Lady John Russell eBook

Lady John Russell

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CHAPTER I

1815-34

On November 15, 1815, at Minto in Roxburghshire, the home of the Elliots, a second daughter was born to the Earl and Countess of Minto.

Frances Anna Maria Elliot, who afterwards became the first Countess Russell, was destined to a long, eventful life. As a girl she lived among those directing the changes of those times; as the wife of a Prime Minister of England unusually reticent in superficial relations but open in intimacy, in whom the qualities of administrator and politician overlay the detachment of sensitive reflection, she came to judge men and events by principles drawn from deep feelings and wide surveys; and in the long years of her widowhood, possessing still great natural vitality and vivacity of feeling, she continued open to the influences of an altered time, delighting and astonishing many who might have expected to find between her and them the ghostly barrier of a generation.

She died in January, 1898. The span of her life covers, then, many important political events, and we shall catch glimpses of these as they affect her. Though the intention of the following pages is biographical, the story of Lady Russell's life, after marriage, coincides so closely with her husband's public career that the thread connecting her letters together must be the political events in which he took part. Some of her letters, by throwing light on the sentiments and considerations which weighed with him at doubtful junctures, are not without value to the historian. It is not, however, the historian who has been chiefly considered in putting them together, but rather the general reader, who may find his notions of past politics vivified and refreshed by following history in the contemporary comments of one so passionately and so personally interested at every turn of events.

Another motive has also had a part in determining the possessors of Lady Russell's letters to publish them. Memory is the most sacred, but also the most perishable of shrines; hence it sometimes seems well worth while to break through reticence to give greater permanence to precious recollections. With this end also the following pages have been put together, and many small details included to help the subject of this memoir to live again in the imagination of the reader. For from brief and even superficial contact with the living we may gain much; but the dead, if they are to be known at all, must be known more intimately.

* * * * *

Minto House, where Lady Fanny was born, is beautifully situated above a steep and wooded glen, and is only a short distance from the river Teviot. The hills around are not

like the wild rugged mountains of the Highlands, but have a soft and tender beauty of their own. Her childhood was far more secluded than the life that would have fallen to her lot had she been born in the next generation, for her home in

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Roxburghshire, in coach and turnpike days, was more remote from the central stir and business of life than any spot in the United Kingdom at the present time. Lady Fanny used to relate what a great event it was for the household at Minto when on very rare occasions her father brought from London a parcel of new books, which were eagerly opened by the family and read with delight. Those were not the days of circulating libraries, and both the old standard books on the Minto library shelves and the few new ones occasionally added were read and re-read with a thoroughness rare among modern readers, surrounded by a multiplicity of books old and new.

They were a large, young family, five boys and five girls, ranging from the ages of three years old to eighteen in 1830, when her diaries begin, all eager, high-spirited children, and exceptionally strong and healthy. In her early diaries, describing day-long journeys in coaches, early starts and late arrivals, she hardly ever mentions feeling tired, and she enjoyed the old methods of travelling infinitely more than the railway journeys of later days, about which she felt like the Frenchman who said: "On ne voyage plus; on arrive." Long wild country walks in Scotland and mountain-climbing in Switzerland were particularly delightful to her.

This stock of sound vitality stood her in good stead all her life; only during those years which followed the birth of her eldest son does it seem to have failed her. Her life was an exceptionally busy one, and her strong feelings and sense of responsibility made even small domestic affairs matters for close attention; yet in the diaries and letters of her later life there are no entries which betray either the lassitude or the restlessness of fatigue. She was not one of those busy women who only keep pace with their interests by deputing home management to others. This power of endurance in a deeply feeling nature is one of the first facts which any one attempting to tell the story of her life must bring before the reader's notice.

There was much reading aloud in the fireside circle at Minto, and for the boys much riding and sport. Many hours were spent upon the heather or in fishing the Teviot. Lady Fanny herself cared little for sport, or only for its picturesque side. Near the house are the rocks known as Minto Crags, mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," where many and many a time Lady Fanny raced about on hunting days, watching the redcoats with childish eagerness—intensely interested in the joyousness and beauty of the sight, but in her heart always secretly thankful if the fox escaped. Fox-hunting on Minto Crags must indeed have been a picturesque sight, and there was a special rock overhanging a precipice upon which she loved to sit and watch the wild chase, men and horses appearing and disappearing with flashing rapidity among the woods and ravines beneath. The pleasures of an open-air life meant so much to her that, in so far as it was possible for one with her temperament to pine at all, she was often homesick in the town, longing for the peace and freedom of the country.

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There were expeditions of other kinds too.

“Gibby [1] and I,” she writes towards the end of one October, “up a little after five this morning and up the big hill to see the sun rise. It was moonlight when we went out, and all so still and indistinct—for it was a cloudy moon—that our steps and voices sounded quite odd. It was mild enough, but so wet with dew that our feet grew very cold. We waited some time on the top before he rose and had a long talk with the Kaims shepherd. It was well worth having gone; though there was nothing fine in the sky or clouds compared to what I have constantly seen at sunrise. But what I thought beautiful was the entire change that his rising made in everything. All we were looking at suddenly became so bright and cheerful, and a hum of people and noises of animals were heard from the village.” “I wish people,” she adds impetuously, “would shake off sleep as soon as the blushing morn does peep in at their windows.”

[1] Her brother Gilbert.

The entries in these early diaries show a quality of clear authentic vision, which was afterwards so characteristic of her conversation. For those who remember their own youthful feelings, even the stiff occasional scraps of poetry she wrote at this time glow with a life not always discernible in the deft writing of more experienced verse-makers.

The household was a brisk, cheerful, active one, and ruled by the spirit of order necessary in a home where many different kinds of things are being done each day by its different inmates. The children were treated with no particular indulgence, and the elder ones were taught to be responsible not only for their own actions, but for the good behaviour, and, in a certain measure, for the education of the younger ones. As a girl she writes down in her diary many hopes and fears about her younger brothers and sisters, which resemble those afterwards awakened in her by the care of her own children. A big family in a great house, with all the different relations and contacts such a life implies, is in itself an education, and Lady Fanny seems to have profited by all that such experiences can give. If she came from such a home anticipating from everybody more loyalty and consistency of feeling than is common in human nature, and crediting everybody with it, that is in itself a kind of generous severity of expectation which, though it may be sometimes the cause of mistakes, helps also to create in others the qualities it looks to find.

The children had plenty of outlets for their high spirits. There are some slight records left of the opening of a “Theatre Royal, Minto,” and of a glorious evening ending in an “excellent country bumpkin,” with bed at two in the morning; of reels and dances, too, and many hours laconically summed up as “famous fun” in the diary. Then there were such September days as this:

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“Bob’m [2] and I went in the phaeton to meet the boys. They were very successful—-about twelve brace. The heather was in full blow, and in wet parts the ground white with parnassia. I never felt such an air—it made me feel quite wild. The sunset behind the far hills and reflected in the lonely little shaw loch most beautiful. When we began our walk there was a fine soft wind that felt as if it would lift one up to the clouds, but before we got back to the little house it had quite fallen, and all was as still as in a desert, except now and then the wild cry of the grouse and black-cock. Bob’m mad with spirits, and talked nonsense all the way home. Not too dark to see the beautiful outline of the country all the way.”

[2] Her sister Charlotte, afterwards Lady Charlotte Portal.

Such tired, happy home-comings stay in the memory; drives back at the end of long days, when scraps of talk and laughter and the pleasure of being together mingle so kindly with the solemnity of the darkening country; drives which end in a sudden blaze of welcome, in fire-light and candles, tea and a hubbub of talk, when everything, though familiar, seems to confess to a new happiness.

Here is another entry a few days later:

“Beautiful day, but a very high, warm *real Minto* wind. We wandered out very late and sat under the lime, playing at being at sea, feeling the stem rock above us as we lent against it and hearing the roaring of the waves in the trees. No summer’s day can be better than such a day and evening as this—there was a cloudy moon, too, above the branches. I wish I could express, but I never can, the sort of feeling I have at times—-now more than I ever had before—which would sound like affectation if one talked of it. A fine day, or beautiful country, or very often nothing but the sky or earth or the singing of a bird gives it. One feels too much love and gratitude and admiration, and something swells my heart so that I do not know how to look or listen enough.”

There was another kind of romance, too, in her young life, destined in future to be at times a source of pain and anxiety, though also of keen gratification and permanent pride. What can equal the romance of politics when we are quite young, when “politics” mean nothing but “serving one’s country” and have no other associations but that one, when politicians seem necessarily great men? The love-dreams of adolescence have often been celebrated; but among young creatures whose lives give plenty of play to their affections in a spontaneous way, such dreams seldom vie in intensity with the mysterious call of religion or with the emotion of patriotism. It stands for an emotion which seems as large as the love of mankind, and its service calls for enthusiasm and self-devotion. The Mintos were in the thick of politics and the times were stirring times. “Throughout the last two centuries of our history,” says

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Sir George Trevelyan in his Life of Macaulay, “there never was a period when a man, conscious of power, impatient of public wrongs, and still young enough to love a fight for its own sake, could have entered Parliament with a fairer prospect of leading a life worth living and doing work that would requite the pains, than at the commencement of the year 1830.” Her father was not only the most genial and kindest of fathers, but he was to her something of a hero too. His political career had not begun during these days at Minto; still he was in the counsel of the leaders of the day—Lord Grey, Lord John Russell, Lords Melbourne and Althorp—great names indeed to her. And the new Cabinet was soon to appoint him Minister at Berlin.

The country was under the personal rule of the Duke of Wellington, who had sorted out from his Cabinet any who were tainted with sympathy for reform; but, as the election of July which resulted in his resignation showed, the country, however one-sided its representation might have been in the House of Commons, had been long in a state of political ferment. This state of affairs, the gradual breaking up of the Tory party dating from the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill, the brewing social troubles, and the prospect of power crossing to the party which was determined on meeting them with reform, made politics everywhere the most absorbing of themes.

In a country house like Minto, which was in close communication with the statesmen of the time, discussions were of course frequent and keen. The guests were often important politicians; and long before Lady Fanny saw her future husband, she frequently heard his name as one whom those she admired looked up to as a leader. In a girl by nature very susceptible to the appeal of great causes, whose active brain made her delight in the arguments of her elders, these surroundings were likely to foster a passionate interest in public affairs; while other influences round her were tending to increase in her a natural sense of the delicacy and preciousness of personal relations. In the course of telling her story occasions may come for remarking again on what was one of the chief graces of her character; but in a book of this kind the sooner the reader becomes acquainted with the subject of it, the more he is likely to see in what follows. So let it be said of her at once that in all relations in which affection was complicated on one side by gratitude, or on her side by superiority in education or social position, she was perfect. She could be employer and benefactress without letting such circumstances deflect in the slightest degree the stream of confidence and affection between her and another. She had the faculty of removing a sense of obligation and of forgetting it herself. Such a faculty is only found in its perfection where the mind is sensitive in perceiving the delicacy of the relations between people; and it must be added that like most people who possess that sensitiveness, she missed it acutely in those who markedly did not.

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The life at Minto, with its many contacts, was a life in which such a faculty could grow to perfection. The daughters, while sharing much of the boys' lives at Minto, saw a great deal of the people upon the estate.

The intercourse between the family at the House and the people of Minto village was of an intimate and affectionate nature. Joys and sorrows were shared in unvarying friendliness and sympathy, and to the end of her life "Lady Fanny" remembered with warm affection the old village friends of her youth. Kindly, true-hearted folk they were, with a sturdy and independent spirit which she valued and respected.

She only remembered seeing Sir Walter Scott on one occasion—when he came to visit her parents. She was quite a child, and it was the day on which her old nurse left Minto. She had wept bitterly, and when Sir Walter Scott came she hardly dared even look at him with her tearful countenance. She always remembered regretfully her indifference about the great man, whose visit was ever after connected in her mind with one of the first sorrows of her childhood. She regretted still more that in those days political differences unhappily prevented the close and friendly intercourse which would otherwise have undoubtedly existed between the Minto family and Sir Walter Scott.

A word or two must be said upon the religion in which she was brought up, for from her childhood she was deeply religious. Like her love for those nearest to her, it entered into everything that interested or delighted her profoundly; into her interest in politics and social questions and into her enjoyment of nature.

The Mintos belonged to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The doctrines of this Church are not of significance here, but an indication of the attitude towards dogma, history, and conduct which harmonizes with these tenets is necessary to the understanding of her life. For this purpose it is only necessary to say that this Church belongs to that half of Protestantism which does not lay peculiar stress upon an inner conviction of salvation. It differs from the evangelical persuasions in this respect, and again from the Church of England in finding less significance in ecclesiastical symbols, in setting less store by traditional usages, and in a more constant and uncompromising disapproval of any doctrine which regards the clergy as having spiritual functions or privileges different from those of other men. In the latter half of her life she came gradually to a Unitarian faith, which she held with earnestness to the last; and the name "Free Church" became more significant to her through the suggestion it carried of a religion detached from creeds and articles. Many entries occur in her diaries protesting against what she felt as mischievous narrowness in the books she read and in the sermons she heard. She sympathized heartily with Lord John Russell's dislike of the Oxford movement. There are many prayers in her diaries and many religious reflections in her letters, and in all two emotions predominate; a trust in God and an earnest conviction that a life of love—love to God and man—is the heart of religion. Her religion was contemplative as well as practical; but it was a religion of the conscience rather than one of mystical emotions.

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Of personal influences, her mother's, until marriage, was the strongest. There are only two long breaks in the diary she kept, when she had no heart to write down her thoughts; one occurs during the year of Lady Minto's long and serious illness at Berlin, which began in 1832, and the other after Lord John Russell's death in 1878.

Lady Minto was not strong; bringing many sons and daughters into the world had tried her; and her delicacy seems to have drawn her children closer round her. Lady Fanny's references to her mother are full of an anxious, protective devotion, as though she were always watching to see if any shadow of physical or mental trouble were threatening her. So in imagining the merry, active life of this large family, the presence of a mother most tenderly loved, from whom praise seemed something almost too good to be true, must not be forgotten.

In November, 1830 (the year Lady Fanny's diaries begin), the Duke of Wellington resigned, having emphatically declared that the system of representation ought to possess, and *did* possess, the entire confidence of the country. He had gone so far as to say that the wit of man could not have devised a better representative system than that which Lord John Russell, in the previous session, had attempted to alter by proposing to enfranchise Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham. But the election which followed the death of George *iv* on June 26th had not borne out the Duke's assertion; it had gone heavily against him. Lord Grey, forming his Ministry out of the old Whigs and the followers of Canning and Grenville, at once made Reform a Cabinet measure. During the stormy elections of July the news came from Paris that Charles X had been deposed, and unlike the news of the French Revolution, it acted as a stimulus, not as a check, to the reforming party in England.

The next entry quoted from Lady Fanny's diary, begun at the age of fourteen, is dated November 22, 1830; the family were travelling towards Paris, matters having almost quieted down there. Louis Philippe had been recognized by England as King of the French the month before, and the only side of the revolution which came under her young eyes was the somewhat vamped up enthusiasm for the Citizen King which followed his acceptance of the crown and tricolor. It is said that any small boy in those days could exhibit the King to curious sightseers by raising a cheer outside the Tuileries windows, when His Majesty, to whom any manifestation of enthusiasm was extremely precious, would appear automatically upon the balcony and bow. But there were traces of agitation still to be felt up and down the country, and over Paris hung that deceptive, stolid air of indifference which is so puzzling a characteristic of crises in France.

The Mintos travelled in several carriages with a considerable retinue, with a doctor and servants, but not with a train which, in those days, would have been thought remarkable for an English peer.

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Melun, *November* 22, 1830 [3]

We left Sens at half past eight and did not stop to dine, but ate in the carriage. We passed through Fossard, Monteran, and got here about four. The doctor is quite grave about his tricolor and has worn it all day. We have had immense laughing at him. He was very much frightened at Sens, because Papa told him the people of the hotel were for the Bourbons and were angry with him for wearing the tricolor. A great many post-boys have it on their hats and all the fleurs-de-lis on the mile-posts are rubbed out.

[3] All extracts not otherwise specified are from Lady John Russell's diary.

By this date Charles X, surrounded by his gloomy, ceremonial little court of faithful followers, was playing his nightly game of whist in the melancholy shelter of Holyrood, where he was to remain for the next two years, an insipid, sorrowful figure, distinguished by such dignity as unquerulous passivity can lend to the foolish and unfortunate. Meanwhile, Paris was attempting to vamp up some interest in her new King, who walked the streets with an umbrella under his arm.

Paris, *December* 23, 1830

We were in the Place Vendome to-day, which was full of national guards waiting for the King. We stopped to see him. It looked very gay and pretty: the National Guard held hands in a long row and danced for ever so long round and round the pillar, with the people shouting as hard as they could. It looked very funny, but the King did not come whilst we were there. We heard them singing the Parisienne. The trial is over and the ministers are at Vincennes, going to be put in prison. There have been several mobs about the Luxembourg and the Palais Royal, but they think nothing more will happen now.

Who can hum now the tune of the "Parisienne"? It has not stayed in men's memories like the "Marseillaise"; no doubt it expressed the prosaic, middle-class spirit of the National Guard, which kept a King upon the throne, in his own way just as determined as his predecessors to rule in the interests of his family.

Paris, *February* 5, 1831

Mama, Papa, Mary, Lizzy, [4] Charlie, Doddy [5] and I have been to a children's ball at the Palais Royal. It was the most beautiful thing I ever saw, and we danced all night long, but no big people at all danced. We saw famously all the royal people; and Lizzy danced with two of the little princes. The Duke of Orleans and M. Duc de Nemours were in uniform and so were all the other gentlemen. The King and Queen are nice-looking old bodies. [6] It was capital fun and very merry indeed, the supper was beautiful. There was famous galloping.

[4] Her sisters Mary and Elizabeth, afterwards Lady Mary Abercromby and Lady Elizabeth Romilly.

[5] Her brothers Charles and George.

[6] The next time she was to see the “old bodies” was on her own lawn at Pembroke Lodge, where she heard from the King the unimpressive story of “ma chute.”

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Paris, *February* 15, 1831

This is *Mardi gras*, the last day of the Carnival. We were out in the carriage this morning to see the masks on the boulevards; there were a great many masks and crowds of people, whilst there were mobs and rows going on in another part of the town. The people have quite destroyed the poor Archbishop's house, because on Sunday night the Duc de Bordeaux's bust was brought, and Mass was said for the Duc de Berry. They have taken all his books, furniture, and everything, and they wanted to throw some priests in the Seine, and they are breaking the things in the churches and taking down the crosses. All the National Guard is out.

These disturbances were the last struggles of the party who had not been satisfied by the spectacle of the son of Philippe Egalite, with the tricolor flag in one hand, embracing the ancient Lafayette on the balcony above the Place de Greve. Their animosity against the Church was the ground-swell of the storm which had washed away Charles X himself. The Sacrilege Law introduced in 1825 had revived the barbarous mediaeval penalty of amputating the hand of the offender. Charles's attempt to reintroduce primogeniture by declaring the French principle of the equal division of property to be inconsistent with the principle of monarchy had irritated the people less than the encouragement he had given to monastic corporations which were contrary to law. The controversy which followed between the ecclesiastics and their opponents was the cause of the repeal of the freedom of the Press; and when he had stifled controversy his next step was the suspension of Parliament. Whence followed the events which so abruptly disturbed his evening rubber at St. Cloud on July 25th.

These outbreaks of the republican anti-clerical party to which Lady Fanny refers were soon calmed; a few weeks later the soldiers had no more work to do, and a grand review was held in the Champ de Mars.

Paris, *March* 27, 1831

We all went in the carriage to the heights of the Trocadero and there got out. It was very pretty to look down at the Champ de Mars, which was quite full of soldiers, who sometimes ranged themselves in lines and sometimes in nice little bundles and squares. In front of the Ecole Militaire was a fine tent for the Queen and Princesses. The King and the Duc de Nemours rode about, and there were some loud cries of "Vive le Roi." Less than a year ago in the same place we saw old Charles X reviewing his soldiers and heard "Vive le Roi" shouted for him and saw white flags waving about the Champs de Mars instead of tricolor. It seems so odd that it should all be changed in so short a time, and spoils the "Vive le Roi" very much, because it makes one think they do not care really for him.

Paris, *April* 2, 1831

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We had a long walk with Mama to the places where the people that were killed in July were buried. There are tricolor flags over them all, and the flowers and crowns of everlastings were all nicely arranged about the tombs. Amongst them was the kennel of a poor dog whose master was one of the killed, which has come every day since and lain on his grave. The dog itself was not in. The poor Swiss are buried there, too, but without flowers or crowns or railings, or even stones, to show the place.

She had been “wishing horridly for fields and trees and grass” for some time past; on June 16, 1831, they were all back again in England.

Dover, *June* 16, 1831

Everything seems odd here; pokers and leather harness, all the women and girls with bonnets and long petticoats and shawls and flounces and comfortable poky straw bonnets, and boys so nicely dressed, and urns and small panes (no glasses and no clocks), trays, good bread, and everybody with clean and fresh and pretty faces. We have been walking this evening by the sea, and all the English look very odd; they all look hangy and loose, so different from the Paris ladies, laced so tight they can hardly walk, and the men and boys look ten times better.

ROCHESTER, *June* 17, 1831

We did not leave Dover till near twelve—the country has really been beautiful to-day; all the beautiful gentlemen’s places with large trees, and the pretty hedges all along the road full of honeysuckle and roses; clean cows and white fat sheep feeding in most beautiful rich green grass; the nicest little cottages with lattice windows and thatched roofs and neat gardens, and roses, ivy, and honeysuckle creeping to the tops of the chimneys; everybody and everything clean and tidy.... The cart-horses are beautiful, and even the beggars look as if they washed their faces.

October 9, 1831, BOGNOR

We heard this morning of the loss of the Reform Bill, and we were at first all very sorry, but in a little while rather glad because it gives us a chance of Minto. When the people of Bognor heard it was lost, they took the flowers and ribands off that they had dressed up the coaches with, thinking it had passed, and put them in mourning.

Lord John Russell had introduced the first Reform Bill on March 1, 1831; this was carried by a majority of one; but in a later division the Government was defeated by a majority of eight, and Parliament was dissolved. The elections resulted in an emphatic verdict in favour of Reform, and on June 24th Lord John introduced the second Reform Bill, which was carried by a large majority in the House of Commons. He had proposed to disfranchise partially or completely 110 boroughs; a proposition which had seemed so

revolutionary that it was at first received with laughter by the Opposition, who were confident no such measure could

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ever pass. Lord Minto had returned from France to support this Bill in the Lords, which on his arrival he found had been rejected by them in a division on the 8th of October. The rejection of the Bill was followed by disturbances throughout the country. Several members of the House of Lords were mobbed, Nottingham Castle was burnt down, and there was fighting and bloodshed in the streets of Bristol. Before the third Reform Bill was brought forward and carried by a huge majority in the Commons, the whole Minto family were on their way North.

Lady Fanny announces the fact of her arrival at her beloved home with many ecstatic exclamation marks.

> *November* 2, 1831, MINTO !!!!
>
> Between Longtown and Langham we passed the toll that divides England and Scotland. Harry and the coachman waved their hats and all heads were poked out at window.

The moment we got into Scotland it felt much finer, the sun shone brighter and the country really became far prettier. We went along above the Esk, which is a little rattling, rumbling, clear, rocky river, prettier than any we ever saw in England....As we drove into Langham we were much surprised by a loud cheer from some men and boys at the roadside, who all threw off their caps as we passed. While we were changing, a man offered to Papa that they would drag him through the town; Papa thanked him very much but said he would rather not; so the man said perhaps he would prefer three cheers, which they gave as we drove off.... The whole town crowded round the carriages. Just as we were setting off, however, we were very much surprised to see numbers of people take the pole of the little carriage and run off with Papa and Mama with all their might. They spun all through the town at a fine rate, and did not stop for ever so long. There was immense cheering as we drove off, and the people ran after us ever so far.... The house all looked beautiful, and this evening we feel as if we had never left Minto.

But she was not to stay there long, for early in 1832 they went to Roehampton House, near London, and the same year Lord Minto was appointed Minister at Berlin.

At this time Berlin was not a capital of sufficient dignity to entitle it to an embassy; but considering the state of European politics, the appointment was one of some diplomatic importance.

Germany was at the beginning of her task of consolidation. The revolution of July had not been without its effect on her. In the southern States the cause of representative government was not wholly powerless; but it had been weakened by the reaction after

1815. Since the government was no longer an undisguised tyranny and since the people themselves were growing richer, a strong sentiment of personal loyalty to the sovereign began to spread among them. Constitutional changes were therefore indefinitely postponed. The great

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work of the next few years for Prussian statesmen was the removal of commercial barriers between the various German States, and the establishment of a *Zollverein* between them. In this way the sway of Austria was weakened, and though political union as an aim was carefully kept in the background, the foundation for the subsequent consolidation of the German Empire was securely laid. During the two central years of this process, 1832-4, Lord Minto was at Berlin. The manners of the time were far simpler and the life at the court far more informal than they were soon to become. Law and custom still preserved some lingering barbarities: during their stay at Wittenberg they heard of a man being broken on the wheel.

They stopped at Brussels on the way. There is a characteristic entry in Lady Fanny's diary describing a visit to the battle-field.

> NAMUR, *September* 6, 1832
>
> We coach-people left Brussels much earlier than the others that we might have time to walk about Waterloo....

They showed us the house where the Duke of Wellington slept the night before and the night after the battle and wrote home his dispatches; then after a long and fierce dispute between a man and woman which was to guide us, the man took us to the Church, where we saw the monuments of immense numbers of poor common soldiers and officers—then to the place where four hundred are buried all together and one sees their graves just raised above the rest of the ground. Then we drove to the field of battle, and the man showed us everything; it was very nice and very sad to hear all about, but as I shall always remember it, I need say nothing about it. We are quite in a rage about a great mound that the Dutch have put up with a great yellow lion on the top, only because the Prince of Orange was wounded there, quite altering the ground from what it was at the time of the battle. The monument to Lord Anglesea's leg too, which we did not of course go to see, makes one very angry, as if he was the only one who was wounded there—and only wounded too when such thousands of poor men were killed and have nothing at all to mark the place where they are buried; and I think they are the people one feels most for, for though they do all they can, after they are dead one never hears any more about them.

Soon after their arrival at Berlin, Lady Minto fell dangerously ill. From September, 1832, there is a long gap in Lady Fanny's diary, for she had no heart to set anything down. This long stretch of anxiety coming when she was sixteen years old, if it did not change her nature, brought to light new qualities which were to mark her character henceforward. There is a little entry written down eight years afterwards on the birthday of her sister Charlotte which shows that she, as well as others, looked back on this time as a turning-point in her life.

Bob’m sixteen to-day, just the age I began to be unhappy, because I began to think. Heaven spare her from the doubts and fears that tormented me.

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During the months of her mother's gradual recovery she seems each day to have been happier than on the one before.

June 6, 1833, POTSDAM

At a little before eleven this morning, Mary, Ginkie, Henry, [7] Mr. Lettsom [8] and I set off from Berlin in a very curious rickety machine of a carriage, to leave Mama for a whole day and night, which feels very impossible, and is the best sign of her (health) that one could have. We were very happy and we thought everything looking very nice. We were sorry to see no friends as we left Berlin, for we looked so beautiful in our jolting little conveyance with four horses and a post-boy blowing the old tune on his horn.

[7] Her brother, afterwards Sir Henry Elliot.

[8] The tutor.

To escape the heat of Berlin they moved out to Freienwalde.

June 14, 1833, FREIENWALDE

A beautiful morning, and at about 10 they all set off from Berlin, leaving Mama, Papa, Bob'm and I to follow after in the coach. After they went, there were two long hours of going backwards and forwards through the empty rooms, then having said a sad good-bye to Senden,[9] Hymen,[9] Mr. Lettsom and Fitz, though we know we shall see them again soon, we got into the coach with the squirrel in a bag and drove off. I could not help feeling very sorry to leave it all, though it will be so very nice to be out of it, but I knew we should never be all there again as we have been, and all the misery we have had in that house makes one feel still more all the happiness of the last month there.There is nothing to say of the country, for it is the same as on all the other sides of Berlin; the soil more horrid than anything I ever saw, and of course all as flat as water, but just now and then some rather nice villages.... After about two hours there we came on, first through nice, small Scotch fir woods, then quite ugly again till near here, when we got into really pretty banks of oak, beech, and fir, down a real steep road and along a nice narrow lane till we got here, where they were all standing on the steps of our mansion ready to receive us. Mama was carried to the drawing-room ... before the house is a wee sort of border all full of weeds, but nothing like a garden or place belonging to the house, but there seem very few people; then there is a terrace, which is very nice though it is public. Mama is not the least tired and quite pleased with it all. It is very, very nice to be here, able to go out without our things and expecting no company, and what at first one feels more nice than everything, not having any carriages or noises out of doors; for eight months and a half we have never been without that horrid, constant rumbling in the streets. It is *very* odd to feel ourselves

here; unlike any place I ever lived in. The bath house is close by, but that is the only house near us.

[9] German friends at Berlin.

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There they lived all the summer the life that they liked best. They lost themselves in the forest, they read aloud, and they enjoyed the rustic theatre. The autumn brought visits to Teplitz and Dresden.

They were back in Berlin for the winter and early spring, when she began to take more part in society.

April 1, 1834, BERLIN

Stupid dinner of old gentlemen. Mary still being rather silly[10] did not dine at table.... It was very awful to be alone, but at dinner I was happy enough as Loeven sat on one side of me. Humboldt was on the other. Afterwards came Fitz for a moment and Deken and Bismarck.

April 5, 1834, BERLIN

I sat the second quadrille by my stupidity in refusing Bismarck.

[10] Scotch for unwell.

Early in May came “the hateful morning of good-byes” to friends in Berlin, and at Marienbad. Lord Minto heard the news that Lord Grey had resigned owing to Lord Althorp’s refusal to agree to the Irish Coercion Bill. Lord Melbourne succeeded him as Prime Minister. Lord Minto had not long returned to England when the King summarily dismissed Lord Melbourne and a provisional Government under the Duke of Wellington was patched together until Sir Robert Peel should return from abroad. The governorship of Canada had been offered meanwhile to Lord Minto, and the family started on their home journey fearing they would have to leave England immediately for Quebec. But this did not happen, and December found them at last once more on the road to Minto. The girls wrote poems celebrating their return on the journey, and tried every cure for impatience as the carriage rolled along.

MINTO, Thursday, December 25, 1834

We left Carlisle about eight, and for the three first stages were so slowly driven that our patience was nearly gone. To make it last a little longer Mary read some “Hamlet” aloud between Longtown and Langholme, and I had a nap.... As soon as we entered Hawick we were surrounded by an immense crowd.... The bells rang, there were flags hung all along the street, and fine shouting as we set off. Papa, which we did not know at the time, had to make a little speech, and contradict a shameful report of his having taken office. A few minutes on this side of Hawick we met the two boys and Robert riding to meet us, looking lovely. Our own country looked really beautiful; rocks, hills, and Rubers Law all seemed to have grown higher. We passed the awful ford in safety across our own lovely Teviot, and soon found ourselves at Nelly’s Lodge, where old

Nelly opened the gate to us.... The trees looked large and fine—in short, everything perfect. Catherine, Mrs. Fraser, and Wales received us at the door, and in a few minutes we were scattered all over the house. We spent a most happy evening.... This has really been a happy Christmas. It is wonderful to be here.

At this point Lady Fanny's early girlhood may be said to end. Her life in London society and the events which led to her marriage will be told in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER II

1835-41

While the Minto family were still on their way home from Germany a startling incident occurred in English politics. One morning a paragraph appeared in the Times announcing the fact that the King had dismissed Lord Melbourne.

We have no authority (it ran) for the important statement which follows, but we have every reason to believe that it is perfectly true. We give it without any comment or amplification, in the very words of the communication, which reached us at a late hour last night. "The King has taken the opportunity of Lord Spencer's death to turn out the Ministry, and there is every reason to believe the Duke of Wellington has been sent for. The Queen has done it all."

(The authority upon which the *Times* was relying was that of the Lord Chancellor.)

So on coming down to breakfast that morning the Ministers, having received no private communication whatever, read to their amazement that they had been already dismissed. Brougham had surreptitiously conveyed the information in order to embarrass the Court. The general trend of political gossip at the time was expressed by Palmerston, who wrote:

It is impossible to doubt that this has been a preconcerted measure and that the Duke of Wellington is prepared at once to form a Government. Peel is abroad; but it is not likely he would have gone away without a previous understanding one way or the other with the Duke, as to what he would do if a crisis were to arise.

As a matter of fact there had been no concerted plan. It was the first and last independent step William IV ever took, and a most unconstitutional instance of royal interference. The Duke, summoned by the King, expressed his willingness to occupy any position His Majesty thought fit, but considering the Liberal majority in the House of Commons was two to one, and it was but two years since the Reform Bill passed, he did his best to dissuade the King from dismissing all his Ministers. During the interview the King's secretary entered and called the attention of the King to the paragraph in the *Times* that morning, which concluded with the statement that the Queen had done it all. "There, Duke, you see how I am insulted and betrayed; nobody in London but Melbourne knew last night what had taken place here, nor of my sending for you: will your Grace compel me to take back people who have treated me in this way?"

Thereupon the Duke consented to undertake a provisional Government, while Mr. Hudson was sent off to Italy in search of Sir Robert Peel. He reached Rome in nine days; at that time very quick travelling. "I think you might have made the journey in a day less by taking another route," is said to have been Peel's only comment upon

receiving the Duke's letter. He returned at once to England to relieve the temporary Cabinet, and formed a Ministry in December. The same month Parliament was dissolved, and the Conservative party went to the country on the policy of "Moderate Reform" enunciated in Peel's Tamworth manifesto. "The shameful report" referred to by Lady Fanny in the last chapter, and immediately contradicted by Lord Minto on his return to Scotland, was that he had joined the Peel Ministry.

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Thus Lady Fanny came home to find the country-side preparing for a mid-winter election. Her uncle, George Elliot, was standing for the home constituency against Lord John Scott, whom he just succeeded in defeating. In most constituencies, however, the Liberals triumphed more easily, and when the new Parliament met they were in a majority of more than a hundred. In April Lord John Russell carried his motion for the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church to general moral and religious purposes, so Peel resigned. Melbourne again became Prime Minister, and in the autumn of the same year, 1835, Lord Minto was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty.

This meant a great change in Lady Fanny's life; henceforward for the next eight years more than half of every year was spent by her in London. There is a change, too, in the spirit of her diaries. Her nature was the reverse of introspective and melancholy, but at this time she was often unhappy and dissatisfied for no definite reason; her diaries show it. It is not likely that others were aware of this private distress. She was leading at the time a busy life both at home and in society, and there were many things in which she was keenly interested. The troubles confided to these private pages were not due to compunction for anything she had done, nor were they caused by any particular event; they expressed simply a general discontent with herself and a kind of *Weltschmerz* not uncommon in a young and thoughtful mind. For the first time she seems glad of outside interests because they distract her.

The months in London were broken by occasional residence at Roehampton House and by visits to Bowood. At Bowood with the Lansdowne family she was always happy. There she heard with delight Tom Moore sing his Irish melodies for the first time. There was much, too, in London to distract and amuse her: breakfasts with Rogers, luncheons at Holland House, and dinner-parties at which all the leading Whig politicians were present. But society did not satisfy her; she wanted more natural and more intimate relations than social gatherings usually afford.

LONDON, *May* 9, 1835

We went to Miss Berry's in the evening. I thought it very tiresome, but was glad to see Lord John Russell and his wife.

BOWOOD, *December* 26, 1835

The evening was very quiet, there was not much to alarm one, and the prettiest music possible to listen to. Mr. Moore singing his own melodies—it was really delightful, and a kind of singing I never heard before. He has very little voice, but what he has is perfectly sweet, and his real Irish face looks quite inspired. The airs were most of them simply beautiful, and many of the words equally so.

January 31, 1836, ADMIRALTY

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I am reading “Ivanhoe” for the first time, and delighted with it, but things cannot be as they should be, when I feel that I require to forget myself in order to be happy, and that unless I am taken up with an interesting book there never, or scarcely ever, is a moment of real peace and quiet for my poor weary mind. What is it I wish for? O God, Thou alone canst clearly know—and in Thy hands alone is the remedy. Oh let this longing cease! Turn it, O Father, to a worthy object! Unworthy it must now be, for were it after virtue, pure holy virtue, could I not still it? Dispel the mist that dims my eyes, that I may first plainly read the secrets of my wretched heart, and then give me, O Almighty God, the sincere will to root out all therein that beareth not good fruit....

February 4, 1836, ADMIRALTY

The great day of the opening of Parliament. Soon after breakfast we prepared to go to the House of Lords—that is to say, we made ourselves great figures with feathers and finery. The day has been, unfortunately, rainy and cold, and made our dress look still more absurd. The King did not come till two, so that we had plenty of time to see all the old lords assembling. Their robes looked very handsome, and I think His Majesty was the least dignified-looking person in the house. I cannot describe exactly all that went on. There was nothing impressive, but it was very amusing. The poor old man could not see to read his speech, and after he had stammered half through it Lord Melbourne was obliged to hold a candle to him, and he read it over again. Lord Melbourne looked very like a Prime Minister, but the more I see him and so many good and clever men obliged to do, at least in part, the bidding of anyone who happens to be born to Royalty, the more I wish that things were otherwise—however, as long as it is only in forms that one sees them give him the superiority one does not much mind. After the debate, several of Papa’s friends came to dine here. Lord Melbourne, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Glenelg, and the Duke of Richmond, who has won my heart—they talked very pleasantly.

March 9, 1836, ADMIRALTY

I wonder what it is that makes one sometimes like and sometimes dislike balls, *etc*. It does not always depend on whom one meets. I am sure it is not, as most books and people seem to think, from love of admiration that one is fond of them or else how should I ever be so, when it is so impossible for anybody ever to admire my looks or think me agreeable? I sometimes wish I was pretty. And I do not think it is a very foolish wish: it would give me courage to be agreeable.

All through this year there are many troubled entries:

March 28, 1836, ADMIRALTY

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Youth may and ought to have—yes, I see by others that it has—pleasures which surpass those of unthinking though lovely childhood: but have I experienced them? ... What makes the same sun seem one day to make all nature bright, and the next only to show more plainly the dreariness of the landscape? Oh wicked, sinful must be those feelings that make me miserable—selfish and sinful—and I cannot reason them away, for I do not understand them. Prayer has helped me before now, and I trust it will still do so. O Lord, forsake me not—take me into Thy own keeping.... Mama fifty to-day [March 30, 1836]. Oh the feelings that crowd into my heart as if they must burst it when I look to this day three years ago. I cannot write or think clearly of it yet. I can only feel—but what, I do not myself know—at one moment agony, doubts, and fears, as if it was still that fearful day; then joy almost too great to bear. When I think of her as she now is, then everything vanishes in one overpowering feeling of intense thankfulness. I have several times to-day seen her eyes fill with tears—every birthday of those one loves gives one a melancholy feeling, and the more rejoicings there are the stronger that feeling is.

June 27, 1836, ADMIRALTY

It was decided that we should go to the Duchess of Buccleuch's breakfast. My horror of breakfasts is only increased by having been to this one, though I believe it was particularly pleasant. Certainly the day was perfect, and the sight and the music pretty; but I scarcely ever disliked people more or felt more beaten down by shyness. My only thoughts from the moment we went in were: How I wish it was over, and how I wish nobody would speak to me.

September 6, 1836, ROEHAMPTON

Mama and I went to dine at Holland House.... The rooms are just what one would expect from the outside of the handsome old house, with a number of good pictures in the library, where we sat, all portraits. Lord Holland is perfectly agreeable, and not at all a man to be afraid of, in the common way of speaking, but for that very reason I always am afraid of him—much more than of her, who does not seem to me agreeable. I was very sorry Lord Melbourne did not come, as he would have made the conversation more general and agreeable.

The impression she made on others in her girlhood will be seen by this passage in the "Reminiscences of an Idler," by Chevalier Wyhoff: "I had the honour of dancing a quadrille with Lady Fanny Elliot, the charming daughter of the Earl of Minto. Her engaging manners and sweetness of disposition were even more winning than her admitted beauty."

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In July it was decided that her brother Henry should go out to Australia with Sir John Franklin. The idea of parting troubled her extremely, and, moreover, the project dashed all the castles in the air she had built for him. August 21st was the day fixed for his sailing. The 20th came—"dismal, dismal day, making things look as if they understood it was his last." Long afterwards, whenever she saw the front of Roehampton House, where she said good-bye to him, the scene would come back to her mind—the waiting carriage and the last farewells. The autumn winds had a new significance to her now her brother was on the sea. She was troubled too about religious problems, but she found it difficult, almost impossible, to talk about the thoughts which were occupying her. Writing of her cousin Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Dean of Bristol, for whom she felt both affection and respect, she says: "In the evening Cousin Gilbert talked a great deal, and not only usefully but delightfully, about different religious sects and against the most illiberal Church to which he belongs—but how could I be happy? The more he talked of what I wished to hear, the more idiotically shy I felt and the more impossible it became to me to ask one of the many questions or make one of the many remarks (foolish very likely, but what would that have signified?) which were filling my mind."

December 24, 1836, BOWOOD

Mr. Moore sang a great deal, and one song quite overcame Lady Lansdowne. At dinner I sat between Henry [11] and Miss Fazakerlie, who told me that last year she thought me impenetrable. How sad it is to appear to every one different from what one is.I like both her and Henry better than ever, but oh, I dislike myself more than ever—and so does everybody else—almost. Is it vain to wish it otherwise?—no, surely it is not. If my manner is so bad must there not be some real fault in me that makes it so, and ought I not to pray that it may be corrected?

[11] Afterwards Lord Lansdowne and the father of the present Marquis.

She read a great deal at this time; Jeremy Taylor, Milton, and Wesley, Heber, Isaac Walton, Burnet; Burns was her favourite on her happiest days. She thought that work among the poor of London might help her; but her time was so taken up both with looking after the younger children and by society that she seems to have got no further than wondering how to set about it.

On June 20th, 1837, William IV died, and in July Parliament was dissolved. On the 4th they were back again at Minto.

Her uncle John Elliot was successful in his candidature of Hawick. "Hawick," she writes, "has done her duty well indeed—in all ways; for the sheriff's terrible riots have been nothing at all. Some men ducked and the clothes of some torn off. We all felt so confused with joy that we did not know what to do all the evening." These rejoicings ended suddenly: Lady Minto was called to the death-bed of her mother, Mrs. Brydone.

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August 19, 1837, MINTO

I feel this time as I always do after a great misfortune, that the shock at first is nothing to the quiet grief afterwards, when one really begins to understand what has happened.

I cannot help constantly repeating over and over to myself that she is gone, and sometimes I do not know how to bear it and however to be comforted for not having seen her once more.

When the new Queen's Parliament met after the General Election the strength of the Conservatives was 315 and of the Liberals 342. The Melbourne Ministry was in a weaker position; they could only hold a majority through the support of the Radical and Irish groups, and troubles were brewing in the country. On the other hand, Peel's position was not an easy one; the split among the Conservatives on Catholic Emancipation had left bitterness behind, and in addition to this complication, his followers in the Commons included both men like Stanley, who had voted for Parliamentary reform, and its implacable opponents. But in spite of this flaw in the solidarity of the Opposition, the Ministers were far from secure. There were the troubles in Canada, which Lord Durham had been sent out to deal with (the Canadian patriots had a great deal of Lady Fanny's sympathy), and in England the grievances of the poor were in the process of being formulated into the famous People's Charter. During the parliamentary sessions the Mintos remained in London, with only occasional very short absences.

ADMIRALTY, *December* 26, 1837

People all seem pleased with the news from Canada because we are beating the poor patriots—let people say what they will I must wish them success and pity them with all my heart.

EASTBOURNE, *April* 14, 1838

It is not only the out of doors pleasures, the sea, the air, *etc*., that we find here, but the way of living takes a weight from one's mind, of which one does not know the burden till one leaves London and is freed from it. "I love not man the less" from feeling as I do the great faults, to us at least, of our London society. It is because I love man, because I daily see people whose thoughts I long to share and profit by, that I am so disappointed in being unable to do so. Oh, why, why do people not all live in the country—or if towns must be, why must they bring stiffness and coldness on everybody?

ADMIRALTY, *May* 10, 1838

Court Ball.... Beautiful ball of beautiful people dancing to beautiful music. Queen dancing a great deal, looking very happy.

ADMIRALTY, *June* 22, 1838

Evening at a Concert at the Palace—all the good singers.... All the foreigners there, Soult and the Duke of Wellington shaking hands more heartily than any other two people there.

ADMIRALTY, *June* 28, 1838

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Day ever memorable in the annals of Great Britain! Day of the coronation of Queen Victoria! ... We were up at six, and Lizzy, Bob'm, and I, being the Abbey party, dressed in all our grandeur. The ceremony was much what I expected, but less solemn and impressive from the mixture of religion with worldly vanities and distinctions. The sight was far more brilliant and beautiful than I had supposed it would be. Walked home in our fine gowns through the crowd; found the stand here well filled, and were quite in time to see the procession pass back. Nothing could be more beautiful, the streets either way being lined with the common people, as close as they could stand, and the windows, house-tops, balconies, and stands crowded with the better dressed. Great cheering when Soult's carriage passed, but really magnificent for the Duchess of Kent and the Queen. The carriages splendid. Did not feel in the Abbey one quarter of what I felt on the stand.

MINTO, *November* 4, 1838

This morning brought us the sad, sad news of the death of Lady John Russell. God give strength to her poor unhappy husband, and watch over his dear little motherless children.

The only event of importance which occurred in the family during 1838 was the marriage of the eldest daughter, Mary, to Ralph Abercromby, son of the Speaker and afterwards Lord Dunfermline. It was a very happy marriage, but Lady Fanny missed her sister very much, and her accounts of the wedding and the last days before it are mixed with regrets. She speaks of it as "an awful day," though it seems to have ended merrily enough in dancing and rejoicings.

In May, 1839, the Government resigned in consequence of the opposition to the Jamaica Bill. The object of the Bill was to suspend the constitution of Jamaica for five years, since difficulties had been made by the Jamaica Assembly in connection with the emancipation of slaves. The Radicals voted with the Conservatives against the Government and the Bill was lost.

ADMIRALTY, *May* 7, 1839

We are all out!!!!

Papa was summoned to a Cabinet at twelve this morning. Mama and I in the meantime drove to some shops, and when we came home found him anxiously expecting us with this overpowering news. We bore, and are still bearing it with tolerable fortitude; but we are all very, very sorry, and every moment find something new to regret. Mama, notwithstanding all she has said, is not better pleased than the rest of us. Papa looks very grave, or else tries to joke it off.

FRIDAY, *May* 10, 1839, ADMIRALTY

Agitating morning—one report following another every hour. Sir Robert Peel refused to form a Ministry unless the Queen would part with some of her household. To this she would not consent. To-day she sent for Lord Melbourne.... We went to the first Queen's ball, very anxious to see how she and other people looked, and to try to foresee coming events by the expression of faces.... I spoke to scarcely one Tory, but our Whig friends were in excellent spirits—the Queen also seemed to be so.

TUESDAY, *May* 14, 1839, ADMIRALTY

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> Papa and Bill [12] came from the House of Lords quite delighted with Lord Melbourne's speech in explanation of what has passed—manner, matter, everything perfect.

[12] Her brother, Lord Melgund, afterwards third Earl of Minto.

Thus, within the week, the Whig Ministry had resigned and accepted office again: this is what had happened.

On his return from Italy to take office Sir Robert Peel requested the Queen to change the ladies of her household, and on her refusal to do so, the Melbourne Ministry had come in again. Their return to power has been generally considered a blunder, from the party point of view; but their action in this case was not the result of tactical calculations. The young Queen was strange as yet to the throne, and she could not bear to be deprived of her personal friends. When Peel made a change in her household the condition of accepting office, she turned to the Whigs, who felt they could not desert her. "My dear Melbourne," wrote Lord John, "I have seen Spencer, who says that we could not have done otherwise than we have done as gentlemen, but that bur difficulties with the Radicals are not diminished...."

They were, indeed, hard put to it to carry on the Government at all, and they only succeeded in passing their Education Bill by a majority of two.

On August 12th the Mintos were still kept in London. "Oh for the boys and guns and dogs, a heathery moor, and a blue Scotch heaven above me!" she writes. When they did get away home, they remained there until the beginning of the new year. At home she seems to have been much happier. She taught her young brothers and sisters, she visited her village friends, and rambled and read a great deal. In short, it was Minto!—-all she found so hard to part from when marriage took her away.

Many of the extracts from the diaries quoted in this chapter must be read in the light of the reader's own recollections of the process of getting used to life. They show that if Lady Russell afterwards attained a happy confidence in action, she was not in youth without experience of bewilderment and doubts about herself. Following one another quickly, these extracts may seem to imply that she was gloomy and self-centred during these years; but that was never the impression she made on others. Like many at her age, when she wrote in a diary she dwelt most on the feelings about which she found it hardest to talk. Her diary was not so much the mirror of the days as they passed as the repository of her unspoken confidences. "Looked over my journals, with reflections," she writes later; "inclined to burn them all. It seems I have only written [on days] when I was not happy, which is very wrong—as if I had forgotten to be grateful for happy ones."

Mrs. Drummond, Lord John Russell's stepdaughter (who was then Miss Adelaide Lister), has recorded, in a letter to Lady Agatha Russell, her recollections of the Minto family at that time.

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I think (she writes) my first visit to the Admiralty, where I was invited to children's parties, must have been in the winter before my mother's death. I have no distinct first impressions of the grown-up part of the family, except perhaps of your grandmother, Lady Minto. Although children exaggerate the age of their elders, and seldom appreciate beauty except that of people near their own age, I did realize her great good looks. She had very regular features and a beautiful skin, with a soft rose-colour in her cheeks. Her hair was brown, worn in loops standing out a little from the face, and she always wore a cap or headdress of some kind. Her manner was most kind and winning, and she had a pleasant voice. I am sure she must have been very even-tempered; and as I recall her image now, and the peace and serenity expressed in her beautiful face, I think she must have had a happy life. I never saw her otherwise than perfectly kind and gentle and quite unruffled by the little contretemps, which must have befallen her as they do others. With this gentleness there was something that made one feel she was capable and reliable, that there was a latent strength on which those she loved could lean and be at rest. But in speaking of these things I am going far beyond the impressions of the small child skipping about the large rooms of the Admiralty.There came a time when I not only went to parties and theatricals at the Admiralty, but went in the afternoons to play with the children. One great game was the ghost game. To the delightful shudders produced by this was added some fear of the butler's interference, for it took place on the large dining-room table. The company was divided into two parties—the ghosts and the owners of the haunted house. At four o'clock in the afternoon (so as to give plenty of time to pile up the horror) the inmates of the house got into bed—that is, on to the table. The ghosts then walked solemnly round and round, while at intervals one of them imitated the striking of the clock; as the hours advanced the ghosts became more demonstrative and the company in bed more terror-stricken, and as the clock struck twelve the ghosts jumped on to the table! Then ensued a frightful scrimmage with ear-splitting squeals, and the game ended. I imagine it was this climax which used to bring the butler. We also had the game of giant all over the house. The yells in this case sometimes brought Lady Minto on the scene, who was always most good-natured. We were quieter when we got into mischief; as when we made a raid on Lord Minto's dressing-room, and each ate two or three of his compressed luncheon tablets and also helped ourselves to some of his pills. This last exploit *did* rather disturb Lady Minto; but, as it happens, neither luncheons nor pills took any effect on the raiders.There were often delightful theatricals at the Admiralty. The best of the plays was

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a little operetta written by your mother, called “William and Susan,” in which Lotty and Harriet[13] sang delightfully in parts; but this must have been later on than the game period.I come now to my first distinct impression of your mother. It is as clear as a miniature in my mind’s eye, and it belongs to a very interesting time. I think her engagement to Papa [14] must just have been declared. She came with Lord and Lady Minto to dine with him at 30, Wilton Crescent, the house he owned since his marriage to my mother. As she passed out of the room to go down to dinner, “Lady Fanny’s” face and figure were suddenly photographed on my brain. Her dark and beautiful smooth hair was most becomingly dressed in two broad plaited loops, hanging low on the back of the neck; the front hair in bands according to the prevailing fashion. Her eyes were dark and very lustrous. Her face was freckled, but this was not disfiguring, as a rich colour in her cheeks showed itself through them. Her neck, shoulders, and arms were most beautifully white, and her slim upright figure showed to great advantage in the neat and simple dress then worn. Hers was of blue and silver gauze, the bodice prettily trimmed with folds of the stuff, and the sleeves short and rather full. I think she wore an enamelled necklet of green and gold. Mama [15] long afterwards told me that at this dinner she went through a very embarrassing moment; Papa asked her what wine she would have, and she, just saying the first thing that came into her head, replied, “Oh, champagne.” There was none. Papa was sadly disconcerted, and replied humbly, “Will hock do?” I used to take much interest at all times in Papa’s dinner-parties, and sometimes suggested what I considered suitable guests. I was much disappointed when I found my selection of Madame Vestris and O’Connell did not altogether commend itself to Papa.

[13] Lady Harriet Elliot, sister of Lady John Russell.

[14] Lord John Russell.

[15] The second Lady John Russell.

Mrs. Drummond, in another letter to Lady Agatha Russell, alluding to a visit to Minto before Lord John Russell’s second marriage, writes:

Mama [then Lady Fanny Elliot] was very kind to me even then, and I took to her very much. I used to admire her bright eyes and her beautiful and very abundant dark hair, which was always exceedingly glossy, and her lovely throat, which was the whitest possible—also her sprightly ways, for she was very lively and engaging.

The winter of 1840 was spent between the Admiralty and Putney House, which the Mintos had taken. Lady Fanny’s description of Putney sounds to us now improbably idyllic:

Out almost till bedtime—the river at night so lovely, so calm, still, undisturbed by anything except now and then a slow, sleepy-looking barge, gliding so smoothly along as hardly to make a ripple. The last few nights we have had a little crescent moon to add to the beauty. Then the air is so delightfully perfumed with azalea, hawthorn, and lilac, and the nightingales sing so beautifully on the opposite banks, that it is difficult to come in at all.

PUTNEY HOUSE, *April 30, 1840*

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> Finished my beloved “Sir Samuel Romilly.” It is a book that everybody, especially men, should immediately read and meditate upon.

It was during the summer of this year, 1840, that she began to see more of Lord John Russell. She had met him a good many times at “rather solemn dinner-parties,” and he had stayed at Minto. She had known him well enough to feel distress and the greatest sympathy for him when his wife died, leaving him with two young families to look after—six children in all, varying in age from the eldest Lister girl, who was fourteen, to Victoria, his own little daughter, whose birth in 1838 was followed in little more than a week by the death of her mother. Lord John was nearly forty-eight. Hitherto he had been a political hero in her eyes rather than a friend of her own; but, as the following entries in her diary show, she began now to realize him from another side.

> *June 3, 1840,* PUTNEY HOUSE
>
> Lord John Russell and Miss Lister [16] came to spend the afternoon and dine. All the little Listers came. All very merry. Lord John played with us and the children at trap-ball, shooting, *etc*.

[16] Miss Harriet Lister was the sister of Lord John’s first wife.

The next time they met was at the Admiralty: “Little unexpected Cabinet meeting after dinner. Lords John Russell and Palmerston, who talked *War with France* till bedtime. I hope papa tells the truth as to its improbability.” Two days later she writes: “Lord John Russell again surprised us by coming in to tea. How much I like him.” The next evening she dined at his house: “Sat between Lord John and Mr. E. Villiers. Utterly and for ever disgraced myself. Lord John begged me to drink a glass of wine, and I asked for champagne when there was none!”

On August 13th they left London for Minto:

We had two places to spare in the carriage, which were taken by Lord John Russell and little Tom [his stepson, Lord Ribblesdale]. We had wished it might be so, though I had some fears of his being tired of us, and of our being stupefied with shyness. This went off more than I expected, and our day’s journey was very pleasant.

> MINTO, *August* 14, 1840

Actually here on the second day! From Hawick we had the most lovely moonlight, making the river like silver and the fields like snow. Oh Scotland, bonny, bonny Scotland, dearest and loveliest of lands! if ever I love thee less than I do now, may I be punished by living far from thee.

> MINTO, *August* 30, 1840

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A great party to Church. Many eyes turned on Lord John as we walked from it. He was much amused by the remark of one man: "Lord John's a silly [17] looking man, but he's smart, too!"—which he, of course, would have understood as an Englishman. In the evening he gave me a poem he had composed on the subject of my letter from Lancaster to Mrs. Law [18] announcing ourselves for the next day.... In the morning [September 1] Lord John begged to sit in our sitting-room with us.... I told him the library would be more comfortable, and we were established there (he very kindly reading the "Lay" aloud), when two Hawick Bailiffs arrived to present him with the freedom of the town.... After dinner, Miss Lister asked me so many questions chiefly relating to marrying, that I began to believe that Lord John's great kindness to us all, but especially to me, meant something more than I wished. I lay awake, wondering, feeling sure, and doubting again.

[17] Delicate.

[18] Housekeeper.

MINTO, *September* 2, 1840

Lord John, Miss Lister, Addy and I went to Melrose Abbey and Abbotsford.... It was his last evening, and in wishing me good-bye he said quite enough to make me tell Mama all I thought.... I could see that she was very glad I did not like him in that way. I am sure I do in every other.

MINTO, *September* 3, 1840

Lord John set off before seven this morning. I dreamed about him and waked about him all night.... Mama gave me a note from Lord John to me which he had left.... I wrote my answer immediately, begging him not to come back; but also telling him how grateful I feel. Had a long talk and walk with Miss Lister, whose *great* kindness makes it all more painful to me.

Lady Fanny wrote to her sister, Lady Mary Abercromby:

A proposal from Lord John Russell is at this moment lying before me. I see it lying, and I write to you that it is there, but yet I do not believe it, nor shall I ever.... Good, kind Miss Lister positively worships him.

MINTO, *September* 4, 1840

Went to the village with Mama and my darling Addy [Lord John's stepdaughter], to whom I may show how I love her now that he is away.

MINTO, *September* 7, 1840

Received a very, very sad note from Lord John in answer to mine—so kind, but oh! so sad.

The note ran as follows:

September 5, 1840

DEAR LADY FANNY,—You are quite right. I deceived myself, not from any fault of yours, but from a deep sense of unhappiness, and a foolish notion that you might throw yourself away on a person of broken spirits, and worn out by time and trouble. There is nothing left to me but constant and laborious attention to public business, and a wretched sense of misery, which even the children can never long drive away. However, that is my duty, and my portion, and I have no right to murmur at what no doubt is ordained for some good end. So do not blame yourself, and leave me to hope that my life may not be long.

Yours truly, J. RUSSELL

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Miss Lister wrote to Lord John on September 9, 1840:

Sad as your letters are, it is still a relief to have them. I *will* hope for you though you cannot for yourself.... I cannot thank you as I wish and feel for all you are with regard to the children, for all you have been to them. I never can think of it without tears of gratitude.... You have been more than even an own father could have been. And by your example—an example of all that is good and pure and great in mind and conduct—you are doing for them more than any other teaching can do.

For a few days Lady Fanny seems to have felt that the matter was irrevocably settled: "The more I think of what has happened, the more I bewilder myself—I therefore do not think at all."

But on the following day she writes: "Though I do not think, I dream. I dreamt of him last night on some of Catherine's bride cake, and that Miss Lister wrote to me of him as one whose equal could not be found in the whole world."

