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Edited by George Earle Buckle

Excerpt

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO CHAPTERS I AND II

THE new Parliament, with a House of Commons consisting of 334 Liberals, 250 Conservatives, and 86 Irish Nationalists, was opened on 21st January by the Queen in person. Mr. Bradlaugh had been permitted to take the oath and his seat without question,<sup>1</sup> as the whole political world was in convulsion over Irish policy. It was widely believed that the veteran Liberal leader, Mr. Gladstone, though he kept his own counsel, had determined to adopt Home Rule—a policy which both historic parties had hitherto opposed, and to which Lord Hartington, his principal lieutenant, had just emphasised his objection. Lord Salisbury's Conservative Ministry were divided as to immediate measures to strengthen authority in Ireland. Lord Carnarvon, a Viceroy inclined to Home Rule ideas, had already tendered his resignation; but it was only at the last moment that the government of Ireland was entrusted to Mr. W. H. Smith as Chief Secretary. He paid a hurried visit to Dublin, and his intention promptly to introduce a "Coercion" Bill was announced in Parliament on 26th January. On that same evening Mr. Gladstone, supported by the bulk of the Liberal Party and by the Irish Nationalists, took advantage of an amendment to the Address about agricultural allotments to expel the Ministry from office. The amendment was carried by 331 votes to 252, Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, Sir Henry James, and fifteen other Liberals voting with the Conservatives. Lord Salisbury at once resigned; and the Queen, after a little hesitation, entrusted the formation of a new Government to Mr. Gladstone.

The Prime Minister declared the Ministerial policy to be one of examination into the practicability of complying with the Home Rule demand. This formula, while it enabled him to secure Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan temporarily for his Cabinet, was too ambiguous to satisfy Lord Hartington and his friends, especially as Mr. John Morley, an early convert to Home Rule, was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. Among Liberal ex-Cabinet Ministers, Lord Granville, Lord Spencer, Lord Kimberley, Lord Ripon, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Childers, and Lord Rosebery (as Foreign Secretary) entered the Cabinet; Lord Hartington, Mr. Bright, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Forster (who was ill, and died in

<sup>1</sup> See Second Series, vol. iii, p. 62.

April), Lord Selborne, Lord Derby, Lord Northbrook, the Duke of Argyll, and Sir Henry James (ex-Attorney-General) either definitely refused or stood critically aside—to be joined in March by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan. On 8th April the Prime Minister introduced his Home Rule Bill. A separate Legislature, with a separate Executive responsible to it, was to be set up in Ireland with ample powers to deal with Irish as distinct from Imperial affairs; and the Irish Peers and Irish Members of Parliament were no longer to sit in the British Parliament at Westminster. By another Bill, which he introduced in the following week, he proposed, through the employment of British credit on a large scale, to set up machinery for the purpose of buying out the Irish landlords, who, he recognised, could not rightly be left at the mercy of an Irish Legislature.

The production of the Home Rule Bill definitely split the Liberal Party in two. It was vigorously attacked in debate by both Liberals and Conservatives, the Liberal dissentients taking the most prominent part. But it was accepted by Mr. Parnell on behalf of the Nationalists; and Mr. Gladstone, supported by Mr. Morley and Sir William Harcourt, put forth all his remarkable powers in its defence. On 14th April, Liberal and Conservative leaders, Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. Rylands (a prominent Radical M.P.) appeared on the same platform at an enthusiastic meeting at the old Opera-House in the Haymarket, in order to protest against Home Rule. The Liberal dissentients began to organise themselves into a “Liberal Unionist” Party under Lord Hartington, while a smaller group of Radical Unionists drew together under Mr. Chamberlain—a process which was hastened by the general disposition shown by the Liberal Associations throughout the country to range themselves behind Mr. Gladstone.

When, on 10th May, the Second Reading was moved by the Prime Minister, Lord Hartington took the lead of the opposition forces, and at once moved its rejection. Towards the close of an intermittent debate, which produced many striking speeches and was spread over a month, Mr. Gladstone, with a view to secure waverers, declared that a vote for the Second Reading merely involved acceptance of the principle, and that the measure would not be further proceeded with till the autumn. Probably this had less effect than the announcement that Mr. Bright would vote against the

Bill. The division was taken on 7th–8th June, and the Bill was rejected by 343 votes to 313, 93 Liberals voting in the majority. The Queen granted immediately the dissolution for which the Cabinet asked, and after a short but bitter campaign the electorate in July confirmed and emphasised the decision of the House of Commons. There were returned 316 Conservatives and 78 Liberal (and Radical) Unionists—394 in all, against 191 Gladstonians and 85 Nationalists—276 in all; a majority of 118 against Home Rule.

