, do I think that the final answer can be given to them—the final judgment pronounced in the course of this generation. But one service he did—in my opinion incalculable—which is altogether apart from the judgment which we may be disposed to pass upon the particular opinions, the particular views or the particular lines of policy which Mr Gladstone may from time to time have adopted. Sir, he added a dignity, and he added a weight to the deliberations of this House by his genius which I think it is impossible adequately to express. It is not enough, in my opinion, for us to keep up simply a level, though it be a high level, of probity and of patriotism. The mere virtue of civic honesty is not sufficient to preserve this



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assembly from the fate which has overcome so many other assemblies, the products of democratic forces. More than this is required, more than this was given to us by Mr Gladstone. Those who seek to raise in the public estimation the level of our proceedings will be the most ready to admit the infinite value of those services and realise how much the public prosperity is involved in the maintenance of the work of public life. Perilously difficult must his contemporaries feel it to be to avoid the dangers—the opposite dangers—into which so many of them have fallen. Sir, that is a view which, perhaps, would not occur to persons unfamiliar with our debates or unwatchful of the course of contemporary thought; but to me it seems that it places the services of Mr Gladstone to this assembly, which he loved so well, and of which he was so great a member, in as clear a light and on as firm a basis as it is possible to place them.”

Mr Balfour then read the address, and resumed his seat amidst a subdued murmur of cheers. After a touching tribute from Sir William Harcourt, the address was agreed to in silence. The Irish Members purposely absented themselves from the assembly, an act of unpardonable ingratitude and discourtesy which probably did not surprise the Leader of the House, but which taught many Liberals a salutary lesson.

Mr Balfour was one of the eight pall-bearers at the great statesman's funeral in Westminster Abbey.



## CHAPTER XIV

### A MEMORABLE TERM OF OFFICE

AT the end of September 1900, with the termination of the South African War apparently in sight, the Government appealed to the country for a renewal of confidence and an approval of their South African policy. The election address which Mr Balfour placed before the electors of East Manchester, went beyond its customary length, but this was fully accounted for by the fact that it dealt with topics of unusual importance, and was practically a review of the great question of the hour, the South African War.

As a manifesto indicating the policy of the Government, and written by one who was destined shortly to succeed to the Premiership, it had an additional importance attached to it, and being issued early, it formed the foundation upon which the election was subsequently fought. It ran as follows:—

10 DOWNING STREET

20th September 1900.

*To the Electors of the East Division of the  
City of Manchester.*

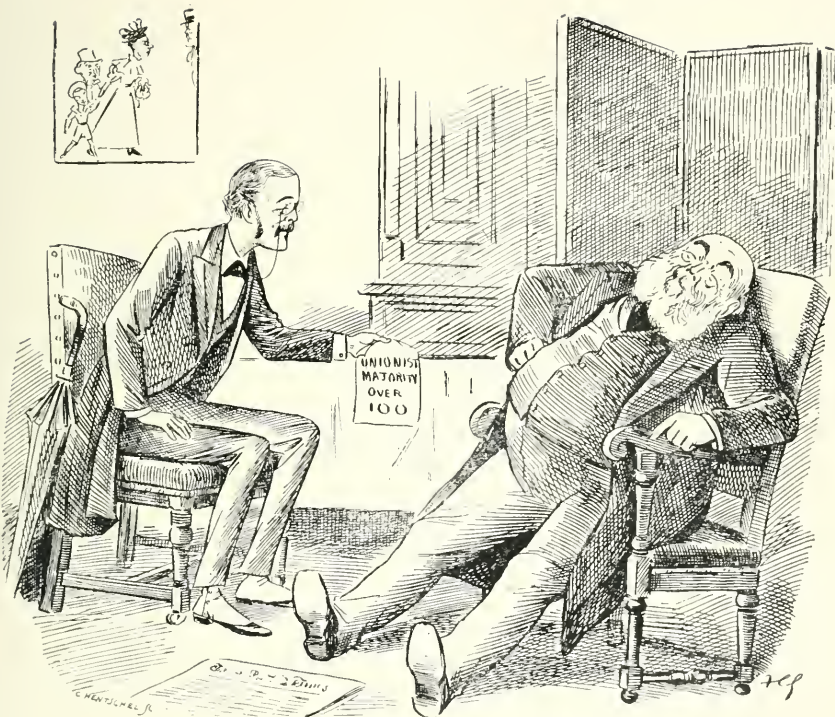
GENTLEMEN,—When in 1895 I last had the honour of soliciting your suffrages, I was addressing an audience who had fresh in their recollection the legis-



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lative schemes of the Home Rule Government which had just been defeated in the House of Commons. The judgment you then passed upon those schemes was decisive. You were asked whether you desired Home Rule for Ireland, Disestablishment for Wales, and the destruction of the House of Lords. You declared by an overwhelming majority that you would have none of them. These questions, amongst others, are now again to be put to you, and I doubt not that you will return to them the same uncompromising reply. In place of these revolutionary projects you were promised, if a Unionist Government were returned to office, a sober course of social reform, a firm Government, and an Imperial policy. The record of the last few years is there to show that these undertakings have been amply fulfilled. I do not believe in the history of this country any Parliament has more successfully carried out their policy or more adequately fulfilled the hopes of those who returned the majority in it to power. The long list of useful measures which have been added to the Statute-book, the firm vindication of Anglo-Egyptian rights in the valley of the Nile, the strengthening of the bonds uniting different portions of the Empire, the increase in its military and naval defences, are among the evidences which may be adduced to show the success with which both the domestic and foreign interests of the country have been pursued by the present administration. And if in one case those interests could not be protected at a less cost than that of war, at least we may reflect with satisfaction that the war was not of our seeking, and that having been forced upon us it has served to show the world what are the moral as well as material resources which this Empire wields in times of national emergency. This survey of the





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### "A GOOD STORY"

*(With apologies to Leo Hermann)*

UNCLE.—"Good boy, Arthur! How did you manage it?"

NEPHEW.—"The old game, uncle! I pledged you to nothing, but we promised them everything."

UNCLE.—"Clever boy!"







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past contains the best of all guarantees as to the character of the policy which the Unionist Government, if it retains the confidence of the Sovereign and of the country, may be trusted to pursue in the future. Here, therefore, in ordinary times I might bring this address to a close.

But the times are not ordinary, nor is the problem now awaiting solution in the recently annexed South African territories to be ranked among the ordinary difficulties from which an Empire like ours can never long be free, and with which statesmen on either side of politics may be equally qualified to deal. For these difficulties, serious under any circumstances, will prove insuperable if the portion of the South African population hostile to this country is persuaded that it has opposed to it only divided counsels and an ambiguous policy. The possible advent to power of the Home Rule Party was one of its chief supports during the war. On the possible advent of a Home Rule Government to power it bases the hope that the war—now happily drawing to its close—shall be fruitless to the victors. One lesson which has been indelibly impressed upon the South African mind by that portion of our dealings with the Transvaal which so ingloriously ended at Majuba, is that from a Radical Administration neither firmness of purpose nor consistency of policy need be anticipated in the face of Boer persistence. Nor is there anything in the recent history of the Opposition likely to modify this view. Individual Members of it have indeed expressed opinions on the war with which all Unionists would agree. But among its leaders there is no symptom of that unity which alone can give strength in council, and among its followers every shade of doctrine seems represented, from an ardent and resolute patriotism to



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something not very easy to distinguish from treasonable sympathy with the enemy. It is not to a party so led and so composed that we can look for any consistent effort to grapple with one of the most difficult questions British statesmanship has ever had to face. And every citizen, therefore, who desires that the blood which men of our race from every quarter of the world have so freely shed in defence of the Empire shall not have been shed in vain, is bound to dismiss all smaller issues, and resolve that so far as in him lies there shall be no break in the continuity of our national policy, no diminution in the strength of the Parliamentary forces by which that policy can alone be successfully maintained.

This, then, gentlemen, seems to me the essential question on which you have got to decide. Other subjects there are, no doubt, of first-rate importance which at the present moment engage public attention—such for example as the development of events in the far East, and Army organisation. But it is not on matters like these, however interesting, that the verdict of the country can depend: for the general principles which should guide our policy in China afford little matter for dispute, and no satisfactory attempt to utilise the lessons of the war can be made until the return to this country of Lord Roberts and the gallant troops under his command. Their capacity and courage have added lustre to our military history: their victories have removed a standing menace to the peace and security of the Empire. They have shown us how excellent is the military material which we have at our command, and perhaps not the least of their services will consist in showing us by their experience how best that material may be turned to account.



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In the confident hope that the Electors of East Manchester will continue to grant me that confidence which they have never yet withheld.

I beg to remain  
Your obedient Servant,  
ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

Mr Balfour, accompanied by his sister, arrived in Manchester on 24th September, and at night addressed an enthusiastic meeting of his supporters at Ardwick, the hall being packed long before the hour for starting. The greater part of his speech dealt with the war, but after referring to the foreign policy of the last Liberal Government, he turned his attention to Lord Rosebery's "lonely furrow" sample of criticism.

"After all, this criticism of weakness," he said, "comes ill from a statesman like Lord Rosebery, a man of many charms and many accomplishments, a man of great gifts, a man well fitted to do his country service, but of whom, up to the present time, his best friends have not asserted that his strong point is to give the country a lead on a critical occasion." During the meeting he answered questions relating to the Church Discipline Bill, Old Age Pensions, Voluntary Schools, and Woman's Suffrage; the latter, he said, he had always supported.

His speech on the following evening reviewed the record of the Unionist Government; and in the two addresses he gave the next day, he defended the action of the Government in appealing to the country on the old register. He spoke twice on 27th September, dealing at some length with Army Reform; and also twice on the following day. He received a deputation from the National Protestant League on the Saturday, and on Monday, the eve of the polling.



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addressed two large open-air gatherings of working-men. An amusing incident occurred at one of the meetings. Just as he drove up to the improvised platform, a working-man called out, "How's Joe getting on?" "All right," replied Mr Balfour with an unrestrained smile.

Wherever he went, and at all his meetings, he met with an enthusiastic reception, his geniality and readiness to answer questions winning for him many supporters. His opponent, Councillor Scott, appealed for support as an "Ardwick lad," but the issue of the election was never in doubt, and when the figures were announced they recorded Mr Balfour's largest majority; an eloquent testimony to the strong hold he has gained over the constituency, and the admiration the working-men of East Manchester have for their illustrious Member.

During the evening Mr Balfour had been speaking on behalf of Captain Houldsworth, who was on active service, but he returned to Manchester after the meeting to hear the poll declared, the figures of which must have given him the keenest satisfaction. The result was as follows:—

### *East Division*

Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (C.) . . .	5803
Scott, A. H. (L.) . . .	3350
<hr/>	
Conservative majority . . .	2453

This magnificent result showed an increase of 1677 votes over 1895, when his majority was 776.

The victorious Member polled 417 more votes than he did at that election, and 656 more than at the one in 1892.

Thankful for his own triumphant success, Mr



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Balfour hastened off to Scotland, and the following evening addressed a great Unionist demonstration in St Andrew's Hall, Glasgow. He met with a magnificent reception, and his powerful speech had no doubt a direct effect on the result which made it possible for Glasgow Unionists to say, "We are seven."

On the 5th October he spoke at Kilmarnock, and three days later at West Calder. Crossing the Border, he addressed two meetings the following day at Bingley, and on the 11th October spoke at Chesterfield.

When the final results came to hand they recorded a magnificent victory for the Unionist Party and an unmistakable approval of their policy; one of the most noticeable features of the election being the firm support accorded to Unionist candidates in the large towns. The Conservative Members returned numbered 332 and the Liberal Unionists 70=402, as against 186 Liberal and Labour candidates and 82 Nationalists=268, which gave Mr Balfour a working majority of 134 over the combined votes of the Liberals and Irish.

Parliament met on 3rd December, the chief business being the supplementary war vote of £16,000,000. After a short sitting the House was prorogued on 15th December.

The death of Queen Victoria on 22nd January 1901 necessitated the early reassembling of Parliament, to enable Members to take the oath of allegiance to the new King. The royal proclamation was read on 24th January, and the following day both Houses of Parliament met to move votes of condolence.

It fell to Mr Balfour's lot, as Leader of the House of Commons, to move the Address, a duty he fulfilled with dignity and in graceful and eloquent language. His speech was purely the expression of a loyal subject and a faithful servant of the Crown. But its spon-



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taniety and depth of feeling was admirably suited for such a memorable occasion. The words of glowing eulogy he spoke will always rank as one of his greatest orations. The *Times*, in its leading article, said that Mr Balfour's speech "was remarkable for its well-chosen language," and that it far surpassed in dignity and impressiveness any previous effort of his on a similar occasion.

The House, Mr Balfour said, had never met under sadder circumstances. They were faced with a universal sorrow which extended from one end of the Empire to the other; a sorrow which filled every heart, and which every citizen of our great Empire felt, not merely as a national, but an irreparable loss. "I do not know how others may feel, but for my own part, it seems to me that I can hardly yet realise the magnitude of the blow which has fallen upon the country. I suppose, in all the history of the British monarchy, there never has been a case in which the feeling of national grief was so deep-seated as it is at present, so universal, and so spontaneous. And that grief affects us, not merely because of the loss which has fallen upon us, but because we feel, as it were, that the end of a great epoch has come—an epoch the beginning of which stretches far beyond the memory, I suppose, of any individual whom I am now addressing, and which embraces within its compass sixty-three years, I would venture to think, more important, more crowded with great change, than almost any other period of a like length that could be selected in the history of the world. It is wonderful to think that when so many of the great changes now familiar and almost vulgarised by constant discussion and repetition, were yet unthought of or undeveloped—those great industrial inventions, those great commercial changes,



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those great discoveries in science which are now in all men's mouths—Queen Victoria reigned over the Empire."

Continuing, Mr Balfour said that the reign of Queen Victoria was no mere chronological landmark, but an era of national progress which was bound up with her personality. The importance of the Crown in our constitution was not a diminishing but an increasing factor, a result due to the great and good example of Queen Victoria. Her queenly dignity only served to throw into stronger relief and into a brighter light "those admirable virtues of the wife, the mother, and the woman, with which she was so richly endowed." Those kindly graces had endeared her to all classes of her subjects.

"Perhaps less known," he went on to say, "was the life of continuous labour which her position of Queen threw upon her. Short as was the interval between the last trembling signature affixed to a public document and final rest, it was yet long enough to clog and hamper the wheels of administration; and I remember when I said a vast mass of untouched documents which awaited the hand of the Sovereign of this country to deal with, it was brought vividly before my mind how admirable was the unostentatious patience with which for sixty-three years, through sorrow, through suffering, in moments of weariness, in moments of despondency it may be, she carried on without intermission her share in the government of this great Empire. For her there was no holiday, to her there was no intermission of toil. Domestic sorrow, domestic sickness, made no difference in her labours, which were continued from the hour at which she became our Sovereign to within a very few days of her death. It is easy to chronicle the growth of Empire, the



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progress of trade, the triumphs of war, and all the events that make history interesting or exciting; but who is there that will dare to weigh in the balance the effect which such an example, continued over sixty-three years, produced on the highest life of the people?

“It is a great life, and had a fortunate, and let me say, in my judgment, a happy ending. The Queen had her reward in the undying affection and the immortal recollection of all her subjects wheresoever their lot may be cast. This has not always been the fate of her ancestors. It has not been the fate of some of the greatest amongst them. It has been their less happy destiny to outlive, as it were, their fame, to see other people's love grow cold, to find new generations growing up around them who knew them not, and problems awaiting solution with which they felt themselves incapable to deal. Such was not the destiny of Queen Victoria. She passed away with her children, and her children's children, the third generation around her, beloved and cherished of all. She passed away without — well, I believe — a single enemy in the world, for even those who loved not England loved her. She passed away not only knowing she was, I had almost said worshipped, in the reverence of all her subjects, but that their feelings towards her had grown in depth and intensity with every year in which she was spared to rule over us. No such reign, no such ending has been known in our history before.

“Mr Speaker, the message from the King which you have read from the chair calls forth, according to the immemorial usage of this House, a double response. We condole with His Majesty upon the irreparable loss which he and the country have sustained; we congratulate him upon his accession to the ancient



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dignities of his House. I suppose at this moment there is no sadder heart in the kingdom than that of its Sovereign, and it may seem, therefore, almost to savour of irony that we should offer him, on such a melancholy occasion, our congratulations. Yet, Sir, it is not so. Each generation must bear its own burdens, and in the course of nature it is right that the burden of the Monarchy should fall upon the heir to the throne, and he is to be congratulated, as every man is to be congratulated, who in the course of his obedience to plain duty takes upon himself the weight of great responsible duties, filled with the earnest hope of carrying out those duties to the end, or, in his own words, 'while life shall last,' to the best of his ability."

Mr Balfour concluded his speech by reading the address of condolence to His Majesty.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman followed, and in an admirably-conceived speech expressed the feelings of the masses in the loss they had sustained, and their sympathy for the Royal Family. The Address was passed in silence, and the House afterwards adjourned.

On 14th February the King opened his first Parliament, the scene in the House of Lords being of a brilliant character and one worthy of a great historical event. Mr Balfour in the House of Commons made an effective speech in reply to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's criticism of the Address; the war and the recent election forming the two foremost topics of his remarks.

The session was largely taken up with discussions on the war and its financial cost, the legislative Acts passed being only of a minor importance. Through many heated debates and trying periods Mr Balfour guided the House with skill and judgment, and although the session was an uneventful one from some aspects,



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the prorogation on 17th August witnessed a still further strengthening of his position as Leader.

The opening of Parliament by His Majesty on 16th January 1902 was not marred by the unseemly crushing which occurred on the first occasion. The Speech from the Throne stated that proposals for the co-ordination and improvement of primary and secondary education would be laid before the House. Other measures mentioned were, the London Water Bill, facilities for the sale and purchase of land in Ireland, an improvement in the law of valuation, the amendment of the licensing laws, the registration of clubs, and the amendment of the patent law.

Mr Balfour in his speech on the Address made a good point at the expense of the Leader of the Opposition, whom he said "had made a public reconfession of faith in the cause of Home Rule." On that question Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had evidently not "wiped his slate clean," the Leader of the House remarked. Developing the point with characteristic skill, Mr Balfour, accompanied by the cheers of his followers, nailed the Leader of the Opposition down to his confession, and then proceeded to twit his party about its various official and unofficial chiefs and its divergent views. He afterwards dealt with the war, and in emphatic terms declared that "we mean to conquer."

To a full House Mr Balfour, on 30th January, introduced his new Procedure Rules. In a speech of felicitous phrases and polished satire, he explained his proposals, and though they tended rather to strengthen the power of the Government against that of the individual Member, they were well received on the whole by the House. The object of the new rules, he said, was to expedite the business of the House and save needless delay, and though righteously sensitive



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of its ancient customs, Members recognised that Mr Balfour's proposals would effect many needed improvements, and that the changes they would cause would be more than counterbalanced by their ultimate results. The opinions expressed on the whole were favourable; but it is only after the rules have been given a thorough trial that a true estimate can be made of their value.

The *Daily Telegraph*, referring to the debate, said that Mr Balfour had added another to the long list of his Parliamentary triumphs. "His interest, courtesy, and an inherited charm of manner, a transparent sincerity and a very genuine affection for the assembly of which he is the leader," remarked the *Telegraph*, had won "the unstinted esteem and complete confidence of the House, and these advantages have now stood him in good stead in proposing somewhat drastic changes."

Speaking on 22nd April, at the conclusion of the debate on the Corn Tax, he said the principles of free trade would not be infringed by the tax. The price of bread was liable to fluctuations, in which the price of corn was only one element. He did not believe working-men would object to pay this slight duty in view of the fact that they had endorsed the policy which had necessitated it.

The most important measure of the session, and the one that aroused the greatest opposition, was Mr Balfour's Education Bill, the details of which were published on 25th March. No Bill of recent years has caused so much political speech-making; but whatever opinions may be formed as to the merits of the Bill, Mr Balfour's management of it in the House earned for him the approval and praise of supporters and opponents alike. Throughout its discussion he showed a mastery of its complex details and a grasp of educa-



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tional affairs which add considerably to his reputation as an administrative statesman.

From the outset he evinced a conciliatory spirit, and, while not willing to sacrifice his fundamental principles, he accepted a number of amendments proposed from both sides of the House. Shortly after the Autumn vacation, Mr Balfour was compelled to promote the more rapid progress of the Bill by the use of the Closure. It was essential that the measure should pass into law before the rising of the House, and while he made no attempt to hinder legitimate discussion, the Leader of the House put a needed check on those Members whose sole object in talking was to retard the progress of the measure, the third reading of which was carried on 3rd December by a majority of 123. The debates on the Bill are of too recent occurrence to need a detailed description. As Leader of the House, Mr Balfour delivered a large number of speeches, and night after night watched the proceedings with undiminished vigour, ever ready to meet attack or make a compromise where it was possible. His piloting of the Bill through the House was one of the features of the session, and the skill, resource, and fortitude he exhibited made still more secure his position as a great Parliamentary leader.



## CHAPTER XV

### HIS QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

MR BALFOUR has now led the House of Commons for a longer continuous period than any Minister since the Reform Bill of 1832; a record of public service of which he, together with his fellow-countrymen, might justly feel proud.

He has also placed to his credit legislative results which very few of his predecessors have surpassed. In the fulfilment of his arduous and responsible duties, Mr Balfour has proved himself one of the greatest leaders the House of Commons has known, and won for himself a popularity which has not always been the portion of Parliamentary leaders. His record is one of exceptional distinction and one which will find a conspicuous place in history. No leader of modern times, with the exception of Mr Gladstone, has exercised such a steady influence over his Parliamentary followers. Mr Balfour's leadership may lack the fire and fascinating enthusiasm of Mr Gladstone's, but for continuity of support and productiveness, it is superior in many respects to the great Liberal leader's record. Had Mr Gladstone's foresight and personal knowledge of the views of his followers been equal to his wonderful oratorical power and personal influence, his leadership would probably have never seen any gaps and divisions. If there is one transcendent



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feature which stands prominently out in Mr Balfour's record, it is the fact that he has taken the trouble to ascertain the views of his supporters, and where possible to adopt them. He has endeavoured to read the signs of the times, and, while not hazarding his authority, he has broadened his Conservatism. Mr Balfour has not attempted to rule his party with an iron hand, but he has so exerted his power that during a most trying period of government he has kept his followers together almost without a single desertion.

Mr Balfour has many qualities which distinguish him as a great leader. Once he assures himself that he is right, he never wastes vital force in fuming and fretting over the wickedness of those who are thwarting his policy. A set determination, combined with an amiable disposition, have enabled him to come triumphant out of many difficulties. While he delights to vanquish an opponent, he has a keen sense of humour, and when he is hit hard in reply, he receives the bombardment with unruffled equanimity. The House contains no more powerful debater. Mr Balfour is a past-master in subtle argument, and though he is second to none in making a good statement and putting a good complexion on an uninviting case, it is in replying to an opponent that he is most effective. His listless attitude may suggest a complete absence of attention, but when he rises it soon becomes strikingly evident that he has followed every word and marked the weak and vulnerable points of his opponent's speech. His so-called indifference is a mere cloak to hide his unostentatious but none the less active interest, and his apparent sleepiness an effective disguise for a fruitful period of thought.

Mr Balfour is always great on great occasions, and



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he may safely be relied upon to speak in a manner worthy of an auspicious event. Powerful opposition brings out his reserved strength, and at such times, with his debating powers at their highest pitch, he provides the House with an oratorical delight which never fails to arouse both the enthusiasm of his own party and the interruptions of the Opposition.

He is seen at his best when winding up a debate, and if an important issue hangs in the balance, and the question under discussion is one of vital consequence to his party, his powers as an orator are strikingly portrayed. It is then when the passionate ring may be distinguished in his voice and the flow of his language is quickened. An attack on a colleague always arouses these hidden fires, and the House is never so impressed as when its leader has his back to the wall. But Mr Balfour never plays to the gallery, and on occasions when he might have produced a dramatic effect, he has chosen to announce the most sensational news in a quiet, deliberate, and unadorned manner. Events which would have completely unnerved most men and sent them into a state of frenzy, the present Leader of the House has received with calm, dispassionate strength. In such moments his command of will-power and reserve mark him out as a born leader. During the dark days after Colenso his resolution and courage never wavered. Although doubly conscious of the critical state of affairs, there was no sign of weakness in his leadership, and his unperturbed optimistic attitude had a most steadying effect on his followers. They recognised in him a true leader, and one who in the hour of difficulty is seen at his greatest.

Some careless observers imagined Mr Balfour was irrecoverably slipping into the marshes of indiffer-



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ence, and were so moved as to most kindly write out his epitaph. But while they only examined the surface, those who knew the man and his qualities had their confidence increased and their admiration kindled. The Leader of the House has on many occasions sacrificed his personal popularity to matters which to him have been of much greater importance.

The charge of indifference which is so often hurled at Mr Balfour has one redeeming quality. He is most unmercifully indifferent to the antics of the bores and the wild schemes of the fanatics, and consequently he has incurred the displeasure of this somewhat numerous class. He has, however, one compensation: they now leave him alone.

Mr Balfour when making a speech seldom troubles himself with papers. On special occasions the brass-bound box in front of him may contain a few notes, but even these aids are sometimes dispensed with, for he has found to his confusion that they have sometimes proved pitfalls instead of inspirations. Like Mr Chamberlain, he gives much time to mapping out and preparing the framework of his speeches, but being gifted with a splendid memory and a ready command of language, he can safely leave the filling in of the rest when he rises from his accustomed place. Whilst speaking he seldom falters in his delivery, and his perfectly-phrased sentences and skilful arguments always make his speeches excellent reading. There is a literary flavour about Mr Balfour's speeches which gives them a distinguished place amongst Parliamentary orations.

It is seldom he indulges in poetical quotations, but during the discussion on the Education Bill on one occasion he used the familiar couplet added to Goldsmith's "Traveller" by Dr Johnson: "How small



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that humble hearts endure that part which laws or kings can cause or cure." He began smoothly enough, "How small," and then abruptly collapsed, and turned round to be prompted by the Attorney-General, whose knowledge of the English classics, however, proved unequal to the emergency. An embarrassing pause ensued, but finding no succour forthcoming from his colleagues, he made another plunge: "How small of all that human hearts endure that part which laws or kings can kill or cure." "Cause or cure" someone interposed. "Ah, well," the Prime Minister exclaimed, throwing out his hands with cheerful helplessness, "the House knows what I mean," and the peal of laughter which followed proved that his slight error had been readily forgiven.

Mr Balfour when speaking in the House has a quiet, graceful style of delivery, and though rarely accompanied with gesture and physical emphasis, it is always noticeable for its delicate shading of tone and effect. His voice is resonant and carries well. His manner is courtliness itself, and his methods such as have won for him an enviable popularity. This is not confined purely to his own followers. Mr Balfour has to make many replies, but he generally succeeds in sending home his argument or giving a reproof without incurring the resentment of his opponent. It is in the exercise of this admirable quality that his influence lies. Mr Chamberlain may be more strenuous and more destructive, but where he makes an enemy Mr Balfour secures a friend and promotes his cause. In the art of retaining supporters and appeasing opponents, the present Leader of the House has few equals amongst his predecessors. While he does not fight his battle with the same burning enthusiasm as the Colonial Secretary, or exhibit the dashing vigour characteristic



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of Lord Randolph Churchill, he appeals more to the impartial observer, and is very seldom ineffective in the long run.

There are very few positions which involves so much arduous labour as the leadership of the House. Unlike some Government offices, it is by no means a sinecure. The man in the street probably never troubles himself over such a detail, while should he detect the slightest weariness in the work of guiding the deliberations of the House, he at once becomes quite eloquent in his denunciation of "indifference." But if the average working M.P. has a just excuse to feel tired at times, what of his leader, who always has to be about the House, either speaking, or ready for an emergency, and who can never take a whole day's pleasure? Under such a strain and working at such a high pitch, it is no small wonder Mr Balfour at times is overcome by a feeling of lassitude. But for his strict habits and fondness for exercise his indispositions must have been increased. The Leader of the House has not an iron constitution, and it is a splendid testimony to his will-power and public patriotism, that, for over seven years he has, purely with the object of serving his country, lead the House of Commons and borne unmurmuringly its heavy responsibilities and arduous trials. Criticism, in the light of such a record, unless it is tempered with sanity, is not worth a moment's consideration.

There is a story to the effect that whilst having tea on the Terrace one afternoon with Miss Balfour and Mr Chamberlain, the latter picked up a newspaper containing a leaderette, which, in the most scathing terms, attacked Mr Balfour's policy, and concluded with the omniscient piece of advice, that he should give up politics and devote himself to golf. "I wish



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I could," smilingly commented the Leader of the House as Mr Chamberlain finished reading the passage; "for it is very evident that the newspaper world contains better politicians than myself."

A glance at Mr Balfour's daily Parliamentary routine not only provides the most striking refutation of his alleged indifference, but supplies an eloquent proof of his great abilities and his fitness for the task he has filled with such honour during the last seven years. When he enters the House in the afternoon he has already done a good morning's work, and by the stroke of midnight he has put to his credit a day's labour such as the working-man, agitating for an eight-hours' day, would shrink from with horror.

Mr Balfour is in his office at Downing Street as early as the average city merchant. Awaiting him is a pile of official correspondence, in addition to a good complement of private letters from constituents and the usual begging epistles from cranks and lunatics. Having read his official papers and answered the necessary questions, and dictated the replies to his private letters to a shorthand clerk—Mr Balfour writes very few letters with his own hand—he turns his attention to his Parliamentary work, such as the preparation of answers, verbal and written, and the arrangements for that day's proceedings in the House. By the time these duties are finished, he has hardly a few minutes in which to snatch a little lunch before he must be in the House, or in attendance at an important Cabinet meeting. His duties as leader may be of a light nature if the sitting is a short one, but if, as is generally the case, an important measure is under discussion, for eight or even twelve hours with but a slight interval, he must be in his place on the Treasury bench, watching the progress of the de-



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bate, and ready at a moment's notice to decide some vital point or make some needful compromise, and, if the occasion should arise, prove equal to a sudden crisis. If he is not on the Treasury bench, listening to a series of dull speeches delivered in an almost empty House, he must be within the sound of the division bell. It has been said that the Leader of the House is a man of letters by instinct and a politician by accident. There is much truth in the former assertion, but although, throughout a busy Parliamentary career, Mr Balfour has nurtured his literary tastes, he has proved himself an out-and-out politician; and his record as Irish Secretary, and the manner in which he has fulfilled the multifarious duties of leader of the greatest assembly in the world, is the best proof of the utter fallacy of the second assertion.

Mr Balfour is a man of immense reserve whom very few really understand. Notwithstanding the arduous nature of his duties, he is often fresh and vivacious at the end of a session, while others are fagged and despondent. One of the secrets of his success is his ability to banish worry, and the calm unperturbed manner in which he deals with the most weighty affairs of state and carries out the duties of his daily routine. He freely associates with his followers, and has many friends amongst the Opposition. His popularity and power have increased with each succeeding year, but if it is more marked in one part of the House than another, it is amongst the younger Members. With the memory of his own early Parliamentary efforts and the valued encouragement accorded him by Mr Gladstone, he never loses an opportunity of emboldening new Members and recognising and acknowledging merit when it is manifested. This cordiality and kindly interest has secured for him



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many valuable recruits, and it is one of the most attractive features of his successful leadership.

Mr Balfour has not carried out his duties with a bull-dog coarseness or made any attempt to introduce amateur theatricals into his speeches, but he has brought to his work the acumen of a great scholar, the practical experience and developed judgment of a man of keen insight, the courtesy of an English gentleman, the wit, knowledge, and resource of a consummate debater, and the inflexible will and steady purpose of a great statesman.