Of one thing she was certain, she did not want to leave her home: "The west hills looking beautiful as we walked round the church. What a pleasure it is to have a church in such a situation! One worships God the better from seeing His beauty so displayed around.... Walked in the glen and wandered about the burn and top of Mama's glen, wondering how anybody could ever ask me to leave all that is so much too dear.

"Yesterday [October 23] received a letter from Miss Lister. Tells me a great deal about him—the way in which he first named me since, and his keeping the book, and much more that is very, very touching; but I will not sentimentalize even to my journal, for fear of losing my firmness again."

Meanwhile, gossip was busy coupling her name with Lord John's, and the Press published the rumour.

Lady Minto to Lady Mary Abercromby

MINTO, *November* 9, 1840

... You will see in the papers the report of Fanny's marriage to Lord John Russell. It is very annoying to her, and I had a few lines (very touching) from him begging me to have it contradicted, which I had already done. If you ask me my reasons why, I cannot tell you, but I have a sort of feeling that she will marry him still. Gina says certainly not, and neither Lizzy nor I think her opinions or feelings changed, but I feel it *in my skin*!!! Still, these feelings are not infallible.... Will you tell me if I wish it or not? For I have now thought so much about it I don't know my own mind. If I knew that she would not marry *at all*, if she did not marry *him*, then I should most miserably lament that she refused him; but I also know as certainly, that if she told me that upon second thoughts she had

accepted him, I should be too unhappy to be able to look as I ought to do. In short, dearest Mary, I heartily wish it had never happened. I was obliged to tell John [Elliot] of it, as the report

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was going to be made a subject of joking, which would have been very unpleasant for Fanny. He was very much surprised, and notwithstanding his great dislike to disparity of years, he regretted her refusal deeply. He is a great admirer of Lord John's, and was delighted with him when he was here. He says that in spite of the drawbacks he is clearly of the opinion that she has made a great mistake, and hopes that it may take another turn still. You may fancy how I am longing to talk to your Father about it. He says in his last letter that his eyes were only just opened to Lord John's being an old man, when he looked on him in this new light....

MINTO, *November* 15, 1840

My birthday—it frightens me to be twenty-five. To think how days, months, and years have slipped away and how unfulfilled resolutions remain to reproach me. Long walk with Papa—talked to me about Lord John very kindly. Had a long letter from Miss Lister—tells me a good deal about him, and the more I hear the more I am forced to admire and like. Then why am I so ungrateful? Oh! why so obstinate? I can only hope for the sake of my character that Dryden is right that "Love is not in our choice but in our fate."

At the beginning of the new year the family moved up to London. The next entry, dated from the Admiralty, expressive in its brevity, runs: "A surprising number of visitors, one very alarming, no less than Lord John—and I saw him." Then, a week later, on February 8: "The agitation of last Monday over again.... After all, perhaps he only wished to show that he is friendly still. It is like his kindness, but he did not look merry."

In March she wrote to her married sister, Lady Mary Abercromby, an account of her feelings and perplexities.

ADMIRALTY, *March* 16, 1841

DEAREST MARY,—Tho' it is not nearly my day for writing, a long letter from you to Mama, principally about myself, has determined me to do so—and to do so this minute, while I feel that I have courage for the great effort (yes, you may laugh, but it is a terrible effort) of saying to you all that you have the best right to abuse me for not having said before. If it was really *saying*, oh how happy I should be! but there is something so terribly distinct in one's thoughts as soon as they are on paper, and I have longed each day a thousand times to have you by my side to help me to read them and to listen to all my nonsense. I felt it utterly impossible to write them, altho' I also felt that my silence was most unfair upon you and would have made me, in your place, either very suspicious or very angry. It *has* made you suspicious, but now let it only make you angry—as angry as you please—for I have *not* changed and I do not suppose I ever shall. When we first came to town, nothing having taken place between us since my positive refusal from Minto, except the contradiction sent by us to the report

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in the papers, Miss Lister asked me if I was the same as ever; and when I said yes, and forbade her the subject for the future, she only begged that I would see him and allow myself to know him better. I said I would do so, provided she was quite sure he was ready to blame himself alone for the consequences, which she said he would. Accordingly, wherever we met I allowed him to speak to me. I begged Lizzy always to join in our talk, if she could, as it made me much happier, but this she has not done nearly as much as I wished. Whenever I knew we were to meet him, I also took care to tell Lizzy that it would be no pleasure to me, and that if it was at dinner, I hoped I should not sit next to him. I said these things to her oftener than I should naturally have done, because I saw that in her wish to disbelieve them she really did so, and I wished to make her understand me, in case either Papa or Mama or the boys should be speaking of it before her. You will say, why did I not speak more to Mama herself?—partly because I was afraid of bringing forward the subject, partly because I knew what I had to say would make her sorry, and partly because I was not at times so *very* sure as to have courage to say it must all come to an end. However, after a dinner at Lady Holland's last week, when he was all the evening by me, I felt I *must* speak—that it would be very wrong to allow it to go on in the same way, and that we had no right to expect the world to see how all advances to intimacy, since we came to town, have been made by him in the face of a refusal. I do not despise the gossip of the world where there is so much foundation for it, and I have felt it very disagreeable to know that busy eyes were upon us several times. It must therefore stop, but do not imagine that I have been acting without thought. I am perfectly easy about *him*—I mean that he will blame nobody but himself, as I have taken care never to understand anything that he has said that he might mean to be particular, and the few times that he ventured to approach the subject he spoke in so perfectly hopeless and melancholy a way as to satisfy me. I am also easy about Miss Lister, as only a week ago she said how sorry she was to see that I was happier in society without than with him; but both he and they must see that it cannot go on so. What a stone I am—but it is needless to speak of that. Only when I think of all his goodness and excellence, above all his goodness in fixing upon me among so many better fitted to him, I first wonder and wonder whether he really can be in earnest, then reproach myself bitterly for my hardness—and then the children: to think of rejecting an opportunity of being so useful—or at least of trying to be so! All these thoughts, turned over and over in my mind oftener than I myself knew before we left Minto, *did* make me think that perhaps I had decided rashly. Now do not repeat this, dear Mary; I have said more to you than to anybody yet—but I am sorry it is time to stop, I have so much more to say. I cannot say how grateful I am to Papa and Mama for leaving me so free in all this, and to you for writing.

Ever your most affectionate sister, FANNY

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The day after this letter was written she saw Lord John again. “He called and had a long conversation with Mama.... Mama liked him better than ever.”

Lady Minto to Lady Mary Abercromby

ADMIRALTY, *March* 18, 1841

... I must now return to *the* subject. I told you of the conversation I had with Fanny when she spoke so openly and so sensibly of her feelings.... She said she was too old to think it necessary to be what is called desperately in love, and without feeling that his age was an objection or that the disparity was too great, yet, she said, if he had been a younger man she would have decided long ago. And that is the truth. It is his age alone that prevents her at once deciding in his favour. It prevents those feelings arising in her mind, without which it would be a struggle to accept him, and this she never will do. She was therefore desirous that he should know the state of her feelings, that she might be again at her ease. He had seen her manner cold towards him, and wrote to say that he would call upon me yesterday. I was *horribly* frightened, as I hate lovers, and you must allow that it was a difficult task to go through.... However, he put me so completely at my ease by his sensible, open, gentle manner, that my task was less difficult than I expected—except that I fell in love with him so desperately, he touched my heart so deeply that I could scarcely refrain from promising him Fanny whenever he chose. There is a depth of feeling and humility about him, and a candour and generosity in his judgments, that I never saw so strongly in anyone before, and every word that he spoke made me regret more and more the barrier that prevents him from becoming one of us. I said, of course, Fanny’s wish and ours could only be for him to do what he considered best for his own happiness, and that half-measures did not answer; that he now knew the whole truth and it was for him to judge how to act. He said then, “I cannot have a doubt; I will visit you less frequently; I will speak very little to you in public, but I cannot, unless you positively forbid me, renounce the intimacy now established with your family.” I said, of course, that it would be a great happiness to us all not to lose him, but that I was very doubtful of the wisdom of his decision, as it might only be rendering himself more unhappy. “That,” he said, “is my affair, and I am willing to run the risk.” ... Fanny, to whom I told everything, says she is now quite happy, and her mind at ease.

He seems, however, to have made up his mind to keep away from them for some weeks. The next mention of him is on May 7th, more than a month later:

Morning visit from Lord John. Said he had a great speech to make this evening on sugar.... Billy came to dinner full of admiration of the speech. Honest, noble, clever. Well, we shall go out with honour.

This speech on sugar was made at a crisis of particular difficulty. The debate was the first important discussion in Parliament on the new principle of Free Trade. Greville

describes Lord John's speech as an "extraordinarily good one," and Lord Sydenham [19] wrote from Canada:

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I have read your speech upon opening the debate on the sugar question with feelings of admiration and pleasure I cannot describe. The Free Traders have never been orators since Mr. Pitt in early days. We have hammered away with facts and figures and some argument, but we could not elevate the subject and excite the feelings of the people. At last you, who can do both, have fairly undertaken it, and the cause has a champion worthy of it.

[19] Lord Sydenham said later, “Lord John is the noblest man it has ever been my fortune to follow” (Spencer Walpole’s “Life of Lord John Russell").

Mr. Baring, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed to lower the import duty on foreign and colonial timber and sugar. Lord John, before the Budget speech, announced his intention of moving the House into a committee on the Corn Laws. During the course of the eight days’ debate he admitted that the proposal of the Ministry would be a fixed duty of 8s. a quarter on wheat. It was on the occasion of this proposal being discussed in the Cabinet that Melbourne, at the close of the meeting, made his famous remark, “By the by, there is one thing we haven’t agreed upon; what are we to say? Is it to make our corn dearer or cheaper, or to make the price steady? I don’t care which; but we had better all say the same thing.”

On June 4th, the very evening Lord John had intended to introduce his measure, the Government was just defeated on Peel’s motion of a want of confidence: “Bill woke me at four this morning with the sad words, ’Beaten by one! Oh dear, oh dear! To expect a triumph and see it won by the enemy. Never mind; our friends deserve success if they cannot command it.... Party at Lady Palmerston’s. He was there.”

Four days later her hesitations came to an end, and they were engaged to be married.

Miss Lister wrote to Lord John on June 8th from Windsor Castle:

Oh! I am happier than I can tell you. God knows you have deserved all the good that may come to you, and I always felt it must be because of that. I long to be with you and to see her. ... Oh! I am so happy, but I can scarcely believe it yet. I hope Lady Fanny will write and then I think I shall believe it.

Ever yours affectionately, Harriet Lister

* * * * *

June 9, 1841 Could not write on Monday or Tuesday. Saw him on Monday morning ... it was a strange dream all that day and is so still.... As soon as he had left me Mama came in. Oh my own dearest and best Mama, bless your poor weak but happy child. Then I saw Papa. What good it did me to see his face of real happiness!—then my brothers and sisters—I never saw William so overcome.

ADMIRALTY, *June* 10, 1841

Tried to be busy in the morning ... but nothing would do. Must think and be foolish. He came in the afternoon and evening—brought me an emerald ring.... Miss Lister came—both of us stupid from having too much to say, but it was a great pleasure. Children here to tea with ours (all but Victoria) and very merry and kind to me. Dear precious children.

Lady Minto to Lady Mary Abercromby

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ADMIRALTY, June 11, 1841

You must be longing so ardently for post-day that I hate to think of the uncomfortable letter this is likely to be; but as Fanny is writing to you herself, my letter will be of less consequence. Oh the volumes and volumes I could write and long to write and the wee miserable things that I do write! I must at once begin by saying that Fanny's happy face would, more than all I can write, convince you how perfectly satisfied and proud she is of the position she has put herself in; how it delights her to think of the son-in-law she has given to your Father, and the friend she has given your brothers. To me he is everything that my proudest wishes could have sought out for Fanny. You know as well as me that it was not an ordinary person that could suit her; and it really is balm to my heart to see the way in which he treasures every word she says, and laughs at the innocence and simplicity of her remarks, and looks at her with such pride when he sees her keen and eager about the great and interesting events of the day, which most girls would neither know nor care about. I don't mean that he is absurd in his admiration of her, but it is evident how fully he appreciates the singular beauty of her character. In short, to sum up all I can say of him, he is in many respects a counterpart of herself. She is very open and at her ease with him, and I am quite as much at my ease with him as I was with Ralph....

From Lady Mary Abercromby to Lord John Russell

GENOA, *June* 19, 1841

... You will every day discover more the great worth of what you have won. You cannot have known her long without admiring the extreme truth and purity of her mind; it is sensitive to a degree which those with more of worldly experience can scarcely understand, yet I feel sure you will watch over it, for it has a charm to those who can appreciate it which must make them dread to see it disturbed. It is a great privation to me to be so little acquainted with you, but believe me I cannot think of you as a stranger now that you belong to my dearest Sister, and that I look to you for her happiness. If you could think of me as a sister and treat me as such it would be a delight to me.

ADMIRALTY, *June* 18, 1841

Very happy day—every day now happier than the one before. Oh will it—can it last? O God, enable me to thank Thee as I ought—to live a life of gratitude to Thee.

CHAPTER III

1841

"He served his country well in choosing thee." [20]

[20] From a sonnet to Lady John Russell by Lord Wriothesley Russel, written after reading Lady Minto's ballad in which these words occur: "His country and thee."

Parliament had been dissolved soon after Peel's motion of a want of confidence had been carried. In the election which followed Lord John was returned for the City of London on June 30th.

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ADMIRALTY, *June* 26, 1841

Day of nomination in the City. He says the show of hands was greatly in his favour.... Mama says he looked so calm, in the midst of the uproar.

"True dignity is his, *his* tranquil mind Virtue has raised above the things below!"

And whether storms may await us in our journey together, even to the wreck of all earthly hopes, I know that he will rise superior to them—and oh! to think that I may be by his side to support him in adversity as well as to share in his prosperity and glorious fate, for which God enable me to be rightly grateful.

The family moved to Minto before the result was declared; from London Lord John wrote the following letters:

Lord John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

WILTON CRESCENT, *June* 25, 1841

Your letters have filled us all with joy and completed what was wanting. I feel very grateful to you for the kindness with which you express yourself.... The happiness of possessing her has blinded me, I dare say, to her real interest; but when I find that you all approve and feel conscious that I shall do all in my power to make her life happy, I gain some confidence. Among many anxieties, Lady Minto naturally felt that the charge of so many children would be a very serious burthen to her, but the children themselves are so good, so much disposed to love her, and their health is at present so good, that I trust they will be to her as they are to me, a daily comfort, making the house cheerful with their merry and affectionate voices. The greatest fear perhaps is, that her generosity and devotion to others may make her undertake what is beyond her strength.

Lord John Russell to Lady Fanny Elliot

DOWNING STREET, *July* 3, 1841

If I am sorry that Saturday is come, I am much more glad that Tuesday is so near. I am not at all anxious for a merry party at Minto—the quieter the better for me. But I can understand that Lady Minto would like some gaiety to divert her spirits, when "Our dear Fanny" is gone. I cannot say how much I think on the prospect of finding you at Minto—and of Bowhill likewise. I hope I am not unworthy of the heart you gave me ... and I trust every day will prove how grateful I am to you.

WILTON CRESCENT, *July* 4, 1841

I got your little note yesterday, after I had sealed my letter.... My dearest Fanny, I am so happy at the thought of being soon at Minto. If you believe that I feel the strongest devotion to you, and am resolved to do all in my power to make you happy, you believe what is true.... This will reach you soon after your arrival. I can imagine how busy you will be ... and long to join you.

A few days later he reached Minto himself. Lady Fanny, writing to her sister Mary, describes their days together, and adds: "They are all except Gibby so much too respectful to Lord John. Not to me, for they take their revenge upon me, and I am unsparingly laughed at, which is a great comfort. I shall write once before it happens. I dare not think what I shall be when you receive this."

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MINTO, *July* 19, 1841

My last day as a child of Minto. How fast it flew. How quickly good-night came—that sad, that dreaded good-night. But sadness may be of such a kind as to give rise to the happiest, the purest feelings—and such was this.... He and I sat in the Moss house. Never saw the glen more beautiful; the birch glittering in the sun and waving its feathery boughs; the burn murmuring more gently than usual; the wood-pigeons answering one another from tree to tree. Had not courage to be much with Mama.

They were married on July 20th in the drawing-room at Minto, and set off for Bowhill, which had been lent them for the honeymoon by the Duke of Buccleuch. Never did statesman on his wedding-day take away a bride more whole-heartedly resolved to be all a wife can be to him in his career. Her mother was now perfectly happy about the marriage, though the disparity of age, and fears about the great responsibility her daughter was undertaking in the care of a young family—one boy and five girls—had undoubtedly made her anxious. Lady Minto felt very deeply the parting with her dearly-loved child, and after the wedding she sent her the following little ballad:

A BORDER BALLAD

AIR: "*Saw ye my father*"

Oh saw ye the robber
That cam' o'er the border
To steal bonny Fanny away?
She's gane awa' frae me
And the bonny North Countrie
And has left me for ever and for aye.

He cam' na wi' horses,
He cam' na wi' men,
Like the bauld English knights langsyne;
But he thought that he could fleech
Wi' his bonny Southron speech
And wile awa' this lassie o' mine.

"Gae hame, gae hame
To your ain countrie,
Nor come o'er the March for me."
But sairly did she rue
When he thought that she spak' true
And the tear-drop it blinded her e'e.

His heart it was sair
And he lo'ed her mair and mair,
For her spirit was noble and free;
"Oh lassie dear, relent,
Nor let a heart be rent
That lives but for its country and thee."

And did she say him nay?
Oh no, he won the day,
Could an Elliot a Russell disdain?
And he's ta'en awa' his bride
Frae the bonnie Teviot-side,
And has left me sae eerie alane.

Oh where's now the smile
Used to cheer me ilk morn,
Like a blink o' the sun's ain light;
And where the voice sae sweet
That aye gar'd my bosom beat
When sae saftly she bade me gude-night.

Now lang, lang are the nights
And dowie are the days
That sae cheerie were ance for me.
And oh the thought is sair
That she'll mine be never mair,
I'm alane in the North Countrie.

MARY MINTO, *July*, 1841

But before following the future, it will be well to look back. Lord John himself must play so large a part in a biography of his wife that a sketch of his life up to this point, and some reminders of the kind of man he was, may interest the reader; not a review of his political achievements, but an outline of the events which had left him at his second marriage a leader among his countrymen.

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Lord John Russell, born in 1792, was the third son of John, sixth Duke of Bedford. He was only nine years old when he lost his mother, whom he remembered to the end of his life with tender affection. He always spoke gratefully of the invariable kindness and affection of his father, who married again in 1803, and of his stepmother, but he felt that the shyness and reserve which often caused him to be misunderstood and thought cold were largely due to the loss of his mother in his childhood. He was educated at Westminster, but he was not robust enough to stand a rough life, and it was decidedly rough. His education was continued at Woburn under a tutor. He was a book-loving boy, and the earliest exercise of his powers was in verses, prologues, and plays. Going to the play was one of the chief enjoyments of his childhood, and he never lost his liking for the drama. Travelling was also a great delight to him, either by coach in England or in foreign countries, and this enjoyment, with a wonderfully keen observation of all that he saw of different places and peoples, lasted to old age.

In 1835 Lord John married Lady Ribblesdale, widow of the second Lord Ribblesdale.

She had by her first husband four children; one son and three daughters. [21] After her marriage with Lord John Russell she had two daughters, Georgiana Adelaide, born in 1836, and Victoria, born in 1838. The marriage had been a most happy one, and her death on November 1, 1838, was a severe blow to Lord John.

[21] Lord Ribblesdale, Adelaide Lister (Mrs. Drummond), Isabel Lister (Mrs. Warburton), Elizabeth Lister (Lady Melvill).

A slight sketch of the more public side of his career will be enough here. A visit to Fox in June, 1806, was perhaps the first experience which turned his interests and ambitions towards politics. All his life he looked up to the memory of Fox. There was in Fox an element which made him more akin to the Liberals, who succeeded him, than to the old Whig party. Lord John, as different from Fox in temperament as a man could be, was the inheritor of the spirit which leavened the old Whig tradition. In Lord John the sentiments of Fox took on a more deliberate air. He was a more intellectual man than his lavish, emotional, imposing forbear; and if it is remembered that he had, in addition, the diffidence of a sensitive man, these facts go far to explain an apparent contradiction in his character which puzzled contemporaries. To the observer at a distance there seemed to be two John Russells: the man who appeared to stand off coldly from his colleagues and backers (he was certainly as incapable as the younger Pitt of throwing round him those heartening glances of good-fellowship which made the followers of Fox feel like a band of brothers); and again, the man who, to the rapture of adherents, could lift debate at moments to a level where passionate principles swept all hesitation away. It was surprising to find, in one who commonly wore the air of picking his steps with care, the dash and anger of the fighter. Bulwer Lytton has described such moments in “The New Timon”—

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"When the steam is on,
And languid Johnny glows to glorious John."

His speeches, if they had not the animated, flowing reasonableness of Cobden's, resembled them in this, that they belonged to that class of oratory which aims at convincing the reason rather than at persuading the emotions. Lord John had, however, one quality likely to make him widely popular—his pluck; at bay he was formidable. If there was a trace of injustice or unreasonableness in his adversaries, though their case might be overwhelmingly plausible, it was ten to one he routed them in confusion. He was ready in retort. One example of this readiness Gladstone was fond of quoting: Sir Francis Burdett had made a speech against the Whigs, in which he spoke of the "cant of patriotism." "There is one thing worse than the cant of patriotism," retorted Lord John, "and that is the recant of patriotism." Again, when the Queen once asked him, "Is it true, Lord John, that you hold that a subject is justified, in certain circumstances, in disobeying his sovereign?" his answer to this difficult question could not have been better: "Well, speaking to a sovereign of the House of Hanover, I can only say that I suppose he is."

One more characteristic must be mentioned. Like most men scrupulous and slow in determining what to do, his confidences often were withheld from others till the last moment, and sometimes beyond the moment, when it would have been wisest to admit his colleagues to his own counsel. In consequence he often appeared disconcertingly abrupt in decision.

In 1808 he accompanied Lord and Lady Holland to Spain and Portugal, and on his return he was sent by his father to Edinburgh University, the Duke having little confidence in the education then procurable at either Oxford or Cambridge. At Edinburgh he took part in the proceedings of the Speculative Society, read essays to them and debated; and he left the University still tending more towards literature than politics. There is no doubt that Edinburgh helped to form him. His mind was one naturally open to influences which are summed up as "the academic spirit"; dislike of exaggeration, impatience with brilliancy which does not illuminate, and distrust of enthusiasm which is not prepared to show its credentials at every step. His own style is marked by these qualities, and in addition by a reminiscence of eighteenth-century formality, more likely to please perhaps future than present readers; accurate, a little distant, it pleases because it conveys a sense of modesty and dignity. When he speaks of himself he does it to perfection.

After leaving the University he served in the Bedford militia. In 1814 he went to Italy, and crossed to Elba, where he saw Napoleon. Lord John was always a most authentic reporter. His description of the Emperor, written the next day, besides its intrinsic interest, is so characteristic of the writer himself that it may be quoted here. It is as matter-of-fact as one of Wellington's dispatches and as shrewd as a passage from one of Horace Walpole's letters.

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PORTO FERRAJO, December 25, 1814 [22]

At eight o'clock in the evening yesterday I went to the Palace according to appointment to see Napoleon. After waiting some minutes in the ante-room I was introduced by Count Drouet and found him standing alone in a small room. He was drest in a green coat with a hat in his hand very much as he is painted, but excepting this resemblance of dress, I had a very mistaken idea of him from his portrait. He appears very short, which is partly owing to his being very fat, his hands and legs being quite swollen and unwieldy; this makes him appear awkward and not unlike the whole length figures of Gibbon, the historian. Besides this, instead of the bold marked countenance that I expected, he has fat cheeks and rather a turn-up nose, which, to bring in another historian, made the shape of his face resemble the portraits of Hume. He has a dusky grey eye, which would be called a vicious eye in a horse, and the shape of his mouth expresses contempt and derision—his manner is very good-natured, and seems studied to put one at one's ease by its familiarity; his smile and laugh are very agreeable—he asks a number of questions without object, and often repeats them, a habit he has no doubt acquired during fifteen years of supreme command—to this I should also attribute the ignorance he seems to show at times of the most common facts. When anything that he likes is said, he puts his head forward and listens with great pleasure, repeating what is said, but when he does not like what he hears, he looks away as if unconcerned and changes the Subject. From this one might conclude that he was open to flattery and violent in his temper.

He began asking me about my family, the allowance my father gave me, if I ran into debt, drank, played, *etc*.

He asked me if I had been in Spain, and if I was not imprisoned by the Inquisition. I told him that I had seen the abolition of the Inquisition voted, and of the injudicious manner in which it was done.He mentioned Infantado, and said, "Il n'a point de caractere." Ferdinand he said was in the hands of the priests—afterwards he said, "Italy is a fine country; Spain too is a fine country—Andalusia and Seville particularly."

F. R. Yes, but uncultivated.

N. Agriculture is neglected because the land is in the hands of the Church.

F. R. And of the Grandees.

N. Yes, who have privileges contrary to the public prosperity.

F. R. Yet it would be difficult to remedy the evil.

N. It might be remedied by dividing property and abolishing hurtful privileges, as was done in France.

F. R. Yes, but the people must be industrious—even if the land was given to the people in Spain, they would not make use of it.

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N. Ils succomberaient.

F. R. Yes, Sire.

He asked many questions about the Cortes, and when I told him that many of them made good speeches on abstract questions, but that they failed when any practical debate on finance or war took place, he said, “Oui, faute de l’habitude de gouverner.” He asked if I had been at Cadiz at the time of the siege, and said the French failed there.

F. R. Cadiz must be very strong.

N. It is not Cadiz that is strong, it is the Isle of Leon—if we could have taken the Isle of Leon, we should have bombarded Cadiz, and we did partly, as it was.

F. R. Yet the Isle of Leon had been fortified with great care by General Graham.

N. Ha—it was he who fought a very brilliant action at Barrosa.

He wondered our officers should go into the Spanish and Portuguese service. I said our Government had sent them with a view of instructing their armies; he said that did well with the Portuguese, but the Spaniards would not submit to it. He was anxious to know if we supported South America, “for,” he said, “you already are not well with the King of Spain.”Speaking of Lord Wellington, he said he had heard he was a large, strong man, *grand chasseur*, and asked if he liked Paris. I said I should think not, and mentioned Lord Wellington having said that he should find himself much at a loss what to do in peace time, and I thought scarcely liked anything but war.

N. La guerre est un grand jeu, une belle occupation.

He wondered the English should have sent him to Paris—“On n’aime pas l’homme par qui on a ete battu. Je n’ai jamais envoye a Vienne un homme qui a assiste a la prise de Vienne.” He asked who was our Minister (Lord Burghersh) at Florence, and whether he was *honnete homme*, “for,” he said, “you have two kinds of men in England, one of *intrigans*, the other of *hommes tres honnetes*.”

Some time afterwards he said, “Dites moi franchement, votre Ministre a Florence est il un homme a se fier?”

He had seen something in the papers about sending him (Napoleon) to St. Helena, and he probably expected Lord Burghersh to kidnap him—he inquired also about his family and if it was one of consequence.His great anxiety at present seems to be on the

subject of France. He inquired if I had seen at Florence many Englishmen who came from there, and when I mentioned Lord Holland, he asked if he thought things went well with the Bourbons, and when I answered in the negative he seemed delighted, and asked if Lord Holland thought they would be able to stay there. I said I really could not give an answer. He said he had heard that the King of France had taken no notice of those Englishmen who had treated him

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well in England—particularly Lord Buckingham; he said that was very wrong, for it showed a want of gratitude. I told him I supposed the Bourbons were afraid to be thought to depend upon the English. "No," he said, "the English in general are very well received." He asked sneeringly if the Army was much attached to the Bourbons.

Talking of the Congress, he said, "There will be no war; the Powers will disagree, but they will not go to war"—he said the Austrians, he heard, were already much disliked in Italy and even at Florence.

F. R. It is very odd, the Austrian government is hated wherever it has been established.

N. It is because they do everything with the baton—the Italians all hate to be given over to them.

F. R. But the Italians will never do anything for themselves—they are not united.

N. True.

Besides this he talked about the robbers between Rome and Florence, and when I said they had increased, he said, "Oh! to be sure; I always had them taken by the *gendarmerie*."

F. R. It is very odd that in England, where we execute so many, we do not prevent crimes.

N. It is because you have not a *gendarmerie*.

He inquired very particularly about the forms of the Viceregal Court in Ireland, the *Dames d'honneur*, pages, *etc*.; in some things he was strangely ignorant, as, for instance, asking if my father was a peer of Parliament.

He asked many questions three times over.

He spoke of the Regent's conduct to the Princess as very impolitic, as it shocked the *bienseances*, by which his father had become so popular.

He said our war with America was a *guerre de vengeance*, for that the frontier could not possibly be of any importance.

He said, "You English ought to be very well satisfied with the end of the war."

F. R. Yes, but we were nearly ruined in the course of it.

N. Ha! le systeme continental, ha—and then he laughed very much.

He asked who was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at present, but made no remark on my answer.

I asked him if he understood English; he said that at Paris he had had plenty of interpreters, but that he now began to read it a little.

Many English went to Elba about this time; the substance of their conversations is still in my recollection—April 2, 1815. He said that he considered the great superiority of England to France lay in her aristocracy, that the people were not better, but that the Parliament was composed of all the men of property and all the men of family in the country; this enabled the Government to resist the shock which the failure

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of the Duke of York's expedition was liable to cause—in France it would have destroyed the Government. (This is an opinion rather tinged by the Revolution, but it is true that our House of Commons looks to final results.) They were strong, he said, by "les souvenirs attachants a l'histoire"; that on the contrary he could make eighty senates in France as good as the present; that he had intended to create a nobility by marrying his generals, whom he accounted as quite insignificant, notwithstanding the titles he had given them, to the offspring of the old nobility of France. He had reserved a fund from the contribution which he levied when he made treaties with Austria, Prussia, *etc*., in order to found these new families. "Did you get anything from Russia?"

> *N.* No, I never asked anything from her but to shut her ports against England.

> He wished, he said, to favour the re-establishment of the old families, but every time he touched that chord an alarm was raised, and the people trembled as a horse does when he is checked.

He told the story of the poisoning, and said there was some truth in it—he had wished to give opium to two soldiers who had got the plague and could not be carried away, rather than leave them to be murdered by the Turks, but the physician would not consent. He said that after talking the subject over very often he had changed his mind on the morality of the measure. He owned to shooting the Turks, and said they had broken their capitulation. He found great fault with the French Admiral who fought the battle of the Nile, and pointed out what he ought to have done, but he found most fault with the Admiral who fought—R. Calder—for not disabling his fleet, and said that if he could have got the Channel clear then, or at any other time, he would have invaded England.He said the Emperor of Russia was clever and had "idees liberales," but was a veritable Grec. At Tilsit, the Emperor of Russia, King of Prussia, and N. used to dine together. They separated early—the King of Prussia went to bed, and the two Emperors met at each other's quarters and talked, often on abstract subjects, till late in the night. The King of Prussia a mere corporal, and the Emperor of Austria very prejudiced—"d'ailleurs honnete homme."

> Berthier quite a pen-and-ink man—but "bon diable qui servit le premier, a me temoigner ses regrets, les larmes aux yeux."

> Metternich a man of the world, "courtisan des femmes," but too false to be a good statesman-"car en politique il ne faut pas etre *trop* menteur."

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It was his maxim not to displace his Marshals, which he had carried to a fault in the case of Marmont, who lost his cannon by treachery, he believed—I forget where. The Army liked him, he had rewarded them well.Talleyrand had been guilty of such extortion in the peace with Austria and with Bavaria that he was complained against by those Powers and therefore removed—it was he who advised the war with Spain, and prevented N. from seeing the Duke d'Enghien, whom he thought a "brave jeune homme," and wished to see.

He said he had been fairly tried by a military tribunal, and the sentence put up in every town in France, according to law.

Spain ought to have been conquered, and he should have gone there himself had not the war with Russia occurred.

Lord Lauderdale was an English peer, but not of "la plus belle race." England will repent of bringing the Russians so far: they will deprive her of India.

If Mr. Fox had lived, he thought he should have made peace—praised the noble way in which the negotiation was begun by him.

The Archduke Charles he did not think a man of great abilities. "Tout ce que j'ai publie sur les finances est de l'Evangile," he said—he allowed no *gaspillage* and had an excellent treasurer; owing to this he saved large sums out of his civil list.

The conscription produced 300,000 men yearly.

He thought us wrong in taking Belgium from France—he said it was now considered as so intimately united that the loss was very mortifying. Perhaps it would have been better, he said, to divide France—he considered one great advantage to consist as I—-(*End of Journal*.)

[22] This account is copied from the old leather-bound journal, in which it was written by Lord John the day after the interview; there is no gap in the account, but the last part appears to have been written later, and is unfinished.

During the session of 1813 Lord John was returned for the family borough of Tavistock. He was obliged, however, principally owing to ill-health, to retire from active life at the end of three years, during which time he made a remarkable speech against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. It must have been at about this time that he thought of giving up politics and devoting himself to literature, which brought the following "Remonstrance" from his friend Thomas Moore:

REMONSTRANCE

(*After a conversation with Lord John Russell in which he had intimated some idea of giving up all political pursuits*.)

What! *thou*, with thy genius, thy youth, and thy name—
  Thou, born of a Russell—whose instinct to run
The accustomed career of thy sires, is the same
  As the eaglet's to soar with his eyes on the sun.

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Whose nobility comes to thee, stamped with a seal,
  Far, far more ennobling than monarch e'er set,
With the blood of thy race, offered up for the weal
  Of a nation that swears by that martyrdom yet I

Shalt *thou* be faint-hearted and turn from the strife,
  From the mighty arena, where all that is grand,
And devoted and pure, and adorning in life,
  'Tis for high-thoughted spirits like thine to command?

Oh no, never dream it—while good men despair
  Between tyrants and traitors, and timid men bow,
Never think, for an instant, thy country can spare
  Such a light from her darkening horizon as thou.

With a spirit as meek as the gentlest of those
  Who in life's sunny valley lie sheltered and warm;
Yet bold and heroic as ever yet rose
  To the top cliffs of Fortune and breasted her storm;

With an ardour for liberty, fresh as in youth
  It first kindles the bard and gives life to his lyre,
Yet mellowed even now by that mildness of truth
  Which tempers, but chills not, the patriot fire;

With an eloquence—not like those rills from a height,
  Which sparkle and foam, and in vapour are o'er;
But a current that works out its way into light
  Through the filtering recesses of thought and of lore.

Thus gifted, thou never canst sleep in the shade;
If the stirrings of Genius, the music of fame,
And the charms of thy cause have not power to persuade,
Yet think how to Freedom thou'rt pledged by thy Name.

Like the boughs of that laurel, by Delphi's decree,
Set apart for the Fane and its service divine,
So the branches that spring from the old Russell tree,
Are by Liberty *claimed* for the use of her shrine.

THOMAS MOORE.

In spite of strong literary proclivities it would certainly have been a wrench to Lord John to leave the stirring scenes of Parliamentary life, and his feeling about it may be gathered from a letter written to his brother in 1841:

Lord John Russell to the Duke of Bedford

ENDSLEIGH, *October* 13, 1841

Whatever may be said about other families, I do not think ours ought to retire from active exertion. In all times of popular movement the Russells have been on the "forward" side. At the Reformation the first Earl of Bedford, in Charles the First's days Francis the great Earl, in Charles the Second's William, Lord Russell, in later times Francis Duke of Bedford—my father—you—and lastly myself in the Reform Bill.

At the General Election in 1818 Lord John was again elected for Tavistock, and began to make the furtherance of Parliamentary Reform his particular aim. In 1820 he became member for Huntingdonshire. Henceforward, whenever the question of Reform came before the House, Lord John was recognized as its most prominent supporter.

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As early as 1822 he moved that “the present state of representation of the people in Parliament requires the most serious consideration of the House.” In 1828 he succeeded in carrying the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. He was also an ardent supporter of the Catholic Relief Bill. Thus in religious, educational, and parliamentary questions he stood up stoutly for liberty. When Lord Grey succeeded the Duke of Wellington, Lord John took a large part in drafting the famous measure of Reform, and the Bill of 1831 was introduced by him; after which speech he became the most popular man in England. Beaten in Committee, the Reform party appealed to the country and returned with a larger majority. On June 24, 1831. he introduced the Bill for the second time.

This Bill, after being carried in the House of Commons, was rejected by the House of Lords, and it was not till June, 1832. that the great Reform Bill (the third introduced within twelve months) became the law of the land. Lord John, who had been admitted to the Cabinet in 1831 during Lord Grey’s Government, became Home Secretary in Lord Melbourne’s Government in 1835, and in 1839 he was appointed Colonial Secretary, which office he held at the time of his second marriage. Up to this point we have only followed his career at a distance, but now through the letters and diaries of his wife we shall be enabled to follow it more intimately to the end.

CHAPTER IV

1841-45

Lord and Lady John Russell stayed at Bowhill till the 31st of July. They had a grand reception at Selkirk on their way back to Minto—a procession headed by all the magistrates, a band of music, and banners flying. Lord John was given the freedom of the burgh, and was received with enthusiasm by the inhabitants. After a short visit to Minto they went to London, to his house in Wilton Crescent.

BOWHILL, *July* 29, 1841

I hardly know how to begin my journal again. I wrote the last page as Fanny Elliot; I am now Fanny Russell.... Forgive me, Almighty Father, for the manifold sins, errors, and omissions of my past life, [a life] to which I look back with deep gratitude for its countless blessings, especially for the affection of those with whom I spent it, so far beyond what I deserved. Enable me to think calmly of the Mother whom I have left.... I was, and still am, in a dream; but one from which I hope never to wake, which I trust will only grow sweeter as the bitter days of parting wear away, as I become more and more the companion and friend of him whose heart is mine as truly as mine is his, and in whom I see all the strength and goodness that my weak and erring nature so much

requires.This is a perfect place and the days have flown—each walk lovelier than the last. Much as poets have sung Ettrick and Yarrow, they have not, and cannot, sing enough to satisfy me.... I am so sorry that to-morrow is our last day, though it is to Minto that we go, but I feel as if a spell would be broken—a spell of such enchantment.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

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30, WILTON CRESCENT, *August* 13, 1841 I say nothing of the day we left Minto, which could not help being of that kind that one hardly dares to look back to.... We were received with great honours at Hawick—bells ringing, flags flying, and I should think the whole population assembled to cheer us—it is very agreeable that people should be wise enough to see his merits, particularly as he does his best to avoid all such exhibitions of popular feeling. I like to see his shy looks on such occasions, as it gives him less right to abuse me for mine on many others.

WILTON CRESCENT, *August* 14, 1841

We arrived here on Thursday evening. Lord John did all he could to make it less strange to me; but how strange it was—and still is. We had a visit from Papa and Henry; my first visitors in *my own house*. The children arrived from Ramsgate all well. Oh, Father in Heaven, strengthen me in the path of righteousness that I may be a mother to these dear children.

WILTON CRESCENT, *August* 15, 1841

Dear Baby a great deal with me. She and Georgy call me Mama. It was too much—-such a mixture of great happiness, anxiety, novelty, painful recollections, longing to make him happy—impossibility of saying all I so deeply feel from the fear of giving him pain. Oh! I thought I should quite fail.Oh, what a weight seemed to be taken off my heart when at night, after speaking about the children, he mentioned their mother. Now I feel that the greatest bar to perfect confidence between us is removed. God bless him for the effort.

In August, soon after the meeting of Parliament, Lord Melbourne's Government was defeated on the Address and resigned.

WILTON CRESCENT, *August* 28, 1841

Lord John dined at Lansdowne House—a last Cabinet dinner.... Letter from the Queen to Lord John, which for a moment overcame him—she does indeed lose a faithful adviser, and deeply does he feel it for his country and her. Oh, I never loved him so well; his mind rises with reverse. It is no small matter for a man whose whole soul is intent on the good of his country to be stopt in his high career—to be, apparently at least, rejected by that country—but no, the people are still and will be more and more with him, and his career will still be great and glorious.... And to me he has never shone so brightly as now—so cheerful, so calm, so hopeful for the great principles for which he falls—and yet, as that moment showed, regretting the event so deeply.

They went down to stay a few days with the Duke of Bedford, and she notes in her diary:

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Continued to like Woburn better and better. Some people went and others came, among the last, Lord Melbourne. Lord Melbourne did not, I thought, appear to advantage; he showed little wish for conversation with anybody, but seemed trying to banish the thoughts of his reverse by talking nonsense with some of the ladies.

The elections which followed the defeat of the Melbourne Ministry gave the Tories a majority of over eighty seats. Peel was joined by Lord Ripon, Lord Stanley, and others, who had supported Lord Grey during the Reform Bill. The Whig Party were in a discomfited condition. They did not look back on their past term of office with much satisfaction; they had been constantly in a minority; and although such useful measures as Rowland Hill's Penny Postage had been carried, nothing had been done to meet the most urgent needs of the time.

The Duke of Bedford had placed Endsleigh at Lord John's disposal, and next month he travelled down with Lady John to Devonshire. Endsleigh is one of the most beautiful places in Devonshire; it is near the little town of Tavistock, where Drake was born. The house looks down from a height on the lovely wooded slopes of the River Tamar. In letters to his brother Lord John had said of Endsleigh, "It is the place I am most fond of in the world." "I think no place so beautiful for walks and drives." He and Lady John always retained the happiest memories of their life there.

ENDSLEIGH, *October* 22, 1841

Long delightful shooting walk with Lord John—delightful although so many songs, poems, and sentiments of my greatest favourites against shooting were running in my head to strengthen the horror that I and all women must have of it.

"Inhuman man—curse on thy barbarous art."

Inhuman woman to countenance his barbarity!

ENDSLEIGH, *October* 26, 1841

Such a day! White frost in the morning, sparkling in the brightest sun, which shone all day. The trees looking redder and yellower from the deep blue sky beyond—the different distances of the hills so marked—the river shining like silver. Oh, what a day! We were prepared for it by the beauty of last night—such that I could scarcely bring myself to shut my window and go to bed. A snow-white mist over all except the garden below my eyes and the tops of the hills beyond, and a bright moon "tipping with silver every mountain head."

ENDSLEIGH, *November* 11, 1841

With Lord John to hear an examination of the School at Milton Abbot. He gave prizes and made a little speech in praise of master and boys, which made him and, I think, me

more nervous than any of the speeches I have heard from him in the House of Commons. I do not know why it should have been affecting, but it was so.... Walk with him in the dusk—his kindness, his tenderness are the joy of my life.

Her marriage had brought her greater happiness than she had thought possible. Writing to her mother from Endsleigh on November 15th, she says:

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How little I thought on my last birthday how it would be before my next. I looked in my journal to see about it and found it full of *him*; but not exactly as I should write now—-reproaching myself for not returning the affection of one whose character I admired and liked so much. I should have been rightly punished by his thinking no more about me; but then, to be sure, I should not have known what my loss was. He said a few days ago that he hoped it would be a happy birthday—said it as humbly as he always speaks of his powers of making me so—yet he must know that a brighter could not have dawned upon me, and that he is the cause....

Lord John Russell to Lady Minto

ENDSLEIGH, *November* 23, 1841

Fanny's own letters will have given you the best insight into her feelings since we came here. It has been the most fortunate thing for us all. Fanny herself, Addy, Georgy, Miss Lister, and indeed all of us, have had means of fitting and *cementing* here, which no London or visiting life could have given us. I never can be sufficiently grateful for such a blessing as Fanny is to me; and I only feel the more grateful that she reconciles herself so well to the loss of the home she loved so well. Nor is this by loving you or any one she has left at all the less—far from it, every day proves her devotion to you and her anxiety for your happiness.

They could not take a long holiday, although Lord John was now in Opposition. Early in February the great Anti-Corn Law League bazaar was held at Manchester, and a few days later Peel carried his sliding scale: 20s. duty when corn was 57s., 12s. when the price was 60s., and 1s. when it reached 73s. Lord John proposed an amendment in favour of a fixed duty of 8s.

CHESHAM PLACE, [23] *February* 14, 1842

Beginning of Corn Law debate. Went to hear Lord John. He began—excellent speech—attacked the measure as founded on the same bad principle as the present corn laws; showed the absurdity of any corn laws to make us independent of foreign countries; the cruelty of doing nothing to relieve the distress of the manufacturing districts; the different results of a sliding scale and a fixed duty; the advantages of free trade, even with all countries, especially with the United States, *etc*., *etc*.; was much cheered. Answered by Mr. Gladstone, beside whose wife I was sitting.

[23] Lord John had built a house, 37, Chesham Place, which was henceforward their London home.

Lord John's amendment was lost by 123 votes; Villiers' and Brougham's amendments in favour of total repeal by over three hundred. This measure of the sliding scale did not embody Peel's real conviction at the time; its object was to discover how much the

agricultural party would stand. Gladstone himself was in favour of a more liberal reduction in the sliding scale; and it appears from his journal that he very nearly resigned the Presidency of the Board of Trade in consequence of Peel's measure. Peel asked Gladstone to reply to Lord John Russell. "This I did," he says, "and with all my heart, for I did not yet fully understand the vicious operation of the sliding scale on the corn trade, and it is hard to see how an eight-shilling duty could even then have been maintained."

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During the next ten months Lord and Lady John were less at the mercy of politics than they were destined to be for many years to come. They were constantly together, either at Chesham Place or at Endsleigh. Lord Minto was living near them in London.

Lord Minto to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *March* 1, 1843

MY DEAR MARY,—I think you will be glad to have my report of Fanny since I have been established almost next door to her, and the more so as it will be so favourable. For whatever misgivings I may have had from difference of age, or the cares of a ready-made nursery of children, have entirely gone off. I really never saw anybody more thoroughly or naturally happy, or upon a footing of more perfect ease and confidence and equality. I forget if you know Lord John well behind the scenes, but there is a simplicity and gentleness and purity in his character which is quite delightful, and it chimes in very fortunately with Fanny's. She has drawn prizes, too, in the children, who are really as nice a little tribe as can be imagined, and I reckon myself a good judge of such small stock. They are very comfortably housed, much better than I ever hope to be in London, and Fanny seems to govern her establishment very handily. I don't know that she has yet quite brought herself to believe that there is anybody in the world so wicked as really to intend to cheat, or to overcharge, or to neglect her work for their own pleasure, but I suppose she will make this discovery in time....

Adieu, dearest Mary, I have such a craving to see you again that I hardly know how I shall keep myself within bounds on this side of the Channel.

Your affectionate,

MINTO

Lady Minto to Lord John Russell

MINTO, *March* 5, 1842

You can now be pretty well aware of what my delight will be to see my dear Fanny again, and to know her tolerably well; but you have not lived with her five-and-twenty years, and therefore memory has no place in your affection for her, and you cannot even now comprehend the blank she makes to me. But you can well comprehend the extent of my pleasure in reading her letters, which breathe happiness in every line, and in hearing from everybody of her good looks and cheerfulness. My only fear for her is an anxiety, natural considering the great change, that her cares and occupations may weigh at times too heavily upon her, and that she will not wish you to see she feels it. This is the only thing she would conceal from you; but as I know the sort of feelings she

formerly endeavoured to conceal from me, it is but too probable she has the same fault still, and nothing but trying to extract her feelings from her will cure her, or at least mitigate the evil.

The next great event in their lives was the birth of their first-born son, John, afterwards Lord Amberley.

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On the 10th of December, 1842, our dear little baby boy was born. He has been thriving ever since to our heart's content. It has been a happy, happy time to me, and to us all. And now I am a mother. Oh, Heavenly Father, enable me to be one indeed and to feel that an immortal soul is entrusted to my care.

On the 10th of December, a year later, she expressed the same thought in the following lines:

Rough winter blew thy welcome; cold on thee
  Looked the cold earth, my snowdrop frail and fair.
Again that day; but wintry though it be,
  Come to thy Mother's heart: no frost is there.
What sparkles in thy dark and guileless eye?
  Life's joyous dawn alone undimmed by care!
Thou gift of God, canst thou then wholly die?
  Oh no, a soul immortal flashes there;
And for that soul now spotless as thy cheek—
  That infant form the Almighty's hand has sealed—
Oh, there are thoughts a mother ne'er can speak;
  In midnight's silent prayer alone revealed.

After Lady John had recovered, they went down to Woburn, and later to stay with Lord Clarendon at The Grove. At both houses large parties were assembled, and Greville notes in his diary that Lord John was in excellent spirits. "Buller goes on as if the only purpose in life was to laugh and make others laugh," and he adds, "John Russell is always agreeable, both from what he contributes himself and his hearty enjoyment of the contributions of others."

One of the principal events which had interested Lady John in the past year had been the secession from the Scottish Church and the establishment of the. Free Church of Scotland. Her feelings about it are expressed in this letter to her sister, Lady Mary Abercromby:

ENDSLEIGH, *September* 11, 1842 The divisions in the Kirk distress me so much that I never read anything about them now. It is disagreeable to find people with whom one cannot agree making use of the most sacred expressions on every occasion where their own power or interests can be helped by them. You used not to be much of a Kirk woman; but surely you would regret seeing many of her children come over to the English. I have just been reading the Thirty-nine Articles for the first time in my life, and am therefore particularly disposed to prefer all that is simple in matters of religion. They *may* be true; but whether they are so or not, is what neither I, nor those who wrote them, nor the wisest man that lives, can judge; that they are presumptuous in the extreme, all who read may see. In short, I hate theology as the greatest enemy of true religion, and may therefore leave the subject to my betters.... I need hardly tell you that

we are leading a happy life, since we are at Endsleigh and *alone*. Did I ever tell you that we are becoming great botanists? I have some hopes of equalling you before we meet, as I feel new

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light breaks upon me every day, and every night too, for I try so hard to repress my ardour during the day for fear of being tiresome to everybody, that my dreams are of nothing else. John, of course, is very little advanced as yet, but he finds it so interesting, to his surprise, that I hope even Parliament will not quite drive it out of his head.

Early in February she was back again in London, where social and political distractions, together with the care of a young family of stepchildren, were soon to prove too much for her strength.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

February 7, 1843

... How you must envy me and how I am to be envied for having my own people within reach. I am hourly thankful for it.... Yet for one thing I envy you—great lady as you are, you lead a quiet life; how far from quiet mine is and always must be, and how intensely I long that it could be more so, how completely worn out both mind and body often feel at the end of a common day, none can imagine but those who have become in one moment mother of six children, wife of the Leader of the House of Commons, and mistress of a house in London. You will suppose that I wish husband and children at the world's end, and you will call me a sinful, discontented creature; you will do anything but pity me, since my only complaint is that I have not as much leisure as so much happiness requires to be enjoyed. Well, say and think what you please; I must let you into my secret follies, in the hope of curing myself in so doing. London, hateful London, alone is at fault. Anywhere else my duties and occupations would be light, and my *pleasures* would be so not in name only.... How *could* I beg Mama, as I used to do, to have more parties and dinners and balls! I cannot now conceive the state of mind which made me actually wish for such things. Now I have them in my power without number, and I detest them all. The world has passed its judgment on me. I am reckoned cold, dull, and unworthy of such a husband; and it is quite right, for I never appear anything else. In short, I doubt my capacity for everything except making husband and children happy—*that* I have not yet begun to doubt. When I do, I will instantly bid them all adieu and "find out some peaceful hermitage." ... Darling Baby was brought in to be seen in his christening dress, the gift of Mama, and such a little love you never saw.... Papa is the best of Grandpapas, as you may imagine from his love of babies, and I delight in seeing him nurse it and speak to it....

Do not think this quite a mad letter. I wrote as the spirit, good or evil, prompted me. I must do so or not write at all....

Ever, my dearest Mary, your most affectionate sister.

Lady Minto was evidently afraid that her daughter was shutting herself up too entirely with her family, and not amusing herself as much as was good for her.

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“My dearest Mama,” she answers (on July 5, 1843)—... I hope to make you laugh at yourself for your fears about me, and to convince you that the seclusion of Belgravia, though great, is not quite like that of Kamschatka; that John’s pleasure is not my pleasure, that the welfare of the children is not my happiness, and that far from constantly devoting my time to them, one whole afternoon this week was devoted to the world and the fine arts in Westminster Hall. I will name to you a few of the friends I met there, by all of whom I was recognized, in spite of my long banishment, my wrinkles, and my grey hair.... [Thirty names follow.]The evening before I had been *without* John to a tea at Mr. W. Russell’s. To-night we are to dine with the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch; to-morrow to breakfast with the Duchess Dowager of Bedford; on Thursday go to the Drawing-room and give our banquet; and so on to the end of the session and season. Seriously, dear Mama, if I had more of the pleasures of my age, I should dislike them very much; those of a more tender age suit me better; and if you do not think it unbecoming, I will have a swing and a rocking-horse in our own garden. You ought rather to scold Papa for shutting himself up; he has seen hardly anybody but ourselves, which has been very agreeable for us—so agreeable that I do not at all like his going away, tho’ of course I do not try to keep him longer when he so much wishes to go, and you so much wish to have him....You think I did not know what I was undertaking when we married, and you are right. The hope, humble as it was, of lightening the duties and cheering the life of one—the wish, God knows how sincere, of being a mother to those who had none, outweighed all other considerations. But if I did not know and have sometimes been overpowered by the greatness of my duties, if I have sighed for the repose and leisure with which marriage generally begins, neither did I know the greatness of my rewards—so far beyond what I deserve. The constant sympathy, encouragement, and approbation of John can make everything easy to me; and these I trust I shall always have; these will keep me young and merry, so do not distress yourself about me, my own dear Mama, and believe me ever your most affectionate child,

FANNY RUSSELL

The year 1843 was one of increasing difficulty for the Tories. Peel’s followers began to suspect more and more strongly that he was not sound on the question of the corn taxes; outside Parliament, Cobden and Bright were battering Protection at their great monthly meetings in Covent Garden Theatre. The troubles in Ireland were growing acute, and the arrest of O’Connell and the Repeal leaders made matters worse. The Government had been forced to abandon their Bill for the education of factory children through the bitter opposition of Dissenters and Radicals, who thought the Bill increased the already too great influence

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of the Church. At the beginning of the year the Government had been strong enough to throw out Lord Howick's motion for a committee of inquiry into the causes of distress, which would have entailed a division upon the Corn Laws; but the strength of the Ministry was now seriously diminished. Parliament was prorogued late in August; on the 5th Lord John left London, hoping that he had done with politics till next year. The whole family moved down to Endsleigh, where, soon afterwards, his eldest stepdaughter fell ill of a fever.

Lady John caught the infection. She had been living up to the limit of her energies, and her case proved a grave one. They moved to Minto in October, and never again used Endsleigh as their country house. By the beginning of 1844 she was sufficiently recovered to attend the House of Commons and to hear her husband speak upon the Irish question. In this speech he declared himself in favour of putting Catholics, Anglicans, and Dissenters on an equality; not by disestablishing the English Church in Ireland, but by endowing the Catholics. He summed up the political situation by saying: "In England the government, as it should be, is a government of opinion; the government of Ireland is notoriously a government by force."

February 15, 1844

O'Connell arrived from Dublin—much cheered by the crowd outside and by the Irish and Radical members inside the House. John shook hands with him. O'Connell said: "I thank you for your admirable speech. It makes up to us for much that we have gone through."

Lady John's next Diary was lost, and the first entry in her new Diary was written after serious illness.

LONDON, *February* 2, 1845

I have found in illness even more than in health how much better I am loved than I deserve to be. To say nothing of the unwearied care and cheerful watching of my dearest John, the children have given me such proofs of affection as gladdened many an hour of pain or weariness. One day, while I was ill in bed, and Georgy by me, I told her how kind it was of God to send illness upon us at times, as warnings to repent of past faults and prepare for death. Upon which she said: "But, Mama, *you* can't have done anything to be sorry for." No self-examination, no sermon, could have made me feel more humble than these words of a little child.

During the early part of the year, while Lord John was supporting in the House of Commons the endowment of the Maynooth College for priests and the establishment of

colleges in other important Irish towns, Lady John was living at Unsted Wood, near Godalming, a house they had taken for the year.

Their constant separation was painful to both, and as soon as Parliament rose they decided to go to Minto. There the state of her health became so alarming that, to be within reach of medical advice, they moved to Edinburgh.

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The distress of the poorer classes throughout the country during this autumn was terrible. It was to meet this distress, unparalleled since the Middle Ages, that Lord John wrote from Edinburgh his famous Free Trade letter to his London constituents, urging them to clamour for the only remedy, “to unite to put an end to a system which has proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people.”

Shortly afterwards he was called to London by the sudden death of his old friend Lady Holland, and he had hardly returned when the news of Peel’s resignation reached him. Peel, thoroughly alarmed, had called a Cabinet Council to consider the repeal of the Corn Laws. Lord Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, had strongly dissented, and carried several Ministers with him, thus compelling Peel to resign.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

EDINBURGH, *December* 2, 1845

I wonder what Ralph and William will say to John’s letter to his electors. It is what I have long wished, and I am delighted that the chief barrier between him and the Radical part of the Whig party should be knocked down by it. In short, *patriotically* I am quite pleased, but *privately* far from it; I dread its being a stepping-stone to office, which, not to mention myself, would kill him very soon. He has already quite as much work as his health can stand, so what would it be with office in *addition?* However, I do not torment myself with a future which may never come, or which, if it does, I may never see. I forget whether I have written since poor Lady Holland’s death, which John felt very much. It is sad that her death should have startled one as only that of a young person generally does; but, old as she was, she never appeared so, and she belonged as much to society as she ever did. Poor woman, it is a comfort that she died so calmly, whatever it was that enabled her to do so.

Lord John had hardly returned to Edinburgh when the event which she had been trying to think remote and unlikely was upon them.

EDINBURGH, *December* 8, 1845

Evening of utter consternation. A message from the Queen requiring John’s attendance at Osborne House immediately.... John set out at ten this morning (December 9th) on his dreary and anxious journey, leaving a dreary and anxious wife behind him. Baby not well towards evening. Sent for Dr. Davidson. Oh, Heavenly Father, preserve to me my earthly treasures, and whatever be my lot in life, they will make it a happy one. Forgive me for such a prayer. The hope of happiness is too strong within me.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

LONDON, *December* 10, 1845

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It is very sad, this moment, when many will think me at the height of my ambition. But when I think of you and your many trials, and the children with their ailments to disturb you, when I cannot share your anxieties—it is all very sad. I doubt, too, of the will of the country to go through with it—and then I shall have done mischief by calling upon them. I saw Mr. Bright at one of the stations. He spoke much of the enthusiasm. God save and preserve us all.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

OSBORNE HOUSE, *December* 11th, 1845

Well, I am here—and have seen Her Majesty. It is proposed to me to form a Government, and nothing can be more gracious than the manner in which this has been done. Likewise Sir Robert Peel has placed his views on paper, and they are such as very much to facilitate my task. Can I do so wild a thing? For this purpose, and to know whether it is wild or not, I must consult my friends.... There end politics—I hope you have not suffered from anxiety and the desolation of our domestic prospects.... I stay here to-night, and summon my friends in London to-morrow—Ever, ever affly., with love to all,

J.R.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

EDINBURGH, *December* 13, 1845

I have just read your note which I so anxiously expected from Osborne House. No, my dearest, it is not a wild thing. It is a great duty which you will nobly perform; and, with all my regrets—with the conviction that private happiness to the degree we have enjoyed is at an end if you are Prime Minister—still I sincerely hope that no timid friend will dissuade you from at least trying what you have yourself called upon the country to help you in. If I liked it better, I should feel less certain it was a duty. If you had not written that letter you might perhaps have made an honourable escape; but now I see none.