Mr. Gladstone resigned, and the Queen sent for Lord Salisbury, who, having failed to persuade Lord Hartington to form a Coalition Ministry, undertook the task of forming a Conservative Ministry, with promises of cordial support from the Liberal Unionists. Lord Iddesleigh became Foreign Secretary and Lord Randolph Churchill Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. The Government postponed their Irish legislation till the next year; but the short autumn session was marked by Mr. Gladstone's abandonment of his Irish land purchase scheme, and by a Tenants' Relief Bill which, on the plea of a coming economic crisis, Mr. Parnell introduced, suspending proceedings for the recovery of rent on payment of half the rent and arrears. The Bill was rejected, but the policy was put in force by the National League on several estates in Ireland through the "Plan of Campaign"—a system under which the tenants on an estate were to meet and settle for themselves the rents they could pay, and, if the agent refused to accept these as payment in full, to pay the money into a fund to be used to support dispossessed tenants. The Government took legal action against Mr. Dillon and others, but without much effect. Just before Christmas Lord Randolph Churchill suddenly resigned, because the Cabinet would not support him in enforcing drastic reductions in the Naval and Military Estimates. Again Lord Salisbury offered to serve either under or with Lord Hartington. Though Lord Hartington again refused, he supported Lord Salisbury in the last days of the year in pressing Mr. Goschen to take Lord Randolph's place.

British Foreign Policy was not a subject of dispute between parties in 1886, as Lord Rosebery, who was favourably regarded by Prince Bismarck, preserved strict continuity with Lord Salisbury. This steadiness finally succeeded in June, after five months' effort in conjunction with the other Great Powers, in restraining and disarming Greece, which,

owing to the Bulgarian complications, had threatened war on Turkey. An arrangement was come to between Turkey and Bulgaria, by which Prince Alexander was to be Governor-General of Eastern Roumelia for five years certain. He was popular in both provinces; but, in both, Russian agents were active in spreading the belief that, with the Tsar hostile, neither province could have settled government. Accordingly, on 21st August military conspirators kidnapped the Prince by night in his palace, forced him by threats of death to sign his abdication, took him down the Danube in his own steam yacht and put him ashore at Reni, whence the Russian authorities conveyed him across-country by rail to Lemberg. Public opinion throughout Europe was shocked; the Prince made a triumphal return, and was warmly welcomed by his people and by a Regency (with M. Stambouloff at its head) which had overthrown and imprisoned the leading conspirators. But the Tsar showed himself quite implacable; the European Governments (with the exception of the British) followed Prince Bismarck's lead and withheld sympathy; and Prince Alexander found that the conspiracy against him was much more widespread than he thought. So on 7th September he resigned the throne, appointing Regents. General Kaulbars, sent by Russia as Special Commissioner to Bulgaria, adopted such tactless and bullying methods that he united the whole country against him, and had to leave after a couple of months. A deputation from the Regents started in December to make a tour of the principal European Courts.

In June Russia announced her intention of terminating the arrangement in the Treaty of Berlin by which Batoum was constituted a free port. As Lord Rosebery found that the other signatories of the Treaty were prepared to acquiesce, he could do no more than enter an emphatic protest. The year was marked in France by the expulsion of the leading Bourbon and Napoleonic Princes, and by the rise of General Boulanger, Minister of War, to popularity and power. Queen Maria Christina gave birth in May to a posthumous son—Alphonso XIII, King of Spain.

A Colonial and Indian Exhibition was held in London, and was opened in May by the Queen in state. Her Majesty's interest in politics throughout the year was absorbing; so strong was her sense of the peril of Home Rule, so deep her detestation of the Tsar's treatment of Prince Alexander and of Bulgaria.

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## CHAPTER I

1886

JANUARY TO JULY

*Extract from the Queen's Journal.*

OSBORNE, *1st Jan.* 1886.—May God help me on in this new year full of political difficulties, and preserve all most dear to me! May He guide me aright!

*Mr. Goschen<sup>1</sup> to Queen Victoria.*

SEACOX HEATH, *3rd Jan.* 1886.—Mr. Goschen . . . begs to express his sincere thanks for the gracious permission to submit some further remarks on the present political crisis.

Mr. Goschen has gathered that, among the most important of Mr. Gladstone's late colleagues, there is not only no desire to force on any motion or to take any step which might compel the Government to resign, but that they will use their utmost efforts to prevent his embarking on such a course. So far, then, it would appear that the danger which your Majesty apprehends is less imminent. But what is possibly to be feared is that the Government, though not assailed by any form of vote of censure, may

<sup>1</sup> Who had held Cabinet office in Mr. Gladstone's first Ministry (1868–1874), but had not joined his second Ministry (1880–1885), and now occupied an independent position in the Liberal Party. On account of that independence the Queen frequently consulted him, from December 1885 (see Second Series, vol. iii, p. 709 to end) through the critical months of 1886, till in January 1887 he consented to fill the gap caused by Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation.