Mr Chamberlain paid a well-deserved tribute to Mr Balfour's leadership, at a banquet given in the new Premier's honour on 15th October 1902. After referring to the "profound reverence" in which he regarded the nation's Parliament, he said:

"I look back upon the long roll of illustrious men who have filled in this country the position of Leaders of the House and Prime Ministers of the kingdom, and I know of none who have earned in greater degree, who have more deservedly earned the confidence and the regard of the House of Commons, than my friend Mr Balfour. (Loud cheers.) Mr Balfour, as none know better than his colleagues in the House of Commons, possesses qualities which that assembly has always appreciated. The unfailing courtesy which can never be exhausted is joined in him to those great qualities of firmness, courage, and sincerity which the House of Commons always applauds and always approves. I congratulate him in my heart on the great position he has earned, which is deserved by his character and by his talents; but I claim for the House of Commons the fact that he is essentially a product of the House, and that he is what he is, largely by virtue of the education, the experience, and



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discipline he has gained in the twenty-nine years of Parliamentary life to which he has referred. The House of Commons, I believe, is the only assembly which could have afforded it. In honouring him you have honoured the House of Commons, and although our differences are great, I do not believe there is one Member in the assembly who will not say, at all events in his calmer moments, that Mr Balfour represents the best traditions of that assembly—(hear, hear)—and who would not be willing to apply to him the well-known lines:

“ ‘Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,  
In action faithful, and in honour clear;  
Who broke no promise, served no private end,  
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.’ ”



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE

No political movement of modern times has exerted a greater influence on English history, and been attended with such epoch-making results, as the Alliance formed between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Unionists in 1886. The secession of a section of Mr Gladstone's followers, who were unable to support his Irish policy, not only materially affected the future history of the two great political parties in the State but proved the turning-point in the fortunes of the one and the beginning of a weakening process in the other.

The fears expressed at the time the Unionist Alliance was formed have been falsified, and, instead of dissension and rampant disagreement, the results achieved, as they are viewed to-day after fifteen years working, are such as the nation has cause to be thankful for, and which redound to the honour of those who, in the face of tremendous difficulties and at great personal sacrifice, laid the foundation of an historic union.

The fruits of the Alliance are manifold. Not only has its primary object been realised and the dismemberment of the United Kingdom been averted, by the defeat and practically the annihilation of Home Rule, but the fusion of Liberal principles with Con-



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servative politics has resulted in the passing of many beneficial legislative Acts in the interests of the masses. Of later years the two men who have taken the foremost part in the work and growth of the Alliance have been Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain. Owing to the enormous amount of labour which devolved upon him as Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr Balfour did not play so prominent a part in the negotiations which led up to the Alliance as his distinguished colleague. Since 1886, however, and throughout the period he has led the House of Commons and occupied a leading position in the counsels of the Unionist Party, Mr Balfour has contributed largely to the strengthening and consolidation of the Alliance. He has worked in complete harmony with Mr Chamberlain, and there have been many striking evidences of mutual support and attachment since the forces of both statesmen became united. Mr Balfour's political relationship with the Member for West Birmingham forms a not unimportant chapter of his career.

At one time they were determined antagonists, each conscious of the other's strength. On several occasions they crossed swords, and the House always showed its appreciation of a debate when two of its most promising speakers were taking a leading part. When the Member for West Birmingham was making his name in the Commons, he found in Mr Balfour a worthy opponent. Rising on 16th July 1885 after the President of the Local Government Board had spoken at some length on the Medical Relief Disqualification Bill, Mr Chamberlain said he had listened to the speech of the right honourable gentleman with the greatest possible interest, as he always did listen to his speeches. There was no one in the House, he continued, who was a more sincere admirer of the right honourable gentle-



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man's ability than he was, but although he had listened to him with especial interest on this occasion, he was unable to tell until the concluding sentence of his speech whether it was for or against the Bill. The remainder of Mr Chamberlain's remarks dealt with Mr Balfour's arguments in support of the measure. On the 22nd of the same month the two orators again came into contact in the House, and a sharp passage-at-arms followed.

On the 26th of the previous month, Mr Balfour, speaking at Hertford on his election as President of the Board of Trade, had devoted a good portion of his speech to the Member for West Birmingham, and his pungent criticism on that occasion had evidently aroused Mr Chamberlain's wrath.

Mr Balfour said he hoped Local Self-Government would be given to Ireland, but not such as would satisfy Mr Chamberlain; and, continuing, he remarked that: "It is impossible to read the recent utterances of Mr Chamberlain without being convinced that his object, at all events, is to make Whiggism impossible and moderate Liberalism impossible. He has determined that the Liberal Party, whether it be in a majority or in a minority, shall be a homogeneous and a Radical Party, and all the elements—the valuable and useful elements which now prevent it being homogeneous and exclusively Radical—he means to drive out. If he means to do it, depend upon it that he will succeed in doing it. It will not, perhaps, be as long as the great statesman lives who was recently at the head of affairs, not so long as he reigns undisputed over the Liberal Party. But as soon as Mr Gladstone retires from the cares of active political life, then it will be that Mr Chamberlain will, as I have said, make Whiggism an impossibility and an anachronism,



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a thing which can no longer count on the chess-board of politics. I confess I look forward to the change which will ensue with very mixed feelings. The old traditions of English politics will then have disappeared. At this moment the difference between a Conservative and a moderate Liberal is almost undistinguishable. It is almost a vanishing quantity. The ties of party may lead them into different lobbies and make them vote differently at the polls; but if they were to put down the items of their political creed you would find the difference to be almost infinitesimal. The result of this has been moderation in legislation, and good party-feeling between the opposing camps. I fear that both good feeling and moderation may vanish in the political struggles of the future."

He believed Mr Chamberlain's policy would result in many moderate Liberals going over to his own party. He welcomed these recruiting tactics, and, "speaking merely as a Conservative and merely as a party man, and not at all from the view of the general welfare of the community, I should say: 'Long live Mr Chamberlain; may his counsels prevail more and more in the Liberal camp; may he convince his late colleagues more and more that united action with him is impossible in the future, as recent events have shown it to be in the past.'" Loud and prolonged cheering followed this straightforward and forcible piece of advice.

Replying to a vote of thanks, Mr Balfour said that Mr Chamberlain had announced that the only terms on which the Government were to be allowed to exist was that they should not destroy the work of the Liberal party. He was not in a position to state the Government's policy, but, continued Mr Balfour, with unmistakable emphasis, "I tell you what it will not



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do. We will not do the dirty work of the Liberal Party, or any other party. We are not going to be the humble substitutes of Mr Chamberlain." (Loud cheers.)

The President of the Local Government Board and Mr Chamberlain were not, however, destined to long continue as vigorous opponents. The stirring events in the political life of 1886 were the first signs of an impending change in the relationships between the two men, and before the expiration of two years the first links had been forged, and both were fighting shoulder to shoulder. Much speculation has been indulged in as to what history would have recorded had the upheaval of 1886 never occurred. No two lives would certainly have been more affected than those of the two foremost members of the present Unionist Cabinet.

Although Mr Balfour took no leading part in the negotiations of 1886 and 1887, he watched with the keenest interest the process of political transformation which, with the resignation of Mr Chamberlain and the defeat of the Home Rule Bill, and the triumph of the Conservative Party aided by the Liberal Unionists at the polls, launched him into the onerous and unenviable position of Irish Secretary. The round-table conference of 1887 aroused some hope, but after prolonged deliberation it proved abortive, and Mr Chamberlain gave his support to Mr Balfour's Crimes Act, which formed the chief question in the speeches he made during his Scottish tour.

His work as Irish Secretary for some time absorbed most of Mr Balfour's attention, and his speeches at this period dealt chiefly with one topic, and that his Irish administration, and the attacks made upon it by his great opponent Mr Gladstone.



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Towards the end of 1888, however, Mr Balfour made several references to the Unionist Alliance. During his visit to Glasgow, on 1st October he was the recipient of a resolution passed by the West of Scotland Liberal Unionist Association, who "as staunch Liberals desired to record their admiration for the patriotic and courageous manner in which he took up the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland at a grave crisis in the history of the United Kingdom, and also their approval of the impartial and painstaking manner in which he had discharged the duties of his office, and their regret that his motives should have been so constantly aspersed by his political opponents."

Mr Balfour, in reply, expressed his thanks for the unfailing support the Liberal Unionist Party had given the Government in the arduous work with which they had been entrusted, and for the unswerving fidelity of the Alliance with which they had resisted the dismemberment of the Empire. Without their aid, he said, the party to which he belonged would have been powerless to resist the overwhelming influence which one great name had upon the masses of the country. The dissentient Liberals represented the true traditions and succession of the Liberal Party, and on the question regarding which the Conservatives and Liberals agreed, they had been united from the time of the Union. Their enemies had prophesied that the Liberal Unionist Party, while it might last weeks, would not stand the strain of session after session and vacation after vacation. He emphatically replied that "every month during the last two years had seen the bonds which united the leaders of the Liberal Unionists and Conservative Unionists drawn closer together."

Speaking at Haddington on 16th October, at a banquet given in his honour by the Unionists of the county,



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he said: "This union of Unionists will, I am convinced, appear to the historian of the future as the most remarkable phase of the great Irish controversy in which we are now engaged. The action of the Liberal Unionist Party will be quoted as one of the bravest examples of public spirit which the Parliamentary annals of England have shown."

He did not advise an immediate amalgamation, nor that Liberal Unionists should discontinue their name. He hailed with satisfaction the policy which had been pursued by the Liberal Unionist Party, as he believed "it had been dictated, not only by a wise reverence for their own past, but by a sound knowledge of the exigencies of the present." The public spirit and patriotism, he said, which had animated the Liberal Unionists, had preserved the Empire from a great danger. Amidst loud cheers he added, that the Unionist Party were fighting, not only for unity of Empire, but "as custodians of the public morality."

During his visit to Manchester on 18th October 1888, the newly-formed Liberal Unionist Association presented him with an address, in which they recorded their admiration of the "ability and patient courage with which he had performed the difficult and often painful duties of his office as Irish Secretary." As Liberals firmly attached to Liberal principles, they assured him of their admiration, which, they remarked, even fair-minded opponents in their calmer moments must have felt for the manner in which he had faced the greatest difficulties. They assured him he could rely upon their support in his prolonged struggle against lawlessness and crime.

Such a testimony, coming from a section of his constituents who had opposed his first election a few months previously, was greatly appreciated by



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Mr Balfour, and in his reply he heartily thanked them for their valued address. He paid a glowing eulogy to Professor Hopkinson, his opponent at the election, who was present at the meeting, and to the work of the Liberal Unionists, between whom and the Liberal Party, the Irish by their system of boycotting had created a moral gulf.

On 4th December 1889, Mr Balfour received a remarkable reception at a banquet given in his honour by the Unionists of Scotland. Covers were laid for 2700 guests, and throughout the proceedings the greatest enthusiasm prevailed.

Addresses from Liberal Unionists in every part of the country continued to flow in upon the Irish Secretary, and one of the most important of these was the resolution presented on November 1890 by the Liberal Unionists of Liverpool, who desired to welcome him to their city, and to assure him of "their appreciation of his ability and character, and his courage, tenacity, and sympathy with Ireland." On rising to speak he met with a great reception. He said that Liberal Unionists by their action had exhibited a patriotism transcending party ties. Without their aid the Government could not have accomplished its great work. Even more important than their support at the polls, was the weight of the great names associated with their party. The ability and public spirit they had shown in clearly and dispassionately explaining the Unionist creed, was a service which could not possibly be over-estimated. Coalition Governments had not been very successful in the past, but whereas previous coalitions were "but temporary combinations of place-hunters for power, our alliance is based upon a deep, a hearty, and an earnest conviction, and is not framed for any personal object, not for any selfish end ;



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but it is based upon public morality, and destined, therefore, to endure as long as public morality shall hold its place among the springs of public action." Referring to the rumours of dissension, he said: "I need not tell you that so far as, at all events, the leaders of the two parties are concerned, such jealousy has never had the slightest existence."

He appealed for hearty co-operation between the two wings of the party, and for the sinking of minor differences to the promotion of the great cause they all had at heart.

Speaking at a great political demonstration at Plymouth on 11th August 1891, he said that the greatest sacrifices had been made by the Liberal Unionists, and the smallest official rewards reaped by them. In the history of the country never had there been a more noble sacrifice of the smaller to the greater ends of the comparatively petty objects of party struggle to the overmastering object of national welfare and national union.

Addressing a Primrose League gathering in Hatfield Park on 19th July 1891, he eulogised the work of the Liberal Unionists, who, he said, "had earned their gratitude and the gratitude of their children, for they had saved the country." He urged Conservatives to imitate their loyalty and enthusiasm for the common cause.

The relations between the two wings of the Unionist party continued to make marked progress, and gradually minor differences and memories of past conflicts were swept aside, and an united action taken wherever required. The Irish Question remained the binding link, but every year saw a gradual drawing together of the two sections, and a more mutual agreement on the other great questions of the hour. The



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year 1895 witnessed a memorable advance, and before its close the fusion was complete, and the two parties were installed in power as a working union.

A speech Mr Balfour made on 26th April 1895, at the annual meeting of the Grand Habitation of the Primrose League in London, proved the last connecting link which was needed to weld the bond. Replying to the legendary rumours that the union of the Unionist Party, "which is our glory and the Opposition's difficulty," was on the point of dissolution, he said, that the Unionist Party had behind it nine years of the closest political co-operation and the closest political friendship.

"I have before borne my testimony in public to Mr Chamberlain's character as an ally and colleague. Never did a man meet with more generous support, more unflinching assistance, and more ungrudging and unselfish aid from another, than I have received all through my official career as Leader of the Opposition, and I can truly say, never was that friendship more unclouded than it is at the present moment. Never was I more certain of that co-operation without which I could hardly have even undertaken the task I have so unworthily performed, and in which, if I have had any measure of success at all, it is largely due to the aid which has been given to me by Mr Chamberlain and his party."

Mr Balfour warmly repudiated the attacks which some Conservative journals had made on Mr Chamberlain. He was convinced that they only represented a small fraction of the party.

"I do not think that anyone who hears me will deny that of all the men who have been engaged in that great task, there is no one, be he who he may, who has made greater personal sacrifices of legitimate



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personal ambition, sacrifices of ancient personal friendship, sacrifices of immemorial ties to the Unionist cause, than the statesman who has been made the object of these unworthy attacks."

He said the Conservatives would never forget the assistance of their allies, who helped them to avert a great national catastrophe. The necessity for the Alliance was still there, as Home Rule was not dead but "sick unto death," and while there was a probability of a Home Rule Government coming into power, the work of the Unionist Alliance would remain uncompleted.

He emphatically refuted the charge that the compact was extorted from Conservative necessities by Liberal Unionist ambitions. Replying to the question which had been asked: Is the alliance between the two wings of the Unionist Party to be an eternal alliance, and was it always to go on precisely the same terms which existed at present? he said that his ideal of party organisation, and the only one which could work without friction, was that each constituency should be allowed to manage its own affairs without interference from London. During a period of transition, however, this was not possible.

Conservative Unionists, he said, were in a majority, but in some cases Liberal Unionists held the balance of power. Policy and justice demanded that the claims of the Liberal Unionists for representation in Parliament should be considered, as only by respecting the rights of the Liberal Unionists could the compact of 1886 and 1888 be carried out in a loyal spirit. This arrangement might inflict some hardship, but he appealed to those who felt themselves injured in any way, to make the sacrifice necessary for the cause they had in common.



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He could not look forward indefinitely to the existing arrangements continuing, and in reply to the question which had been asked, he unhesitatingly answered that there was to be a "permanent union."

The Unionist Party, united not merely in the House of Commons but throughout the country, he went on to say, had for its social programme "the maintenance of institutions, the preservation of individual liberty, and resistance to Socialistic schemes." Individual differences might exist in the party, but these should be subordinated to the paramount objects they were all fighting to obtain.

He concluded his speech with the following significant statement which was received with great cheering: "I look forward," he said, "to the time when Liberal Unionists and Conservative Unionists, united in one Government, and drawn together by one great set of principles, to carry out one great work, shall have earned the gratitude, not only of their own time, but of posterity."

On 14th June the Duke of Devonshire and Mr Chamberlain were entertained to a banquet given by the National Conservative Union, and between this latter event and Mr Balfour's speech there exists an undoubted historical connection. The Duke, in his speech, reviewed the history of the Liberal Unionist Party; and Mr Chamberlain in the course of a characteristic address referred to the growth of the alliance and his cordial relations with the Conservative leaders. He made a special allusion to "the brilliant leadership of my friend Mr Arthur Balfour," and to the morbid state of the Government.

Lord Rosebery's Government was in none too vigorous health at the time, and no one was surprised when a week later its troublesome career was cut short



## THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE

by an adverse vote on the inadequacy of the nation's supply of cordite.

The Unionist Party proved triumphant at the polls by a majority of 152, and Mr Chamberlain accepted the office of Colonial Secretary in Lord Salisbury's Government.

Some surprise was expressed at the position allotted to Mr Chamberlain, but subsequent events have proved that it was destined to be one of the most onerous and most responsible in the Cabinet. The opening of Parliament witnessed the unusual event of Mr Chamberlain taking his seat beside Mr Balfour on the Treasury bench.



## CHAPTER XVII

### A POLITICAL FRIENDSHIP

WITH the acceptance of office by the Liberal Unionist leaders in the Government of 1895, the Unionist compact entered upon the second stage of its career. The mists having been cleared away, both sections of the Unionist Party put their hands to the plough to justify the confidence the country had placed in them jointly. The Jameson Raid proved the first disturbing event. Mr Balfour, speaking to his constituents on 15th January 1896, referred to the gravity of the offence, but he said the time was not pertinent to pass an opinion upon the action of the leaders, who, he said, would be brought to trial, but he was sure they had not been animated by sordid or personal motives. He passed on to refer to the grievances of the Uitlanders, and the urgent need for the introduction of many requisite reforms by Mr Kruger's Government. The Transvaal is a free and independent country as regards its internal affairs, but as regards its external affairs, he added, it is under the control of this country. His reference to Mr Chamberlain was distinguished by a note of complete confidence in his policy. He said:

“In our Colonial Secretary we have a man who has shown himself, under difficult circumstances, possessed in a high degree of those qualities of rapid decision and of courage which are essential qualities of states-



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manship of the first rank. I think we may well leave in his hands the further management of Imperial interests, which he so well knows how to safeguard."

The outbreak of the South African War at the end of 1899 put a fresh strain on the stability of the Unionist compact. It proved itself, however, equal to the demand, and Mr Balfour's defence of his colleague throughout a period of exceptional difficulty and of exceptional abuse forms one of the most distinguishing features of the history of the compact, as well as one of the most important periods of his career. Again and again the Leader of the House vindicated the Colonial Secretary's policy and testified to his personal qualities.

In the debate on the Address on 6th February 1900, he said the amendment was not an attack on the Government but on the Colonial Secretary. Whenever a speech flagged, or an orator felt that he was not holding the attention of his friends, he had only to make an attack on the Colonial Secretary, and immediately, from a small but vocal part of the House, a hearty response was obtained. He thought his friend might well ignore these persistent and reiterated attacks. Mr Chamberlain might congratulate himself that "it was during his term of office as Colonial Secretary that the British Empire, as a whole, had first shown its full and corporate consciousness of what it was and what its destinies were. . . . And in no small degree, through his great administrative abilities, that dramatic moment occurred, for the first time in the nation's history, when every British Colony joined with the mother-country to carry out a great Imperial work. When all these contemptible charges were buried in oblivion, which they so well deserved, Mr Chamberlain's name will be forever associated with that great moment in our history."



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While not giving his complete support to the use Mr Chamberlain thought fit to make of the famous telegram from the Mayor of Mafeking, "that a seat lost to the Government is a seat sold to the Boers," he said, in the debate on the Address in the House on 6th December 1900, that although he had not used the telegram himself during the election, he was of the opinion that votes given to the Opposition helped to strengthen the Boer cause.

In the debate on Mr Chamberlain's pecuniary interest in a number of Birmingham companies on 10th December 1900, Mr Balfour said the Colonial Secretary had the sympathy of the country with him in the personal attacks which had been made upon him. There was no ground for the imputations which had been made, and he believed Mr Chamberlain never stood higher in the esteem of the vast majority of his countrymen.

An attempt was made on 20th February 1900 to reopen the inquiry into the Raid, as an indirect attack on the Colonial Secretary, whom the Committee in their report had exonerated from blame. Mr Balfour ridiculed the idea that there should be an inquiry, because the Colonial Secretary had three years ago made a speech in which he spoke well of Mr Rhodes. He asked the House not to reopen, after such a period, a subject which had been considered for several months by a Parliamentary Commission. If the demands of the Opposition were acceded, Parliamentary procedure would be turned into a farce. Calumny sedulously fostered against an individual was not likely to be stopped by the simple expedient of appointing a new Committee. The notion that a new inquiry was necessary in order to satisfy foreign opinion, he treated as absurd. The Committee had control of the whole



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inquiry, he remarked, and they examined whom they liked. He reminded the House that Sir William Harcourt had approved the Committee's report, and that Pitt and Palmerston had in the past been similarly attacked by the foreign press without serious injury to their reputations.

Continuing, he said that it was evident the motion was a personal attack on Mr Chamberlain. "I do not think my honourable friend need have anything to fear from it. In my opinion, those who have turned this weapon against him have misunderstood the temper of the people of this country. If there is anything calculated to turn an enemy into a friend, to turn a cold observer into an ardent supporter, to make an ardent supporter even more firm in his adherence to any statesman, it is the feeling that that statesman is being unfairly attacked, and his political enemies are taking advantage of the situation to stab him in the back. If I had a good wish to give my honourable friend in the course of his political career, it is that he may have many times to undergo such attacks as to-night. But I can assure him that there is nothing which will more secure his position in the eyes of his friends, followers, and supporters than the consciousness that he has been made the victim of such calumnious assaults as he has been made the victim of on the present occasion." Mr Balfour's unambiguous and staunch testimony, which was made the subject of much comment in the press, was received with hearty applause by the House, who rejected Mr D. Thomas's resolution by a majority of 134.

Speaking at Manchester on 27th September 1900, he said he had served in the closest harmony and co-operation with the Liberal Unionist leaders since Mr Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886. He could truly



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say that never in all that period had there been any difference between them. They had throughout acted "as members of a coherent, united, and homogeneous party."

To mark their appreciation of the services Mr Balfour had rendered to the consolidation and growth of the Unionist compact, he was entertained to dinner on 16th May 1900 by an influential company of Liberal Unionists, amongst whom were the Duke of Devonshire and Mr Chamberlain.

Mr Chamberlain, in proposing the toast of the evening, "The health of Mr Balfour," said that the banquet was the realisation of a desire long entertained by the Liberal Union Club and the representatives of the Liberal Unionist Party to mark their appreciation of the splendid services which Mr Balfour had rendered to the country, their special sense of his loyalty to the Unionist Alliance, whose existence at the present and through so many years of conflict and struggle, was largely due to his tact and wisdom and generosity. He (Mr Chamberlain) considered it a high honour to have been chosen their mouthpiece on that occasion. There had been in the present century many Leaders of the House of Commons, but there had been none who had possessed in a more remarkable degree the confidence—the affectionate confidence—of that great assembly. The House of Commons was an excellent judge of character, and did not lightly give its confidence, and it certainly was not prodigal of its affection. A man with great ability and distinguished intellectual gifts might earn their respect, but if he wanted their regard he must have some of those qualities by which their guest was so distinguished—his generosity to his opponents and his chivalrous loyalty to his friends. It was because Mr Balfour had



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those qualities that he had been so implicitly trusted by all parties. To have accomplished such a task between so many shoals and dangerous rocks, especially when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, was alone a fact which deserved their gratitude and admiration, and from the term of Mr Balfour's office in Ireland could be dated that happier period which had left our relations with that country in a better condition than they had been for very, very many years. Another point to which he would like to call their attention was one which specially interested Liberal Unionists. It was now only ancient history to say that the unity of the country—the integrity of the Empire—was saved in 1886 and in 1892 by the Unionist Alliance. Conceive what would have been our position to-day if we had had a Nationalist, an independent, Parliament in Dublin, manned by the most extreme of the Nationalist Party, animated by the most bitter feelings towards this country and its policy, naturally dissatisfied, as they would have been, with what they considered the inadequacy of the terms on which they had gained their independence, and if they had been willing, as they would have been willing, to seek in England's danger for Ireland's opportunity. That we had been spared, and it was cause for thankfulness to everyone in that room, and to many who fourteen years ago were able to see that it was better that a party should be broken up than that an empire should have been disintegrated. It had been said with truth that England hates coalitions, and no doubt the Gladstonian Party calculated in 1886 that the coalition represented that night, when the immediate danger had passed would break up under stress of personal jealousies or mutual distrust. That that did not take place, as it had taken place with two previous political



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alliances of the kind, was due, in the first place, to the trust which they were able to place in the honour, the good faith of Lord Salisbury and Mr Balfour; and, in the second place, to the splendid way in which the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House of Commons had repaid that confidence. Both sides were prepared to subordinate personal differences—minor differences—to the great interests of the nation. The result had been the growth of a truly National Party, animated by great Imperial aims, and pledged to a policy of national reform, which had done more to bind classes together and to promote the welfare of the whole people of this country, than had ever been accomplished before in a similar period of legislation. The success of this coalition—its very existence at the present time—had depended upon the wisdom and the moderation of the Conservative leaders. He, therefore, asked them to drink the health of their guest as one of the founders and principal supports of the Unionist Alliance, as a statesman, as a trusted Leader of the House of Commons, and as the best friend and most powerful and loyal comrade that any man could desire to have.”

Mr Balfour, on rising to respond, met with a magnificent reception, which, with the eulogy and striking testimony to his ability and work contributed by Mr Chamberlain, must have in some measure repaid him for his labours on behalf on the compact, and revealed to him some of the fruits the union had produced since its inception. His speech, like that of Mr Chamberlain’s, has an historic association. He said: “Mr Chamberlain, my lords and gentlemen, you will readily conceive that I do not rise to respond to the toast presented to you in the terms which you have just listened to without feelings of the deepest emotion. Mr Chamberlain’s speech—far too kind and



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favourable in its general tenor—takes my mind back over fourteen years—the fourteen eventful years which have elapsed since the Liberal Unionist Alliance was first consummated. I recall all the incidents of that period—the fights that we have gone through together, the great causes that we have upheld in common, the mutual support which we have given to each other in moments of difficulty—and I think there must be few politicians who could look back upon that period, as I can look back upon it, with a feeling of heartfelt gratitude that Providence has given me colleagues to work with with whom I have been so closely associated in all those years. Mr Chamberlain was kind enough to say that some part of the success, some part of the absolute harmony which has reigned without a flaw all these years, was due to myself. But I hardly think so. I wish to affect no modesty on an occasion like this, but my candid view of what has occurred is that the success of the Unionist coalition—if coalition you are to call it—was due to very different causes, much deeper and profounder causes than could have been found in the character or purpose of any single individual, or, indeed, of even a small body of individuals. Mr Chamberlain has reminded us that, according to a saying which he quoted, and which, I believe, is due to Lord Beaconsfield, England does not love coalitions; and why does not England love coalitions, or, rather, why did England not love coalitions at the time when Lord Beaconsfield made that observation? The reason is that the coalitions of which England had then had experience were coalitions having for their object some petty party advantage, some success for this or that section of politicians, who desired to obtain what are called—and what, perhaps, at one time were rightly called—sweets of



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office—to themselves, and who were perfectly prepared to sacrifice for this temporary object publicly avowed professions of many years. Had the coalition between the Conservative Unionists and the Liberal Unionists been of that character, it would have lasted but a short time, and it would have been buried in as deep disgrace as the famous coalition between Lord North and Mr Fox more than a hundred years ago; and it is because that coalition was framed for very different objects and based upon very different motives that it has had, and will have, a very different place in English history and very different claims upon the gratitude of British posterity. In this room we all belong to one party, but we are represented by two organisations, and I mention the fact to show how deeply based are those fundamental agreements which make us, I believe, the most homogeneous and united party which has ever ruled in this country. History gives us plenty of examples of persons who were substantially agreed. History, political and ecclesiastical, gives us plenty of examples of cases in which persons substantially agreed were nevertheless driven asunder by the fact that they were divided between different organisations. History again gives us plenty of examples in which persons of very different opinions were nevertheless bound into some kind of coherent unity by a common organisation. I am not aware that history gives us any example of great bodies of men having separate organisations who nevertheless found no difficulty in working together in the most intimate harmony and the most complete unity, through every change and stress of circumstances, every alteration of political fortune. . . . No doubt, year by year, we have seen the warm affection between the English Home Rulers and the Irish Home



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Rulers gradually cool. That honeymoon was of short duration. Nevertheless, I am not quite sure that a permanent divorce is likely to occur, or that either the Irish Home Rulers or those who were once Home Rulers among the English—but who would gladly be Home Rulers no longer—will be able so to divide their political interests that either can do without the other; and as long as that condition of things remains, the immediate national and Imperial danger which this union was called into existence to avert still remains a possible danger in the future, a danger which we cannot ignore, however confident we may be that our future efforts to defend it will not be less successful than those of the past. But, my lords and gentlemen, I should be giving a wholly false impression if I left you with the idea that the alliance between the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists depended alone upon the danger of a recrudescence of the Home Rule agitation. I think very differently. I think that the union brought about by a great national crisis, having come, will remain. There are cases in the physical world when a sudden stroke, some unexpected shock, will crystallise in new forms a liquid subjected to the impact. That crystallisation, having once been produced, remains, and in the same way I believe that the Home Rule agitation has brought together men in all parts of the kingdom suited to work with one another, having substantially a common creed, aiming substantially at like results, and, under those circumstances, not likely to be dissociated one from another by any passing chance or any unexpected alteration in the political weather. If I had to give a proof of what I say to those not intimately acquainted with the day-to-day life of the House of Commons, I should like to point out to them that in all those years in



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which, some times in a majority, we, the Unionist Party, have upheld the Unionist cause, there has never, in my recollection, been a single case in which any division—any temporary division—of opinion in our party followed what I may call the lines of cleavage between the Liberal and Conservative Unionists, and though it would be improper to allude more particularly to the more intimate councils of the party, a similar proposition may be stated in the most absolute and unqualified sense, that in all the discussions which I have known amongst us—discussions inevitable, necessary, and desirable before the final decision is arrived at—I have never known—never once in all these fourteen years have I known any division of opinion, even in the most intimate councils of the party—following, as I say, the historic line of cleavage between Conservative and Liberal Unionist. That proves, gentlemen, to my mind, absolutely and conclusively, that the Unionist Party as it is now constituted is no temporary makeshift to meet a temporary necessity. It is no chance expedient, hastily snatched at to avoid a great national danger. That it may have been in its original inception fourteen years ago, but we have not fought together for fourteen years in the same cause, we have not together passed measures which we believe will be for the permanent benefit of every class in the community, we have not together resisted the disintegrating policy of the Opposition, we have not together followed out the great Imperial policy of which, to put it moderately, my right honourable friend is not the least distinguished exponent, we have not done all this through fourteen eventful years to separate again upon some chance occasion or some passing difference. What has happened has happened in the history of England, in the history of party



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government in England, which is the political history of England—no greater, I will even venture to say, no more beneficent event has occurred; and while I associate myself fully with what has fallen from Mr Chamberlain to-night as to the claim which this Government has had, as we think, upon the gratitude of our contemporaries and of posterity, I believe that the benefits of this alliance, as they did not begin with this Government, will not end with this Government, but that they are destined in the future, and in the far future, to produce fruits not less useful, results not less admirable than, I think, we may justly claim they have produced in the past.”

Complimentary speeches followed from the Lord Chancellor and the Duke of Devonshire, and one of the most memorable events in Mr Balfour’s career closed with a reply from Mr Chamberlain, in which he quoted the lines:

“Friends I have made whom envy may commend,  
But ne’er a foe whom I would wish a friend.”

On 12th August of the following year, Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain were the chief speakers at a huge demonstration of Unionists in the grounds of Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, the historic seat of the Duke of Marlborough. Mr Balfour, on rising to speak, was greeted by the band playing “For he’s a jolly good fellow,” the vast audience joining in the refrain. In the opening part of his speech, the First Lord of the Treasury made a short but important reference to the Unionist compact. He said: “I have often addressed great gatherings before, but so far as I know it has never been my privilege to speak to an audience of such magnitude, drawn from the two great wings of



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the Unionist Party. The Duke of Marlborough in his admirable introductory address spoke of the permanence of that alliance. Ladies and gentlemen, it was once *an alliance*, it is now *an indissoluble union*; and although my right honourable friend, the Colonial Secretary, and I are appearing to-day on one platform, let it not be supposed by that, or any other sign, to indicate a closer union than that which exists, and for many years has existed, between the members of this party."