She wrote again on the 14th:

I am as eager and anxious lying here on my sofa—a broken-down, useless bit of rubbish—as if I were well and strong and in the midst of the turmoil. And I am proud to find that even the prospect of what you too truly call the “desolation of our domestic prospects,” though the words go to my very heart of hearts, cannot shake my wish that you should make the attempt. My mind is made up.... My ambition is that you should be the head of the most moral and religious government the country has ever had.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

EDINBURGH, *December* 14, 1845

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DEAREST MARY,—All you say of your dreams for me in days gone by is like yourself. You were always thinking more of my happiness than your own. What a strange world it is, where the happiest and saddest events are so often linked together—for instance, the marriage and absence of those one would wish to have always by one. I certainly never wish either of our marriages *undone;* but “Seas between us braid hae roared sin auld Lang-syne” more than either of us could have borne to look forward to. If ever I did wish myself freed from my husband, it has been for the last five days, since the highest honour in the land has been within his reach. Oh dear! how unworthy I am of what to many wives would be a source of constant pride, not only for their husband’s sake, but their own; whereas, proud as I *am* of so public a mark of his country’s good opinion, and convinced as I am that he ought not to shrink from the post, still to myself it is all loss, all sacrifice—every favourite plan upset—London, London, London, and London in its worst shape—a constant struggle between husband and children, constant anxiety about his health and theirs, added to that about public affairs. But I will not begin to count up the countless miseries of office to those who have, I will not say a love, but a passion for quiet, leisure, and the country.As I said before, I am so convinced that he ought to make the trial, unless the difficulties are much greater than I have wisdom to see, that I should be positively disappointed if I found he had given it up.Besides, I see many bright sides to it all. You will think I have lost all my old patriotism, but it is not so; and the prospect of seeing my husband repeal the Corn Laws, and pacify and settle Ireland, is one that repays me for much private regret. You see, if he does undertake to govern, I expect him to do it successfully, and this in spite of many a wise friend. He went off looking so miserable himself that I long to hear from somebody else how he looks now. You cannot think what a thunderbolt it was to us both. We were reading aloud, about an hour before bedtime, when the messenger was announced—and he brought the Queen’s fatal letter. Oh! how difficult I found it not to call the man every sort of name! The next morning John was off, and though he flattered himself he would be able to come back to me in any case, *I* flatter myself no such thing.Poor baby made his resolution falter that morning—he would not leave him for a moment, clinging round his neck and laying his little cheek on his, coaxing him in every possible way. He does not conceal either from himself or me how entire the sacrifice must be of private happiness to public duty, of which this parting was the first sample; and he writes of the desolation of domestic prospects in so sad a way that I am obliged to write like a Spartan to him.

What her feelings were at this time the above letter shows. What was happening in London may be gathered from Lord John’s letters and the following letter from Macaulay to his sister: [24]

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"... Lord John has not consented to form a Ministry. He has only told the Queen that he would consult his friends, and see what could be done. We are all most unwilling to take office, and so is he. I have never seen his natural audacity of spirit so much tempered by discretion, and by a sense of responsibility, as on this occasion. The question of the Corn Laws throws all other questions into the shade. Yet, even if that question were out of the way, there would be matters enough to perplex us. Ireland, we fear, is on the brink of something like a civil war—the effect, not of Repeal agitation, but of severe distress endured by the peasantry. Foreign Politics look dark. An augmentation of the Army will be necessary. Pretty legacies to leave to a Ministry which will be in a minority in both Houses. I have no doubt that there is not a single man among us who would not at once refuse to enlist, if he could do so with a clear conscience. Nevertheless, our opinion is that, if we have reasonable hope of being able to settle the all-important question of the Corn Laws in a satisfactory way, we ought, at whatever sacrifice of quiet and comfort, to take office, though only for a few weeks. But can we entertain such a hope? This is the point; and till we are satisfied about it we cannot positively accept or refuse. A few days must pass before we are able to decide."It is clear that we cannot win the battle with our own unassisted strength. If we win it at all, it must be by the help of Peel, Graham, and their friends. Peel has not seen Lord John; but he left with the Queen a memorandum, containing a promise to support a Corn Bill founded on the principles of Lord John's famous letter to the electors of London."

[24] Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay."

Lord John to Lady John Russell

CHESHAM PLACE, *December* 14, 1845

Well, my friends agreed with me that, unless I could have a very good prospect of carrying a grand measure about corn, I had better decline the Queen's Commission. So we are to have all the old Cabinet men here on Tuesday, and try to ascertain whether we are agreed on a measure, and whether Sir Robert Peel would support such a measure as we should propose. On Wednesday evening, or Thursday, I hope the matter will be cleared up, and if you ask me what I think, I should say it is most probable that we shall be made into a Ministry. How very strange and incomprehensible it seems; and much as I have had to do with public affairs, I feel now as if I knew nothing about them, and was quite incompetent to so great an office—to rule over such vast concerns, with such parties. With so many great things and so many little things to decide it is quite appalling.Many of our friends say I ought to decline; but I feel that to do so would be mean and dastardly while I have a prospect of such great good before me—possible if not probable, but I think even probable. It would seem that most of the Cabinet thought I should have a better chance of preventing bitter attacks than Peel would. This may be so, or not.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

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CHESHAM PLACE, *December* 17, 1845

I want a security that I shall be able to carry a total repeal of the Corn Laws without delay, and that security must consist in an assurance of Sir Robert Peel's support. Unless I get this, I give up the task.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

MINTO, *Sunday, December* 21, 1845

It is difficult to write while our suspense lasts.... It does not seem unlikely that Lord Grey [25] will have yielded, and all be smooth, or *smoother,* again. Papa tells me not to wish it even on public grounds. On private ones I certainly do not; but I should be ashamed if at such a time my anxieties were not chiefly for you as a *statesman,* not as my husband, and for my country more than for myself. If it turns out that the interests of the statesman and the country and the wife agree, why then let us be thankful; if not, why then let us be thankful still that we can make some sacrifice to duty. You see that my "courage mounteth with occasion"; and though I have low and gloomy fits when I think of my ill-health and its probable consequences, I am sure that, on the whole, I shall not disgrace you. Oh, what a week of toil and trouble you have had, and how gladly I would have shared them with you to more purpose than I can do at this *terrible* distance.... It is so pleasant to write to you. When I have finished my letter I always grow sad, as if I was really saying good-bye to you. How have you been sleeping? and eating? and have you walked every day? ... Good-bye, Heaven bless you, my dearest love. I trust that this has been a day of rest to you, and that God hears and accepts our prayers for one another.

[25] Third Earl Grey, son of the Prime Minister.

Lord John wrote daily to his wife, and the following three letters to her show what he felt during this anxious time:

CHESHAM PLACE, *December* 19, 1845

It is all at an end. Howick [Lord Grey] would not serve with Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary, and it was impossible for me to go on unless I had both. I am very happy ... at the result. I think that for the present it will tend much to our happiness; and power may come, some day or other, in a less odious shape.

CHESHAM PLACE, *December* 20, 1845

I write to you with a great sense of relief on public affairs. Lord Grey's objection to sitting in a Cabinet in which Palmerston was to have the Foreign Office was invincible. I could not make a Cabinet without Lord Grey, and I have therefore been to Windsor this morning to resign my hard task. The Queen, as usual, was very gracious.... I have left

a paper with her in which I state that we were prepared to advise free trade in corn without gradation and without delay; but that I could support Sir Robert Peel in any measure which he should think more practicable.

CHESHAM PLACE, *December* 21, 1845

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The desponding tone of your letter, yesterday, although I do not believe it was otherwise than the effect of weakness, makes me rejoice at my escape a thousand times more than I should otherwise have done. I reflect on the misery I should have felt with every moment of my time occupied here in details of appointments, while my thoughts were with you.... The Queen and the Prince have behaved beautifully throughout.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

MINTO, *December* 24, 1845

You will not be surprised that a great deal of the time which I meant to devote to you this morning has run away in talk to my husband. You will see by the *Times* what the *cause* of the failure is: Lord Grey's refusal to belong to the Ministry if Lord Palmerston was at the Foreign Office—a most unfortunate cause, we must all agree, but in the opinion of Papa and many other wise people, a most fortunate occurrence on the whole, as they considered it next to impossible that such a Ministry as John could have formed would have been strong enough to be of use to the country.My husband, who is no coward, sees it differently, and thinks that with a united Cabinet he *might* have gone on successfully and carried not only Corn Law Repeal, but other great questions; though the probability was that they would only have carried that and then gone out. But even that would have been something worth doing, and better and more naturally done by Whigs than Tories. One good thing is that John has returned in excellent spirits. *All* his personal wishes and feelings were so against taking office at present, and the foretaste he had of it in this lonely and most harassing fortnight was so odious to him that his only feeling at first when he gave it all up was pure delight; and he slept, which he had not been able to do before. It certainly was a terrible prospect to us both—one immovable in Edinburgh, the other equally immovable in London—and it required all my patriotism to wish the thing to go on.

If it had gone on, the name of Lord John Russell would be now more often on men's lips. Peel's popular fame rests upon the abolition of the Corn Laws, Lord John's upon the first Reform Bill. It was but an accident—Lord Grey's objection to Palmerston at the Foreign Office—which prevented the name of Lord John Russell from being linked with those of Cobden and Bright, and imperishably associated with both the great measures of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER V

1846

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After Lord John's failure to form a Ministry, Peel returned to power; Gladstone replaced Stanley at the War and Colonial Office, and Stanley became the acknowledged leader of the protectionist Opposition. Having Lord John's assurance that the Whigs would support anti-Corn Law legislation, Peel set about preparing his famous measure. But before it could be discussed in Parliament, the usual explanations with regard to resignation and resumption of office had to be gone through. In his speech on this occasion, Lord John tried to shield Lord Grey as far as possible from the unpopularity which he had incurred by refusing to work with Palmerston in the same Cabinet. Feeling on both sides of the House was against Lord Grey; for both Free Traders and Protectionists thought that Repeal ought to have come from the Whigs, and that it was Lord Grey who had made this impossible.

Lady John remained in Edinburgh, too ill to move. While her husband was helping Peel at Westminster, the following letters passed between them:

Lord John to Lady John Russell

LONDON, *January 23,* 1846

I did not write to you last night, as I thought I could give you a clearer account to-day. Sir Robert Peel gave up Protection altogether on the ground that he had changed his opinion.... I dine with the Fox Club [to-day?] and at Lansdowne House to-morrow. I have rather startled Lord Lansdowne this morning by some of my views about Ireland.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

EDINBURGH, *January* 25, 1846

I never doubted that you were as noble by nature as by name; and I am now more happily convinced of it than ever. Your whole speech was plain and excellent, but the part that I dwell upon with the greatest pleasure is that about Lord Grey.... I generally think your speeches a curious contrast to Sir Robert's, and it does not fail on this occasion. His humble confession of former errors, his appeal to our sympathies, and his heroic tone at the close, all got rather the better of my reason while I read; but the more I think over his conduct, the less becomes the effect of his words. Yours, on the contrary, as usual, only gain in force the more they are reflected on, simply because they are true. And now, having congratulated you quite as much as is good for your vanity, I must praise myself a little for the way in which I have hitherto borne your absence. What with its present pain, the uncertainty as to when it may end, and my varying and wearying state of health, I have many a time been inclined to lie and cry; and if ever I allowed myself to dwell in thought on the happy days which sad memory brings to light, I *should* lie and cry; those days when neither night nor day could take me from your side, and when it was as difficult to look forward to sickness or sorrow as it now is to believe that health and happiness—such happiness as that—are in store for

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us. But I do *not* dwell upon past enjoyments, but upon present blessings, and I *do* lie and talk and read and write and think cheerfully and gratefully.Dearest, I know you cannot see much of the children, but when you do, pray be both Papa and Mama to them. Do not let their little minds grow reserved towards you, or your *great* mind towards them. Help them to apply what they hear you read from the Bible to their own little daily pleasures and cares, and you will find how delightfully they take it all in.

God bless you, my dearest. Pray go out every day, and take Isabel and Bessy or one of the small ones with you sometimes to enliven you.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

EDINBURGH, *January* 26, 1846

Your mention of the dreams which you had had of happiness for Ireland made me sad, and you know how I shared in those dreams.... I like the way in which politics are talked here, it is far enough from the scene of action for them to lose much of their personality, and for all the little views to be lost in the greater—and yet the interest is as great as in London.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

EDINBURGH, *January 28*, 1846

Well, I wonder what you will say to the debate or rather the explanations in Parliament. Are not John's and Sir Robert's speeches a curious contrast? and is not John a generous man? and is not Sir Robert a puzzling one? and was there ever such a strange state of parties? What an unhappy being a real Tory must be, at least in England, battling so vainly against time and tide, and doomed to see the idols of his worship crumbled to dust one after another. In *your* benighted country [Italy] their end is further off; but still it must come. I am reading a book on Russia that makes my blood boil at every page. It is called "Eastern Europe and the Emperor Nicholas," and I am positively ashamed of the reception we gave that wholesale murderer in our free country.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

CHESHAM PLACE, *February* 1, 1846

The Ministry will carry their Corn Measure, but will hardly last a month after it. What next? I think the next Government will be Whig, as the Protection party have no corps of officers in the House of Commons. So that their only way of avenging themselves upon Peel is to bring in a Liberal Ministry.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

MINTO, *February* 7, 1846

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I am glad you have a satisfactory letter from the doctor. A volunteered letter from him, as this was, must be a good sign.... I shall all my life regret not having been with you at this most interesting period in our political history; for the longest letters can but barely make up for the loss of the hourly chats upon each event with all its variations which are only known in London. Then, I think how sad it is for you to have nobody to care, as I should care, whether you had spoken well or ill. But all this and much more we must bear as cheerfully as we can; and I am glad to think that though *one wife* is far from you, your other wife, the House of Commons, leaves you little time to spend in pining for her. I think you quite right in your intention of voting for Sir Robert's measure as it is, in preference to any amendment which would not be carried, and might delay the settlement of the question. Not, as you well know, because I am not heart and soul a Free Trader, but because I think it a more patriotic, as well as a more consistent, course for you to take. Then if you come into office, as seems probable, you may make what improvements you like, and especially put an end to the miserable trifling about slave-grown sugar; a question in which I take a sentimental interest, as your first gift to me was your great sugar speech in 1841.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *February* 9, 1846

Here I am in the House of Commons, on the important night of Corn, having just introduced Morpeth as a new Member. It all makes me very nervous—I mean to speak to-night, and I must take care not to join in the bitterness of the Tories, and at the same time to avoid the praise of the Ministry, which I see is the fashion. ... I am glad you all take such interest in the present struggle—it would be difficult not to do so. Our majority will, I hope, be eighty. As matters stand at present no one feels sure of the Lords.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

CHESHAM PLACE, *February* 16, 1846

The events of the last few days have been remarkable. There has been no move, no agitation in the counties; but wherever a contest is announced the Protection party carry it hollow.... In London the Protectionists have created in a fortnight a very strong and compact party, from 220 to 240, in the Commons, and no one knows how many in the Lords—thus we are threatened with a revival of the real old Tory party. Of course they are very civil to us, and they all say that we ought to have settled this question and not Sir Robert. But how things may turn out no one can say.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

CHESHAM PLACE, *February* 21, 1846

I trust the feelings you have, and the enjoyment you seem to take in the flowers and buds of the garden, show that you have before you the opening Paradise of good health.

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Baby's letter is very merry indeed. I long to see his little face and curly locks again.

I am going to have a meeting at twelve and of twelve on the affairs of Ireland. It is a thorny point, and vexes me more than the Corn Laws. Lord Bessborough and Lansdowne are too much inclined to coercion, and I fear we shall not agree. But on the other hand, if we show ourselves for strong measures without lenitives, I fear we shall entirely lose the confidence of Ireland.

February 22, 1846

We are much occupied with the affairs of Ireland—I am engaged in persuading Lansdowne to speak out upon the affairs of that unhappy country, where a Bill called an Insurrection Act seems the ordinary medicine.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

Minto, *February* 23, 1846

You were quite right to send the children out in spite of the remains of their coughs, but how hard it is for you to have all those domestic responsibilities added to your numerous public ones. It is more than your share, while I linger away my hours on the sofa, without so much as a dinner to order for anybody. Your Coercive measures for Ireland frighten me. I do not trust any Englishman on the subject except yourself, and you cannot keep to your own opinion in favour of leniency and act upon it. I often think how unfortunate it is that there should be that little channel of sea between England and Ireland. It prevents each country from considering itself a part of the other, and a bridge across it would make it much more difficult for Orange or Repeal bitterness to be kept up. I send you Lord William's [26] letter. But first I must tell you that in a former letter from him he compared you to Antony throwing away the world for Cleopatra.... I read one of Lord Campbell's Lives aloud yesterday evening—Sir Christopher Hatton—a short and entertaining one; but from which it would appear that a man can make a respectable Lord Chancellor without having seriously studied anything except dancing....

[26] Lord John Russell's brother.

Lord William Russell to Lady John Russell

Genoa, *February* 12, 1846

My dear Sister—I thank you much for your letter of the 4th from Minto, but regret to find my letters make you not only angry, but very angry. If I was within reach I should have my ears well cuffed, but at this distance I am bold.... You will not have to get into a towering passion in defending your husband from my accusation of loving you too much

and dashing the world aside and bid it pass, that he might enjoy a quiet life with his Fanny. I begin by obeying you and asking pardon and saying you did quite right not to think me in earnest, and to “know that I often write what I do not mean,” a fault unknown to myself, and one to be corrected, for it is a great fault, if not worse. The letter

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just received pleases me much, for I find in it a high tone of moral rectitude, a noble feeling of devotion to your husband's calling, an unselfish determination to fulfil your destiny, an abnegation of domestic comfort, a latent feeling of ambition tempered with resignation, such as becomes a woman, that do you the highest honour.... I think the crisis we are going through in England very alarming ... a frightful system of political immorality is stalking through the land—the Democracy is triumphant, the Aristocracy is making a noble and last effort to hold its own, unfortunately in so bad, so unjust, so selfish, so stupid a cause, that it must fall covered with shame.... The hero of the day, Cobden, is a great man in his way, the type of an honest manufacturer, but for the moment all-powerful. I am domiciled with your brother and sister, [27] under the same roof, dine daily at their hospitable table, sit over the fire and cose and prose with them, sometimes alone with your sister, who thinks and talks very like you, that is, not only well but very well.

I am very affectionately yours,

W.R.

P.S.—You say it would be unworthy of John to *pine* for office. I think the difficulties of a Prime Minister so great and the toil so irksome that the country ought to be full of gratitude to any man that will undertake it. I am full of gratitude to Sir Robert Peel for having sacrificed his ease and enjoyment for the good of his country, and to enable us to sit in the shade under our own fig-trees. Glory and gratitude to Peel.

[27] Lady Mary Abercromby.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

CHESHAM PLACE, *February* 15, 1846

I have been to St. Paul's to-day. Mr. Bennett enforced still further obedience to the Church, and what was strange, he said Papists and Dissenters were prevented by the prejudices of education from seeing the truth—as if the same thing were not just as true of his own Church. I do not see how it is possible to be out of the Roman Catholic pale and not use one's own faculties on the interpretation of the Bible. That tells us that our Saviour said, he who knew that to love God with all our soul and to love our neighbour as ourself were the two great commandments, was not far from the kingdom of God. This surely can be known and even followed without a priest at all.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

MINTO, *February* 27, 1846

You seem to have had a very pleasant dinner at the Berrys, and I wish I had been at it. I wonder sometimes whether the social enjoyments of life are for ever at an end for me: and in my hopeful moods I plan all sorts of pleasant little *teas* at Chesham Place—at home from nine to eleven on certain days, in an easy way, without smart dressing and preparation of any sort beyond a few candles and plenty of tea.

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I feel and always have felt ambitious to establish some more popular and rational kind of society than is usual in London. But the difficulty in our position would be to limit the numbers: however, limiting the hours would help to do this; and I do not think one need be very brilliant or agreeable oneself to make such a thing succeed well. But what a foolish presumptuous being I am, lying here on my sofa, not even able to share in the quiet amusements of Minto, making schemes for the entertainment of all the London world! However, these dreams and others of a more serious nature as to my future life, if God should restore me to health, help to while away my hours of separation from you, and make me forget for awhile how long I have been debarred from fulfilling my natural duties, either to you, the children, or the world. This, believe me, is the hardest of the many hard trials that belong to illness, or at least, such an illness as mine, in which I have mercifully but little physical suffering.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

MINTO, *March* 1, 1846

What pleasant times we live in, when the triumph of right principles brings about one great and peaceful change after another in our country; each one (this from Free Trade in a great degree) promising an increase of happiness and diminution of war and bloodshed to the whole world. No doubt, however, its good effects will be but slowly perceived, and I fear there is much disappointment in store for the millions of poor labourers, who expect to have abundance of food and clothing the moment the Bill becomes a law. Poor creatures, their state is most deplorable and haunts me day and night. The very best of Poor Laws must be quite insufficient. Indeed, wherever there is a necessity for a Poor Law at all there must be something wrong, I think; for if each proprietor, farmer and clergyman did his duty there would be no misery, and if they do *not*, no Poor Law can prevent it. You cannot think how I long for a few acres of *our own*, in order to know and do what little I could for the poor round us. It would not lessen one's deep pity for the many in all other parts of the country, but one's own conscience would be relieved from what, rightly or wrongly, I now feel as a weight upon it; and without a permanent residence one does not become really acquainted with poor people in their prosperity as well as adversity; one only does a desultory unsatisfactory sort of good. I have not seen Dickens's letter about the ragged schools of which you speak. What you say of the devotion of the Roman Catholic priests to the charities of religion reflects shame on ours of a purer faith, but is what I have always supposed. The Puseyites are most like them in that as well as in their mischievous doctrines; but then a new sect is always zealous for good as well as for evil.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

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CHESHAM PLACE, *March* 3, 1846

I am so happy to find you have had a good night and are stronger in feeling. If you had not told me how weak and ill you have been I should have been beyond measure anxious; but, as it is, and with your letters, I have been very unhappy and exceedingly disappointed. For my hopes are often extravagant, and I love to look forward to days of health and happiness and gratitude to God for His blessings.... Need I say after all I have suffered on your account that while I am conducting my campaign in Italy [28] my thoughts are always with you? ... I cannot bear your absence. The interest of a great crisis, and the best company of London cannot make me tolerably patient under the misfortune of your being away; and it is you, and you alone who could inspire me with such deep love.

[28] An allusion to Napoleon's letters to Josephine from Italy, which she had been reading.

Peel had taken the first step towards feeding the poor at home. He had also done his best to relieve the immediate distress of Ireland. Shiploads of Indian corn had been landed, and public works for the help of the destitute established up and down the country. But the chief grievance of the Irish, which was at the bottom of half the agrarian crime, had not been remedied. The House of Lords, by having thrown out Peel's Bill for compensating outgoing tenants for improvements their own money or exertions had created, was largely responsible for the violence and sedition now threatening life and property throughout Ireland. The true remedy having been rejected by the Lords, the Government had to meet violence by violence. No sooner had the Corn Bill been passed in the House of Commons than Peel brought in a stringent Sedition Bill for Ireland. Lord John and the Whigs disliked the Bill because it was extremely harsh.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

EDINBURGH, *March* 12, 1846

Nothing that I read in the speeches in favour of the Coercion Bill convinced me that it would do the slightest good.... It must embitter the Irish against England, for which there is no need. Nothing can be more shocking than the continual outrages and murders in Ireland; but it is the penalty we pay for a long course of misgovernment, and from which nothing but a long course of mild and good government can set us free; certainly not severe indiscriminate measures which mark out Ireland still more as an unhappy conquered province, instead of a part of the nation. Such are my sentiments, dearest, on this subject, which always makes my blood boil.... I read the "Giaour" two nights ago to Addy—it has as great and as numerous beauties as any poem Byron ever wrote—but I find I am not old enough, or wise enough, or good enough to *bear* Byron,

and left off feeling miserable, as he always contrives to make one; despair is what he excels in, and he makes it

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such beautiful despair that all sense of right or wrong is overwhelmed by it. I said to Addy that one always requires an antidote after reading Byron, and that she and I ought instantly to go and hem pocket-handkerchiefs, or make a pudding—and that is what she has illustrated in the newspaper I send.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *March*, 1846

Your views about the Irish Coercion Bill are very natural; but Bessborough, who is the best authority we have about Irish matters, thinks it will tend to stop crime—and especially the crime of murder. I should be loath to throw out a Bill which may have this good effect; but I shall move a resolution which will pledge the House to measures of remedy and conciliation. This may lead to a great debate.... The little girls look very nice, but Toza [29] is, if possible, thinner than ever. However, she laughs and dances like a little fairy. I dined with Mrs. Drummond yesterday. Macaulay [30] was there—-entertaining, and not too much of a monopolist—I mean of talk—which, like other monopolies, is very disagreeable.

[29] Victoria.

[30] Lord John had written to his wife in April, 1845: "Macaulay made one of his splendid speeches again last night.... He is a wonderful man, and must with the years before him be a great leader."

Lady John to Lord John Russell

EDINBURGH, *March* 19, 1846

After dinner we drove to Portobello sands and there got out and walked for an hour; the sea was of the brightest blue, covered with sails; Inchkeith and the opposite coast so clear that every inequality of hill or rock was seen; Arthur's Seat, grand and snowy, was behind us, and the glittering sands under our feet—the whole beautiful far beyond description and beyond what I have yet seen it in any weather; for the east wind and bright sun are what it requires. How I did wish for you! I need not say that I only half enjoyed it, as I only half enjoy anything without you. My comfort in your absence is to think that you are not taken from me for nothing, but for your country's service; and that even if we could have foreseen four years ago all the various anxieties and trials that awaited us, we should have married all the same. As it was, we knew that ours could not be a life of quiet ease; and it was for me to decide whether I was able to face the reverse—and I *did* decide, and I *am* able—

"Io lo cercai, fui preso
Dall' alta indole sua, dal suo gran nome;
Pensai dapprima, oh pensai che incarco
E l'amor d'un uomo che a gli' altri e sopra!
Perche allor correr, solo io nol lasciai
La sua splendida via, s' io non potea
Seguire i passi suoi?"

Now I am sure you do not know where those lines are from. They are a wee bit altered from Manzoni's "Carmagnola"; and they struck me so much, when I read them to-day, as applicable to you and me, and made me think of your "splendida via" and all its results.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

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EDINBURGH, *March* 23, 1846

Thanks for your precious letter of Saturday. You need not grieve at having brought cares and anxieties ... upon me. You have given me a love that repays them all; and such words as you write in that letter strengthen me for all that our “splendida via” may entail upon us, however contrary to my natural tastes or trying to my natural feelings. What a delightful hope you give of your getting away on the 2nd—but I am too wise to build upon it.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

EDINBURGH, *March* 25, 1846

.... There is a calmness and fairness and *depth* in conversation here which one seldom meets with in London, where people are too much taken up by the present to dwell upon the past, or look forward to the future—and where consequently passion and prejudice are mixed up with most that one hears. Dante, and Milton, and Shakespeare, *etc*., have little chance amid the hubbub of the great city—but with all its faults, the great city is the place in the world I most wish to see again.... At poor Lady Holland’s one *did* hear the sort of conversation I find here, and surely you must miss not only her but her house very much.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

April 3, 1846

At all events pray do not distress yourself with the reflexion that you will not be a companion to me during my political trials. You have been feeling strong, ... that strength will, I trust, return. I see no reason why it should not—and there is no one in existence who can think so well with my thoughts and feel so truly with my feelings as yourself. So in sickness and in sorrow, so in joy and prosperity, we must rely on each other and let no discouraging apprehensions shake our courage.

Meanwhile in Parliament the Irish Coercion Bill was dragging on. Lord Bessborough and other Whig peers had changed their mind about its value, and Lord John, instead of proposing an amendment, definitely opposed it. The Protectionists, eager to revenge themselves upon Peel, who, they felt, had betrayed them, caught at the opportunity and voted with the Whigs. The Government was defeated by a large majority on the very day the Repeal of the Corn Laws passed the House of Lords, and the Queen sent for Lord John, who became Prime Minister in July, 1846.

This time, beyond the usual troubles in the distribution of offices, he had no difficulty in forming a Ministry; but when formed it was in an unusually difficult position. They were in power only because the Protectionists had chosen to send Peel about his business,

and the Irish problem was growing more and more acute. The potato crop of 1846 was even worse than that of 1845, and Peel's system of public works had proved an expensive failure, more pauperising than almsgiving. The Irish population fell from eight millions to five, and those who survived handed down an intensified hatred of England, which lives in some of their descendants to this day.

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In the autumn of 1846 Lord John, little thinking that a home would soon be offered to him by the Queen, bought a country place, Chorley Wood, near Rickmansworth.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

CHORLEY WOOD, RICKMANSWORTH, *December* 12, 1846

About the 10th January we all go back to town for good, as John must be there some time before the meeting of Parliament. Oh that meeting of Parliament! It is so different from any I have ever looked forward to; and though it has always been awful, this is so much *more* so. I shall then first really feel that John is Minister, and find out the *pains* of the position, having as yet little experience of anything but the pleasures of it. Then will come the daily toil beyond his strength, the daily abuse to reward him, and the daily trial to us both of hardly meeting for a quarter of an hour between breakfast and bedtime. In short, I had better not begin to enumerate the evils that await us, as they are innumerable. However, I feel very courageous and that they will appear trifles if he succeeds; and if he is turned out before the end of the session, I shall never regret that he has made the attempt. It is a fearful time to have the government in his hands; but for that very reason I am glad that *he* and no other has it. The accounts from Ireland are worse and worse, and what with the extreme misery of the unfortunate poor and the misbehaviour of the gentry, he is made very miserable. As he said this morning, at times they almost drive him mad.

During Lady John's long illness in Edinburgh, Francis Lord Jeffrey had been one of her kindest friends, and had helped to brighten many a weary hour by his visits and conversation.

Lord Jeffrey to Lady John Russell

EDINBURGH, *December* 21, 1846

It is very good in you to remember my sunset visits to you in the hotel. I never pass by its windows in these winter twilights without thinking of you, and of the lessons of cheerful magnanimity (as well as other things) I used to learn by the side of your couch. The Murrays and Rutherfords are particularly well; the latter will soon be up among you, and at his post for the opening of a campaign of no common interest and anxiety. For my part, I am terribly frightened—for the first time, I believe I may say, in my life. Lord John, I believe, does not know what fear is! *sans peur* as *sans reproche*. But it would be a comfort to know that even he thinks we can get out of the mess in Ireland without some dreadful calamity. And how ugly, in fact, do things look all round the world!

One of the first acts of Lord John's Government was to vote L10,000,000 for the relief of Ireland. In July, 1847, Parliament was dissolved. When it met again Lord John was

reluctantly compelled to ask for its votes in support of an Irish Bill resembling the one on which the Liberals had defeated Peel the year before.

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A bare enumeration of the difficulties which beset the new Prime Minister brings home a sense of his unenviable position. Ireland was on the verge of starvation and revolt; everywhere in Europe the rebellions which culminated in 1848 were beginning to stir, seeming then more formidable than they really were in their immediate consequences; in England the Chartist movement was thought to threaten Crown and Constitution; and, in addition, the country had taken alarm at the weakness of its military defences. Lastly, for power to meet all these emergencies Lord John was dependent, at every juncture, upon the animosity between the Protectionists and Peelites proving stronger than the dislike which either party felt for the Government. There were 325 Liberals in the House; the Protectionists numbered 226; the Conservative Free Traders 105; so the day Protectionists and Peelites came to terms would be fatal to the Government. Such were the troubles of the Prime Minister, who was a man to take them hard. As for his wife, her diaries and letters show that, however high her spirit and firm her principles, her nature was an intensely anxious one.

In December, 1846, they both went down for a short holiday to Chorley Wood, where, on the last night of the year, they held a “grand ball for children and servants. All very merry. John danced a great deal, and I not a little. Darling Johnny danced the first country dance, holding his Papa’s hand and mine.”

CHAPTER VI

1847-52

On January 1, 1847, Lady John wrote in her diary that the year was beginning most prosperously for her and those dearest to her. “Within my own home all is peace and happiness.” About a month later she became dangerously ill in London.

LONDON, *February* 21, 1847

I have been very ill since I last wrote.... I felt that life was still dear to me for the sake of those I love and of those who depend on me.... I saw the look of agony of my dearest husband; I thought of my heart’s treasure—my darling boy; I thought of my other beloved children; I thought of those still earlier loved—my dear, dear Papa and Mama, brothers and sisters. But I was calm and ready to go, if such should be God’s will.... Dr. Rigby has been not only the most skilful doctor, but the kindest friend.

In the spring of this year, 1847, the Queen offered Pembroke Lodge to the Prime Minister. He accepted with thankfulness, and throughout life both he and Lady John felt deep gratitude to the Queen for their beautiful home.

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Pembroke Lodge is a long, low, irregular white house on the edge of the high ground which forms the western limit of Richmond Park. Added to and altered many times, it has no unity of plan, but it has kept a character of its own, an air of cheerful seclusion and homely eighteenth-century dignity. On the eastern side it is screened from the road by shrubs and trees; on the other side, standing as it does upon the top of the steep, wooded ridge above the Thames Valley, its windows overlook a thousand fields, through which the placid river winds, now flowing between flat open banks, now past groups of trees, or by gardens where here and there the corner of an old brick house shows among cedars. The grounds are long rather than wide, and comprise the slope towards the valley and the stretch along the summit of the ridge, where beech, oak, and chestnut shade with their green and solemn presences a garden of shorn turf and border flowers. Walking beneath them, you see between their stems part of some slow-sailing cloud or glimpses of the distant plain; as you descend, the gardens, village, and river near below. There is a peculiar charm in these steep woods, where the tops of some trees are level with the eye, while the branches of others are overhead. As the paths go down the slope they lose their garden-like trimness among bracken and brambles. An oak fence separates the grounds of Pembroke Lodge from the surrounding park.

It was indeed a perfect home for a statesman. When wearied or troubled with political cares and anxieties, the fresh breezes, the natural beauties, and the peace of Pembroke Lodge often helped to bring calm and repose to his mind. What better prospect can his windows command than the valley of the Thames from Richmond Hill, the view Argyll showed Jeanie Deans, which drew from her the admission “it was braw rich feeding for the cows,” though she herself would as soon have been looking at “the craigs of Arthur’s Seat and the sea coming ayont them, as at a’ that muckle trees.” Certainly no home was ever more appreciated and loved than Pembroke Lodge, both by Lord and Lady John Russell and their children. Long afterwards Lady John wrote:

In March, 1847, the Queen offered him Pembroke Lodge for life, a deed for which we have been yearly and daily more grateful. He and I were convinced that it added years to his life, and the happiness it has given us all cannot be measured. I think it was a year or two before the Queen offered us Pembroke Lodge that we came down for a few days for a change of air for some of the children to the Star and Garter. John and I, in one of our strolls in the park, sat under a big oak-tree while the children played round us. We were at that time often in perplexity about a country home for the summer and autumn, to which we could send them before we ourselves could leave London.... From our bench under the oak we looked into the grounds of Pembroke Lodge, and we said to one another that

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would be the place for us. When it became ours indeed we often thought of this, and the oak has ever since been called the “Wishing Tree.” [31] ... From the time that Pembroke Lodge became ours we used only to keep the children in town from the meeting of Parliament till Easter, and settle the younger ones at Pembroke Lodge, and we ourselves slept there Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays with as much regularity as other engagements allowed. This obliged us to give up most dinner engagements in London, and we regretted the consequent loss of society. At the same time he always felt the need of those evenings and mornings of rest and change and country air (besides those welcome and blessed Sundays) after Parliamentary and official toil, rather than of heated and crowded rooms and late hours; and he had the happy power of throwing off public cares and giving his whole heart to the enjoyment of his strolls in the garden, walks and rides in the park, and the little interests of the children. [32]

[31] When Pembroke Lodge was offered to them they remembered—with surprise and delight at its fulfilment—the wish of that day, known to themselves alone.

[32] Appendix at end of chapter.

The short Whitsuntide holiday was spent in settling in at Pembroke Lodge.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 29, 1847

... You would not wonder so much at his [Lord John’s] silence lately, if you knew what nobody but English Ministers’ wives *can* know or conceive, how incessantly either his mind or body or both have been at work on financial affairs.He has gone to town every morning early, Sunday included; worked hard the whole day in Downing Street, writing long letters and seeing one man and one deputation after another, on these most difficult and most harassing subjects—only returning here for tea, and with no time for any other correspondence but that between tea and bed, when a little rest and amusement is almost necessary for him—then waking in the night to think of bullion and Exchequer Bills till time to get up. Now this great anxiety is partly over; for when once he has taken a resolution, after all the reflection and consideration he can give to a subject, he feels that he has done his best, and awaits its success or failure with comparative ease of mind.

The difficulties of this Ministry have been briefly stated at the close of the last chapter; working with a precarious majority, they had to cope with starvation and revolt in Ireland, Chartism in England, and disturbances abroad.

In December, 1847, they passed their Irish Coercion Bill. [33] The passing of this Bill was one of the few occasions on which Lady John could not convince herself that her husband's policy was the wisest one.

[33] "The state of Ireland was chaotic, and Lord Clarendon (Lord Lieutenant) was demanding a stringent measure of coercion. He did not get it.... The two Bills [Sir Robert Peel's in 1846 and the Bill of 1847] were so entirely different that to call them by a common name, though perhaps inevitable, is also inevitably misleading" ("History of Modern England," Herbert Paul, vol. i, chap. iv. See also Walpole's "Life of Lord John Russell," vol. i, chap, xvii.)

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Subsequently, during the enforcement of the Act, the bitterness of the attacks upon her husband, who, she knew, wished Ireland well, and the sight of his anxiety, made her for a time less sympathetic with the Irish; but she did not, and could not, approve of the Government's action at the time. Among Irishmen, a Government which had first opposed a Tory Coercion Bill, and when in power proposed one themselves, might well excite indignation. Ireland was already in a state so miserable that the horrors of a civil war with a bare chance of better things beyond must have seemed well worth risking to her people, now the party which had hitherto befriended them had adopted the policy of their oppressors.

On February 26, 1848, the news that Louis Philippe had been deposed reached the House of Commons. "This is what would have happened here," said Sir Robert Peel, "if these gentlemen [pointing to the Protectionists] had had their way." The astonishment was great, and the fear increased that the Chartist movement and Irish troubles would lead to revolution at home.

The immediate cause of the revolution in France had been Louis Philippe's opposition to electoral reform; only one Frenchman in about a hundred and fifty possessed a vote under his reign. "Royalty having been packed off in a hackney coach," the mildest of Parisian mobs contented itself with smashing the King's bust, breaking furniture, and firing at the clock of the Tuileries that it might register permanently upon its face the propitious moment of his departure. He had embarked the next day for England, shaven and in green spectacles, and landed upon our shores under the modest pseudonym of "William Smith." England did not welcome him. His Spanish marriage intrigues had naturally not made him a favourite, and his enemy, Palmerston, was at the Foreign Office. Two days afterwards Louis Napoleon Bonaparte left England to pay his respects to the Provisional Government. "I hasten," he wrote in memorable words, "I hasten from exile to place myself under the flag of the Republic just proclaimed. Without other ambition than that of being useful to my country, I announce my arrival to the members of the Provisional Government, and assure them of my devotion to the cause which they represent." He was, however, courteously requested to withdraw from France, since the law banishing the Napoleon family had not yet been repealed, a circumstance which enabled him to return to England in time to enrol himself in the cause of law and order as a special constable at the Chartist meeting.

LONDON, *February* 26, 1848

We and everybody much taken up with the startling and in some respects terrible events in France. The regency of the Duchess of Orleans rejected by the Chambers, or rather by the Cote Gauche, and a republic proclaimed. Sad loss of life in Paris—the King and Queen fled to Eu—Guizot, it is said, to Brussels. We dined at the Palace, and found the Queen and

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Prince, the Duchess of Kent, Duke and Duchess of Saxe Coburg, thinking of course of little else—and almost equally *of course*, full of nothing but indignation against the French nation and Guizot, nothing but pity for the King and Queen and royal family, and nothing but fears for the rest of Europe from the infection of such an example. I sat next the Duke of Coburg, who more particularly took this *class* view with very little reasoning and a great deal of declamation. Said he should not care if Guizot lost his head, and much in the same spirit. The Queen spoke with much good sense and good feeling, if not with perfect impartiality.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *March* 3, 1848

How anxious you must be as to the effect which the extraordinary events in France will have upon Italy. They have been so rapid and unexpected that all power of reasoning upon them has been lost in wonder. Some pity must inevitably be felt for any man "fallen from his high estate"; but if, as I trust, the report of Louis Philippe's safety and arrival in England is true, his share of it will be as small as ever fell to the lot of a King in misfortune; for the opinion that he has deserved it is general. It is seldom that history gives so distinct a lesson of retribution. You know what London is in a ferment of exciting events, and can therefore pretty well imagine the constant succession of reports, true and false, from hour to hour, the unceasing cries of the newsmen with 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th editions of all the newspapers, the running about of friends to one another's houses, the continual crossing of notes in the streets, each asking the same questions, the hopes and fears and the conjectures one hears and utters during the course of the day, and the state of blank, weary stupidity to which one is reduced by the end of it. What *I* mind most in it all is the immense additional anxiety and responsibility it brings upon my poor husband, who feels it even more than he would have done any other year from being still, I grieve to say, less strong and well owing to his influenza still hanging about him.

Lady John Russell to Lady Minto

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 29, 1848

John returned to dinner, but some hours later than I expected him, which in times like these, when each hour may bring an account of a *new* revolution *somewhere*, or worst of all, of a rebellion in Ireland, is a trial to a Minister's wife. However, the reason was simply that Prince Albert had detained him talking. ... Of course we talked a great deal with our visitors of France, Italy, Germany, and Ireland; but happily, engrossing as these topics are, the bright sun and blue sky and shining river and opening leaves and birds and squirrels *would* have their share of attention, and give some rest to our minds.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 31, 1848

The preparations for rebellion in Ireland are most alarming, and John's usually calm and *hopeful* spirit more nearly fails him on that subject than any other. The speeches and writings of the Young Ireland leaders are so *extravagantly* seditious, and so grossly false as to the behaviour of England generally, and the present Ministry in particular to Ireland, that I cannot but hope they may defeat their own objects.... Poor people, the more deeply one feels for the starving and destitute millions among them and admires their patience and resignation, and the more bitterly one resents the misgovernment under which the whole nation suffered for hundreds of years, the fruits of which we are now reaping, the less one can excuse those reckless ones who are now misleading them, who must and *do* know that the present Ministers have not looked on with indifference and let famine and fever rage at will; that the subject of Ireland is *not* one to which the Houses of Parliament never give a day's or an hour's thought, but that on the contrary, *her* interests and happiness are daily and nightly the object of more intense anxiety and earnest endeavours on the part of her rulers than any portion of the Empire. We have had a week of such real spring with all its enjoyments, and to-day is so much finer and milder than ever, that the notion of streets and smoke and noise is odious. However, we have enough to go for, private and public. May God prosper the good cause of peace and freedom all over Europe.

The European revolutionary movement of 1848 did not prove serious in England. What actually took place was a mild mass meeting on Kennington Common, well kept within the bounds of decorum by an army of citizen police. In Ireland, a rough-and-tumble fight between Smith O'Brien's followers and the police was all that came of the dreaded rebellion. But before these events took place the future looked ominous, especially to those responsible for what might happen.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

April 8, 1848

John had a late night in the House, and made two speeches on the unpleasant subjects of the Chartist meeting next Monday and Sir George Grey's "Security of the Crown" Bill; both of which ought to do good, from their mild and *whiggish* tone, in spite of the sadly *un*-whiggish nature of the topics; the very, last to which one would wish a Whig Government to have to turn its attention. All minds are full of next Monday, and at this moment we have not a manservant in the house, as they are summoned to a meeting to learn their duties as special constables for that day. I find it difficult to be in the least frightened, and I trust I am right. The only thing I dread is being long without knowing what John is about, and as he would be equally unwilling to know nothing about me, in case of

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any march upon this house or any other disagreeable demonstration against the Prime Minister, we have arranged that I am to go to Downing Street with him in the morning and remain all day there, as that is the place he will most easily come to from the House of Commons. My spirits have been much lowered about the whole thing this morning, as Mr. Trevelyan has been here and persuaded John that it would be madness for me either to remain in this house or go to Downing Street, both of which would be *marks* in case of a fight.Mr. Trevelyan is very seriously alarmed, and talks of the effect the sound of the *cannon* might have upon me, and has persuaded Lady Mary Wood to go to his house on Clapham Common. I do not yet know what the other Ministers' wives are going to do, but I *do* know that I think Milton quite right in saying:

> "The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
> Safest and seemliest by her husband bides."

However, I must do as I am bid, or at least I must do what makes *him* easiest.

LONDON, *April* 9, 1848

Hardly knew how much I had been thinking of to-morrow till I had to read aloud the prayers for Queen, country, and Parliament.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

DOWNING STREET, *Monday*, 3 *o'clock*

Well, here we are after all, Lady Grey, Lady Mary Wood, and I, with much easier minds than we have had for many days.

Everything has ended quietly; the meeting has dispersed at the persuasion of its leaders, who took fright. Fergus O'Connor especially has shown himself the most abject blusterer, and came pale and haggard and almost crying to speak to Sir George Grey—and told him how anxious he was that all should come to a peaceable end.It seems too good to be true, after the various alarming reports and conjectures. Of course there will still be *some* anxiety until the night is well over, and till we see whether the Chartist spirit rises again after this failure. To begin at the beginning, I ought to tell you that hearing a great clattering at six this morning I got up, and looked out, and saw immense numbers of Lancers ride from the West into Belgrave Square, which they left to go to their destination somewhere about Portland Place, after performing many pretty manoeuvres which I did not understand. Many foot soldiers passed by. I admired the sight, but silently prayed that their services might not be required. We packed the brougham full of mattresses and blankets, as it seemed likely that we should have to sleep here. Now we have little doubt of getting home.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *April* 12, 1848

Yesterday was chiefly spent in receiving visits and congratulations without end, and very welcome they were. John and I had also a good long walk to freshen him up for a hard day in the House of Commons....

April 13, 1848

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Again many notes and visits of congratulation and mutual rejoicing yesterday. God grant that this triumph of the good cause may have some effect on unhappy, misguided Ireland; there is the weight that almost crushes John, who opens Lord Clarendon's daily letters with an uneasiness not to be told.

Queen Victoria to Lord John Russell

OSBORNE, *April* 14, 1848

The Queen has received Lord John Russell's letter of yesterday evening. She approves that a form of prayer for the present time of tumult and trouble be ordered. She concludes it is for *peace* and *quiet* GENERALLY, which indeed we *may well* pray for. A thanksgiving for the failure of any attempts like the proposed one last Monday, the Queen would not have thought judicious, as being painful and unlike thanksgiving for preservation from *foreign war*.Our accounts from Germany yesterday, from different quarters, were very distressing and alarming. So much fear of a *total* subversion of *all* existing things. But we must not lose courage or hope.

In the midst of these troubles and forebodings, on the day that the Queen wrote the above letter to Lord John, their second son, George William Gilbert, was born.

Lady John was touched by the following letter from Dr. James Simpson (the eminent physician, later Sir James Simpson), under whose medical care she had been in Edinburgh some years before.

EDINBURGH, *March*, 1848

I heard from two or three different sources that your Ladyship was to be blessed by an addition to your family....

I *once* made a pledge, that I would gladly leave all to watch and guard over your safety if you desired me. I have not forgotten the pledge, and am ready to redeem it—but not for fee or recompense, only for the love and pleasure of being near you at a time I could possibly show my gratitude by watching over your valued health and life.... With almost all my medical brethren here I use chloroform in all cases. None of us, I believe, could now feel justified in *not* relieving pain, when God has bestowed upon us the means of relieving it.

May 16, 1848

With a thankful heart I begin my diary again. Another child has been added to our blessings—another dear little boy. John was with me. Oh! his happiness when all was safely over. This child has done much already to restore his health and strength. Summer weather and the success of all his political measures for the last anxious months have also done much.

But the Irish troubles were by no means over; on July 21st Lord John introduced a Bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. His case rested on Lord Clarendon's evidence that a rebellion was on the point of breaking out, and circumstances seem to have justified this precautionary measure. The Bill was passed without opposition and with the support of all the prominent men in Parliament.

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July 21, 1848

Irish news much the same. A Cabinet at which it was determined to propose suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. John accordingly gave notice of it in the House. I had hoped that a Whig Ministry would never be driven to such measures. I had hoped that Ireland would remember my husband's rule for ever with gratitude.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *July* 28, 1848

I have another letter to thank you for. You really must not describe the beauties of that place to me any more. It must so perfectly satisfy the longing for what, after some years of such a life as ours, seems the height of happiness—repose. I struggle hard against this longing, but I doubt whether I should do so successfully without that blessed Pembroke Lodge, from which I always return newly armed for the turmoil. After all, I am much more afraid of my husband being overpowered by this longing than myself. He can so much seldomer indulge in it. He is so much older, and it is so much more difficult for him to portion out his employments with any regularity, which is his best preservative against *fuss*. Yesterday was a most trying day for him, and the more so as he had looked forward to it as one of rest and enjoyment. It was Baby's christening-day, and we meant to remain at Pembroke Lodge after the ceremony to luncheon; but just as we were going to church came a letter from Sir George Grey with news of the whole South of Ireland being in rebellion, with horrible additions of bloodshed, defection of the troops, *etc*. As it has, thank God, turned out to be a hoax, a most wicked hoax, of some stockjobbing or traitorous wretch at Liverpool, I shall not waste your time and sympathies by telling you of the anxious hours we spent till seven in the evening, when the truth was made out.And now let us trust that real rebellion may not be in store. It is dreadful to think of bloodshed, of loss of life, of the desolation of one's country and of the many, many imaginable and unimaginable miseries of civil war; but one thing I feel would be more dreadful still, weak and womanly as I may be in so feeling—to see one's husband unable to prevent the miseries, perhaps accusing himself of them, and sinking, as I know mine *would*, by degrees under his efforts and his regrets. Let us trust and pray, then, that we are not doomed to see the reality of so gloomy a picture. It is always difficult to me to look forward to great political failures and national misfortunes, perhaps because I have never known any; but the alarm of yesterday has made them seem more possible.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *August* 3, 1848

... I do not care for my country or my husband's success a bit more than is good for me, and I often wonder at and almost blame myself for not being more disturbed about them.

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I know that he does his best, and that is all I care very deeply or very permanently about; though there may now and then be a more than commonly anxious day. If I thought him stupid, or mean, or ignorant, or thoughtless, or indifferent in his trade, I should not be satisfied with his doing his best even; but as I luckily think him the contrary of all these things, I am both satisfied and calm, and his own calm mind helps me to be so. Sometimes I think I care much more about politics at a distance than when I am mixed up in them. The fact is that I care very much for the questions themselves, but grow wearied to death of all the details and personalities belonging to them, and consequently of the conversation of lady politicians, made up as it is of these details and personalities. And the more interested I am in the thing itself, the more angry I am with the nonsense they talk about it, and had rather listen to the most humdrum domestic twaddle. Mind, I mean the regular hardened lady politicians who talk of nothing else, of whom I could name several, but will not.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 24, 1848

We have just had a visit from Louis Philippe. He spoke much of France—said that his wishes were with Louis Bonaparte rather than with Cavaignac for the presidency.

John expressed some fear of war if Louis Bonaparte should be elected; the King said he need have none, that France had neither means nor inclination for war. His account of the dismissal of Guizot's Ministry was that he said to Guizot "What's to be done?"—that Guizot gave him three answers: "Je ne peux pas donner la Reforme. Je ne peux pas laisser dissoudre la garde nationale. Je ne peux pas laisser tirer les troupes sur la garde nationale." Upon this he had said to Guizot that he must change his Ministry: "Cela l'a peut-etre un peu blesse—ma foi, je n'en sais rien. Il a dit que non, que j'etais le maitre."When he heard that the National Guard said, if the troops fired on the mob, *they* would fire on the troops, he knew that "la chose etait finie," and when he went out himself among the National Guard, to see what the effect of his presence would be, La Moriciere called out to him, "Sire, si vous allez parmi ces gens-la je ne reponds pas de votre vie. Ils vont tirer sur vous." He answered whatever might come of it he would "parler a ces braves gens"; but they surrounded him, grinning and calling out "La Reforme, nous voulons la Reforme," pointing their bayonets at him and even over his horse's neck.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

WOBURN ABBEY, *December* 10, 1848

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The great question of the French Presidency is decided, whether for good or for evil to other countries none can foresee, but certainly to the disgrace of their own. For here is a man, known only by a foolish attempt to disturb France, to whom no party gives credit for either great or good qualities, raised to the highest dignity in the new Republic, one of the advantages of which was to be that men should rise by their own merits alone. The common language of Frenchmen, or at least of French Royalists on the subject, is that they consider his election as a step to the restoration of Monarchy—but it is a shabby way of making the step, or it may prove a false one. You know we have had Louis Philippe and his family as near neighbours at the Star and Garter for some weeks, and we have seen him several times, to thank us for our inquiries after the poor Queen and Princes while they were so ill. Only think how strange to see this great King, this busy plotter for the glory of his own family and the degradation of England, taking refuge in that very England, and sitting in the house of one of those very Ministers whom he had been so proud of outwitting, giving the history of "ma chute." This he did with great bitterness; representing the whole French nation as a mass of place-hunters, without patriotism and without gratitude, and with no tenderness to Guizot. There is nothing noble and touching in his manner or conversation, or I am sure he would have inspired me with more pity in his fallen state, in spite of many faults as a King. [34]

[34] In later years Lord and Lady John had much friendly intercourse with the Due d'Aumale, son of Louis Philippe, and with the Comte de Paris and the Due de Chartres (grandsons of the King), who were neighbours and welcome visitors at Pembroke Lodge.

During the earlier part of 1849, Lord John suffered from the effects of overwork, and like most tired statesmen he began to think of taking a peerage. On July 11th their third son, Francis Albert Rollo Russell, was born at Pembroke Lodge. The parliamentary recess was an easier period than they had known since taking office, and they had time to attend to other projects, although the difficulties with Palmerston at the Foreign Office were meanwhile coming to a climax.

In August Lord and Lady John founded a school at Petersham, over which she watched with unflagging interest till her death. They were amused by the remark of an old gentleman in the neighbourhood, who said that to have a school at Petersham "would ruin the aristocratic character of the village"—education and aristocracy being evidently, in his eyes, opposing forces.

The classes were held at first in a room in the village; the present building was not erected till 1852.

On August 32nd Lady John wrote in her diary:

Our little school, which had long been planned, was opened in a room in the village the day before Baby's birthday, July 10th, and goes on well. We celebrated John's birthday

last Saturday by giving the school-children a tea under the cedar, and a dance on the lawn afterwards, and very merry they were.

In August and September the Prime Minister spent some weeks at Balmoral, and wrote as follows on his last day there:

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Lord John Russell to Lady John Russell

BALMORAL, *September* 6, 1849

I leave this place to-morrow.... No hostess could be more charming or more easy than the Queen has been—or more kind and agreeable than the Prince, and I shall leave this place with increased attachment to them.

The Queen had been to Ireland in August, and Lord Dufferin wrote an interesting account of her visit in a letter to Lady John.

Lord Dufferin to Lady John Russell

September 10, 1849

As the newspaper reporters have already described all, nay more than was to be seen on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Ireland, I need not trouble you with any of my own experiences during those auspicious days—suffice it to say that the people were frantic with loyalty and enthusiasm. Indeed, I never witnessed so touching a sight as when the Queen from her quarter-deck took leave of the Irish people. It was a sweet, calm, silent evening, and the sun just setting behind the Wicklow mountains bathed all things in golden floods of light. Upon the beach were crowded in thousands the screaming bother-headed people, full of love and devotion for her, her children, and her house, surging to and fro like some horrid sea and asking her to come back quick to them, and bidding her God-speed.... It was a beautiful historical picture, and one which one thought of for a long time after Queen and ships and people had vanished away. I suspect that she too must have thought of it that night as she sat upon the deck and sailed away into the darkness—and perhaps she wondered as she looked back upon the land, which ever has been and still is, the dwelling of so much wrong and misery, whether it should be written in history hereafter, that in *her* reign, and under *her* auspices, Ireland first became prosperous and her people contented. Directly after the Queen's departure, I started on a little tour round the West coast, where I saw such sights as could be seen nowhere else. The scenery is beautiful and wild.... But after one has been travelling for a little while in the far West one soon loses all thought of the scenery, or the climate, or anything else, in astonishment at the condition of the people. I do most firmly believe that in no other country under the sun are there to be found men so wretched in every respect.... All along the West coast, from North to South, there has been allowed to accumulate on land utterly unable to support them a dense population, the only functions of whose lives have been to produce rent and children. Generation after generation have grown up in ignorance and misery, while those who lived upon the product of their labours have laughed and rioted through life as though they had not known that from them alone could light and civilization descend upon these poor wretches. I had often heard, as every one has, of the evils of absenteeism, but till I came and

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saw its effects I had no notion how great a crime it is.... They [the absentee landowners] thought only of themselves and their own enjoyments, they left their people to grow up and multiply like brute beasts, they stifled in them by their tyranny all hope and independence and desire of advancement, they made them cowards and liars, and have now left them to die off from the face of the earth. Neither can any one living at a distance have any notion of the utter absence of all public spirit among the upper classes.... Legislation can do nothing when there is nothing for it to act upon. Parliament to Ireland is what a galvanic battery is to a dead body, and it is in vain to make laws when there is no machinery to work them. A people must be worked up to a certain point in their dispositions and understandings before they can be affected by highly civilized legislation.... It is only individual exertions, and the personal superintendence of wise and good men, that can ever drill the Irish people into a legislatable state.... One or two things, however, seem to me pretty certain—

1. That under proper management the Irish peasant can be made anything of.

2. That, generally speaking, the present class of proprietors must and will be swept from off the surface of the earth.

3. That in the extreme West the surface is overcrowded, but not at all so a few miles inland.

4. That reclaiming waste lands and bogs at present is to throw money away.

I begin to fear I have written a strange rigmarole, but still I will send it, for though Irish matters cannot interest you as they do me, yet still a letter is always a pleasant thing to receive, even only that one may have the satisfaction of looking at the Queen's head and breaking the seal.

The next entry from Lady John's Diary is dated October 9, 1849.

After tea John told me that he had informed the Cabinet of his plan for the extension of the suffrage—to be proposed next session. All looked grave. Sir Charles Wood and Lord Lansdowne expressed some alarm.... To grant an increase of weight to the people of this country when revolutions are taking place on all sides, when a timid Ministry would rather seek to diminish that which they already have, is to show a noble trust in them, of which I believe they will nobly prove themselves worthy.

Lord John's determination to carry through this measure himself, rather than to leave it in the hands of others, was afterwards the cause of the first defeat of the Whig Government.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *February* 19, 1850

The weeks are galloping past so much faster even than usual that there is no keeping pace with them.