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endeavour to force on some debate and division, which would imply a positive vote of confidence. Such a course would place many Liberals who are sincerely anxious to treat the Government with the utmost fairness, and without any party spirit at all, in a position of most serious embarrassment. Many Liberals declare that, coming fresh from their elections, they cannot vote *confidence* in the present Ministers under any circumstances, though quite prepared and even anxious to abstain from any actual attack.

It would appear, then, to be a matter of extreme importance from the point of view of avoiding that immediate change of Government which your Majesty so strongly deprecates in the present crisis, that every influence should be used to prevent the Conservative leaders from directly or indirectly *challenging* the Liberal Party, in such a way as might be interpreted to mean a vote of confidence, either through a passage in the Address in answer to the gracious Speech from the Throne, or otherwise. . . .

Mr. Goschen feels convinced that your Majesty's words with reference to the conduct of the Prince of Bulgaria,<sup>1</sup> in the trying circumstances through which he has just passed,<sup>2</sup> would be echoed by the immense majority of your Majesty's subjects. . . .

*Lord Salisbury's First Ministry at the beginning of 1886.*

*Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary*

<i>First Lord of the Treasury</i>	. . . .	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.
<i>Lord Chancellor</i>	. . . .	EARL OF IDDESLEIGH.
<i>Lord President of the Council</i>	. . . .	LORD HALSBURY.
<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>	. . . .	VISCOUNT CRANBROOK.
<i>Home Secretary</i>	. . . .	EARL OF HARROWBY.
<i>Colonial Secretary</i>	. . . .	SIR RICHARD CROSS.
<i>War Secretary</i>	. . . .	HON. SIR FREDERICK STANLEY.
<i>Indian Secretary</i>	. . . .	WILLIAM HENRY SMITH.
	. . . .	LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

<sup>1</sup> He was Prince Alexander of Battenberg, brother to Prince Louis of Battenberg (afterwards Admiral the Marquis of Milford Haven), a distinguished officer in the British Navy, and to Prince Henry of Battenberg, husband of Princess Beatrice.

<sup>2</sup> See Second Series, vol. iii, p. 589, and from p. 690 onwards.

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[More information](#)

## 1886] QUEEN AND THE GLADSTONE FAMILY 7

<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons</i>	SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH.
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>	LORD GEORGE HAMILTON.
<i>Viceroy of Ireland</i>	EARL OF CARNARVON. <sup>1</sup>
<i>Lord Chancellor of Ireland</i>	LORD ASHBOURNE.
<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>	DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON.
<i>Postmaster-General</i>	LORD JOHN MANNERS.

*Queen Victoria to Mrs. Gladstone.*

[Copy.]

OSBORNE, 4th January 1886.

DEAR MRS. GLADSTONE,—Pray accept my best thanks for your kind letter announcing to me the intended marriage of your daughter Mary,<sup>2</sup> which I hope will prove a happy one, and I would ask you to wish her joy from me and to accept for yourself and Mr. Gladstone my congratulations. You must both rejoice at Mr. Gladstone's rest—which he so often spoke of as his *great* wish and which is essential at his time of life, when *overwork* and excitement are always detrimental to health. Trusting that you are well. Believe me, yours sincerely, V. R. I.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to Queen Victoria.*

FOREIGN OFFICE, 5th Jan. 1886.—Lord Salisbury with his humble duty to your Majesty respectfully addresses your Majesty on the question of opening Parliament in person, in consequence of a letter he has received from Sir William Jenner.<sup>3</sup> Lord Salisbury is very sensible of the sacrifice any such effort would impose upon your Majesty; for the fatigue is necessarily severe, and, but for Sir William's letter, he would not have ventured to write on the subject. But, as representing the Ministry, he cannot forget the very great advantage and assistance which such a step on your Majesty's part would render to them in the performance of their difficult task; and therefore he learns with great satisfaction from Sir William

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carnarvon tendered his resignation early in January, but was asked to continue until the appointment of his successor.

<sup>2</sup> Who, on 2nd February, married the Rev. Harry Drew, afterwards Rector of Hawarden. She died in 1927.

<sup>3</sup> The Queen's physician.