Mr Balfour went on to refer to the support which the country had accorded the Government,—a continuance of public confidence which, he said, had not been exceeded in point of undiminished strength and length of tenure since the great Reform Bill of seventy years ago. The remainder of his speech was devoted to a severe criticism of the disloyal attitude of the Irish Party.

Mr Chamberlain, who followed, also met with a great reception. Referring to the Unionist Alliance, he said: "It has successfully defended the United Kingdom against the greatest danger which has menaced it throughout the last century, and it has been welded together by a growing sense of Imperial interest and of the obligation and the duties of Empire which the last few years have evolved. Day by day it has grown stronger, day by day the old jealousies have faded into the past, day by day we have been engaged shoulder to shoulder in battle with the common enemy and in building up the foundations of a truly national party."

In his first public speech on 20th July 1902, after succeeding to the Premiership, Mr Balfour made a significant reference to his political friendship and his appreciation of Mr Chamberlain's services as Colonial



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Secretary. He said that statesman had imparted to colonial affairs a new inspiration. The growth of colonial loyalty was chiefly due to "the personality and policy of that great statesman who rules over the Colonial Office."



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

MR BALFOUR'S attitude on the South African War was distinguished throughout by a statesman-like firmness and stability. From the commencement of hostilities he strongly held to the conviction that the war was just and inevitable, and in company with his colleagues in the Cabinet, he maintained this view during one of the most critical and trying periods of English history. He proved himself a staunch champion of the Government's policy, and by a large number of speeches in Parliament and throughout the country, rendered yeoman service in placing the issues at stake before his fellow-countrymen, and refuting the charges and assertions made by the opponents of the war. His work in this respect forms a most important chapter in his career, and will rank as one of the greatest services he has rendered, not only to the Unionist Party, but to his country. The main work devolved on Mr Chamberlain as Secretary for the Colonies, but as Leader of the House of Commons a vast amount of responsible and arduous labour fell to Mr Balfour, who acquitted himself with honour and credit to his party, and succeeded in winning over many doubtful supporters, and to a certain extent enlisting the aid of several prominent politicians amongst the Opposition, a task which very few men could have accomplished with such signal success.



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Although Mr Balfour believed the war to have been inevitable as well as just, at one period when the negotiations were in progress, he was hopeful an amicable settlement would be possible and the points in dispute mutually decided upon by diplomacy. He even regarded war as impossible, considering the reasonableness of the Uitlander's claims and the disposition of the Transvaal Government to grant the representation they appealed for as taxpayers. His hopes, however, were not destined to be fulfilled; but, as showing the almost sanguine view held by the British Government that the negotiations would have a peaceful conclusion, and the extent of the policy of patience and moderation they pursued during the trying months preceding the outbreak of hostilities, a speech delivered by Mr Balfour on 27th July 1899 possesses an additional importance.

Replying to the toast of his health as the principal guest at a dinner given by Mr F. W. Lowe, M.P., the Chairman of the Midland Union of Conservative Associations, he said: "We are face to face with one of those problems, or one aspect of those perennial problems, justly calculated to cause anxiety both to those who are responsible for the government of the Empire and to those on whose support the Government essentially rely."

He went on to say that one of the roots of the misunderstanding was an unwillingness to grasp the seriousness of the present crisis and the train of historical circumstances which had led up to the difficulty. The Transvaal was not an isolated country, but situated in the midst of our South African possessions, and not differing from them either in the general character of the country or the races which inhabited it. That being so, we had not merely to consider the



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grievances or the difficulties of the Uitlanders, we had, in addition, to consider how those grievances and difficulties would react upon the possessions for which we had even a more direct and obvious responsibility than we had in connection with our own countrymen in the Transvaal.

Continuing, he said: "I do not wish to comment upon the settlement of 1881, from which, no doubt, it would be possible to trace all the difficulties with which we have now to deal; but let us not do injustice to Mr Gladstone and to those who were responsible for that arrangement. They never would have entered into it, they never would have restored to the Transvaal the independence which they could have destroyed, unless they had supposed that in the Transvaal the same rights and the same liberties would be extended both to the English and to the Dutch races, and which are already extended to those races in every other part of our South African dominions. They never contemplated the possibility in 1881 that, by a series of laws more stringent than one another, the Uitlanders would be excluded from every position, from every right which Englishmen and Dutchmen alike possess in the Orange Free State, in Cape Colony, in Natal, and elsewhere. They never contemplated for a moment that this process of establishing by law more and more effectually an oligarchical rule of a relatively small section would be enforced by so amazing a provision as that which puts every court of law in the Transvaal under the direct control of the executive, differentiating in this respect, so far as I know, the Transvaal, not only from every free Government in the world, but from every Government describing itself as civilised. That was a contingency never contemplated."

The promise of the Transvaal Government in 1881



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to give equal rights to men of all nationalities, the same as granted by the Orange Free State, had not been fulfilled, and it was owing to the non-fulfilment of this pledge, Mr Balfour said, that the difficulties which confronted the Government in 1899 had arisen.

He made a passing reference to the expedition which Mr Gladstone had sent out fourteen years previously, and expressed the hope that the Government would have no necessity to follow the same course. But it is manifest, he added, that the present position cannot be indefinitely prolonged, a statement which was received with loud cheers. He remarked that: "If endless patience, endless desire to prevent matters coming to extremity, and if all the resources of diplomacy were utterly ineffectual to untie the knot, other means would have to be found by which that knot could be loosened."

But immediately striking a more cheerful and optimistic note, he said: "Personally, I take a more sanguine view of the situation, and I take it for this reason: that if I rightly understand the proposals made by the Transvaal Government, that Government is in principle prepared to grant that immediate representation of the Uitlander interest in the Volksraad which, however inadequate, if you measure by our standard of redistribution, is at all events real and substantial, and which carries within it the germ of every future reform which may make the South African Republic a useful member of the great South African Confederacy of States and Colonies, and may solve for ever the differences which have so unhappily come between them and us. In principle, I say, I understand that representation is conceded. I cannot believe that those responsible for the Transvaal policy could be so



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ill-advised as to withdraw in detail what they have given in the gross—to take back with one hand what they have given with the other, to destroy by minute vexatious regulations that which, broadly speaking, they have indicated their desire to grant; and if I am right, as I hope I am, in attributing these broad and statesman-like views to the Transvaal Government, then, in spite of all we have gone through, in spite of all the indications pointing in the opposite direction, we may trust that the negotiations now going on will lead to a final settlement of the differences which, while they last endanger, not the prosperity of the Transvaal alone, but that of the whole South African continent.”

Continuing, Mr Balfour said it was manifestly impossible that in face of the world, in the eyes of the native population and of our Dutch fellow-subjects, that we should permanently submit freeborn Englishmen to being treated as if they were an inferior race,—a sentiment which found generous approval in his audience.

He described such a policy as impossible as well as impolitic, and said that no Government responsible for the destinies of the Empire could permanently consent to it.

“But I hope—I hope with an expectation which I trust is not too sanguine—that as so much in principle has been granted, we shall find it not impossible in matters of detail to come to such an arrangement with the Government of the South African Republic as shall forever put an end to an inequality, an injustice, which deleterious as it is to our interests, to the interests of the Cape, to the interests of Natal and of our other dependencies in that part of the world, is most of all pernicious and even fatal to the Government which attempts to keep it up.”

While not taking a despairing view of the situation,



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he said, in conclusion, it would be folly to pretend that all the difficulties had been solved and to proclaim peace where there was no peace. He added that if the patience and moderation shown on our side met with similar qualities on the part of the Transvaal Government, the negotiations would be followed by amicable results. Mr Balfour's hope was not destined to be realised, and before the end of October the differences between the two nations were put to the arbitrament of the sword by the delivery of Mr Kruger's disastrous ultimatum.

The Transvaal difficulty is an old one, and during the latter part of the nineteenth century it occupied a foremost position in British politics. It is only possible here to take a glance at the events which led up to the outbreak of hostilities at the end of 1899.

The Boers first began to "trek" northwards of Cape Colony in 1833, but it was not until 1852 that the Transvaal was created by the Sand River Convention, Her Majesty's Commissioners consenting to "guarantee in the fullest manner to the emigrant farmers north of the Vaal River the right to manage their own affairs and to govern themselves according to their own laws without interference on the part of the British Government." In consequence of a series of Zulu victories over the Boers, the country was annexed by England in 1877. Mr Kruger was the only prominent dissident, and with the object of gaining support he twice visited England. A new constitution was promulgated in 1879, but it did not give satisfaction, and the refusal of a Boer farmer to pay taxes, and the seizure of his goods, immediately led to an armed insurrection and the establishment of a republican government under Kruger. A British column on its way to Pretoria was intercepted, and being vastly



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outnumbered, was defeated with heavy loss. The ensuing campaign was of but short duration. The Boers seized Laing's Nek and repulsed Sir George Colley, who attacked them. Fruitless negotiations then passed between the two sides. On the morning of 27th February the Boers attacked Sir George Colley's force on Majuba Hill. The defenders were routed, and the British commander and nearly a hundred of his force were killed. An armistice was arranged, and, ultimately, provisional terms of peace were agreed to, which included the return of the country to the burghers within six months. A Royal Commission was afterwards appointed, and the famous Convention of 1881 was drawn up and ratified.

In 1884 a deputation of Transvaal representatives visited England, and as a result, the Treaty of Pretoria was followed by the Convention of London. The name was changed to the South African Republic, and Great Britain's control over the internal policy of the country was relaxed, though a power of veto was retained. The word "suzerainty," which appeared in the preamble of the first treaty, was not mentioned in the second treaty, an omission which afterwards led to an endless amount of friction, and finally to war. Whilst England throughout a long period of contentious negotiations firmly held to the view that the suzerainty was not abrogated, and that only the articles were changed, and the preamble continued to be binding on both parties, the Boers, on the other hand, maintained that the second treaty had a separate preamble, and consequently the British power of suzerainty was revoked. But notwithstanding the ambiguous nature of the second treaty, it was too clear for any denial that Great Britain had not relinquished all her rights; and though Mr Gladstone's magnanimous terms gave the Transvaal wider



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powers of self-government, they did not make it an independent state. Article IV. left no room for doubt on that point.

With the discovery of gold in large deposits, the Transvaal in 1886 entered upon a new era of wonderful progress. Thousands of miners of all nationalities found their way into the country, and with the growth of the population, Johannesburg rapidly sprang into a prominent town. But the Boers were determined not only to profit to the utmost out of the labours of those who had come to exploit their country, but they refused to grant them any voting powers, or the right to say how the money they paid in taxation should be spent. Under such conditions grievances continued to grow, and as no redress was given, the discontent at last reached a critical stage, which unfortunately resulted in the ill-starred Jameson Raid.

The expedition, the responsibility for which has excited so much discussion and bitter recrimination, proved a miserable failure. The raiders were easily trapped and defeated, and the revolution they were supposed to lead collapsed like a pack of cards. The rank and file of the small band were dismissed, and after a prolonged trial the officers were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. The Raid did an incalculable amount of injury to South Africa, and its effect on subsequent events will never be fully measured. It not only failed to effect any reforms, but destroyed all prospects for a time, and hardened the resolve of the Boer Government not to grant the Uitlanders increased voting powers. It also had the effect of largely augmenting the Boer arsenal.

But injustice cannot be allowed to thrive even though foolish errors are committed, and in April 1899 a petition signed by 21,000 Uitlanders was presented



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to the Queen, praying for protection, and drawing attention to their grievances, the chief of which was that they were taxed but not allowed to vote. As a result, negotiations were opened between the two Governments. At the outset President Kruger appeared willing to grant some of the rights demanded by the Uitlanders, but, contrary to expectations, the Bloemfontein conference proved abortive for all practical purposes. Mr Kruger offered a seven years' franchise under certain conditions, which considerably lessened its power and efficacy. He added the proviso that all differences should be subject to foreign arbitration, and Sir Alfred Milner, being unable to accept these terms, the conference broke up early in June.

From this point matters continued to go from bad to worse. A vast amount of correspondence passed between the two Governments, but with no satisfactory result. Although the prospects of an amicable settlement appeared more promising at intervals, both sides continued to make preparations. On the 9th of October President Kruger despatched his famous Ultimatum, demanding in peremptory terms that all troops on the frontier should be withdrawn and those on the high seas sent back. The British Government's reply was firm and to the point. The demands were such as they deemed it impossible to discuss.

Mr Balfour's first public speech after the crisis had been reached was delivered at Haddington on 11th October before the East Lothian Unionist Association. He said: "Not by any action of the Government, not by any undue haste on our part, by no impatience, by no desire unduly to press those with whom we were in diplomatic conflict, the controversy which may be said to have begun on the morrow of the signing of the Convention of 1881 has now reached the stage



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when diplomacy is put aside, when argument ceases to take any further place, and when an appeal is made to arms I know not what other people may feel, but I confess that I, as a member of the Government, as one of those directly responsible for the conduct of the negotiations which have now terminated, regard this unhappy close of them with the feeling that though perhaps this result could not permanently be avoided, yet now that it has come, every lover, not merely of peace, but of goodwill among men, which it is our first business to cultivate in all our vast possessions, must consider that this peace and goodwill have been wantonly and gratuitously imperiled by the rash policy of the Boer Government."

He went on to say that the British Government, if it had erred, "had erred on the side of patience." They had hoped that the great controversy would be decided without bloodshed.

"If we have erred, we have erred, at all events, on the right side, and we can look back upon those long and anxious months with the conscientious conviction that, though war is imminent, it is none of our seeking. It has been forced upon us by those who are not men fighting for the freedom of their country, but an oligarchy fearing that the hour of their domination is nearing its end. . . . The choice before us was, either to insist that all the white races in South Africa—in that portion of the continent in which we claim to be the paramount power—should stand on an equality; or, on the other hand, to lose irrecoverably, and I think righteously, the claim to be a nation which not only has the desire, but the power to see that justice is done in all the regions over which it claims paramount influence." Continuing, he said that we had been contending, not



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merely for the rights of our countrymen—a legitimate subject of national anxiety—but the war had been forced upon us because we desired to see established a state of things under which alone peace was possible.

“I know not—and I will frankly add that I do not much care—what judgment be passed on this matter, and upon us, by those who perhaps have not the opportunity, and perhaps have not the inclination, to judge us as a nation fairly. It is enough for me that this country has been forced into its present position against its will, that each step forward has been taken reluctantly and in obedience to an overmastering necessity, and that, now that the prospects of peace are finally destroyed; now that even those whose patience seemed inexhaustible have had this solution pressed upon them; now that war, with all its consequences, all its loss of life, all its destruction of property, all the suffering in any war is upon us, we, at all events, can say that we have never asked for anything but justice, that we have never desired anything but freedom, that all we have longed for is that equality under the Transvaal Republic for men of our race and of our speech which we freely and equally give to men of Dutch race and Dutch speech in the neighbouring colonies. If they think it worth while to imperil their future in order to refuse these rights to men of our race and of our speech, at all events the blame rests on them and not upon this country, and we can, at all events, feel that whatever we have to go through before this war be brought to its final conclusive issue, the sacrifices we shall be called upon to make are sacrifices in the interests of the rights of men and of civilisation.”

Mr Balfour's first speech in Parliament on the war



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was delivered on 17th October 1899, on the opening of the short Autumn session. After complimenting Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman on his patriotic speech, he said: "I was hopeful that wise counsels would still prevail, that just demands would after all be granted, and that the horrors of war would not be brought down upon South Africa by an obstinate refusal of the South African Republic to grant rights to the Uitlanders which they had a right to expect."

Replying to the Leader of the Opposition's statement that the Government had goaded the South African Republic into war and flaunted the word "suzerainty" in their faces, he said that the South African Republic themselves made claims of being a wholly independent state, which was externally and internally inconsistent with the Conventions of 1881 and 1884. Mr Chamberlain had not used the word needlessly, as its use was made necessary by the contentions of the Boers themselves, and, added the Leader of the House, "had not the Secretary for the Colonies made perfectly clear the position of this country, he would have been guilty of an omission which, I am convinced, this House would not easily have forgiven."

In answer to the charge that the Government had adopted a policy of "bluff," he said that it was absolutely necessary to make preparations, and subsequent events had justified their action. The colonists of Natal could not be left unprotected, and while they had taken every precaution, they had avoided impeding the negotiations. The war he went on to say, had been entered upon in the cause of righteousness and liberty, and as a proof of his argument, he mentioned the support rendered by the Colonies, which had, he said, no parallel of a similar magnitude in the history of the British Empire.



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“We have material proof that our self-governing Colonies beyond the seas are with us heart and soul in this matter. (Loud cheers.) Is it to be believed that if we were engaged in some piratical transaction against the liberties of other people that these Colonies, the very breath of whose nostrils is self-government and liberty, would throw themselves into our cause and offer us armed assistance?”

In an eloquent peroration, he said: “We have been the butt of much ill-informed and malicious criticism on the part of foreign nations, but we have with us the conscience of the Empire (cheers); and having with us the conscience of the Empire and the material resources of the Empire, surely we may look forward with no undue misgiving to the result of a contest which was none of our seeking, and which we would have given anything consistent with the honour of the country to avoid, but which, as it has been forced upon us, will undoubtedly be carried through to its final, honourable, and, I hope, not remote conclusion.”

The war aroused the greatest enthusiasm throughout the country, and its discussion and defence formed the chief topic at public meetings and conferences. Mr Balfour delivered a series of speeches in which he firmly upheld the Government's policy. On 28th November 1899 he addressed a great meeting of the National Union of Conservative Associations at Dewsbury. Printed in large white letters on a crimson cloth stretching across the platform were the names of the three most prominent statesmen of the hour, Salisbury, Balfour, and Chamberlain.

Mr Balfour, on rising to speak, met with a great ovation. Replying to the charge that the Government had been moved by corrupt motives to adopt a policy



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which had for its object the destruction of the Transvaal and its neighbour, and that money and the acquisition of goldfields had been the moving springs of our action, the ground and ultimate goal of an iniquitous and selfish policy, he said that those who had made that charge were not acquainted with the colonial system of this country. He asked: "What penny of direct profit is it our habit to extract from our Colonies? Are we not, on the other hand, sacrificing the lives of those dearest to us, risking the death, as each one can probably say, as I myself and most of us can say, of those who by blood or by friendship are closely bound to us, in a contest from which we have nothing to gain except the security and the honour of the Empire?"

The war, he went on to say, was not in the interests of the capitalists but of the British workmen and the Uitlanders, who objected to "taxation without representation." Mr Balfour compared the Uitlanders' case with that of the Irish, much to the advantage of the latter, who had better representation, more freedom, and an unrestricted right to educate their children as they chose,—privileges not enjoyed by our countrymen in the Transvaal.

"You have only got to consider the condition of the Uitlanders—mark you, the superior section of the population in numbers, in culture, in civilisation, in all that goes to make industrial progress—and no comparison can be made between their condition and the condition of any other subject-population in the world. It was not possible for England to tolerate that, in the very middle of one of her dependencies, her sons should be treated like inferior creatures. It was not consistent with our honour or our dignity, still less was it consistent with the ultimate interests of



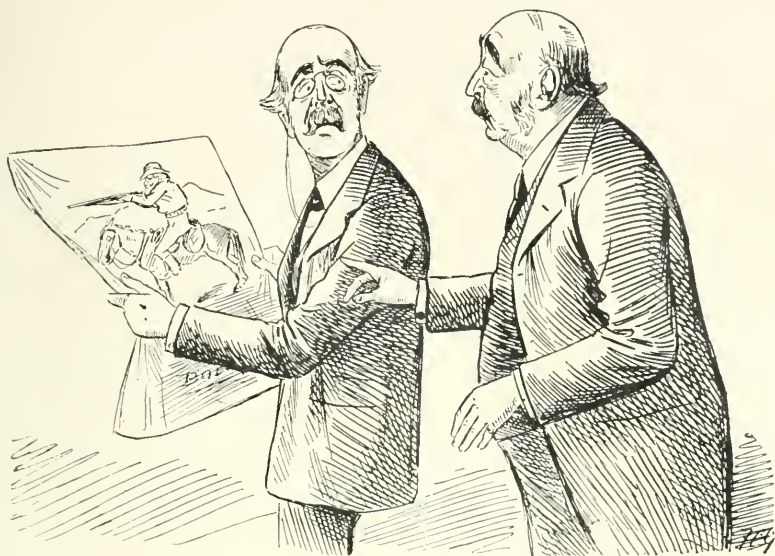
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either men of our own blood and language in South Africa, or even of white races taken as a whole."

Answering the charge that had the negotiations been carried on with greater dexterity by the Government in general, and in particular by Mr Chamberlain, the calamities of the war would have been avoided and all our legitimate desires peacefully obtained, he said that great events did not spring from petty causes. The Orange Free State and the South African Republic did not risk their very existence because a despatch was couched in one set of formula rather than in another, or was sent one day of the week rather than on another day.

"It would have been in the power of the South African Republic at any moment up to that fatal Wednesday when they declared war—it would have been in their power, undoubtedly, to have checkmated English diplomacy,—if English diplomacy had for its object to provoke a war,—by any measure which had promised to give immediate and substantial representation to the Uitlanders, and they could at the same time have claimed, if they had liked, that we should guarantee their independence. I say that, because it will be in your recollection that we offered to guarantee their independence in, I think it was the year 1896 or 1897, and the offer made was scornfully rejected. Now it is folly to say that people who could have avoided war by this simple procedure, were drawn into war itself by the wiles of unscrupulous diplomatists. They had their fate in their own hands. They could have chosen peace and permanent independence had they preferred to do so, but they elected for the opposite policy. They plunged themselves and their neighbours of the Orange Free State and us into a war, of which the end is not yet, and which, whatever blessings it may ultimately produce





*By kind permission of the Editor of "The Westminster Gazette"]*

### SUCH A SURPRISE

MR BALFOUR.—"Fancy, Ridley! they've actually got horses!"

SIR M. W. RIDLEY.—"And look, Arthur, they've got rifles too!  
What a shame to deceive us!"



*By kind permission of the Editor of "The Westminster Gazette"]*

### LO, THE POOR INDIAN

MR BALFOUR.—"Give you a dole! Quite impossible, my poor fellow. I feel very much for you, but I have heavy family claims."







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for South Africa, will certainly not tend to carry out the policy which these Transvaal statesmen most desire."

Mr Balfour maintained that the Government majority would have melted away if their policy had not been approved by the national conscience. The corruption which had prevailed had been the main obstacle to the granting of the franchise. A small governing class had aimed at keeping the sole power in their own hands, and had they granted substantial representation the whole forces of corruption would have been swept away by the people. But self-seeking was not the sole cause of the war, in Mr Balfour's opinion.

"I believe that the declaration of war by the Transvaal and the Orange Free State was not any despairing struggle for liberty but a bold bid for empire. It was not to preserve what they had, but to get what they had not that they went to war. Their object was to set up a Dutch-speaking paramount power and to exclude the hated Britisher from any dominating influence in the future, of that part of the world. That is the only explanation which fits the facts, that is the only explanation which, amongst other things, makes the policy of the Orange Free State credible. We never had any quarrel with the Orange Free State, we never did interfere or desire to interfere with their internal affairs. Their co-operation was part of a larger policy, a deeper and darker design, which aimed at nothing less than the substitution of Boer for British rule."

The speaker then passed on to refer to the conduct of the war. He said that there never had been such a spectacle as the transporting of an army 7000 miles across the sea to a country which was incapable of supporting a great force requiring food for its soldiers, fodder for the horses, and ammunition. The Boers, who



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were as a people an irregular militia, were intimately acquainted with the country, and consequently secured the best strategical positions.

Another factor which induced the Boers to plunge into war, Mr Balfour remarked, was that they had hoped for European intervention and the aid of partisans in England. "But," he added, "they counted on our party system in vain. They did not realise that, however divided we may be about the relatively unimportant questions which divide the great parties in the State, we should come together, if not as one man, still with a practical unanimity, whenever the great interests of Empire were threatened. And, let me say on this point, how very fortunate I count the country which has among its statesmen men like those who, not agreeing with us in politics, have spoken in patriotic and statesman-like language. There are men among our political opponents not less imbued than us with the traditions of an Imperial people, not less worthy to carry on the Imperial policy, or to protect the great interests of the Empire."

While not desirous of raking up old enmities, Mr Balfour said there was a connection between the attitude assumed by the Boers in 1881 and in 1899. They thought that by threat they had compelled the British Government to grant them their independence. This policy had been repeated, but with greater confidence, because by an immense acquisition of the most modern armaments, stores, rifles, and fortification guns, bought through the industry of the Uitlanders, they were in a strong position. But they mistook, he said, the temper of this country, who were prepared for no trifling. The indignation the treatment of our countrymen had aroused, demanded a definite and firm policy. The Raid had hindered the Uitlanders obtaining equal



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rights, but as soon as it became clear that no other course would suffice, the country decided that "force must be used rather than that wrong should be endured."

Mr Balfour said that while it was difficult to forecast the future, the Government were determined that "never again should we allow to grow up within our midst, communities of our own creation in a position to abuse the liberties we had granted them, and to turn their country into a place of arms to be used against us. Never again shall we see an English colony being invaded, English farmers being raided, or the Queen's dominions being annexed by these insolent republics. The people of this country are unalterably determined that the paramount power in South Africa shall be paramount indeed, and that *Pax Britannica* shall be supreme over all the regions in which the Queen now has territorial rights or paramount rights arising from her position."

Continuing, Mr Balfour said that he did not know how long the war would last, but he did know what the conclusion would be, and that the war, which he described as an "unhappy necessity," was "inevitable from the first."

He concluded his speech with a reference to the results of war and the unequalled patriotism of the Colonies. "War must produce suffering,—it has produced, and it will yet produce, sorrow in this country—but war, this war at all events, has its compensations. It has brought out great virtues in almost every class of the community at home and in our Colonies." The bravery of our soldiers had been unsurpassed, but while we had nothing but praise for our soldiers in the field, Mr Balfour asked his audience not to forget "the courage, the endurance, and the patriotism" which



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had been shown by Natal, on which had fallen the chief of the military operations. "Nothing can exceed, in my opinion, the debt which we owe them, and nothing deserves higher praise at our hands than the patriotic qualities which at a moment of difficulty and danger they have so transcendently displayed. The Colonies have shown themselves worthy members of that great confederacy we call the British Empire." They had sent, he said, their quota of brave men to fight for the cause, and if more men were required, more would be forthcoming.

As a Member of the Government, he was proud of the patriotism shown by all classes in the country. He eulogised the service rendered by the Reservists, the help accorded by the employers of labour, the subscribers to the various funds, and the sympathy shown by our American relations, who had provided at their own cost the Hospital ship *Maine*, fully equipped and staffed with nurses, doctors, and every modern medical appliance.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE DAWN OF PEACE

THE war naturally formed the chief topic in Mr Balfour's speeches to his constituents, and at Unionist meetings throughout the country during 1900 and 1901. He replied to the attacks of the Opposition with a vehemence only equalled by that shown by Mr Chamberlain, and defended the Government's policy in a number of able and powerful speeches. His receptions were of the most enthusiastic character, and this encouraging support was nowhere more freely extended than by his own constituents. His visit in the early part of January 1900 was marked by a series of oratorical triumphs. At his first meeting, on rising to speak, he was received with vociferous cheers. At the outset he alluded to the Fashoda incident, which he was glad had been amicably settled since his last visit. Turning to the war, he reviewed the negotiations which preceded it, and, casually referring to the Raid, he described it as "that most unfortunate and ill-omened enterprise." The Transvaal Government, he said, had shirked their responsibilities and obligations to the Uitlanders, whose industry had fed the corruption which had prevailed. All through the protracted negotiations the Home Government had hoped for an amicable settlement, and had never contemplated hostilities breaking out in the Autumn. The Raid had prevented



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the Government demanding that the storing of armaments by the Boers should cease. The Boers had replied that they needed arms for self-defence, and to resist another Raid. In the face of that argument, Mr Balfour added, we were helpless. Replying to the charge of unpreparedness, he said that while the negotiations had been proceeding, the Government had abstained from unnecessary menace, but had not neglected to make needful preparations. If the Government had erred, they had erred with the great mass of opinion on the South African Question. War was thought impossible. "Everybody was on an equality. The man in the street knew as much as the man in the Cabinet, and very often he thought he knew a great deal more."

Continuing, he said: "Supposing we had come to Parliament in the middle of August and said: 'We want you to vote us immense supplementary estimates for the provision of immediate transport to South Africa; we want you to call out the Reserve; we want you to embody the Militia'; what would have been the reply, not of the Opposition, not of the men who politically exist, but what would have been said by that great mass of moderate opinion both on the other side and on our own side of the House if we had made such a proposition?"

He went on to say that such steps would have been regarded as costly and unnecessary and likely to have precipitated hostilities. Referring to the support of the Opposition, he said: "Personally, I believe that unanimity is worth to us many Army Corps, and that it will do for us before this struggle is over what no hastiness or over-hastiness of preparation could by any possibility have accomplished."

He admitted that the Government had under-



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estimated the military efficiency of the Boers, but he said they deserved credit for having placed 25,000 men in South Africa at the commencement of hostilities. The Ladysmith entanglement was unexpected, and he could see no reason whatever why the Government should make an apology.

The assertion that the artillery was obsolete and inferior, was, he said, a complete delusion. Sir George White had been supplied with Naval guns, and the Army equipped with modern weapons. Mr Balfour made a hit at those critics who had prophesied that the Reservists would never prove equal to the demand. "They have come up to a man," he added, "and the three Army Corps which have mobilised have proved efficient."

Defending the War Office, he said, referring to the transport arrangements: "This enormous undertaking, the like of which has never been seen or attempted in history, has been carried out, broadly and roughly speaking, without a serious hitch. I say honour to whom honour is due, and that those who have controlled that organisation, and those who are now working it, are deserving, not of hostile comment or the carping quibbles of their countrymen, but mostly of a great debt of national gratitude."

He paid a tribute to the Volunteers, "those who have offered to serve their country," and then went on to refer to the conduct of the war. He said the Government had given the generals in the field a free hand, and left them to work out the problem to the best of their capacity, untrammelled by orders from home. Criticism at that moment was inopportune, as the generals criticised were unable to reply.

The war, he said, was one of self-defence, and on it depended whether there should be a British Empire in South Africa or not. The Government, through good



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fortune or ill, were resolved to pursue, unwavering to the end, a policy which would prevent such a war ever occurring again, a statement which his audience received with prolonged cheers.

He was not prepared to indulge in prophecy, and though there might be a period of great darkness and difficulty before the country, he had complete confidence in the courage and tenacity of his countrymen.

Mr Balfour, with his customary impartiality, referred to the "broad and wise spirit, and fair judgment, and generous toleration, which have animated every section of the community, even those persons who by temperament, by tradition, by party feeling, might be most expected to be actuated by a desire to attack the Government," and in a brilliant peroration testified to the invaluable aid rendered by the Colonies. "We are all agreed upon a common object, and moved by a common aim, and are prepared to make common sacrifices. The blood tingles and the pulse beats quicker, when we read of the feats that have been performed by our colonial troops."

The war, he said, had made us conscious of our citizenship, and had helped to build up those moral qualities which were the only solid and permanent foundations upon which any Empire could be built.

Speaking at a meeting the following day, he said the fibre and courage of the British soldier had not deteriorated, and that the sacrifices that had been made had knit closer every branch of the English-speaking race. He refuted the statement that the war had for its object the acquisition of more territory. Its great cost in life and treasure was not to be reckoned in such a light.

In his speech at the Conservative Club on 10th January, he replied to the criticisms which had been poured upon his defence of the War Office. The *Times*



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had published a trenchant article demanding reform and full information. The War Office, he said, had not concealed any unpleasant truths, and there were no facts to his knowledge which, if revealed, would produce an unpleasant impression. The field-guns supplied to the artillery would compare favourably with those supplied by any great nation. He was not sceptical as to the value of criticism, but distrustful as to its merits. While not regarding the Army system as perfect, he had not yet seen a satisfactory suggestion for its reform. No nation had so difficult a task in Army organisation as ourselves, and the work of our Army was different to that of Continental nations. Until the War Office could be shown to be behind the best military information of the time, it seemed ludicrous, he said, to attack it for want of prescience. As long as the Voluntary system lasted, the nation could not expect to put into the field a much larger and better-equipped force than the one sent to South Africa. If the country were prepared to adopt conscription, the case would be altered.