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I neither read, write, teach, learn, nor do anything—unless indeed revising visiting books and writing invitations is to be called something. I want to be with my Mama, to be with my husband, to be with my children, to be with friends, and to be alone, all at the same time. I want to read everything, and to write to everybody, and to walk everywhere, in no time at all. And what is the result? Why, that I lose the very *power* not only of *doing*, but of *thinking*, to a degree that makes me seriously uneasy and unfits me to be a companion to anybody older or wiser than Wee-wee, or Baby, whose capacities exactly suit mine. All this sounds as if I led a life of bustle, which I do *not*—but it is *too full,* and there is an end of it. I dare say it is mistaken vanity to suppose that if it was emptier I should do anything worthier of record in the political, literary, or educational line—and at all events it would be hard to find a happier or, I trust, more thankful heart than mine, my troubles being in fact the result of many blessings.

The next session opened with the Greek crisis, which Greville described as "the worst scrape into which Palmerston has ever got himself and his colleagues. The disgust at it here is universal with those who think at all about foreign matters: it is past all doubt that it has produced the strongest feelings of indignation against this country all over Europe, and the Ministers themselves are conscious what a disgraceful figure they cut, and are ashamed of it."

Palmerston had ordered the blockade of the Piraeus to extort compensation from the Greek Government on behalf of Mr. Finlay (afterwards the historian of Greece), whose land had been commandeered by the King of Greece for his garden, and on behalf of Don Pacifico, a Maltese Jew (and therefore a British subject), whose house had been wrecked by an Athenian mob. The Greek Government had been prepared to pay Compensation in both cases, but not the figure demanded, which turned out, indeed, on investigation, to be in gross excess of fair compensation. Palmerston's action nearly threw Europe into war; Russia protested, and France, who had offered to mediate, was aggravated by a diplomatic muddle to the verge of breaking off negotiations. A vote of censure was passed by the Opposition in the House of Lords, which had the effect of making Lord John take up the cause of Palmerston in the Commons. The question was discussed in a famous four days' debate. "It contained," says Mr. Herbert Paul, "the finest of all Lord Palmerston's speeches, the first great speech of Gladstone, the last speech of Sir Robert Peel, and the most elaborate of those forensic harangues, delivered successively at the Bar, in the Senate, and on the Bench, by the accomplished personage best known as Lord Chief Justice Cockburn." Lord John, who was always good at a fighting speech, spoke also with great force. Mr. Roebuck's motion of confidence in the Ministry was carried, but this success was largely due to the fact that a coalition between the Peelites and the Protectionists seemed impossible. Had it not been carried the Whigs would have resigned, and neither of the other two parties feeling strong enough to succeed them, they did not oppose in force the motion of confidence.

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The day after Peel made his speech he was thrown from his horse on Constitution Hill, and on July 2nd he died.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

June 20, 1850

... Day of great political excitement. After dinner I took John to the House and have utterly regretted since that I did not go up to hear him—for he made what I am quite sure you and Ralph will agree with me and all whom I have yet spoken to, was a most perfect answer; and I should have dearly liked to hear the volleys of cheering which he so well deserved. Now we shall either go out with honour or stay in with triumph—-welcome either.

Lord Charles Russell [35] to Lady John Russell

July 13, 1850

As you were not here to hear John move the monument [of Sir Robert Peel], I must tell you that he succeeded in the opinion of all. Dizzy has just, in passing my chair, said, "Well, Lord John did that to perfection. My friends were nervous, I was not; it was a difficult subject, but one peculiarly fitted for Lord John. He did as I was sure he would, and pleased all those who sit about me."

[35] Lord John's stepbrother.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 17, 1850

For the first time since the session began John spent a whole weekday here, and such a fine one that we enjoyed it thoroughly. Our roses are still in great beauty, but it is a drying blaze. In the evening we cried over "David Copperfield" till we were ashamed.

Lady John Russell to Lady Melgund

MINTO, October 5, 1850

This whole morning having been spent fox-hunting, and the afternoon doing something else, I do not exactly remember what, I am obliged to write to you at the forbidden time (after dinner), instead of making myself agreeable. What a quantity I have to say to you, and what a pity to say it all by letter, or, rather, to say a very small part of it by letter, instead of having you here, as I had hoped and looked forward to, enjoying daily *gloomy* talks with you, such as we always find ourselves indulging in when we are together.... Though I have scarcely walked a step about the place from obedience to doctors, I have driven daily with Mama—and such lovely drives! Oh! the place is in such beauty. I think its greatest beauty—the trees red, yellow, green, brown, of every

shade, so that each one is seen separately, and the too great thickness on the rocks is less perceived. This was one of the brightest mornings, and you know what a hunt is on the rocks when the sun shines bright, and the rocks look whiter against a blue sky, and men and horses and hounds place themselves in the most picturesque positions, and horns and tally-hos echo all round, and everybody, except the fox, is in spirits. The gentlemen had no sport, but the ladies a great deal, and I saw more foxes than

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I had ever seen before....Our time here is slipping away fearfully fast—there are so many impossibilities to be done. I am hungry to see every brother and sister comfortably and alone, and hungry to be out all day seeing every old spot and old face in the place and village, and hungry to be always with Papa and Mama, and hungry to read all the books in the library—and none of these hungers can be satisfied. We are all much pleased with Mr. Chichester Fortescue. He is agreeable and gentlemanlike and good, and Lotty and Harriet got on very well with him, which is more than I am doing with my letter, for they are singing me out of all my little sense—"Wha's at the window" was distracting enough, but "Saw ye the robber" ten times worse.

In September the Papal Bull dividing England into Roman Catholic sees threw the country into a state of needless excitement. The year had been a very critical one for the Church of England. The result of the Gorham case, which marked the failure of the High Church clergy to get their own way within the Church, hastened the secession to Rome of Manning, James Hope, and other well-known men. Lord John's letter to the Bishop of Durham, in which he expressed his own strong Protestant and Erastian principles, increased his popularity; but it was unfortunate in its effect. It encouraged the bigoted alarmist outcries which had been started by the Papal Bull, although his own letter differed in tone from such protests. The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which the Government brought forward in response to popular feeling, seems to have been one of the idlest measures that ever wasted the time of Parliament. It remained a dead-letter from the day it passed, yet at the time no Minister had a chance of leading the country who was not prepared to support it.

The Budget made the Ministry unpopular at the beginning of the session; and in February Mr. Locke King succeeded in passing, with the help of the Radicals, a measure for the extension of the franchise, in spite of opposition from the Government. Lord John had a measure of his own of a similar nature in view, as we have seen; but, in spite of his assurance that he would introduce it during the following year, the Radicals voted against him on Mr. King's motion, and on February 20th he resigned.

The state of parties was such that no rival coalition was possible. Lord Stanley was for widening the franchise, but being a Protectionist he could not work with the Peelites; while Lord Aberdeen would not consent to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and was impossible as a leader so long as the anti-Catholic hubble-bubble continued. Lord John was therefore compelled to resume office.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 22, 1850

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I am very glad you and Ralph liked John's letter to the Bishop of Durham. It was necessary for him to speak out, and having all his life defended the claims of the Roman Catholics to perfect toleration and equality of civil rights with the other subjects of the Queen, I should hardly have expected that they would take offence because he declares himself a Protestant and a despiser of the superstitious imitation of Roman Catholic ceremonies by clergymen of the Church of England. Such, however, has not been the case: and Ireland especially, excited by her priests, has taken fire at the whole letter, and most of all at the word "mummeries." The wisest and most moderate of them, however, here, and in Ireland with Archbishop Murray I hope at their head, will do what they can to put out the flame. No amount of dislike to any creed can, happily, for a moment shake one's conviction that complete toleration to every creed and conviction, and complete charity to each one of its professors, is the only right and safe rule—the only one which can make consistency in religious matters possible at all times and on all occasions. Otherwise it *might* be shaken by the new proofs of the insidious, corrupting, anti-truthful nature and effects of the Roman Catholic belief.They have shown themselves for ages past in the character and conditions of the countries where it reigns, and now the Pope's foolish Bull is the signal for double-dealing and ingratitude among his spiritual subjects—and consequently for anger and intolerance among Protestants—wrong, but not quite inexcusable.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 29, 1850

Far from wondering at your vacillations of opinion about John's letter, both he and I felt, on the first appearance of Wiseman's pastoral letter, that the whole scheme was so ridiculous, the affectation of power so contemptible, the change of Vicars Apostolic into Bishops and Archbishops, so impotent for evil to Protestants, while it might possibly be of use to Roman Catholics, that ridicule and contempt were the only fit arms for the occasion. But when he came to consider the chief cause of the measure—that is, the great and growing evil of Tractarianism—of an established clergy becoming daily less efficient for the wants of their parishioners, and more at variance with the laity and with the spirit of the Church to which they outwardly belong; when the whole Protestant country showed its anger or fear; when such a man as the Bishop of Norwich (Hinds), a man so tolerant as to be called by the intolerant a latitudinarian, came to him to represent the necessity for some expression of opinion on the part of the Government, and the immense evils that would result from the want of such an expression; when, after a calm survey of the state of religion throughout the country, he thought he saw that

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it was in his power to prevent the ruin of the Church of England, not by assuming popular opinions, but merely by openly avowing his own—then, and not till then, he wrote his letter—then, and not till then, I felt he was right to do so.It has quieted men's fears with regard to the Pope, and directed them towards Tractarianism. And we are told that a great many (I think one hundred) of the clergy omitted some of their "mummeries" on the following Sunday. That word was perhaps ill-chosen, and he is willing to say so—but I doubt it. Suppose he had omitted it, some other would have been laid hold of as offensive to men sincere in their opinions, however mistaken he may think them.The letter was a Protestant one, and could not give great satisfaction to Roman Catholics, except such as Lord Beaumont, who prefers the Queen to the Pope. John has all his life showed himself a friend to civil and religious liberty, especially that of the Roman Catholics—and would gladly never have been called upon to say a word that they could take as an insult to their creed. But it was a moment in which he had to choose between a temporary offence to a part of their body and the deserved loss of the confidence of the Protestant body, to which he heart and soul belongs. He could scarcely declare his opinion of the Tractarians, who remain in a Church to which they no longer belong, without indirectly giving offence to Roman Catholics. But it is against their practices that his strong disapprobation is declared, and of the mischief of those practices I dare say you have no idea. I believe many of them, most of them, to be as pious and excellent men as ever existed; but their teaching is not likely to make others as pious and excellent as themselves; and their remaining in the Church obliges them to a secrecy and hesitation in their teaching that is worse than the teaching itself, which would disappear if they became honest Dissenters. I could write pages more upon the subject but have no time, and I will only beg you not to confound John's letter with the bigotry and intolerance of many speeches at many meetings. I am keeping the collection of letters, addresses, *etc*., that he has received on the subject—a curious medley, being from all ranks and degrees of men, some really touching, some laughable.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *February* 11, 1851

I wonder what you will think of John's speech last Friday. I am quite surprised at the approbation it meets with here—not that I do not think it deserved, for surely it was a fine high-minded one, and at the same time one at no word of which a Roman Catholic, as such, could take offence—but so many people thought more ought to be done, and so many others that nothing ought to be done, that I expected nothing but grumbling. However, the *speech* is by most persons distinguished from the *measure*.

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I have not yet quite succeeded in persuading myself, or being persuaded, that we might not have let the whole thing alone; treating an impertinence *as* an impertinence, to be met by ridicule or indignation as each person might incline, but not by legislation. This being my natural and I hope foolish impulse, I rejoice that the Bill is so mild that nobody can consider it as an infringement of the principle of religious liberty, but rather a protest against undue interference in temporal affairs by Pope, Prelate, or Priest of any denomination. Lizzy and I went to the House last night. I never heard John speak with more spirit and effect. Do not you in your quiet beautiful Nervi look with amazement at the whirl of politics and parties in which we live? I am sometimes ashamed of the time I consume in writing invitations and other matters connected with party-giving—quite as much as John takes to think of speeches, which affect the welfare of so many thousands. But after all it is a part of the same trade, one which, though most dangerous to all that is best in man and woman, may, I trust, be followed in safety by those who see the dangers. I am sure I see them. God grant we may both escape them.

In a letter written to Lady Mary Abercromby, more than two years before, she had expressed her feelings with regard to religious ceremonies. It is interesting that the word *mummeries*, which excited so much indignation in Lord John's Durham letter, occurs in this letter.

On January 13, 1848, she wrote:

Many thanks to you for the interesting account of the great ceremony on Christmas Day in St. Peter's, and of your own feelings about it. I believe that whatever is *meant* as an act of devotion to God, or as an acknowledgment of His greatness and glory, whether expressed by the simple prayer of a Covenanter on the hill-side or by the ceremonies of a Catholic priesthood, or even by the prostrations of a Mahometan, or by the self-torture of a Hindoo, may and ought to inspire us with respect and with a devout feeling, at least when the worshippers themselves are pious and sincere. Otherwise, indeed, if the *mummery* is more apparent than the solemnity, I do not see how respect can be felt by those accustomed to a pure worship, the words and meaning of which are clear and applicable to rich and poor, high and low....

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *April* 11, 1851

I wonder what you will do with regard to teaching religion to Maillie when she is older. I am daily more and more convinced of the folly, or worse than folly, the mischief, of stuffing children's heads with doctrines some of which we do not believe ourselves (though we may think we do), others which we do not understand, while their hearts

remain untouched.... Old as Johnny is, he does not yet go to church. I see with pain, but cannot

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help seeing, that from the time a child begins to go to church, the truth and candour of its religion are apt to suffer.... Oh, how far we still are from the religion of Christ! How unwilling to believe that God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts! How willing to bring them down to suit not what is divine, but what is earthly, in ourselves! Yet, happily, we do not feel or act in consistency with all that we repeat as a lesson upon the subject of our faith—for man cannot altogether crush the growth of the soul given by God—and I trust and believe a better time is coming, when freedom of thought and of word will be as common as they are now uncommon.

In May Lady John writes of a dinner-party in London where she had a long conversation with the Russian Ambassador (Baron Brunow) on the Governments of Russia and England; she ended by hoping for a time "when Russia will be more like this country than it is now, to which he answered with a start, and lifting up his hands, 'God forbid! May I never live to see Russia more like this country! God forbid, my dear Lady *Joan!'*"

To follow the events which led to the fall of the Ministry it is necessary to look abroad. The power of the Whigs in the House of Commons, such as it was, was the result of inability of Tories to combine, owing to their differences concerning Free Trade. The strength of Lord John's Ministry in the country depended largely upon the foreign policy of Palmerston, who was disliked and mistrusted by the Court. While Palmerston was defending his abrupt, highhanded policy towards Greece in the speech which made him the hero of the hour, a war was going on between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, in which the Prince Consort himself was much interested. It was a question as to whether Schleswig-Holstein should be permitted to join the German Federation. Holstein was a German fief, Schleswig was a Danish fief; unfortunately an old law linked them together in some mysterious fashion, as indissolubly as Siamese twins. Both wanted to join the Federation. Holstein had a good legal claim to do as it liked in this respect, Schleswig a bad one; but the law declared that both must be under the same government. Prussia interfered on behalf of the duchies; England, Austria, France, and the Baltic Powers joined in declaring that the Danish monarchy should not be divided.

The Prince Consort had Prussian sympathies, and he therefore disapproved of the strong line which Palmerston took up in this matter. It was not only Palmerston's policy, however, but the independence with which he was accustomed to carry it out, which annoyed the Court. He was a bad courtier; he domineered over princelings and kings abroad, and his behaviour to his own Sovereign did not in any way resemble Disraeli's. He not only "never contradicted, only sometimes forgot"; on the contrary, he often omitted to tell the Queen what he was doing, and consequently she found herself in a false position.

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At last the following peremptory reproof was addressed to him:

Queen Victoria to Lord John Russell, [36]

Osborne, *August* 12, 1850

... The Queen requires, first, that Lord Palmerston will distinctly state what he proposes in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her royal sanction; secondly, having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister. Such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of what passes between him and Foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken, based upon that intercourse: to receive foreign dispatches in good time; and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they must be sent off. The Queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston.

[36] “Letters of Queen Victoria,” vol. ii, chap. xix.

Palmerston apologized and promised amendment, but he did not resign, nor did the Prime Minister request him to do so. His foreign policy had hitherto vigorously befriended liberty on the Continent, and although the Queen and Prince Consort never strained the constitutional limits of the prerogative, these limits are elastic and there was a general feeling among Liberals that the Court might acquire an overwhelming influence in diplomacy, and that certainly at the moment the Prince Consort’s sympathies were too largely determined by his relationship to foreign royal families. It is clear, however, that as long as the Crown is an integral part of the Executive, the Sovereign must have the fullest information upon foreign affairs. Palmerston had gone a great deal too far.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *March* 14, 1851

We have now heard from you several times since the *crisis*, [37] but not since you knew of our reinstatement in place and power, toil and trouble.... I should hardly have thought it possible that Ralph, hearing constantly from Lord Palmerston, had not discovered the change that has come over him since last year, when he took his stand and won his victory on the principles that became a Whig Minister, of sympathy with the constitutionalists and antipathy to the absolutists all over Europe. Ever since that great debate he has gradually retreated from those principles.... I am not apt to be politically desponding, but the one thing which now threatens us is the loss of confidence of the House of Commons and the country....

[37] The defeat of the Government on Mr. Locke King's motion for the equalization of the county and borough franchise.

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She was not right, however, in her estimate of the dangers which threatened the Ministry; they came from the Foreign Office and the Court, not from the Commons.

Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian Revolution, had been received in England with great enthusiasm. He made a series of fiery speeches against the Austrian and Russian Governments, urging that in cases in which foreign Powers interfered with the internal politics of a country, as they had done in the case of the Revolution in Hungary, outside nations should combine to prevent it. This was thoroughly in harmony with Palmerston's foreign policy. He wished to receive Kossuth at his house, which would have been tantamount to admitting to a hostile attitude towards Austria and Russia, who were nominally our friends. Lord John dissuaded him from doing this; but he did receive deputations at the Foreign Office, who spoke of the Emperors of Austria and Russia as "odious and detestable assassins." The Queen was extremely angry.

> Windsor Castle, *November* 13, 1851
>
> The Queen talked long with me about Lord Palmerston and about Kossuth.

After accusing Lord Palmerston of every kind of fault and folly, public and private, she said several times, "I have the very worst opinion of him." I secretly agreed with her in much that she said of him, but openly defended him when I thought her unjust. I told her of his steadiness in friendship and constant kindness in word and deed to those he had known in early life, however separated from him by time and station. She did not believe it, and said she knew him to be quite wanting in feeling. This turned out to mean that his political enmities outlasted the good fortune of his enemies. She said if he took the part of the revolutionists in some countries he ought in all, and that while he pretended great compassion for the oppressed Hungarians and Italians, he would not care if the Schleswig-Holsteiners were all drowned. I said this was too common a failing with us all, *etc*. I allowed that I wished his faults were not laid on John's shoulders, and John's merits given to him, as has often been the case—and that it was a pity he sometimes used unnecessarily provoking language, but I would not grant that England was despised and hated by all other European countries.

The Kossuth incident was soon followed by a graver one. On December 1, 1851, Louis Napoleon carried out his *coup d'etat.* The Ministry determined to maintain a strict neutrality in the matter, and a short dispatch was sent to Lord Normanby instructing him "to make no change in his relations to the French Government." When this dispatch was shown to the French Minister, he replied, a little nettled no doubt by the suggestion that England considered herself to be stretching a point in recognising the Emperor, that he had already heard from their Ambassador in London that Lord Palmerston fully approved of the

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change. In a later dispatch to Lord Normanby, which had not been shown either to the Queen or to the Prime Minister, Palmerston repeated his own opinion. Now this was precisely the kind of conduct for which he had been reproved: in consequence he was asked to resign. When it came to explanations before Parliament, Palmerston, to the surprise of everybody, made a meek, halting defence of his independent conduct. But he bided his time, and when the Government brought in a Militia Bill, intended to quiet the invasion scare which the appearance of another Napoleon on the throne of France had started, he proposed an amendment which they could not accept, and carried it against them. Lord John Russell resigned and Lord Derby undertook to form a Government.

Lady John wrote afterwards the following recollections of this crisis:

The breach between John and Lord Palmerston was a calamity to the country, to the Whig party, and to themselves. And although it had for some months been a threatening danger on the horizon, I cannot but feel that there was accident in its actual occurrence. Had we been in London, or at Pembroke Lodge, and not at Woburn Abbey at the time, they would have met and talked over the subjects of their difference. Words spoken might have been equally strong, but would have been less cutting than words written, and conciliatory expressions on John's part would have led the way to promises on Lord Palmerston's to avoid committing his colleagues in future, as he had done in the case of the coup d'etat, and also to avoid any needless risk of irritating the Queen by neglect in sending dispatches to the Palace. It was characteristic of my husband to bear patiently for a long while with difficulties, opposition, perplexities, doubts raised by those with whom he acted, listening to them with candour and good temper, and only meeting their arguments with his own; but, at last, if he failed to convince them, to take a sudden resolution—either yielding to them entirely or breaking with them altogether—-from which nothing could shake him, but which, on looking back in after years, did not always seem to him the best course. My father, who knew him well, once said to me, half in joke and half in earnest: "Your husband is never so determined as when he is in the wrong." It was a relief to him to have done with hesitation and be resolved on any step which this very anxiety to have done with hesitation led him to believe a right one at the moment. This habit of mind showed itself in private as in public matters, and his children and I were often startled by abrupt decisions on home affairs announced very often by letter.

In the case of the dismissal of Lord Palmerston, there was but Lord Palmerston himself who found fault. The rest of the Cabinet were unanimous in approbation. But there was not one of them whose opinions on foreign policy were, in John's mind, worth weighing against those of Lord Palmerston. He and John were always in cordial agreement on the great lines of foreign policy, so far as I remember, except on Lord Palmerston's unlucky and unworthy sanction of the *coup d'etat*.

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They two kept up the character of England as the sturdy guardian of her own rights against other nations and the champion of freedom and independence abroad. They did so both before and after the breach of 1851, which was happily closed in the following year, when they were once more colleagues in office. On matters of home policy Lord Palmerston remained the Tory he had been in his earlier days, and this was the cause of many a trial to John. Indeed, it was a misfortune to him throughout his public career that his colleagues almost to a man hung back when he would have gone forward; and many a time he came home dispirited from a Cabinet at which he had been alone—or with only the support of my father, who always stood stoutly by him while he remained Cabinet Minister—in the wish to bring before Parliament measures worthy of the Whig banner of Civil and Religious Liberty, Progress and Reform. Nothing could exceed John's patience under the criticisms of his colleagues, who were, most of them, also his friends, some of them very dear friends—nothing could exceed his readiness to admit and listen to difference of opinion from them; but it was trying to find the difference always in one direction, and that a direction hardly consistent with the character of a Whig Ministry.

The spirit which pervaded the foreign policy of Lord John Russell is shown in a letter from him to Queen Victoria dated December 29, 1851 [38]:

The grand rule of doing to others as we wish that they should do unto us is more applicable than any system of political science. The honour of England does not consist in defending every English officer or English subject, right or wrong, but in taking care that she does not infringe the rules of justice, and that they are not infringed against her.

[38] "Letters of Queen Victoria," vol. ii, chap. xx.

Lord and Lady John often regretted that the duties of political life prevented them from having fuller intercourse with literary friends. There are short entries in her diaries mentioning the visits of distinguished men and women, but she seldom had time to write more than a few words. Her diaries—like her letters—were written with marvellous rapidity, and were, of course, meant for herself alone. In March, 1852, she writes: "Thackeray came to read his 'Sterne' and 'Goldsmith' to us—very interesting quiet evening." And a little later at Pembroke Lodge: "Dickens came to luncheon and stayed to dinner. He was very agreeable—and more than agreeable—made us feel how much he is to be liked." Rogers they also saw occasionally, and the letter which follows is a reply to an invitation to Pembroke Lodge. The second letter refers to a volume of poems in manuscript, written by Lady John and illustrated by Lord John's stepdaughter, Mrs. Drummond. He had lent it to Rogers.

MY DEAR LADY JOHN,—Yes! yes! yes! A thousand thanks to you both! I need not say how delighted I shall be to avail myself of your kindness. I would rather share a crust with you and Lord John in your Paradise then sup in the Apollo with Lucullus himself—-yes—though Cicero and Pompey were to be of the party.

Yours most sincerely,

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SAMUEL ROGERS

Mr. Samuel Rogers to Lord John Russell

April 15, 1852

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How could you entrust me with anything so precious, so invaluable, that when I leave it I run back to see if it is lost? The work of two kindred minds which nor time nor chance could sever, long may it live a monument of all that is beautiful, and long may *they* live to charm and to instruct when I am gone and forgotten.

Yours ever,

S.R.

The next entry from Lady John's diary is dated March 14, 1852:

Yesterday John read a ballad in *Punch* giving a very unfavourable review of his conduct in dismissing Lord Palmerston, in bringing forward Reform—indeed, in almost all he has done in office. He felt this more than the attacks of graver and less independent papers, and said, "That's hard upon a man who has worked as I have for Reform"; but the moment of discouragement passed away, and he walked up and down the room repeating Milton's lines with the spirit and feeling of Milton:

"Yet hate I not a jot of heart or hope,
But steer right onward."

PEMBROKE LODGE

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VI

My brother and I have here added a few recollections of our old home.

A.R.

Pembroke Lodge, an old-fashioned house, long and low, surrounded by thickly wooded grounds, stood on the ridge of the hill in Richmond Park overlooking the Thames Valley and a wide plain beyond. It was approached by a drive between ancient oaks, limes, and evergreens, and at the entrance was a two-roomed thatched cottage, long occupied by a hearty old couple employed on the place, so careful and watchful that an amusing incident occurred one day when our father and mother were away from home. A lady and gentleman who were walking in the Park called at the Lodge, and asked for permission to walk through the grounds. The old lodge-keeper refused, saying she

could not give access to strangers during the absence of the family. The lady then told her they were friends of Lord and Lady John, but still the old guardian of the place remained suspicious and obdurate; till, to her surprise and discomfiture, it came out that the visitors to whom she had so sturdily refused admission were no other than Queen Victoria and Prince Albert walking incognito in the Park.

Just outside the Lodge the Crystal Palace on the height of Sydenham could be seen glittering in the rays of the setting sun. In front of the house, eastward, were two magnificent poplars, one 100 feet, the other about 96 feet high, rich and ample in foliage, and most delicately expressive of every kind of wind and weather. They could be seen with a telescope from Hindhead, about thirty miles south-west. Grand old oaks, of seven hundred to a thousand years, grew

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near the house and made plentiful shade; southwards the grass under them was scarcely visible in May for the glorious carpet of wild hyacinths, all blue and purple in the chequered sunlight. Nearly every oak had its name and place in the affection of young minds. There were also many fine beech-trees in the grounds. On the western slopes were masses of primroses and violets, also wild strawberries. West and south, down the hill, was a wilderness, the delight of children, untended and unspoiled, where birds of many kinds built their nests, where squirrels, rabbits, hedgehogs, weasels, snakes, wood-pigeons, turtle-doves, owls, and other life of the woods had never been driven out, and where visitors hardly ever cared to penetrate. Outside, in Petersham Park, was a picturesque thatched byre where the cows were milked. Petersham Park was then quiet and secluded, before the time came for its invasion by London school treats.

East of the house was a long lawn, secluded from the open Park by a beautiful, wildly growing hedge of gorse, berberis, bramble, hawthorn, and wild roses. Further north was a bowling-green, surrounded by hollies, laburnums, lilacs, rhododendrons, and forest trees; at one end was a rose-trellis and a raised flower garden. The effect of this bright flower garden with its setting of green foliage and flowering shrubs, and majestic old trees surrounding the whole, was very beautiful. At one end, shaded by two cryptomereas, planted by our father—said by Sir Joseph Hooker to be among the finest in England—was a long verandah where our mother often sat in summer with her basket of books, and in winter spread oatmeal for the birds, which grew very tame and would eat out of her hand. Close by was a picturesque old thatched summer-house, covered with roses; on each side were glades of chestnut, hornbeam, and lime trees, and looking westward Windsor Castle could be seen on the far horizon.

Near the house was a noble cedar, with one particularly fine bough under the shade of which the Petersham School children and the “Old Scholars” had their tea on festive occasions, followed by merry games in the grounds. The view from the house and the West walk, and also from King Henry’s Mount, was most beautiful, especially in the spring and autumn, with the varied and harmonious tints of the wooded foreground fading away into the soft blue distance.

It was a glorious Park to live in. The great oaks, the hawthorns, the tall dense bracken, the wide expanses of grass, the herds of red and fallow deer, not always undisturbed, made it a paradise for young people. The boys delighted in the large ponds, full of old carp and tench, with dace and roach, perch, gudgeons, eels, tadpoles, sticklebacks, and curious creatures of the weedy bottom. There was the best of riding over the smooth grass in the open sunny expanses or among the quiet and shady glades. Combe Wood, a little south of the Park, was then an island of pure country, quite unfrequented, and an occasional day there was a treat for all.

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Pembroke Lodge, the house, was entered by a porch overhung with wistaria; the walls on each side were covered with laburnums and roses; a long trellised arch of white roses led to the south lawn, which was sheltered from the east by holly, lilacs, and a very fine crataegus. From here was one of the loveliest views in the place, for our mother had made a wide opening under the arched bough of a fine elm-tree which stood like a grand old sentinel in the foreground. The bow room on the south side of the house was occupied by our father during his later years. Here stood the statue of Italy given by grateful Italians and the silver statuette given by the ladies of Bedford in recognition of Reform. The West room next the dining-room had been our father's study during many of his most strenuous years of office. The floor was heaped high with pyramids of despatch-boxes. One day some consternation was caused by our pet jackdaw, who had found his way in and pulled off all the labels, no doubt intending, in mischievous enjoyment, to tear to shreds despatches of European importance.

Above the bow room was our mother's bedroom; the view from here was exceedingly beautiful, both near and far, and she was never tired of standing at the open window looking at the loveliness around her, and listening to the happy chorus of birds—and to the nightingales answering each other, and singing day and night, apparently never weary of trying to gladden the world with their glorious melody.

It was indeed impossible to have a happier or more perfect home; the freedom, the outdoor life, the games and fun, in which our father and mother joined in their rare moments of leisure; the hours of reading and talk with them on the high and deep things of life—all this, and much more that cannot be expressed, forms a background in the memory of life deeply treasured and ineffaceable.

CHAPTER VII

1852-55

Although the Russell Ministry had been defeated upon the Militia Bill ("my tit-for-tat with John Russell," as Palmerston called it), the victors were very unlikely to hold office for long. In spite of Disraeli's praise of Free Trade during the General Election, a right-about surprising and disconcerting to his colleagues, the returns left the strength of parties much as they had been before. The Conservatives did not lose ground, but they did not gain it; they remained stronger than any other single party, but much weaker than Whigs, Peelites, and Irish combined. When Parliament met it was obvious that they would soon be replaced in office by some kind of coalition. Defeat came on Disraeli's Budget. The question remained, who could now undertake to amalgamate the various political groups, which, except in Opposition, had shown so little stable cohesion? Since the downfall of the Derby Government had been the work of a temporary alliance between Peelites and Whigs,

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the Queen sent for representatives of both parties; for Lord Aberdeen as the leader of Peel's followers and for Lord Lansdowne as the representative of the Whigs. Naturally she did not wish to summon Palmerston after what had happened; and to have charged Lord John, the other Whig leader, with the formation of a Ministry would have widened the discrepancies within the Whig party itself; for Lord John was unpopular with the Protestant Nonconformist section of the party, who were indignant with him for not strictly enforcing the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, and he had alienated the numerous believers in Palmerston by having forced him to resign. Lord Lansdowne was universally respected, and since he belonged to the rear-guard of the Whig party there seemed a better chance of his coalescing with the Conservatives. When he declined, pleading gout and old age, the task devolved upon Lord Aberdeen, who accepted the Queen's commission knowing that Palmerston was willing to take office and work *with*, though never again (he said) *under*, [39] Lord John. It was most important that both the leaders of the Whig party, Palmerston and Russell, should come into the Cabinet; for if either stayed outside a coalition, which by its Conservative tendencies already excluded Radicals of influence like Cobden and Bright, it could not have counted upon steady Whig support. Would Lord John consent to take office? Upon his decision depended, in Lord Aberdeen's opinion, the success or failure of the coalition. He had some talk with Lord John before accepting the Queen's commission, which persuaded him that he could rely upon Lord John's consent; but it is clear that at that time Lord John did not consider the matter decided.

[39] Although he asserted at the time that he would never serve under Lord John again, yet it appears that he was the only one of Lord John's colleagues who was willing to serve under him, when Lord John attempted to succeed Lord Aberdeen. Morley's "Life of Gladstone," vol. i, p. 531.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *December* 24, 1852

God grant our present good accounts may continue. [Lady Minto had been and was then alarmingly ill.] The two last letters have made me as little unhappy as is possible, considering how much there is still to dread.Whenever my thoughts are not with Mama, they are wearying themselves to no purpose in threading the maze of ravelled politics, or rather political arrangements, in which we are living. Since I have been in *public life*, I never spent a week of such painful *public anxiety*. When I say that the possibility of John taking office under Lord Aberdeen was always an odious one to me, and one which seemed next to an impossibility, don't for one moment suppose that I say so on the ground of personal claims and personal ambition, which I hold to be as wrong and selfish in

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politics as in everything else. And I shall feel a positive pleasure, far above that of seeing him *first,* in seeing him give so undoubted a proof of disinterestedness and patriotism as consenting to be *second*, if that were all. But oh, the danger of other sacrifices—sacrifices as fatal as that one would be honourable to his name—and oh, the infinite shades and grades of want of high motives and aims which, at such a time, one is doomed to find out in the buzzers who hover round the house—while the honest and pure and upright keep away and are silent. At times I almost wish I could throw away all that is honest and pure and upright, as useless and inconvenient rubbish of which I am half ashamed. I never felt more keenly or heavily the immeasurable distance between earth and heaven than now, when after the day has been spent in listening to the plausibilities of commonplace politicians, I open my Bible at night. It is going from darkness into light.And now you have had enough of my grumpiness, and I shall only add that all has not been pain and mortification. On the contrary, some men have come out bright and true as they were sure to do, and have shown themselves real friends to John and the country, and redeemed the class of politicians from a sweeping condemnation which would be most unjust.

After much hesitation Lord John determined to serve under Lord Aberdeen. He was persuaded to do so, in spite of strong misgivings, by the Queen, who was anxious to avoid the last resort of calling in Palmerston; her request was backed by the appeals of his most trusted political friends.

Queen Victoria to Lord John Russell

OSBORNE, *December* 19, 1852

The Queen has to-day charged Lord Aberdeen with the duty of forming an Administration, which he has accepted. The Queen thinks the moment to have arrived when a popular, efficient, and durable Government could be formed by the sincere and united efforts of all parties professing Conservative and Liberal opinions. The Queen, knowing that this can only be effected by the patriotic sacrifice of personal interests and feelings to the public, trusts that Lord John Russell will, as far as he is able, give his valuable and powerful assistance to the realization of this object.

Lord John's hesitation seems to have been not unnaturally interpreted by many contemporaries as the reluctance of an ex-Prime Minister to take a subordinate position, and some records of this impression have found their way into history. We have Lady John's assurance that "this never for one moment weighed with him," and that his hesitation was entirely due to "the improbability of agreement in a Cabinet so composed, and therefore the probable evil to the country." His true feeling was shown by a remark made at that time by Lady John, that her husband would not mind being "shoeblack to Lord Aberdeen" if it would serve the country. [40]

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[40] Stuart Reid's "Life of Lord John Russell," p. 205.

It may be pointed out in corroboration that three years later Lord John was willing to serve under Palmerston himself, both in the House of Commons and the Cabinet, though the latter had thwarted him at every turn in the previous Ministry, and hardly hoped for such generous support. A man in whom scruples of pride were strong emotions would have found far greater cause for standing out then, than at this juncture. Indeed, such an interpretation of his motives does not agree with the impression which Lord John's character leaves on the mind. From his reserved speech, shy manner, and uncommunicative patience under criticism, from the silent abruptness of his decisions, his formidable trenchancy in self-defence when openly attacked, and his aloofness from any attempts to curry favour with the Press, it may be inferred that his character was a dignified one; but he was dignified precisely in the way which makes such actions as taking a subordinate political position particularly easy. He foresaw that his position would be one of extreme difficulty, but not—here lay his error—that it would prove an impossible one. It must be remembered that by subordinating himself he was also in a certain measure subordinating his party. The Whigs were contributing the majority of votes in the House of Commons, and they demanded that they should be proportionately powerful in the Cabinet. He was therefore forced to arrogate to himself an exceptional position in the Cabinet as the leader and representative of what was in fact a separate party. The Whigs kept complaining that he did not press their claims to office with sufficient importunity, while the Peelites reproached him with refusing to work under his chief like every other Minister. Whenever he subordinated the claims of the Whigs for the sake of working better with Lord Aberdeen, he laid himself open to charges of betraying his followers, and when he pressed their claims, he was accused of arrogance towards his chief. This, however, was a dilemma, the vexations of which wore off as places were apportioned and the Ministry got to its work; there was a more fatal incongruity in his position. He was technically a subordinate Minister, pledged to reform (as Prime Minister he had opposed a Radical Reform Bill on the ground that he would introduce his own), and the representative of the strongest party, also pledged to reform, in a coalition Cabinet anxious for the most part to seize the first excuse to postpone it indefinitely. In ordinary circumstances, if thwarted by his colleagues he would have resigned; but as it turned out, their excuse for thwarting him was at the same time the strongest claim on his loyalty. They made Crimean difficulties at once an excuse for postponing reform and for urging him to postpone his resignation.

At first, however, as far as those who were not behind the scenes could see, all went smoothly with the Coalition. The work of the session was admirably carried out. Lord John entered the Cabinet as Foreign Secretary; but as the duties of that office combined with the leadership of the House of Commons were too much for one man, he resigned, remaining in the Cabinet without office until 1854, when he became Colonial Secretary. The great event of the session was Gladstone's famous first Budget.

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Lord John to Lady John Russell

April 19, 1853

Gladstone's speech was magnificent, and I think his plan will do.... I think we shall carry this Budget, as Gladstone has put it so clearly that hardly a Liberal can vote with Disraeli to put him in our place. It rejoices me to be party to a large plan, and to have to do with a man who seeks to benefit the country rather than to carry a majority by concessions to fear.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 20, 1853

I am delighted with Gladstone's Budget. I don't pretend to judge of all its details, but such of its proposals as I understand are all to my mind, and the spirit and temper of the whole speech admirable; so bold, so benevolent, so mild, so uncompromising. I read it aloud to Lizzy and the girls, and we were in the middle of it when your letter came telling us how fine it had been.... Surely you will carry it? I feel no fear, except of your allowing it to be damaged in the carrying.

Mrs. Gladstone to Lady John Russell

April, 1853

MY DEAR LADY JOHN,—I thank you heartily for your very kind note. You know well from your own experience how happy I must be now.

We have indeed great reason to be thankful: the approbation of such men as your husband is no slight encouragement and no slight happiness. I assure you we have felt this deeply. After great anxiety one feels more as if in a happy dream than in real life and you will not laugh at the relief to me of seeing him well after such an effort and after such labour as it has been for weeks....

We have often thought of you in your illness and heard of your well-doing with sincere pleasure.

Once more thanking you, believe me, dear Lady John,

Yours sincerely,

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

I must tell you with what comfort and interest I watched Lord John's countenance during the speech.

On March 28, 1853, Lady John's daughter, Mary Agatha, was born at Pembroke Lodge. Lady Minto was well enough to write a bright and happy letter of congratulation on the birth of her granddaughter, but her health was gradually failing, and on July 21st she died at Nervi, in Italy.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *August* 3, 1853

The world is changed to me for ever since I last wrote. My dear, dear Mama has left it, and I shall never again see that face so long and deeply loved. Tuesday, July 26th, was the day we heard. Thursday, July 21st, the day her angel spirit was summoned to that happy home where tears are wiped from all eyes. I pray to think more of her, glorious, happy and at rest, than of ourselves. But it is hard, very, very hard to part. O Mama, Mama, I call and you do not come. I dream of you, I wake, and you are not there.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

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MINTO, *August* 10, 1853

You will feel a melancholy pang at the date of the place from which I write. It is indeed very sorrowful to see Lord Minto and so many of his sons and daughters assembled to perform the last duties to her who was the life and comfort of them all.... The place is looking beautiful, and your mother's garden was never so lovely. It is pleasant in all these sorrows and trials to see a family so united in affection, and so totally without feelings or objects that partake of selfishness or ill-will.

The old poet Rogers, who had been attached to Lady John since her earliest days in London society, now wrote to her in her sorrow. His note is worth preserving. He was past his ninetieth year when he wrote, and it reveals a side of him which is lost sight of in the memoirs of the time, where he usually appears as saying many neat things, but few kind ones. Mrs. Norton, in a letter to Hayward, gives an authentic picture of him at this time. She begins by saying that no man ever *seemed* so important who did so little, even said so little:

"His god was Harmony," she wrote; "and over his life Harmony presided, sitting on a lukewarm cloud. He was *not* the 'poet, sage, and philosopher' people expected to find he was, but a man in whom the tastes (rare fact!) preponderated over the passions; who defrayed the expenses of his tastes as other men make outlay for the gratification of their passions; all within the limit of reason."... He was the very embodiment of quiet, from his voice to the last harmonious little picture that hung in his hushed room, and a curious figure he seemed—an elegant pale watch-tower, showing for ever what a quiet port literature and the fine arts might offer, in an age of 'progress,' when every one is tossing, struggling, wrecking, and foundering on a sea of commercial speculation or political adventure; when people fight over pictures, and if a man does buy a picture, it is with the burning desire to prove it is a Raphael to his yielding enemies, rather than to point it out with a slow white finger to his breakfasting friends."

Mr. Samuel Rogers to Lady John Russell

August 13, 1853

MY DEAR FRIEND,—May I break in upon you to say how much you have been in my thoughts for the last fortnight? But I was unwilling to interrupt you at such a moment when you must have been so much engaged.May He who has made us and alone knows what is best for us support you under your great affliction. Again and again have I taken up my poor pen, but in vain, and I have only to pray that God may bless you and yours wherever you go.

Ever most affectionately yours,

SAMUEL ROGERS

In the autumn of 1853 Lord John took his family up to Roseneath, in Scotland, which had been lent them by the Duke of Argyll. They had been there some weeks, occasionally making short cruises in the *Seamew*, which the Commission of Inland Revenue had placed at their disposal, when threatening complications in the East compelled Lord John to return to London. The peace of thirty-eight years was nearly at an end.

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ROSENEATH, *September* 2, 1853

My poor dear John set off to London, to his and my great disappointment. The refusal of the Porte to agree to the Note accepted by the Emperor makes the journey necessary.

Lady John soon followed him.

Lady John Russell to Lady Elizabeth Romilly

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 21, 1853

MY DEAREST LIZZY,—... I have never ceased rejoicing at my sudden flight from Roseneath, though its two causes, John's cold and the Czar's misdeeds, are unpleasant enough—but his presence here is so necessary, so terribly necessary, that neither he nor I could have stayed on in peace at Roseneath.... What he has accomplished is a wonder; and I hope that some day somehow everybody will know everything, and wonder at his patience and firmness and unselfishness, as I do.... I trust we may be very quiet here for some time, and then one must gather courage for London and the battle of life again. Our quiet here will not be without interruption, for there will be early in November a week or so of Cabinets, for which we shall go to town, and at the end of November Parliament may be obliged to meet....

Your ever affectionate sister,

FANNY RUSSELL

Lady John to Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 9, 1853

Your letter just come, dearest ... I don't think I am tired by colds, but indeed it is true that I think constantly and uneasily of your political position, *never, never*, as to whether this or that course will place you highest in the world's estimation. I am sure you know all I care about is that you should do what is most right in the sight of God.

It may be well to remind the reader at this point of the diplomatic confusions and difficulties which led to the Crimean War. The Eastern Question originally grew out of a quarrel between France and Russia concerning the possession of certain holy places in Palestine; both the Latin and the Greek Church wanted to control them. The Sultan had offered to mediate, but neither party had been satisfied by his intervention. In the beginning of 1853 it became known in England that the Czar was looking forward to the collapse of Turkey, and that he had actually proposed to the English Ambassador that we should take Crete and Greece, while he took the European provinces of Turkey. In Russia, hostility to Turkey rose partly from sympathy with the Greek Church, which was

persecuted in Turkey, and partly from the desire to possess an outlet into the Mediterranean. The English Ministers naturally would have nothing to do with the Czar's proposal to partition Turkey. Russia's attitude towards Turkey was attributed to the aggressive motive alone. Nicholas then demanded from the Sultan the right of protecting the Sultan's Christian subjects himself, and when this was refused, he occupied Moldavia and Wallachia with his troops. England's reply was to send a fleet up the Dardanelles.

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A consultation of the four great Powers, England, France, Austria, and Prussia, for the prevention of war, ended in the dispatch of the “Vienna Note,” which contained the stipulation that the Sultan should protect in future all Christians of the Greek Church in his kingdom. The Czar accepted the terms of the Note, but the Sultan, instigated by Sir Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, refused them. The Czar then declared war, and though the Turks were successful on the Danube, he succeeded in destroying the Turkish fleet at Sinope. This success produced the greatest indignation in England and France, and in March, 1854, they declared war upon Russia together.

Before these events Palmerston had resigned on the ground that the attitude of the Government towards Russia was not sufficiently stiff and peremptory; for, from the first, Lord Aberdeen had never contemplated the possibility of war with Russia. But before the month was out Palmerston had resumed office. It will be seen from the following letter, written by Lord John’s private secretary, Mr. Boileau, that disapproval of the Government’s negotiations with Russia was not the only motive attributed by Whigs to Palmerston in resigning. Lord John had joined the Ministry on the condition that he should bring forward his measure of reform; from the first most of his colleagues were very lukewarm towards it, but Palmerston was definitely, though covertly, antagonistic,

Mr. John Boileau to Lady Melgund

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December* 19, 1853

You will be glad to know something about Pam’s resignation and the *on dits* here—if, as I hope, you are safely arrived at Minto.... His own paper, the *Morning Post*, will do him more harm than good, I think. It will not allow that Reform has anything to do with his resignation—swears he is an out-and-out Reformer—and that his differing from the policy of the Cabinet on the Eastern Question is the only reason. Now this, in my humble judgment, I believe not to be the case. I feel certain, in fact I feel sure, that he goes out solely on the question of Reform, having been opposed to it *in toto* from the first moment of the discussion on it in the Cabinet, and though he went on with them for a time, they came to something that he could not swallow. As to the question of the East, if he does differ from the Cabinet it is no more than Lord John or several others might say if they went out to-morrow.... The *Times* of to-day has a very severe article against him. The *Daily News* is very sensible and implies great confidence in Lord John. The *Chronicle* is calm in its disapprobation of Pam—the *Morning Advertiser*, of all papers! is the most in favour, and is crying Pam up for Prime Minister already, and gives extracts from county papers to show how popular he is. The *Morning Herald* is silent on the subject.

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I send you these flying remarks, as I dare say you will see nothing at Minto except perhaps the *Times*, and any news in the country goes a great way.... London is very cold and painfully dull without 24 Chester Square, and you must write to me very often. You see *I* have begun very well....

Lord John, however, insisted on bringing forward his Bill in spite of opposition from his colleagues and many of the Government's supporters. He felt that the party was bound to keep its promise to the country, while his colleagues urged that the House of Commons was so much occupied by the war that they had no time to consider such a Bill. As the House of Commons was not conducting the war itself the excuse was shallow. Lord John threatened to resign unless he was allowed to introduce his measure, for he considered the honour of the Ministry and his own honour at stake. From the following letters it will be seen how hard he fought for this measure, and with what poignant regret he found himself compelled at last to choose between letting it drop and resignation. His resignation would have meant a serious shock to a Ministry already in disgrace through their mismanagement of the war; rather than embarrass them further at such a crisis he chose the lesser evil of abandoning his Bill. But by yielding to the urgent appeals of his colleagues and continuing in office, his position became from day to day increasingly difficult. Finally, he resigned abruptly, for reasons which have been interpreted unfavourably by almost every historian who has written upon this period.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *February* 14, 1854

I remember almost crying in Minto days, when you were twelve, because I thought it past the prime of life. What shall I do now that you are striking forty-three? I believe you have long ago made up your mind to the changing and fading and ending of all things here below, joys as well as sorrows, childhood, youth and age, hope and fear and doubt, and that you have learnt to look forward rather than back; but to me this is often a struggle still; and when the struggle ends the wrong way, how much there is to make my heart sink within me! Chiefly, as you may guess, the deepening lines on the face of the dearest husband that ever blessed a home, and the comparison of him as he now is with him as he was when we married.Yesterday was a great day to us; the Reform Bill was brought in. I suppose I should be better pleased if there was more enthusiasm. I should certainly have a better opinion of human nature, if those who have cried out most loudly for Reform did not set their cowardly faces against it now; but at the same time there is a happy pride in seeing John's honest and patriotic perseverance in what he is convinced is right, through evil report and good report, in season and out of season.

Lady John Russell to Lady Elizabeth Romilly

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February 28, 1854

DEAREST LIZZY,—To get out of my difficulty as to which of my other three correspondents to write to, I give my half-hour to you this morning. I must begin by thanking you all with all my heart for your most welcome congratulations on all that John has said and done since Parliament met, and especially his great speech in answer to Layard. It is indeed a happiness to hear such praise from people whose praise is worth having; but I have now learned, if I had not long ago, how worthless many of the congratulations are, which I receive after a good speech which has set the Ministers firmer in their seats. It may be right the week after to make one which has a contrary effect, and then the congratulators become revilers. I knew when I began to write that I should be disagreeable, but had hoped not to be so as early as the second page. However, having got into the complaining mood, I will not hurry out of it; and I shall be surprised if you do not admit that I have some reason for my complaints.For the last ten days John has been urged and pressed and threatened and coaxed and assailed by all the various arts of every variety of politician to induce him to give up Reform! Mind, *I* say give up, where *they* say put off, because I know they mean give up; though cowards as they are in this as in everything else, they *dare* not say what they mean. Will you believe that the language poured into my pained and wounded and offended but very helpless ears, day after day, by official friends, is to the effect that the country is apathetic on Reform, and that therefore it should not be proceeded with; that Reform is a measure calculated to produce excitement, conflict, disturbance in the country, and therefore it should not be proceeded with; that John having given a pledge was bound, “oh yes, certainly,” to redeem it, and that all the world will agree he *has* most nobly redeemed it, if he lets his Bill fall on the floor of the House of Commons to-morrow, never to be picked up again; that if he proceeds with it, he will be universally reproached for allowing personal hostility to Lord Palmerston to influence him to the injury of the country; that his character is so high that if he gave it up, it would be utterly impossible for any creature to raise a doubt of his sincerity in bringing it forward; that dissolution or resignation are revolution and ruin and disgrace; that the caballers are wrong, quite wrong, but that we must look at the general question and the possible results (a hackneyed expression which may sound wise but of which I too well know the drift); that it may often be very honourable to abandon friends and supporters with whom we agree, to conciliate the shabbies with whom we differ; that, of course, they would be too happy to be out of office, but people must not consult their own wishes; that I must be aware that Lord John is supposed sometimes to

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be a little obstinate, *etc*. In short, it all comes to this, that many M.P.'s are afraid of losing their seats by a dissolution, and many others whose boroughs are disfranchised hate the Reform Bill, and many more are anti-Reformers by nature, and all these combine to stifle it.... And to tell Lord John that really he has such a quantity of spare character that it can bear a little damaging! I am ashamed and sick of such things, and should think my country no longer worth caring for, but for those brave men who have gone off to fight for her with a spirit worthy of themselves, and but for those lower classes in which Frederick [41] tells me to put my faith.... I must stop, not without fear that you may think me blind to the very real evil and danger of dissolution or resignation at the beginning of a great war. Indeed I am not—but those who see nothing but these dangers are taking the very way to lead us into them.... Lord Aberdeen is firm as a rock; it is due to him to say so. How shall I prevent my boys growing up to be cowards and selfish like the rest? You see what a humour I am in.... I never *let out* to anybody. When my friends give all this noble advice I sit to all appearance like Patience on a monument, but not feeling like her at all—keeping silence because there is not time to begin at the first rudiments of morality, and there would be no use in anything higher up. Good-bye, poor Lizzy, doomed to suffer under my bad moods. God bless you all.

Yours ever, F.R.

[41] Colonel Romilly, husband of Lady Elizabeth Romilly, and son of Sir Samuel Romilly.

Lord Granville to Lady John Russell

February 28, 1854

I have just heard that Lord John has consented to put off Reform till after Easter. It must have been a great personal sacrifice to him, but I am delighted for his own sake and the public cause that he has done it. There is no doubt but that nearly all who cry for delay are at bottom enemies to Reform. Reform is not incompatible with war, and it is not clear that a dissolution would be dangerous during its continuance, but an enormous majority of the House of Commons have persuaded themselves of the contrary.In all probability the apathetic approved of the Reform Bill only because it was out of the question for the present. Newcastle agrees with me in thinking that a wall has been built which, at present, could not have been knocked down by the few who really desire Reform.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 8, 1854

Painfully anxious day. Cabinet to decide on Reform or no Reform this session.

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Came here early with the children, wishing to be cheerful for John's sake, and knowing how much power Pembroke Lodge and the children have to make me so. Found this place most lovely; the day warm and bright as June; the children like larks escaped from a cage. At half-past seven John came looking worn and sad—no Reform, and no resignation! Not a man in the Cabinet agreed with him that it would be best to go on with Reform; though several would have consented had he insisted, but he did not. Not one would hear either of his resignation or of Lord Palmerston's. In short—the present Ministry at any price. John dissatisfied with his colleagues, and worse with himself. May God watch over him and guide him.

LONDON, *April* 11, 1854

The great day is over, and thank God John has stood the trial, and even risen, I believe, in the estimation of his followers and of men in general. The regrets, disapprobation, despair, reproaches that assailed him from the various sections of his party, on the rumours of his resignation, were of a kind that would have made it wrong in him to persist; for they proved that the heartiest reformers were against it, and would uphold him in remaining in the Government.There was deep silence when he rose. It was soon plain that the disposition of his supporters was good; and throughout his noble, simple, generous, touching speech he was loudly cheered by them, and often by all sides.At the close there were a few words about his own position: he said that the course he was taking was open to suspicion from those who supported him—that if he had done anything—Here his voice failed him, and there burst forth the most deafening cheers from all parts of the House, which lasted for a minute or two, till he was able to go on. If he had done anything for the cause of Reform he still hoped for their confidence. If not, his influence would be weakened and destroyed, and he could no longer lead them. This was the substance—not the words. It was a great night for him. He risked more than perhaps ought to be risked, but he has lost nothing, I trust and believe, and I hope he has gained more than the enthusiasm of a day. May God ever guide and bless him.

Mr. George Moffatt, M.P., to Lady John Russell

103 EATON SQUARE, *April* 12, 1854

DEAR LADY JOHN RUSSELL,—Pardon my saying one word upon the touching event of last evening. A parliamentary experience of nine years has never shown me so striking an instance of respectful homage and cordial sympathy as was then elicited. I know that the unbidden tears gushed to my cheeks, and looking round I could see scores of other careless, worldly men struck by the same emotion—and even the Speaker (as he subsequently admitted to me) was affected in precisely the same manner. The German-toy face of the Caucasian was of course as immovable as usual, but Mr. Walpole wept outright. I sincerely trust that the kindly enthusiasm of this moment may have in some measure compensated for the vexations and annoyances of the last two months.

Believe me, your faithful servant,

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GEO. MOFFATT

Mr. John Boileau to Lady Melgund

LONDON, *April* 12, 1854

I wish I could write you a long letter giving an account of last night in the House of Commons.... I would not have missed last night for the world. It was a melancholy instance of what a public servant in these days may have to go through, at the same time such a noble example of patriotism and self-sacrifice as I believe there is not another man in England capable of giving—and though I cannot yet resign my feeling that it would have been better in the end both for Lord John and the Liberal party had he resigned, at present I have nothing to do but to admire, love, and respect more than ever the man who could, for the sake of his country and what he believes in his judgment to be the best for her, go through as painful a struggle as he has.... The scene in the House itself I shall never forget—the sudden pause when he began to speak of himself and his position—the sobs, and finally the burst of tears, and the almost ineffectual attempt to finish the remaining sentences, and at last obliged to give it up and sit down exhausted with the protracted struggle and the strain of nerve. He was loudly cheered from both sides of the House.

Lord John Russell to Mr. John Abel Smith [42]

April 12, 1854

DEAR SMITH,—As I find some rumours have been mentioned to Lady John, false in themselves and injurious to me, I beg to assure you that it has been the greatest comfort to me to find that I received from her the best encouragement and support in the course which I ultimately adopted. She could not fail to perceive and to sympathize in the deep distress which the prospect of abandoning the Reform Bill caused me, and it was my chief consolation during a trying period to find at home regard for my fame and reputation as a sincere and earnest reformer. That regard has now been shown by the House of Commons generally, but there is no man in that House on whose friendship I more confidently rely, and with good reason, than yourself.

Yours ever truly,

J. RUSSELL

[42] Lord John's election agent.

Lord Spencer to Lady John Russell

LEAMINGTON, *April* 14, 1854

DEAR LADY JOHN,—I cannot resist giving you the trouble to read a few lines from me on Lord John's speech the other night. Remembering the conversation we had on the subject of the proposed Reform Bill, when I ventured, perhaps too boldly and too roundly, to let out my unworthy opinion in a contrary sense, I think I ought to tell you that I had arrived some time ago at the same conclusion which Lord John announced to the House of Commons the other night, and I really believe if I had not, his reasons would have made me. I never read a more convincing speech, and I never read so affecting a one. No man living, I believe, could have made that speech but your husband, and it gives me great pleasure to offer you my heartfelt congratulations upon it.... Pray forgive me, dear Lady John, for intruding thus on your time, and believe me,

Very faithfully yours,

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SPENCER

Lady John Russell to Lord Minto,

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 24, 1854

MY DEAREST PAPA,—... I must dash at once into my subject, having only a quarter of an hour to spend on it. It is that of John's position; he has, I believe, raised his character in the country by the withdrawal of the Reform Bill. His motives are above suspicion and unsuspected; whereas, owing to the singular state of the public mind, it seems pretty sure that they *would* have been, though most unjustly, suspected, had he persisted in his resignation. But in the Cabinet I do *not* think his position improved, rather the reverse. The policy of the timid and the shabby and the ambitious and the cunning and the illiberal triumphed; and all experience teaches me that John, having made a great sacrifice, will be expected to make every other that *apparent expediency* may induce his colleagues to require. He will always be pressed and urged and taunted with obstinacy, *etc*., and told that he will ruin his reputation, if for the sake of one question on which he may happen to differ with them, he exposed his country to the awful danger of a change of Ministry.... It is for the avowed purpose of carrying on the war with vigour that Reform and other things are thrown aside. The Ministry has not asked the House of Commons or the country to declare, but has declared itself indispensable to the country, and the only possible Ministry competent to carry on the war. But if it has already proved, and if it daily goes on to prove, itself incompetent in time of peace to carry on measures of domestic improvement, and more specially incompetent either to prepare for or prosecute a great war, has John done right, has he done what the welfare of the country requires, in lending himself so long as its indispensable prop? It is not incompetent from want of ability, but of unity.... He is considered by them to have wedded himself to them for better for worse more closely than ever by the withdrawal of Reform.... The wretched fears and delays and doubts which have, I firmly believe, first produced this war, and then made its beginning of so little promise, have had no effect as warnings for the future.... There will probably soon be great pressure put upon him to take office.... Nothing but the fact of his having no office, of his only part in the Government being *work,* has made him struggle along a very dangerous way unattacked and unhurt.... With his opinion of Lord Aberdeen's Ministry he would be *doing wrong,* though from no worse motives than excess of deference to those with whom he acts, were he, after giving up Reform, to give up the degree of independence which he now has.... You can now partly conceive how doubtful I feel (and he does too) whether the withdrawal of Reform will ultimately be an advantage, though it is obvious that a break-up on that was more to be deprecated than on almost any other

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subject. John said this morning of his own accord that he feared he had been wrong in ever joining this Ministry. I wake every morning with the fear of some terrible national disaster before night, of disasters which could be borne if they were unavoidable, but will be unbearable if they could have been avoided. Do *not,* pray, think me a croaker without good reason for croaking. The greatness of the occasion is not understood.