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[More information](#)

## 8 DUKES OF EDINBURGH AND CONNAUGHT [CHAP. I

that, under favourable circumstances, it can be undertaken without prejudice to your Majesty's health. Lord Salisbury also feels bound to add that, in view of the fact that a very large number of your Majesty's subjects are directly represented in Parliament for the first time on this occasion, it will be taken as a very gracious act on your Majesty's part, if this particular opening were honoured by your presence. If, at the last moment, any unfortunate impediment should arise which will make it inadvisable for your Majesty to make the effort, there will be no serious difficulty in substituting an opening by Commissioners. Lord Salisbury trusts that the interests of the Ministry and the country may be sufficient excuse for making a recommendation, which, he is well aware, will impose serious exertion upon your Majesty, if it is graciously accepted.<sup>1</sup>

[*Copy.*] *Queen Victoria to Mr. Goschen.*

OSBORNE, 7th Jan. 1886.—I thank you sincerely for your kind letter and frank reply. I lost no time in informing Lord Salisbury of its contents, and I can assure you that my Ministers do not propose to ask of Parliament a direct vote of confidence, nor is it their intention, by challenging the Liberal Party in any way, or by any departure from the usual practice, to raise the question of confidence. Yours truly, V. R. I.

*The Duke of Edinburgh to Queen Victoria.*

CLARENCE HOUSE, 13th January 1886.

MY DEAREST MAMA,—My best thanks for your kind letter received yesterday. I am afraid that you must feel a pang that both Arthur and myself should be going away to such a distance at the same time,<sup>2</sup> more especially as our dear brother Leopold is no

<sup>1</sup> The Queen consented.

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Edinburgh had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Squadron, and the Duke of Connaught had a military command at Rawal Pindi, in India.



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1886]

THE CABINET AND IRELAND

9

longer near you. I hope indeed that my duties will make it possible for me to be at hand for your Jubilee, if it is only for a few days.

As at present arranged, I am to leave England on the 20th February, together with the new officers and men of the *Alexandra*, which is to be my flagship, in a troopship, the *Tamar*. Prior to leaving, it is my intention to take a run over to Germany to wish all good-bye; first to Berlin, then to Gotha to see Uncle Ernest,<sup>1</sup> and so by Coburg and Darmstadt home again. . . .

I am so glad that you will undertake the to you of course very tiring duty of opening Parliament in person. Your decision to do so has given the most lively and universal satisfaction. . . .

With Marie's best love, Ever your dutiful and affectionate son, ALFRED.

*Queen Victoria to the Marquis of Salisbury.*

[*Cypher Telegram.*]

OSBORNE, 15th Jan. 1886.—Have just had cypher from Berlin<sup>2</sup> that Prince Alexander [of Bulgaria] should come to a direct understanding with the Porte as speedily as possible, as there was danger impending. Have let him know.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to Queen Victoria.*

HATFIELD HOUSE, 15th Jan. 1886.—. . . The Cabinet met to-day and sat for a long time discussing the Irish question. The variety of opinions was very great; and no settlement was arrived at. The Cabinet meets again to-morrow.

The Irish Government and Lord John Manners were for no action at all beyond vigorously enforcing the existing law. Lord Salisbury and some others were for an immediate secret Committee, as in the Westmeath case, to ascertain where the existing

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, whom the Duke of Edinburgh succeeded in 1893.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt from the German Crown Princess.

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[More information](#)

10

PATRIOTISM *VERSUS* PARTY [CHAP. I

law fell short. Lord Iddesleigh and some others were for a bill directed against the National League; while Lord Cranbrook, Lord R. Churchill and Lord G. Hamilton were for suppressing the League by executive action without a Bill and trusting to Parliament for an indemnity. . . .

[*Copy.*] *Queen Victoria to Mr. Goschen.*

OSBORNE, 17th Jan. 1886.—Tho' I have not heard from you since my last letter, I am anxious to say how well I think the Duke of Westminster<sup>1</sup> has spoken, and how I *hope* many others will follow his example, and that Lord Hartington is remaining true to his declarations, and will have the courage of his convictions. I can only *repeat*, true loyal patriotism must go before party. I hope and think Mr. Forster is better.<sup>2</sup> Yours truly, V. R. I.

*The Marquis of Salisbury to Queen Victoria.*

[*Cypher Telegram.*]

17th Jan. 1886.—Humble duty. Great differences in Cabinet to-day. Sir M. Beach, Lord R. Churchill, Lord G. Hamilton, and Viceroy were against measures for suppressing National League: the other twelve in favour.

Discussion adjourned to Monday.

[? HATFIELD], *Sunday morning, 17th Jan. 1886.*—Lord Salisbury with his humble duty to your Majesty respectfully returns the cypher and the very interesting and striking letter from Prince Alexander. He evidently sees clearly what he is about and is the victim of no illusions.

On the whole, Lord Salisbury thinks the recommendation from Berlin contains the wisest policy to follow—agree with Turkey rather than with

<sup>1</sup> The 1st Duke (1825–1899), a prominent supporter of philanthropic movements, and a leading figure among owners of racehorses.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Mr. Forster's illness proved fatal. He died on 6th April.