In the debate on the Address in Parliament on 30th January 1900, Mr Balfour replied at length to the speech of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and defended in spirited language both the conduct of the war and the negotiations which preceded it. He exonerated the Intelligence Department, and said it was impossible to accurately estimate how many men the enemy could put into the field. He crossed swords several times with the Leader of the Opposition, and taunted his opponents with the divergent views which they held and the various kinds of "foresight" they advocated. While one half believed the war was just and inevitable, the other half held quite an opposite view.

He said the Government had no desire to minimise



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the magnitude of the task before them, or any wish to conceal what shortcomings existed. "We are anxious to learn all the lessons the past can teach, and we know that the future is, and must be for some time, full of anxiety and difficulty for those who are responsible for the management of public affairs." The Government were determined that not only should the military honour of the country be vindicated, but that no root should be left in South Africa from which might spring any of the bitter and poisonous fruits under which for so many years we had suffered.

Speaking on the Army estimates on 16th February, he deprecated the panic-inspired speeches of some Members of the Opposition, and defended Lord Salisbury against the imputation that he desired to introduce conscription. The aim of the Government was to supply three Army Corps and the necessary garrisons. He did not agree with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that the difficulties of the moment were due to the growth of the Empire, although he was not one of those who watched our Imperial expansion wholly without misgiving or anxiety. We had, however, to defend our possessions in Egypt, India, and Africa.

The meetings organised by the opponents of the war throughout the country were in some cases disturbed and in others broken up. The matter assumed such prominence and aroused so much hostility, that it was brought before the notice of Parliament. Mr Balfour said that the counter-demonstrations were apparently quite spontaneous, and there appeared to be no evidence that they were organised. The local authorities were responsible for the maintenance of order and the punishment of offenders, but any aid that could be given them by the Government in carrying out their duties would be afforded. He deprecated



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the disturbances, which were contrary to our best traditions, but he thought it right to say that a certain responsibility for what had occurred rested upon those who had called the meetings which had been broken up, for public opinion was deeply stirred at that moment by the war, and the vast majority of the population disapproved of the objects for which the meetings were held.

“Free speech in this country is of a kind which ought not to make the persons who wish to give their views to the world absolutely oblivious of the conditions under which they speak, and of the disorder to which their speeches may give rise, and the public difficulties and dangers which may ensue.”

Continuing, he said that relatives and friends of our soldiers were naturally jealous of their honour, and eager to refute the aspersions which some speakers had cast upon them. He read the programme of the Stop-the-War-Committee, and asked if its contents could be agreeable. It simply amounted to a denunciation of our own country and an appeal for peace at any price. The adjournment was moved by Sir Robert Reid, but the vote was rejected by 229 to 120.

The charges brought by Mr Burdett-Coutts against the hospital arrangements in South Africa resulted in the matter being discussed in the House of Commons on 29th June 1900. The Member for Westminster, in an exhaustive and well-reasoned speech, gave an account of his visit to the camps in South Africa. While eulogising the work of Lord Roberts, he made a number of startling revelations, mainly the result of official neglect, and asked that a more efficient system should be instituted. Mr Wyndham, in his reply, referred to the exceptional difficulties which



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had to be met, and the enormous amount of transport which frequently blocked the railways; and Mr Balfour, who wound up the debate for the Government, said that everything possible had been done for the wounded. Military expediency had necessarily caused some inconvenience and delay, but many of the speeches made were merely disguised attacks on Lord Roberts.

A Royal Commission was appointed, consisting of three Members, which Mr Balfour subsequently agreed to increase to five. Their report, which was published in January the following year, recommended certain improvements in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and concluded with the significant statement that there had been nothing in the nature of a scandal with regard to the care of the sick and wounded, and no general or widespread neglect of patients or indifference to their suffering, and that, taken all in all, witnesses were agreed that in no war had the sick and wounded been so well looked after.

In the Autumn of 1900 the Government appealed to the country for renewed support of their South African policy, and for an approval of their administration after the war, which they regarded as practically over with the conclusion of Lord Roberts' triumphant campaign. The election afforded Mr Balfour many opportunities of vindicating the policy of his party and revealing the schism and divergent opinions amongst the Opposition. In his first speech at Manchester on 24th September, he reminded his audience that the last time he addressed them was soon after the disaster at Colenso, "when the whole of Great Britain was palpitating with anxiety as to the result of the war."

Continuing, he said: "I do not think even in the darkest days a single one in the constituency doubted



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what the issue was to be." No sacrifice of life or money was too great, he said, to defeat the objects of Mr Kruger and Mr Steyn, and he hoped no such critical period would ever occur again.

"I am glad to think that the war, by the skill of our generals and by the admirable valour of our troops, has now almost, as I speak to you in this room, been brought to its final consummation; and we may hope that no more British blood is to be shed upon the Transvaal soil, and that the great task which Britain and her Colonies have set themselves steadfastly to perform, in so far as the warlike aspect of the problem is concerned, is now conclusively settled. But though the war is over, and though the organised military operations on the part of the enemy may perhaps now be considered finally to have come to a conclusion, there are problems of peace awaiting your attention as difficult and as fraught with grave consequences for this and for future generations as any of the problems war can be said to carry with it; and the question the country is asked to-day is: Who are the men on whose shoulders is to rest the burden of this settlement? What party are you going to select, so as to lay out the future settlement of South Africa that the blood and the treasure we have so freely spent shall not have been spent in vain?"

This, Mr Balfour said, was "a clear-cut issue," and a plain answer was required. The Government was not forced to dissolve, but they had appealed to the constituencies because there was a task before them for the due performance of which they required all the strength that public opinion could give them. The Electorate had to choose between a united party with Lord Salisbury at its head, and that collection of parties which had Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as its leader.



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The war and its settlement occupied the foremost position in Mr Balfour's election address and in his subsequent speeches in Manchester and in other towns. The huge majority by which he was returned, and the cordial receptions he received, provided the most eloquent proof that his views were those of the vast majority of his countrymen.

On the opening of Parliament on 14th February 1901, Mr Balfour made an important speech on the war, in which he replied to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's charge that the Government had misled the country as to the termination of hostilities. He said everyone was mistaken, and no one was to blame, because there was no reason to believe that the Boer forces would adopt a course of guerilla warfare, which, however embarrassing to us, was more detrimental and disastrous to their own interests. He went on to refer to the attitude of the Boers towards peace, and said that they knew if they laid down their arms they could do so with the assurance that their person and property would be respected and that equal rights would be granted with autonomy and free institutions. He referred to the courage and patriotism of the Boer leaders, but denounced the brutality with which the peace emissaries had been received. The Government, he said, had put their hands to the plough, and had no intention of abandoning their policy, a statement which aroused loud Ministerial cheers. While adopting a conciliatory policy, the Government, he continued, had not altered their determination that the conclusion of the war must be one consistent with our honour and position in South Africa. He trusted Members would avoid using language which would be likely to encourage the Boers to continue a hopeless struggle.

Towards the end of February an effort was made



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to bring about peace through the medium of Mrs Botha. Lord Kitchener and General Botha met at Middleburg, and correspondence with the Home Government followed, but owing to the Boers refusing to give up their independence, the most essential point, the negotiations proved abortive. On the 20th June the Boer leaders issued a proclamation which stated that "no peace conditions will be accepted by which our independence and national existence, or the interests of our colonial brothers, shall be the price paid, and that the war will be vigorously prosecuted by taking all measures necessary for the maintenance of independence and interests."

On the vexed question of the condition of the Concentration Camps, which figured prominently during the last stages of the war, Mr Balfour made several speeches in which he vindicated the policy of the Government, and replied to the charges brought forward by Members of the Opposition.

Speaking on 19th June 1901 at a Conservative Agents' dinner, he severely criticised the language of the Leader of the Opposition, who, he said, had spoken of the Concentration Camps as "Methods of Barbarism."

Mr Balfour went on to say that it was an absolute impossibility to provide the camps with all the comforts of home-life. It was a military necessity to clear the country, and this could only be done in two ways—"either to leave the women and children to starve on the farms, or place them in these camps and give them food and shelter." It was necessary to remember, he added, that we had to provide for a population equal to that of a large provincial town, and that we also had the gigantic task of providing for our own troops, who had the first claim.

"I do not believe, in the history of the world," he



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said, "a war of this kind has ever been conducted with such humanity." The military problem, he went on to say, had been under-estimated, but the Boers' political dream had not been realised. They had mistaken the Britain of 1899 for the Britain of 1880.

In the debate on the Address at the opening of Parliament by the King on 17th January 1902, Mr Balfour made a powerful speech on the war. He again taunted the Opposition with their divergent opinions and lack of unity, and defended the Government against the charge that they had withheld military information of general interest. He supported the action of the Cape Government in temporarily suspending the Constitution; and, replying to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, he said that farm-burning had not been given up where it was still a military necessity. Turning to the question of peace, he emphasised the point that the Boers would not hear of terminating hostilities unless they were given their independence. That was utterly impossible; and continuing, he said: "We do mean to subjugate the Boers. We do mean to conquer them. We do mean to annex them and incorporate them in this Empire."

With the object of promoting peace, the Dutch Government, on 25th January, addressed a Note to the British Government suggesting that the Boer delegates in Europe should be allowed to consult the Boer leaders in South Africa. Lord Landsowne, in his reply, stated that His Majesty's Government had given the proposal their best consideration, but they were unable to depart from their decision not to accept the interference of any foreign power. It was open for the Boer leaders to enter into negotiations, but they must take place in South Africa, not in Europe. The reply of the British Government, firm but conciliatory in tone, was gener-



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ally endorsed, and its fruit was seen a few months later in the peace negotiations, which resulted in an amicable settlement between Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener, and the Boer leaders in South Africa.

The negotiations began on the 12th of March, and on 2nd June Mr Balfour, amidst a scene of the greatest excitement and suspense, had the pleasure of announcing in Parliament the terms of surrender. The Leader of the House did not supplement his statement with any remarks, but as he read the articles, the House frequently broke into loud cheers. It was a proud moment for Mr Balfour, and one of the happiest and most congenial duties he has ever had to perform as Leader of the House of Commons. The celebrations which followed the announcement of the welcome news will not easily be forgotten. The country was not only deeply thankful that a long and bitter war had been concluded on the most satisfactory and mutually acceptable terms, but that a brave foe had been honourably incorporated into the Empire, and that the future of South Africa under such conditions was so promising.

No Member of the Government was more gratified than Mr Balfour with this result, and on 6th June he had an opportunity of more fully expressing his views on the settlement. On rising to speak, the occasion being the annual dinner of the National Union of Conservative Associations, he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. He said: "We are a peace-loving country, and peace, thank heaven, that greatest of all blessings, has now been attained. And yet I could not utter that thanksgiving with the single-minded fervour I do utter it with on the present occasion, had I any suspicion that the peace which we have attained was a peace dishonourably bought by unnecessary conces-



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sions, or a peace which had in it, as some previous settlements have had, the root of much bitterness, the initial cause of infinite waste of life and of public falsehood. I believe that the peace we have now attained, and on which we are universally congratulated by our opponents, has in itself every element of permanence, certainty, and stability, and that we may really regard the events of last Saturday as opening a new era for South Africa in which all races—all the closely-allied races in blood and sentiment—may henceforth merge together in one contented community, which, like the other great self-governing Colonies of the Empire, may not be a source of anxiety, disquiet, and weakness, but may add strength and confidence to the policy of every Minister of this country who carries with him the sentiment of the Empire.”

Mr Balfour had on a previous occasion eulogised the services of Lord Roberts in proposing a Parliamentary grant of £100,000 to him, and one of his final duties in connection with the war was to propose a grant of £50,000 to Lord Kitchener in recognition of his eminent services. The happy conclusion of hostilities and the triumph of British arms was due, not only to Lord Kitchener's brilliant generalship, but to his statesmanlike abilities and wise conciliatory policy. With the most gratifying success, he blended the skill of the soldier with the art of the peacemaker, and Mr Balfour in his speech paid a worthy and well-earned eulogy to the great services Lord Kitchener had rendered to his country. After briefly sketching his brilliant career, he referred to his difficult and responsible duties as chief of the staff under Lord Roberts, which, he said, had been executed with “admirable energy and skill.” It was, however, after Lord Roberts' departure that “the special claims of Lord Kitchener to the gratitude of his countrymen reached



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their present magnitude." Mr Balfour referred to the difficulties of guerilla warfare Lord Kitchener had successfully encountered, and to the extent of the theatre of operations. The conditions, he said, were unique. He had under his control 90 small mobile columns, and had erected no less than 4000 miles of lines defended by blockhouses, a distance greater than from Capetown to Khartoum. That, he said, showed a fertile brain, and the success with which it had been carried out showed "boundless courage, boundless energy, and resolution." It was to all these great qualities, he remarked, that we owed the fortunate termination of active hostilities in South Africa. "In the roll of English generals," concluded Mr Balfour, "few have had greater difficulties to contend with, and few have come out of them in a more absolutely triumphant manner."

After the Leader of the Opposition had added his tribute, Mr Dillon followed with a dissenting speech, and Mr W. Redmond with a still more insulting and bitter harangue against his illustrious countryman. The House refused to hear the Irish agitator, and a scene of the wildest confusion ensued. The vote was eventually passed by a majority of 336.

Mr Balfour, rising again to propose a vote of thanks to the troops who had been engaged in the war, said there should be no difference of opinion with regard to that resolution. For the first time we had had an Army entirely composed of British subjects; and there had been fighting side by side, not merely the regular troops of the Crown, but Militia, Volunteers, Colonial forces, Yeomanry, and Volunteers from India. Never before had we sent beyond the seas any force comparable in numbers to that which had been engaged in South Africa.



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“On this occasion alone, so far as I know, a force of 250,000 men have been collected seven thousand miles from our shores, every one of whom is a subject of His Majesty the King. To each of the classes of which the force was composed we ought to offer our thanks.”

He eulogised in turn the work of the regular troops, “the backbone of our fighting force,” the co-operation of the Naval Brigade, the work of the Militia, and the service rendered by the Volunteers and Yeomanry who had fought with “an army numerically insufficient for the work thrown upon it.” His reference to the Colonial troops was loudly cheered. “If this is the first time the Militia have taken part in actual operations, and if it is the first time the Volunteers have co-operated with the regular troops, so it is the first time that any large body from our Colonies have come forward in a moment of great Imperial need and thrown in their lot with the mother-country. I agree that it is not the first time they have given us assistance, but this is the great example, the first example of what can be done from a purely military point of view by the British Empire when all the parts of that Empire are convinced that some great common Imperial need requires from every member of the Empire an equal sacrifice. The numbers which were supplied from our Colonies have been considerable, and the services they have rendered in the field have been great; but I venture to say that the benefits they have conferred upon our common Empire are not to be measured either by the number of men engaged, or by the actual military operations in which they were engaged. They are to be measured by the sentiment of which this great contribution is the conclusive evidence, and which makes the present war the opening of a new chapter in our Imperial history.”

Mr Balfour paid a glowing tribute to the humanity



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and self-control of the troops, and in a fine peroration expressed the nation's sympathy for those to whom the war had brought bereavement. "We can do little to console the widow or the parent for the loss of husband or child, but it may be some consolation to those who have suffered these irreparable injuries to feel that, after all, those whom they loved were engaged in a cause which the nation at large believed to be just, to which they freely lent their services, in which they died, and for which they did not die in vain. The cause to which they were sacrificed has been successful, and if this is not a sufficient or an adequate consolation for their nearest and dearest, at all events it must be some comfort to know that the greatest of all sacrifices was a sacrifice which was not made in vain."



## CHAPTER XX

### POLITICAL QUESTIONS

IN the course of his career Mr Balfour has spoken on well-nigh every subject of public interest. His speeches cover a wide field of thought, but whether he has been presiding at some political dinner or addressing a University assembly, he has brought to his subject a resource of knowledge, a keenness of intellect, a power of apt illustration and metaphor, and a command of language, which have given to all his speeches a literary grace and a readable attractiveness. In addition to the prominent political questions of the day, Mr Balfour has invaded other spheres, and in the study of philosophy and in the art of the dialectician he has proved himself a past-master. But while literature and science are his leisure subjects, it is to the great questions of the hour he has given his closest attention, and on these he has always been willing to express his views.

Now the South African war has closed, and the nation has paid its heavy bill, the question, How can the lessons which have cost us so much in life and treasure be put to the most profitable use? is sure to occupy a foremost position in the future. Mr Balfour has spoken on the subject of Army Reform on numerous occasions, and his speeches have always been distinguished by sound common sense and a statesman-like judgment.



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Speaking on the Army Estimates on 16th February 1900, he said the country ought to have three Army Corps, as well as a sufficient force to garrison its arsenals and military stations. The object of the Government was to supply those three Army Corps and necessary garrisons.

At Manchester, the same year, in a speech on 27th September, he maintained that during the past twenty years every reform of the Army and our defensive system had been initiated and carried out by a Conservative Government. Everything which required great expenditure had been left by the Liberal Party to the Unionists; yet, when the war fever was at its height the Opposition had the audacity to come forward and claim that they were the soldier's friends, and that to them the military interests of the country might safely be entrusted. "When the Government entered office," continued Mr Balfour, "they recognised that the Army was numerically less than the needs of the Empire required, and they set to work steadily to augment the numbers and to make up the deficiencies left by their predecessors. The numbers of the Army had not only been increased, but what was at least of equal importance, the Government had in field-guns augmented the available forces of the country." He went on to say that he believed the Government had added not less than seventy-one batteries to the previous strength of the British Army in artillery. Reform could hardly be expected from the Opposition, whom, he reminded his audience, had been turned out of office owing to an insufficient supply of small ammunition.

Speaking in Parliament on 14th March 1901, he reminded the Opposition that our responsibilities had increased, and that smooth words could not take the place of our Army and Navy. The plan of the Govern-



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ment, he said, was not so much to increase the number of our troops as to make those we have efficient. The 10,000 garrison veterans, and the 25,000 Yeomanry constituted the only numerical additions. Whereas now we had 600,000 men, under the new scheme we should have 680,000.

Summing up the results which would follow Mr Brodrick's scheme, he said that it would make available for the defence of our fortresses material useful for little else; it would free for operations in the field troops now wasted in garrison work; that under it six Army Corps would be organised, not for wanton aggressions, but for home defence; and that the Army would be put in a position to meet the probable demands of a foreign war. In this way more would be done to assure peace than could be done by the most dexterous diplomatist, for peace could not be secured if we did not command the respect of the Powers, who in some matters were our rivals, and might become our enemies.

In winding up the debate on the Government's scheme on 16th May, he dealt with the criticisms which had been passed upon its proposals, and said that it would be impossible to obtain a unanimous approval of the details of any Army Reform scheme. The difficulty of enrolling a sufficient number of recruits was one, which would always haunt the military authorities as long as our Army was worked on the voluntary system. This difficulty would, however, be lessened by the Government proposals.

Replying to Mr Asquith, he said, under the new arrangement we should have the requisite number of men and cavalry, with a competent staff of officers, and all the organised requirements of an Army ready to go forth and fight for the nation. The Government's



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scheme was not a question of nomenclature but of substance, and he hoped it would serve the three great objects of preparing for effective expeditions abroad, effective defence at home, and secure decentralisation. He sympathised with the economic school, but we could not, he added, disregard our national responsibilities, and having raised the efficiency of the fleet, the Government were determined to improve the Army, and place it on a substantial basis. He appealed to the House to support the scheme, which, although it might be open to criticism, would, at all events, "organise the great military power which this country possesses, and turn it to the best possible account with the least possible cost to the taxpayer or the country." The Government's scheme was subsequently passed by a majority of 116.

Mr Balfour has expressed himself in favour of Woman's Suffrage, but he is opposed to the Payment of Members. He has often referred in complimentary terms to the work of the Primrose League. Speaking at Liverpool in November 1890, he said the object of the League was to propagate the great truths they held in common, and no work was more important. One of the most valuable testimonies to its service was the abuse constantly heaped upon it by its opponents, and the measure of its ability was to be found in the magnitude of their aversion. It had emerged from abuse and ridicule more powerful for good and more useful as a great instrument of political education.

Addressing a demonstration at Glasgow in November 1891, he described the League as "the militant order within the bosom of the true political Church."

On another occasion, he said: "The Primrose League has worked, not merely at election times, but also at those times when, without organisation the political



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pulse may perhaps have begun to beat slow. It was the Primrose League that first recognised the great truth that, whether women ought, or ought not to have a vote, they have equal interest with men in the good government of the country, and that they have a right to make their influence felt through the electoral machinery."

On that apparently insoluble question the provision for the aged poor, Mr Balfour expressed the view in 1892, that the question could not be decided by abstract principles, but only by a carefully-balanced consideration of definite schemes worked out in detail. A scheme of pensions, he said, carried out by individual thrift and enterprise, would be more beneficial than the action of a Government Department. Friendly Societies would have to be taken into account in any satisfactory scheme.

Speaking at Manchester on 10th July 1895, he said: "We have only to look at the proportion of persons over sixty-five years of age who are compelled to seek poor relief, in order to see if it is possible to do something to ameliorate their lot, and to soften the last days of those who, in the time of their strength and of their prosperity did good work for their families and society. Now, I have never disguised from myself that the question is surrounded with difficulties, but in regard to those difficulties I will say this much—that, though it is possibly beyond the power of the State to ensure that in every case of a poor person surviving the age of sixty-five there should be a pension provided other than that already secured out of the rates by the Poor-Law system, nevertheless, I cannot doubt that by the aid of the Friendly Societies, and probably by an alteration of the existing system of Poor-Law classification, it may be possible—it must be possible—to prevent those who have led honour-



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able and abstemious lives, worthy of a citizen of this country, from being in their old age classed with those who have been the worthless waifs and strays, the waste products, the useless members of the society to which they belong."

Mr Balfour referred to the question in his 1895 election address, and in November 1898 he reiterated the views he expressed in his Manchester speech. The South African war has prevented any scheme being put forward during the last three years, but should any feasible proposals be formulated, Mr Balfour would, no doubt, give them his individual support, and if they were practicable possibly adopt them as a Government measure. It is a huge question, which bristles with difficulties, but whether any steps are taken to solve the problem in future or not, Mr Balfour is not likely to give his sanction to any scheme of wholesale pensions without discrimination as to need or merit, and which does not work on the principle of self-help.

Mr Balfour has adopted a moderate attitude towards the Temperance Question, but, as his speeches indicate, he is in hearty sympathy with any effort which aims at promoting reform by a gradual process, either on moral lines or by means of legislation.

Speaking at Manchester on 9th July 1895, when the Local Veto Bill was being prominently discussed, he said he believed the Temperance party contained as many workers devoted to the public good and the welfare of society as any other organisation, and with their object he had the profoundest sympathy. He said it was impossible to look round upon the condition of modern society and analyse the evils under which it laboured, without being convinced that an excessive indulgence in intoxicating liquors was the main cause of those evils.



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Much of the crime, misery, and vice in our midst, he said, could be directly traced to habits of intemperance, which, if they could be eradicated from the lives of the people, would considerably lessen the evils which hampered the progress of society.

Whilst in favour of legislation, he looked for quite as great results from social and religious influences, and other forces which made for righteousness. He advocated moderation, but for those who are slaves to the drinking-habit he had a wise piece of advice to give:

"I admit," he said, "that teetotalism is probably the only possible course to be adopted by those who, unfortunately for themselves, for their families, and for society, have allowed themselves to get into the grasp of the alcoholic monster."

He appealed to Temperance reformers to take a more impartial view of the question, and to provide, where possible, counter-attractions to the public-house, and work more in harmony with those, who while not abstainers, yet earnestly desired to see reforms effected.

"Let Temperance workers," he said, "beware of driving drinking from respectable public-houses into forms which are not respectable. Let them beware that they do not arouse the whole feeling of the community against them, and throw discredit upon the doctrine which they preach."

He proceeded to discuss the Local Veto Bill, but as in his opinion it transgressed the rights of individual liberty, and offered no compensation, he was unable to support it, but he promised that the Unionist Party would introduce a more moderate measure on the first opportunity.

Mr Balfour, since his term as Irish Secretary, has



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supported the claims for a Roman Catholic University for Ireland, both in the House of Commons and in his public speeches. There are many of his most ardent supporters who cannot understand his attitude and have protested against his views, but, being convinced of the need for such a University, he has firmly held to his opinions. The sole reason why the Leader of the House personally advocates the establishment of such a seat of learning in Belfast, is purely in the interests of higher education. He does not believe a Catholic University would have the disastrous effect its opponents prophesy, and form a mere subsidy for the propagation of priestcraft. On 23rd January he addressed an important letter containing his views to one of his constituents. He reviewed at considerable length the whole question, and in one portion he wrote:

“People sometimes ask, Why establish a University at all? Why not leave the one existing teaching University in Ireland, namely, Trinity College, to meet by a natural process of expansion the growing educational needs of the country? The answer is threefold. In the first place, no such expansion would place Queen’s College, Belfast, upon a satisfactory footing. Its status, if the wants of Ulster, and especially of the great Presbyterian bodies in the North, are to be adequately met, should be raised to that of a teaching University, properly equipped. Such a prospect is for ever at an end if we commit ourselves to the policy that while Scotland has four teaching Universities Ireland is only to have one. In the second place, there seems no reason to suppose than the Roman Catholic population will in the future avail itself of Trinity College to a greater extent than it has done in the past, nor, to my thinking at least, is this so unreasonable as might at first appear. The



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vast majority of students in that great University are Protestants. Protestant services are exclusively performed in its chapel. At this moment (as it happens) the whole of its teaching staff is Protestant, and the eminent theologian who is at its head, distinguished in many departments of learning, is not least distinguished as a brilliant Protestant champion in the controversy between Protestantism and Rome. Now, imagine a University, of which this was an accurate description, with the single change that wherever the word 'Protestant' occurred the words 'Roman Catholic' were put in its place. Would you willingly send there any Protestant youth for whose education you were responsible? For myself, I answer the question unhesitatingly in the negative. Perhaps I am bigoted, but if so, I feel assured that there are many Protestant parents to be found not less bigoted than I; and to them, at least, I may confidently appeal not to condemn others for doing what they, under like circumstances, would do themselves. There is yet a third point to be considered. Those who urge that the Roman Catholics, if they want University education, should flock to Trinity College, must surely, if they are sincere in recommending this remedy, desire to see it rapidly and effectually applied. I frankly acknowledge that I do not desire it. Sooner or later, such an influx must convert a University now mainly Protestant into one mainly Roman Catholic. A Roman Catholic ecclesiastic would be Provost, a Roman Catholic majority would rule the College, and for the first time in Ireland since the reign of Queen Elizabeth a Protestant youth could no longer get the best kind of University training amidst Protestant surroundings. This, surely, would be a strange result of Protestant zeal, and, for myself, though I shall not, I suppose, be



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accused of grudging University privileges to my Roman Catholic countrymen, yet, if the gift is to be at the cost of so violent a revolution in the traditions of Trinity College, I could almost wish that it were withheld.

“The plan which seems best to solve the University problem, both for the Presbyterians and other Protestants in the North, and for the Irish Roman Catholics generally, and which does so without revolutionising Trinity College, or violating any accepted legislative principle, is to establish by a single Act two new teaching Universities, one in Dublin and one in Belfast, on precisely similar lines, and differing in no particular excepting the names of the gentlemen first appointed to serve on their respective governing bodies. As the University in Belfast would absorb the existing Queen’s College, the governing body of the new institution should be so constructed as to continue the traditions of the old. As the Dublin University is designed to attract those Roman Catholics who now hold aloof from University life altogether, its governing body, as first constituted, should, no doubt, be in the main of their own way of thinking; but both Universities would be subject to the Test Acts. All scholarships and fellowships paid out of public funds would be open to competition irrespective of creed. No public endowment would be given to chairs in philosophy, theology, or modern history. Professors would have a right of appeal against unjust dismissal, and the number of clergymen on the governing body would be strictly limited. A University so constituted would, I believe, meet the needs of Roman Catholics, but it would not be a Roman Catholic University. This phrase has a well-understood meaning, and Universities properly answering to it are to be found in Belgium, in Switzer-



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land, and elsewhere. Yet we need not dispute about words, and if anyone chooses to brand the proposed institution as 'Roman Catholic,' I will not quarrel with him, provided only that in common consistency he applies parallel language to other Universities in and out of Ireland. If a University in Dublin, constituted as I have stated, is to be described as 'Roman Catholic,' then must Trinity College and the new University in Belfast be described as 'Protestant.' There will thus be in Ireland two Protestant Universities to one Roman Catholic, which, as there are nearly three Roman Catholics in that country to one Protestant, seems not unfair to the Protestants.

"That the scheme thus sketched out violates no accepted principle of legislation, that it confers no exceptional privilege upon any particular denomination, I hold to be incontrovertible. Is there, then, anything in it which would give umbrage to us as Protestants? Is it not rather as Protestants that we ought specially to welcome it? We claim, and justly, to have been the pioneers of toleration. Let us not persist in a policy so perilously suggestive of intolerance. We claim, and justly, that the Reformation scarce did more for the purification of religion than for the advancement of learning. Let us not show zeal for one-half of its work by frustrating the other. We have not here, be it remembered, a proposal for making Roman Catholics, but only a proposal for educating them. The scheme neither confers on the Roman priesthood powers they have not got, nor augments those they already possess."

He concluded his letter with the hope that the claim of the Irish Roman Catholics would ultimately be granted and the inequality removed.

He reiterated these views when an influential de-



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putation waited on him a few days later at Manchester ; and in the House of Commons the following year supported the resolution of the Irish Party calling attention to the subject. As he has emphasised many times, his attitude is purely a personal one, and is in no way binding upon his party.

On the vexed question of ritualism in the Church, Mr Balfour has expressed his views on several occasions. Probably more than other living statesmen he has closely identified himself with Church work, and religious and philosophical subjects, and, consequently, he has taken a leading part in the ritualistic controversy, or at least his views on the crisis have been brought into prominent notice.

At a time when the controversy was at its height in 1899 Mr Balfour contributed a paper to the November number of the *North American Review* entitled "How Ritualists harm the Church." He said a section of the High Church clergy seemed bent on proving their "Catholicity" by imitating as much of Roman ritual and absorbing as much of the Roman doctrine, as was compatible with remaining in a communion which the Church of Rome has declared to be schismatic.

He was not hopeless that a remedy would be found : "I am one of those who have always desired to see greater spiritual autonomy given to the English Church. It may be that, being a Scotsman, living in Scotland, and seeing how the Established Church of Scotland is constituted and how it works, I am prejudiced in favour of giving to the sister Established Church those liberties which the Scottish Established Church enjoys. . . . If there be a hope—and there is a hope—for the future of the Established Church of this country, it lies, and, in my opinion can only lie, in the firm de-



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termination of all men who are sincerely loyal to the worship, the ritual, and the doctrines of the Church of England, to unite even though there be differences dividing them upon other subjects, in the resolve that neither by one set of extremists nor by the other, shall this great Church be torn asunder."

In a speech in the House of Commons on 11th April 1899, he supported an amendment to the effect that clergymen who did not obey the Bishops and the Prayer-Book should not be recommended for preferment. He severely criticised the attitude of people, "who, like Lord Halifax and those following him, made no secret of the fact that they regarded the history of the Church of England during the last three centuries as carrying with it no Protestant tradition whatever, and who frankly admitted that they would like to see the ritual of that Church modified in a sense which would bring it into very close agreement, if not actual conformity, with the ritual existing in the Church of Rome in immediate pre-Reformation days. The men who held those views were not loyal members of the Church of England." (Loud cheers.)

Mr Balfour went on to say that he should prefer to see the Church as it was in the days of Hooker and Butler, and the great evangelical movement, and that the cause of spiritual freedom could not be worse served than by being used as the plan of those who desired to revolutionise and destroy the Church of which they were members. He drew attention to the injury done to religious progress by bickerings within the Church, and finally appealed for more amicable sentiments on the question.

In the following year, on 29th September 1900, during his election campaign at Manchester, he received a deputation from the National Protestant League,



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asking if he would support the Church Discipline Bill. In his reply, he said he had the greatest sympathy with the objects of the League, and he agreed that they should all do their utmost to prevent the illegal practices spreading in the Church. Personally, he had no affection for even legal practices of the kind which were described as ritualistic or High Church, but the fact that he did not happen to derive either pleasure or profit from that particular class of service made him anxious that no legitimate liberty already existing in the Church should be curtailed. He was glad to notice that there had been a marked diminution of some of the most notorious practices during the past few months.