Ever, my dearest Papa,

Your affectionate child,

F.R.

Matters were coming to a crisis in the Cabinet. The autumn and early winter of 1854 brought the victories of Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman. As the country grew prouder of its soldiers its indignation at the way the civil side of the war had been organized increased. The incompetence of the War Office made the Government extremely unpopular, and a motion was brought forward in the House of Commons charging them with the mismanagement of the war. Directly after Mr. Roebuck had given notice of a motion for a Committee of Inquiry, Lord John wrote to Lord Aberdeen that since he could not conscientiously oppose the motion, he must resign his office. The view which most historians have taken of this step is that it was an act of cowardly desertion on his part. As a member of the Government, he was as responsible as his colleagues for what had been done, and by resigning he was admitting that they deserved disgrace. Quotations from two important historical books will show the view which has been generally taken of his action.

Lord Morley, in his “Life of Gladstone,” says:

... When Parliament assembled on January 23, 1855, Mr. Roebuck on the first night of the session gave notice of a motion for a Committee of Inquiry. Lord John Russell attended to the formal business, and when the House was up went home, accompanied by Sir Charles Wood. Nothing of consequence passed between the two colleagues, and no word was said to Wood in the direction of withdrawal. The same evening, as the Prime Minister was sitting in his drawing-room, a red box was brought in to him by his son, containing Lord John Russell’s resignation. He was as much amazed as Lord Newcastle, smoking his evening pipe of tobacco in his coach, was amazed by the news that the battle of Marston Moor had begun. Nothing has come to light since to set aside the severe judgment pronounced upon this proceeding by the universal opinion of contemporaries, including Lord John’s own closest political allies. That a Minister should run away from a hostile motion upon affairs for which responsibility was collective, and this without a word of consultation with a single colleague, is a transaction happily without precedent in the history of modern English Cabinets. [43]

[43] Morley's "Life of Gladstone," vol. i, p. 521. See also Lord Stanmore's "Earl of Aberdeen," chap. X.

Mr. Herbert Paul, in his brilliant "History of Modern England," gives a version of this occurrence, which, on the whole, is hardly less harsh towards Lord John.

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Well might Lord Palmerston complain of such behaviour as embarrassing. It was crippling. It furnished the Opposition with unanswerable arguments. “Here,” they could say, “is the second man in your Cabinet, in his own estimation the first, knowing all that you know, and he says ’that an inquiry by the House is essential. How then can you deny or dispute it?’” In a foot-note he adds, “Lord John offered to withdraw his resignation if the Duke of Newcastle would retire [from the War Office] in favour of Palmerston. It had been settled before Christmas between Lord Aberdeen and the Duke that this change should be made. But no one else was aware of the arrangement, and Lord Aberdeen, though he had assented to it, declined to carry it out as the result of a bargain with Lord John.”

Now both these versions leave out an important fact in the private history of the Aberdeen Cabinet. Lord John had on two occasions at least, subsequent to giving way upon the question of the Reform Bill, tried to resign. Only the entreaties of the Queen and his colleagues had induced him to remain in the Ministry; and then, it was understood, only until some striking success of arms should make his resignation of less consequence to them. But Sevastopol did not fall, and Lord John hung on, urging in the meantime, emphatically and repeatedly, that the efficiency of the war administration must be increased, that the control must be transferred from the hands of the two Secretaries of War to the most vigorous Minister, Palmerston. At the Cabinet meeting of December 6th, Lord John desisted from pressing this particular change, owing to Palmerston having written to him that he thought there were “no broad and distinct grounds” for removing the Duke of Newcastle, and confined himself, after criticizing the general conduct of the war, to announcing his intention of resigning in any case after Christmas. When it was objected that such an announcement was inconsistent with his remaining leader of the House of Commons till then, he offered to resign at once. He would have gladly done so had they not implored him to remain. On December 30th he drew up a memorandum of his criticisms upon the conduct of the war; and on January 3rd he wrote to Lord Aberdeen: “Nothing can be less satisfactory than the result of the recent Cabinets. Unless you will direct measures for yourself, I see no hope for the efficient prosecution of the war...."[44]

[44] For a full account of these incidents the reader must be referred to Sir Spencer Walpole’s “Life of Lord John Russell,” chap. xxv.

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When, therefore, on January 23rd, the Opposition demanded an inquiry, he was in a very awkward position. He had either to bar the way to changes he had been urging himself all along, or he was obliged to admit openly that he agreed with the critics of the Government. Had he chosen the first alternative he would have been untrue to his conviction that a change of method in conducting the war was absolutely essential to his country's success; yet in choosing the second he was turning his back on his colleagues. No doubt the custom of the Constitution asks either complete acceptance of common responsibility from individual Ministers or their immediate resignation. Lord John had protested and protested, but he had *not* resigned; he was therefore responsible for what had been done while he was in the Cabinet. He had not resigned because he thought it bad for the country that the Government should be weakened while the war was at its height, and he had hoped that by staying in the Cabinet he would be able to induce the Ministry to alter its methods of conducting the war. When he discovered that, in spite of reiterated protests, he could not effect these all-important changes from within, and when the House of Commons began to clamour for them from without, he decided that no considerations of loyalty to colleagues ought to make him stand between the country and changes so urgently desirable. It may be said that since he had acted all along on the ground that in keeping the strength of the Government intact lay the best chance of helping to bring the war to a successful and speedy conclusion, he was inconsistent, to say the least, in deserting his colleagues at a juncture which made their defeat inevitable. But the inconsistency is only superficial; when he once had lost hope that the Government could be got to alter their methods of conducting the war, their defeat and dissolution, which he had previously striven to prevent, became the lesser of two evils. It was not an evil at all, as it turned out, for the dissolution brought the right man—Palmerston—into power. Lord John's mistake was in thinking that his long-suffering support of a loose-jointed, ill-working Ministry, like the Aberdeen Ministry, could have ever transformed it into a strong one.

Lord Wriothesley Russell, [45] whom Lady John wrote of years before as "the mildest and best of men," sent her a letter on February 8, 1855, containing the following passages:

It is impossible to hear all these abominable attacks in silence. It makes me sad as well as indignant to hear the world speaking as if straight-forward honesty were a thing incredible—impossible. A man, and above all a man to whom truth is no new thing, says simply that he cannot assent to what he believes to be false, and the whole world says, What can he mean by it—treachery, trickery, cowardice, ambition, what is it? My hope is that our statesmen may learn from John's dignified conduct a lesson which does not appear hitherto

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to have occurred to them—that even the fate of a Ministry will not justify a lie. We all admire in fiction the stern uprightness of Jeanie Deans: "One word would have saved me, and she would not speak it." ... Whether that word would have saved them is a question—it was their only chance—and he would not speak it; that word revolted his conscience, it would have been false. I know nothing grander than the sublime simplicity of that refusal.

[45] Lord John's stepbrother.

Nearly two years later, Lord John Russell, in a letter to his brother, the Duke of Bedford, said:

... The question with me was how to resist Roebuck's motion. I do not think I was wrong in substance, but in form I was. I ought to have gone to the Cabinet and have explained that I could not vote against inquiry, and only have resigned if I had not carried the Cabinet with me. I could not have taken Palmerston's line of making a feeble defence.

How absurd it is to suppose that cowardice could have dictated Lord John's decision at this time, his behaviour in circumstances to be recounted in the next chapter shows. Unpopular as his resignation made him with politicians, it was nothing to the storm of abuse which he was forced to endure when he chose, a few months later, to stand—-now an imputed trimmer—for the sake of preserving what was best in a policy he had not originally approved.

The troubles and differences of the Coalition Ministry did not lessen Lord John's regard for Lord Aberdeen, of whom he wrote in his last years: "I believe no man has entered public life in my time more pure in his personal views, and more free from grasping ambition or selfish consideration."

Mr. Rollo Russell, on the publication of Mr. John Morley's "Life of Gladstone," wrote the following letter to the *Times* in vindication of his father's action with regard to Mr. Roebuck's motion:

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, SURREY, *November,* 1903

SIR,—In his admirable biography of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley has given, no doubt without any intention of injury, an impression which is not historically correct by his account of my father's resignation in January, 1855, on the notice of Mr. Roebuck's motion for a Committee of Inquiry. I do not wish to apply to his account the same measure which he applies by quoting an ephemeral observation of Mr. Greville to my father's speech, but I do maintain that "the general effect is very untrue."Before being judged a man is entitled to the consideration both of his character and of the evidence

on his side. In the chapter to which I allude there is no reference to the records by which my father's action has been largely justified. There is no mention, I think, of these facts: that my father had again and again during the Crimean War urged upon the Cabinet a redistribution of offices, the more efficient

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prosecution of the war, the provision of proper food and clothing for the Army, which was then undergoing terrible privations and sufferings, a better concert between the different Departments, and between the English and French camps, and, especially, the appointment of a Minister of War of vigour and authority. "As the welfare of the Empire and the success of the present conflict are concerned," he wrote at the end of November to the head of the Government, "the conduct of the war ought to be placed in the hands of the fittest man who can be found for the post." He laid the greatest stress on more efficient administration.The miseries of the campaign increased. On January 30, 1855, Lord Malmesbury wrote: "The accounts from the Crimea are dreadful. Only 18,000 effective men; 14,000 are dead and 11,000 sick. The same neglect which has hitherto prevailed continues and is shown in everything."He held very strong views as to the duty of the House of Commons in regard to these calamities. "Inquiry is the proper duty and function of the House of Commons.... Inquiry is at the root of the powers of the House of Commons."He had been induced by great pressure from the highest quarters to join the Cabinet, and on patriotic grounds remained in office against his desire. He continually but unsuccessfully advocated Reform. Several times he asked to be allowed to resign.

> When, therefore, Mr. Roebuck brought forward a motion embodying the opinion which he had frequently urged on his colleagues, he could not pretend the opposite views and resist the motion for inquiry.

The resignation was not so sudden as represented. On the 6th of December, 1854, when the Cabinet met, he declared that he was determined to retire after Christmas; after some conference with his colleagues, he wrote on December 16th to Lord Lansdowne: "I do not feel justified in taking upon myself to retire from the Government on that account [the War Office] at this moment." It is not the case that a severe judgment was pronounced upon these proceedings by the "universal" opinion of his contemporaries. His brother. Lord Wriothesley Russell, wrote: "It makes one sad to hear the world speaking as if straightforward honesty were a thing incredible, impossible." And the Duke of Bedford: "My mind has been deeply pained by seeing your pure patriotic motives maligned and misconstrued after such a life devoted to the political service of the public." But the whole world was not against him. Among many letters of approval, I find one strongly supporting his action with regard to the Army in the Crimea and his course in quitting the Ministry, and quoting a favourable article in *The Examiner;* another strongly approving, and stating: "I have this morning conversed with more than fifty gentlemen in the City, and they *all* agree with me that in following the dictates of your conscience

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you acted the part most worthy of your exalted name and character.... We recognize the importance of the principle which you yourself proclaimed, that there can be no sound politics without sound morality." Mr. John Dillon wrote: "To have opposed Mr. Roebuck's motion and then to have defended what you thought and knew to have been indefensible would have been not a fault but a crime."Another wrote expressing the satisfaction and gratitude of the great majority of the inhabitants of his district in regard to his "efforts to cure the sad evils encompassing our brave countrymen;" and another wrote: "The last act of your official life was one of the most honourable of the sacrifices to duty which have so eminently distinguished you both as a man and a Minister."There was no doubt a common outcry against the act of resignation at the time, but the outcry against certain Ministers of the Peelite group was still louder, and their conduct, as Mr. Morley relates, was pronounced to be "actually worse than Lord John's." "Bad as Lord John's conduct was," wrote Lord Malmesbury on February 22, 1855, "this [of Graham, Gladstone, and Herbert] is a thousand times worse."The real question, however, is not what the public thought at the time, but what a fuller knowledge of the facts will determine, and I contend that my father's dissatisfaction with the manner in which the war was conducted, and his failure to induce the Cabinet to supply an effective remedy, justified if it did not compel his resignation.

Mr. Roebuck's motion accelerated a resignation which the Prime Minister knew had been imminent during the preceding ten weeks.

My father himself admitted that he made great mistakes, that for the manner of his resignation he was justly blamed, and that he ought never to have joined the Coalition Ministry. He had a deep sense, I may here say, of Mr. Gladstone's great generosity towards him on all occasions. At this distance of time the complication of affairs and of opinions then partly hidden can be better estimated, and the conduct of seceders from the Government cannot in fairness be visited with the reprobation which was natural to contemporaries. The floating reproaches of the period in regard to my father's action seem to imply, if justified, that he ought to have publicly defended the conduct of military affairs which he had persistently and heartily condemned. It appears to me that not only his candid nature, but the story of his life, refutes these reproaches, as clearly as similar reproaches are refuted by the life of Gladstone.

Yours faithfully,

ROLLO RUSSELL

CHAPTER VIII

1855

The debate upon Roebuck's motion of inquiry lasted two nights, and at its close the Aberdeen Ministry fell, beaten by a majority of 157. Historians have seen in this incident much more than the fall of a Ministry.

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Behind the question whether the civil side of the Crimean campaign had been mismanaged lay the wider issue whether the Executive should allow its duties to be delegated to a committee of the House of Commons. “The question which had to be answered,” says Mr. Bright in his “History of England,” “was whether a great war could be carried to a successful conclusion under the blaze of publicity, when every action was exposed not only to the criticism and discussion of the Press, but also to the more formidable and dangerous demands of party warfare within the walls of Parliament.”

After both Lord John and Lord Derby had failed to form a Government, the Queen sent for Lord Palmerston.

Lady John, when her husband was summoned to form a Government, wrote to him from Pembroke Lodge on February 3, 1855:

All the world must feel that the burden laid upon you, though a very glorious, is a very heavy one.... Politics have never yet been what they ought to be; men who would do nothing mean themselves do not punish meanness in others when it can serve their party or their country, and excuse their connivance on that ground. That ground itself gives way when fairly tried. You are made for better days than these. I know how much better you really are than me.... You have it in your power to purify and to reform much that is morally wrong—much that you would not tolerate in your own household.... “Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are honest,” on these things take your stand—hold them fast, let them be your pride—let your Ministry, as far as in you lies, be made of such men, that the more closely its deeds are looked into, the more it will be admired.... Pray for strength and wisdom from above, and God bless and prosper you, dearest.

But Lord John failing to find sufficient support, Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister. His first Cabinet was a coalition. It included, besides some new Whig Ministers, all the members of the previous Cabinet with the exception of Lord John, Lord Aberdeen, and the Duke of Newcastle. But on Palmerston accepting the decision of the last Parliament in favour of a Committee of Inquiry, Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, and Sir James Graham resigned; their reason being that the admission of such a precedent for subordinating the Executive to a committee of the House was a grave danger to the Constitution.

It looked as though the Ministry would fall, when Lord John, who had previously refused office, to the surprise and delight of the Whigs, accepted the Colonies. His motives in taking office will be found in the following letters. He had already accepted a mission as British Plenipotentiary at the Conference of Vienna, summoned by Austria to conclude terms of peace between the Allies and Russia. He did not therefore return at once to take his place in the Cabinet, but continued on his mission. Its consequences were destined

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to bring down on him such a storm of abuse as the careers of statesmen seldom survive. When Gladstone and the Peelites resigned, Palmerston's Ministry ceased to be a coalition and became a Whig Cabinet. The fact that Lord John came to Palmerston's rescue, that he accepted without hesitation a subordinate office and served under Palmerston's leadership in the Commons, shows that Lord John's reluctance to serve in the first instance under Lord Aberdeen could not have been due to a scruple of pride; nor could his obstinate insistence upon his own way inside the Cabinet, of which the Peelites had complained in the early days of Lord Aberdeen's Ministry, have been caused by a desire to make the most of his own importance.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

PARIS, *February* 23, 1855

I have accepted office in the present Ministry. Whatever objections you may feel to this decision, I have taken it on the ground that the country is in great difficulty, and that every personal consideration ought to be waived. I am sure I give a Liberal Government the best chance of continuing by so acting. When I come home, I shall have weight enough in the Cabinet through my experience and position. In the meantime I go on to Vienna.... I shall ascertain whether peace can be made on honourable terms, and having done this, shall return home.

The office I have accepted is the Colonial; but as I do *not*
lead in the Commons, it will not be at all too much for my health.

Mr. John Abel Smith to Lady John Russell

February_ 24, 1855

I received this morning, to my great surprise, a letter from Lord John announcing his acceptance of the Seals of the Colonial Department.... I believe it to be unquestionably the fact that by this remarkable act of self-sacrifice he has saved Lord Palmerston's Government and preserved to the Liberal party the tenure of power.... I never saw Brooks's more thoroughly excited than this evening, and some old hard-hearted stagers talking of Lord John's conduct with tears in their eyes.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

BRUSSELS, *February 25,* 1855

The wish to support a Whig Government under difficulties, the desire to be reunited to my friends, with whom when separated by two benches I could have had no intimate alliance, the perilous state of the country with none but a pure Derby Government in

prospect, have induced me to take this step. No doubt my own position was better and safer as an independent man; but I have thrown all such considerations to the winds.... I am very much afraid of Vienna for the children; but if you can arrive and keep well, it will be to me a great delight to see you all.... I have just seen the King, who is very gracious and kind. He thinks I may make peace.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *February 26,* 1855

Mr. West called yesterday, and was full of admiration of the magnanimity of your conduct, but not of its wisdom. J.A. Smith writes me a kind letter telling me of the delight of your late calumniators at Brooks's. Frederick Romilly says London society is charmed. He touched me very much. He spoke with tears in his eyes of the generosity of your motives, and of the irreparable blow to yourself and the country from your abandonment of an honourable and independent position for a renewal of official ties.... Papa is very grave and unhappy, doing justice of course to your motives, but fearing that in sacrificing yourself you sacrifice the best interests of the country.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

BERLIN, *March 1,* 1855

It was necessary in order to have any effect to decide at once on my acceptance or refusal of office. I considered the situation of affairs to be a very serious one. I had hoped that Lord Palmerston, with the assistance of the Peelites, might go through the session. Suddenly the secession took place, producing a state of affairs such as no man ever remembered. Confidence in the Government was shaken to a very great extent by the mortality and misery of our Army in the Crimea. I could not resist inquiry; but having yielded that point, it seemed dastardly to leave men, who had nothing to do with sending the expedition to the Crimea, charged with the duty of getting the Army out of the difficulty. Yet it was clear that Lord Palmerston's Government without my help could hardly stand, and thus the Government of 1854 would have been convicted of deserting the task they had undertaken to perform. There remained the personal difficulty of my serving under Palmerston in the House of Commons; for my going to the House of Lords would have been only a personal distinction to me and would not have helped Palmerston in his difficulty. In the circumstances of the case I thought it right to throw aside every consideration of ease, dignity, and comfort. If I had not been responsible for the original expedition to the Crimea, I would certainly not have taken the office I have now accepted. Still, it brings the scattered remnants of the Liberal party together and enables them to try once more whether they can govern with success.... Lord Minto is now satisfied that I have followed a public call; for public men must sacrifice themselves in a great emergency. It was not a time to think of self.... We had an account of the serious illness of the Emperor of Russia. If he should die, I should have good hopes of peace....March 2nd. News come of the Emperor's death. I hope it may be a good event for Europe, but it makes me sad at present. "What shadows we are and what shadows we pursue" constantly occurs to my mind.... My mission may perhaps be more successful in consequence, but no one can say. At all events you will come to Vienna....

Poor little boys and poor little Agatha! I should feel more responsible with those children on a journey than with my mission and the Colonies to boot.

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In Paris his conversations with the Emperor confirmed his previous opinion that the best hope of peace lay in winning Austria over to the policy of the Allies.

Lady John joined him at Vienna early in March. In order to understand the following extracts it is necessary to recall the history of the whole negotiation.

Lord John had been dispatched with vague general instructions, and it must not be forgotten that Palmerston was privately much more in favour of continuing the war than Lord John appears to have understood at the time. Palmerston, like Napoleon III, wished to take Sevastopol before making peace; Lord John did not therefore receive during his negotiations the backing he ought to have had from the Government at home. A hitch occurred at the outset of the negotiations owing to the delay of instructions from the Sultan. This delay was engineered by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who was determined that Russia should be still further humiliated, and felt sure of Palmerston's sympathy in doing everything that tended to prolong the war. Lord John might complain justly that he was being hindered; but the English Ambassador at Constantinople, who knew Palmerston's mind, felt safe in ignoring Lord John's remonstrances. The first two Articles which formed the subject of discussion dealt with the abolition of the Russian Protectorate over Servia and the Principalities, and with the question of the free navigation of the Danube. These Articles were accepted by Russia. On the third Article, which concerned the Russian power in the Black Sea, the representatives of the Western Powers could not agree. Gortschakoff, the Russian emissary, admitted that the Treaty of 1841 would have to be altered in such a way as would prevent the preponderance of the Russian power off the coast of Turkey. This could have been secured in two ways:

1. By excluding Russian vessels from the Black Sea altogether;
2. By limiting the number of warships Russia might be permitted to keep there;

but to neither of these methods would Russia at first agree.

Two other alternative proposals were then made by the Austrian Minister, Count Buol. The first was based on the principle of counterpoise, which would give the Allies the right to keep as many ships as Russia in the Black Sea. The second was a stipulation that Russia should not increase her fleet there beyond the strength at which it then stood.

The representatives of the Allies were instructed from home not to accept the proposal of counterpoise. So the second alternative of the Austrian Chancellor was the last remaining chance of Austria and the Allies agreeing upon the terms to be offered to Russia. Lord John wrote to the Government urging them to accept this compromise; for in his opinion the only chance of peace lay in the Allies acting in concert with Austria. At

this juncture he received a telegram from home saying that the Government were in favour of a proposal, which had reached them from Paris, for neutralizing the Black Sea.

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Prince Gortschakoff at once pointed out that such a plan would leave Russia disarmed in the presence of Turkey armed. Lord John considered this a perfectly just objection on the part of Russia, while the proposal had the unfortunate effect of detaching Austria from the Allies, who considered neutralization to be out of the question. M. Drouyn de L'Huys, the French representative, held the same opinion as Lord John, and when his advice was not accepted by the Emperor, he sent in his resignation. Lord John likewise wrote to Lord Clarendon, then Foreign Secretary, tendering his own.

March 31, 1855, VIENNA

Private letters from Lord Clarendon and Lord Lansdowne full of distrust and disapprobation of the proceedings here, though not openly finding fault with John. Lord Clarendon's more especially warlike, and anti-Austrian and pro-French; the very reverse of every letter he wrote in the days of Lord Aberdeen.

April 1, 1855, VIENNA

More letters and dispatches making John's position still worse; representing him as ready to consent to unworthy terms, whereas he was endeavouring to carry out what had been agreed on by the Government. No doubt Lord Clarendon's present tone is far better than his former; but that is not the question. John naturally indignant and talked of giving up mission and Colonies. This I trust he will not do unless there is absolute loss of character in remaining, for another breach with Lord Palmerston, who is far less to blame than Lord Clarendon, would be a great misfortune—besides, it might lead to the far greater evil of a breach with France. I rejoice therefore that John has resolved to wait for Drouyn de L'Huys and do his utmost to bring matters to a better state.

On April 5, at Vienna, when he wished to resign, she wrote: "Anxious he should delay this step till he hears again from home, as he might repent it, in which case either retracting or abiding by it would be bad. Having regretted his acceptance of office it seems inconsistent to discourage resignation, but is not really so. His reputation cannot afford a fresh storm, and he must show that he did not lightly consent to belong to a Ministry of which he knew the materials so well."

At the end of April they came back to England.

May 5, 1855, LONDON

After all the Emperor rejects the plan [the proposal to limit the Russian fleet in the Baltic to its strength at the close of the war] on the plea that the army would not bear it. John disturbed and perplexed.

May 6, 1855, *Sunday*

John went to town for a meeting at Lord Panmure's on Army Reform—found here on his return a letter from Lord Clarendon telling him that the Emperor had sent a telegram through Lord Cowley and the Foreign Office to Walewski, offering him Foreign Affairs and asking whether the Queen would agree to Persigny as French Ambassador. Thus the dismissal or resignation of Drouyn obliged John to resolve on his own resignation unless the Cabinet should accept his own view.

Lord John Russell to Lord Clarendon [46]

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *May* 6, 1855

MY DEAR CLARENDON,—I was at Panmure's when your box arrived here, and did not get back till past eight. I am very much concerned at the removal or resignation of Drouyn. I cannot separate myself from him; and, having taken at Vienna the same view which he did, his resignation entails mine. I am very sorry for this, and wished to avoid it. But I have in some measure got Drouyn into this scrape, for at first he was disposed to advise the Emperor to insist on a limitation of ships, and I induced him not to give any advice at all to the Emperor. Afterwards we agreed very much; and, if he had stayed in office there, I might have gulped, though with difficulty, the rejection of my advice here. However, I shall wait till Colloredo has made a definite proposal, and then make the opinion I shall give upon it in the Cabinet a vital question with me. It is painful to me to leave a second Cabinet, and will injure my reputation—perhaps irretrievably. But I see no other course. Do as you please about communicating to Palmerston what I have written. I fear I must leave you and Hammond to judge of the papers to be given.... But I hope you will not tie your hands or those of the Government by giving arguments against what the nation may ultimately accept. I hold that a simple provision, by which the Sultan would reserve the power to admit the vessels of Powers not having establishments in the Black Sea, through the Straits at his own pleasure at all times, ... and a general treaty of European alliance to defend Turkey against Russia, would be a good security for peace. If the Emperor of the French were to declare that he could not accept such a peace, of course we must stick by him, but that does not prevent our declaring to him our opinion. Walewski spoke to me very strongly at the Palace in favour of the Austrian plan, but I suppose he has now made up his mind against it.

I remain, yours truly,

J. RUSSELL

[46] Spencer Walpole's "Life of Lord John Russell," chap, xxvi.

Lord Clarendon replied:

GROSVENOR CRESCENT, May 7, 1855

MY DEAR LORD JOHN,—... I am very sorry you did not come in just now, as I wanted most particularly to see you. I now write this *earnestly to entreat* that you will say nothing to anybody at present about your intended resignation. The public interests and your own position are so involved in the question, and so much harm of every kind may be done by a hasty decision, however honourable and high-minded the motives may be, that I do beg of you well to weigh *all* the points of the case; and let me frankly add that you will not act with fairness, and as I am sure you must wish to act, towards your colleagues, if you do not hear what some of them may have to say.As you allowed me to do as I pleased about informing Palmerston, I did not think it

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right to leave him in the dark upon a matter which seems to me of vital importance. I need not tell you that your intention causes him the deepest regret, and he feels, as I do, how essential it is that nothing should be known of it at present. We are not even in possession of the facts that led to Drouyn's resignation.

Yours sincerely,

CLARENDON

"Moved by this appeal," says Sir Spencer Walpole, "and by Lord Palmerston's personal entreaties, thrice repeated, Lord John withdrew his resignation. Its withdrawal, however convenient it may have seemed to the Government at the time, was one of the most unfortunate circumstances of Lord John's political career. It directly led to misunderstandings and to obloquy, such as few public men have ever encountered."

LONDON, May 8, 1855

John given up thoughts of resignation. Glad of it, since he can honourably remain. I know how his reputation would have suffered—not as an honest man, but as a wise statesman.

This was the second time in Lord John's career that his loyalty to the Whig party involved him in a false position. On May 24th Disraeli proposed a vote of censure on the Government for their conduct of the war and condemning their part in the negotiations at Vienna. Lord John made, in reply to Gladstone and Disraeli, an extremely forcible speech, urging that the limitation of the number of Russian ships in the Black Sea did not give sufficient guarantee to the safety of Turkey. Shortly afterwards the Austrian Chancellor, Count Buol, published the fact that Lord John had been in favour of this very compromise, which Austria had proposed at the Congress. He was at once asked whether this was true, and he admitted that it was. He could not explain that he had taken a different line on his return because, had he stuck to his opinion, the French alliance would have been endangered. The Emperor was persuaded that the fall of Sevastopol was necessary to the safety of his throne. Marshal Vaillant had said to him, "I know the feelings of the Army. I am sure that if, after having spent months in the siege of Sevastopol, we return unsuccessful, the Army will not be satisfied." [47] Since this was the case, Lord John had had to choose between resigning on the strength of his own opinion that the Austrian terms were good enough, thus bringing about the fall of the Ministry and a possible breach with France, or relinquishing his own opinion and defending the view of the Government and the Emperor in order to preserve a good understanding with the French. Of course, to all the world it looked as though, for the sake of office, he had belied his own convictions. Seldom has any Minister of the Crown been placed in a more painful position. The Cabinet knew the true circumstances of the case, and the reason why he could give no

explanation for his inconsistency: but many of his friends did not. A motion of censure was proposed against him, and now that his presence in the Ministry had ceased to be a support, and had actually become a source of weakness through the condemnation passed on him by the country at large, he offered to resign.

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[47] Kinglake, “Invasion of the Crimea,” vol. iii, p. 348.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *June* 8, 1855

All is more beautiful than ever this morning. I am on my pretty red sofa looking out from my middle window in lazy luxury at oak, ivy, hawthorn, laburnum, and blue sky; not very much to be pitied, am I? except, my dearest, for the weary, weary separation that takes away the life of life—and for my anxiety about what is to be the result of all this, which, however, I do not allow to weigh upon me. We are in wiser hands than our own, and I should be a bad woman indeed if so much leisure did not give some good thoughts that I trust nothing can disturb.... Pray tell dear Georgy not to think any but cheerful thoughts of me, and that she can do a great deal for me by asking my friends—Cabinet and ex-Cabinet and all sorts—to visit me whenever they are inclined for a drive into the country and luncheon or tea among its beauties.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 5, 1855

John to town and back. He is so much here now that my life is quite different, and as I know he neglects no duty for the sake of coming, I may also allow myself to enjoy it as he does.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 7

Read John’s speech and the bitter comments of Cobden and Roebuck. Whether he was right or wrong in his views of peace, or in not resigning when they were rejected by the Cabinet, he has nobly told the simple truth without gloss or extenuation.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 10

John writes that he saw Lord Palmerston and told him that he had thought the Austrian proposals ought to be accepted at the time; but that he did not think they ought now, after the late events of the war. He proposed resignation if it would help the Government. Lord Palmerston of course begged him to remain, which he will do. The subject is more painful to me the more I think of it.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 12

An anxious parting with John. He was to go straight to Lord Clarendon, to find out what portion of the dispatches Lord Clarendon was prepared to give. His explanation to be made to-night of a sentence in his Friday’s speech, by which some of his colleagues understood him to declare his opinion to be that he thought the Austrian proposal ought *now* to be accepted. He did *not* say so, and such an explanation is much to be lamented. His position is very painful, and my thoughts about him more so than they

have ever been, because now many of his best and truest friends grieve and are disappointed. God grant he may have life, strength, and spirit to work on for his country till he has risen again higher than ever in her trust, esteem, and love.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 13

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A very anxious morning, thinking of my dear and noble husband, doomed to suffer so much for no greater fault than having committed himself too far without consultation with his colleagues to a scheme which higher duties persuaded him not to abide by when he failed to convince them. Anxiety to know his determination and the state of his spirits made me send a note up to town early, to which I received his answer about four, that he had written his resignation last night and sent it to Lord Palmerston this morning.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 13, 1855

We are all well, but I am too anxious to be all day without hearing from you; besides, and chiefly, I want to cheer you up and beseech you not to let all this depress you more than it ought. Don't believe the *Daily News* when it says you have committed political suicide—that need not be a bit more true than that there was *trickiness* or *treachery* in your course, which it also asserts. Depend upon it, it is in your power and it is therefore your duty to show that you can still be yourself. You will rise again higher than ever if you will but think you can—if you will but avoid for the future the rocks on which you have sometimes split. There is plenty to do for your country, plenty that you can do better than any other man, and *you must not sink.* You made, I believe, a great mistake in surrendering your own judgment to that of those who surrounded you at Vienna; but who can dare to say you were favouring any interest of your own, or what malice or ingenuity can pretend to find the shadow of a low or unworthy motive? Remember Moore's lines:

"Never dream for a moment thy country can spare
Such a light from her darkening horizon as thou."

As to your immediate course, what have you resolved? Surely your own resignation is the most natural—you might persuade your colleagues, if they require persuasion, to let you go alone, as you alone are responsible, that you think a change of Ministry would be a misfortune, and that you would be unhappy to find that added to your responsibility.... The feeling that the Ministry may be sacrificed to you is a very painful one, and I earnestly hope your wisdom may find some means of averting this.... Now, my dearest, farewell—would that I could go to you myself. I am told that the expectation of the Whips is that you will be beat. Tell me as much as you can and God speed you.... Good-bye, and above all keep up a good heart for your country's sake and mine.

Lord Palmerston replied to his offer to resign in the following terms [48]:

PICCADILLY, *July* 13, 1855

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MY DEAR LORD JOHN,—I have received, I need not say with how much regret, your letter of this morning, and have sent it down to the Queen. But, whatever pain I may feel at the step you have taken, I must nevertheless own that as a public man, whose standing and position are matters of public interest and public property, you have judged rightly. The storm is too strong at this moment to be resisted, and an attempt to withstand it would, while unsuccessful, only increase irritation. But juster feelings will in due time prevail. In the meantime I must thank you for the very friendly and handsome terms in which you have announced to me your determination.

Yours sincerely, PALMERSTON

[48] Spencer Walpole's "Life of Lord John Russell."

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 15, 1855

John and I agreed that we felt almost unaccountably happy—there is, however, much to account for it—much that cannot be taken from us.

Lady John Russell to the Duke of Bedford

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 16, 1855

MY DEAR DUKE,—You will like to hear how John has borne his new trouble, and I am very glad to tell you that he is in good spirits, and as calm as a clear conscience can make him. The week before his resignation was a very anxious one, reminding me of that sad and anxious day at Woburn when he determined to dismiss Lord Palmerston, and of that other when he resolved not to speak to any of his colleagues before sending his resignation to Lord Aberdeen. Those occasions were so far like this that it was impossible even for me, though unable to judge of the questions politically, not to foresee painful consequences in the altered relations of old friends, and therefore not to lament his decisions; though he had, as he was sure to have, high and generous reasons in both cases. Here again, there has been much to lament in all that led to his resignation and fresh separation from many with whom he has acted during half his political life, many so highly valued in public and private. One cannot but feel all this, nor do I pretend indifference to what is said of him, for I do think the next best thing to deserving "spotless reputation" is possessing it. But there are many comforts—first and foremost, a faith in him that nothing can shake; then a firm hope that the country will one day understand him better—besides, the relief was immense of finding that he would be allowed to resign without breaking up the Government. In short, we agreed yesterday that after all our pains and anxieties we both felt strangely and almost unaccountably happy. Of course, seeing him so was enough to make me so, and perhaps there is something too in the unexpected freedom of body and soul which loss

of office has given him. This state of mind, in which he has just left me for London, gives me good hope that he will get well through his hard task to-night....

Ever yours affectionately,

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FANNY RUSSELL

Lady John Russell to Lord Minto

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 18, 1855

MY DEAREST PAPA,—I feel very guilty in not having written to you since all these great events occurred, but you are pretty well able to guess what I felt about them ... and the newspapers are much better chroniclers of facts, though not of motives, than I can be.... Of course, he proposed resignation immediately after he had made his speech, but it was not then thought the Ministry would be beat on Bulwer's motion, and Lord Palmerston and the rest begged him to remain. Very soon, however, there was no doubt left as to what would be the result of the motion, and as neither John nor Doddy, the only other person I saw, had a hope that any fresh resignation would be accepted, we had the painful prospect of the destruction of the Ministry by his means.... But the surprise was great as the relief when we found that not one man had the slightest difficulty in making up his mind, ... and that one and all felt it a paramount duty "not to shrink from the toils and responsibilities of office." ... His *spirits* have not sunk and his *spirit* has risen, and the feeling uppermost in his mind is thankfulness that he is out of it all, and has regained his freedom, body and soul.... There is plenty left for him to do, and I trust he will do it as an independent member of Parliament, and in that position regain his lost influence with the country. I am most anxious he should not think his political life at an end, though his official life may go forever without a sigh.... I ought to add that he is on perfectly friendly terms with all his late colleagues, ... anxious to help them when he can, but pledged to nothing....

Ever, dearest Papa,

Your affectionate child,

F.R.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 23, 1855

Thunderstorm during which I sat in the Windsor summer-house writing and thinking many sad thoughts; chiefly of my own ill-performance of many duties on which my whole heart and soul were bent. Had I but known when we married as much of the world as I know now, though I should have been far, far less happy, I should have done better in many ways.... Came in; went to my room with Georgy and took Baby on my lap. Baby looked at me, saw I had been sad, and said gravely, "Poor Mama," adding immediately, "Where is Papa?" as if she thought my sadness must have to do with him. On my answering, "He is gone to London," she put her dear little arms round my neck and kissed and coaxed me, repeating over and over, "Never mind, never mind, my dear Mama," and again, "Never mind, my poor Mama."

The state of Lady John's health prevented her from leaving home, but Lord John left Pembroke Lodge with two of the children on August 9th, for a much needed holiday in Scotland.

Lord John to Lady John Russell

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EDINBURGH, *August* 10, 1855

We got here safely yesterday an hour after time, which made about fourteen hours from Pembroke Lodge.... Dearest, it is a very melancholy journey; without you to comfort me I take a very gloomy view of everything; but I hope the Highland air will refresh me with its briskness.... I have a letter from Lord Minto, disturbed at my not coming sooner, and supposing I shall be abused for my Italian speech, in which he is quite right; but I may save some poor devil by my denunciation of his persecutors.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *August* 12, 1855

It grieves me to have to write what will grieve you, but it would be wrong and useless to hide it from you—I was taken ill suddenly yesterday.... What I bear least well is the thought of you. I did so hope that after all your political troubles you might be spared anxieties of a worse kind; but it was not to be.... I hope, dearest, you will not hurry home immediately. I should be so sorry to think you only had the fatigue of two long journeys, instead of some weeks of Highland air. I know how sadly your enjoyment will be damaged, but do not—I beg you, dearest—do not let your spirits sink. Nothing would make your poor old wife so sad. Georgy is the best and dearest of children and nurses; I am so sorry for her. Yesterday she was quite upset, far more than I was, but to-day she has taken heart. God bless you. Think what happy people we still are—-happy far beyond the common lot—in one another and all our darlings.

When Lord John heard of her illness, he wrote that he could not be a moment easy away from her, and came home at once.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *September* 8, 1855

Thank God! though in bed, I have generally been able to read and talk, and for the last two days have given Johnny and the little boys their lessons.... Cannot but hope I am a little less impatient of illness, a little less unreasonably sorry to be debarred from air and liberty and all I care for most in this world, than I used to be.... I pray with my whole heart for the true faith and patience that can never fail. I pray that, since I cannot teach my children how to *do,* I may teach them how to *bear,* so that even in illness I may not be wholly useless to them.

CHAPTER IX

1855-60

During the next four years Lord John remained out of office. He devoted much time to literary work. Besides writing his “Life of Fox” and editing the papers of his friend

Thomas Moore, he delivered three important addresses. The first was a lecture on the causes which have checked moral and political progress. As will be seen from Lady John's diary, he was still so unpopular that she felt some dread of its reception at the hands of a large public audience.

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LONDON, *November* 13, 1855

Great day well over.... At-half-past seven set out for Exeter Hall. John well cheered on his entrance, but not so warmly as to make me quite secure for the lecture. It was, however, received exactly as I hoped—deep attention, interrupted often by applause, sometimes enthusiastic, and generally at the parts one most wished applauded. A few words from Montague Villiers [49](in asking for a vote of thanks), his hope that the whole country would soon feel as that audience did towards a man whose long life had been spent in the country's service, brought a fresh burst, waving of hats and handkerchiefs, *etc*. Went to bed grateful and happy.

[49] Afterwards Bishop of Durham.

In 1855, Lord John bought a country estate, Rodborough Manor, near Stroud in Gloucestershire, as he wished to have a place of his own to leave to his children. It was in the parish of Amberley, from which he afterwards took his second title and his eldest son, Lord Amberley, made Rodborough his home for some years after his marriage.

Lady John Russell to Lord Dufferin

RODBOROUGH MANOR, STROUD, *November* 16, 1855

DEAR LORD DUFFERIN,—Thanks for your letter. I began to think you meant to disclaim all connection with your fallen chief. We have just been, he and I alone, spending a week in London. In that little week he underwent various turns of fortune—-hissed one night (though far less than the papers said), cheered the next day by four thousand voices, while eight thousand hands waved hats and handkerchiefs. I was not at Guildhall, but was at Exeter Hall, which was just as it should be; for, in spite of a great many noble and philosophical sentiments, which I always keep in store against the hissing days, and find of infinite service, I prefer being present on the cheering days. I hope you will think his lecture deserved its reception. His squiredom agrees with him uncommonly. He rides and walks, and drinks ale and grows fat. As for me, I have not been at all strong since I came here, but I hope I am reviving now, and shall soon be able thoroughly to enjoy a life happy and pleasant beyond expression—such peace of mind and body to us both, such leisure to enjoy much that we both do enjoy with all our hearts and have been long debarred from, are blessings of no small value, and when people tell me, by way of cheering me up under a temporary disgrace, that he is sure to be in office again soon, they little know what a knell their words are to my heart. However, *che sara, sara*, and in the meantime we are very happy. Yesterday I required some excitement, I must say, to carry me through the day, for alas! I struck forty! Accordingly the children had provided for it unknown to me, and acted Beauty and the Beast with rapturous applause to a very select audience. ... We are much pleased with our new home, green and cheerful and varied and pretty outside, snug and respectable inside.

Ever sincerely yours,

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F. RUSSELL

P.S.—I hear you are going to be married to a great many people;
please let me know how many reports are true.

In 1856 Lady John and the children went abroad. They visited Lady Mary Abercromby, whose husband was British Minister at the Hague, and later on they joined Lord John at Antwerp. Thence they travelled to Switzerland, where they remained till the end of September in a villa beautifully situated above the Lake of Geneva, near Lausanne. The early part of the winter was spent in Italy, where Lord John came into personal contact with Cavour and many other Italian patriots, whose cause he so staunchly supported during the next few years. The Villa Capponi, where they lived at Florence, became the meeting-place of all the Liberal spirits in Tuscany; and the Tuscan Government, who thought that Lord John had come to Florence to estimate the probable success of the revolutionaries, set spies upon his visitors.

Lord John Russell to Lady Melgund

VILLA CAPPONI, *December* 19, 1856

We have passed our time here very agreeably. Besides the Florentines and their acute sagacity, we have had here many of those whose wits were too bright or their hearts too warm to bear the Governments of Naples and Rome.... As for the French newspapers, it is the custom at Paris and Vienna to let the newspapers attack everything but their own Government, which is their notion of the liberty of the Press!

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

VILLA CAPPONI, FLORENCE, *January* 1, 1857

MY DEAREST MARY,—You have my first date for the New Year.... God grant it may be a happy one to us all. We began it merrily. Mrs. E. Villiers, who, with her daughter, is spending the winter here, gave a little dance. Twelve struck in the middle of a quadrille, which was accordingly interrupted by general shaking of hands among chaperons, dancers, and all. There is a cordiality and ease in society abroad, the charm of which goes far with me to make up for the absence of some of the merits of society in England. The subjects of conversation among men are queer, no doubt; but what people have in them is much easier to get at—and to me it is a relief not to hear all the ladies talking politics, or rather talking political personalities, as they do in London.*January* 2.—I am afraid, after having been abused as unworthy of Italy (not so much, however, by you as by Lotty and Lizzy) you will now charge me with the far worse sin of being a bad Briton—but *that,* depend upon it, I am not, whatever appearances may say—on the contrary, a better one than ever, only grieving that with such materials as we have at home we do not manage to make social life pleasanter.... Yesterday we

had our usual Thursday party; and before more than five or six had come, I went into the girls' sitting-room, which opens out

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of the drawing-room, and played reels while the girls and two young Italians danced—-but they had not danced long before our frisky Papa followed with Count Ferretti, and not only joined in a reel, but *asked* for a waltz, and whirled round and round with Georgy and then with me, and made the old Count do the same. It all reminded me of our Berlin evenings, except that Papa, though twenty-four years younger then, was not inspired by the German as he is by the Italian atmosphere, and never, to my recollection, joined us in our many merry unpremeditated dances. It was hardly less a wonder to see Henry follow the example yesterday, and add to the confusion of the most confused "Lancers" I ever saw danced.... It is impossible to say how this letter has been interrupted.... The weather being too bright and beautiful to allow us to spend the morning indoors, the first interruption was a drive to San Miniato, where there is one of the finest views of Florence, and since we came home I have been jumping up every five minutes from my writing-table to receive one visitor after another—whereas many an afternoon passes without a single one—and since they all disappeared I have been called upon to help in a rehearsal for a second representation of our "Three Golden Hairs," [50] which is to take place to-morrow on purpose for Lady Normanby.... The gaiety and noise of the rehearsals, the fun of the preparations, and the shyness, which effectually prevents any good acting, all reminds me of our dear old Minto plays. How very, very long ago all that seems! Not long ago in time only, but the changes in everybody and everything make the recollection almost like a dream. I was sorry to say good-bye to poor old fifty-six, for though not invariably amiable to us he has been a good friend on the whole, and one learns to be more than grateful for each year that passes without any positive sorrow, and leaves no blanks among our nearest and dearest. God bless you, dearest Mary; pray attribute blots and incoherences to my countless interruptions.

Yours ever affectionately,

F.R.

[50] A children's play written by herself.

On his return, Lord John continued to give independent support to the Ministry until circumstances arose which forced him to oppose Palmerston's foreign policy. In March Cobden brought forward a motion condemning the violent measures resorted to against China. Palmerston had justified these measures on the ground that the British flag had been insulted and our treaty rights infringed by the Chinese authorities at Canton. A small coasting vessel called *The Arrow* (sailing under British colours, but manned by Chinamen, and owned by a Chinaman) had been boarded while she lay in the river, and her crew carried off by a party from a Chinese warship in search of a pirate, who they had reason to think was then serving as a seaman on board *The Arrow*. Sir John Bowring, Plenipotentiary at Hong-Kong, demanded that the men

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should be instantly sent back. It was true that *The Arrow* had at the time of the seizure no right to fly the British flag, for her licence to trade under British colours had expired the year before; but he argued that since the Chinese could not have known this when they raided the vessel, they had deliberately insulted the flag in doing so, and afterwards infringed the extradition laws by refusing to restore the crew immediately. Upon the British fleet proceeding to bombard the forts, the men were released, but the apology and indemnity demanded in addition were not forthcoming. More forts were then bombarded and a number of junks were sunk. The real motive of these aggressive proceedings lay in the fact that the English traders had not yet been able to get a free entrance into Canton, in spite of treaties permitting them to trade there. Sir John Bowring made the refusal of apologies an excuse for forcing the Chinese to admit them. Not unnaturally the Chinese retaliated by burning foreign factories and cutting foreign throats. Meanwhile Palmerston at home characteristically supported Sir John Bowring through thick and thin, and the upshot was a long war with China.

Lord John detested aggressive and violent proceedings of this kind. His speech on Cobden's motion was one of his finest. The following passage from it expresses the spirit in which later on he conducted the foreign policy of England himself:

We have heard much of late—a great deal too much, I think—of the prestige of England. We used to hear of the character, of the reputation, of the honour of England. I trust, sir, that the character, the reputation, and the honour of this country are dear to us all; but if the prestige of England is to be separated from those qualities ... then I, for one, have no wish to maintain it. To those who argue, as I have heard some argue, "It is true we have a bad case; it is true we were in the wrong; it is true that we have committed an injustice; but we must persevere in that wrong; we must continue to act unjustly, or the Chinese will think we are afraid," I say, as has been said before, "Be just and fear not."

Palmerston was defeated by sixteen votes, and went to the country on a "Civis Romanus" policy, or, as we should say now, with a "Jingo" cry, which was immensely popular. Its popularity was so great that there seemed no chance that Lord John would retain his seat for the City. Even Cobden and Bright were defeated in their constituencies, and the country returned Palmerston with a majority of seventy-nine. Unpopular since his apparent change of front regarding the Vienna treaty, it would have been small wonder if Lord John had taken the advice of his committee and retired from the contest; but he was bent on taking his one-to-hundred chance, and, as it turned out, his courage won the seat.

LONDON, *March* 7, 1857

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J.A. Smith called on me to know whether John had determined what to do. Said I thought he meant to fight the battle. He looked most woeful, and said, “As sure as I stand here, he will not be the member for the City.”I said I believed he thought it best at all events to stand. “Ah, that’s all very well if he had seen a chance of a tolerable minority—but if he has only *two or three* votes!” He also said John had as much chance of being Pope as of being M.P. for the City.

Although a lack of the faculty which conciliates individuals was one of the criticisms most constantly brought against Lord John as a political leader, he certainly possessed the power of overcoming the hostility of a popular audience, without abating one jot of his own independence or dignity. A bold, good-tempered directness is always effective in such situations. He never lacked the tact of an orator. In this election the Liberal Committee, on the first rumour of his resignation, without verifying it, or notifying their intentions to Lord John, substituted Mr. Raikes Currie, late member for Northampton, as their Liberal candidate. Lord John at once called a meeting to protest against the action of the committee. The following passage in his speech was received with enthusiastic applause, and did much to secure a favourable hearing for his anti-Palmerstonian views during the campaign. It must be remembered that he had represented the City for sixteen years.

“If a gentleman were disposed to part with his butler, his coachman, or his gamekeeper, or if a merchant were disposed to part with an old servant, a warehouseman, a clerk, or even a porter, he would say to him, ’John, I think your faculties are somewhat decayed; you are growing old, you have made several mistakes; and I think of putting a young man from Northampton in your place.’ I think a gentleman would behave in that way to his servant, and thereby give John an opportunity for answering. That opportunity was not given to me. The question was decided in my absence; and I come now to ask you, and the citizens of London, to reverse that decision.”

His success won back for him some of the general admiration which he had forfeited by his loyalty to the Ministers in 1855. Many of the best men in England rejoiced in his triumph; among them Charles Dickens wrote his congratulations.

Lord John Russell to Lady Melgund

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 1, 1857

...The contest has brought out an amount of feeling in my favour both from electors and non-electors which is very gratifying. ...It is the more pleasant, as all the merchant princes turned their princely backs upon me, and left me to fight as I could (the two Hankeys alone excepted)....Fanny has not been very well since the election ... but this blessed place will, I hope, soon restore her.

Lady John Russell to Lord Minto

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 4, 1857

The City election engrossed my thoughts for many days, and made it difficult to write to anybody who cared as much about it as you till it was over. I have since spent my life in answering letters and receiving visits of congratulation, most of them very hearty and sincere, and accordingly very pleasant. I thought my days of caring for popular applause were over, but there was something so much higher than usual in the meaning of the cheers that greeted John whenever he showed himself, that I was not ashamed of being quite delighted. There was obviously a strong feeling among the electors and non-electors, in Guildhall and in the streets, that John had been unfairly and ungratefully set aside, which far outweighed the effect of his unpopular opinions on ballot and church rates. Altogether there was a good tone among the people (by which I don't mean only one of attachment to John) which made me proud of them. Next to the pleasure of seeing and hearing with my own eyes and ears how strong his hold upon his countrymen still is, was the pleasure I was wicked enough to feel at the reception which greeted the unfortunate Raikes Currie.

The repose of Pemmy Lodge, which I hope you will by and by share with us, is very welcome after our noisy triumph.

Mr. Charles Dickens to Lady John Russell

May 22, 1857

DEAR LADY JOHN,—Coming to town yesterday morning out of Kent, I found your kind and welcome note referring to the previous day. I need not tell you, I hope, that although I have not had the pleasure of seeing you for a long time, I have of late been accompanying Lord John at a distance with great interest and satisfaction. Several times after the City election was over I debated with myself whether I should come to see you, but I abstained because I knew you would be overwhelmed with congratulations and I thought it was the more considerate to withhold mine.I am going out of town on Monday, June 1st, to a little old-fashioned house I have at Gad's Hill, by Rochester, on the identical spot where Falstaff ran away, and as you are so kind as to ask me to propose a day for coming to Richmond, I should very much like to do so either on Saturday the 30th of this month or on Sunday the 31st.

I heard of you at Lausanne from some of my old friends there, and sometimes tracked you in the newspapers afterwards. I beg to send my regard to Lord John and to all your house.

Do you believe me to remain always yours very faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS

Lady John Russell to Lord Minto

PEMBROKE LODGE, *September* 27, 1857

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John's reception at Sheffield equalled anything of the kind I had ever seen in our "high and palmy" days. So little had we expected *any* reception, that when we arrived at the station and saw the crowds on the platform I could not think what was the matter, and it was not till there was a general rush towards our carriage and shouts of John's name that I understood it was meant for him. From the station we had to drive all through the town to Alderman Hoole's villa; it was one loud and long triumph. John and Mr. Hoole and I were in an open carriage, the children following in a closed one. We went at a foot's pace, followed and surrounded by such an ocean of human beings as I should not have thought all Sheffield could produce, cheering, throwing up caps and hats, thrusting great hard hands into the carriage for John to shake, proposing to take off the horses and draw us, *etc*. Windows and balconies all thronged with waving women and children, and bells ringing so lustily as to drown John's voice when, at Mr. Hoole's request, he stood up on the seat and made a little speech. All this honour from one of the most warlike towns in the kingdom will surprise you, no doubt; indeed, I am not sure that you will quite approve.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December 25, 1857*

A bright and lovely Christmas.... Sat more than an hour in the sunny South summer-house, listening to birds singing and boys and little May [51] talking and laughing.... Dear, darling children, how I grudge each day that passes and hurries you on beyond blessed childhood.... I am too happy—there can hardly be a change that will not make me less so.... A glorious sunset brought the glorious day to an end.

[51] Mary Agatha.

Lady John Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 26, 1857

I cannot remember a happier Christmas than ours has been, and I am sure nobody can remember a milder or brighter Christmas sky. I sat more than an hour yesterday in the sunny South summer-house, listening to the songs of the blackbirds and thrushes, who have lost all count of the seasons, and to the merry voices of the boys and little May, and thinking of many things besides, and wishing I could lay my hand on old Father Time and stop him in his flight, for he *cannot* bring me any change for the better, and he must very soon take away one of the best joys of my daily life, since he must take away childhood from my bairnies.In the meantime I know I am not ungrateful, and when the little boys in their evening prayer thanked God for making it "such a happy Christmas," oh! how I thanked Him too. We have had a Christmas-tree, and for many days before its appearance the children were in a state of ungovernable spirits, full of indescribable fun and mischief, and making indescribable uproar. John has been by no means the least merry of the

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party, and seeing a game at “my lady’s toilet” going on yesterday evening, could not resist tacking himself to its tail and being dragged through as many passages and round as many windings as Pemmy Lodge affords.

Although the Palmerston Ministry seemed firmly seated in power and were certainly capable of carrying out the spirited and aggressive foreign policy on which they had so successfully appealed to the country, an unexpected event occurred during the recess of 1857 which led to their downfall. On the night of January 14th some Italian patriots threw three bombs under Napoleon’s carriage as he was driving to the Opera. The Emperor and Empress had a narrow escape, and many spectators were killed or wounded. The outrage was prompted by a frantic notion that the death of Napoleon III was an indispensable step towards the freedom of Italy. Orsini, the leader of the conspirators, was not himself of a crazy criminal type. He was a fine, soldier-like fellow, who had fought and suffered for his country’s independence, and he had many friends in England among lovers of Italy who never suspected that he was the kind of man to turn into an assassin. When it was discovered that the plot had been hatched in London and the bombs made in Birmingham, a feverish resentment seized the whole French Army. Addresses were sent by many regiments congratulating Napoleon on his escape, in which London was described as *ce repaire d’assassins* and much abusive language used. The Press, of course, on both sides, fanned the flame, and for some days the two nations were very near war. The French Ambassador requested the Government to make at once more stringent laws against refugee aliens, and in answer to this request Palmerston brought in a Conspiracy to Murder Bill. Lord John informed the Government that he, for his part, would oppose any such measure as an ignominious capitulation to a foolish outcry.

Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby

LONDON, *February* 4, 1858

I have never seen John more moved, more mortified, more indignant, than on reading a letter from Sir George Grey yesterday announcing the intention of the Ministry to make an alteration in the Conspiracy Laws under the threats of an inconceivably insolent French soldiery. He had heard a rumour of such an intention, but would not believe it. He thinks very seriously of the possible effects of debates on the measure, and feels the full weight of his responsibility; but he is nevertheless resolved to oppose to the utmost of his power what he considers as only the first step in a series of unworthy concessions. . . .

PEMBROKE LODGE, *February* 20, 1858

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John woke me at two with the news of a majority for the amendment (234 to 215)—the country spared from humiliation, the character of the House of Commons redeemed. But, privately, what will become of our victory? Lay awake with the nightmare of coming office upon me—went to sleep only to dream that John was going to the scaffold (being interpreted, the Treasury Bench).

Although the division was taken in a very small house, as the above figures show, Palmerston resigned, and after some hesitation the Queen charged Lord Derby with forming a Government. This was the second time Lord Derby had attempted to govern with a majority against him in the House of Commons. The first task of the new Ministry was to patch up the quarrel with France, and, thanks to the good sense and dignity of the Emperor, it was managed in spite of the scandalous acquittal by an English jury of the Frenchman, Dr. Bernard, who had manufactured Orsini's bombs. The Duc de Malakoff, whose conduct in the Crimea made him a popular hero in England, replaced M. Persigny at the French Embassy. His presence helped to remind Englishmen that it was not many years since they had fought side by side with French soldiers, and resentment against the Emperor's army died away.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 30, 1858

Dinner at Gunnersbury. Met Malakoffs, D'lsraelis, Azeglio. Never before had opportunity for real conversation with D'lsraeli—a sad flatterer and otherwise less agreeable than so able a man of such varied pursuits ought to be.

Although these years of comparative leisure had been welcome to them both, the issues at stake in Europe were so important that Lord John could not help wishing he again had an opportunity of directly influencing events.

He writes to his wife on December 15, 1858:

When I reflect that a Reform Bill and the liberation of Italy are "looming in the distance," it gives me no little wish to be in office; but when I consider what colleagues I should have, I am cured of any such wish. I can express my own opinions in my own way.

He feared that he would not have hearty support from his colleagues in his views on Italy and Reform, which accounts for the above allusion.