The Prayer-Book, after all, was compiled three hundred years ago, he remarked, and the growth and practices of modern society made it almost necessary that some latitude should be given to those who conducted the services of the Church. Mere technicalities may be permissible, but not any serious infractions of the law. He believed that the work done at the Reformation was not going to be undone in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

He should be reluctant to over-ride the decisions of the Bishops by any Act of Parliament until it was absolutely necessary. Such a course would fill the Church with turmoil, controversy, and litigation, and he asked who would benefit. As far as he could judge only three sections of the people would profit. These were "the political Nonconformists who did not conceal for a moment their view that difficulties in the Church were making for disestablishment; the secularists and opponents of all religions, who knew very well that when Christian communities fell out among themselves and disputed with extreme bitterness about forms



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and ceremonies, there was a vast body of public opinion, a vast number of individuals in the community who took no public part in the disputes, and who said if religion was that sort of thing, if that was what was meant by Christianity, they would ignore its teaching and neglect its services. In the third place, the members of the Roman Catholic faith would benefit. There were some calling themselves members of the Church of England who seemed to differ so little in their doctrine from the Church of Rome, that their secession from the Church of England might perhaps be no serious loss."

There was, he said, a vast body of High Church opinion which had a perfect right to be in the Church,—and which none of them would wish to exclude,—who would be horrified at the tendency to litigation. The Church could not be regarded as a mere machine, and the thought of making religion an affair of lawyers, judges, and advocates, was repellent. He expressed the hope, in conclusion, that more order and unity would prevail for the Church's own sake.



## CHAPTER XXI

### HIS VIEWS ON GENERAL SUBJECTS

BOTH as a statesman and a landowner, Mr Balfour has taken a deep personal interest in the great housing question. He has always endeavoured to approach the problem from a practical standpoint, and, although no one has greater sympathy with the lot of the respectable poor, he believes that while it is needful to draw public attention to the condition of the slums of our great cities, it is still more urgent and necessary that practical measures of reform should be instituted, and the evils remedied by the clearing of insanitary areas, and the demolition of old dwellings and the erection of modern tenements, preferably in the suburbs. In the development of the suburban districts, Mr Balfour thinks there lies a promising solution. He would like to see the working-classes enjoying the full benefits of the country, and travelling to and from their work in the city by the most modern and expeditious means of locomotion.

Instead of the cumbrous steam trams which are a feature of some of our provincial cities, he would prefer that the outlying districts should be opened up by electric trams, railways, and motor cars; and in this respect some of our most progressive towns, including Liverpool, Glasgow, Leeds, and Manchester, have set a splendid example.

Mr Balfour has made many references to the



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question in his speeches, and as early as March 1884 he called the attention of Parliament to the housing conditions of the poor. He said there had been a decided improvement during the last fifty years, but the existing state of affairs in the large towns demanded energetic measures of reform.

More open spaces and parks were needed in the crowded districts, as the question, he said, "affects not only us but our posterity. The moral and physical evils which now exist in our large towns will not die out with those who suffer under them. They descend in sure succession from father to son. If we are to have a posterity capable of continuing the traditions of the great English race, we must do something soon, and something effectual, to remove the terrible conditions I have described."

He concluded by moving that loans for an extended period should be granted to Corporations and other public bodies, for the improvement of the dwellings of the poor and the erection of modern tenements.

In a speech he made at Hertford the following year, on his election as President of the Board of Trade, he again reviewed the question, and promised that he would continue to do his utmost to further legislation.

Mr Balfour has not only kept the question to the front, but on every occasion supported Parliamentary measures during his leadership of the House. The passing of the Housing of the Working-Classes Act by the Unionist Government, owed much to his initiative, and personal guidance.

Writing to Mr F. Herbert Stead, warden of the Robert Browning Settlement, on 12th February 1901, Mr Balfour made an important suggestion regarding the means of locomotion. His letter ran as follows:—



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MY DEAR SIR,—I have read your letter of the 9th with great interest, and I am glad to gather from it that the discussions on the all-important question of housing are showing a tendency to leave the relatively barren regions of rhetorical description and to apply themselves to the more difficult, but more profitable, problems raised by a search for a practical remedy. We have to recognise that London, from its unequalled size, presents difficulties so different in degree from those met with elsewhere that they almost amount to a difference in kind; and I am certain that the improvement of means of communication, about which I said something last year, and which Mr Charles Booth discusses in his pamphlet, is the most important element in the problem. What I am anxious people should bear in mind is, that trams, railways, and “tubes” by no means exhaust the catalogue of possible improvements in transit. Indeed, I am not sure that they are the means of communication for relatively short distances which, some years hence, will find most favour. What I should like to see carefully thought out by competent authorities would be a system of radiating thoroughfares confined to rapid (say fifteen miles an hour or over) traffic (this is absolutely essential), and with a surface designed, not for carts or horses, but for some form of auto-car propulsion. If the local authority which designed and carried out such a system chose to run public auto-cars along them, well and good, but this need not be necessary, and private enterprise would probably in time do all that was wanted in such thoroughfares. There would be none of the monopoly inseparable from trams, the number of people carried would be much larger, the speed much greater, the power of taking them from door to door unique, while there would be



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none of the friction now caused when the owners of the tram lines break up the public streets. It may be urged, and, perhaps with truth, that at present the auto-car industry has not devised an absolutely satisfactory vehicle, but we are, I believe, so near it that the delay ought not to be material. It is, of course, obvious that the present difficulty of locomotion in our streets is almost entirely due to want of differentiation in the traffic. We act as the owners of a railway would act if they allowed luggage trains, express trains, and horse-drawn trams to run upon one pair of rails. The radiating causeways, as I conceive them, would be entirely free from this difficulty. Neither the traffic of cross streets, nor foot-passengers, nor slow-going carts and vehicles would be permitted to interfere with the equable running of fast cars. There would be no danger and no block. No doubt the cost would be great, but it would be incomparably less than that of any of the means of locomotion suggested by Mr Charles Booth. The upkeep would be small; there would be no terminal charges; no great areas would have to be cleared, as in the case of railways, for stations and sidings; the local authority which made the causeway would not be compelled to become managers of great railway enterprises, the rolling stock would be provided by the public to suit its own needs; and as the causeway would be connected at intervals with the ordinary road and street system of the district, and would melt into that system at either end, every village in which there were enough residents who had to be in London at a fixed hour every day could have a motor of its own. It might be well worth a manufacturer's while, I should suppose, to lodge his workpeople out of London and to run them to and from his works. I will not dwell longer on this



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scheme, which may be open to practical objections of which I am not aware, but if it be true that improved locomotion is the real key of the housing difficulty, then I submit that this form of providing it would probably prove to be the cheapest, the easiest, the most flexible, the most convenient.—Forgive this long letter, and believe me,

Yours very truly,

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

In a letter to Professor Smart on 24th February 1902, he commended the inquiry into the housing problem Glasgow proposed to make, as it would be of help to other large towns. He said “the world has been moved far beyond the stage of indifference, and what we now require is not sentiment but science; the unbiassed investigation into the economical and social facts from which evils of overcrowding spring, into the remedies which have been already tried, and into any new ones which seem likely to be effective.”

The subject of our national education has on many occasions occupied a prominent position in Mr Balfour's speeches. To-day he is recognised as the leading educationalist in the country, and although the Education Act has aroused a storm of strenuous opposition owing to the aid it will give to Voluntary Schools, and the power it places in the hands of the clergy, its main object is the improvement and strengthening of our national education the ideal Mr Balfour has always had before him since he entered public life.

When Secretary for Scotland, he opened a Board School in Edinburgh, and, speaking to the scholars, he said: “The time which you can give uninterruptedly to the work of acquiring knowledge is rapidly slipping



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away from you, and when the work of life properly begins, the hours we can give to study seem to diminish day by day." Addressing an audience in the Free Assembly Hall the same day, he said the old parish schools of Scotland had done more than anything else to place their country in the proud position it held in the world. Education had its mission, but it could not accomplish everything. "No amount of education can produce a genius. Education has turned many stupid people into prigs, but it never yet turned a stupid man into a clever man, and it never will."

Mr Balfour has often spoken on the question in Parliament, either during the discussion on educational measures, or on the annual vote. As a supporter of Voluntary Schools, he has been charged with desiring the destruction of Board Schools. There is not a grain of sense in such a wild statement. While aiding Board Schools, he believes that it is quite as necessary to assist Rural Schools, and bring their curriculum up to an efficient standard. The promotion of the educational interests of the nation, and not the salvation of the clergy, has been his great aim. This is the object of the Education Act, as it was the aim of the previous measures introduced by Mr Balfour.

Speaking on the future of Higher Education at Leys School, Cambridge, on 17th June 1899, he said, that although the conditions of our national life had changed, and it was necessary that Universities should adapt themselves to modern requirements, the need for a classical education remained, and for the profession of literature or science an intimate knowledge of Greek and Latin was, of course, essential.

No statesman is more ardent than Mr Balfour in his advocacy of his country adopting the best methods of educating its youth and equipping him with weapons



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to enable him to battle with foreign competition. He urges the teaching of modern languages and scientific subjects, but, as in other spheres, he refuses to take a pessimistic view of England's commercial future. What others can accomplish he thinks his own countrymen are capable of doing, and, advocating the motto *Nil desperandum*, he believes we shall hold our own in the future as we have done in the past, and especially if we utilise the discoveries of science.

Although the views he expressed in an interesting speech on the question of Technical Education on 12th December 1901 were of a sanguine tone, a policy of confidence is preferable to one of despair, but the safest attitude is probably the one which, while valuing the records of the past, does not overlook or disregard the signs of the present.

The occasion was the annual presentation of the awards gained by the students of the Goldsmiths Technical and Recreation Institute at New Cross, London. After distributing the prizes, Mr Balfour said he was no pessimist with regard to British manufactures. He had no faith in a great many of the arguments which pretended to indicate our national decay. To hear some people talk, he said, "they would really suppose that every successful and prosperous manufacture started by any other nation but our own was a kind of robbery committed upon British trade, and that the manufacturing success and the commercial prosperity of foreign nations was not so much an addition to the wealth of the world as a subtraction from the wealth of England. He believed that to be a profound and a dangerous fallacy. Of course, it was perfectly true that there might be particular cases in which, though we were well qualified to carry on a particular industry, we had lost it through laziness or want of



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enterprise on the part of our manufacturers, or through the difficulty which those manufacturers might find in obtaining competently-instructed persons to carry out the work. There might be such cases—he did not deny it at all; but on the whole, and broadly speaking, the prosperity of one nation conduced to the prosperity of all nations, and we were not poorer, but richer, because other nations were rich. It was therefore an argument which he dismissed without further examination, though he constantly heard it urged, that because this country or that country had made immense strides—perhaps greater than our own, because they had a much greater amount to make up—because they had made great strides in their manufactures and their commerce, that all that threatened the position of this country, that all the trade was taken out of the hands of our operatives and the profits taken from our capitalists. He did not believe that doctrine, and he looked with perfect serenity upon the general increase of the world's wealth, so long as he could be assured that in this country we organised our labour in such a manner that the best workmen got the greatest remuneration; that industry, thrift, and skill had their proper reward; that there was no lack of well-trained and skilled persons in all branches of manufacture; and last, but not least, that those who led industry in this country—the capitalist, the manufacturer, and the manager—showed that flexibility, that power of adaptation to the ever-changing needs of the world, which was of course an absolute necessity, if we were to make the best of the great advantages which our physical resources, our natural position, our free institutions, our great traditions, and the natural skill of our workpeople gave us and enabled us, to meet the demand of the world in manufactures.”



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He said he attached the greatest importance to the study of one particular trade with the aid of the latest discoveries of science. He held it to be a promising sign that the alliance between scientific investigation and industrial work was becoming closer, and technical institutes were rendering a great service in cementing these two forces together. A scientific education was absolutely necessary for our leaders of industry, so that every new discovery could be utilised to its full, and what was yesterday the curiosity of the laboratory could rapidly be turned to profitable commercial use.

In a speech at the opening of a new hall at the Battersea Polytechnic on 3rd February 1899, he advocated a more thorough scientific training for students. He referred to the work of such men as Newton, Pasteur, and Kelvin, and urged his hearers to pursue their studies and experiments with the same perseverance and thoroughness which had characterised the triumphant labours of these great scientists.

Speaking at the London Chamber of Commerce on 29th April 1902, after distributing the awards to the students, he said the action of the Chamber was the visible sign of a great educational movement. Proceeding to touch upon the state of our commercial education, he adopted a less sanguine tone than formerly. He said it was strange that a people so much concerned with universal commerce should have lagged behind all the great nations of the world in the matter, not merely of commercial education, but also in many wider and more important aspects of national education. This nation had taught other nations of the world many lessons in government, toleration, freedom, enterprise, and the initiative of great moral and intellectual qualities; but we must, at the same time, admit that, while we had taught them much, we had not



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been as quick as we might have been to learn from them in other departments of national activity. He congratulated the London Chamber of Commerce upon their insight with regard to one of the greatest contemporary needs of the nation.

Apart from what municipalities can do by organised effort to improve the conditions of the masses, Mr Balfour believes that the working-classes have individual opportunities and responsibilities to better their positions. He has often pointed out the value of self-culture, and in a practical speech on 29th June 1891, at a meeting of the depositors in the Savings Bank connected with the South-Eastern and Metropolitan Railways, he referred to the advantages of thrift and the work of Savings Banks, which he thought were more elastic and accessible than Friendly Societies. He said that saving was easier in youth than in old age, and he recommended that the habit of frugality should be cultivated early. Future needs were the most certain things in life, while pleasures were merely transient, and it behoved every working-man, he said, to prepare for the inevitable rainy day. The great railways had inaugurated a system of thrift which he should like to see extended by employers of labour.

Mr Balfour is a believer in decentralisation, and much of the work which now occupies the time of Parliament being performed by County Councils and municipalities. The London Government Bill which he successfully guided through the House was a step in this direction, and although personally he has taken no share in Council work, he has the warmest admiration for those who give their time and abilities to public duties. In an interesting speech on municipal work in July 1891, at the opening of the Town Hall at St Martin's-in-the-Fields, he drew a parallel between



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the activity of modern life and that of 200 years ago, when the site of the Hall was used for pasture. He said it was a good sign of the times that municipalities were erecting institutes and other buildings for the education and recreation of the people. He referred to the phenomenal growth of London, but he added that the Metropolis could learn much from some of the great provincial towns.

No figure in history has aroused so much contention and such a diversity of opinion as Cromwell. While Mr Balfour has not exalted the Protector to the highest pinnacle in his list of heroes, he admires him as a great man. During the discussion in the House on 23rd February 1900, on the Irish protest against Cromwell's statue being placed on the lawn adjoining Westminster Hall, he contributed a singularly interesting criticism to the debate. He said he believed Cromwell was neither the fiend represented by one set of critics, nor the man of supernatural greatness represented by others. The pedestal to which Carlyle had raised him was too high. Nobody would deny he was a great soldier, but while it would be folly to refuse him the epithet great, he was on the whole, through no fault of his own, ineffectual, and certainly the most pathetic figure in history. He saw no reason for the removal of the statue. In 1895 he opposed a proposal to vote public money for the erection of a statue, but now the cost had been borne by a private donor, the case had considerably changed.

Continuing, he said the Irish never forgave, and an injury committed 250 years ago was as fresh as if it had been committed yesterday, and this to his mind was one of the weak traits of Irish character. It was his good fortune, he said, to live near the battlefield of Dunbar, but he could see no reason why a blood feud should exist between England and Scotland. It was not only



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Christian charity, but the height of wisdom, to forget old injuries and ancient wrongs.

Mr Balfour's attitude towards the Press has always been a subject of much conjecture. Worthless and idle rumours have credited him with daily perpetrating the unpardonable crime of never opening a newspaper. Of course, it is just possible Mr Balfour has never unfolded a newspaper, but, considering that he is so well informed on public affairs, and acquainted with the criticisms and intentions of his opponents, it is not at all improbable that the Premier occasionally glances at his morning paper when no one is looking.

Mr Balfour has certainly no time to waste over reading some of the trash that is published, but for the work of the clever pens that record our daily history, he has the greatest admiration. Wherever he recognises merit the Premier acknowledges and encourages it, and when he sees a well-written and sanely-expressed article, even though it be in condemnation of his own party, he reads it with unalloyed appreciation.

In an address he delivered at the annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Society on 8th May 1895, he expressed in an unambiguous manner his personal admiration for the English Press, and the high position it had attained through the excellence of its work. Politicians, he said, always had war correspondents with them, and as public men they were dependent upon their help in a double sense—first, as reporters of their proceedings, and then as constant critics.

"The Press of England," he continued, "has made such progress during the last two or three generations, that every citizen of the Empire may well be proud of it as a great example of the intelligence, the enterprise, and the skill of her citizens. We habitually boast of the extension of our railway, postal and telegraph systems



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as great undertakings, which render the complex work of modern society possible, but we ought and must add the Newspaper Press as an agent of communicating news, and not in that capacity alone, but in its capacity as an advertising agent.

“The thing that interests me most in the modern development of the Press is a point which I have seldom seen taken up, but which is nevertheless of profound significance, as far as my judgment goes, in estimating the importance of the Press as a great social organisation. We may assume, what is no doubt the fact, that a newspaper must necessarily be both a means of communicating news and a means of promoting particular kinds of opinions. There is really no necessary connection between the two. . . . What has always struck me as most singular, looked at from a purely abstract and philosophic point of view, is that the function of the newspaper as a means of communicating news gives it the power of supporting particular opinions wholly different and alien as it were to the popularity of those opinions of the public which desire to see their particular views expressed. I do not at all mean, that in the long run it is not necessary for every newspaper by its leading articles, by the great opinions it expresses and enforces, to gain the favour of the particular class to whom it appeals; but everybody knows that a newspaper may gain such a position as an organ for disseminating news, that on the basis of its purely commercial success it may advocate and promote almost any opinions which it chooses. In a very different sphere we call that endowment (laughter). It is an endowment, not of any particular political, religious, or social party; and the peculiarity of it is that those who are called upon to endow it, have no notion of what they are doing, and very often strongly object



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to what is being done. (Laughter.) A matter of some interest has recently arisen in connection with a very important social problem: I mean that of public betting and gambling. I believe there are newspapers which have written very strongly upon that subject in their capacity as guides to public opinion, and still in their capacity of purveyors of news they very properly in my opinion give the odds on all the races. (Laughter.) And what was the result? The result was that the people who wanted to know the odds bought the paper, and by doing so subsidised, or perhaps I ought to have said endowed, the propaganda, and the very opinions from which they most profoundly dissented. Just conceive what some visitant from another planet, ignorant of the history of the Press, ignorant of the general principles on which we regulate our social life, would say of such a state of things. He would say, what are they thinking of in a community which deliberately permits an arrangement by which those who are taxed to endow certain opinions dissent from those opinions in almost every way? (Laughter.) Of course, we all know that this question has grown up by a natural process, but I cannot help thinking that though by our law we rightly permit Wisdom to call in the market-places what she chooses, I do not think anybody will regard her unless she be properly supplemented by a large advertisement sheet, and by very carefully filled columns of news agreeable to the public which has to buy the paper. (Cheers.)

“The question which forces itself upon us is, if we have amongst us those great endowed corporations who practically have it in their power to promote, irrespective almost of public opinion, what views they choose to take on public policy, do we not run some danger that powers so great may be abused? But great as



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is the power of the Press in England, I do not think that anybody can say it is to any important extent abused. They practically being themselves critics, are almost above criticism, and yet though probably every public man feels that occasionally he receives an undeserved castigation (laughter), I do not think that any person would maintain, as a whole, that the immense and irresponsible powers of the English Press are abused for any base purpose whatever." (Cheers.)

Continuing, Mr Balfour said there was no need to dwell upon the superior qualities of the English Press over its foreign contemporaries. The Press in England was absolutely independent of Government control or influence, and was free from any form of blackmailing.

"I think we may say, in the third place, that, of course, a Radical politician does not expect glowing eulogies from the Unionist Press any more than a Unionist expects to be photographed for the public interest in the best light in the Radical Press (laughter); still, the Press never directs its power against individuals, and that no individual career has been injured by the flagitious use of the great influence of the Press, and that, on the whole, every side of every question does in the long run get a fair hearing through the medium of the great organisation which you represent, and that public opinion, though it may err for a moment, and may swerve backwards and forwards until the natural swing to which all great public opinions are subject, is nevertheless on the whole well served by these great mediums of information." (Cheers.)

He concluded by eulogising the work of the Society, and wishing it success.

During his career Mr Balfour has had a large number of honours conferred upon him in recognition of his



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public work, and prominent amongst these is the freedom of the City of London, which was presented in 1888. He has been the chief speaker at innumerable demonstrations, and although his speeches are not adorned with any showy gesticulation, they always leave a good impression and revive the hopes of his followers.

Like every other Scotsman, he is proud of the country of his birth, and with native generosity Scotland has taken every opportunity to show its appreciation of its illustrious son. At a banquet held in his honour at Edinburgh in December 1899, he said: "I speak to you as a Scotsman to Scotsmen. The British Empire gains instead of losing by the fact that all Scotsmen feel bound to other Scotsmen. It gains—it does not lose—by the fact that a Scotsman, even though he feels himself at the same time to be a British subject, feels himself always a Scotsman. But, as you may direct this great feeling of nationality to good ends, so by stupid perversity, or to obtain some temporary electoral triumph, you may direct it to evil and pernicious ends." In the evening he addressed a great meeting of 10,000 of his countrymen, who accorded him a magnificent reception.

The freedom of Glasgow was conferred on Mr Balfour on 14th January 1896, and in acknowledging the honour at a vast meeting in St Andrew's Hall, he said it was a mark of approval given by Scotsmen to one who was proud to be a Scotsman. Referring to his political career, he remarked: "I have been engaged perhaps in as bitter political strife as any man of this generation, and yet I can truly say that I love not controversy for its own sake, and I gladly do all in my power to mitigate the occasional brutality of public controversy."

Scotsmen were naturally proud of their distinguished countryman when the King offered Mr Balfour the



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highest position in the State, and eulogies without number were showered upon the Laird of Whittingehame. In a racy speech on 20th September, acknowledging the freedom of Haddington, he referred to "Scottish character and loyalty," and coined a very apt phrase, "Subordinate Patriotism."

"It is a comfort to reflect that from this point of view Scotland appears to have little to fear even if—how shall I put it?—some untoward accident were to occur to the present Government and the present Prime Minister—(a voice: "No fear, Sir," and laughter)—at all events, we have Scotsmen in reserve. There is the present Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, and the late Liberal Prime Minister, and whatever happens, it appears to me, however much the Empire might lose, and I am bound to suppose it would lose a great deal (laughter), by the transfer of power from one side of the House to the other—however much, I say, the Empire might lose, Scotland, at all events, appears to be safe. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, this feeling of subordinate patriotism—if I might coin a phrase—which all Scotsmen feel for their country, and which in no way militates against that larger patriotism which we feel for Britain first, and for the British Empire second—that subordinate patriotism is, I think, one of the most valuable qualities which we possess. What is the great difficulty which besets the path of the great nations of the world; the great stumbling-block which is embarrassing their statesmen and causing anxiety to all those who look into the future? It is this: that every great Empire is, and must be, made up of heterogeneous elements—elements which, either for historical reasons, or for geographical reasons, or for religious reasons, or for political reasons, have elements within them which lead, I will not say



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to separation, but to the diminution of that feeling for the country as a whole, for the Empire as a whole, which is, after all, the only possible condition of great national health and prosperity. On the other hand, if by any series of events, military or revolutionary, all these ancient landmarks are destroyed and a general levelling up takes place, then I think you have the opposite danger—you have too great an equality, too great an absence of those variations which are of the essence of a full, concrete, and healthy national life, and you lose as much on the one side at least as you gain upon the other. The difficulty is to touch that happy mean by which the subordinate patriotism may exist, may flourish, may grow exceedingly, and yet may never be allowed for one moment to interfere with the larger patriotism which is the essence of the life of every great Empire.”

If there is one place Mr Balfour is deeply attached to after his native country, it is Manchester. Seventeen years' close association has taught him to regard his constituents as amongst his most valued friends, and they on their part have on numerous occasions shown—in addition to placing him victoriously at the head of the poll—in many practical ways their appreciation of his services, and their admiration of his sterling character and brilliant abilities. One of the first telegrams he received on attaining the Premiership was one from his constituents. This bond of union has been tightened by every election campaign and strengthened by every visit. Mr Balfour mixes freely with his constituents, and he cheerfully invites them to express their views and hand up to him on the platform questions of public interest. It is this honesty of purpose and friendly intercourse, which have helped him to win such a firm hold over the hearts of his horny-handed supporters.



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can hope to attain, and that as a source, not of worldly profit, but of personal pleasure may be of incalculable value to its possessor. . . . He has only half learnt the art of reading who has not added to it the even more refined accomplishments of skipping and skimming."

He said he had no sympathy with the horror Mr Harrison had expressed at "the incessant accumulation of fresh books." A reader should be able to exercise his judgment as to what was worth his time to read.

"We are always obliged to read our letters, and are sometimes obliged to answer them. But who obliges us to wade through the piled-up lumber of an ancient library, or to skim more than we like off the frothy foolishness poured forth in ceaseless streams by our circulating libraries. Dead dunces do not importune us; Grub Street does not ask for a reply by return of post. Even their living successors need hurt no one who possesses the very moderate degree of social courage required to make the admission that he has not read the last new novel or the current number of a fashionable magazine.

"But this is not the view of Mr Harrison. To him the position of anyone having free access to a large library is fraught with issues so tremendous that, in order to describe it he has to seek for parallels in two of the most highly-wrought episodes in fiction—the Ancient Mariner becalmed and thirsting on the tropic ocean, and Bunyan's Christian in the crisis of spiritual conflict. . . . I have often heard of the individual whose excellent natural gifts have been so overloaded with huge masses of undigested and indigestible learning that they have had no chance of healthy development; but though I have often heard of this personage, I have never met him, and I believe him to be mythical. It is true, no doubt, that many learned



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people are dull, but there is no indication whatever that they are dull because they are learned."

He proceeded to deal with the great demand for fiction and the growth of intellectual curiosity, one of the strongest impulses of rational beings.

"We hear much indeed of what is called 'idle curiosity,' but I am loth to brand any form of curiosity as necessarily idle. Take, for example, one of the most singular, but in this age one of the most universal forms in which it is accustomed to manifest itself: I mean that of an exhaustive study of the contents of the morning and evening papers. It is certainly remarkable that any person who has nothing to get by it should destroy his eyesight and confuse his brain by a conscientious attempt to master the dull and doubtful details of the European diary daily transmitted to us by 'Our Special Correspondent.' But it must be remembered that this is only a somewhat unprofitable exercise of that disinterested love of knowledge which moves men to penetrate the Polar snows, to build up systems of philosophy, or to explore the secrets of the remotest heavens. It has in it the rudiments of infinite and varied delights. It *can* be turned, and it *should* be turned, into a curiosity for which nothing that has been done or thought, or suffered, or believed, no law which governs the world of matter or the world of mind, can be wholly alien or uninteresting."

After condemning "cramming" and the craze for examination, he referred to the growth of literature and how easily the works of the greatest authors could be obtained. He concluded his address with a beautiful tribute to the immortal friendship of books.

"It is perfectly possible," he said, "for a man not a professed student, and who only gives to reading the leisure hours of a business life, to acquire such



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general knowledge of the laws of nature and the facts of history, that every great advance made in either department shall be to him both intelligible and interesting, and he may have among his familiar friends many a departed worthy whose memory is embalmed in the pages of memoir or biography. All this is ours for the asking. All this we shall ask, if only it be our happy fortune to love for its own sake the beauty and the knowledge to be gathered from books. And if this be our fortune, the world may be kind or unkind, it may seem to us to be hastening on the wings of enlightenment and progress to an imminent millennium, or it may weigh us down with the sense of insoluble difficulty and irremediable wrong; but whatever else it be, so long as we have good health and a good library, it can hardly be dull."

Mr Balfour's address aroused widespread attention outside the circle in which it was delivered. The *Times*, in its leading article, spoke in high terms of his discourse. "He has shown himself an able debater, a capable and resolute administrator, and a trenchant platform speaker. . . . Mr Balfour's rectorial address shows that he possesses his full share of the literary taste and cultivation that mark the most promising of our younger politicians of all shades of thought, as distinctly as they characterise our most successful statesmen of an elder generation. His address is carefully thought out, deftly framed and adjusted in all its parts, and teeming with apt phrases and felicitous illustrations."

Mr Balfour visited Glasgow to deliver his rectorial address on 26th November 1891. He had just succeeded Mr W. H. Smith as Leader of the House, and, as if to seal the appointment with an outward manifestation of their approval, the students prepared for him



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a truly great reception. No praise is more hearty and genuine than the appreciative cheers of young voices; and as Mr Balfour permitted himself to be escorted, like some newly-crowned monarch, from the station to the University, the hearty bursts of unrestrained enthusiasm which met him at every point, must have put new life and strength into him, and strongly reminded him of his own schooldays.

At Bute Hall, Professor Moody Stuart conferred on the hero of the hour the degree of LL.D., and in a short speech referred to him as an "illustrious Scotsman who is honoured in the school of letters as a philosophic thinker, and who, in the political world, holds a foremost place as a great statesman and a brilliant debater, wise in counsel, and successful in administration."

Mr Balfour chose as the title of his address "A Fragment on Progress," but instead of indulging in the customary platitudes and eulogising without stint the progress made in the course of history, he entered upon a dispassionate and critical review, not unaccompanied by a few depreciative and somewhat discouraging comments. But the address, both in matter and in literary finish, was distinctly characteristic, and his analytical survey provided much food for thought, though many could have wished that it had been more optimistic in tone. He said "that those who look forward to a period of continuous and, so to speak, inevitable progress, are bound to assign some more solid reason for their convictions than a merely empirical survey of the surface lessons of history."

Towards the close of his address, he remarked: "We are therefore driven to the conclusion that, as our expectations of limitless progress for the race



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cannot depend upon the blind operation of the laws of heredity, so neither can they depend upon the deliberate action of national governments. . . . But we have no scientific ground for suspecting that the stimulus to these individual efforts must necessarily continue; we know of no law by which, if they do continue, they must needs be co-ordinated for a common purpose or pressed into the service of the common good. . . . The future of the race is thus encompassed with darkness; no faculty of calculation that we possess, no instrument that we are likely to invent, will enable us to map out its course, or penetrate the secret of its destiny. It is easy, no doubt, to find in the clouds which obscure our path what shapes we please; to see in them the promise of some millennial paradise, or the threat of endless and unmeaning travel through waste and perilous places. But in such visions, the wise man will put but little confidence; content in a sober and cautious spirit, with a full consciousness of his feeble powers of foresight and the narrow limits of his activity, to deal, as they arise, with the problems of his own generation. . . . I doubt whether any of us will be less fitted to face with a wise and cheerful courage the problems of our age and country, if reflection should induce us to rate somewhat lower than is at present fashionable, either the splendours of our future destiny, or the facility with which these splendours may be attained."

At a banquet in the evening, Sir William Thompson referred to Mr Balfour's "most thoughtful, weighty, and witty address," and Principal Caird spoke in high terms of his work, "A Defence of Philosophic Doubt."

Mr Balfour, in his reply, contrasted his own University with the one in "the second city of the Empire," and he remarked that he could not find much re-



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semblance, the one having a classical, the other a commercial atmosphere. He referred to the pleasure his visit had afforded him. The scenes he had witnessed had reminded him, he said, how impressionable and exhilarating it was to come in contact with those "who are just emerging from boyhood into manhood, who have just begun to taste the delights of coming face to face with the problems of life, who are drinking in every day new ideas and forming themselves into men, who are our heirs, and who will govern the affairs of this great Empire when we have ceased to have anything to do with it. Long may Glasgow flourish, long may it give an education as it is now giving to the youth of Scotland."

These good wishes were re-echoed in a letter Mr Balfour wrote to Principal Story in December 1901, in support of an appeal made by the University for £100,000 for extension purposes. In his letter he said: "I should be glad to share in any movement designed to remove the reproach which attaches to us as a nation of ignoring the present needs for the better equipment under which our Universities, Scottish, English, and Irish, with few exceptions, at present suffer. The splendid munificence of Mr Carnegie will, I hope, perform wonders for our Scottish Universities, but this should be a stimulus to the rest of the community to increase their efforts in the same cause, not an excuse to diminish or abandon them."