In March the Ministry were defeated on Disraeli's Reform Bill, and Parliament was dissolved. Meanwhile Italy's struggle against Austria was exciting much deeper interest than franchise questions. On June 24, 1859, the battle of Solferino was fought. Although the Austrians were beaten, the cost of victory to the Italians and French was very heavy. The fortunes of the whole campaign, indeed, had hitherto been due more to the incompetence of Austrian generalship than either to the strength of the allies or to

the weakness of the Austrian position. Though Solferino was the fifth victory, the others had been also dearly bought, and the allies still remained inferior in

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numbers. Besides, should Austria go on losing ground there was more than a chance that Prussia would invade France, when the prospects of Italy would have been at an end, and England too, in all probability, involved in a general war. Napoleon, who knew the unsoundness of his own army, dreaded this contingency himself; though the English Court supposed—and continued to suppose, strangely enough—that to provoke a war with Prussia was the ultimate end of his policy. Generally speaking, the English people were enthusiastically Italian, while the Court and aristocracy were pro-Austrian. "I remarked," wrote Lord Granville to Lord Canning at this time, "that in the Lords, whenever I said anything in favour of the Emperor or the Italians, the House became nearly sea-sick, while they cheered anything the other way, as if pearls were dropping from my lips."

The elections did not strengthen Lord Derby sufficiently, and in June he resigned.

"Lord Derby's Government was beaten this morning," writes Lord Malmesbury, [52] "by a majority of 13.... The division took place at half-past two, and the result was received with tremendous cheers by the Opposition. D'Azeglio (the Piedmontese Minister) and some other foreigners were waiting in the lobby outside, and when Lord Palmerston appeared redoubled their vociferations. D'Azeglio is said to have thrown his hat in the air and himself in the arms of Jaucourt, the French attache, which probably no ambassador, or even Italian, ever did before in so public a place."

[52] "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister."

It was not easy to choose Lord Derby's successor, since the Liberal party was divided; but its two leaders, Palmerston and Lord John, agreed to support each other in the event of either of them being charged with the formation of the new Government. The Queen, either because she was reluctant to distinguish between two equally eminent statesmen, or because she did not know of their mutual agreement, or more likely because she did not wish the foreign policy of England to be in the hands of Ministers with professed Italian sympathies, commissioned Lord Granville to make the attempt, who, though he felt some sympathy for the patriots, considered the peace of Europe far more important than the better government of Italy. After he had failed she sent for Palmerston, under whom Lord John became Foreign Secretary. This change of Government had a happy and instant effect upon the prosperity of the Italian cause. Technically, England still maintained her neutrality with regard to the struggle between Austria and Victor Emmanuel, backed by his French allies; but the change of Ministry meant that instead of being in the hands of a neutral Government with Austrian sympathies, the international negotiations upon which the union and freedom of Italy depended were now inspired by three men—Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone—who did all in their power, and were prepared, perhaps, to risk war, in order to forward the policy of Victor Emmanuel and Cavour.

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Lady John unfortunately lost her diaries recording events from May, 1859, to January, 1861; but it is known that she was in close sympathy with her husband's policy, and she looked back upon the part he played in the liberation of Italy with almost more pride than upon any other period of his career. Italian patriots and escaped prisoners from the Papal and Neapolitan dungeons found a warm welcome at Pembroke Lodge. She was never tired of listening to their stories, and she felt an enthusiastic ardour for their cause.

PEMBROKE LODGE, May 9, 1859

Farewell visit from Spaventa and Dr. Cesare Braico, [53] who goes to Piedmont Wednesday. Spaventa full of eager but not hopeful talk on Neapolitan prospects, Dr. Braico very quiet, crushed in spirits, but not in spirit.

> "For me the illusions of life are past," he said. "I have given the flower of my youth to my country in prison—what remains to me of life is hers."

In answer to some commonplace of mine about hope he replied, "To those who have suffered much the word hope seems a lie.... While I was in prison my mother died—my only tie to life." Said he left England with regret, and should always gratefully remember the sympathy he had found here. Told him I thought there was not enough. "More than in my own country. We passed through four villages on our way to the port after leaving the prison; not one person looked at us or gave us a word of kindness; not a tear was in any eye; not one blessing was uttered." I wondered. I supposed the people (the Neapolitans) were *avilis*. "More than *avilili—sono abbruttati*." All these sad words, and many more, in beautiful Italian, would have touched any heart, however shut to the great cause for which he and others have given their earthly happiness, and are about to offer their lives. As I looked at that fine countenance, so determined, so melancholy, and listened to the words that still ring in my ear, I felt that, though he did not say so, he meant to die in battle against tyranny. He gave me some verses, written with a pencil at the moment, to little May, who ran into the room while he was here. Farewell, brave, noble spirit. May God be with thee!

[53] Spaventa and Braico had been prisoners in Italy for about ten years.

To get clear what Lord John's share was in the creation of Italy, we must remember what hampered him at home and what difficulties he contended with in the councils of Europe.

The Palmerston Cabinet, as far as ability went, was exceptionally strong. Lord Granville, himself a member of it, had failed in his own attempt, because Lord John had stipulated that he should lead the Commons, and that foreign affairs should be in no

other hands but Palmerston's; while Palmerston, who was as necessary as Lord John to any strong Whig Government, had declined to serve unless he led the Commons.

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The motive of Lord John's demand that Palmerston should be Minister for Foreign Affairs is clear; he did not trust Lord Granville where Italy was concerned. He thought extremely well of his qualifications as Foreign Minister—he had previously appointed him his own Foreign Secretary—but Lord Granville had objected shortly before to Lord Clarendon's dispatch to Naples, in which Ferdinand II's misrule had been condemned in terms such as might have preceded intervention. This dispatch had had Lord John's ardent sympathy, while Lord Granville had disapproved of it on the grounds that in diplomacy threatening language should not be addressed to a small State which prudence would have moderated in dealing with a powerful one, and that the whole tenor of the dispatch was calculated to draw on a European war.

It was these views upon Italian questions—namely, that peace was all-important and that little kingdoms, however corrupt and despotic, should not be browbeaten, which made Lord Granville so acceptable to the Court. Throughout the next two years he was the principal agent through whom the Queen and the Prince Consort attempted to mitigate the pro-Italian policy of Lord John and Palmerston. The Cabinet itself was divided on the subject; the "two old gentlemen," as Sidney Herbert called them, were for stretching England's "neutrality" to mean support of every kind short of (and even at the risk of) committing us to intervention; while the rest of the Cabinet, with the important exception of Gladstone, were more or less in favour of abstaining from any demonstration on one side or the other. When Palmerston came into power the matters stood thus: Austria, after losing the battle of Solferino, was securely entrenched within her four strong fortresses of Verona, Mantua, Peschiera, and Legnago, but her Emperor was already disheartened and disgusted by the fighting.

Napoleon, too, on his side was anxious for peace—most anxious, in fact, to extricate himself as soon as possible from the dangerous complications in which his alliance was likely to land him. On the eve of Solferino he had heard that Prussia, ready for war, was concentrating at Coblenz and Cologne, and he knew well there was no army in France capable of much resistance. He began, too, to realize that success pressed home might lead to the formation on the south-east border of France of a new—and perhaps formidable—Italian power; a possibility he had not considered when he planned with Cavour at Plombieres their secret alliance against Austria. The war was now becoming unpopular with far-sighted Frenchmen precisely because its success plainly tended towards this issue; and, in addition, the formation of such a kingdom, by implying the confiscation of the Papal territories, was most distasteful to his Catholic subjects, with whom Napoleon already stood badly and wished to stand better. After a brief armistice, he proposed terms of peace to Austria, which were signed at Villafranca on July 9th. They ran as follows:

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Lombardy was to be surrendered to France and then handed over to Italy; the Italian States were to be formed into a Federation under the honorary presidency of the Pope (this was intended to soothe French Catholics); Venetia, while remaining under Austrian rule, was to be a member of the Federation, and the Dukes of Tuscany and Modena were to resume their thrones. Napoleon wished to add a further stipulation that neither side should use their armies to secure this latter object, but over this there rose so much haggling that the outcome was only an understanding between the two Emperors (not committed to paper) that Austria would not oppose the establishment of constitutional government in those States, should they themselves desire it, but at the same time she retained by her silence her right to interfere for other reasons; while France on her side asserted that she would neither restore the Dukes by force of arms herself nor—and here lay a point of great importance—allow Austria to interfere should she act upon the right she had reserved.

As may be imagined, to men who had set their hearts on a free united Italy, such a treaty was exasperating. However aware Victor Emmanuel might be that he owed much to France, he could not but be bitterly disappointed by Napoleon withdrawing his help when the struggle had just begun and when the freedom of Lombardy alone had been won. Cavour resigned in a passion of resentment that Victor Emmanuel should have countenanced such a peace. “Siamo traditi” was the cry at Milan and Turin. Yet Napoleon had already done much for the union of Italy; in fact, he had done more than he knew, and far more than he ever intended. Though no one at first fully realized it, the stipulation that Austria should not attempt to use force to restore the fugitive Dukes, and that France should abstain from similar interference, really opened a path for the union of Italy. This was the first important juncture at which Lord John brought valuable assistance to the cause of “Italy for the Italians,” since he kept Napoleon to his promise, after he had good reasons to regret it, and bent the whole weight of England’s influence towards persuading reluctant Austria to accept on her side the principle of complete non-intervention.

It must be remembered that the terms of Villafranca, in so far as the question of armed intervention was concerned, had never been finally ratified; and it was Napoleon’s wish that the European Powers should form a Congress at Zuerich, at which the Convention would acquire the stability of a European treaty, and the nature of the proposed Italian Federation be finally defined. Lord John and Palmerston, while protesting against the clause of the treaty which, by including Venice in the Federation, still left Austria a preponderating influence in Italian affairs, refused to take part in this Congress unless Napoleon promised beforehand to withdraw his army from Italy as soon as possible, and to join England in insisting that no Austrian troops should be allowed in future to cross the borders of their own Venetian territory.

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At home the English Court did its best to prevent its Ministers exacting these promises. It was the Queen's strong wish that the Federation of Italy and the restoration of the Dukes of Parma and Modena should stand as Austria's compensation for yielding Lombardy to Italy, and that the Congress at Zuerich should insist upon these conditions forming part of the ultimate European treaty. She objected to the pressure which Lord John was applying to France, on the ground that in making England's presence conditional upon an assurance that Napoleon would consider terms more favourable to Italian independence than those already signed at Villafranca, her Ministers were abandoning neutrality and intervening deliberately upon the side of Victor Emmanuel. The contest between the Court and the Foreign Office was obstinate on both sides; at one time it seemed likely that Palmerston and Lord John would be forced to resign. Lord John succeeded, however, in obtaining a favourable assurance from Napoleon to the effect that if it should prove impossible to construct an Italian Federation in which Austria *could* not predominate, he would accept a proposal for an Italian Federation from which Austria was excluded entirely. On these terms England consented to appear; but after all these intricate delays the Congress, dated to meet in January, 1860, never sat. In December a pamphlet, inspired by Napoleon himself, entitled "Le Pape et le Congres," had appeared, which advocated the Pope's abandonment of all territory beyond the limits of the patrimony of St. Peter, and declared that the settlement of this important matter should lie not with the Congress, but in the hands of Napoleon himself. If these were the Emperor's own views, Austria pronounced that she could take no part in the Congress; for she would then be denied a voice in decisions very near her interests as a Catholic Power and the first enemy of Italian union. The Congress consequently fell through.

Meanwhile events had been moving rapidly in Italy. Relieved from the immediate fear of Austrian coercion, the Tuscan Assembly had voted their own annexation to the kingdom of Piedmont, and the duchies of Modena and Parma and the Romagna soon followed suit. The question remained, could Victor Emmanuel venture to accept these offers? He had the moral support of England on his side, and in his favour the threat of Napoleon that should Austria advance beyond her Venetian territory, the French would take the field against her; but on the other hand, Austria declared that if the King of Piedmont moved a single soldier into these States she would fight at once, and Napoleon, while he threatened Austria, did not wish Victor Emmanuel to widen his borders. Cavour was now again at the head of the Piedmontese Government, and the problem of British diplomacy was to propose terms so favourable to Italian liberty that Cavour would not be tempted to provoke another war as a desperate bid for a united

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Italy, and yet of a kind that France and Austria would accept. The terms Lord John offered were: (1) that Austria and France should both agree to abstain from intervention, except at the invitation of the five Great Powers; (2) that another vote should be taken in those States which had desired to amalgamate with Piedmont before the King should be free to enter their territories. The other provisions dealt with the preservation of the *status quo* in Venetia and the withdrawal of the French troops from Rome and Northern Italy.

It will be seen that the first clause was merely a reiteration, a reinforcement with Europe to back it, of the clause which Napoleon, blind to its results, had attempted to induce the Emperor of Austria to put upon paper at Villafranca. Having failed then, he had contented himself with announcing that he would not interfere himself, nor allow Austria to interfere, by force of arms in Italy, a promise to which English diplomacy had from that moment firmly held him. We have seen, too, that before Lord John had consented to take part in the Zurich Congress, he had exacted from Napoleon an assurance that he would consider, as an alternative to the Federation proposed at Villafranca, the formation of an Italian Federation in which Venice (or in other words Austria) should have no part whatever. Such a Federation would not have been very different from the amalgamation with Piedmont which the other States had just proposed of their own accord; and consequently the Emperor of the French could not well protest against Lord John's proposals without repudiating all his earlier negotiations. Thus England and Italy now held France on their side, an unwilling ally in diplomacy, and Austria, on whom Lord John had endeavoured all along to force the principle of non-intervention, at last gave way. She refused, however, to commit herself for the future, or to admit that she had not the right to interfere at any time in Italy's affairs; but she let it be known that, for the present, reluctance to renew war with France and Piedmont would determine her actions. Of course the people of the States confirmed their vote in favour of annexation, and on April 2, 1860, the first Parliament representing Piedmont and Central Italy met at Turin.

This was the first stage in the making of Italy. When it was completed there remained only three independent Powers (excluding Austrian Venice) dividing the peninsula among them—in the north the new kingdom of Piedmont; in the centre the diminished Papal States; in the south the kingdom of Naples. Lord John, as the spokesman of England, by playing off Napoleon, who was no friend to Italian unity, against Francis Joseph, who was the prime enemy of Italian freedom, had secured for Italy an opportunity to work out her own salvation. He and Cavour together had forced Napoleon to prevent Austria from checking what Napoleon himself would have liked to prevent.

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Subsequently it came to light that Napoleon's surprising readiness in agreeing to the annexation of Central Italy in April had been due to a private arrangement between him and Cavour in the previous month. It was agreed between them in March that Savoy and Nice should be handed over to France as the price of her acquiescence. In the secret treaty of Plombieres, Napoleon's reward for helping the Piedmontese, should the war leave Venice, Lombardy, and the Romagna in Victor Emmanuel's hands, had been fixed as the cession of these territories to France. But since Napoleon had withdrawn and made peace when, as yet, only Lombardy had been wrested from Austria, he had waived his claim upon Nice and Savoy at Villafranca, and claimed in exchange a contribution towards his expenses in the war. But the moment Piedmont proposed to annex Tuscany, the Romagna and the Duchies, he returned to his original claim. His action had two important results: one which immediately added to the complication of Italian politics, and one which affected the diplomatic relations of the Great Powers for the next eleven years. In Italy his demand made a lasting breach between Cavour and Garibaldi. The latter never forgave the cession of Nice, his native town, to France, and never could be convinced that the sacrifice of Italian territory was a necessary step towards uniting Italy. In his eyes the agreement with Napoleon had been a kind of treason on the part of Cavour. Among the European Powers, on the other hand, Napoleon's action created an impression, which was never effaced, that he was a predatory and treacherous power.

In England the news was received with the greatest indignation. Lord John was extremely angry, and practically threatened war. He, like Garibaldi, did not realize that Cavour was driven to the concession, nor that Napoleon was, in truth, compelled on his side to demand what he did. The following letter from Sir James Hudson, the English Minister at Turin—"uomo italianissimo," as Cavour called him—is particularly interesting, because, though addressed to Lady John, it reads as though it were also intended for the eyes of the Foreign Secretary, from whom indignation had temporarily concealed the truth that this sacrifice was the only compensation which would have induced Napoleon to look on quietly while the new kingdom of Italy was consolidating on his frontier. The last event Cavour desired was a war between the two Powers whose unanimity forced neutrality upon Austria. Napoleon on his side was practically obliged to demand Savoy and Nice as a barrier against Italy, and because the acquisition of territory alone could have prevented his subjects from feeling that they had lost their lives and money only to further the aims of Victor Emmanuel.

Sir James Hudson to Lady John Russell

TURIN, *April* 6, 1860

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MY DEAR LADY JOHN,—I have seen Braico—Poerio brought him to me after I had offered my services to him in your name, and we have combined to dine together and to perform other feats, besides gastronomic ones, in order to cheer him whilst he resides in these (to a Parthenopean) Boeotian regions.You mention in your letter the name of that scandal to royalty, Louis Napoleon. What can I say of him? Hypocrite and footpad combined. He came to carry out an "idea," and he prigs the silver spoons. "Take care of your pockets" ought to be the cry whenever he appears either personally or by deputy.But do not, I beg of you, consider and confound either the King of Sardinia or Cavour as his accomplice. Think for a moment on the condition of Sardinia, who represents the nascent hope of Italy. Think of the evil that man meant—how he tried to trip up the heels of Tuscany, establish a precarious vicarial existence for the Romagna, and plots now at Naples. Not to have surrendered when he cried "stand and deliver" would have been to have risked all that was gained—would have given breathing time to Rome, reinforced and comforted Rome's partisans in the Romagna—have induced doubt, fear, and disunion throughout Italy. Judging by the experience of the last eight years, I must say I saw no means of avoiding the rocks ahead save by a sop to Cerberus. But do not lose confidence in the National party—Cavour or no Cavour, Victor Emmanuel or another, that party is determined to give Italy an Italian representation. I regret that the Nizzards (who have a keen eye to the value of building lots) are wrenched from us by a French *filou*; but I cannot forget that the Savoyards have constantly upheld the Pope, and have been firm and consistent in their detestation of Liberal Government in Sardinia. *I am not speaking of the neutral parts*, please remember.

Your most devoted servant,

JAMES HUDSON

Meanwhile the reign of Francis II of Naples and the Two Sicilies, who had succeeded Ferdinand, was proving if anything worse than his father's. Early in 1860 insurrections began to break out in Sicily, and on May 5th Garibaldi, on his own initiative, set sail from Genoa to help the rebels. "I go," he said, "a general without an army, to fight an army without a general." His success was extraordinarily rapid. At the end of May he had taken Palermo from 24,000 regular troops with his volunteers and some Sicilian help, thus making the dictatorship of Sicily, which he had declared on landing, a reality. It soon became known that he intended to recross to the mainland to free the people of Naples itself. Piedmont, of course, wished Garibaldi to succeed in this further undertaking. His cause was her cause. Though this action was entirely independent, his dictatorship had been avowed as a preliminary step to handing over the island to Victor Emmanuel. The King could not, therefore, oppose him nor prevent him re-embarking for Naples without separating himself from the cause of United Italy and making an enemy of almost every patriot in the country; but both he and Cavour were afraid either that Garibaldi might fail, in which case the union of Italy would have been

postponed for many years, or that the pace at which changes were coming would lead France or Austria to interfere again.

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France, of course, was most anxious to stop the further increase of the power of Piedmont, and therefore to check Garibaldi. Napoleon's idea of "United Italy" was a federation of separate States under the presidency of the Pope, who in his turn would be under the influence of France. He at once put pressure upon Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, compelling the latter to write to Garibaldi, telling him to stop in Sicily. Thus, in spite of her desire that Garibaldi should sail and succeed, Piedmont was compelled publicly to express disapproval of his intention. In England it was supposed that Cavour meant what he made the King say in his letter to Garibaldi, and in addition Palmerston, who was glad enough to see the old Governments of the little States tumbling to the ground, was rather alarmed at the prospect of a United Italy, which would also be a Mediterranean Power. Hitherto the honour of assisting Italy had belonged equally to him and to Lord John. Henceforward, however, Lord John, who had been brought up in the Fox tradition, and whose Italian sympathies had been fortified by his wife's enthusiasm, definitely took the lead in determining England's policy.

The aim of Cavour was to help the revolution as much as possible without making it obvious to Europe that he was doing so; but, like everybody else, Lord John had taken him at his word, and thought that the liberation of Italy might be retarded by Garibaldi's departure from Sicily for the mainland, till information reached him that in reality Piedmont was most anxious nothing should hinder Garibaldi's attack upon Naples. It reached him apparently in the following manner.

Cavour determined to appeal to the Russells personally through a secret agent. With this object Mr. Lacaita [afterwards Sir James Lacaita], who had been exiled from Naples for having helped Gladstone to write his famous letters upon the state of the Neapolitan prisons, which Lacaita knew from inside, was instructed to call upon Lord John in London and to tell him that in spite of her official declaration, Piedmont was desperately anxious that Garibaldi should drive the King of Naples from the throne; for Garibaldi's extraordinary success in Sicily had made his failure on the mainland far less likely, and Cavour was now certain that there was not much power of resistance left in the Neapolitan kingdom. Lacaita, though ill in bed, got up and went to deliver his message. He was told that Lord John was closeted with the French and Neapolitan ambassadors and could not see him. Lacaita guessed that Lord John was at that very moment talking over the means of preventing Garibaldi's expedition, and he immediately decided to ask for Lady John. When informed that she was seriously ill, he insisted upon being taken up into her bedroom, and adjured her for the love of Italy to get Lord John away from the ambassadors at once. A scribbled note begging her husband to come to her immediately brought him upstairs in some alarm. And there he learnt from Lacaita that Victor Emmanuel's letter of July 25th was a blind, that united Italy must be made now or never, and that he would never be forgiven if England stopped Garibaldi.

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This incident is recorded by several persons to whom Mr. Lacaita told the story. [54] It explains the sudden right-about of English diplomacy at this juncture, which, as Persigny shows in his memoirs, puzzled and astonished him. For Lord John having received this information, refused to act with France in preventing Garibaldi from crossing the Straits of Messina. This he accordingly did, and marched straight on to Naples, where he was welcomed as a deliverer; the royal troops deserted or retreated to Capua, and Garibaldi made his entrance into Naples, as was said in the House of Commons, “a simple traveller by railway with a first-class ticket.” Before the end of October the King of Sardinia and Garibaldi met near Teano and Garibaldi saluted Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy.

[54] Lady John’s diaries of 1860 being lost, this incident is given here on the sole authority of the late Sir James Lacaita.

On October 27, 1860, Lord John wrote a dispatch, in which he said that—

Her Majesty’s Government can see no sufficient grounds for the severe censure with which Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia have visited the acts of the King of Sardinia. Her Majesty’s Government will turn their eyes rather to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their liberties and consolidating the work of their independence....

Lord John also quoted from “that eminent jurist Vattel” the following words: “When a people from good reasons take up arms against an oppressor, it is but an act of justice and generosity to assist brave men in the defence of their liberties.”

Mr. Odo Russell to Lord John Russell

ROME, *December* 1, 1860

MY DEAR UNCLE,—Ever since your famous dispatch of the 27th, you are blessed night and morning by twenty millions of Italians. I could not read it myself without deep emotion, and the moment it was published in Italian, thousands of people copied it from each other to carry it to their homes and weep over it for joy and gratitude in the bosom of their families, away from brutal mercenaries and greasy priests. Difficult as the task is the Italians have now before them, I cannot but think that they will accomplish it better than we any of us hope, for every day convinces me more and more that I am living in the midst of a *great* and *real* national movement, which will at last be crowned with perfect success, notwithstanding the legion of enemies Italy still counts in Europe.

Your affectionate nephew,

ODO RUSSELL

Such was the second important juncture at which the British Ministry came to the rescue of the Italian nationalists. If after Villafranca the negotiations which secured the safety of Italy were the work of three men, Palmerston, Lord John, and Gladstone, contending against an indifferent and timid Cabinet and the opposition of the Court—it is clear that when the success or failure of Italian unity was a second time at stake, the decision and initiative were Lord John's.

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After his retirement, when he was travelling with his family in 1869, they took a villa at San Remo. The ceiling of the *salon* was decorated with those homely frescoes so common in Italy, which in this case consisted of four portraits—Garibaldi, Cavour, Mazzini, and—to their surprise—Lord John himself. Next to the national heroes he was associated closest in the minds of the people with the achievement of their independence.

When Garibaldi came to England in the spring of 1864, and received a more than royal welcome, Pembroke Lodge was, naturally, one of the first houses he visited. On April 21, 1864, Lady John writes in her diary:

All looked anxiously to the sky on getting up—all rejoiced to see it bright. Sunshine the whole day. Garibaldi to luncheon at Pembroke Lodge. Our school children, ranged alongside of approach with flags, cheered him loudly. All went well and pleasantly.

> John gave him a stick of British oak. Garibaldi gave John his own in exchange.

Agatha gave him a nosegay of green, red, and white—he kissed her on the forehead. Much interesting conversation with him at luncheon. Told him he would be blamed by many for his praise of Mazzini yesterday. He said that he and Mazzini differed as to what was best for Italy, but Mazzini had been his teacher in early youth—had been unjustly blamed and was *malheureux*. "Et j'ai cru devoir dire quelque chose," and that he (Garibaldi) had been in past years accused of being badly influenced by Mazzini: "Ceux qui ont dit cela ne me connaissent pas." That when he acts it is because he himself is convinced he ought. Inveighed bitterly against Louis Napoleon, whom he looks upon as *hors la loi*. Simple dignity in every word he utters.

> Park full of people. Richmond decorated with flags.

CHAPTER X

1859-66

Since only political events in which Lady John was herself deeply interested or those which affected her life through her husband's career are here to the purpose, the other international difficulties with which Lord John had to deal as Secretary for Foreign Affairs in this Government may be quickly passed over. And for the same reason the domestic politics of these years require only the briefest notice. Palmerston's Ministry produced very little social legislation, and the fact that Lord John was at the Foreign Office, while the Prime Minister led the Commons, increased the legislative inactivity of a Government which, with Palmerston at its head, would in any case have changed little in the country. Gladstone's budgets and Cobden's Free-Trade Treaty with France were

the important events. Between 1860 and 1864 the taxation of the country was reduced by twelve millions, the National Debt by eleven millions, and the nation's income increased by twenty-seven millions, while foreign trade had risen in two years by seventy-seven millions. These were the most splendid results a Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever been able to show; but the changes by which it had been achieved had been far from welcome to Palmerston himself. It had required great resolution on Gladstone's part to carry the Prime Minister with him.

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Many comments have been made on the indifference which the country showed to domestic reform during these years of Liberal Government; but it is not very surprising. It is a familiar fact that when foreign affairs are exciting the people are not eager about social or political reform, a fact upon which Governments have always been able to count. And foreign affairs had been very exciting. Under Lord John and Palmerston our own foreign policy had been bold and peremptory; the policy of France was directed by Napoleon, whose head, as Palmerston said, was as full of schemes as a rabbit-warren is of rabbits; and the quarrel of 1852 between Prussia and Denmark had arisen again in a far acuter form. It was, therefore, natural that popular attention should be constantly turned abroad.

The deaths of those who linked Lady John with her childhood now came quickly. Her father, Lord Minto, died a month after Lord John had taken office. He had been ailing for some time.

LONDON.—PEMBROKE LODGE, *May* 2, 1859

John at 7 a.m. to Huntingdon to propose Mr. Heathcote at nomination; back to Pembroke Lodge about five, having been very well received, but chiefly by the *ill-dressed*. Papa surprisingly well—saw him on my way out of town; far the happiest sight I had yet had of him. Dear Papa, he looked so pleased, smiled so brightly when he saw me. “Ah, dear Fanny! How glad I am to see you! How fresh and well you look.” Held my hand all the time I was with him.... I said I hoped in his place I should be as patient—that he was an example to us all, as he always had been.... Said few daughters could look back at my age without being able to remember having heard from their father one word but of love and kindness....

He died on July 31, 1859. His keen interest in public questions continued to the end, with a firm belief in the ultimate triumph of good. “Magna est veritas et prevalebit” were almost the last words he spoke on his death-bed.

During the autumn of 1860 Lord John accompanied the Queen to Coburg, where boar-shooting with the Prince Consort and Court-life (he never liked its formalities) failed to console him for absence from wife and children.

Lady John to Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 11, 1860

I found two letters from you here.... So you are fairly on your journey and safe so far. And here I am with my large detachment, all well and merry, and all at dear beloved home again after our wanderings. I am so thankful, and I hope to be still more so in five days, when I am no longer doomed to sing “There’s nae luck about the house,” as I have done daily for three weeks.... That you should have killed a wild boar is all but

incredible, and makes me expect to see you with a long moustache and green *Faeger* costume.

In April, 1861, Lord John's second daughter, Victoria, married Mr. Villiers, son of the Bishop of Durham. Lady John wrote some verses to her on her marriage which are published in Walpole's "Life of Lord John Russell."

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In May the Duke of Bedford died. The Duke had been Lord John's close friend, and had often advised him at the beginning of his career. He was one of those influential noblemen who watch politics with unflagging interest, but without the smallest desire to take an active part in them. It was his pride and pleasure to know the ins and outs of a situation perhaps even better than some of the principal actors in it, and his judgment was always at his brother's service. On his death Lord John inherited the Ardsalla estate in Ireland. The loss of his brother precipitated perhaps an intention he had considered for some time of saving his strength by accepting a peerage, and exchanging the strenuous life of the House of Commons for the lighter work of the House of Lords. The exchange was effected in July, when Lord John became Earl Russell.

> "Very dismal about the peerage," writes Lady John in her diary, "and seeing only the sad side of it.... John made a fine speech on Sardinia, perhaps his last in the House of Commons."

Lady Minto [55] to Lady John Russell

July 20, 1861

...It is impossible not to feel *very sad* in parting with a name which has so long been the rallying point of the Liberal party, the watchword of all those who in our day have fought the good fight, and, whatever name he may bear, it will never carry to English ears the same sound as "Lord John." People older than ourselves had looked to it with hope; and in our time, whenever Liberty has been in danger, or truth or justice or the national honour has been attacked, the first question which rose to men's lips was, "What will Lord John do?"....I remember his first speech on the China War in 1856. How empty the House was when he rose, how rapidly it filled to overflowing; then the intense silence which followed the rush, and lastly the overpowering cheers from all sides as he went on. To leave the scene where he has so long wielded at will the, alas! *not fierce* "democracie" (and it will be milder still without him!) must require immense self-control and self-denial.

[55] Formerly Lady Melgund. Her husband had now succeeded his father as third Earl of Minto.

Lord John Russell to Lady Minto

LONDON, *July* 23, 1861

MY DEAREST NINA,—It seems very bad of us not to have explained duly and deliberately that I have the project resolved upon and decided of accepting a peerage. But there have been many changes in my mind before the final leap was resolved upon. Forty-seven years of the House of Commons are enough for any man, and imply

a degree of wear and tear which those who read the speeches listlessly at the breakfast table have little conception of. A reply which is to go to Paris, Petersburg, Turin, and Washington requires much presence of mind, and often much previous thought, work, *etc*. A calmer

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atmosphere will suit better my old age, but I could not leave my companions on the Treasury Bench while any change was impending, and if I were to wait till 1862 I might again find the ship in a storm, and be loath to take to the boat. About a title for Johnny there is still some doubt, but I shall be Earl Russell, and make little change in the signature of

Your affectionate brother,

J. RUSSELL

In August Lord and Lady Russell and their children went to Abergeldie Castle, which had been lent to them for several successive autumns. Their free and happy life in the Highlands was delightful to them all. In October Lady Russell writes: "Left our beautiful Highland home.... Very very thankful for all our happy Abergeldie days."

In the April of this year the American Civil War had broken out, and the Ministry had been obliged to decide the question whether England should recognize the Southerners as "belligerents" or accept the Northern view of them as "rebels." The touchiness of the Northerners, and the fact that in England many people sympathized loudly with the South, made it difficult for the Ministry to maintain the attitude of neutrality, which, while recognizing the Southern Confederacy as a belligerent Power, they had officially declared in May. In November two Commissioners, sent by the Confederacy to put the case of the South before the Courts of Europe, were forcibly seized on board the *Trent*, an English, and therefore a neutral, vessel. This was a breach of international law, and the resentment it provoked in England was increased by the truculent attitude of the North in the face of our demand for the restoration of the Commissioners. The Congress, instead of apologizing, proceeded to pass a vote of thanks to Captain Wilks for having intercepted the *Trent*.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline [56]

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 13, 1861

When the account of the seizure of the Southern Commissioners first reached us I was afraid of the effect on John's health and spirits, as you may well believe; but, as you say, he could not but feel that there had been no fault on our side, that not a word had been spoken, not a deed done by him but what showed the friendliest feeling to the United States, and the strongest wish to remain at peace with them. I wish the newspapers were blameless; but there was a sneering, exulting tone in many of them after the military disasters of the North which was likely to irritate. Mr. Motley said long ago that the *Times* would, if possible, work up a war between the two countries, and though I can't speak from my own knowledge, as I have seldom looked at its articles, I have no doubt from what John and others say that he was right.... There can be no doubt that

we have done deeds very like that of Captain Wilks—not exactly like, because no two cases ever are so—but I wish we had not done them, and I suppose and

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hope we shall admit they were very wrong. It is all terrible and awful, and I hope and pray war may be averted—and whatever may have been the first natural burst of indignation in this country, I believe it would be ready to execrate the Ministry if all right and honourable means were not taken to prevent so fearful a calamity.

[56] Her husband, Mr. Ralph Abercromby, was now Lord Dunfermline.

December 19, 1861

John to town to see Mr. Adams [57].... John's interview with Mr. Adams encouraging. Mr. Adams showed him a dispatch from Mr. Seward declaring Government to be quite uncommitted as to opinion on seizure of Commissioners.

[57] American Minister in London.

In December the Prince Consort died. Almost his last public act was to modify the dispatch sent in reply to the vote in Congress, so that it offered the North an opportunity of relaxing with dignity their uncompromising attitude.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 24, 1861

I know you, like everybody, must have been thinking much of our poor desolate Queen. Her anguish, her loneliness of heart on that pinnacle of human greatness, must weigh on all who have known how happy she was; but to us who have often seen that lost happiness, it is almost like a grief of our own. I don't believe I have ever seen her take his arm without the thought crossing my mind: "There is the real blessing of your life—-that which alone makes you as happy a woman as others in spite of your crown." Everybody must have been full of dread of the effect upon her, but she has borne up nobly—or rather, she has bowed humbly to God's will, and takes comfort in her children. It must be soothing to her that his rare worth is now fully acknowledged and gratefully felt by the whole nation.

January 7, 1862

John to town at twelve, back at half-past six; dispatches and letters from Lord Lyons of December 26th discouraging, cabinet still considering our demands. Surrender possible, but in Lord Lyons's opinion very unlikely.

January 8, 1862

Telegram to John at 6 p.m. Commissioners surrendered! Thank God.
General rejoicing in the House.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 13, 1862

Well, what do you say to our American triumph? It ought to go far to cure you all. It is long since any political event has given me, my particular self, such unmixed pleasure. For my country, for my husband, and for the other country too, with all its sins, I rejoice with all my heart and soul. John is delighted. He was very anxious up to the last moment....We “Plodgians” were all so delighted that it has been a surprise to us to hear of the very tempered joy, or rather the ill-concealed disappointment, of *London society*; but John says London society is always wrong, and I believe the country to be all right.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

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LONDON, *February* 10, 1863

You ask me about Kinglake's book—everybody except ourselves is reading or has read it.... With regard to the sleepy Cabinet dinner at Pembroke Lodge he has from what we hear fallen into great inaccuracy.... John says that the despatch, having been circulated in the Cabinet before that dinner, was already well known to them all. As far as he remembers none but Sir William Molesworth went to sleep. I remember perfectly how several of them told me afterwards about Sir William sleeping and falling from his chair, and we have often laughed about it, but I do not remember being told of anybody else going to sleep. I suppose I shall read the book, but I cannot tell you how I shrink from anything that must recall and make one live over again those terrible months of vacillation and weakness, the consequence of a Coalition Cabinet, which "drifted" us into a most terrible war—a war from which consistency and firmness would have saved us. A thoroughly Aberdeen Ministry would have maintained peace. A thoroughly Russell or Palmerston Ministry would have maintained peace and honour too.

Lord Russell to Lady Minto

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 9, 1863

Parliament is coming to an end, most people being tired of talking and everybody of listening.... Lord Chelmsford says in honour of the House of Lords: "The Commons have a great deal to do and they don't do it—the Lords have nothing to do and they do it."

In 1863 relations between England and America were again strained. English vessels were perpetually running the blockade to bring cotton to England and goods to the Southern ports—a risky but highly profitable business. They were often captured by Northern cruisers and forfeited. There were complaints on our side that the Federal courts were not always careful to distinguish in their decisions between cases of deliberate blockade-running and legitimate trading with ports beyond the Southern frontier. The North, besides blockade-running, had a further cause of complaint. The Confederates were getting cruisers built for them in neutral ports. The most famous case of the kind was that of the *Alabama*, which was built in the Mersey. The English Government had information of its destination, but failed to prevent it sailing—a failure which eventually cost us an indemnity of L3,000,000. The speech referred to in the following letter was made in the midst of these troubles. It was a defence of England's good faith in the matter of the *Alabama* and an assertion that Americans should be left to settle their own difficulties without European mediation. At this time the French Government and a strong party in England were in favour of European intervention. By securing the independence of the South, they hoped to diminish the power of the United States in the future. Such an idea could only be entertained while the struggle between North and South seemed evenly balanced. The next year showed the hopelessness of

such a project and vindicated the wisdom of the English Government in having refused to attempt to divide America into two independent Powers.

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Mr. William Vernon Harcourt (later Sir William) to Lady Russell

September 28, 1863

I hope you will excuse my taking the liberty to write you a line of admiration and satisfaction at Lord Russell's speech at Meiklour [in Scotland], which I have just read. I take so deep and lively an interest in the great American question and all that concerns it that I looked forward to the authorized exposition of English policy by the Foreign Secretary with the greatest anxiety. Lord Russell's speech, will, I am sure, be of immense service both to Europe and to America. It has the *juste milieu*, and withal does not suppress the sympathy which every good man must feel for the cause of freedom, in a manner which more than ever justifies the Loch Katrine boatman's opinion of his "terrible judgment."I cannot help feeling that this speech has for the first time publicly placed the position of England in its true light before the world, and I with many another one am very grateful for it. Among all Lord Russell's many titles to fame and to public gratitude, the manner in which he has steered the vessel of the State through the Scylla and Charybdis of the American War will, I think, always stand conspicuous.... Now I am going to ask a great favour. I saw at Minto a copy of verses written for the summer-house at Pembroke Lodge, of which I formed the highest opinion. May I have a copy of them? I should really be most sincerely grateful and treasure them up amongst the things I really value.

These are the lines referred to by Mr. Harcourt:

To J.R. PEMBROKE LODGE, *June* 30, 1850

Here, statesman, rest, and while thy ranging sight
Drinks from old sources ever new delight
Unbind the weary shackles of the week,
And find the Sabbath thou art come to seek.
Here lay the babbling, lying Present by,
And Past and Future call to counsel high;
To Nature's worship say thy loud Amen,
And learn of solitude to mix with men.
Here hang on every rose a thorny care,
Bathe thy vexed soul in unpolluted air,
Fill deep from ancient stream and opening flower,
From veteran oak and wild melodious bower,
With love, with awe, the bright but fleeting hour.
Here bid the breeze that sweeps dull vapours by,
Leaving majestic clouds to deck the sky,
Fan from thy brow the lines unrest has wrought,
But leave the footprint of each nobler thought.

Now turn where high from Windsor’s hoary walls,
To keep her flag unstained thy Sovereign calls;
Now wandering stop where wrapt in mantle dun,
As if her guilty head Heaven’s light would shun,
London, gigantic parent, looks to thee,
Foremost of million sons her guide to be;
On the fair land

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in gladness now gaze round,
And wish thy name with hers in glory bound.
With one alone when fades the glowing West,
Beneath the moonbeam let thy spirit rest,
While childhood's silvery tones the stillness break
And all the echoes of thy heart awake.
Then wiser, holier, stronger than before,
Go, plunge into the maddening strife once more;
The dangerous, glorious path that thou hast trod,
Go, tread again, and with thy country's God.

F.R.

WOBURN ABBEY, *August* 18, 1864

My dear, dear husband's birthday. [He was seventy-two.] I resolved not to let sad and untrustful thoughts come in the way of gratitude for present happiness, and oh! how thankfully I looked at him with his children around him. They made him and me join them in a match at trap-ball that lasted two hours and a half. He, the boys, Johnny and Agatha rode, Mademoiselle and I drove in the same direction. He and his cavalcade were a pleasant sight to me. He looked pleased and proud with his three sons and his little daughter galloping beside him. The day ended with merry games.

In September, 1864, came the news of Lord Amberley's engagement to Lord Stanley of Alderley's daughter. He was at that time only twenty-one. Lady Russell's feeling about it is shown in the following letter:

Lady Russell to Lady Georgiana Russell

NORTH BERWICK, *September* 21, 1864

MY DEAREST GEORGY,—Your long and dear letters were a great pleasure to me, showing how you are thinking and feeling with us about this event, so great to us all. Whatever pangs there may be belonging to it, and of course there are some, are lost and swallowed up to me in great joy and gratitude. We might have wished him to marry a little later, to have him a little longer a child of home. But, on the other hand, there is something to me very delightful in his marrying while heart and mind are fresh and innocent and unworldly, and I even add inexperienced—for I am not over-fond of experience. I think it just as often makes people less wise as more wise. There is more real truth in their "Ideale" than in what follows.... God bless you, dear child.

Your very loving MAMA

In July, 1865, Parliament was dissolved, the Ministry having held office for six years. They had lost prestige over the Schleswig-Holstein negotiations. Lord Derby, with justification, denounced their policy as one of “meddle and muddle,” and Palmerston only escaped a vote of censure in the Commons by being able to point to the prodigious success of the Ministry’s finance. His personal popularity and ascendancy, however, were as great as ever; the Liberals were returned by a majority of sixty-seven. Although this majority must have been more than they looked for, the election disappointed Lord Russell in two respects: Gladstone lost his seat at Oxford and Lord Amberley was beaten at Leeds. Before Parliament met Palmerston fell seriously ill.

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 19, 1865

Letter from the Queen at Balmoral to John telling him she means to ask him to carry on the Government in case of Lord Palmerston's death. Dearest John very calm and without the oppressed look and manner I always dread to see.

On the 18th of October Palmerston died. Had he taken the precautions usual at the age of eighty, he might have lived longer, but in private as in public life, he despised caution. He was one of those statesmen whom modern critics, on the watch for the partially obsolete and with the complexity of present problems always before them, tend to depreciate. He had the first quality which is necessary for popularity: he was readily intelligible. In addition he was prompt, combative, and magnanimous; shrewd, but never subtle; sensible, but not imaginative. He had no ideas which he wished to carry out; he did not like ideas. He wanted England to dominate in Europe and to use her power good-naturedly afterwards; to be, in fact, what a nobleman may be in his home-country, where he is universally looked up to and ready to take immense trouble to settle fairly disputes between inferiors. Opposition from a direction making it savour of impertinence he stamped upon at once, without imagining the provocation or ideas from which it might possibly spring; he could not understand, for instance, that there might be two sides to the Chinese War. It is probable, too, that had not the Prince Consort intervened to soften the asperity of the Government's protest against the seizure of the Confederate emissaries on board the *Trent*, we should have had war with the Northern States. This menacing, peremptory attitude in diplomacy served him well, till Bismarck crossed his path. In the encounter between the man with a great idea to carry out, who had taken the measure of the forces against him, and the man who had only, as it were, a dignified attitude to support in the eyes of Europe, the odds were uneven, and Palmerston was beaten.

Lord Russell, though he must have been among the few who knew the Prime Minister had been failing lately, writes that his death came with a shock of surprise, he was so full of heart and health to the last.

Lord Russell now became Prime Minister, and Lord Clarendon took his place at the Foreign Office.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 2, 1865

John to town at twelve, back at half-past five, having taken leave of the dear old Foreign Office and left Lord Clarendon there. Happy, happy days, so full of reality—the hours of work so cheerfully got through, the hours of leisure so delightful. Sometimes when I walk with my dear, dear husband and see my lovely Agatha bounding along with sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks, and the bright sun shining on the red and yellow trees, I can only feel the sunshine of life and forget its autumn leaves. Or when we sit together by our evening fire and talk, as our moods or fancies

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lead us, of things grave or gay, trifling or solemn, my heart seems to leap within me from the sense of happiness, and I can only utter silent and humble thanks to the Almighty Giver. It must end, oh, fearful thought!—parting and death must come; fearfully yet not despairingly I think of that end. Come when or how it will, it cannot take all away—this happiness, this unutterable gratitude is not for time only, but is mine for ever.

The succession of Lord Russell to Palmerston's place at the head of the Government implied a change in its character and policy. It was not merely a continuation of an old, but practically the formation of a new Government. Lord Russell was bent upon introducing a Reform Bill, and thus closing his career in forwarding the cause in which he had won his earliest and most famous laurels, and for which he had on two other occasions striven without success. But though the country was now in a mood for such measures, and Gladstone's speeches in favour of an extension of the franchise had been well received, the party which had been elected in support of Palmerston was largely composed of men who shared his indifference, if not his dislike, to all such proposals. In all probability the Ministry was therefore doomed to a short life. "Palmerston," wrote Lord Clarendon to Lord Granville, "held a great bundle of sticks together. They are now loosened and there is nobody to tie them up." [58] In any case such a Bill would require very careful steering. The first ominous sign of a split occurred when it became necessary to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Sir Charles Wood. A place in the Cabinet was offered to Mr. Lowe, but he refused on the ground that he could not support Reform. Lord Russell, with characteristic abruptness and without consulting his colleagues, then offered the place to Mr. Goschen, who was quite unknown to the public; he had only been three years in Parliament, and held a subordinate office. [59] The choice was an admirable one, but to those who had not read Mr. Goschen's book upon Foreign Exchanges the appointment might well seem inexplicable.

[58] "Life of Lord Granville," by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.

[59] Promotion so rapid has only occurred once or twice in Parliamentary history. See note, Morley's "Life of Gladstone," vol. ii, p. 156.

LONDON, *February* 3, 1866

Sir Charles Wood [60] called—wished to see me alone—chiefly in order to talk about John, his occasional sudden acts without consulting colleagues, and the bad effect of so acting. He gave some instances, in which he was quite mistaken, some in which he was right. The subject was a difficult one for me—but his intentions were very kind, and as I heartily agree with him in the main, we got on very well, and as a wife I was glad to have the opportunity of saying some things of my dearest, dearest John, who is not always understood. Sir Charles took my hand, kissed it, and said: "God bless you."

[60] Sir Charles Wood retired with the title of Lord Halifax.

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Early in March Lady Russell writes to her son Rollo, at Harrow, of a very agreeable evening at Chesham Place, when Mr. Froude and Mr. Bright were among her guests.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

March 1, 1866

I wish you had been here at the Friday dinner.... It was such a pleasant little dinner. Bright was between Johnny and me; ... his conversation is interesting; he is warm hearted and very much in earnest. We talked of Milton, Shakespeare, and poetry in general; he has intense admiration for Milton, as a man and as a poet, as he ought to have; but agreed with me that it is less improbable that the world should produce another Milton than another Shakespeare. He said reading poetry was the next to the greatest pleasure he had in life—the greatest was little children. These refined and amiable tastes are not what the common world would attribute to Bright, who is better known for determination and pugnacity.

Although Lord Russell and Lord Derby were the two leaders of their respective parties, they were no longer the principal men on either side. The centre of interest lay in the House of Commons, and Gladstone and Disraeli were now the antagonists whom everybody watched. On March 12th the Government's Reform Bill was introduced in a speech by Gladstone, which was chiefly remarkable for lacking his usual fervour. The cause of this want of ardour on his part lay in the nature of the Bill itself. In order to conciliate the apathetic or hostile section of the party, the Cabinet, against the advice of Lord Russell and the inclinations of Gladstone had separated the franchise question from their redistribution scheme, which ought to have been an integral part of any Reform Bill capable of meeting the needs of the country. The grievances which such a Bill would aim at mitigating, although less gigantic than those which called for removal at the time of the first Reform Bill, were still serious enough. In 1865 "there was not one elector for each four inhabited houses, and five out of every six adult males were without a vote." [61] But in addition to this the large increase in population had been very unevenly distributed, with the result that large towns like Liverpool were palpably under-represented. The franchise had been fixed by the first Reform Bill at L10 a year rental. The Bill which Gladstone brought forward in the Commons proposed to reduce the county franchise from L50 to L14, and the borough franchise from L10 to L7 rental. Gladstone wished to make the payment of rates qualify a man for a vote; but this change was thought to be too radical, and any lowering of the qualifying sum of L7 rental would, it was found, place the working-classes in command of a majority in the towns—a result which the Cabinet was not ready to face. Moderate as the measure was, it was received with bitter hostility, while its half-heartedness roused little enthusiasm among the keener Liberals of the

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party. The debates upon the first and second readings were remarkable for energy of attack from the disaffected section of the old Palmerstonian party, nicknamed the "Adullamites." Mr. Lowe's speeches from "the cave of Adullam," "to which every one was invited who was distressed, and every one who was discontented," are still [62] remembered as among the most eloquent ever delivered in the House of Commons. The second reading passed by so narrow a majority that the Government thought it prudent to rally their reliable supporters, and meet just criticisms upon the inadequacy of their Bill, by bringing forward a redistribution measure and incorporating it with their franchise proposals. For a time this served to help them. By declaring that they would also stand or fall by the redistribution clauses of their Bill, they at any rate showed a better front to the Opposition. Towards the end of June, however, they were beaten in committee by eleven; their defeat being principally due to the attacks and manoeuvres of Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman, who had been Irish Secretary in Palmerston's first Ministry.

[61] Spencer Walpole, "The History of Twenty-five Years."

[62] John Bright's speech.

Lady Russell to her two sons at Harrow

March 15, 1866

...Horsman and Lowe are both Liberals; Horsman used, I think, to be reckoned Radical. But both have taken a violent dislike to Parliamentary Reform, and certainly one would not guess by their speeches that they were liberal in anything. Mr. Lowe's was a very clever speech; Bright's very clever too, and very good. Of course the Bill does not satisfy him; but his honest support of it, being all in the right direction, is creditable to him and very useful to the measure. Your Papa is much pleased with the whole debate, thinking it a very good one (excellent speeches for and against the measure), and the result probably favourable to it. As to the likelihood of its passing, opinions vary. I hear that Lord Eversley (the late Speaker) says he would take a good big bet that it won't pass. Your Papa says he is ready to bet against him that it will. Will Ministers dissolve Parliament if beaten? To that I must answer I don't know. I heard Mr. Gladstone's speech. As Willy says, the latter part was very eloquent. It was all good; but the details of a Suffrage Act are tiresome, and the apparent indifference, or even apathy, of our side of the House allowed even the striking passages with which the speech was interspersed to fall dead. The passages were striking, but nobody seemed to be struck. I don't believe the real feeling is one of dislike to Reform; but that, of course, they don't like to show, as the greater part of them, in spite of dislike, will support it. Your classical hearts must have enjoyed Mr. Gladstone's "ligneus equus" quotation; but

I am afraid Mr. Lowe's continuation was better. I never, or seldom, like quotations that merely

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illustrate what the subject of discussion does *not* resemble—they are forced and without much point; but when Mr. Lowe *likens* our Reform Bill to the “monstrum infelix,” and hopes it will not succeed in penetrating the “muros” of the Constitution (isn’t that pretty nearly what he said?) there is wit and point in the quotation. [63]

[63] Gladstone, in his apologetic introductory speech, had declared that no one could regard the Bill as a Trojan horse, which the Government was introducing surreptitiously within the citadel of the Constitution. “We cannot say:

“’Scandit fatalis machina muros
Foeta armis.’”
(The fated engine climbs our walls, big with arms.)

Mr. Lowe retorted:

“That was not a very apt quotation; but there was a curious felicity about it which he [Mr. Gladstone] little dreamt of. The House remembers that, among other proofs of the degree in which public opinion is enlisted in the cause of Reform, is this—that this is now the fifth Reform Bill which has been brought in since 1851. Now, just attend to the sequel of the passage quoted by the right honourable gentleman: “’O Divum domus Ilium et inclyta bello Mcenia Dardanidum! Quater ipso in limine portae Sustitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.’ (O Troy, house of gods and Dardanian city famous in war! four times in the very gateway it stood, and four times the clash of arms sounded in its womb.)

“But that is not all:

“’Instamus tarn en immemores, caecique furore, Et monstrum infelix sacrata sistimus arce.’ (Yet we, thoughtless and blind with enthusiasm, urged it on, and in our hallowed citadel stationed the ill-omened monster.)”

Mr. Charles Dickens to Lady Russell

GLASGOW, *April* 17, 1866

MY DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—...In sending my kindest regards to Lord Russell, let me congratulate you on the culminating victory before him, and on the faith and constancy with which the country carries him in its great heart. I have never felt so certain of any public event as I have been from the first that the national honour would feel itself stung to the quick if he were in danger of being deserted....

Dear Lady Russell,

Ever faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS

LONDON, *April* 19, 1866

Political prospects not brightening. John and his Ministry will be in such an honourable position, whether they stand or fall, that no serious danger threatens the country if they fall. My only anxiety is lest John should be disappointed and depressed; and it was with a sense of relief of which he was little aware that I heard him say yesterday of his own accord, as he looked out of window at the bright sunshine, “I shall not be very sorry—it’s such fine weather to go out in.”

LONDON, *June* 19, 1866

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At 7.30 a note was brought to John from Mr. Gladstone. Government beaten by eleven. Happily Gladstone, though ambiguous in one sentence as to the importance of the vote, was not so in others—or at all events was understood to mean “stand or fall.”

> Cabinet at 2.30 resolved that John should write to the Queen to offer resignations. Queen meantime writes from Balmoral, foreseeing the defeat, that she will not accept the resignations.
>
> Dearest John not depressed, though very sorry for this defeat of his hopes. He will stand well with the country, and that he feels.

The Queen could not understand the necessity of her Ministers’ resignation. The amendment upon which they had been defeated by so small a majority seemed to her a matter of small importance compared with events which made continuance in office desirable. For Bismarck had just declared war upon Austria, and the failure of Overend and Gurney had thrown the City into confusion. After a delay of more than a week, however, she was compelled to accept their resignations, which had been tendered as early as June 19th.

> PEMBROKE LODGE, *June* 28, 1866

John so well and happy that my joy in his release becomes greater every hour. There is a sense of repose that can hardly be described—abounding happiness in his honourable downfall that cannot be uttered.

> *Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline*
>
> PEMBROKE LODGE, *June* 30, 1866

As I wrote to you last in a doubting and disagreeable state of mind, I am in a hurry to write again, being now perfectly certain that the blessings of the resignation far outweigh its pains. I do not care for the charge of fickleness which may with justice be made against me. I can only confirm it. The defeat made me very sad. I hoped for many days that John could honourably remain in office.... On the day of the resignation he was serious—perhaps sad—and so was I. The next day everything, including his face, looked brighter, and has gone on brightening; so that now I am only afraid of being too much uplifted by our downfall, and hardly have words enough to describe my relief and joy. All the best men are full of approbation of his conduct. He and Mr. Gladstone have given an example to the country worth more than a Reform Bill. A short Tory reign will strengthen the Whig party; a good strong Whig Opposition will prevent much Tory mischief, so that there is little regret on public grounds to mix with my unbounded joy on our private account. Seven years of office had made me aware of its advantages and its interest, and I saw that John liked it, and I thought I did; but now I see that he has had enough of it, and any fear I may have had that he might regret it is for ever gone,

and I have found out how entirely it was an acquired taste with me. I can't say how often we have already said to one another,

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“Now that we are out,” as a preface to something pleasant to be done. He said to me this morning, “The days will not be long enough now.” That “now” would surprise those people who may imagine that time will hang heavy on his hands. He is in excellent spirits.... We feel as if fetters had been struck off our minds and bodies. If God grants us health, how happy we may be, dearest Mary! I have said far too much on this subject, but you will understand how I have reason to be both sadder and gladder than other Ministers’ wives.

Prussia and Italy had declared war against Austria, Hanover, Bavaria, and Hesse on the day the Russell Government was defeated. At Custozza the Italians were badly beaten by the Austrians, under the Archduke Charles.

Alas, alas! for poor Italy! Alas for everybody engaged in this most wicked and terrible German war! Surely it is all wrong that two or three bad, ambitious—men should be able to cause the death and misery of thousands upon thousands. Our day at Harrow, Agatha with us, was very happy. I never had heard John so heartily cheered by the boys.

He was in his seventy-fourth year, and he was never again to bear the cares of office. That summer they went down to Endsleigh, which they had not visited since the first years of their marriage,

ENDSLEIGH, *August* 4, 1866

John, Georgy, and I here about 7.30, after a beautiful journey. Lovely Endsleigh! it is like a dream to be here.... Thoughts of the old happy days haunting me continually. To church, to Fairy Dell. Places all the same—everything else altered.

CHAPTER XI

1866-70

During 1866 Lord Russell finished his “Life of Fox.” In the autumn and winter he and his family travelled in Italy, where they were often *feted* by the people of the towns through which they passed. At the close of the seven weeks’ war Austria had ceded Venetia to Italy, and on November 7th they witnessed the entry of Victor Emmanuel into Venice as King of all Italy. It was a magnificent and most impressive sight. Lord Russell was full of thankfulness and joy at the deliverance of Venetia from foreign rule, and the triumph of a free and united Italy.

In the memoir of Count Pasolini by his son (translated by the Countess of Dalhousie) the following passage occurs:

Lord John Russell was then in Venice, and came to view the pageant from our windows in Palazzo Corner. When my mother saw this old friend appear with the tricolor upon his breast, she said, “Fort bien, Milord! nos couleurs italiennes sur votre coeur!” He shook her by the hand, and answered, “Pour moi je les ai toujours portees, Comtesse. Je suis bien content de vous trouver ici aujourd’hui; c’est un des plus beaux jours de notre siecle!”

Somebody then said to Lord Russell what a pity it was that the sun of Italy did not shine more brightly to gild the historical solemnity. “As for that,” said he, “England shows her sympathy by sending you her beloved fog from the Thames.”

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Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

VENICE, November 8, 1866

We are all enchanted with this enchanting place.... Thursday (yesterday) was the grand and glorious sight—*how* grand and glorious nobody who has not been here and probably nobody who has can conceive.... Newspapers will tell you of the countless gondolas decorated with every variety of brilliant colours—alike only in the tricolor flag waving from every one of them—and rowed by gondoliers in every variety of brilliant and picturesque garb—and they will tell you a great deal more; but they cannot describe the *thrill* of thousands and thousands of Italian hearts at the moment when their King, "il sospirato nostro Re," appeared, the winged Lion of St. Mark at one end of his magnificent gondola, a statue of Italy crowned by Venice at the other. So spirit-stirring a celebration of so great an event we shall never see again, and I rejoice that our children were there.

Lord Russell to Lady Minto

VENICE, *November* 11, 1866

... We have been delighted with this place, but especially with being here to see the crowning of the edifice of Italian Independence. The people have rather their hearts full than their voices loud. When the Italian flag was first raised none of the crowd could cheer for weeping and sobbing. It is a mighty change.... We have seen many pictures. I am exceedingly struck with the number of fine pictures, the magnificent colouring, and the large conceptions of the Venetian painters—faulty in drawing very often, as Michelangelo said long ago, but wonderfully satisfying to the imagination.

They returned to England early in 1867.

It was a critical time in the history of the franchise. Neither Lord Derby nor his followers liked Reform, but the workmen of England were at last set upon it, and Disraeli realized that only a party prepared to enlarge the franchise had any chance of power. Unlike his colleagues, he had no fear or dislike of the people. His imagination enabled him to foresee what hardly another statesman, Conservative or Radical, supposed possible, that the power of the Democracy might be increased without kindling in the people any desire to use it. He divined that the glamour which wealth and riches have for the majority of voters would make it easy to put a hook in the nose of Leviathan, and that the monster might be ultimately taken in tow by the Conservative party. His first move in the process of "educating his party" was to offer the House a series of Resolutions upon the principles of representation. These were intended to foreshadow the nature of the Government's proposals and also to prepare their way. By this device he hoped to raise the Bill above party conflict, and to lead the more Conservative of his followers up a gently graduated slope of generalities till they found themselves committed to

accepting a somewhat democratic measure. His plan was frustrated by the determination of the Opposition to force the Government to show their hand at once.

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He consequently placed before his colleagues a measure which based the franchise on the occupation of houses rated at L5, coupled with several antidotes to the democratic tendencies of such a change in the shape of “fancy franchises,” which gave votes to men of certain educational and financial qualifications. His proposals seem to have been accepted by the Cabinet with reluctant and hesitating approval. On examining more carefully the effects of the L5 franchise upon town constituencies Lord Cranborne (afterwards Lord Salisbury) retracted his previous assent, and Lord Carnarvon followed his lead.

On the very day that Lord Derby and Disraeli were pledged to define their measure they found themselves threatened with the resignation of two most important members of the Government. At a hasty Cabinet Council, held just before they were to speak, it was agreed, after about twenty minutes’ discussion, that the borough rental should be raised to L6. The Opposition, however, declared a L6 franchise to be still too high, and they were now backed by a considerable section of the Conservative party itself, who felt that when once they were committed to Reform it would at least be wise to introduce a measure likely to win them popularity as reformers. Lord Derby and Disraeli yielded to pressure from within their party, and Lord Cranborne, Lord Carnarvon, and General Peel resigned. The subsequent history of the Bill consisted in a series of surrenders on the part of Disraeli. All the clauses and qualifications which had originally modified its democratic character were dropped, and Gladstone succeeded in carrying nearly all the amendments his first speech upon the Bill had suggested.

When the Bill finally passed Lord Salisbury described it as a measure based upon the principles of Bright and dictated by Gladstone; and what many Conservatives thought of Disraeli’s conduct is reflected in the speeches of their ally Lowe: “Never, never was tergiversation so complete. Such conduct may fail or not; it may lead to the retention or loss of office; but it merits alike the contempt of all honest men and the execration of posterity.” [64] Gladstone, writing to Dr. Pusey at the end of the year, said: “We have been passing through a strange, eventful year: a deplorable one, I think, for the character and conduct of the House of Commons; but yet one of promise for the country, though of a promise not unmixed with evils.” The feeling of romantic Tories in the country is expressed in Coventry Patmore’s poem “1867,” which begins:

In the year of the great crime,
When the false English Nobles and their Jew,
By God demented, slew
The Trust they stood twice pledged to keep from wrong.

[64] Morley’s “Life of Gladstone,” vol. ii, p. 235.

The last and longest struggle took place over the compound householder. On May 17th Mr. Hodgkinson proposed and carried an amendment that in a Parliamentary borough only the occupier should be rated, thus basing, in effect, the franchise upon household

suffrage, and forcing upon Disraeli a principle which he had begun by announcing he would never accept. To make the following letters intelligible it is only necessary to add that in 1866 Lord Amberley had been returned to Parliament as Radical member for Nottingham:

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Lord Russell to Lady Georgiana Russell [65]

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 22, 1867

MY DEAREST GEORGY,—I have been very negligent in not writing to you before, as I meant to do, but laziness after exertion is very pleasant. My exertion was not small, as, besides speaking at the beginning of the evening, I sate up for the division, and did not get home till near four in the morning. The triumph was very great; Derby and Cairns and the foolish and wicked Tories were beat, and the wise and honest Tories, like Salisbury and Carnarvon, helped the Liberals to defeat them.... We shall have a great fight in Committee; but I still trust in a reasonable majority for not pushing amendments too far, and then the Bill will be a great triumph of sense over nonsense.... We had Dickens Saturday and Sunday—very agreeable and amiable....

Your affectionate father, R.

[65] This letter ought to be dated July 22, 1869, and addressed to Lady Georgiana Peel. It refers to the debate on the Irish Church Bill.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

37 CHESHAM PLACE, BELGRAVE SQUARE, S.W.,

February 21, 1867

... Your Papa and I dined yesterday with Lord and Lady Cork. I heard some funny stories of Mrs. Lowe.... Here's the best. Mr. Lowe was talking of the marriage service, of the absurdity of making everybody say, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow"—-"For instance, I had not a penny." *Mrs. L*.: "Oh, but Robert, you had your brains!" *Mr. L. (sharply)*: "I'm sure I didn't endow you with *them*." Very funny; but very cruel, too, in answer to what was meant so affectionately.... Now, I must get ready to walk with your Papa. He keeps well and strong, in spite of the cloudy political atmosphere (hazy, perhaps, rather than cloudy)—nobody thinking or feeling anything clearly or warmly, except him and Gladstone and a score or two of others. He feels that the Government has so discredited itself and the Tory party generally, that the Whig party might be in a capital position if it chose. But the general indifference of Whig M.P.'s to Reform, and their selfish fear of dissolution, come in the way of public spirit and combined action.Your Papa is writing to Mr. Gladstone, from whom he has just received an account of the debate. Disraeli's clever and artful speech appears to have had more effect on the House (and even on our side of it) than is creditable.... Johnny has made a very good impression—so we hear from Mr. Brand, Hastings, [66] Mr. Huguesson, and Gladstone—by his maiden speech. All these, except Gladstone, heard it, and concur in warm praise, both of matter and manner. It is a great event in his life, and I am so thankful it is well over.

[66] Afterwards Duke of Bedford.

Lord Russell to Lady Minto

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LONDON, *May 21*, 1867

MY DEAR NINA,—As you have been so much bothered with the compound householder, you will be glad to learn that he is dead and is to be buried on Thursday. It was supposed he was the last and best product of civilization; but it has been found out that he was a son of Old Nick, and a valiant knight of the name of Hodgkinson has run him through the body.The Duke of Buccleuch, with whom Fanny and I have been having luncheon, says that Dizzy is like a clever conjuror. "Is that the card you wished for, sir?-and is that yours, and yours, and yours?" But politics are rather disgusting than otherwise. ... Fanny and I went yesterday to see the Queen lay the first stone of the Hall of Science and Art. [67] It was a grand sight—great respect, but no enthusiasm, nor occasion for it.Lotty is going to give us dinner to-morrow. I call her and Mary, L'Allegra e la Penserosa. *Fanny*: "And what am I?" "L'Allegra e Penserosa." I have no more nonsense to tell you. I should like to go to Paris in July or August, but can we? Let me know when you will be there.

Your faithful

TRUSTY TOMKINS

[67] The Albert Hall.

A few weeks later he wrote again to Lady Minto: "Our Reform Bill is now brought to that exact shape in which Bright put it in 1858, and which he thought too large and democratic a change to be accepted by the moderate Liberal party. However, nothing is too much for the swallow of our modern Tories."

In August, 1867, Lord Russell's eldest daughter, Georgiana, married Mr. Archibald Peel, [68] son of General Peel, and nephew of the statesman, Sir Robert Peel.

[68] The marriage service was at Petersham, in the quaint old village Church, hallowed by many sacred memories.

The daughters, who had now left the old home, were sadly missed, but intimate and affectionate intercourse with them never ceased. Lady Russell's own daughter, the youngest of three families—ten in all—thought in her early childhood that they were all real brothers and sisters, a striking proof of the harmonious happiness of the home. In November, 1867, Lady Victoria Villiers wrote to Lady Russell: "How I long to make our home as pure, as high in its tone and aims, as free from all that is low or even useless for our children, as our dear home was to us."

On Lord Russell's birthday, August 18, 1867, Lady Russell wrote in her diary:

My dear, dear husband's birthday. Each year, each day, makes me feel more deeply all the wonderful goodness of God in giving me one so noble, so gentle, so loving, to be

my example, my happiness, my stay. How often his strength makes me feel, but try to conquer, my own weakness; how often his cheerfulness and calmness are a reproach to my anxieties. Experience has not hardened but only given him wisdom. Trials have taught

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him to feel for others; age has deepened his religion of love. All that so often lowers commoner natures has but raised his.

In February, 1868, Lord Derby resigned, owing to ill health. “With Lord Derby [says Sir Spencer Walpole [69]] a whole race of statesmen disappeared. He was the last of the Prime Ministers who had held high office before the Reform Act of 1832; and power, on his fall, was to be transferred to men not much younger in point of years, but whose characters and opinions had been moulded by other influences. He was, moreover, the last of the Tories. He had, indeed, by his own concluding action made Toryism impossible; for, in 1867, he had thrown the ramparts of Toryism into a heap, and had himself mounted the structure and fired the funeral pile.” Disraeli succeeded him as Prime Minister.

[69] “The History of Twenty-five Years,” vol. ii, p. 287.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

CHESHAM PLACE, *February* 18, 1868

...Lord Derby is supposed to be dying, I am sorry to say. It is horrible to hear the street criers bawling out in their catchpenny voices, “Serious illness of Lord Derby.” I feel for his wife and all belonging to him without any of the flutter and anxiety about your father which a probable change of Ministry would have caused a few years ago. He will never accept office again. This is right, I know, and I am thankful that on the conviction of its being so he has calmly made up his mind—yet there is deep sadness in it. The newspapers are not favourable to his pamphlets on Ireland [three pamphlets published together afterwards under the title, “A letter to the Right Hon. Chichester Fortescue"]. He does not care much about this, provided men in Parliament adopt his views or something like them.

We find London very sociable and pleasant ... people all looking glad to meet, and fresh and pleasant from their country life, quite different from what they will be in July....

Lady Russell, as well as her husband, was always anxious to encourage perfect freedom and independence of thought in her children. The following passages are from a letter to her daughter on her fifteenth birthday:

37 CHESHAM PLACE, *March* 28, 1868

... Every day will now bring you more independence of mind, more capacity to understand, not merely to adopt the thoughts of others, to reason and to form opinions of your own. I am the more sure of this, that yours is a thoughtful and reflective mind.

The voice of God may sometimes sound differently to you from what it sounds even to your father or to me; if so, never be afraid to say so—never close your mind against any but bad thoughts; for although we are all one in as far as we all partake of God's spirit, which is the breath of life, still the communion of each soul with Him is, and must be, for that soul alone.... Nothing great is easy,

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and the greatest and most difficult of all things is to overcome ourselves.... Life is short, and we do well to remember it, but each moment is eternal, and we do still better to remember that.... Heaven bless you and guide you through the pleasures and perplexities, the sorrows and the joys, of this strange and beautiful world, to the source of all light, and life, and goodness, to that Being whose highest name is Love.

The everlasting Irish question had been coming again to the front. During 1867 the Fenians had attempted to get the grievances of Ireland redressed by adopting violent measures. There had been an attempt upon the arsenal at Chester, numerous outrages in Ireland, an attack at Manchester upon the prison van, in which two Fenian leaders were being taken to prison, and a subsequent attempt to blow up Clerkenwell jail. The crisis had been met by suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. Lord Russell, when Prime Minister, had replaced Sir Robert Peel, as Chief Secretary, by Mr. Chichester Fortescue, who later received the same office from Mr. Gladstone. In February, 1868, Lord Russell published his letter to Mr. Fortescue advocating Disestablishment in Ireland, but declaring himself in favour of endowing the Catholic Church with part of the revenues of the disestablished Church. In April Gladstone succeeded in carrying three Resolutions against the Government on the Irish Church question, and though Disraeli tendered his resignation, dissolution was postponed until the autumn. The same month Lord Russell presided at a meeting in St. James's Hall in support of Disestablishment. At the general election in the autumn the Liberals came in with a large majority; Gladstone became Prime Minister, and in the following year carried his Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. [70] Lady Russell's views on the question of Church and State are shown in the following letter:

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *May* 20, 1868

MY DEAREST MARY,—...How can one write letters in such weather as we have had? A fine May is surely the loveliest of lovely things, and the most enjoyable, at least to lucky mortals like ourselves who are not obliged to be "in populous city pent"—and those who have never seen Pemmy Lodge in its May garments of lilac, laburnum, wild hyacinth, hawthorn, and the tender greens of countless shades on trees and shrubs, are not really acquainted with it.... I have been going through the contrary change from you as regards Church and State. I thought *I* was strongly for the connection (at least of *a* Church with the State, certainly not *the* Church of England as it now is), but reflection on what the history of our State Churches has been, the speeches in St. James's Hall of the Bishops fostered by the State, and Arthur Stanley's pamphlet, which says the best that *can* be said for connection, and yet seems to open

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my eyes to the fallacy of that best, and the conversations I hear, have opened my eyes to the bad principle at the very root of a State Church. If *all* who call themselves teachers of religion could be paid, it might be very well, best of all perhaps; but I'm afraid there are difficulties not to be got over, and the objections to the voluntary system diminish on reflection.... This new political crisis raises John's hopes a little; but he has small faith in the public spirit of the Liberal party, and even now fears some manoeuvre to keep Dizzy in.

Ever, dearest Mary, your most affectionate sister,

F. RUSSELL

[70] Mr. Froude, in a talk with an Irish peasant on the grievances of his country, remarked that one cause of complaint was removed by Disestablishment of the Church. "Och, sure, your honour, that is worse than all. It was the best gravance we had, and ye've taken it away from us!"

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 3, 1868

MY DEAREST MARY,—Yesterday's *Pall Mall* and Sir David Dundas, who dined with us, set us all agog with the news that the Ministry are to resign at once, probably have now resigned; certainly much the wisest course for themselves, and John rather thinks the best for everybody.... How different this change of Ministry is to us from any there has been before since we were married, and for John since long before! There is now only a keen and wholesome interest for the country's sake—none of the countless agitations which at all events on the formation of the three last Ministries, of which John was either the head or a prominent member, more than overpowered satisfaction and pride, perhaps not to himself, but to his wife in her secret heart. As to pride, I never was prouder of him in one position than in another, *in* than *out*, applauded than condemned; and I had learned to know the risks, not to health only or chiefly, for that, precious as it was, seemed a trifle in comparison with other things, but to the power of serving his country, to friendship, to reputation in the highest sense, which are involved in the formation of a Government. These are matters of experience, and in 1846 I was inexperienced and consequently foresaw only good to the country and increase of fame to him from his acceptance of the Prime Ministership. I now know that these seldom or never in such a state of parties as has existed for many years and still exists, can be the *only* consequences of high office for him, although, thank God, they have always been *among* the consequences, and my only reasonable and permanent regret (for I don't pretend to the absence of passing and unreasonable regrets) is for the *cause* of office being over for him. What a letter full of *John*, and just when I ought to be talking of

everybody else except *John*; but you will guess that if he were not perfectly cheerful—-and

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he is more, he is full of patriotic eagerness—I could not write all this.... Thanks for your sympathy about Johnny—we were *very* sorry, I need not say[71].... I don't at all mind the beating, which has been a glorious one in every way, but I *immensely* mind his not being in Parliament....

Your most affectionate sister, F.R.

[71] Lord Amberley was defeated in the General Election.

Mr. Charles Dickens to Lady Russell

GAD'S HILL PLACE, HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT

Saturday, December 26, 1868

MY DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—... I cannot tell you how highly I esteem your kind Christmas remembrances, or how earnestly I send all seasonable wishes to you and Lord Russell and all who are dearest to you. I am unselfishly glad that Lord Russell is out of the turmoil and worry of a new Administration, but I miss him from it sorely. I was saying only yesterday to Layard (who is staying here), that I could not get over the absence of that great Liberal name from a Liberal Government, and that I lost heart without it.

Ever faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS

Lady Russell to Lady Victoria Villiers

PEMBROKE LODGE, *February* 4, 1869

We have had such a gay time of it—that is, from Saturday to Monday only; but we have had such a quiet life in general that that seems a great deal. The Gladstones with daughter Mary to dine. Gladstone was unanimously pronounced to be most agreeable and delightful. I never saw him in such high spirits, and he was as ready to talk about anything and everything, small and great, as if he had no Ministerial weight on his shoulders. He carries such fire and eloquence into whatever he talks about that it seems for the moment the most important subject in the world.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

37 CHESHAM PLACE, *March* 2, 1869

> London is extremely agreeable now, not rackety, but sociable—at least to the like of us who do not attempt to mix in the very gay world....

Arthur Russell called last night after hearing Gladstone's great speech [on Irish Disestablishment], well pleased himself and expecting the country to be so—*the* country, Ireland, more especially. *On* the whole your father is satisfied, but not *with* the whole; he does not approve of the churches being left to the Protestants for ever, as there is nothing granted to the Roman Catholics. Neither does he like the appropriation of national money to charities. [72]

[72] The Bill transferred to the new disestablished Episcopal Church all the churches, all endowments given since 1660, while the remaining funds were to be handed over to the Government for the relief of poverty and suffering.

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Lord Russell had followed up his first letter to Mr. Chichester Fortescue by two more letters, in which he again advocated both the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church. He warmly supported Gladstone's measure; though he again insisted that the funds of the Irish Church should be used to endow the other Churches. He was in constant attendance at the House of Lords, and during the same session he proposed, without success, a measure which would have added a limited number of life peers to the Second Chamber. These incursions into politics seem in no way to have taxed his strength.

Lady Russell to Mr. William Russell

June 3, 1869

It is a great misfortune that we have so few really eminent men among the clergy of England, Scotland, or Ireland—in any of the various communities. Such men are greatly needed to take the lead in what I cannot but look upon as a noble march of the progress of mankind, the assertion of the right to think and speak with unbounded freedom on that which concerns us all more deeply than anything else—religion. I believe that by the exercise of such unbounded freedom we shall reach to a knowledge of God and a comprehension of the all-perfect spirit of Christianity such as no Established Church has ever taught by Creeds or Articles, though individuals of all such Churches have forgotten Creeds and Articles, and taught "true religion and undefiled" out of the real Word of God and their own high and holy thoughts.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *August* 18, 1869

My dear husband seventy-seven this day. God be thanked for all that has made it a calm and bright and blessed one to us.

Our happiness now is chiefly in the past and present as to this world, in memory more than hope. But the best joys of the past and present are linked to that future beyond the grave to which we are hastening.... Bright and beautiful day. We sat long together in bowling-green and talked of the stir in men's minds on Christianity, on all religions and religion, our own thoughts, our hope, our trust.

Lord Russell to Lady Georgiana Peel

PEMBROKE LODGE, RICHMOND PARK, *August* 18, 1869

MY DEAREST GEORGY,—... Your very kind and warm congratulations delight me. It is sad that the years pass and make one older and weaker and sillier, but as they will pass all the same, it is well to have one bright day in each year when one's children can recall all the past, and feel once again gratitude to the Giver of all good.

Your affectionate Father, RUSSELL

To Mr. Archibald Peel

MY DEAR ARCHIE,—Thanks for your good wishes. Happy returns I always find them, as my children are so affectionate and loving—many I cannot expect—but I have played my part, and think the rest will be far easier than my task has been.

Your affectionate F.I.L. (Father-in-Law)

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RUSSELL

On October 26th they left home for Italy, travelling across France in deep snow. They reached the Villa Garbarino, at San Remo, on November 3rd, and remained there till April, 1870. “The five months,” Lady Russell writes, “were among the very happiest of our lives, and we reckon it among the three earthly paradises to which our wanderings have taken us—La Roche, St. Fillans, and San Remo. It was a very quiet life, but with a pleasant amount of society, many people we much liked passing through, or staying awhile, or, like ourselves, all the winter.”

They also became friendly with several of the Italians of San Remo, whom they welcomed at little evening gatherings at their villa. Their landlord, the Marchese Garbarino, was an ardent patriot. He it was who had decorated the ceiling of his drawing-room with the four portraits: Cavour, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Lord John Russell, so it was to him a delightful surprise to have Lord John as his tenant.

Lord Russell to Lady Minto

SAN REMO, *November* 23, 1869

I am very sorry that headache and neuralgia should have been added to illness and dislike of writing, as your reason for not inquiring how we were going on. We sit here in the receipt of news without any means of reciprocity, but we can speculate on France, Italy, and Ireland. Of those, the country which most interests and most concerns me, is Ireland.... I have heard much of Lady and Lord Byron, and from good sources. I can only conclude that he was half mad and loved to frighten her, and that she believed in the stories she circulated. [73] The Duke of Wellington said of George IV’s story that he was at the Battle of Waterloo, “At first it was a lie, than a strong delusion, and at last downright madness.”Brougham’s conversation with William IV on the dissolution was another delusion, and so on in perverse, wicked, contradictory human nature. Those who like to probe such systems may do so—the only wise conclusion is Swift’s, “If you want to confute a lie, tell another in the opposite direction.” Madame de Sevigne tells of a curate who put up a clock on his church. His parishioners collected stones to break it, saying it was the Gabelle. “No, my friends,” he said, “it was the Jubilee,” on which they all hurrahed and went away. If he had said it was a machine to mark the hour, his clock would have been broken and himself pelted.I hope your second volume is coming out soon. [74] There are no lies in it, and therefore you must not expect a great sale. I must stop or you will think me grown a misanthrope. Fanny and Agatha are well. If the day had been fine the Crown Princess and her sister would have come here to tea, and you would have had no letter from me. Do send me a return, when your mankind is gone a-hunting.

[73] The publication of “Astarte,” by the late Lord Lovelace, containing the documents and letters relating to Byron’s separation from his wife, has now made it quite clear that the grounds for separation were real.

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[74] The second volume of “Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto.”

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SAN REMO, *December* 1, 1869

Your letter of November 24th found the Amberleys here.... They were preceded by the Crown Princess of Prussia and Princess Louis of Hesse, announced by telegram in the morning, and a young Prince Albert of Prussia, son of the Prince Albert of our Berlin days, and a suite of two gentlemen and a lady, who came from Cannes, where they are living, on Friday, to pay us a visit, dined with us, slept at the nearest hotel, and were off again Saturday morning, we going With them as far as Bordighera; and on Monday arrived the Odos [75] for one night only, sleeping at an hotel. You see that our usual quiet life was for a while exchanged for one of—... Well, I beg pardon for this interruption and go back to our illustrious and non-illustrious visitors. The illustrious were as merry as if they had no royalty about them, and as simple, too, dining in their travelling garments, brushing and washing in my room and John’s, enjoying their dinner, of which happily there was enough (although the suite was unexpected owing to my not having received a letter giving details), chatting and laughing afterwards till half-past eight, when they walked in darkness, and strange to say, mud! but with glorious stars overhead, the five minute’ distance to their hotel, accompanied by Agatha and me. The drive to Bordighera next morning was the pleasantest part of the visit to us all—John, Princess Louis, and Prince Albert in their carriage, Crown Princess, Agatha, and I in ours. It is wonderful to hear Princesses express such widely liberal opinions and feelings on education, religion, nationality, and if we had talked politics I dare-say I should add that too. Their strong love for their Vaterland in spite of their early transplantation is also very agreeable.The Amberleys had been ten days with Mill at Avignon—a good fortification, I should imagine, against the wiles and blandishments of priests of all degree to which they will be exposed at Rome.... Little Rachel [76]is as sweet a little bright-eyed lassie as I ever saw, hardly saying anything yet, but expressing a vast deal.

[75] Mr. Odo Russell (afterwards Lord Ampthill) and his wife.

[76] Daughter of Lord and Lady Amberley, born in February, 1868.

Lord Russell to Colonel Romilly

SAN REMO, *December* 4, 1869

MY DEAR FREDERICK,—I had understood from you that you wished to propose some alterations in my Introduction to the Speeches, and I was much obliged to you for so kind a thought. But it appears by a letter from Lizzy that she and you think that all

discussions of the future (which are announced in my preface) ought to be omitted. In logical and literary aspects you are quite right;

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but I must tell you that since 1832 Ireland has been a main object of all my political career.... I am not without hope that the House of Commons will pass a reasonable Land Bill, and adhere to the plan of national education, which has been in force now for nearly forty years. At all events, the present government of Ireland gives no proofs of the infallibility of our rulers. Tell Lizzy that it is not a plate of salted cherries, but cherries ripe, without any salt, which I propose to lay before the Irish.

Yours affectionately,

RUSSELL

In the closing passage of the "Introduction" referred to in the above letter Lord Russell gives a modest estimate of his own career: "My capacity I always felt was very inferior to that of the men who have attained in past times the foremost place in our Parliament, and in the Councils of our Sovereign. I have committed many errors, some of them very gross blunders. But the generous people of England are always forbearing and forgiving to those statesmen who have the good of their country at heart; like my betters, I have been misrepresented and slandered by those who knew nothing of me, but I have been more than compensated by the confidence and the friendship of the best men of my own political connection, and by the regard and favourable interpretation of my motives which I have heard expressed by my generous opponents, from the days of Lord Castlereagh to those of Mr. Disraeli."

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

SAN REMO, *February* 17, 1870

How awful Paris will be after the easy, natural, unconventional life of San Remo, one delight of which is the absence of all thought about dress! Whatever may be and are the delights of Paris—and I fully intend that we should all three enjoy them—*that* burden is heavier there than in all the world beside—and why? oh, why? What is there to prevent human nature from finding out and rejoicing in the blessings of civilization and society without encumbering them with petty etiquettes and fashions and forms which deprive them of half their value? Human nature is a very provoking compound. It strives and struggles and gives life itself for political freedom, while it forges social chains and fetters for itself and wears them with a foolish smile. And with this fruitless lamentation I must end.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SAN REMO, *February* 23, 1870

I don’t know a bit whether we shall be much in London during the session—it will be session, not season, that takes us there.... The longer I live the more I condemn and deplore a rackety life for *any* girl, and therefore if I do what I myself think right by her and not what others may think right, she shall never be a London butterfly. Would that we could give our girls the ideal society which I suppose we all dream for them—that of the wise and

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the good of all ages, of the young and merry of their own. No barbarous crowds, no despotic fashions, no senseless omnipotence of custom (see “Childe Harold,” somewhere).[77] I wonder in this age of revolution, which has dethroned so many monarchs and upset so many time-honoured systems of Government and broken so many chains, that Queen Fashion is left unmolested on her throne, ruling the civilized world with her rod of iron, and binding us hand and foot in her fetters.

[77] A favourite stanza of Lady Russell’s in “Childe Harold":—

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weighed in custom’s falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

BYRON.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SAN REMO, *March* 2, 1870

I am writing in my pretty bedroom, at an east window which is wide open, letting in the balmiest of airs, and the spring twittering of chaffinches and larks and other little birds, and the gentle music of the waves. Below the window I look at a very untidy bit of nondescript ground, with a few white-armed fig-trees and a number of flaunting Italian daisies—a little farther an enclosure of glossy green orange-trees laden with fruit; then an olive plantation, soft and feathery; then a bare, brownish, pleasant hill, crowned by the “Madonna della Guardia,” and stretching to the sea, which I should like to call blue, but which is a dull grey. Oh dear, how sorry we shall be to leave it all! You, I know, understand the sort of shrinking there is after so quiet, so spoiling, so natural and unconventional a life (not to mention climate and beauty) from the thought of the overpowering quantity of people and business of all sorts and the artificial habits of our own country, in spite of the immense pleasure of looking forward to brothers and sisters and children and friends.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

SAN REMO, *March* 17, 1870

... No doubt we must always in the last resort trust to our own reason upon all subjects on which our reason is capable of helping us. On a question of *language*, Hebrew for instance, if we don't know it and somebody else does, we cannot of course dispute his translation, but where nobody questions the words, everybody has a right—it is indeed everybody's duty—to reflect upon their meaning and bearing and come to their own conclusions; listening to others wiser or not wiser than themselves, eagerly seeking help, but never, oh never fettering their minds by an unconditional and premeditated submission

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to *anybody* else's, or rather *pretending* so to fetter it, for a mind will make itself heard, and there's much false modesty in the disclaimer of all power or right to judge—that very disclaimer being in fact, as you say, an exercise of private judgment and a rebellion or protest against thousands of wise and good and learned men.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SAN REMO, *March* 23, 1870

You must take John's second letter to Forster, [78] which will appear in the *Times* and *Daily News*, as my letter to you for to-day, as I had already not left myself much time for you, so that copying them, although they are not long, has left me hardly any. I think you will agree with him that now, when the moment seems come for a really national system of education, it would be a great pity not to put an end to the teaching of catechisms in rate-supported schools. People may of course always have their little pet, privately supported sectarian schools, but surely, surely, it's enough that the weary catechism should be repeated and yawned over every Sunday of the year, where there are Sunday schools. I wonder whether you are in favour of compulsory attendance. I don't like it, but I do like compulsory rating, and I wish the Bill made it general and not local, and I also want the education to be gratis.

[78] In February Mr. Forster introduced the Elementary Education Act. It passed the second reading without a division. In Committee the Cowper-Temple Clause was admitted by the Government.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SAN REMO, *April* 6, 1870

We go on discussing the Education Bill and all that is written about it with immense interest, but oh, the clergy! they seem resolved to fulfil the prophecy that Christ came not to bring peace on earth, but a sword.... How true what you say of want of earnestness in London society and Parliament!

On April 7th they left San Remo, "servants [79] all in tears," she writes, "and all, high and low, showering blessings on us, and praying for our welfare in their lovely language." At Paris they stayed with Lord Lyons at the British Embassy. The Emperor Napoleon and Empress Eugenie showed them much kindness during their visit to Paris. One evening Lord and Lady Russell and their daughter dined at the Tuileries, Lady Russell sitting next the Emperor and Lord Russell next the Empress. It has been told since that at this dinner the Emperor mentioned a riddle which he had put to the Empress, and her reply.

Emperor. Quelle est la difference entre toi et un miroir? *Empress.* Je ne sais pas. *Emperor.* Le miroir reflechit; tu ne reflechis pas. *Empress.* Et quelle est la difference entre toi et un miroir? *Emperor.* Je ne sais pas. *Empress.* Le miroir est poli, et tu ne l'es pas.

[79] Their Italian servants.

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On April 27th, after six months' absence, Lord and Lady Russell were once more at Pembroke Lodge.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

37 CHESHAM PLACE, *May* 26, 1870

... We came up, your father and I, on Tuesday to dine with Clarendons, and stayed all yesterday to dine with Salisburys. Many things strike me on returning to England and English society: the superiority of its best to those of any other nation; the larger proportion of vulgarity in all classes; ostentatious vulgarity, aristocratic vulgarity, coarse vulgarity; the stir and activity of mind on religion, politics, morals, all that is most worthy of thought. What is to come of it all? Will goodness and truth prevail? Is a great regeneration coming? I believe it in spite of many discouraging symptoms. I believe that a coming generation will try to be and not only call itself Christian. God grant that each of my children may add some little ray of light by thought, word, and deed to help in dispelling the darkness of error, sin, and crime in this and all other lands.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

June 2, 1870

I wish most earnestly for legal and social equality for women, but I cannot shut my eyes to what woman has already been—the equal, if not the superior, of man in all that is highest and noblest and loveliest. I don't at all approve of any appearance of setting one against the other. Let equal justice be done to both, without any spirit of antagonism.... I can well believe in all the delights of Oxford, and envy men that portion of their life.

CHAPTER XII

1870-78

In July, 1870, public attention was abruptly distracted from Irish and educational questions by the outbreak of the Franco-German War, which followed immediately upon the King of Prussia's refusal to promise France that he would never, under any circumstances, countenance his cousin Prince Leopold's candidature for the Spanish throne. War came as a surprise to every one, even to the Foreign Office, and its real causes were little understood at the time. The entire blame fell on Napoleon. Only some, who had special information, knew that Bismarck had long been waiting for the opportunity which the extravagant demand of France had just given him; and very few among the well-informed guessed that he might have had a hand in contriving the cause of dispute itself. Napoleon, since his annexation of Savoy, had so bad a reputation in Europe, a reputation which Bismarck had managed to blacken still more in

their recent controversy over Luxembourg, that people were ready to take it as a matter of course that Napoleon should be the aggressor. Finally, by publishing through the *Times* the secret document in M. Benedetti's own hand, which assured help to Germany in annexing Holland, if Germany would help Napoleon to seize Belgium, Bismarck destroyed all remaining sympathy for France.

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Now, however, that the inner history of events has come to light, we know that it was Germany who fomented the quarrel, though both Austria and France must be held responsible for the conditions which made the policy of Germany possible. The significant suppression of the part of Bernhardi's memoirs dealing with his secret mission from Bismarck to Spain, and the fact that a large sum of Prussian money is now known to have passed to Spain, [80] while the Cortes was discussing the question of succession, make it probable that Bismarck not only took advantage of French hostility to Prince Leopold's candidature, but deliberately instigated the offer of the Spanish throne to a German prince, because he knew France was certain to resent it.

[80] Lord Acton, "Historical Essays and Studies."

Napoleon, however, must be held responsible, inasmuch as since the close of the Seven Weeks' War, he had intrigued with Austria to induce her to revenge herself by a joint attack with him upon Germany, hoping that he might win with Austria's help those concessions of territory along the Rhine, which Bismarck had peremptorily refused him as a *pour-boire* after Sadowa. Austria, too, must take a share of the responsibility, since through the secret negotiations of the Archduke Albrecht she had encouraged Napoleon in this idea. Both Napoleon and the Archduke were convinced that those South-German States which had been annexed by Prussia for siding with Austria would rise, if their attack on Prussia could be associated with the idea of liberation. Bismarck's cleverness in picking the quarrel over the question of the Spanish succession, a matter which did not in the least concern South-Germany, proved fatal to their expectations. This triumph of diplomacy, together with the success of his master-stroke of provocation, the Ems telegram, decided the fate of France. As edited by Bismarck, the King of Prussia's telegram describing his last interview with the French Ambassador at Ems, infuriated the French to the necessary pitch of recklessness, while to Germans it read like the account of an insult to German-speaking peoples, and tended to draw them together in resentment.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SALTBURN, *August* 24, 1870

Don't you sometimes feel that a few weeks' delay in beginning this horrible war might have given time to Europe to discover some better means than war for settling the dispute? We are full of schemes for the prevention of future wars. The only compensation I see for all these horrors is the conviction they bring of the amount of heroism in the world and of the progress made in humanity towards enemies—-especially sick and wounded.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SALTBURN, *August* 30, 1870

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Poor Paris! You may well say we must be sorry for it, having so lately seen it in all its gay spring beauty—and though no doubt the surface, which is all we saw of its inhabitants, is better than the groundwork, how much of good and great it contains! How the best Frenchmen everywhere, and the best Parisians in particular, must grieve over the deep corruption which has done much to bring their country to its present dreary prospects. I did not mean that any mediation or interference of other Powers would have prevented this war, but that there ought by this time to be a substitute found for all war.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

SALTBURN, *September* 7, 1870

Don't you find it bewildering to be hurried at express speed through such mighty pages of history? And if bewildering and overpowering to us, who from the beginning of the war could see a probability of French disaster, what must it be to Paris, to all France, fed with falsehood as they have been till from one success to another they find their Emperor and an army of 80,000 men prisoners of war! But what a people! Who would have supposed by reading the accounts of Paris on Sunday, the excess of joy, the *air de fete*, the wild exultation, that an immense calamity, a bitter mortification had just befallen the country! that a gigantic German army was on its way to their gates! I should like to know whether many of those who shouted "Vive l'Empereur" when he left Paris, who applauded the war and hooted down anybody who doubted its justice or attacked Imperialism, are now among the shouters of "Vive la Republique" and the new Democratic Ministry. Let us hope not. Let us hope a great many things from the downfall of a corrupt Court, and the call for heroism and self-sacrifice to a frivolous and depraved city—frivolous and depraved, and yet containing so much of noble and good—all the nobler and better, perhaps, from the constant struggle to remain so in that atmosphere. Even if, as God grant, there is no siege, the serious thoughts which the prospect of it must give will perhaps not be lost on the Parisians. I, like you, long that the King of Prussia may prove that he spoke in all sincerity when he said that he fought against the Emperor, not France, and be magnanimous in the conditions he may offer—but what does that precisely mean? John says he is right to seek for some guarantee against future French ambition. Hitherto he has acted very like a gentleman, as John in the House of Lords declared him to be, and may still be your model sovereign.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 3, 1870

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Your letter is so interesting and raises so many serious thoughts that I should like to answer it as it deserves, but can't do so to-day as I am obliged to go to London on business, and have hardly a moment. The kind of "gigantic brains" which you mention are, I agree with you, often repulsive—there is a harshness of *dissent* from all that mankind most values, all that has raised them above this earth, which cannot be right—which is the result of deficiency in some part of their minds or hearts or both, and not of excess of intellect or any other good thing. If they are right in their contempt of Christian faith and hope, or of all other spiritual faith and hope, they ought to be "of all men most miserable"; but they are apt to reject Christian charity too, and to dance on the ruins of all that has hitherto sustained their fellow-creatures in a world of sin and sorrow. That they are not right, but wofully wrong, I firmly believe, and happily many and many a noble intellect and great heart, which have not shrunk from searching into the mysteries of life and death with all the powers and all the love of truth given them by God to be used, not to lie dormant or merely receive what other men teach, have risen from the search with a firmer faith than before in Christ and in the immortality which he brought to light. I believe that many of those who deem themselves sceptics or atheists retain, after all, enough of the divine element within them practically to refute their own words.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 4, 1871

I wonder whether the solemn thoughts which must belong to the end of a year, and the solemn services by which it has been celebrated both by Germans and French, will lead them to ask themselves in all earnestness whether it is really duty, really what they believe to be God's will, which guides them in the continuance of a fearful war—whether earthly passions, earthly point of honour, do not mingle with their determination. If they do ask themselves such questions, what will be the answers? I, too, am often tempted to wish peace at any price, yet neither you nor I would act upon the wish were we the people to act. It was the peace at any price doctrine that forced us into the Russian war.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 25, 1871

Hopes of peace at last, thank God! I can think of little else—the increasing and accumulating horrors, miseries, and desolation of this wicked war have been enough to make one despair of mankind. France alone was in the wrong at first, but both have been wrong ever since Sedan, so at least I think, but it is too long a matter to discuss in a letter. If the new Emperor [81] does not grant most honourable terms to Paris, I shall give him up altogether as a self-seeking, hard-hearted old man of fire and sword. I dare

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say you have not heard as many sad stories as we have of the losses and disasters and unspeakable sorrows of people in Paris, known to other people we have seen. I won't repeat any of them, as it can do no good. I am glad to know that the Crown Prince *hates* the war, *hates* the bombardment, and opposed it strongly, and then again opposed sending shells into the town, and was very angry when it began to be done. Indeed, everything that we hear of him is highly to his credit, and one may hope much for the welfare and good government of United Germany from him and his wife.

[81] King William of Prussia had just taken the title of German Emperor.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 26, 1871

... We are rejoicing and thanking God for the blessed news of the coming surrender of Paris. Alas for all the wasted lives—wasted, *I* think, on both sides, for I cannot perceive that it was on either side one of those great and holy causes in which the blood shed by one generation bears fruit for the next. The *Times* was too quick in drawing conclusions from Jules Favre being at Versailles, but there can be little doubt that terms are under consideration, and I hope the Germans will show that they are not so spoiled by success as to be ungenerous in their demands. As to Alsace and Lorraine, I fear that it is a settled point with them. If so, they ought to be all the more ready to grant terms honourable in other respects. Do you see that a brave man in the Berlin Parliament raised his voice against annexation of French provinces, on the discussion of address to the new Emperor on his new dignity? ... What wonderfully interesting lectures Tyndall is giving.

LONDON, *July* 12, 1871

We lunched yesterday, all three, with Bernstorffs, [82] to meet Crown Prince and Princess—best of Princes and Princesses. It was interesting and agreeable. John and I had the luck to sit beside her and him. I was delighted to hear him say, "I hate war," with an emphasis better than words.

[82] Count Bernstorff was German Ambassador in London.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 27, 1871

... I suppose Agatha told you of the Emperor of Brazil's visit to us at 7 a.m.—it was amusing to get up at six to receive an Emperor, impossible to put on much ceremony with one's garments at that unceremonious hour, and fortunately unnecessary, for His Majesty was chatty and easy. He took a turn along West walk, admired the view, had a

cup of chocolate, thanked us for our courtesy, and was off again before eight with his sallow-faced, grimy gentleman in waiting, who looked as if the little sleep he ever had was with his clothes on. We tried to see another Emperor [83] on Tuesday, having at last made out our journey to Chislehurst. Unluckily he

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and his son had gone to town, but we found the Empress. How unlike the splendid, bejewelled, pomp-and-gloryfied Empress of the Tuileries: her dress careless and common, her face little, if at all, painted, and thereby to my eye improved—but so altered. She seemed, however, in good spirits. She did not talk of France, but feared for England anything tending to diminish authority of "powers that be."

[83] Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie were living at Chislehurst.

On August 18, 1871, Lord Russell's seventy-ninth birthday was celebrated at Pembroke Lodge by the school children under the cedar in the garden. "His serene and cheerful mind, a greater blessing year by year as enjoyments one by one drop away. He looks back with gratitude, he accepts the present with contentment. He looks forward, I think, without dread." In September they went abroad, and took for the second time the house at Renens-sur-Roche, in Switzerland, where they had stayed in 1855. Lady Russell's mind was still full of horror of the recent war.

The first morning at Glyon (she writes to her sister, Lady Dunfermline) was one of merciless rain, but the afternoon did well enough for Chillon, to which use we all put it, and very interesting, grimly and horribly so, we found it. Men are less wicked and less cruel, tyrants are less tyrannical nowadays than when so-called criminals, often the best men in their country, were chained by iron rings to dungeon stones for years and years, or fastened to pillars and tortured by slow fires, or thrown down "oubliettes" into the lake below, falling first on a revolving machine stuck full of sharp blades—of all which horrors we were shown the scene and the remains. But I hope that some centuries hence travellers will wonder at even the present use to which Chillon is put, that of an arsenal, and thank God that they did not live in an age when sovereigns and rulers could command man to destroy his brother-man.

From Switzerland they moved down to the South of France to get to a warmer climate. They had taken a villa for the winter at Cannes, where they had a happy time, brightened during the Christmas vacation by the visits of their sons with friends from Oxford. In his old age Lord Russell seemed to enjoy more and more the companionship of the young, and entered with spirit into their merry jests and their eager conversations on great subjects, discussed with the freshness and enthusiasm of youth.

Lord Russell, as the following letters show, was still taking keen interest in education questions:

Lord Russell to Colonel Romilly

RENENS, *September* 27, 1871

I see the Bishop of Manchester has been speaking in favour of “a very moderate form of dogmatism” to be imposed on Dissenters who wish their children to have religious teaching. I am quite against this moderate form, which consists in making a Baptist child own that he is to believe what his godfathers and godmothers promised for him—-he having neither godfathers nor godmothers. Every form of persecution is in my eyes detestable, so that I shall have to fight a new fight for freedom of education.

Lord Russell to Lady Minto

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CANNES, *January* 6, 1872

MY DEAREST NINA,—Your New Year's Day letter shows that you write as well as a volunteer as on compulsion.... I am sorry to have annoyed Maggie by my allusion to the Hertfordshire incumbent. Here is my case. Sixty-three years ago my father, with others founded a Society to teach the Bible to young boys and girls, which they called "Schools for all." One should have thought there was no harm in the project, and that they might have been left alone. Not so. The clergy were furious. Sixty years ago they founded the National Society, and ever since they have libelled our schools.... Last year or the year before the H.I. [Hertfordshire Incumbent] attacked my proposals. I left him alone, but I carried the day, and excluded formularies from schools provided by rates. Still the bishops and clergy fulminate against us, shut out Baptists from the schools where they have influence, and declaim against us. Now I happen to have a great respect for the Bible, and while I have life will not cease to defend our Bible schools. You will say, if I do not, that in time the world will come round to Christianity, which is at a low ebb at present. Men will understand at last that they ought to love God and to love their neighbour as themselves, not to steal, or commit murder, or cheat their neighbours. The Athanasian Creed is making a pretty hubbub. It was invented as a substitute for Christianity, and taken from Aristotle....

Ever yours affectionately,

RUSSELL

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

CANNES, *November* 29, 1871

What is to be the result of the Republican ferment in our country? It may not be widespread, and it certainly hardly exists above the working classes, yet I feel that the germ is there—and who can say how far it is doomed to flourish, or whether it will die away.... Ours has been so free and independent and prosperous a nation, that the notion of any fundamental change in the Constitution is awful. Yet when we boast of our freedom and prosperity we should not forget the enormous mass of misery, vice, filth, and all evil which disgraces all our large towns—nor the brutish ignorance and apathy which pervades much of our rural population. And it is well worth the most earnest thought and study, on the part of all Englishmen and women, to find out whether our form of government has or has not any share of the blame and to act accordingly. I have great confidence in the British people. They have never liked hasty, ill-considered changes; they hate revolution; and I hope I am not too trustful in believing that we shall go on in the wise and the right path, whatever that may be, and in spite of the freaks and follies of many a man whose aims are more selfish than patriotic.

While at Cannes Lord and Lady Russell saw a great deal of Princess Christian, who was living near them, and was in great anxiety and sorrow about the illness of her brother, the Prince of Wales, who nearly died in December, 1871. His illness was the occasion of a display of loyalty and sympathy from thousands of British subjects. Lady Russell received the following reply to a letter she wrote from Cannes to the Queen:

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Queen Victoria to Lady Russell

OSBORNE, *January* 22, 1872

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—I meant ere this to have thanked you for your very kind letter of the 1st, but my dear son's illness brought with it much writing besides much to do, in addition to which, there is the correspondence with *four* absent married daughters, which is no light task. I thank you now *both* most warmly for the great kindness of your expressions about my own long and severe illness, when you so kindly wrote to Lady Ely to inquire, and relative to this last dreadful illness of my dear son's, coming, as it did, when I was far from strong myself. Thank God! I was able to be near him and with my *beloved* daughter, the Princess of Wales (who behaved so beautifully and admirably), during that terrible time, when for nearly a week his life hung on a thread. Indeed, for a whole month *at least,* if not for five weeks, his state was one of the greatest anxiety and indeed of danger. Since the 4th we may look on his progress as steady and good, and I hear that he was able to drive out yesterday for a little while. But great quiet will be necessary for a long while to come. You are very kind in your accounts of Helena, who no doubt must have suffered much from being so far off.... I hear that she is really better and stronger. She speaks often of the pleasure it is to her to see you and Lord Russell, of whom I am delighted to hear so good an account. Though not very strong and not free from rheumatic pains at times, I am much better and able to walk again out of doors, much as usual.

With kind remembrances to Lord Russell and Agatha,

Ever yours affectionately, V.R.

In the spring they all came back to England. Lord John had benefited in health by wintering abroad; he was still vigorous enough to resist in the House of Lords the claim of the United States for the *Alabama* indemnity, and to give a presidential address to the Historical Society; but the years were beginning to tell on him.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 18, 1872

John did not venture out—still looks tired and not as he did when we arrived, but no cold. Sad, most sad to me, that when I take a brisk turn in the garden, it is no longer with him—that his enjoyments, his active powers, yearly dwindle away—that it is scarcely possible he should not at times feel the hours too long from the difficulty of finding variety of occupation. Writing, walking, even reading very long or talking much with friends and visitors all tire him. He never complains, and I thank God for his patience, and oh! so heartily that he has no pain, no chronic ailment. But alas for the days of his vigour when he was out and in twenty times a day, when life had a zest which nothing can restore!

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *August* 8, 1872

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Filled with wonder, shame, remorse, I begin on a Thursday to write to you. What possessed me to let Wednesday pass without doing so I can't tell, but I think it happens about once a year, and I dare say it's a statistical mystery—the averages must be kept right, and my mind is not to blame—no free will in the matter. This brings me to an essay in one of the magazines for August—I forget which—on the statistics of prayer. Not a nice name (perhaps it's not correct, but nearly so), and not a nice article, it seemed to me—but I only glanced at it; produced, like many other faulty things of the kind, by illogical superstition on the part of Christian clergy, most of whom preach a half-belief, some a whole belief, on the efficacy of prayer for temporal good. Then comes the hard unbeliever, delighted to prove, as any child can do, that such prayer cannot be proved to avail anything. He is incapable of understanding the deeper and truer kind of prayer, but he convinces many that all communion with God is fruitless, or perhaps that there is no God with whom to hold it. This may not be the drift of the article, for, as I said, I have not read it, but it *is* the drift of much that is talked and written nowadays by men and women of the author's school. I wish there were no schools in that sense. They always have done and always will do harm, and prevent the independence of thought which they are by way of encouraging.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *Christmas Day,* 1872

I do indeed feel with you how wonderful the goodness and the contented spirit of many thousands of poor, pent-up, toiling human beings, who live in God's glorious world and leave it without ever knowing its glories, whose lives are one struggle to maintain life; and I think with you how easy it ought to be for us who have leisure for the beauty of life, in nature and in books, in conversation and in art. And yet, it was to the rich that Christ gave His most frequent warnings. Is it then, after all, easiest for the poor to do His will and love Him and trust Him in all things?

The summer and autumn and winter had been spent almost entirely at Pembroke Lodge, but when Parliament met early in 1873 they moved to London, where they had taken a house till Easter.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

LONDON, *February* 19, 1873

Scene—a drawing-room; hour 11.30 a.m. A young lady playing the pianoforte by candle-light. An old lady writing, also by candle-light. An old gentleman five minutes ago sitting reading also by candle-light, but now doing the same in a room below. Three large windows through which is seen a vast expanse of a semi-substantial material of the hue of a smoked primrose; against it is dimly visible an irregular and picturesque

outline, probably of a range of mountains, some rocky and pyramidal, others horizontally

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banked. Altogether, a mystery replete with grandeur in the effect—none of your Southern transparency leaving nothing for the imagination. *Seriously,* it's laughable that human beings should congregate so as to produce these effects, and that we among others should by preference be among the congregators. Your day at Napoule is like something in a different world altogether.You are rather hard, John says, and he is not disposed to be otherwise, on Parliamentary sayings and doings. I can say nothing from myself, as I have not read one single speech, except that I cannot bear the humiliating exclusion of *any* kind of useful knowledge from a University out of false consideration for religious or irreligious scruples. [84] Surely young men had better be taught boldly to face the fact that men differ than be dealt with in this ridiculously tender and most futile manner.

[84] The Irish University Bill was being discussed in the Commons, one clause of which proposed to exclude theology, philosophy, and history from the curriculum of the New University.

In August, 1873, after the publication of Lord Russell's book, "Essays on the History of the Christian Religion," they spent some six weeks at Dieppe, where Lord Russell's health again considerably improved.

Mr. Disraeli to Lord Russell

GEORGE STREET, HANOVER SQUARE, *May* 8, 1873

MY DEAR LORD,—I have just finished reading your book, which I was much gratified by receiving from the author.... I cannot refrain from expressing to you the great pleasure its perusal gave me. The subject is of perpetual interest, and it is treated, in many instances, with originality founded on truth, and with wonderful freshness. The remarks suggested by your own eminent career give to the general conduct of the theme additional interest, like the personal passages in Montaigne. I wish there had been more of them, or that you would favour the world with some observations on men and things, which one who is alike a statesman, a philosopher, and a scholar could alone supply. In your retirement you have the inestimable happiness of constant and accomplished sympathy, without which life is little worth. Mine is lone and dark, but still, I hope I may send my kindest remembrances to Lady Russell.

Yours with sincere respect and regard,

B. DISRAELI

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 3, 1873

You will not be disappointed, I do believe, with John's book, high as your expectations are. The spirit of it at all events is that of your letter: that of love and reverence for what you truly call the wonder of wonders—the Bible—as well as that of perfect freedom of thought. Had that perfect freedom always been allowed to mankind by kings, rulers, and priests, in all their disguises, we should never have

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had the “trash” of which you complain inundating our country and thinking itself a substitute for the simple lessons and glorious promises of Christ. Whereas in proportion as it is less “trashy,” it approaches more nearly, though unconsciously, to what He taught, borrowing what is best in it from Him, only giving an earthly tone to what He made divine. I have, perhaps, more indulgence than you for some of the anti-Christian thinkers and writers of the day—those who love truth with all their souls, who would give their lives to believe that—

> “Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
> Was not spoken of the soul,”

but who seek a kind of proof of this which never can be found. They are very unhappy in this world, but I believe they are nearer heaven than many comfortable so-called believers, and will find their happiness beyond that death upon which they look as annihilation.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 22, 1873

Louisa [85] writes in such warm admiration of Minto indoors and out, it did me good to read it, and such joy in meeting you. Shall I ever be there again, I wonder?—a foolish wonder, and foolisher still when let out! Dear old oak-room—to me too Granny Brydone is always present there. I *cannot* think of it without her image rising before me. How perfect she was! How far above the common world she and Mama, and yet both spending their lives in the discharge of common, and what many would call, petty duties! How little it signifies what are the special duties to which we are called, how much the spirit in which we do them! I don’t think I ever longed so much for long talks day after day with you. Don’t say such hopes are visionary, though, alas! they have over and over again vanished before our eyes.

[85] Lady Louisa Howard, formerly Lady Louisa Fitzmaurice (daughter of Lord Lansdowne), one of Lady Russell’s earliest friends.

Lady Russell to Lord Amberley

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 28, 1873

DEAREST JOHNNY,—... Rollo bought Mill’s autobiography, and I have read the greater part of it. Deeply interesting it is, and his lovableness comes out in it as much as his intellect—but deeply sad too, in more ways than one. I live in dread of the possible effect on you and Kate of the account of his education by his father—the principles right, the application so wofully wrong. Mill was a learned scholar, a great thinker, a good

man, partly in consequence, partly in spite of it.... Happily you have more Popes than one, as good for you as it was for the world in days of old. Happily, too, there's such a thing as love, *innate, intuitive, instinctive* (oh, horrible!), which is wise in proportion to its depth, and will be your best and safest guide. How strange Mill's utter silence about his mother I How beautiful and touching the pages about his wife! How melancholy to know that such high natures as his and hers generally fail to meet in close intimacy here below, and therefore live and die more than half unknown, waiting for the hereafter. God bless you, my very dear children.

Your loving MOTHER

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 9, 1873

Visit from Mr. Herbert Spencer, who stayed to dinner. Long, deep, interesting conversation; all amounting to “we know nothing,” he assuring me that the prospect of annihilation has no terrors for him; I feeling that without immortality life is “all a cheat,” and without a Father in heaven, right and wrong, love, conscience, joy, sorrow, are words without a meaning and the Universe, if governed at all, is governed by a malignant spirit who gives us hopes, and aspirations never to be fulfilled, affections to be wasted, a thirst for knowledge never to be quenched.

“1874 opened brightly and peacefully on our dear home,” she writes; but it was to prove one of the saddest years in their lives. Only some of the heavy trials and sorrows that they were called upon to bear from this time onward will be touched upon here. They were borne by Lord and Lady Russell with heroic courage and unfaltering faith.

Lady Russell to Lady Dunfermline

PEMBROKE LODGE, *February* 25, 1874

I am now just finishing the “Heart of Midlothian,” and with more intense admiration for it than ever—the beauty and naturalness of every word spoken by Jeanie and Effie *before* the last volume, of a great deal of Davie Deans, of many of the scenes scattered through the book are, I think, not to be surpassed. More tenderness and depth and heart-breakingness I should say than in any of Sir Walter’s.... I turned to Sir Walter from “The Parisians.” I doubt whether I shall finish it, a false, glittering, disagreeable atmosphere.

Lady Russell to Lord and Lady Amberley

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 2, 1874

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—... We had a charming visit from Sir Henry Taylor a few days ago, a long quiet real “crack” about many books and many authors, with a little touch of the events of the day-change of Ministry, causes of our utter defeat, which he thinks obscure, so do I—not creditable to the country, so do I—in so far as Disraeli can hardly be reckoned more trustworthy or consistent than Gladstone, and Gladstone’s untrustworthiness and inconsistency are supposed to have caused his overthrow. The Queen made Sir John Cowell write me a note to find out whether John would be disposed to go to the great banquet next Tuesday and sleep at Windsor. Kindly done of her—of course he declines. I read Herbert Spencer on “The Bias of Patriotism,” yesterday—much of it truly excellent. To-day I am at “Progress” in the Essays ... of which I have read several here and there. Whenever I have the feeling that *I*, not Herbert Spencer, have written what I am reading, I have the delightful sensation of complete agreement and unqualified admiration of his (or *my*) wisdom. When I have

not that feeling, I stop to consider, but even then have sometimes the candour to come to his conclusions;

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while at some passages, less frequent, I inwardly exclaim, “I never did, I do not now, and I never shall agree.” The want of what Sir Henry Taylor calls “the spiritual instinct” is striking in him. It is strange to turn to him as I have done from “Memorials of a Quiet Life,” which raises me into an atmosphere of heavenly calmness and joy, or ought to do so, although nobody ever felt the trials and sorrows of life more keenly than Mrs. Hare....

Good-bye, dearest children, your pets [86] are as well and as dear as pets can be.

Your loving, MOTHER.

[86] Rachel and Bertrand, who stayed for the winter at Pembroke Lodge while their parents were abroad.

In April Lady Russell lost her sister, Lady Dunfermline, who died in Rome. In May, Lord and Lady Russell’s second son, who was dearly loved for his generous and noble nature, was seized with dangerous illness. He lived, but never recovered. In the summer, Lady Amberley and her little daughter Rachel, who was only six years old, died of diphtheria within a few days of each other.

There is a touching reference to Lord Russell in a letter, written many years after his death, from Miss Elliot, daughter of the Dean of Bristol, to Lady Russell.

One of the very last times I saw him you were out, and he sent word that he would see me when he knew I was at the door; when he literally bowed his head and said, “The hand of the Lord has been very heavy on us—very heavy,” and spoke of little Rachel. I never remember being more touched and awed by the reverence I felt for him.

Queen Victoria to Lady Russell [87]

WINDSOR CASTLE, *June* 29, 1874

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—I cannot remain silent without writing to express to you my deep and sincere sympathy with you both, and especially with your poor son on this most sad event, which has deprived him of his wife, and his little children (whom I saw so lately) of an affectionate mother, in the very prime of life! I saw the sad announcement in the papers this morning and could hardly believe it, never having heard even of her illness. This sad event will, I know, be a terrible blow to you, and to Lord Russell, and I know that *you have* had much sorrow and anxiety lately. Dear Lady Russell, I have known you both too long not to feel the truest and deepest interest in all that concerns you and yours—in weal and woe—and I would not delay a moment in writing to express this to you. You will, I know, look for support and for comfort where

alone it can be found, and I pray that God may support and comfort you and your poor bereaved son.

Ever yours affectionately,

V.R.

I should be very grateful if you would let me have any details of poor Lady Amberley's illness and death.

[87] On several occasions Lord Russell had been prevented by the state of his health from accepting invitations to Windsor. In April, 1874, he and Lady Russell were touched by the Queen's kindness in coming to visit them at Pembroke Lodge, and she had then seen Lord Amberley's children.