## CHAPTER XXIII

### “THE FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF”

IN the early stages of his career, when his political duties were not so onerous, Mr Balfour spent much of his leisure time in literary work. The study of philosophy and religious beliefs has had the greatest attraction for him, and had he not attained fame as a statesman, his work in this sphere alone would have brought him into prominence as a leader of thought, and the possessor of one of the most brilliant intellects of his day.

In his fondness for literary work Mr Balfour resembles the late Mr Gladstone, and it is a noteworthy fact that both statesmen have given their exceptional powers to the elucidation of the same subject, the one which has baffled the greatest minds of all ages. While Mr Gladstone confined himself more particularly to Biblical criticism and theological discussion, Mr Balfour has devoted his attention to the relations between science and religion. Both statesmen have by their labours laid the religious world under the deepest obligation, and the work they have accomplished will always be regarded as one of the most distinguishing landmarks of their individual careers. The Church has found in each an illustrious son and a worthy champion. The splendid testimony borne by Mr Gladstone to the power of the Christian faith, and



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the equally valuable work of Mr Balfour in combating the claims of Naturalism, have influenced the minds of thousands, and their respective labours will pass into religious history as notable achievements of incalculable value.

Mr Balfour's greatest book, "The Foundations of Belief," at the time of its publication in January 1895, aroused widespread interest in religious circles and amongst men of science. For several months it formed one of the chief topics in the leading monthly reviews, and was subjected to extensive criticisms from all quarters, and by the greatest thinkers of the day. But while it was trenchantly attacked by such leaders of scientific thought as Huxley and Spencer, on the other hand it received the approval of many prominent theologians, including amongst others Dr Fairbairn and Dean Farrar.

Owing, no doubt, to the problematic nature of the subjects discussed, and the philosophical manner in which they are treated, the book did not appeal to a large audience. Readers of a philosophic mind, however, will find it a valuable treasure. But its constituency is not limited, and all who delight in reasoning out great problems, and weighing in the balance of logical truth the merits and stability of scientific discoveries, the mysteries of evolution, and the numerous beliefs which have gained prominence in the world, will appreciate Mr Balfour's great work. The publishers, Messrs Longmans, Green & Co., have recently issued a cheaper edition of the book with an introduction by the author, and have thus brought what is undoubtedly a literary masterpiece within the reach of the majority of readers.

In a preliminary note to the book Mr Balfour says: "As its title imports, the following essay is intended



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to serve as an introduction to the study of Theology." He goes on to explain that the word Theology must be taken in a limited sense. His object is to recommend "a certain attitude of mind" towards those "world problems" we are compelled to face. The first part of the book is devoted to an examination of some consequences of belief, and is divided into chapters entitled Naturalism and Ethics, Naturalism and Æsthetics, and Naturalism and Reason.

He defines Naturalism as a system whose leading doctrines "are that we may know phenomena and the laws by which they are connected, but nothing more." In the summary at the end of Part I. he writes: "If Naturalism be true—or rather if it be the whole truth—is morality but a bare catalogue of utilitarian precepts, beauty but the chance occasion of passing pleasure, reason but the dim passage from one set of unthinking habits to another? All that gives dignity to life, all that gives value to effort, shrinks and fades under the pitiless glare of a creed like this, and even curiosity, the hardiest amongst the nobler passions of the soul, must languish under the conviction that neither for this generation nor for any that shall come after it, neither in this life nor in another, will the tie be wholly loosened by which reason, not less than appetite is held in hereditary bondage to the service of our material needs."

The second part of the book is entitled "Some Reasons for Belief," and deals with the philosophic basis of Naturalism and transcendental Idealism. The third part is headed "Some Causes of Belief," and is chiefly devoted to an examination of the respective positions Authority and Reason occupy in our beliefs. "Authority," he writes, "stands for that group of non-rational causes, moral, social, and educational, which



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produces its results by psychic processes other than reasoning." Mr Balfour does not, however, disregard the claims of Reason. "To Reason we are in some measure beholden, though not perhaps so much as we suppose, for hourly aid in managing so much of the trifling portion of our personal affairs entrusted to our care by nature as we do not happen to have already surrendered to the control of habit." By Reason, he also says, is directed the public policy of communities, within the narrow limits of deviation permitted by accepted custom and tradition. On the other hand, he maintains that every moment of our lives, as individuals, as members of a family, of a party, of a nation, of a Church, of a universal brotherhood, the silent, continuous unnoticed influence of Authority moulds our feelings, and aspirations, and our beliefs. He sums up his argument that "Reason itself draws its most important premises from Authority," and that it is in unloosing the forces of Authority that its most important conclusions find their principal function.

In a fine passage he says: "We must not forget that it is Authority rather than Reason to which in the main we owe not religion only, but ethics and politics; that it is Authority which supplies us with the essential elements in the premises of Science, that it is Authority rather than Reason which lays deep the foundations of social life, and that it is Authority rather than Reason which cements its superstructure."

Dealing with the attitude of Science towards Theology, he says: "What reason is there for the intolerant and supercilious bigotry with which Agnostics and Scientists look upon the Theologian? If the ultimate ideas of Science are unintelligible, how can Science be regarded as rationally established upon such an



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unthinkable basis?" In another part he writes: "In the world presented to us by science we might conjecture a God of power, and a God of reason, but we could never infer a God who is wholly loving and wholly just; so that what religion proclaims aloud to be His most essential attributes are precisely those respecting which the oracles of science are doubtful or dumb."

His views on the question of Inspiration are very explicit. "It is not, I think, accurate to say that every addition to knowledge, whether in the individual or the community, whether scientific, ethical, or theological, is due to a co-operation between the human soul which assimilates and the Divine power which inspires. . . . These things assuredly are of God, and whatever be the terms in which we choose to express our faith, let us not give colour to the opinion that His assistance to mankind has been narrowed down to the sources, however unique, from which we immediately and consciously draw our own special nourishment."

Dealing with man's relationship to his Maker, he says: "In a world looked at by the light of simple Theism the evidences of God's material power lie about us on every side, daily added to by science, universal, overwhelming. The evidences of His moral interest have to be extracted grain by grain through the speculative analysis of our moral nature. Mankind, however, is not given to speculative analysis, and if it be desirable that they should be enabled to obtain an imaginative grasp of this great truth; if they need to have brought home to them that, in the sight of God, the stability of the heavens is of less importance than the moral growth of a human spirit; I know not how this end could be more completely attained than by the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation."



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Answering the question, What is the supreme need of the world, he says: "What is needed is such a living faith in God's relation to man as shall leave no place for that helpless resentment against the appointed order so apt to rise within us at the sight of undeserved pain. And this faith is possessed by those who vividly realise the Christian form of Theism. For they worship One who is no remote contriver of the universe, to whose ills He is indifferent. If they suffer, did He not on their account suffer also? If suffering falls not always on the most guilty, was He not innocent? Shall they cry aloud that the world is ill-designed for their convenience when He for their sakes subjected Himself to its conditions? It is true that beliefs like these do not in any narrow sense resolve our doubts, nor provide us with explanations. But they give us something better than many explanations. For they minister, or rather the reality behind them ministers, to one of our deepest ethical needs; to a need which, far from showing signs of diminution, seems to grow with the growth of civilisation, and clings to us ever more keenly as the hardness of an earlier time dissolves away."

"The Foundations of Belief" is not only a brilliant and forceful contribution to an endless controversy, and a literary masterpiece of exceptional power, but a great Christian classic, and one which strikingly proves that intellect is not incompatible with religious belief. At the end of the summary to the new edition, Mr Balfour says: "Christianity brings home to us, as nothing else could do, that God is no indifferent spectator of our sorrows, and in doing so affords the surest practical alleviation to a pessimism, which seems fostered alike by the virtues and vices of our modern civilisation."

In addition to a summary, the eighth edition con-



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tains an introduction extending to thirty pages, in which the author explains the most controversial points and the least understood of his arguments, an acquisition prompted by the vast amount of criticism which the first edition aroused.

One of the most important criticisms passed upon Mr Balfour's book was one by Professor Huxley, who, while disagreeing with the views expressed, and objecting to Agnosticism being rechristened under the title of "Naturalism," wrote in the *Nineteenth Century Review* that, "the readers of 'The Foundations of Belief' must be very learned and very acute if they do not find much to instruct them; very dull if enjoyment of dialectic fence is not largely mingled with their gratitude for that instruction; and if they are not devoid of literary sense, they must feel the charm of a style which flows like a smooth stream, sparkling with wit and rippling with sarcasms enough to take away any reproach of monotony. . . . It is eminently satisfactory to find that one at anyrate of our political chiefs already occupying a high place and sure to go higher, not merely in official rank, but, if I may have an opinion on such a matter, in the estimation of his countrymen whatever their politics, is fully alive to these facts."



## CHAPTER XXIV

### AUTHOR AND PHILOSOPHER

MR BALFOUR'S first book was published in 1879 under the title of "A Defence of Philosophic Scepticism." As many people, who, not having read the book, inferred from the title that Mr Balfour had written a defence of Atheistic principles, the name was afterwards changed to "A Defence of Philosophic Doubt." This erroneous impression gave birth to a cynical comment which for a time aroused much amusement in the Parliamentary lobby. The Member for Aberdeen, Dr Hunter, remarked that there was only one question on which Mr Balfour had any doubt, and that was "whether God made Arthur Balfour or Arthur Balfour made God."

Instead of being antagonistic to the Christian religion, "Philosophic Doubt" was Mr Balfour's first challenge to the leaders of Agnosticism. Throughout the book he maintains a spirited defence, which was destined to prove the earnest of his more notable work. Towards the close of the book, he remarks that the task of arousing the careless may be beyond his scope, but he appeals nevertheless with great power to those "who would regard religion as the most precious of all inheritances if it were only true; who surrender slowly and unwillingly to what they conceive to be unanswerable argument and convic-



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tions with which as yet they can scarcely bear to part; who for the sake of truth are prepared to give up what they had been wont to think as their guide in this life, their hope in another, and to take refuge in the strange substitutes for religion provided by the ingenuity of these latter times. It is not impossible to some of these hesitating between arguments, to which they can find no reply, and a creed which they feel to be necessary, the line of thought suggested may be of service. Should such prove to be the case, this essay will have an interest and a utility beyond that of pure speculation, and I shall be more than satisfied."

Only one edition of the book was issued, and consequently copies are not very plentiful; but should the political compass ever give Mr Balfour any prolonged period of leisure, it is not improbable that he will fulfil his promise to revise the book, and also to give to the world the life of John Stuart Mill he contemplated writing in his early days.

In addition to his two great books, Mr Balfour has contributed a number of articles to the monthly reviews from time to time. The greater portion of his literary work was done in the early part of his career, and one of the first papers he wrote was a critical study of Mr John Morley's "Life of Cobden," which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1882. As a free trader and a Radical, Cobden's politics had no strong fascination for Mr Balfour, and he subjected both Mr Morley's eulogy and his hero's views to a somewhat severe criticism.

He welcomed the appearance of Mr Morley's two volumes as "the most important addition to the biographical records of Cobden," whose career was interesting because it was "unusual in its commencement,



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in its course, and in its culmination." He went on to say that Cobden "must be looked on rather as a political missionary than as a statesman, as an agitator rather than as an administrator," and one who never sought office for personal aggrandisement, but who took a delight, and regarded it as a duty, to battle with "aristocratic monopolists." Mr Balfour proceeded to criticise the profuse use Cobden and likewise his biographer had made of such adjectives as "selfish," "insolent," "prejudiced," and "unprincipled," in their references to the landed classes. After alluding to his peace principles, and his objections to armaments, he wrote: "To him our vast and scattered dominions appeared to be an ill-omened fabric built at the cost of much innocent blood and much ill-spent treasure, and which, having been originally contrived in obedience to a mistaken theory of trade, was not worth the trouble of keeping in repair now that it had been finally exploded. . . . He may have been right in thinking that the weight of Imperial responsibilities will become a burden too heavy too be borne. It may be true that the sceptre of dominion is doomed at no distant date to slide from our failing grasp. We may be destined from choice or from necessity to shut ourselves up within the four seas, and it is not absolutely impossible, though in the highest degree improbable, that even under these conditions our Board of Trade returns may be such as to delight the heart of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. But no man is fit to estimate the consequences of these changes who attempts to estimate them solely and exclusively by figures. The sentiments with which an Englishman regards the English Empire are neither small nor an ignoble part of the feelings which belong to him as a Member of the Commonwealth. If, therefore,



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that Empire is destined to dissolve, and with it all the associations by which it is surrounded; if we in these islands are henceforth to turn our gaze solely inwards upon ourselves and our local affairs; if we are to have no relations with foreigners or with men of our own race living in other continents, except those which may be adequately expressed by double entry and exhibited in a ledger;—we may be richer or poorer for the change, but it is folly to suppose that we shall be richer or poorer only. An element will be withdrawn from our national life which, if not wholly free from base alloy, we can yet ill-afford to spare, and which no one at all events can be competent to criticise, unless, unlike Mr Cobden, they first show themselves capable of understanding it.”

Mr Balfour, who thus early proved himself to be a staunch Imperialist, concluded his paper with a reference to Cobden’s democratic theories and an appreciation of his work. “Let those who are inclined to take a severer view of the narrowness, prejudice, and inconsistency which in some degree marred his career as a whole, not only call to mind the great qualities by which those shortcomings were accompanied, but also recollect how happily his defects conspired with his merits to render him a fitting instrument for carrying out the inevitable change in our fiscal policy, which was the most important work of his public life, and with which his name will forever be connected.”

In the following year he contributed to the *National Review*, of which he was one of the founders, two articles on “Bishop Berkeley’s Life and Letters.” He wrote that Berkeley’s chief title to fame must always rest on his philosophy. His life and character, he said, “had for his contemporaries, and may have for us, an interest



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quite apart from the details of metaphysical discussion. We may look at him as they looked at him, not principally as the successor of Locke and the predecessor of Hume, as the almost impersonal author of a subtle philosophical theory, but as the worthy associate of the men who rendered the first fifty years of the eighteenth century illustrious in English literature, as an Irish patriot, as an American philanthropist, as a religious controversialist, as a man of delightful character and converse, simple, devoted, and unworldly."

The articles eulogised Berkeley's philosophy, teaching, and character, and at the end of the second one he quoted his famous passage in which he said: "Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not mediated upon God, the human soul, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman."

Utterances of this character, Mr Balfour remarked, were not characteristic of an age taught by Voltaire and Hume, and a nation governed by Walpole and Newcastle, and he added: "Berkeley's writings will perpetuate his fame as one of the most admirable of English philosophers."

In January 1887 Mr Balfour contributed his brilliant tribute to Handel's genius to the *Edinburgh Review*, from which some quotations are given in another chapter. "Literary immortality," he wrote, "is an unsubstantial fiction devised by literary artists for their own especial consolation. It means at the best an existence prolonged through an infinitesimal fraction of that infinitesimal fraction of the world's history during which man has played his part upon it. And during this fraction of fraction, what, or rather how, many things does it mean? A work of



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genius begins by appealing to the hearts of men; moving their fancy, warming their imagination, entering into their inmost life. In this period immortality is still young, and life really means living. But this condition of things has never yet endured. What at first was the delight of nations, declines by slow but inevitable gradation into the luxury, or the business, or even the vanity of a few. What once spoke in accents understood by all, is now painfully spelt out by a small band of scholars. What was once read for pleasure is now read for curiosity."

There are a few names which, no doubt, Mr Balfour would exempt from his sweeping criticism, whose creations will live as long as English literature endures. Time, the merciless judge, will only help to exalt the immortal beauty of their works into isolated grandeur. Mr Balfour drew the parallel with the object of showing the omnipresent power of music.

In 1893 his three essays, together with his rectorial addresses and his speech on "The Religion of Humanity," were published in book form.

The study of philosophy has always had a great fascination for Mr Balfour, and his analytical mind and fondness for unravelling problems and fighting opposition, have made this plunging into the unfathomable mysteries, a source of pleasure and a helpful relaxation. As a philosopher he has attained an eminent position, and is looked up to as an authority and a leader.

In an address on "Philosophical Studies at Universities," on 21st October 1891, at the Victoria University, Manchester, he said: "that any great centre of academic education which ignored Philosophy as an essential branch of its studies, would thereby condemn and stultify itself. Industrial work unbalanced



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by literary work, and literary work unbalanced by speculative work, depend upon it, ought never to form the mental sustenance and subsistence of academic training." The limited time he spent in scientific studies, he added, was always pleasant and profitable. Science, in his opinion, should occupy a foremost position in a University situated in a great industrial town. No nation, he said, could hope to keep in the van of industrial progress if it ignored the teaching of theoretical science.

In 1882 Mr Balfour helped to form the Psychical Research Society in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Professor Sidgwick, who became the first President. Both the Premier and Miss Balfour have continued to take a keen interest in its work.

The author of "The Foundations of Belief" has been the recipient of numerous University honours. He was made a F.R.S. in 1888. In 1875 St Andrews University conferred the degree of LL.D., Edinburgh followed in 1881, Cambridge in 1888, and three years later Dublin and Glasgow. Oxford made him an honorary D.C.L. in 1891, and the same year he was asked to accept the Chancellorship of Edinburgh University. The London Scientific Union elected him an honorary member in 1888.

These distinctions have been conferred chiefly as a recognition of Mr Balfour's literary and scientific work, and as an acknowledgment of the eminent position he has attained as a scholar and thinker. He is a son whom any University would delight to honour, and one who has written his name on "the cliffs of fame" both in the literary and political world. Had he not stepped into the political arena, Mr Balfour would probably have become one of our most learned professors; but as in Mr Gladstone's case, politics



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claimed him as a disciple, and the nation has cause to feel thankful that both men chose the larger and more difficult sphere of work.

A speech Mr Balfour delivered when Secretary for Scotland, on Education, in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, affords an insight into his inclinations at that period of his career. As he reviews the past to-day, the Premier must not regret having stuck to the political ship, though he would be as ready as ever to admit that his thirst for knowledge was by no means satisfied.

"If I could wish," he said, "for some earthly gift to be given by a fairy to an infant whom I loved, my first wish would be that under no circumstances should the child be under any temptation to become a politician. That would be my negative request. But I should ask the fairy to give the child an omnivorous, universal, and insatiable curiosity to know everything that can be known. That he should look at learning and the acquisition of knowledge as the great delight of his life; for, believe me, it is one of those pleasures which last longer than any other. It is an appetite which is not dulled by satiety, which is independent of changes and circumstances, or of the love or dislike of your fellow-men. It is one, therefore, which every wise man would cultivate for himself and which every benevolent man would wish for his friends."



## CHAPTER XXV

### HIS DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

RELIGIOUS questions have always had for Mr Balfour a singular fascination, and he has given his keen intellectual powers to their discussion on numerous occasions. His most notable address on the subject of religion was the one he delivered at the Church Congress at Manchester in October 1888.

In the spring of the same year he read Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," and being deeply interested in the book, he readily signed a request to its distinguished author, asking if he would deliver a series of addresses on Sunday afternoons at Grosvenor House. Amongst the others who signed the invitation were: Lord Aberdeen, Mr St John Brodrick, Mr George Curzon, Mr Munro-Ferguson, Mr Alfred Lyttleton, and Mr G. W. E. Russell.

Professor Drummond replied that, though he felt unequal to the task, he would do his best. The first gathering, which took place on 13th June, was largely attended, and amongst its members were those who had signed the request, and a few of the public, including a number of working-men. In compliance with the lecturer's desire, no reports were published of the proceedings. The title of the first address was



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"The Programme of Christianity," and of the second "How to become like Christ."

Mr Balfour showed a warm personal interest in the addresses, and when a few months later Professor Drummond read the Chief Secretary for Ireland's address at the Church Congress, he must have felt thankful that he had accepted the invitation sent him in the spring.

The members of the Church Congress accorded their distinguished guest a most hearty reception. A correspondent of the *Guardian*, writing at the time, said: "Mr Balfour met with quite an ovation. Men clapped their hands as loudly as they could and waved hats and handkerchiefs, and cheered with all their might. The Archbishop of York, whose speech followed that of the Chief Secretary's, commented on the contrast between his own reception and that of the statesman whose name in these fighting years is a household word, and rather mistakenly observed that it proved how much greater was the interest taken in politics than in religion. Mr Balfour, who had made a long political speech at Glasgow before coming to the Congress, looked worn and tired with the combined anxiety of speaking and the fatigue of railway travelling, and it was no slight achievement to hold two Congress meetings enchained by his thoughtful and suggestive 'lay-sermons.'"

Mr Balfour chose as the subject of his address, "The Religion of Humanity," and if any misconceptions had previously existed as to the nature of his belief, his thoughtful remarks must have dispersed them. He not only made his own position clear, but eloquently reviewed the claims and results of the Christian religion, and in his brilliant style deduced a series of arguments to prove its stability. He de-



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fined Positivism "as a scheme of thought which, on its negative side, refuses all belief in anything beyond phenomena and the laws connecting them; and on its positive side attempts to find in the 'worship of humanity,' or, as some more soberly phrase it, in the 'service of man,' a form of religion unpolluted by any element of the Supernatural."

"The spectacle of the starry heavens," he said, "may inspire admiration and awe, but it cannot be said, except by way of metaphor, to inspire love and devotion. Humanity may inspire love and devotion, but it does not in ordinarily constituted minds inspire admiration or awe. If we wish to find these and other religious feelings concentrated on one object, trans-fusing and vivifying the bare precepts of morality, the combining power must be sought for in the doctrines of supernatural religion.

"It remains to be proved whether, if Christianity were destroyed, a 'religion of humanity' could long maintain for itself the atmosphere in which alone it could permanently flourish.

"To say that the doctrine of immortality provides us with a ready-made solution of the problem of evil is, of course, absurd. If there be a problem, it is insoluble. . . . The sense of misery unrelieved, of wrongs unredressed, of griefs beyond remedy, of failure without hope, of physical pain so acute that it seems the one over-mastering reality in a world of shadows, of mental depression so deadly that it welcomes physical pain itself as a relief—these and all crookednesses and injustices of a crooked and unjust world, may well overload our spirits and shatter the springs of our energies if to this world only we must restrict our gaze.

"Conceive for one moment what an infinitely better



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and happier world it would be if every action in it were directed by a reasonable desire for the agent's happiness. Excess of all kinds, drunkenness and its attendant ills, would vanish; disease would be enormously mitigated; nine-tenths of the petty vexations which embitter domestic life would be smoothed away; the competition for wealth would be lessened, for wealth would be rated at no more than the quantity of pleasure it is capable of purchasing for its possessor; the sympathetic emotions would be sedulously cultivated as among those least subject to weariness and satiety; while self-sacrifice itself would be precluded as the last refinement of a judicious luxury."

He then passed on to discuss the claims and purposes of self-love.

"To promote the happiness of others solely as a means to our own may be, and is, a perfectly logical and reasonable policy, but it is not a policy human beings are capable of pursuing; and, as experience shows, the love of self must be barren unless merged in the love of others. So does the Church teach that rarely can this love of others be found in its highest perfection unless associated with the love of God. These three great principles—great but not co-equal, distinct in themselves, harmonious in the actions they prescribe, gaining strength from a combination often so intimate as to defy analysis, are yet even in combination insufficient to control the inordinate ambitions, desires, and passions over which they are *de jure*, but seldom *de facto*, the unquestioned rulers. How, then, are they dealt with by the Positivist creed? The love of self is *directly* weakened as a motive to virtue by the abolition of supernatural sanctions in another life. The love of others is *indirectly* weakened by the possibility of conflict be-



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tween it and the love of self. The love of God is summarily suppressed. Surely those who can contemplate this result with equanimity must either be indifferent to the triumphs of morality, very ignorant of human nature, or very sanguine about the issues of the struggle between the opposing forces of good and evil."

On the hope for the future held by the followers of evolution, he said:

"If man differs from the animals only in degree, will not his fate only differ from theirs in degree also? He too will reach a point, if he has not reached it already, beyond which no variation will bring with it increased intellectual grasp, increased vigour of imagination, increased moralisation of will, increased capacity for social life.

"If we then regard the universe in which we have to live as a mere web of connected phenomena created for no object, informed for no purpose, stamped with no marks of design other than those which can be imitated by Natural Selection, I see no ground for the faith that all honest effort will work together for the production of a regenerate man and a perfected society. . . . To me, therefore, it seems that the 'positive' view of the world must needs end in a chilling scepticism concerning the final worth of human effort, which can hardly fail to freeze and paralyse the warmest enthusiasm and the most zealous energy.

"Comte was, I think, well advised when in his later writings, he discouraged research into matters remote from obvious human interest, on the ground that such research is inimical to the progress of the Positive faith. Not Christianity but Positivism shrinks and pales in the light of increasing knowledge."



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Mr Balfour then drew a vivid picture of the pessimistic past, and the still more pessimistic future, depicted by science.

“Man, so far as natural science by itself is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and discreditable episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. . . . We survey the past and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short, indeed, compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. . . . Imperishable monuments and immortal deeds, death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that remains be better or be worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion, and suffering of men have striven, through countless generations, to effect.”

Mr Balfour proceeded to disassociate himself from such a hopeless view of the world's destiny, and from any religion which “so dwarfs and impoverishes the ideal end of human effort, that though it may encourage us to die with dignity it hardly encourages us to live with hope.”

“Much current controversy,” he continued, “about the possibility of miracles, about the evidence for design, about what is commonly though very absurdly



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described as 'the conflict between science and religion, can, at best, be only provisional.'

He concluded his brilliant address with a powerful comparison between the claims and results of Positivism and Christianity.

"The Religion of Humanity," he said, "seems specially fitted to meet the tastes of that comparatively small and prosperous class who are unwilling to leave the dry bones of Agnosticism wholly unclothed with any living tissue of religious emotion, and who are at the same time fortunate enough to be able to persuade themselves that they are contributing, or may contribute by their individual efforts, to the attainment of some great ideal for mankind. But what has it to say to the more obscure multitude who are absorbed and well-nigh overwhelmed in the constant struggle with daily needs and narrow cares, who have but little leisure or inclination to consider the precise *rôle* they are called on to play in the great drama of 'humanity,' and who might, in any case, be puzzled to discover its interest or importance?"

"Can it assure them that there is no human being so insignificant as not to be of infinite worth in the eyes of Him who created the heavens, or so feeble that his actions may have consequence of infinite moment long after this material system shall have crumbled into nothingness? Does it offer consolation to those who are in grief, hope to those who are bereaved, strength to the weak, forgiveness to the sinful, rest to those who are weary and leavy-laden? If not, then, whatever be its merits, it is no rival to Christianity. There is in it no nourishment for ordinary human souls, no comfort for ordinary human sorrow, no help for ordinary human weak-



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ness. Not less than the crudest irreligion does it leave us men divorced from all communion with God, face to face with the unthinking energies of nature which gave us birth; and into which, if supernatural religion be indeed a dream, we must, after a few fruitless struggles, be again resolved."

In the evening Mr Balfour addressed a large working-men's meeting in the Free Trade Hall. He said science had changed, but religion remained steadfast and permanent. It was the glory of science to change: and if it did not change it would be dead. But religion, which was based upon the eternal principles of human nature, and which ministered to the eternal wants of human souls, remained and must remain essentially the same.

"The Bible is to us what it was to our forefathers," continued Mr Balfour; "it is a common link between all classes of Christian men and women. It is a wonderful thought to me that those who live in the murky atmosphere of Manchester, in the full tide of modern industrial life, should be able to read the Book of Job, written, I do not venture to say how many hundreds of years ago, in the blazing solitude of an eastern desert, by a master of flocks and herds, with a perfect sympathy and appreciation of his feelings towards God and towards nature. Does it not give us some idea of the permanence of religious ideas in the world? . . . I feel myself that religion appeals as freshly now to the hearts of men as ever before. I see nothing in the circumstances of modern life to alter that; I see everything to increase it. Science continually changes, but so long as human hearts remain what they are, so long as suffering exists, so long as a sense of sin and weakness oppresses us in the face of the overwhelming forces of nature, so long shall we and our children be able



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to draw inexhaustible sources of comfort from the streams which have fed our forefathers."

The Church has recognised in Mr Balfour a brilliant son, and on many occasions he has been invited to speak on behalf of Voluntary Schools and at important religious gatherings. He is a member of the Church of Scotland himself, but he by no means takes a narrow view of the religious field, and has impartially assisted all denominations. If there is one thing he deplores it is the bigotry which characterises some religious people.

Speaking at a bazaar in his constituency in May 1892, he said, that "so long as he saw activity, self-denial, energy, and devotion on the part of her ministers, and the loving reverence and enthusiastic support given to her by her children, he should believe that the Church was safe."

On another occasion he said: "When I am told that a particular parish is in an efficient condition, I am never satisfied unless I hear, not merely that the church is crowded with a full and attentive congregation, and that liberality prevails in good works, but that much has been done towards providing education in Church principles for the young."

He took a deep interest in the Union between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and, speaking at a large meeting held at Haddington on 16th January 1901, he said that the history of the Christian Church had been largely one of perpetual divisions, but he was pleased that instead of further cleavage on that occasion they could rejoice over a closer unity. He admitted that "of late years there had been a far greater increase of charity between the different denominations, and a much greater desire to work harmoniously for common ends. But even now,



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with all these improvements, there was infinite waste of material resources none too great, and, besides, there was the inevitable friction and jealousy; and, in addition to these, there was the further disadvantage that the ground of division between different denominations was always exaggerated out of all proportion to its real importance. (Cheers.) In all ages of ecclesiastical history theologians had been too much given to these hostile definitions, but certainly the period of Church history in which the passion for definition raged with the most uncontrollable and most disastrous force was in that great period of religious awakening, the Reformation."

Continuing, he said that "he was not an advocate for that colourless thing known as 'an undenominational creed.' But what he did plead for was that Christian men should understand that there was a permission to differ, but that they should not allow any difference to make common work for a common object impossible. After all, whatever else the Church was, it was, among other things, a practical organisation to carry out a great practical work. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) It was something more than an organisation to produce a body, a school of divinity; it was a body in which Christians were asked to join together and work together for great religious and moral objects. He often wondered why they treated the contemporaneous as only of transcendent importance when differences separated from them in time, and due to the full, necessary, and most advantageous development of Christian thought and feeling, were not regarded as separating them from their religious ancestors. He supposed if any of them should go upon a succession of Sundays and listen to the sermons delivered in their own or some other great capital



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where all sects find representatives, his belief was that they would go from one denomination of Christians to another, and they would all be simply speaking the same great truth in language not very different; and it might be that if they could transfer themselves back to the great epoch in 1733, and heard that most saintly theologian, Ebenezer Erskine (cheers), they would find the presentation of Christian truth which they had here, even in the churches and chapels to which they did not belong, had a more natural harmony with their modes of thought than even the famous sermons of Ebenezer Erskine. In other words, time made the difference. Why should they feel that men who were preaching the same great truths in the same spirit were to be forever divided from them by some difference of ecclesiastical policy or organisation? He understood that, if in the two churches there were points of difference between them, these matters were now open questions in the united body. That, he believed, was the sound principle, and the only principle, upon which the divisions of Christendom could be healed. Increase the number of their open questions, and do not exclude from the pale of their communion every man who differed from them on any of those subjects which had been a fertile source of controversy in the well-worn and trampled battle-fields of dogmatic dispute. If that principle could sink into the minds and consciences of Christian men in all parts of the country, for his part he did not despair of seeing a very great diminution in that which had long been a reproach to Christianity, and had, he feared, been especially a reproach to Protestant Christianity, namely, that habit of running into an infinite variety and division of sects upon the smallest pretext, upon what often seemed the flimsiest



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ground and the most technical matter upon which a dispute could possibly arise. If that lesson could be learned, then the leaders in that movement might congratulate themselves, not only in having done a great work within the borders of their own communion, but having done a work the benefit of which would spread far and wide beyond its borders and affect the life of every Christian denomination."

On 4th November 1901 he presided at a meeting of the Church of Scotland Home Mission and Church Extension Society, and in a practical speech dwelt upon the attitude of the masses towards the Church, and the various competitive influences at work. He said "there could be no question that the augmentation of their great cities was going to tax to the utmost the energies of the statesman, the philanthropist, and the divine (hear, hear, and cheers), but they also were met there that night in a cause that could not look for the kind of assistance which those who were attempting to deal with other branches of the problem might rightfully call to their assistance. They had behind them no rates; they could not call upon the rates or upon the wealth of the community to assist them; and neither could they call in the aid of legal compulsion for those in whose service they desired to spend their efforts."

Proceeding, he said the chief difficulty in our great cities was not the supply of churches and ministers, but congregations. He thought, on the whole, it had been less felt in Scotland than elsewhere, for he believed that "the need for religion had, through century after century and generation after generation, sunk more deeply into the minds and consciences of the Scottish people than it had in other Christian populations. But the difficulty, though it was less here, was



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still great; and if he were to ask those on that platform, they would say that there was a difficulty found in towns that was not found in the country districts of bringing within the folds of the Church the vast populations whom it was the business of the Church to get, and to whom it was the business of the Church to preach religion. (Hear, hear.) No doubt many causes contributed to that lamentable and deplorable state of things. It might be the fact that the very circumstance that in a great city, where they were surrounded by the work of men's hands, almost everything that they looked at from the hour at which they rose to the hour at which they went to rest, from the last technical institution downwards, was contrived by man to meet the material needs of man. He did not conceal from himself the fact that there were at the present time special difficulties with which the Church had to contend in dealing with those great religious problems, for it was impossible that religion should not be intertwined with and touch at many points the general conception of the world, and of the history of the world in which they lived. He asked them to think for a moment of the change that had taken place during the last hundred years."

Mr Balfour then referred to the growth of scientific knowledge and beliefs founded on ethics. In conclusion, he said "there were those who had taken refuge from the difficulties of positive religious teaching in what they properly considered the safe ground of ethical moralising. That was not the business of the Christian Church. Any Church which is derogated from its great mission as to teach morality alone, and not morality interfused with religion, and looked at from the side of religion, that Church was destined to make its moralising barren and useless. Morality was



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no substitute for religion, and any organised body which in a rash moment thought that that was the apparently easier path to choose was destined to find a rude awakening. Some thought that the days when religion was a necessity of a civilised community had passed away, or was in the process of passing away. He did not say that. He held precisely the contrary doctrine. The growth of science and the enormous augmentation of knowledge, so far from rendering religion less necessary, made it doubly imperative upon them, and he should be sorry to think that that view was not the view of—and would meet with something more than lip approval, and something more than surface assent from—any assembly of his countrymen. The leaven of religious life had been one of the most prominent characteristics of our people for three centuries, and were they going to allow that great heritage to diminish and fade away? Should they have to admit at the end of their lives that they left Scotland less religious than they found it, that that great element of national well-being and of spiritual excellence had diminished and waned under the light of modern civilisation and of modern education? He trusted not, he prayed not; nor did he think that they ought to have any misgiving or deep-seated misgiving on that subject."



## CHAPTER XXVI

### HIS RECREATIONS

AMIDST the worry and anxiety of a strenuous Parliamentary life, Mr Balfour has eagerly welcomed every opportunity to pursue his favourite recreations. Unlike his distinguished colleague, the Colonial Secretary, open-air exercise has for him a great fascination. It is no doubt owing to his fondness for outdoor recreation that he has been able to accomplish, during the last twenty years, so much public work, and with the exception of a few minor indispositions, to maintain unimpaired his health and strength. As a youth Mr Balfour's health was none too promising, but as a result of a well-disciplined life, and a growing devotion to invigorating exercise, he has been able to tide over many constitutional difficulties, and at no time was he in better health than when called upon to take up the responsible duties of the Premiership.

In his school-days the future Leader of the House did not evidence any great fondness for sport, but a natural liking for walking and the pleasure of playing with the Curling Club at Whittingehame gradually developed his recreative tendencies, until he became in turn an enthusiast at Golf and an ardent Cyclist.

As President of the Whittingehame Curling Club, in his early Parliamentary days he often took part in the favourite winter sport, and at one of the dinners over which he presided he said he valued the game,



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as it "afforded a platform upon which all could meet as equals."

Mr Balfour's favourite recreation and the one that has engaged most of his attention during the last few years, is Golf. The enormous popularity the game has attained amongst Members of Parliament is due in no small measure to the patronage of such distinguished players as Mr Balfour. In forming the new Procedure Rules the Leader of the House did not overlook the claims of those Members who, after the laborious and oftentimes dreary routine of Parliamentary life, delight to spend their week-ends on the moors. An M.P.'s position nowadays is no sinecure, and although the alteration, giving Members a longer holiday at the week-end, met with some opposition, the majority of the electors do not begrudge their representatives indulging in needed recreation after voluntarily giving their services to the management of the nation's affairs.

Mr Balfour, when in town, plays at Tooting and on some of the grounds near the Metropolis, but his favourite links are those at St Andrews, where he has taken part in many exciting games with the "experts." He is a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club. As an amateur he wields the clubs with no mean skill, and occupies a prominent position in a sport which affords him the keenest pleasure. Some years ago he contributed a small volume on Golf to the Badminton series; and in a humorous speech, the first he made on the fashionable game, at Camden House, Chislehurst, he described how the "Scottification of England" was in progress through Golf.

At the invitation of Lord Wimborne, on 16th November 1898 he opened new golf-links his lordship had been instrumental in laying out. Mr Balfour



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had the pleasure of playing the first game over the grounds, and with J. H. Taylor, the professional player, he handsomely defeated Mr John Penn, M.P., and James Braid. Afterwards, in proposing prosperity to the East Dorset Golf Club, he humorously remarked that it was the best links he had played on, and not an easy one either, he added. Proceeding to mention the fascination the game had gained on such a large army of devotees, he said the game had its contributory pleasures, as even the most self-absorbed players could not fail to admire beautiful scenery. More and more people, he remarked, were beginning to discover that there was no better method of spending a holiday or enjoying a day's outing than playing golf on good links. The game had its pleasures, but, he dryly added, a beginner might possibly discover its dark side, and be tempted on certain occasions to express his emotions in rather vigorous language.

In the essay he contributed to the Badminton series, he humorously described the trials of the learner. "It is narrated of one intending golfer that he wrote home to a friend saying that all his arrangements for playing were nearly completed: he had purchased the necessary implements, he had been elected to the club, and he had hired a bunker for his own exclusive use. Ingenious commentators aver that for *bunker* in this passage should be read *locker*. But, however this may be, what delicious ignorance is there not displayed in these observations! What blissful unconsciousness of miseries yet to come! The writer little knew that in this particular kind of real estate no hiring is by golfing law required; that exclusive possession, though it carries few privileges, brings with it no envy; that he might cultivate it





*Photo by Durbach Bros., 106 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1*

## MR BALFOUR AT THE TEE







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with his niblick and with the sweat of his brow till the crack of doom, and no man would be found to suggest that what Providence intended for the people should not be monopolised by the individual."

On the question of new rubber-cored balls he recently wrote to the editor of *Golf Illustrated* a "technical" letter on the controversy, in which he said: "Those who fear that any considerable improvement in golf-balls will necessitate a corresponding modification in the length of our courses have much to say for themselves, but I should view with great apprehension the introduction into golf of so great a novelty as that of standardisation of the implements to be used by the player. Such standardisation cannot logically be restricted to the balls, and it would be a pity, I think, to destroy the practically unlimited freedom of selection which among all games belongs, so far as I know, alone to golf."

The Premier was one of the first of our public men to call the cycle to his aid as a means of pleasure and convenience. His example had a most stimulating effect, but it is to be hoped not all who followed his lead in this respect were so unfortunate. Not long after he had accustomed himself to the "steel steed" he collided with a baker's cart. He was precipitated into the gutter, and the youth who was driving the cart, all unconscious who his adversary in trouble was, began an oration more vigorous than polite. A policeman eventually appeared on the scene, and rescued the crushed cyclist, who discreetly chose not to divulge his identity. A few months later he had another taste of the dangers of the wheel, and to the surprise of the House appeared on the Treasury bench with his arm in a sling and one foot bandaged in a slipper. This maimed condition was the result of a carriage



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suddenly, without warning, turning a corner, and Mr Balfour, who was riding at a fair speed behind, colliding with its rear portion. He gradually recovered from what at the time looked like being a serious accident, and since, although not altogether discontinuing the pastime, he has not ridden so extensively, but preferred the whirling pleasure of motoring.

He has great faith in the motor car, not only as a means of enjoyment, but as providing a solution for the housing problem in carrying work-people to and from their work so as to enable them to live in the suburbs. A good story is told of one of his first motoring excursions. He was riding in company with some friends along a country road when he noticed a cyclist pedalling rapidly in the rear, and, with characteristic friendliness, the Premier asked: "Shall we pace you?" But no answer was forthcoming, and to the motorist's surprise, when he had proceeded about a mile, he was ordered to pull up by two constables. His voiceless friend had been none other than a policeman in plain clothes.

Mr Balfour presided at the annual dinner of the National Cyclists' Union on 24th March 1899. On that particular evening the London Government Bill was under discussion in Parliament, and his stay was consequently only a short one. In his speech he referred to the use of the cycle as a potent agency in lessening the overcrowding in the large cities. Speaking from his own experience, he said there had been no more useful invention during the past century than the bicycle. Cycling, he remarked, could be enjoyed by all classes and by both sexes of all ages. There was no other exercise less dependent upon external circumstances or upon preliminary organisation. In con-



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clusion, he spoke highly of the work of the Union, which, he said, had protected the interests and improved the comfort of the cycling fraternity.

Mr Balfour is a firm believer in all forms of exercise of a rational character, and on many occasions he has shown a practical interest in athletic sports, and especially when they have taken place amongst his own tenants in the grounds at Whittingehame.

Presiding at the annual dinner of the Association of Conservative Clubs, held at Fulham on 12th July 1896, he said that there were critics who regarded the rapid growth of public interest in athletics with something akin to suspicion. He did not share their views. He had always held that "healthy interest in athletic sports and games of all kinds—which was one of the distinguishing and characteristic marks of the age in which we lived, and of the race to which we belonged—was an admirable sign of the times." That it had not led to excess he was not prepared to say, but, he added, "what human pursuit is there that has not at some time led to abuse?" He looked upon athletic competition as a social bond of union, which helped to foster an excellent mutual feeling between those who took part in it. Mr Balfour afterwards distributed the prizes to the successful competitors.

The Premier enjoys a good novel when he has an hour to spare, and he is also an enthusiastic billiard-player.

As an indoor pastime music, next to literary work, claims a considerable portion of his leisure. In his study at Whittingehame, which adjoins his bedroom, is an iron grand pianoforte, and on many occasions, long after the other inmates of the great house have gone to rest, the strains of music may be heard coming from his room. The Premier has a great passion for music,



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and in addition to being an accomplished pianoforte player, he is a clever violinist. When at Whittingehame many pleasant musical evenings are spent with Miss Balfour, who, like her brother, is devoted to the art. In his earlier days, when the pressure of public work was not so great, Mr Balfour never lost an opportunity of hearing the great oratorios and renewing his acquaintance with the works of the world-famed composers and attending the big festivals.

His paper on Handel, which he contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in January 1887, revealed not only his admiration for the famous musician's genius, but a breadth of musical knowledge hardly to be expected from one daily absorbed with political duties.

"Music alone among her sister arts," he wrote, "has profited by the material development of society and the progress of mechanical invention; music alone has been able in any important respect to multiply the methods by which she moves the imagination of mankind. . . . We cannot flatter ourselves that we know more of colouring than Titian, or of versification than Milton. We could not teach drawing to Michael Angelo nor rhythm to Shakespeare. In music the case is otherwise. Since the death of Handel there has been not only a remarkable development of musical form, an increased freedom in the use of harmonic resources, and a prodigious growth both in the art of instrumentation and in the variety of instruments; but the modern musician has at his command far better players, far larger orchestras, and far more powerful choirs than his predecessors; so that the pettiest composer of the year 1886 is able to produce effects of which Handel and Bach never dreamed, and may employ methods of which they were totally ignorant."



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In an exhaustive review of the great composer's works, he referred to him as "the inventor of the oratorio" and "the greatest master of choral effect the world has ever seen." "He was an unrivalled master of direct and simple sentiment; of love, fear, triumph, mourning; of patriotism untroubled by scruples, of religion that knows no doubts. . . . From triumph to despair, from love to frantic fury and desperation, for whatever purpose it may be required, his power of using melody with dramatic force is rarely found wanting." In the age of Voltaire and Hume, Handel produced the most profoundly religious music which the world has yet known. Contrasting his end with that of his contemporary Bach, "who lies in a nameless and forgotten tomb," Mr Balfour wrote, "to the honour of his adopted country, Handel died full of fame and honour, mourned by the nation whose hospitality he had for so many years enjoyed. His body was laid to rest in the abbey among the poets whose works he had so often illustrated and whose genius he had more than equalled." The writer concluded his brilliant essay with a testimony to the eternal power of Handel's works. "'Israel' and the 'Messiah' are for us still immortal, because they live in our affections, not because they lie in honourable sepulture upon the shelves of our museums."

In an address he delivered on Education, in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, at the beginning of his political career, referring to his love of music, he said: "This is a special crotchet of my own. Music is the most democratic of arts. Contrast it with the pictures we see in the public galleries. We pay a shilling at the door and enter the gallery where, perhaps, 2000 pictures are waiting for inspection. Half-dazed by the number, half-stunned by the noisy tramp-



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ing of feet and the foolish comments we hear around us, how is it possible that we shall see at its best the work of the great men who produce the pictures? But music is within the reach of all. I don't know how we Scotsmen have come to deserve the reproof that we are one of the most unmusical nations of Europe. I am afraid it is true (no! no!), and yet two centuries ago an ordinary Edinburgh crowd was capable of singing in parts. My friends who cried No! no! would hardly assert that any ordinary collection of Scotsmen in our streets could do this to-day."

Mr Balfour cannot altogether forget his art even when surrounded by the cares and anxieties of State. The pianoforte which adorns one corner of his study at Downing Street affords him many opportunities of spending a congenial evening with those great souls who "being dead yet speaketh," and whose works possess immortal wealth. No recreation has such a soothing, as well as such a stimulating effect as music, and no art has so many inexpressible secrets to yield to its faithful followers. Amongst the latter, Mr Balfour occupies a prominent position, and in the exercise of his gift, no doubt, is built up that buoyancy of spirits and strength of personality which makes him such a popular chief, and such a brilliant and accomplished Leader of the nation's Parliament.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### HIS SCOTTISH HOME

WHITTINGEHAME HOUSE, where the Prime Minister resides during the Parliamentary vacation, is situated near Prestonkirk, East Lothian. The house was built by the Premier's grandfather, Mr John Balfour, in 1817, but the estate itself, and some part of the house, has a much more ancient history. Whittingehame is mentioned in Scottish annals as having been at one time the home of the great Douglas family, whilst tradition speaks of it as having been associated with the tragic fortunes of Mary Queen of Scots. A portion of the old castle still existed in a habitable state early in the nineteenth century. Stonypath Tower, which it is supposed was built about 1414, forms a striking souvenir of the hoary past. After being in the possession of the Earl of Morton, it was eventually restored to the Douglas family, from whom it was handed down to the Hays of Drummelzier, the last owners before Mr John Balfour purchased the estate on his return from India, where he had built up a large fortune as a contractor.

Besides its historic associations, Whittingehame has many attractions, and commands a view of some of the prettiest scenery in the south of Scotland. On the one side are the wooded banks of the Firth of Forth



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and on the landward side the picturesque slopes of the Lammermoors. The park is divided into two parts by a ravine, along which flows a stream known locally as Whittingehame Water or "burn." The old castle stood on the north side of this ravine, and here have been placed the greenhouses and gardens. The house is built on the far side of the ravine, and is reached from the gardens by stepping-stones and a light wooden bridge. Viewed from this bridge, through great masses of foliage, the mansion makes a pleasing picture. The house is built in the plain unadorned style which prevailed in Scotland early last century. Shortly after coming of age, Mr Balfour effected a number of changes. Grecian pillars were placed at the entrances, and broad bay windows, and a terrace with an ornamental balustrade, were added. These additions greatly improved the house and removed its sterner features. There are twenty farms on the estate, which ranks as one of the finest in Scotland. Mr Balfour is an ideal landlord, and spares no effort to improve the condition of his tenants. Since he entered upon the possession of the estate many of the cottages and farmhouses have been rebuilt on modern lines. In shape they are like small villas, and contain every necessary convenience. Mr Balfour's record as a landowner could well be imitated by others with larger means. His interest in the housing question is not political and theoretical only, but eminently practical in its scope.

The parish church and the manse are built of dark red stone, and in 1876 were restored mainly at Mr Balfour's expense. The new pulpit was designed and presented by Miss Alice Balfour. It is a graceful piece of work with open lattice-work at the sides. Mr Balfour's pew was formerly placed in the gallery, but is



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now at the back of the church in the aisle, with an entrance from the outside. The Rev. Dr Robertson, is a man for whom the Premier has the warmest admiration. He has occupied the position since 1865, and is greatly respected by all the members of Mr Balfour's household.

The entrance hall of Whittingehame House is a good reflection of the habits of its owner. In addition to a large assortment of rural hats and coats, there are usually to be found several bicycles and a miscellaneous collection of golfing requisites. When going to Dunbar or North Berwick for a game of golf, the Premier often uses his cycle, and is generally accompanied by Miss Balfour, who also is attached to the wheel. The house is replete with artistic comfort, and this is evident in the library as well as in the billiard saloon, in the Premier's study no less than in Miss Balfour's boudoir.

The library, which is a long, well-lighted apartment with a panelled ceiling of dark oak, contains a number of substantial volumes bound in calf and vellum. The majority of these were part of the original furnishing, and, as the catalogue shows, many of them are works of unquestionable literary orthodoxy. Mr Balfour has made numerous marginal notes in the catalogue, but it is in his study at the other side of the house where the shelves reveal the taste and literary inclinations of the Premier. They contain a remarkable variety of books, and both in the subject-matter and in the style of the binding they show signs of having been carefully arranged by the skilled hands of their owner. History, and especially modern history, is well represented, and, as may be expected, metaphysics make a formidable show. Political works, however, are not so numerous



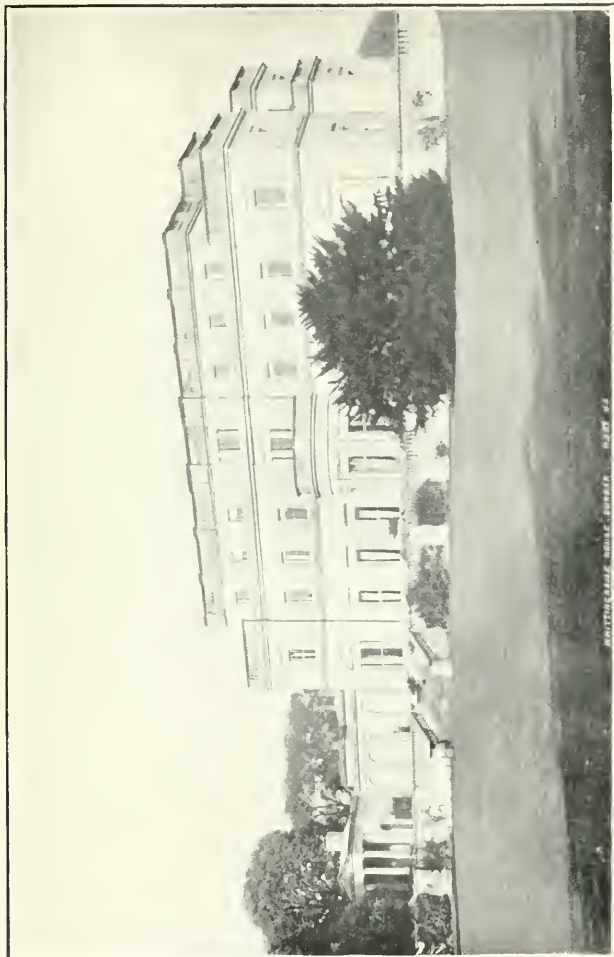
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with the exception of a small cluster of volumes on the Irish Question, a memento of his busy and very exacting period of office as Irish Secretary. Fiction and poetry do not occupy much space, but a glance along the shelves, whilst it does not suggest exceptional versatility, indicates that Mr Balfour has studied both sides of the questions which have interested him. The books of his opponents in politics and philosophy are probably even more numerous than those of his own allies.

Mr Balfour spends most of his time when he is indoors at Whittingehame in his study, and probably finds in its smaller size greater comfort than would be possible in the library. It was in his study that the greater part of "The Foundations of Belief" was written. The room is at the corner of the house, and having two large windows, there is no available wall space for pictures, whilst neither photographs nor sketches are to be found on the mantelpiece or tables. A large mahogany writing-desk of the American pattern stands in one corner of the room and an iron grand pianoforte in another. His bedroom, which is only a few steps away, is small in size compared with those on the upper storey. It is apparent that Mr Balfour has chosen it in order that he might more conveniently burn "the midnight oil," when the desire for study or music needs to be satisfied.

Except for the family portraits, there are few large pictures in the house, and these have not been purchased by Mr Balfour. The famous Burne-Jones treasures he possesses, and other specimens of contemporary art, are at present hung in his London residence; but some day, when the cares of State are not so heavy, they will probably find a resting-place at Whittingehame. In the drawing-room there are





*Photo by Valentine & Sons, Dundee*

## WHITTINGEHAME HOUSE







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three or four fine landscapes painted by one of his own relatives, and the dining-room has several examples of the Dutch school. The walls of the billiard-room are adorned with sketches of country life. Mr Balfour delights in a good game at billiards, and as an indoor recreation it occupies the same place in his affections as golf does for open-air exercise. The Leader of the House usually spends an hour or so after dinner in the billiard-room when he has visitors staying with him. The room is so spacious that a full table occupies not a quarter of its space. On the occasion of a family gathering at Whittingehame, it is often turned into a nursery for his little nephews and nieces.

The presents Mr Balfour has received in the course of his long and busy career, from political friends and other admirers, are to be seen in almost every nook and corner. After so many years they now make quite an imposing show. Of variety there is plenty: from the satin cushion presented by an Irish lady, who embroidered upon it the rose, shamrock, and thistle, to timepieces and other ornaments of every description. Mr Balfour must often be at a loss to remember who the donors were, and when and where some of the gifts were showered upon him. The ink-stand presented by the Whittingehame Curling Club has a prominent position, and likewise the illuminated address from the tenantry on the estate, testifying to his good qualities as a landlord and to their pride in his distinguished public career. The silver caskets containing borough freedoms, and gold keys with which public buildings have been opened, and silver trowels with which foundation stones have been laid, require for their accommodation a large iron safe in the basement of the house.



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The leafy beauty of Whittingehame Park was largely the work of Mr Balfour's grandfather, who designed most of its pleasant avenues. Oaks, firs, limes, beeches, were planted by him in large numbers, and consequently places which were bare last century are now rich with foliage. There are two remarkable trees which are usually inspected by visitors to Whittingehame. A eucalyptus, which was brought from Australia more than sixty years ago by Lord Salisbury's father, is considered the finest specimen of its kind in Scotland, and notwithstanding the rigours of the Scottish climate it has grown to a wonderful size, and is the object of much admiration. The other tree is a magnificent yew. It was under the branches of this giant of the past that the conspiracy which led to the assassination of Darnley is believed to have been concocted. The branches of the tree, which embrace the grounds at all points, have a circumference of 120 feet, and in the arched space thus formed some three hundred school children have been seated at the same time. In forty years the circumference of the tree has grown by 30 feet. A climb up the tower of the old castle which stands close by is rewarded by a fine view of sea and country. The shore is only about nine miles away.

The gardens at Whittingehame are not now maintained on the scale which made them at one time so well known in East Lothian. There are still, however, eighteen glass-houses and extensive beds of flowers and vegetables, which are under the care of ten gardeners. The Premier has no favourite flower, and is not interested in horticulture like Mr Chamberlain. His sister, however, is passionately fond of flowers, and takes a great pride in the gardens. The extensive game preserves on the estate, while they afford ex-



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cellent sport for his guests, have no attraction for the Laird of Whittingehame. When he visits the grounds, it is more often than not to play a game over the small links of nine holes which, chiefly with a view to the enjoyment of the ladies of the house, was made in the park some years ago.

Many distinguished men have enjoyed the hospitality of Whittingehame. Mr Balfour's guests include the leading lights of learning, the sons of science, ecclesiastical princes, and a large number of those who play or pursue politics either from the benches of his own party or from the cool shades of the Opposition. Many of the visitors to Whittingehame are ardent golfers like their host, and more than one "public servant" has learnt the art of the game whilst enjoying Mr Balfour's companionship.

During his stay in Scotland last October, His Majesty drove to Whittingehame on his motor car. He was accompanied by the Premier, and after the members of the family had been presented to the Royal visitor, and a pleasant half-hour had been spent in inspecting the house and grounds, the journey was resumed. The King, to commemorate his visit planted an oak-tree. His Majesty was delighted with his afternoon's "spin" on Mr Balfour's motor, and when the distinguished party reached North Berwick darkness had set in. The long tour of visits was accomplished without any mishap.

Another distinguished visitor to Whittingehame last autumn was Lord Kitchener. The Premier again discarded the old methods of travelling, and meeting the great general at Edinburgh, the warrior and the statesman merrily covered the twenty-two miles on Mr Balfour's "flyer."

In 1891 Mr Balfour sold his highland estate at



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Strathconan, Ross-shire, to Mr Coombs, for £100,000. It was mainly used for shooting purposes, but on attaining his majority Mr Balfour greatly improved the cottages on the estate, and added to the comfort of the tenants in many ways.

In addition to being an extensive landowner, Mr Balfour inherited a large fortune from his father.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### MISS BALFOUR

As illustrating the respect in which Mr Balfour is held by his neighbours and tenants—"his own people"—and the confidence he in turn places upon their support, a speech he made at Haddington on 16th October 1888, when the storm and stress of his Irish Secretaryship was at its height, and when vituperative epithets were showered upon him as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa, has a special importance. One of his opponents, he said, had been penetrating into his pedigree, and had mysteriously discovered that he was a descendant of the Duke of Lauderdale, whose record in English statesmanship was supposed not to be of the highest character. Mr Balfour remarked that it was good amusement, for, although the Duke might have added to his political crimes by bringing him into the world, it so happened that he had no children, consequently he could not have inherited his bad points from that source.

Mr Balfour went on to say that his opponents, not content with attacking his public administration, had attempted to blacken his private character. "They have hardly been willing to allow that I am a Christian. If it had been my fortune to have married a wife, I have no doubt they would have charged me with



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beating her." These criticisms might pass unchallenged, he said, in some parts, but there were two audiences who were not likely to give their assent to them. The first was the crofters of Strathconan, and the other his neighbours in East Lothian, an announcement which met with a lusty and unmistakable answer from his hearers. He continued:—

"Just as in England we put M.P. or F.R.S. after anybody's name as an indication of his position, so do our Irish friends put before people's names such epithets as base, bloody, brutal. No one has denied to the Irish agitators an extraordinary knowledge of the English language in the matter of invective."

The Chief Secretary, who had been resembled to Nero and Caligula by his Irish opponents, added that their knowledge of history was, however, not as profound as their knowledge of vituperation.

One of the first congratulatory messages he received, on succeeding to the Premiership, was one from the tenants on the Whittingehame estate and his county neighbours. As a recognition of the honour conferred on their kinsman, Mr Balfour was presented with the freedom of Haddington, and in a homely speech on 20th September, in which he thanked them for their kindness, he said: "It has often been my good fortune to address a Haddington and East Lothian audience within these walls, but never, as you will readily believe, under circumstances more calculated to move deep emotions in my heart or to make me feel so intensely the bond which unites me to my friends and neighbours in this town and in this county. (Cheers.) The Provost, in the too kind remarks with which he has prefaced the gift of the casket, which I have just had the honour to receive, gave a brief account of the duties and the responsi-



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bilities which rest upon the First Minister of the Crown; and as I listened to that enumeration I felt how impossible it was, how impossible it must be, for any man to sustain the vast burden of responsibility to which the Provost referred, were it not that he was supported by the kindness and confidence of his fellow-countrymen. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, there is no kindness which brings so much consolation, there is no confidence which gives greater assistance, than the kindness and the confidence of those whom we have known and who have known us from our childhood upwards, whom we have nothing to teach as to our character, disposition, or abilities, and whose affections, as they date back to the earliest times of our recollection, may well survive all the changes and chances of political life, all the ups and downs of popularity and unpopularity, all the inevitable variations in a politician's position. Ladies and gentlemen, I know that whatever happens, however I may be judged by others, by you, at all events, I shall be judged in all kindness and in all toleration (cheers), and that if criticism elsewhere be harsh—and it may be sometimes unfair—at all events from you I have nothing to expect—I will not say but justice—but something more than justice—that justice tempered by affection which is, after all, our greatest support in all the difficulties of life. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, I feel greatly the honour you have done me. I feel it as a neighbour, I feel it as a Scotsman (cheers), and I cannot help thinking that some of the feeling, some of the enthusiasm with which this occasion has been greeted occasionally in quarters not altogether in agreement with me in matters political, is due to the fact that my brother Scots judge a Scotsman kindly (cheers) and that they are not ill-pleased to see a Scotsman,



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placed in the position in which I now find myself." (Loud cheers.)

Mr Haldane, the Liberal Member for the county, wrote: "Mr Balfour is not only in one of the greatest positions in the world—possibly the greatest—but he is endowed with one of the finest intellects that is anywhere to be found, and this appeals profoundly to my faculty of admiration—not the less profoundly that I am of another party in politics."

When at Whittingehame Mr Balfour takes a great interest in the affairs of the district, but he is relieved of much purely local work by his youngest sister, who, since the death of his mother, has kept house for him.

In Miss Alice Balfour he has an indefatigable helper, and on numerous occasions he has testified to her invaluable assistance. She has brought to his aid conspicuous ability, and a remarkable gift for organisation. During the storm and stress of his long political career, she has been his constant companion, and no doubt on many trying occasions a welcome comforter and adviser. To a remarkable degree Miss Balfour has inherited the rare qualities which distinguished her devoted mother, and worthily carried on her important work, and realised what must have been one of her most cherished hopes. As a bachelor Mr Balfour is particularly fortunate. The enticements to break the bonds of bachelorhood and to enter the matrimonial state must have been countless, but the Laird of Whittingehame has successfully withstood them all, and probably the reason lies in the devoted attention of his sister.

She has accompanied him on nearly all his important political tours. Miss Balfour is a great favourite with his constituents in East Manchester, where she has



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opened quite a large number of bazaars at various times, and performed many graceful actions on her brother's behalf.

Speaking, on 9th January 1900, in reply to a resolution thanking them both for their work in the constituency, Mr Balfour said: "Certainly nobody knows better than I do how much I owe her in the work which we do in this division."

Some years ago Miss Balfour visited South Africa, and on her return she recorded her impressions of the country, and the adventures of her travels, in an attractive and entertaining volume entitled "Twelve Hundred Miles in a Wagon."

Many interesting souvenirs of her visit, and specimens of her skill with pencil and brush, are to be seen at Whittingehame. Miss Balfour is a clever artist, and probably one of her best achievements is a small pencil drawing of her brother's head. The expression she has obtained is one truly characteristic of the Leader of the House.

It is impossible to estimate the silent influence exerted by Miss Balfour on the Premier's busy career. In innumerable ways she has smoothed his path and watched over his personal comfort. Nothing has escaped her practised eye, and certainly no one understands better than her, Mr Balfour's habits and peculiarities, and how his health may best be promoted. Through many trying periods of indisposition she has been his ever-vigilant nurse. Like Mr Gladstone, England's present Prime Minister has been cheered and sustained in his public duties by a gifted and noble-spirited woman. There are many traits in Miss Balfour's character which resemble those possessed by the late Mrs Gladstone, and probably the nation will never fully know what it really owes to the unostenta-



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tious work of these two ladies in their respective spheres.

Whatever recreation her brother from time to time has taken up, Miss Balfour has also become a devotee. She is a skilled player at golf, and being an experienced cyclist she readily adapted herself to the motor car, the Premier's latest means of recreative travelling.

Mr Balfour has had four brothers and three sisters. Cecil Charles, died when he was thirty-two. Francis Maitland, the next eldest, was killed whilst attempting the ascent of the Aiguille Blanche de Peuteret in July 1882. His early death was a great blow to Mr Balfour. Although only thirty-one, his brother had attained an eminent position in science, and his future was full of great promise. As Professor of Animal Morphology at Cambridge, he had become an intimate friend of Darwin and Huxley, and both deeply deplored his untimely death. The Premier's third brother, Gerald, is well known as the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the present President of the Board of Trade. His youngest brother, Eustace James, is a Colonel in the London Scottish. His eldest sister, Eleanor Mildred, married Professor Sidgwick in 1876. His second sister is the wife of Lord Rayleigh.

Mr Balfour's motto is *Virtus ad cethera tendit*. The arms of the family are: Arg. on a chevron, engrailed between three mullets, sa. a selch's head, erased, of the field, within a bordure of the second. The family crest is a palm-tree.

Mr Balfour's official residence when in London is 10 Downing Street, an unimposing but historic house. It has a modest exterior, but is conveniently arranged inside. The house was offered to Sir Robert Walpole as a gift by his sovereign, and he accepted it on the



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understanding that it should become the official residence of the acting First Lord of the Treasury.

The Premier's office overlooks the Horse Guards Parade. In this room for many years the Cabinet meetings were held, and its walls have re-echoed some of the most momentous deliberations of Lord Beaconsfield's and Mr Gladstone's Cabinets. Its windows and doors are double lined, but these precautionary measures have now served their purpose, as the present Cabinet meetings are usually held at the Foreign Office. Near the window is a high desk, and it is here that Mr Balfour transacts the business of the State.

Leading out of this "chamber of secrets" are the rooms occupied by his private secretaries. In these offices are numerous works of reference, in addition to newspaper files and periodicals, all of which are systematically arranged for immediate use.

The dining-room is of magnificent proportions, and is beautifully decorated. On the walls are two of the famous Burne-Jones pictures which Mr Balfour prizes so highly. The official dinners given by the First Lord of the Treasury are held in this room. The walls of the drawing-room are lined with the portraits of famous Leaders of the House. This room has also witnessed many historic Cabinet meetings.

Mr Balfour's private study is a well-lighted, neatly-furnished room. In one corner stands a grand piano, and thus, as at Whittingehame, the Premier keeps his favourite instrument near at hand, so that when he has an hour to spare he may, without any trouble, enjoy a renewed acquaintance with the great composers. Miss Balfour's boudoir adjoins her brother's study.

An historic incident is associated with the spacious hall of the great house. While waiting to see the



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Minister resident in the house at the time, Wellington and Nelson met upon one occasion, and, unconscious of each other's identity, they entered into conversation. It was only some time afterwards that the two great men made the discovery, and, somewhat unfortunately, this proved the only opportunity they had of meeting each other.

In the aversion he has for crowds and society gatherings Mr Balfour has inherited the tastes of his uncle. But notwithstanding his reserved nature, the Premier is an admirable host, and, gifted as he is in so many ways, he cannot prevent himself being adored by the ladies, and becoming the centre of attraction wherever he goes. Much of the work of society entertaining is borne by Miss Balfour, and her brother thus finds an escape from what to his nature must be little less than boredom.

Mr Balfour has many intimate friends amongst his political opponents, and included in the number is that old Parliamentarian Sir William Harcourt. The evenings the Premier delights to spend are the literary talks with famous men and women. These social reunions, presided over by his sister, provide many opportunities for discussing art, music, books, and kindred subjects; and when the subject is a worthy one, it would be difficult to find a more brilliant conversationalist than the Premier. His great knowledge enables him to converse upon almost every subject, and once his interest has been aroused he exerts a great charm over his companions, and generally succeeds in winning over the majority of his opponents. Mr Balfour, like everyone else, has his moments when solitude is his one desideratum, and at such times he will quickly seclude himself in his own sanctum or in a cosy corner of one of his favourite literary clubs.





*Photo by Augustin Rischgitz]*

**MR BALFOUR'S PRIVATE STUDY AND MUSIC-ROOM,  
10 DOWNING STREET**



*Photo by Augustin Rischgitz]*

**MR BALFOUR'S WORKING-ROOM, SHOWING HIS  
FAVOURITE DESK, 10 DOWNING STREET**

Practically all the Cabinet Councils since 1856 have been held in this room, which has double doors, double windows, and double locks.







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There the stars of society disturb him not, but when he emerges to take his place and play his part on the world's stage, his courtesy and brilliant gifts enable him to fulfil his duties in a manner eminently worthy of his high position.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### PRIME MINISTER

IN high political circles Mr Balfour's claims to the Premiership were never questioned. Members of his own party have always regarded him as Lord Salisbury's successor. As the Leader of the House of Commons, and the late Premier's right hand man, his work and his position eminently entitled him to the highest office in the State when it became vacant. His Leadership of the House had secured for him the unbroken support and allegiance of his party, and his statesmanlike management of the nation's affairs the confidence of the country. With such a splendid record, and occupying such a strong position, it was only to be expected that when Lord Salisbury laid down the seals of office, His Majesty the King should offer the vacated position to Mr Balfour.

Lord Salisbury handed his resignation to his Sovereign on 10th July 1902, and the following day, after consulting with his colleagues, Mr Balfour visited the King at Buckingham Palace and accepted His Majesty's invitation to form an Administration. The Premier's resignation caused some surprise, as, although it had been expected during the previous twelve months, with it having not taken place at the conclusion of the war, or on the official date fixed for the Coronation, it was thought that he had decided to retain office



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for a longer period. With characteristic resource, his Lordship, before taking further leave of public life, could evidently not resist the temptation of confounding the prophets and having a quiet laugh at their expense.

But if Lord Salisbury's resignation was not expected at the moment, the announcement of the name of his successor caused no surprise. To the thoughtful observer it was a foregone conclusion. The speculations which were so freely indulged in by the "men in the know" provided some idle amusement for the passing moment, and likewise the terrifying prophecies of those who, with bated breath and nervous trembling, forecasted with omniscient assurance a dreadful upheaval and a disastrous revolt in the Unionist Party when Lord Salisbury retired. Much to the disappointment of these "wash-tub" politicians the political world was not torn asunder, neither did the heavens rain revolt and the Unionist Party commit suicide. The rearrangement of offices proved, after all, a very quiet affair, without any serious casualties being reported.

With the unanimous support of his colleagues in the Cabinet Mr Balfour accepted the Premiership, and at once entered upon the task of reconstructing his ministry and filling the vacated positions.

Mr Balfour's appointment was received with general approval throughout the country. By the press, and by politicians of all shades, it was agreed on almost every hand that he was the best man for the post. Politicians spoke highly of his leadership qualities, the press recognised in him a statesman with great endowments, and the masses knew him to be a leader who would pursue a safe foreign policy, and at the same time promote domestic legislation on progressive lines.



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The *Times* said: "Mr Balfour has claims and qualifications which must be universally recognised. He has led the House of Commons for the past seven years, and commands its confidence to a very unusual degree. The loyalty of his own party, now in an immense majority, has never wavered during the eleven years he has led it, in or out of office, in that House, and was never stronger than it is to-day; while at the same time he enjoys the confidence, the regard, and, it may almost be said, the affection of his political opponents. There is no other man in the House who in these respects can approach Mr Balfour."

The *Standard* and *Morning Post* cordially approved of the appointment, while the *Daily Telegraph* remarked: "We predict for the Balfour Administration a brilliant and useful career, and for the Prime Minister himself that in his new position he will more than realise the high hopes of his friends and strengthen and increase—if that be possible—the reputation for sterling patriotism, sagacious statesmanship, unflinching courage, and flawless honesty he has already established in the hearts of the King's subjects."

The *Daily News* described the appointment as "a triumph for the *status quo* and for the cause of healthy and genuine Toryism. . . . Mr Balfour is the possessor of an acute and ingenious intellect, free from most vulgar passions and prejudices, and capable of bringing to most problems an open and receptive mind."

A meeting of the Unionist Party was held on 14th July, the large and representative attendance including 251 members of Parliament and 115 Peers. Mr Balfour, on entering the room, was accorded a most hearty reception. He was accompanied by his colleagues in the Cabinet with the exception of Mr Chamberlain, who, owing to an accident, was unable to



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attend. In an impressive speech, the new Premier said: "We have, as you are aware, lost the services of the chief who for nearly fifty years has been engaged in active political life and for twenty years has been the central figure and the embodiment of the policy which this great party represents. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) During these years he has given himself ungrudgingly to the public service and to the service of the cause of the party to which he belongs. (Cheers.) If now the labours inseparable from political work impose upon him too heavy a physical strain, there are none, I think, who would grudge him the repose which he has so well earned. (Cheers.) His loss to us is indeed irreparable (hear, hear), but it is not from us that any complaint will come. I do not flatter myself that the gap which has been left can be filled, but the place he has left must be occupied; and it is because the King has desired me to do my best to take that position that I have asked you to meet me here to-day. (Hear, hear.) I have accepted a great task and heavy responsibility, certainly from no overweening belief in my own capacity, but because I am conscious—at least I have every reason to believe—that in attempting to carry on this work I shall have the most important qualification which a leader can have—namely, the regard and the confidence of those with whom one works. (Cheers.) I have not had an opportunity before this of consulting you, but I have, of course, consulted those with whom I have been working in the Cabinet for many years; and if the kindness which you are prepared to extend to me at all equals the kindness they have extended to me, then indeed the terrors, or I ought perhaps rather to say the difficulties, of the task before me are greatly mitigated. I cannot indeed promise myself that I shall have the



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continued assistance of all my present colleagues. One of the most important of them, with whom I have been associated through all my political life, and who has occupied, and deserves to occupy, the highest position in the House of Commons and the State, has told me that I cannot count on his further assistance. I mean the Chancellor of the Exchequer. (Murmurs of surprise.) But though I grieve to say I cannot count with any assurance upon his further assistance, I can count with absolute confidence upon his good wishes in the labours that lie before us. Of myself I have nothing to say; but to all the gentlemen of the House of Commons who are now listening to me, I may say I have no secrets and no surprises. They have known me so well and so long that, even if I were disposed to dwell on this, then there would be nothing I could say which can or ought to alter the judgment long ago formed. (Hear, hear.) If I have nothing of a personal nature to say at the present time, neither have I any pronouncement to make. Changes there may be, and, I fear, there must be, consequent upon the great change which we have met here to deplore. But this is probably not the moment, this is not the occasion, on which either to discuss or even to think of them. As to questions of policy, I need hardly tell you that the policy of the Unionist Party remains now as it always has been. If changes there must be in the headquarters staff responsible for carrying on operations, there is at all events no change in the object of those operations or in the methods by which that object is to be attained. (Cheers.) We have lost the services of a brilliant advocate of our cause, we have lost the man around whom the sentiment and emotions of the party have now for many years crystallised; nevertheless I feel



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that we should do wrong even to have the faintest misgivings as to the future of the cause which he has so long and so well upheld. (Hear, hear.) If we preserve that unity in the future which has never been wanting in our ranks in the past, the inherent vitality of our cause will make up for any weakness in the arms which have to sustain it." (Loud cheers.)

The Duke of Devonshire, who followed, after eulogising the services of Lord Salisbury to the State, said that Liberal Unionists entirely approved of His Majesty's choice, and that Mr Balfour could rely on their loyal support.

Mr Austen Chamberlain, as representing the Colonial Secretary, said his father had requested him to say how greatly disappointed he was at being unable to be present that day to welcome Mr Balfour to the leadership, and to say "with what pride and pleasure he will give all the assistance in his power to Mr Balfour in the responsible task which lies before him. What he cannot say here in person to-day, he said at a meeting of the Liberal Unionist Club two years ago." The speaker proceeded to quote the Colonial Secretary's eulogy of Mr Balfour on that occasion, and added: "Two years have served to strengthen and confirm the feeling then expressed. My father bids me say to you, Mr Balfour, that you will find in him a colleague equally attached to you by private friendship and public regard, and in offering you his own support he feels that he may speak also in the name of the whole of the Liberal Unionist Party in the House of Commons." (Hear, hear, and cheers.)

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said he had contemplated resigning his position two years ago, but the continuation of the war had prevented him. He had, he said, now asked to be relieved of his office, believ-



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ing that an opportunity should be given to the younger men. He added that he would retain office for the present, as he desired to show that he entertained "as fully as any man, a spirit of loyalty to the new leader of our party, and my desire to give him, whether I am in or out of office, my best help and support in the administration of affairs."

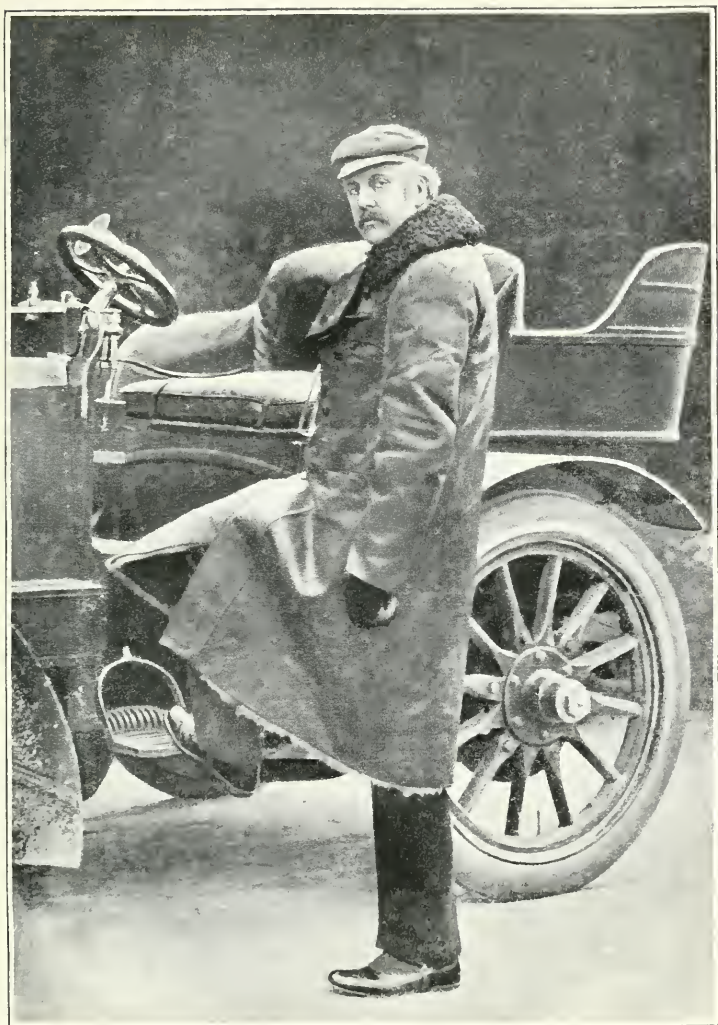
Congratulatory speeches promising support followed from Mr Renshaw, M.P., Sir W. Houldsworth, Lord Northbrook, Mr Chaplin, Sir W. Hart Dyke, the Duke of Abercorn, and Mr A. F. Ward. Mr Balfour, in his brief reply, said that whatever trials were in store—and they could not always expect calm seas and cloudless skies—he believed they would "with success be able to navigate even the most difficult ocean."

On entering Parliament the same day, Mr Balfour was greeted with loud and prolonged cheering. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, interrupting the course of questions, said he offered on "his own part and on that of those who act with me, and I am sure on the part of a far wider circle, including Members in every part of the House, our warm congratulations on the honour which the Leader of the House has received by being invited to form an Administration, and by wishing him success and prosperity not only in the formation, but in the conduct of it." (Loud cheers.)

Mr Balfour, who was greatly affected by the spontaneity and heartiness of his reception, thanked the Leader of the Opposition "for his most kind observations." After questions, in a pithy speech, he referred to "the immense public loss" which the country had sustained by the retirement of Lord Salisbury.

Nowhere was the announcement of Mr Balfour's well-deserved promotion received with greater satis-





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*[Photo by Lafayette]*

## MR BALFOUR AND HIS MOTOR CAR







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faction than in Parliamentary circles. The universal cheers which greeted him from every part of the House strikingly proved the popularity of the King's choice, and the genuine esteem in which as a Minister Mr. Balfour is held by members of all parties, and the confidence they have placed in his leadership.

In the work of reconstructing the Ministry, the new Premier had a difficult task. While the services of his old colleagues had to be considered, the claims of the younger members could not be overlooked. With admirable tact and judgment, however, he surmounted what some wiseacres had described as his unsurmountable difficulties, and the vacated positions were filled and the promotions announced before Members ceased from their Parliamentary labours.

The reconstructed Ministry contained the principal members of the Salisbury Cabinet, with the addition of several new members. By the changes he made Mr Balfour undoubtedly strengthened his Administration. The reduction of the Cabinet from twenty to eighteen received general approval, and likewise the majority of the new appointments, Mr Austen Chamberlain's promotion to the position of Postmaster-General being perhaps the most popular. The list of changes has evidently not been finally completed, and when the remainder have been made, Mr Balfour's first Ministry will, in point of ability and influence, be one in which the country will have every encouragement to place its full confidence. The following were the appointments announced on 9th August:—Mr Ritchie as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Wyndham a seat in the Cabinet, Marquis of Londonderry President of the Board of Education, Earl of Dudley Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Mr Akers Douglas Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lord Windsor First Com-



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missioner of Works, Sir W. Walrond Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Mr Austen Chamberlain Postmaster-General, Mr W. Hayes Fisher Financial Secretary to the Treasury Sir Acland Hood Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, Mr W. H. Forster Lord Commissioner to the Treasury, Earl Percy Under-Secretary for India, Mr T. Cochrane Under-Secretary for the Home Department, Earl Hardwicke Under-Secretary for War, Sir W. H. Anson Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, Mr A. Bonar Law Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade.

One of the first telegrams Mr Balfour received congratulating him on his appointment, was a homely-worded message from his constituents in East Manchester. At a meeting of the General Committee held on 17th July, a resolution assuring him of their continued loyalty and support was unanimously passed. The great cotton city felt justly proud in being able to claim the new Premier as one of its Members, and a representative who had been connected with the city since 1885.

Mr Balfour's first public speech as Premier was made at Fulham on 20th July. He was accorded a truly magnificent reception, the roar of cheers being again and again renewed. The demonstration signally proved that with the rank and file his appointment was immensely popular, and that they have complete confidence in his statesmanship. He was in splendid voice, and delivered a rousing address, in which he referred to Lord Salisbury's resignation, the support of the Colonies, Mr Chamberlain's services, and the Education Bill.

A banquet held in honour of the new Premier at the Mansion-House on 16th October, was attended by a distinguished company, which included most of the



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members of the Cabinet. Mr Balfour prefaced his remarks with an interesting reference to his relations with Lord Salisbury, all unconscious of the fact that reporters were present. The Premier discovered his "error" too late, but he added that he had no desire to recall his words, nor was he ashamed of them. It is characteristic of Mr Balfour's refined sentiments that he should regard, what to some would be an overt testimony, as private and confidential. Speaking of Lord Salisbury's services, he said:

"There are other subjects on which we find it difficult to speak, because our feelings are too strong and too intimate to be made the natural subject—I won't say of oratorical display, but even of public utterance before a public audience. It is in the latter category that I must rank my feelings with regard to my predecessor. (Hear, hear.) I have never found it easy to speak of him before even an audience of the most sympathetic character, because my relations with him were not merely—I had almost said were not even chiefly—of a public character, nor were my debts to him simply connected with the public affairs of this country. It is true that I entered my public life twenty-eight years ago as Member for Hertford under his auspices. It is true that two or three years later I became, whilst a Member of Parliament, his private secretary, and that in all subsequent years I have been, and am proud to have been, associated with Lord Salisbury in all the great transactions in which he has taken so great, so memorable, and so leading a part. (Cheers.) And yet I feel that my debts to him are not exhausted, or even touched upon by this brief account of what I might almost call our public connection. I don't believe that he at this moment is aware—I am sure he is not aware—of the



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greatest debt of all the many great debts I owe to him—the debt of encouragement which a young man—a boy, I might say—may receive from the words of encouragement of one much older than himself, which that older man probably hardly knows he has given, but which, nevertheless, live and germinate, and probably affect the whole future life and character of those to whom they are addressed. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) That is the debt that I owe to my predecessor in office. I do not know why I should have been led to speak of it to-night, except that the Lord Mayor alluded to him. I should never have ventured to touch upon such a subject were there reporters present, and were I not conscious that I was speaking amid an assembly of friends, words intended only for their ears and not for the public at large.” (Hear, hear.) At this point Mr Balfour paused, while the Lord Mayor whispered to him. Continuing, the right honourable gentleman said: “the Lord Mayor tells me there are reporters present. (Laughter.) He is also good enough to say that nothing I have said need be recalled (hear, hear) and I may say I am not ashamed of it. (Hear, hear.) But I should like to say that I would never have said it had I been aware that the words I said would go beyond these walls.” The remainder of Mr Balfour’s speech consisted of a spirited defence of the Education Bill.

This latter measure will always be associated with the opening of Mr Balfour’s first Administration. No Bill of modern times has aroused so much opposition and caused such a wide divergency of opinion. While, on the one hand, it has been welcomed as a great educational reform, many Nonconformists have taken the opposite view, and denounced it as an unjust measure, and threatened when it comes into operation to refuse



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to pay the School-rate. The objects of the Bill, and the controversy it has aroused, are too fresh in the public mind to need a detailed description. In its amended form, the Bill has given general satisfaction, not only to the Anglican party, but to the leading educationalists of the country, and when it has had a fair trial, no doubt, it will be better understood and certainly better appreciated.

The Government were faced with an educational chaos, which in the interests of the country they could not disregard. They recognised the urgency of co-ordinating education, and placing it on a more efficient basis to meet the inroads of foreign competition. It was decided to place the Voluntary Schools on a level with Board Schools, and to vest the power of local Government in Educational Committees formed from members of Borough and County Councils. Judged purely from an educational point of view, very little fault could be found with the Bill in its amended form, and practically the sole cause for the opposition which it aroused was the religious question. Nonconformists, led by their chief organ the *British Weekly*—which, to do it credit, fought valiantly for what it considered to be their rights—objected to public money being spent without public control, and for denominational teaching. It was said that the country parson will take undue liberties, and make himself something akin to an autocrat, notwithstanding the fact that he will be under the Educational Committee and have to work with a Board of Managers.

The one-man control of our schools has been an unmitigated injustice, but now the schools are to be exclusively maintained out of the rates—with the exception of the slight cost of repairs—this inequality will



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be removed, and should any fanatical parson overstep the limit and misuse his authority in the future, it will be easier to call him to account for his transgressions than under the old conditions.

Mr Balfour recognised it would be necessary to use the Voluntary Schools, as any other scheme would have entailed great expense and needless delay. Placed between two religious forces, his task was not a particularly pleasant one; but, heedless of the volleys of the extremists on both sides, he pursued a steady course resolved to give the country the best educational system possible. It is absurd to charge Mr Balfour with favouring one sect. The whole tenor of his speeches on religion have been distinguished by a broad impartiality. Replying to Lord Hugh Cecil, on 27th November, 1902, he said: "The honourable member regards the school as an annexe of the Church. I regard it as *an annexe of the family*." Many similar brilliant passages of Mr Balfour's in defence of the Bill, might be quoted. He has always deprecated sectarian bitterness. Had it been at all possible, he would have left the Voluntary Schools out of his scheme, but having claimed them for the carrying out of a needed educational reform, he recognised that it was only right they should be maintained out of the rates. He will be the first, however, to check any high-handed action or violation of their authority by the clergy.

Mr Balfour has been subjected to a torrent of invective by the opponents of the measure, but the majority of his countrymen will recognise in the Bill, which will always be associated with his name, an educational Act of national importance, and one worthy of a great statesman. It may not be perfect, and possibly in some respects it could have been improved by giving fuller public control and restricting the power, and





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## MR BALFOUR SPEAKING







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possibly the eccentricities of the priests, but its good points completely overshadow its weak ones, and with such a noble and patriotic object in view as the betterment and consolidation of the educational interests of the country, it will continue to receive the support of all right-thinking and impartial people. Instead of making an attempt at "passive resistance," Nonconformists would do better to spend their strength and time in helping to make the Bill beneficial to all classes, and, if abuses and injustices should occur, to point them out and appeal for their abolition. If they adopt this sane attitude they will show a true educational enthusiasm, and will never be denied a respectful hearing.

An influential deputation representing every branch of Nonconformity waited on Mr Balfour on 12th June. His reply was both conciliatory and courteous in tone, although he held out no hope of the Bill being withdrawn. He said he had introduced the Bill as a great educational reform, and he absolutely repudiated the statement that its object was the bolstering up of one set of religious opinions to the injury of others. He deeply regretted the religious differences which surrounded our national education, but he added that, in the interests of the country, it was necessary to raise the efficiency of the Voluntary Schools. Two days later he received an agricultural deputation headed by Mr Chaplin, which protested against the rates in rural districts being increased, as the Bill would in the main chiefly benefit the towns.

In his speech at Manchester on 14th October Mr Balfour replied at considerable length to the attacks which had been made upon the Bill, and the "unscrupulous misrepresentations" which its opponents had not hesitated to use to further their own objects. On numerous occasions, in speeches and in letters to corre-



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spondents, he pointed out that "the whole tendency of the measure is to promote the unification of education, under a popularly-elected body, in place of the existing system."

From every point of view the future is full of hope for Mr Balfour's first Administration. Supported by a large majority in Parliament, and assured of the loyal co-operation of Mr Chamberlain and his other colleagues in the Cabinet, its prospects could not be brighter. While Parliament has undiminished confidence in its chief, the country has transferred the allegiance it placed in Lord Salisbury for so many years to his successor. This transfer has, however, been something more than nominal. For many years the nation has looked upon Mr Balfour as its future Premier, and when the moment came for the outward change to be made, the chorus of approval was both spontaneous and sincere.

No statesman is more implicitly trusted by the man in the street, and no leader has obtained such a hold over the masses of his countrymen, as Mr Balfour. The country recognises in him a "safe" Minister and one whose foreign policy is not likely to be of a fire-work description, full of splendour at one moment, but threatening every instant to plunge the nation into a European war. The present Premier's management of the Foreign Office during Lord Salisbury's indisposition in 1898, and the statesmanlike policy he adopted regarding the Chinese difficulty, strengthened the country's faith in his administrative abilities, and paved the way for his promotion to the office he now occupies.

It is well known that, during the last few years of his ministry, Lord Salisbury delegated much of his work as Premier to the Leader of the House, and



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the manner in which those duties were fulfilled, and the increased responsibilities borne, not only fitted Mr Balfour for the highest position in the State, but won for him the support of his followers and opponents alike. His training as Lord Salisbury's lieutenant served a double purpose. It equipped him for his future duties, and gave him an insight into the inner working of Lord Salisbury's foreign policy. Like his uncle, Mr Balfour is essentially a peace Minister, and therein lies the first elements of his strength.

The appreciative references which appeared in the foreign press on his succession to the Premiership, revealed the confidence European countries have in his future policy. The *National Zeitung*, Germany, wrote: "Mr Balfour is a sure and trustworthy statesman. It may fairly be anticipated that the new Premier will direct affairs with a firm hand in accustomed paths, and foreign countries may therefore have all confidence in him."

Similar references, welcoming his appointment, were made by the principal Paris newspapers. Our new ally in the East also sent its message of congratulation. Coming so soon after the alliance with Japan, the opinion expressed in that country, that "Mr Balfour has already given ample proofs of his capacity, and the affairs of Great Britain are safe in his hands," possessed an additional importance.

Our cousins across the sea were not less complimentary, and they acknowledged in the new Premier a great statesman, and a true friend to both nations. Mr Balfour has done much to promote cordial relations between the two countries, and his views are not likely to change. Speaking at Manchester at the beginning of 1896, when, for a short period, the Venezuela question reached an acute stage, he said: "Large sections



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in America regard war with Great Britain as a thing to be lightly indulged in, an exhilarating exercise, a gentle national stimulus. To me that is a terrible, a distressing, and a horrible point of view. We are taxed with being idealists and dreamers in this matter. I would rather be an idealist and dreamer, and I look forward to the time when our ideals will become realities and our dreams will be converted into sober political fact." He said he hoped a statesman would arise who would "bind together the English-speaking world, and lay down a greater Monroe doctrine, which would make war between the kindred peoples impossible."

With Arthur Balfour at the helm, England is not likely to run ashore on any dangerous rocks in the pursuit of shadowy triumphs.

In his speech at Fulham, he said: "I hope and believe that we may look forward to ever-increasing good relations between us and our Continental neighbours, and that in pursuing that continuity of policy which it is the pride even of Administrations differing in politics to retain in this country, we may find that the bonds uniting us and our neighbours may ever grow closer and closer, and that, all subjects of friction being removed, the great family of civilised nations may be a brotherhood with allied interests and like aims, to be divided, if divided at all, by matters insignificant, and that in truth we may find ourselves at the beginning of an era of prolonged international goodwill."

And while Mr Balfour may be relied upon to adopt a safe and judicious foreign policy, firm, but yet not provocative, his Imperialism will likewise be dictated by the highest motives, and his attitude towards the Colonies one of increasing cordiality. He is now, as



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he has always been, an Imperialist to the core, and one who has the utmost confidence in Mr Chamberlain's Colonial policy. Whatever the present Premier can do to strengthen the bonds of Empire and draw still closer the ties which unite us to our kinsmen across the sea, either by a mutual trade policy or the encouragement of Colonial industries, he may be relied upon to support. As in the past, Mr Balfour will resist any attempt to dismember the Empire. His Irish administration, which won for him such unstinted praise and revealed his great abilities as a statesman, may be taken as a criterion that, while doing his utmost to improve the condition of Ireland, he will not be terrorised by the threats of agitators.

Mr Balfour has already proved himself a statesman who has the true interests of the masses at heart, and while it is unlikely he will attempt to pass any revolutionary measures of social reform, his policy will be one which will commend itself to the majority of his countrymen. The Premier's Conservatism is of a more enlightened and democratic character than the old Toryism. He is a progressive Conservative, but he believes that reforms can only be effected when the hour is ripe, and that to legislate in advance of that time is to court disaster and to bring the object sought into disfavour. There are some of his followers who would like to see him sprint occasionally, but they are not likely to have their hopes realised, for while, on the one hand, he will keep clear of the ruts of antique Toryism, he will be just as careful to avoid any policy which savours of socialism or is framed in fanaticism. On the great questions of the hour, such as Army Reform, the better housing of the poor, Temperance reform on moderate lines, an efficient system of education, and the protection of our com-



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mercial interests, his views are those of the nation. On the important subject with regard to which the country is looking forward to comprehensive reforms in the future, speaking on 10th January 1900, he said: "The thing we most desire is that the military defence of this country may be put upon an effective basis, and there is no party or political sacrifice which I should think too great to make in order that that all-important natural object should be attained.

The Government's agreement with the Cunard Company, published on 1st October, made it plainly evident that Mr Balfour does not mean to allow our commercial shipping to be captured or seriously hampered by the gentlemen over the herring-pond who have cast such avaricious eyes upon our sea-girt island. Mr Balfour's trust in trusts is of a very limited character, and whatever he can do to promote the commercial interests of his country and foster its industries, he will only be too willing to undertake. Mr Chamberlain's visit to South Africa provides another proof that the Government mean to avail themselves to the full of the Empire's resources, and to give Englishmen every opportunity of deriving the utmost benefit from the fruits of conquest.

Mr Balfour has taken up the duties of the highest position in the Empire with zeal and energy, and in the spirit of a true patriot, and none but the most bigoted will deny that he possesses in no small degree the qualities and powers of a great statesman, and that he is eminently fitted for the important work which lies before him. As was so strikingly illustrated during his Irish Secretaryship, he may be relied upon to prove equal to the demands of a great occasion and bring honour to an historic office.



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If Mr Balfour has one danger to guard against more than another, it is his indifference and lack of dynamic energy. If more enthusiasm and zeal were manifested by him, the general results would be considerably more effective, and greater vitality would characterise his party. Balanced with his steady purpose and commanding abilities, this shortcoming, however, can be easily forgiven. A statesman of great intellectual strength, extensive knowledge, long experience, and unswerving decision, and animated by the highest principles and noblest aims, Mr Balfour contains in his character those distinguishing qualities which Englishmen admire, and in which they can place complete confidence. A cautious and prescient diplomatist, a staunch Imperialist, a progressive administrator, a powerful debater, a brilliant leader, and a great statesman, under his Premiership England may look forward with confidence to the future, assured that the aim of Mr Balfour's foreign policy will be the safeguarding of British interests and the promotion of peace; and the object of his domestic legislation the prosperity of his country and the happiness and welfare of its people.







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