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Queen Victoria to Lady Russell

WINDSOR CASTLE, *July* 3, 1874

DEAREST LADY RUSSELL,—Your two sad and touching letters have affected me deeply, and I thank you much for writing to me. It is too dreadful that the dear little girl whose bright eyes and look of health I so well remember at Pembroke Lodge should also be taken. May God support your poor unhappy son, for whom your heart must bleed, and whose agony of grief and bereavement seems almost too much to bear. But if he will but trust our Father in Heaven, and feel all is sent in love, though he may have to go through months and years of the bitterest sufferings, and of anguish indescribable, he will find peace and resignation and comfort come at last—when it seems farthest. *I* know this myself. For you, dear Lady Russell and dear Lord Russell, I do feel so deeply. Your trials have been so great lately.... I shall be really grateful if you would write to me again to say how Lord Russell bears this new blow, and how your poor son Amberley is. Agatha, who is so devoted a daughter, will, I am sure, do all she can now to help and comfort you, but she will be deeply distressed herself. And poor dear Lady Clarendon is dying I fear, and poor Emily Russell only just confined, and unable to go and see her. It is dreadful.

With fervent prayers that your health may not suffer, and that you may be mercifully supported.

Ever yours affectionately,

V.R.

Lord Russell to Lady Minto

PEMBROKE LODGE, *July* 3, 1874

MY DEAR NINA,—We are struck down by the death of my dear pet, Rachel, who was taken from us to stay with her parents at Ravenscroft. It was but too natural that Kate should wish to have her child with her, but the event is heart-breaking—such a darling, so bright, so pretty.

> “Elle a dure ce que durent les roses,
> L’espace d’un matin.”

I am always touched by those French verses, and now I apply them tearfully.

Ever yours affectionately,

RUSSELL

In the summer of 1874 Lord Russell took Aldworth, Tennyson's beautiful home near Haslemere, where they remained for some months.

Lady Russell to Lord Amberley

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE, *November* 10, 1874

We have been going on in a happy humdrum way since I last wrote—humdrum as regards events, and all the happier that it should be so—but with no lack of delightful occupation and delightful conversation, and that intimate interchange of thought which makes home life so much fuller than society life. However, it would not do to go on long cut off from the world and its ways and from the blessing of the society of real friends, which unluckily can't be had without intermixture of wearisome acquaintances.

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Rollo's reader is reading Molesworth's "History of England for the last Forty Years," and Agatha takes advantage and listens, and I read it by myself, and as your father knows it all without reading it and likes to be talked to about it, we have been living a good deal in the great events of that period, and we find it a relief to turn from the mazy though deeply interesting flood of metaphysics which this age pours upon the world, to facts and events which also have their philosophy, and a deep one too.

PEMBROKE LODGE, December 28, 1874

Finished "Life of Prince Albert." It is seldom that a revelation of the inner life of Princes would raise the mind to a higher region than before—although we all know that they *have* an inner and a real life through the tinsels and the trappings in which we see them. But this book can hardly fail to raise any mind, warm any heart, brace any soul. Would that we all, in all conditions of life, kept truth and duty ever before us, as he did even amid the pettinesses of a Court—the solemn trifles of etiquette which would have stifled the nobleness of a less noble nature. Would that all Princes had a Stockmar, [88] but there are not many Stockmars in the world; if there were, there would soon not be many Princes of the kind which now abounds, beings cut off from equality, friendship, freedom, by what in our supreme folly we call the "necessary" pomp and fetters of a Court. Noble as Prince Albert was, those things did him harm, and as Lady Lyttelton says, nobody but the organ knew what was in him.... The Queen appears in a charming light—truthfulness, humility, unbounded love for him.

[88] "One of the best friends of the Queen and the Prince Consort was Baron Stockmar. This old nobleman, who had known the English Court since the days of George III, and loved Prince Albert like a son, was a man of sturdy independence, fearlessly outspoken, and regarded with affectionate confidence both by Queen Victoria and her Consort."—-*Daily News*, May 7, 1910. This was what Lady Russell felt about him; his fearless outspokenness at Court always impressed her.

Lady Russell to Lord Amberley

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 29, 1874

M. d'Etchegoyen [89] has given me Mill's three essays. I have read "Nature," a great deal of which I like much, but were it to be read by the inhabitant of some other planet, he would have a very false notion of this one; for Mill dwells almost entirely on the ugly and malevolent side of Nature, leaving out of sight the beautiful and benevolent side—-whereas both abound, and suggest the notion of two powers at strife for the government of the world. If you bring the "Conscious Machine Controversy," I may read it, although I feel very uncharitable to the hard, presumptuous unwisdom of some modern metaphysics.

[89] The Comte and Comtesse d'Etchegoyen (*nee* Talleyrand) were intimate friends of Lord and Lady Russell. He was a French Republican, who had been obliged to leave Paris at the *Coup d'Etat*.

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Lady Russell to Lord Amberley

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 28, 1875

This is our Agatha's birthday, and the spirit moves me to write to you. Every marked day, whether marked by sorrow or by joy, turns my heart, if possible, more than usual to you, and makes me feel more keenly how all the joy and perfect happiness once yours has been turned to bitter sorrow and desolation. I find it is far, far more difficult to bear grief for one's children than for oneself, and sometimes my heart "has been like to break" as I have followed you in thought on your long and dreary journey, and remembered what your companionship was when last you went to the sunny South, to so many of the same places. You have indeed been sorely tried, my child, and you have not—would that I could give it to you—the one and only rock of refuge and consolation, of faith in the wisdom and mercy of a God of love. But I trust in Him for you, and I know that though clouds hide Him from your sight, He will care for you and not forsake you—and even here on earth I look forward to much peaceful happiness for you, in your children, in books, in nature, in duties zealously done, in the love and sympathy of many—"Mutter Treu ist ewig neu," and that you may find some rest to your aching heart in that Mutter Treue, which is always hovering round you, wherever you are, and to which every day seems to add fresh strength and renewed longing to give you comfort, is my daily, nightly hope and prayer. May this letter find you well and cheerful and able to enjoy the loveliness of sea and sky and mountain; if so, I know it will not sadden you to get this drop out of the ocean of my thoughts about you—-thoughts which the freshness of the wounds makes it intensely difficult for me to utter.... Kiss my two precious little boys and keep us in their memory. Is Bertrand as full of fun and merriment as he used to be? Poor pets! they look to you for all the tenderness of father and mother combined in order to be as happy as children ought to be. Give it them largely, my child, as it is in your nature to do.... God bless you all.

In August, 1875, Lady Russell notes in her diary that her husband had written a letter to the *Times* giving his support to the Herzegovina insurgents. During the few years preceding 1876 he had become convinced that the days of Turkish misrule in the Christian provinces must be ended. [90] He frequently spoke with indignation of the systematic murders contrived by the Turkish Government and officials, and felt that the cause of the oppressed Christians deserved support, and that the time for upholding the rule of the Sultan as a cardinal principle in our policy had passed. He threw himself with the greatest heartiness into a movement for the aid of the insurgents. Though in his eighty-third year he was the first British statesman to break with the past and to bless the uprising of liberty in the near East. In the following letter, written from Caprera on September 17, 1875, the generous sympathy between him and Garibaldi found fresh expression.

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[90] In 1874 he wrote that from Adrianople to Belgrade all government should be in the hands of the Christians.

MON ILLUSTRE AMI,—En associant votre grand nom au bien-faiteurs des Chretiens opprimes par le Gouvernement Turc, vous avez ajoute un bien precieux bijou a la couronne humanitaire qui ceint votre noble front. En 1860 votre parole sublime sonna en faveur des Rayahs Italiens, et l'Italie n'est plus une expression geographique. Aujourd'hui vous plaidez la cause des Rayahs Turcs, plus malheureux encore. C'est une cause qui vaincra comme la premiere, et Dieu benira vos vieux ans.... Je baise la main a votre precieuse epouse, et suis pour la vie votre devoue G. GARIBALDI. [91]

[91] "MY ILLUSTRIOUS FRIEND,—In associating your great name with the benefactors of the Christians oppressed by the Turkish Government, you have added a most precious jewel to the crown of humanity which encircles your noble brow. In 1860 your sublime word was spoken in favour of the Italian Rayahs, and Italy is no longer only a geographical expression. To-day you plead the cause of the Turkish Rayahs, even more unhappy. It is a cause which will conquer like the first, and God will bless your old age. I kiss the hand of your dear wife, and remain for life your devoted G. GARIBALDI."

About a year later Lady Russell writes: "Great meetings at the Guildhall and Exeter Hall—fine spirit-stirring speech of Fawcett at the last. The feeling of the nation makes me proud, as it does to remember that John was the first to foresee the magnitude of the coming storm, when the first grumblings were heard in Herzegovina—the first to feel sympathy with the insurgents.... Many a nation may be roused to a sense of its own wrongs, but to see a whole people fired with indignation for the wrongs of another and a remote country, with no selfish afterthought, no possible prospect of advantage to what are called 'British Interests,' is grand indeed."

The last entry calls to mind a passage by Mr. Froude in the Life of Lord Beaconsfield [92]:

"The spirit of a great nation called into energy on a grand occasion is one of the noblest of human phenomena. The pseudo-national spirit of Jingoism is the meanest and the most dangerous."

[92] "Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield," J.A. Froude, p. 251.

At the beginning of 1876 Lord Russell still retained so much health and vigour that his doctor spoke of him as being in some respects "like a man in the prime of life." But another great sorrow now befell them. Their eldest son, Lord Amberley, died on January 9th. He was only thirty-three. In his short life he had shown great independence of mind and unusual ability. His two boys [93] now came to live permanently at Pembroke Lodge. Something of his character may be gathered from the following letter from Dr. Jowett, who had known him well at Oxford.

Professor Jowett to Lady Russell

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January 14, 1876

I am grieved to hear of the death of Lord Amberley; I read it by accident in the newspaper of yesterday. I fear it must be a terrible blow both to you and Lord Russell.

I will not intrude upon your sorrow, but I would like to tell you what I thought of him. He was one of the best men I ever knew—most truthful and disinterested. He was not of the world, and therefore not likely to be popular with the world. He had chosen a path which was very difficult, and could hardly have been carried out in practical politics. I think that latterly he saw this and was content to live seeking after the truth in the companionship of his wife, whose memory I shall always cherish. Some persons may grieve over them because they had not the ordinary hopes and consolations of religion. This does not add to my sorrow for them except in so far as it deprived them of sympathy and happiness while they were living. It must inevitably happen in these times, when everything is made the subject of inquiry with many good persons. God does not regard men with reference to their opinion about Himself or about a future world, but with reference to what they really are. In holding fast to truth and righteousness they held the greater part of what we mean by belief in God. No person's religious opinions affect the truth either about themselves or others. One who said to me what I have said to you about your son's remarkable goodness (while condemning his opinions) was Lady Augusta Stanley,[94] who herself, I fear, has not long to live.

[93] Frank (afterwards Earl Russell), who was then ten years old, and Bertrand, three years old.

[94] Wife of Dean Stanley.

Dean Stanley (Dean of Westminster) to Lady Russell

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—Will you allow one broken heart to say a word of sympathy to another?—the life of my life is ebbing away—the hope of your life is gone. She, I trust, will find in the fountain of all Love the love in which she has trusted on earth. He, I trust, will find in the fountain of all Light the truth after which he sought on earth. May God help us both in His love.

Ever yours most truly,

A.P. STANLEY

Queen Victoria to Lady Russell

OSBORNE, *January* 11, 1876

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—My heart bleeds for you. A new and very heavy blow has fallen upon you, who were already so sorely tried! Most deep and sincere is my sympathy with you and Lord Russell, and I cannot say how I feel for you. It is so terrible to see one's children go before one! You will be a mother to the orphans and the fatherless, as I know how kind and loving you were always to them.

Trusting that your health will not suffer, and asking you to remember me to Agatha, who will be a great comfort to you, as she has ever been, believe me always,

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Yours affectionately,

V.R.

In March they began once more to see their friends. “Seeing those I have not yet seen,” she writes, “is like meeting them after years—so changed is our world.”

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 15, 1876

The dear old beech-tree in the wood blown down, and with it countless recollections of happy hours under its shade with merry boys climbing it above our heads, and little Agatha playing at our feet, and her elder sisters chatting with us and looking for nests and flowers. All, all gone. The bitter gales of sorrow have blown down our fair hopes and turned our joys to sorrow. Poor old beech-tree! Like us, it had lost its fair boughs; like it, we shall soon lay down our stripped and shattered stems.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 25, 1876

The loveliness of early spring—its nameless, countless tints, its music and its flowers, never went deeper into my soul—but oh! the happy springtide of life, where is that?

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January 27*, 1877

Do not grieve too much over all our trials, dear Lotty. We have not long to bear them now, and all will be made clear by and by. All the sorrows of all the world will be seen in their true light, and tears will be wiped from all eyes for ever. I often think, though I try to drive away the thought, how unspeakably soothing and happy it would have been to look back upon blows as must fall to the lot of all who live long, instead of to a life of many strange and unexpected and terrible shocks of many kinds. But oftener, far oftener, I feel the brightness and blessedness of my lot; so bright and so blessed in many wonderful ways; and never, never at any moment would I have exchanged it for another. Dearest Lotty, your loving letter has brought all this upon you, and it shall go with all its selfishness to Laverstoke, and not into the fire, where I am inclined to put it.... God bless you, dear Lotty.

Your loving sister,

F.R.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 4, 1878

I am reading the third volume of Prince Albert, and love and admire him more and more—but am very angry with the book as regards John: the unfairness from omission of all particulars which he alone could have given with regard to his resignation on Roebuck's motion, and his non-resignation after Vienna, is something I cannot forgive.

Early in this year, 1878, Lady Russell writes of a dinner-party at Lord Selborne's:

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Agatha and I dined in town, with the Selbornes. I between Lord Selborne and Gladstone, who was as usual most agreeable and most eloquent, giving life and fervour to conversation whatever was the subject. “The Eastern Question,” the “Life of Prince Albert,” the comedy of “Diplomacy,” the different degrees of “parliamentary courage” in different statesmen, *etc*. He said that in his opinion Sir Robert Peel, my husband, and, “I must give the devil his due,” Disraeli, were the three statesmen whom he had known who had the most “parliamentary courage.”

In the summer of 1877 Lord Russell had taken a house overlooking the sea near Broadstairs. But he was falling into a gradual decline, the consequence of great age, and after they came home from Broadstairs, he never again left Pembroke Lodge.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 11, 1878

Do not think too much of the pain to me, but of the mercy of there being none to him, in this gradual extinction of a mind which gave light to so many, of affections which made home so happy. My worst pain is over—was over long ago—the pain of first acknowledging to myself my own loneliness, without the guide, the example, the support, which so long were mine—without those golden joys of perfect companionship which made the hours fly when we sat and talked together on many an evening of blessed memory, or strolled together among our trees and our flowers, or snatched a few moments together from his days and nights of noble toil in London. All this is over, all this and much more, but gratitude that it *has been* remains, and the bright hope of a renewal of companionship hereafter gives strength and courage for present duties and passing trials.

Mr. George W.E. Russell, in the closing passage of an article on his uncle, [95] wrote of these last years of his life: “... Thus in peace and dignity that long life of public and private virtue neared its close; in a home made bright by the love of friends and children, and tended by the devotion of her who for more than five-and-thirty years had been the good angel of her husband’s house.”

[95] *Contemporary Review*, December, 1889.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 19, 1878

I have just been sitting with my dearest husband; he has said precious words such as I did not expect ever to hear from him, for his mind is seldom, very seldom clear. We were holding one another’s hands: “I hope I haven’t given you much trouble.” “How, dearest?” “In watching over me.” Then by and by he said, “I have made mistakes, but in all I did my object was the public good.” Again, “I have sometimes seemed cold to my friends—but it was not in my heart.” He said he had enjoyed his life. I said, “I hope you

enjoy it now." He said, "Yes, except that I am too much confined to my bed.... I'm very old—I'm eighty-five."

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He then talked of his birthday being in July. I told him it was in August, but our wedding-day was in July, and it would be thirty-seven years next July since we were married. He said, “Oh, I’m so glad we’ve passed it so happily together.” I said I had not always been so good to him as I ought to have been. “Oh yes, you have, very good indeed.” At another moment he said, “I’m quite ready to go now.” Asked him where to? “To my grave, to my death.” He also said, “Do you see me sometimes placing my hands in this way?” (he was clasping them together). “That always means devotion—that I am asking God to be good to me.” His voice was much broken by tears as he said these things.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *April* 20, 1878

Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone to tea. Both most cordial and kind. Mr. Gladstone in his most agreeable mood. Eastern Question only slightly touched. Other subjects: increase of drunkenness; Northumberland election, which has raised his spirits, whether Albert Grey be returned or not; Life of Prince Albert, whom he admires heartily, but who according to him (and John) did not understand the British Constitution. Called Stockmar a “mischievous old prig.” Said “Liberty is never safe,” that even in this country an unworthy sovereign might endanger her even now. John sent down to say he wished to see them. I took them to him for a few minutes—happily he was clear in his mind—and said to Mr. Gladstone, “I’m sorry you are not in the Ministry,” and kissed her affectionately, and was so cordial to both that they were greatly touched.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *May* 9, 1878

Great day. Nonconformist deputation presented address to John on the fiftieth anniversary of Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Alas! that he could not see them. All cordial and friendly, and some with strikingly good countenances. Edmond Fitzmaurice happened to call, stayed, and spoke admirably. Lord Spencer also called just before they came to congratulate him, but I stupidly did not think of asking him to stay. Those of the deputation who spoke did so extremely well. It was a proud and a sad day. We had hoped some time ago that he might perhaps see the deputation for a moment in his room, but he was too ill for that to be possible.

Lord Russell died on May 28, 1878, at Pembroke Lodge.

Queen Victoria to Lady Russell

BALMORAL, *May* 30, 1878

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—It was only yesterday afternoon I learnt through the papers that your dear husband had left this world of sorrows and trials peacefully, and full of years, the night before, or I would have telegraphed or written sooner! You will believe

that I truly regret an old friend of forty years' standing, and whose personal kindness in trying and anxious times I shall *ever* remember. "Lord John," as I knew him best, was one of my first and most distinguished Ministers,

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and his departure recalls many eventful times. To you, dear Lady Russell, who were ever one of the most devoted of wives, this must be a terrible blow, though you must have for some time been prepared for it. But one is such trials and sorrows of late years that I most truly sympathize with you. Your dear and devoted daughter will, I know, be the greatest possible comfort to you, and I trust that your grandsons will grow up to be all that you could wish.

Believe me always, yours affectionately,

V.R.I.

Mr. John Bright to Lady Russell

June 1, 1878

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—... What I particularly observed in the public life of Lord John—you once told me you liked his former name and title—was a moral tone, a conscientious feeling, something higher and better than is often found in the guiding principle of our most active statesmen, and for this I always admired and reverenced him. His family may learn from him, his country may and will cherish his memory. You alone can tell what you have lost....

Ever very sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT

Lady Minto to Lady Russell

June 4, 1878

I have been thinking of you all day, and indeed through many hours of the night.... I rather wished to hear that the Abbey was to have been his resting place—but after all it matters little since his abiding place is in the pages of English history.... What none could thoroughly appreciate except those who lived in his intimacy was the perfect simplicity which made him the most easily amused of men, ready to pour out his stores of anecdote to old and young—to discuss opinions on a level with the most humble of interlocutors, and take pleasure in the commonest forms of pleasantness—a fine day, a bright flower. Nor do I think that the outside world understood from what depth of feeling the tears rose to his eyes when tales of noble conduct or any high sentiment touched some responsive chord—nor how much “poetic fire” lay under that *calm,* not cold manner.... I remember often going down to you when London was full of some political anger against him—when personalities and bitterness were rife—and returning *from* you with the feeling of having been in another world, so entire was the absence of such bitterness, so gentle and peaceful were the impressions I carried away.

Lady Russell went with her family early in July to St. Fillans, in Perthshire, for a few months of perfect quiet among the Scotch lakes and mountains. Queen Victoria's kindness in asking her to remain at Pembroke Lodge was a great comfort to her.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *June* 30, 1878

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Just a word with you, my own Lotty, before leaving home. Oh the blessing of being still able to call it home, darkened for ever as it is, for the multiplying memories with which it is thronged make it dearer as well as sadder every day of my life! Lotty, shall I ever believe that he has left me, quite left me, never to return? Will the fearful silence ever cease to startle me? Whenever I came in from a walk or a drive I used to know almost before I opened his door, by the sound of his voice, or of *something,* whether all was well with him, and now there is only that deadly silence. And yet, I often feel if I had but courage to go in, surely I *must* find him, surely he *must* be waiting for me and wanting me. But how foolish to talk of any *one* form of this unutterable blank, which meets me at every turn, intertwined with everything I say or do, and taking a new shape every moment, and the yearning and the aching which have been my portion for four years—-the yearning for my other lost loved ones, for my dear, dear boys, seems more terrible than ever now that this too has come upon me.... I pass my husband's sitting-room window—there are the roses he loved so well, hanging over them in all their summer beauty, but he does not call me to give him one. I come in, and there on the walls of my room are pictures of the three, but not one of them answers me—silence, nothing but deadly silence! I know all is well, and I feel in my inmost heart that this last sorrow is a blessed one, saving us from far worse, and taking him to his rest, and I never for a moment forget what treasures beyond price are left to my old age still.

CHAPTER XIII

1878-98

Lady Russell survived her husband nearly twenty years. From the time of Lord Russell's death in May, 1878, till 1890, she kept no diary, but not long before her death she wrote for her children a few recollections of some of the events during those twelve years.

In May, 1880, Lady Victoria Villiers died, leaving a widowed husband and many children. Her death was a great sorrow to Lady Russell, who wrote of her as "a perfect wife and mother."

In the summer of 1883 her son Rollo bought a place—Dunrozel—near Haslemere, and from this time till 1891 Lady Russell spent a few months every year at Dunrozel.[96] In 1891 and 1892 she took a house on Hindhead—some miles from Haslemere—for a few months. She enjoyed and loved the beautiful wild heather country, which reminded her of Scotland, but after 1892 she felt that home was best for her, and never again left Pembroke Lodge.

[96] They named it Dunrozel after Rozel in Normandy, supposed to be the original home of the Russells.

In 1885 the marriage of her son Rollo to Miss Alice Godfrey was a great happiness to her. But in little more than a year, soon after the birth of a son, Mrs. Rollo Russell died, and again Lady Russell suffered deeply, for she always found the sorrows of her children harder to bear than her own.

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To retire more and more from the world of many engagements and important affairs was easy to her, easier than it proves to many who have figured there with less distinction. Playing a prominent part in that world does not make people happy; but, as a rule, it prevents them from being contented with anything else. It was not so with her; in the days most crowded with successes and excitements her thoughts kept flying home. She had always felt that a quiet, busy family life was the one most natural to her. When she was a girl at Minto, helping to educate her younger brothers and sisters, she had written in her diary:

August 26, 1836

Chiefly unto children, O Lord, do I feel myself called; in them I see Thy image reflected more pure than in anything else in this sinful though beautiful world, and in serving them my love to Thee increases.

Her wish was fulfilled to an unusual degree. One of a large family of brothers and sisters, she was still helping in the education of the younger ones when she married, and her marriage at once brought her the care of a young family; soon, too, children of her own; while her old age brought her the charge of successive grandchildren. During the lifetime of Lord and Lady Amberley their children often spent many months at Pembroke Lodge while their parents were abroad, and when both father and mother had died the two boys came to live with their grandparents. Ten years later her youngest son's boy was brought to her on the day of his mother's death, when he was two months old, and remained with her till her son's second marriage in 1891. The children of her stepdaughters were also loving grandchildren to her, and often came for long visits to Pembroke Lodge.

Lady Russell had sometimes thought that when days of leisure came, she would give some of her time to literary work, and write reminiscences of the many interesting men and women she had known and the stirring events she had lived through; but the unexpected and daily cares and duties which came upon her made this impossible. [97] She was one who would never neglect the living needs of those around her, and she gave her time and thoughts to the care of her grandchildren with glad and loving devotion.

[97] The only book Lady Russell published was "Family Worship"; a small volume of selections from the Bible and prayers for daily use. It was first published in 1876.

One of her greatest pleasures was to see her own ideals and enthusiasms reflected in the young; and next to the care of her family the prosperity of the village school at Petersham was perhaps nearest her heart. It grew and flourished through her devotion. In 1891 it was generously taken over by the British and Foreign School Society, but the change made no difference to her interest nor to the time she gave to it. The warm affection of the people of Petersham was a great happiness to her; after

long illness and enforced absence from the village she wrote to her daughter: “You can’t think what good it did me to see a village friend again.”

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The feeling among the villagers may be gathered from two brief passages in letters written after her death: a gardener in Petersham alluded to her as “our much-loved friend, Countess Russell,” and another man—who had been educated at Petersham School—wrote: “She was really like a mother to many of we ‘Old Scholars.’”

Lady Russell’s letters will show that her interest in politics remained as keen as ever to the end; and she eagerly watched the changes which affected Ireland. To the end of her life she retained the fervour of her youthful Radicalism, and with advancing years her religious opinions became more and more broad. To her there was no infallibility in any Bible, any prophet, any Church. With an ever-deepening reverence for the life and teaching of Jesus, she yet felt that “The highest Revelation is not made by Christ, but comes directly from the Universal Mind to our minds.” [98] Her last public appearance in Richmond was at the opening of the new Free Church, on April 16, 1896, which she had joined some years before as being the community holding views nearer to her own than any other.

[98] Rev. F.W. Robertson, of Brighton. Sermons, 1st Series.

There is a side of Lady Russell’s mind which her letters do not adequately represent. She was a great reader, and in her letters (written off with surprising rapidity) she does not often say much about the books she was so fond of discussing in talk. Among novelists, Sir Walter Scott was perhaps the one she read most often; Jane Austen too was a favourite; but she also much enjoyed many of the later novelists, especially Charles Dickens and George Eliot.

In poetry her taste was in some respects the taste of an earlier generation; she could not join, for instance, in the depreciation of Byron, nor could she sympathize with the unbounded admiration for Keats which she met with among the young. Milton, Cowper, Burns, Byron, and Longfellow were among those oftenest read, but Shakespeare always remained supreme, and as the years went by her wonder and admiration seemed only to grow stronger and deeper with every fresh reading of his greatest plays; and the intervals without some Shakespeare reading, either aloud or to herself, were short and rare. She had not an intimate knowledge of Shelley, but in the later years of her life she became deeply impressed by the beauty and music of his poetry, which she liked best to hear read aloud.

Tennyson she loved, and latterly also Browning, with protests against his obscurity and his occasionally most unmusical English. The inspiration of his brave and optimistic philosophy she felt strongly. She was extremely fond of reading Dante, and she was better acquainted with German and Italian poetry than most cultivated women. But though she read much and often in the works of famous writers, this did not prevent her keeping abreast with the literature of the day. She was strongly attracted by speculative

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books, not too technical, and by the works of theologians whose views were broad and tolerant of doubt. In 1847 she mentions reading some of Dr. Channing's writings "with the greatest delight"; and some years afterwards she wrote: "Began 'Life of Channing'; interesting in the highest degree—an echo of all those high and noble thoughts of which this earth is not yet worthy, but which I firmly believe will one day reign on it supreme." In later years she was deeply impressed by the writings of Dr. Martineau, and read many of his books. But she was not interested in philosophical inquiry for its own sake; it was the importance of the moral and religious issues at stake in such discussions that attracted her. History and biography it was natural she should read eagerly, and it was characteristic of her to praise and condemn actions long past with an intensity such as is usually excited by contemporary events. Until a few years before her death she rose early to secure a space of time for reading and meditation before the duties of the day began. Unless ill-health could be pleaded, fiction and light reading were banished from the morning hours. She believed in strict adherence to such self-imposed sumptuary regulations, whether they applied to the body or to the pleasures of the mind.

In the course of her long life she became personally acquainted with nearly all the principal writers of the Victorian era, and some of them she knew well.

Among the earliest friends of Lord and Lady John Russell were Sydney Smith, Thomas Moore, and Macaulay. There is a note in verse written by Lady John to Samuel Rogers, which will serve at least to suggest how readily her fancy and good spirits might run into rhyme on the occasion of some family rejoicing or for a children's play.

To Mr. Rogers, who was expected to breakfast and forgot to come

CHESHAM PLACE, 1843

When a poet a lady offends
  Is it prose her forgiveness obtains?
And from Rogers can less make amends
  Than the humblest and sweetest of strains?

In glad expectation our board
  With roses and lilies we graced;
But alas! the bard kept not his word,
  He came not for whom they were placed.

Sad and silent our toast we bespread,
  At the empty chair looked we and sighed;

All insipid tea, butter, and bread,
  For the salt of his wit was denied.

Now in wrath we acknowledge how well
  He the “Pleasures of Memory” who drew,
For mankind from his magical shell
  Gives the “Pains of Forgetfulness” too.

Rogers wrote in answer:—

CARA, CARISSIMA, CRUDELISSIMA,—If such is to be the reward for my transgressions, what crimes shall I not commit before I die? I shall shoot Victoria to-day, and Louis Philippe to-morrow.

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> But to be serious, I am at a loss how to thank you as I ought. How I lament that I have hung my harp upon the willow!
>
> Yours ever,
>
> S.R.

In later years Thackeray and Charles Dickens were welcome guests, and the cordial friendship between Lord and Lady John and Dickens lasted till his death in 1870. Dickens said in a speech at Liverpool in 1869 that “there was no man in England whom he respected more in his public capacity, loved more in his private capacity, or from whom he had received more remarkable proofs of his honour and love of literature than Lord John Russell.”

Among poets, Tennyson and Browning were true friends; Longfellow also visited Pembroke Lodge, and impressed Lady Russell by his gentle and spiritual nature; and Lowell was one of her most agreeable guests. With Sir Henry Taylor, whose “Philip van Artevelde” she admired, the intercourse was, from her youth to old age, intimate and affectionate.

Mr. Lecky, a faithful friend, gave a picture of the society at Pembroke Lodge, which may be quoted here:

For some years after Lord Russell’s retirement from ministerial life he gathered around him at Pembroke Lodge a society that could hardly be equalled—certainly not surpassed—in England. In the summer Sunday afternoons there might be seen beneath the shade of those majestic oaks nearly all that was distinguished in English politics, and much that was distinguished in English literature, and few eminent foreigners visited England without making a pilgrimage to the old statesman. [99]

[99] “Life of Lord John Russell,” by Stuart J. Reid, p. 351.

Mr. Frederic Harrison was one of Lady Russell’s best friends in the last years of her life, and her keen interest in the Irish Question brought her into close and intimate intercourse with Mr. Justin McCarthy, who knew her so well in these days of busy and sequestered old age that his recollections, given in the last chapter of this volume, are valuable.

Among the men of science she knew best were Sir Richard Owen, a near neighbour in Richmond Park, Sir Joseph Hooker, and Professor Tyndall, one of the most genial and delightful of her guests.

There is a passage in Sir Henry Taylor’s autobiography which speaks of her in earlier times, but it expresses an impression she made till her death on many who met her:

I have been rather social lately, ... and went to a party at Lord John Russell's, where I met the Archbishop of York.... A better meeting was with Lady Lotty Elliot, the one of the Minto Elliots who is now about the age that her elder sisters were when I first knew them some sixteen or eighteen years ago.... They are a fine set of girls and women, those Minto Elliots, full of literature and poetry and nature; and Lady John, whom I knew best in former days, is still very attractive to me; and now that she is relieved from the social toils of a First Minister's

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wife, I mean to renew and improve my relations with her, if she has no objection.... She is very interesting to me, as having kept herself pure from the world with a fresh and natural and not ungifted mind in the world's most crowded ways. I recollect some years ago going through the heart of the City, somewhere behind Cheapside, to have come upon a courtyard of an antique house, with grass and flowers and green trees growing as quietly as if it was the garden of a farm-house in Northumberland. Lady John reminds me of it.

The charm of her company, apart from the kindliness of her manner, lay in an immediate responsiveness to all that was going on around her, and the sense her talk and presence conveyed of a life controlled by a homely, dignified, strenuous tradition. It was the spontaneity of her sympathy which all her life long drew to her defenders, dispirited or hopeful, of struggling causes, and so many idealists, confident or resigned, shabby or admired. Any with a cause at heart, an end to aim at beyond personal ends, found in her a companion who seemed at once to understand how bitter were the checks or how important the triumphs they had met, and to them her company was a singular refreshment and inspiration, amid the polite or undisguised indifference of the world. She could listen with ardour; and if this sympathy was there for comparative strangers, still more was it at the service of those who possessed her affection. She reflected instantaneously their joys and troubles; indeed, she made both so much her own that those she loved were often tempted at first to hide their troubles from her. Such natures cannot usually disguise their emotions, and though she could conceal her own physical sufferings so as almost to mislead those with whom she lived, her feelings were plainly legible. If anything was said in her presence which pained her, her distress was visible in a moment; and as a beautiful consequence of this transparent expressiveness, her gaiety was infectious and her affection shone out upon those she loved with tenderest radiance.

* * * * *

After Lord Russell's death political events can no longer be used as a thread to connect her letters and other writings together; but the following passages, chosen over many years, will, it is hoped, give to those who never knew her some idea of her as she is remembered by those who did.

On Lady Georgiana Peel's first birthday after the death of her father Lady Russell sent her the following verses:

To GEORGY

For her Birthday, February 6, 1879.

TUNE: *"Lochnagar."*

What music so early, so gently awakes me,
And why as I listen these fast falling tears;
And what is the magic that so swiftly takes me
Far back on my road, o'er the dust of dead years?

Voice of the past, in thy sweetness and sadness
Thy magic enthralling, thy beauty and power,
Oh voice of the past! in thy deep holy sadness,
I know thee and yield to thee one little hour.

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Once more rings the birthday with merry young laughter,
  Our bairnies once more are around us at play;
Their little hearts reck not of what may come after,
  As lightly they weave the fresh flowers of to-day.

Now to thy father's loved hand gaily clinging,
  To ask for the kiss he stoops fondly to gi'e;
To his care-laden spirit once more thou art bringing
  The freshness of thine, bonny winsome wee Gee![100]

Thy rosy young cheek to my own thou art pressing,
Thy little arms twining around me I feel.
And thy Father in Heaven to thank for each blessing,
I see thee beside me in innocence kneel.

When the dread shadow of sickness is o'er me,
I see thee, a lassie all brightness and bloom;
Still, still through thy tears strewing blossoms before me,
Still watching beside me through silence and gloom.

* * * * *

Hushed now is the music! and hushed be my weeping
For days that return not and light that hath fled.
No more from their rest may I summon the sleeping,
Or linger to gaze on the years that are dead.

Fadeth my dream—and my day is declining,
But love lifts the gloamin' and smooths the rough way;
And I hail the bright midday o'er thee that is shining,
And think of a home that will ne'er pass away.

[100] The name she was called by in her childhood.

Early in 1879 Lady Russell began again to have more intercourse with her friends in London, and in May she went with her son and daughter to the Alexandra Hotel for a short stay in town. She writes in her Recollections:

In May (1879) we spent ten days at the Alexandra Hotel, in the midst of many kind friends and acquaintances. It was strange to be once more in "the crowd, the hum, the shock of men" as of old—and all so changed, so solitary within.... We there first saw Mr. Justin McCarthy—he has since become a true friend, and his companionship and conversation are always delightful; as with so warm a heart and so bright an intellect they could not fail to be.

In April, 1880, when Mr. Gladstone's candidature in Midlothian was causing the greatest excitement and enthusiasm, Lady Russell received this letter from Mrs. Gladstone.

120, GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH, *April* 4, 1880

MY DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—We are so much touched by your letter and all the warmth and kindness you have shown to ourselves and Mary and Herbert. How can I thank you enough? I see in your letter all the memories of the past, and that you can throw your kind heart into the present moment lovingly. The old precious memories only make you more alive to what is going on, as you think of *him* who had gone before and shown so noble an example to my husband. No doubt it did not escape you, words of my husband about Lord Russell.... All here goes on splendidly;

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the enthusiasm continues to increase, and all the returns have thrown us into a wild state of ecstasy and thankfulness. It is, indeed, a blessing passing all expectations, and I look back to all the time of anxiety beginning with the Bulgarian horrors, all my husband's anxious hard work of the past three or four years—how he was ridiculed and insulted—and now, thank God, we are seeing the extraordinary result of the elections, and listening to the goodness and greatness of the policy so shamefully slandered; righteous indignation has burst forth.... I loved to hear him saying aloud some of the beautiful psalms of thanksgiving as his mind became overwhelmed with gratitude and relieved with the great and good news. Thank you again and again for your letter.

Yours affectionately,

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

Sir Mount Stuart Grant Duff [101] to Lady Russell

June 8, 1883

As to the public questions at home—alas! I can say nothing but echo what you and some other wise people tell me. One is far too much *out* of the whole thing. I do not fear the Radical, I greatly fear the Radical, or crotchet-monger.... Your phrase about the division on the Affirmation Bill [102] rises to the dignity of a *mot,* and will be treasured by me as such. "The triumph of all that is worst in the name of all that is best."

[101] At that time Governor of Madras.

[102] In the April of 1881 Gladstone gave notice of an Affirmation Bill, to enable men like Mr. Bradlaugh to become members of Parliament without taking an oath which implied a belief in a Supreme Being. But it was not till 1883 that the Bill was taken up. On April 26th Gladstone made one of his most lofty and fervid speeches in support of the Bill, which, however, was lost by a majority of three.

Lady Russell to Lady Agatha Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *June,* 1883

... I have been regaling myself on Sydney Smith's Life and Letters—the wisdom and the wit, the large-hearted and wide-minded piety, the love of God and man set forth in word and deed, and the unlikeness to anybody else, make it delightful companionship.... I long to talk of things deep and high with you, but if I once began I should go on and on, and "of writing of letters there would be no end." That is a grand passage of Hinton's [on music]. I always feel that music means much more than just music, born of earth—joy and sorrow, agony and rapture, are so mysteriously blended in its glorious magic.

Lady Russell's Recollections

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In July, 1883, I went with Agatha to see Dunrozel for the first time ... I was simply enchanted—it was love at first sight, which only deepened year after year.... We had a good many pleasant neighbours; the Tennysons were more than pleasant, and welcomed us with the utmost cordiality, and we loved them all.At that time Professor Tyndall and Louisa [103] were almost the only inhabitants of Hindhead. They were not yet in their house, but till it was built and furnished lived in their "hut," where they used to receive us with the most cheering, as well as cheerful, friendliness.

[103] Mrs. Tyndall.

Lady Russell to Miss Lilian Blyth [104] *[Mrs. Wilfred Praeger]*

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, *November* 16, 1883

Your letter is just like you, and that means all that is dear and good and loving.... Indeed, past years are full of happy memories of you all, not on marked days only, but on all days. At my age, however, it is better to look forward to the renewal of all earthly ties and all earth's best joys in an enduring home, than to look back to the past—to the days before the blanks were left in the earthly home which nothing here below can ever fill, and this it is my prayer and my constant endeavour to do. We go home to dear Pembroke Lodge next Tuesday ... going there must always be a happiness to us all, yet this lovely little Dunrozel is not a place to leave without many a pang.

[104] Daughter of the Rev. F.C. Blyth, for many years curate at Petersham.

Lady Russell to Miss Buehler [105]

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December*, 1883

... I find my head will not bear more than a certain amount of writing without giddiness and dull headache ... and there are so *many* correspondents who must be answered; friends, relations, business people, that I am often quite bewildered; ... so, please, understand that I shall always write *when I can*, but not nearly always when I *would like* to do so. Go on letting yourself out whether sadly or happily, or in mingled sadness and happiness, and believe how very much I like to see into your thoughts and your heart as much as letters can enable me to do so.... As for Scotland, oh! Scotland, my own, my bonny Scotland! if you associate that best and dearest of countries with your present *ennui* and unhappiness, I shall turn my back upon you for good and all and give you up as a bad job! So make haste and tell me that you entirely separate the two things, and if you don't admire "mine own romantic town" and feel its beauty thrill through and through you, you must find the cause in anything rather than in Edinburgh itself! Such are my commands.... In the meantime let it be a consolation and a support to you to

remember that it is by trials and difficulties that our characters are raised, developed, strengthened, made more Christ-like.... Good-bye, good-bye. God bless you.

[105] Miss Buehler (who died some years ago) had been governess to Lady Russell's grandson Bertrand. She was Swiss, and only nineteen when she came, and Lady Russell gave her motherly care and affection.

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Lady Russell to Sir Henry Taylor

February 29, 1884

I have just been reading with painful interest “Memoires d’un Protestant condamne aux Galeres” in the days of that terribly little great man Louis XIV. I ask myself at every page, “Did man really so treat his fellow-man? or is it all historical nightmare?” I never can make the slightest allowance for persecutors on the ground that “they thought it right to persecute.” They had no business so to think.

Mr. Gladstone to Lady Russell

December 14, 1884

I thank you for and return Dr. Westcott’s interesting and weighty letter.... A very clever man, a Bampton lecturer, evidently writing with good and upright intention, sends me a lecture in which he lays down the qualities he thinks necessary to make theological study fruitful. They are courage, patience, and sympathy. He omits one quality, in my opinion even more important than any of them, and that is reverence. Without a great stock of reverence mankind, as I believe, will go to the bad....

During the strife and heat of the controversy on Home Rule, Lady Russell received the following letter from Mr. Gladstone:

10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,

June 10, 1886

MY DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—I am not less gratified than touched by your most acceptable note. It is most kind in you personally to give me at a critical time the assurance of your sympathy and approval. And I value it as a reflected indication of what would, I believe, have been the course, had he been still among us, of one who was the truest disciple of Mr. Fox, and was like him ever forward in the cause of Ireland, a right handling of which he knew lay at the root of all sound and truly Imperial policy. It was the more kind of you to write at a time when domestic trial has been lying heavily upon you. Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

W.E. GLADSTONE

Lady Russell to Lady Agatha Russell

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, *August* 30, 1886

... Our Sunday, mine especially, was a peaceful, lovely Sabbath—mine especially because I didn't go to any church built with hands, but held my silent, solitary worship in God's own glorious temple, with no walls to limit my view, no lower roof than the blue heavens over my head. The lawn, the green walk, the Sunday bench in the triangle, each and all seemed filled with holiness and prayer—sadness and sorrow. Visions of more than one beautiful past which those spots have known and which never can return, were there too; but the Eternal Love was around to hallow them....

Lady Russell to Miss Buehler

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 24, 1886

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MY DEAREST DORA,—I am afraid you will say that I have forgotten you and your most loving and welcome birthday letter, but as I know you will not *think* it, I don't so very much mind. Nobody at seventy-one and with many still to love and leave on earth, can hail a birthday with much gladness.... The *real* sadness to me of birthdays, and of all marked days, is in the bitterly disappointing answer I am obliged to make to myself to the question: "Am I nearer to God than a year ago?" ... I never answered your long-ago letter about your doubts and difficulties and speculations on those subjects which are of deepest import to us all, yet upon which it sometimes seems that we are doomed to work our minds in vain—to seek, and *not* to find—to exult one moment in the fullness of bright hope and the coming fulfilment of our highest aspirations, and the next to grope in darkness and say, "Was it not a beautiful dream, and only a dream? Is it not too good to be true that we are the children of a loving Father who stretches out His hands to guide us to Himself, who has spoken to us in a thousand ways from the beginning of the world by His wondrous works, by the unity of creation, by the voices of our fellow-creatures, by that voice, most inspired of all, that life and death most beautiful and glorious of all, which 'brought life and immortality to light,' and chiefly by that which we feel to be immortal within us—*love*—the beginning and end of God's own nature, the supreme capability which He has breathed into our souls?" No, it is *not* too good to be true. Nothing perishes—not the smallest particle of the most worthless material thing. Is immortality denied to the one thing most worthy of it?I sent you "The Utopian," because I thought some of the little essays would fall in with all that filled your mind, and perhaps help you to a spirit of hopefulness and confidence which *will* come to you and abide with you, I am sure. You will soon receive another book written by several Unitarians, of which I have only read very little as yet, but which seems to me full of strength and comfort and holiness.... Good-bye, and God bless you.

Your ever affectionate,

F. RUSSELL

Lady Charlotte Portal to Lady Russell

January 26, 1887

DEAREST FANNY,—I wonder if you are quite easy in your conscience, or whatever mechanism takes the place with you of that rococo old article. Do you think you have behaved to me as an elder ought?—to me, a poor young thing, looking for and sadly requiring the guidance of my white-headed sister? Our last communications were at Christmas-time—a month ago. Are you all well? Are you all entirely at the feet of the dear baby boy? [106] Or have your republican principles begun to rebel against his autocratic sway? ... I have been amusing myself with an obscure author named William Shakespeare, and

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enjoying him *immensely*. Amusing myself is not the right expression, for I have been in the tragedies only. I had not read “Othello” for ages. How wonderful, great, and beautiful and painful it is (oh dear, why is it so coarse?). Then I also read “Lear” and “Henry VIII,” and being delightfully ignorant I had the great interest of reading the same period (Henry VIII) in Holinshed, and in finding Katharine’s and Wolsey’s speeches there! Then I have tried a little Ben Jonson and Lord Chesterfield’s letters. What a worldling, and what a destroyer of a young mind that man was. Can you tell me how the son turned out? I cannot find any information about him. The language is delightful, and I wish I could remember any of his expressions.... Now give me a volume of Pembroke Lodge news in return for this. Public matters, the fear of war, the arming of all nations, make me sick at heart. How wonderful and admirable the conduct of that poor friendless little Bulgaria has been. Then Ireland, oh me! but on that topic I won’t write to the Home Ruler!

Your affectionate sister,

C.M.P.

[106] Arthur, son of Mr. Rollo Russell.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 27, 1887

DEAREST LOTTY,—It was but yesterday that there rose dimly to my memory the vision of a lady with the initials—C.M.P., and who knows how long I might have remained in the dark as to who and what she might be but for this letter, in which she claims me as a sister! and moreover an elder and a wiser sister! one therefore whose doings and not-doings, writing and not-writing, must not be questioned by the younger....We have imagined ourselves living in a state of isolation from our fellow-creatures, but yours far exceeds ours and makes it almost into a life of gaiety. I’m most extremely sorry to hear of it, though most extremely glad to hear that your minds to you a kingdom are. What good and wholesome and delightful food *your* mind has been living on. Isn’t that Shakespeare too much of a marvel to have really been a man? “Othello” is indeed all you say of it, and more than anybody can say of it, and so are *all* the great plays. I am reading the historical ones with Bertie.... Alas, indeed, for the coarseness! I never can understand the objections to Bowdlerism. It seems to me so right and natural to prune away what can do nobody good—what it pains eyes to look upon and ears to hear—and to leave all the glories and beauties untouched.... The little Autocrat is beginning to master some of the maxims of Constitutional Monarchy—for instance, to find out that we do not always leave the room the moment he waves his hand by way of dismissal and utters the command of “Tata.” I waste too much time upon him, in spite of daily resolutions to neglect him.... I don’t at all know whether Lord Chesterfield succeeded in

making his son like his own clever, worldly, contemptible self, but will try to find out. *Have* you read “Dean Maitland”? [107] Now, Fanny, do stop, you know you have many other letters to write....

Ever thine,

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F.R.

[107] “The Silence of Dean Maitland,” by Maxwell Grey.

Lady Russell to Lady Georgiana Peel

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, SURREY, *September* 9 [1887]

... Your account of the Queen and her visit interested us much.... I often wish she could ever know all my gratitude to her and the nation for the unspeakable blessing and happiness Pembroke Lodge has been, and is; joys and sorrows, hopes fulfilled, and hopes faded and crushed, chances and changes, and memories unnumbered, are sacredly bound up with that dear home. Will it ever be loved by others as we have loved it? It seems impossible....

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, *September* 12, 1887

DEAREST LOTTY,—I don’t think I am writing because your clock is on the stroke of Sixty-three, for these clocks of ours become obtrusive, and the less they are listened to the better for our spirits. I wonder whether it’s wrong and unnatural not to rejoice in their rapid movements as regards myself. I often think so. There is so much, or rather there are so many, oh, so many! to go to when it has struck for the last time, and the longing and the yearning to be with them is so unspeakable—and yet, dear Lotty, I cling to those here, not less and less, but more and more, as the time for leaving them draws nearer. God grant you many and many another birthday of happiness, as I trust this one is to you and your home.... Your letter was an echo of much that we had been saying to one another, as we read our novel—not only does nobody, man or even woman, see every change and know its meaning in the human countenance, and interpret rightly the slight flush, the hidden tremor, the shade of pallor, the faint tinge, *etc*.; but we don’t think there *are* perceptible changes to such an extent except in novels.... I think a great evil of novels for girls, mingled with great good, is the false expectation they raise that *somebody* will know and understand their every thought, look, emotion.... How glad I am that you have a rival baby to worship—ours is beyond all praise—oh, so comical and so lovely in all his little ways and words....

Your most affectionate sister,

F.R.

Lady Russell to Lady Georgiana Peel

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 28, 1887

... We have been having such a delightful visit from Lotty ... we *did* talk; and yet it seems as if all the talk had only made me wish for a great deal more. Books and babies and dress and almsgiving and amusements and the nineteenth century, its merits and its faults, high things and low things, and big things and trifles, and sense and nonsense, and everything except Home Rule, on which we don't agree and couldn't spare time to fight. We did thoroughly agree, however, as I think people of

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all parties must have done, in admiration of a lecture, or rather speech, made at our school by a very good and clever Mr. Wicksteed, a Nonconformist (I believe Unitarian) minister on Politics and Morals. The principle on which he founded it was that politics are a branch of morals; accordingly he placed them on as high a level as any other duty of life, and spoke with withering indignation of the too common practice, and even theory, that a little insincerity, a little trickery, is allowable in politics, whereas it would not be in other matters. [108] We were all delighted.

[108] Lady Russell often quoted a saying attributed to Fox, “Nothing which is morally wrong can ever be politically right.”

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 7, 1888

“Adam Bede” was as interesting a sofa companion as you could have found; a very lovely book—wit and pathos almost equally good, pathos quite the best though, to my mind. We are reading aloud another charming book of Lowell’s, “Democracy,” and other essays in the same volume; and I flutter about from book to book by myself, and have still two books of “Paradise Lost” to read, and am wondering what is going to happen to Adam and Eve. I was very miserable when I found she ate the forbidden fruit. She had made such fair promises to be good. Alas, alas! why did she break them? That story of the Fall, though I suppose nobody thinks it verbally true, is always to me most full of deep meaning, and seems to be the story of every mortal man and woman born into this wondrous world.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, *October* 3, 1888

Agatha gone yesterday to Pembroke Lodge—Rollo gone to-day to join her, so my wee bairnie and I are “left by our lone,” as you used to say. “Einsam nein, dass bin ich nicht, denn die Geister meiner Lieben, Sie umschweben mich.” [109] I think it’s good now and then to let the blessed and beautiful memories of the past have their way and float in waking dreams before our eyes, and not be forced down beneath daily duties and occupations and enjoyments, till the pain of keeping them there becomes hard to bear. Yet, “act, act in the living present” is very, very much the rightest thing; though I don’t think I quite like the past to be called the *dead* past, when it is so fearfully full of keenest life.

[109] “Lonely—no, that am I not, for the spirits of my loved ones, they hover around me.”

Lady Russell to Lady Georgiana Peel

DUNROZEL, HASLEMERE, SURREY, *October* 8, 1888

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... We have had Rollo's old Oxford friend, Dr. Drewitt, here for two nights—the very cheerfulest of guests. He is head of the Victoria Hospital for Children, and what with keen interest in his profession, and intense love of nature, animate and inanimate, I don't think he would know how to be bored. Hard-worked men have far the best of it here below, although we are accustomed to look upon "men of leisure" as those to be envied; but how seldom one finds a man or woman, who lives a life in earnest, and who has eyes to see and observe, taking a gloomy view of human nature and its destinies. I wonder what you have been reading? I have taken up lately that delightful book, Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott," and dipping into many besides.... Some of our pleasantest neighbours have paid us good-bye visits; Frederic Harrisons, and the charming and wonderful old Miss Swanwick [110]....

[110] Miss Anna Swanwick.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 13, 1889

How could you, could you, could you think that my mental vow not to write on the all-absorbing political catastrophe was because I sing "God save, Ireland" in one sense, and you in another! The vow was made because if once the flood-gates of my eloquence are let loose on that subject, there is a danger that the stream will Tennysonially "go on for ever." It is, however, a vow made to be broken from time to time, when I allow a little ripple to flow a little way and make a little noise, and then return to the usual attitude towards non-sympathizers; and, like David, keep silence and refrain even from good words, though it is pain and grief to me, and my heart is hot within me. I am speaking of the mere acquaintance non-sympathizers, or those known to be too bitter to bear difference of opinion; but don't be afraid, or do be afraid, as you may put it, and be prepared for total removal of the flood-gates when *you* come. Don't you often feel yourself in David's trying condition, knowing that your words would be very good, yet had better not be spoken? I don't like it at all.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

DUNROZEL, *September* 4, 1889

DEAREST LOTTY,—It was nice to hear from you from Minto. What a strange sensation it always gives me to write or to hear that word of *Minto.* [111] I am sure you know it too—impossible to define, but like something beautiful and holy, not belonging to this world. I like to hope that such memories have been stored up by the younger spirits who have succeeded us, while "children not hers have trod our nursery floor." But in this restless, fly-about age can they ever be quite the same? ... I see that luckily I have no room to go on about lovely, lovable, sorrowful Ireland. Alas! that England has ever had anything to do with her; but better times are coming, and she will be understood by

her conquerors at last, and be the better for them. Hush! Fanny, no more; even that is too much. God bless thee.

Ever thine,

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F.R.

[111] Lady Russell had written in 1857 to her father about Minto: "I can well imagine the loveliness of that loveliest and dearest of places. There is now to us all a holy beauty in every tree and flower, in rock and river and hill that ought to do us good." Later, in a letter to her sister, Lady Elizabeth Romilly, she writes of "the Minto of old days, that happiest and most perfect home that children ever had."

In 1889 the "Life of Lord John Russell" by Mr. Spencer Walpole, was published.

Mr. Gladstone to Lady Russell

HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER, *October* 30, 1889

MY DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—The week which has elapsed since I received from Mr. Walpole's kindness a copy of his biography has been with me a busy one; but I have now completed a careful perusal of the first volume. I cannot help writing to congratulate you on its appearance. It presents a beautiful and a noble picture. Having so long admired and loved your husband (and the political characters which attract love are not very numerous), I now, with the fuller knowledge of an early period which this volume gives me, both admire and love him more. Your own personal share in the delineation is enviable. And the biographer more than vindicates the wisdom of your choice; his work is capital, but it could not have been achieved except with material of the first order. O for his aid in the present struggle, which, however, is proceeding to *our* heart's content. Believe me always most sincerely yours, W.E. GLADSTONE

A little later Mr. Gladstone sent Lady Russell a proof copy of an article by him on the Melbourne Ministry, [112] from which the following passages are here quoted:

... He [Lord John Russell] brought into public life, and he carried through it unimpaired, the qualities which ennoble manhood—truth, justice, fortitude, self-denial, a fund of genuine indignation against wrong, and an inexhaustible sympathy with human suffering.... With a slender store of physical power, his life was a daily assertion of the superiority of the spirit to the flesh. With the warmest domestic affections, and the keen susceptibilities of sufferings they entail, he never failed to rally under sorrow to the call of public duty. There were no bounds to the prowess or the fellow-feeling with which he would fling himself into the breach on behalf of a belaboured colleague; ... in 1852 an attack upon Lord Clarendon's conduct as Viceroy of Ireland stirred all the depths of his nature, and he replied in a series of the noblest fighting passages which I have ever heard spoken in Parliament ... At the head of all these qualities stands the moral element. I do not recollect or know the time in our own history when the two great parties in the House of Commons have been led by men who so truly and so largely as Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel identified political with personal morality. W.E. GLADSTONE

[112] *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1890.

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Lady Charlotte Portal to Lady Russell, after reading Mr. Walpole's "Life of Lord John Russell" December 26, 1889

... I long that every one should know as we do what the extraordinary beauty of that daily life was. I always think it was the most perfect man's life that I ever knew of; and that could better bear the full flood of light than any other.

In January, 1890, after nearly twelve years' break in her diary, Lady Russell began writing again a few words of daily record. On the 6th she mentions a "most agreeable" visit from Mr. Froude; the same day she received Mr. Justin McCarthy to dinner, and adds that the talk was "more Shakespeare than Ireland."

Lady Russell to Mr. Justin McCarthy [113]

November 19, 1890

DEAR MR. MCCARTHY,—I hardly know why I write to you, but this terrible sin and terrible verdict make us very, very unhappy, and we think constantly of you, who have been among his closest friends, and of all who have trusted him and refused to believe in the charge against him. You must, I know, be feeling all the keenness and bitterness of sorrow in the moral downfall of a man whose claims to the gratitude and admiration of his country in his public career nothing can cancel. It is also much to be feared that the great cause will suffer, at least in England, if he retains the leadership. It ought not, of course; but where enthusiasm and even respect for the leader can no longer be felt, there is danger of diminution of zeal for the cause. Were he to take the honourable course, which alone would show a sense of shame—that of resignation—his political enemies would be silenced, and his friends would feel that although reparation for the past is impossible, he has not been blinded by long continuance in deception and sin to his own unworthiness, and to the fact that his word can no longer be trusted as it has been, and as that of a leader ought to be. I dare not think of what his own state of mind must be; it makes me so miserable—the unlimited trust of a nation not only in his political but in his moral worth must be like a dagger in his heart. Were he to retire, the recollection of the great qualities he has shown would revive, and the proof of remorse given by his retirement would draw a veil over his guilt, and the charity, which we all need, would not be withheld from him. I know that numerous instances can be given of men in the highest positions who have retained them without opposition in spite of lives tainted with similar sin; but this has not been without evil to the nation, and I think there is a stronger sense now than there used to be of the value of high private character in public men, in spite of a great deal of remaining Pharisaism in the difference of the measure of condemnation meted out to different men. I think too that the unusual and most painful amount of low deception in this case will

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be felt, even more than the sin itself, by the English people. Pray forgive me, dear Mr. McCarthy, for writing on this sad topic; but I have got into the habit of writing and speaking freely to you, even when it can, as now, do no earthly good to anybody.There is one consolation in the thought that should he retire Ireland is not wanting in the best and highest to succeed him. Pray do not write if you prefer not, though I long to hear from you, or still better see you.

Yours most sincerely,

F. RUSSELL

[113] Written after the Parnell O'Shea divorce case.

Lady Russell to Mr. Justin McCarthy

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 22, 1890

DEAR MR. MCCARTHY,—I cannot rest without telling you how very sorry I shall be if my letter gave you one moment's pain. I knew how close and true a friend you were of Mr. Parnell, and how unchanging your friendship would be; but I did not know which course that unchanging friendship would lead you to take. Not a doubt can ever cross our minds of the patriotism which has dictated your action and that of your Irish colleagues. Do not allow any doubt to cross yours or theirs, that it is the intensity of love for the great cause which led many in England to wish for a different decision. Nothing would be more terrible, more fatal, than any coldness between the friends of Ireland on the two sides of the Channel. May God avert such a misfortune, and whatever happens, believe me always most sincerely yours,

F. RUSSELL

Mr. Justin McCarthy to Lady Russell

November 24, 1890

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—I ought to have answered your kind letter before, for I value your sympathy more—much more—than I can tell you in words. I am afraid the prospect is dark for the present. Mr. Gladstone sent for me to-day and I had some talk with him. He was full of generous consideration and kindness, but he thinks there will be a catastrophe for the cause if Parnell does not retire. The Irish members *cannot* and *would not* throw over Parnell, but he may even yet decide upon retiring. All depends on to-morrow, and we have not seen him. I have the utmost faith in his singleness of public purpose and his judgment and policy, but it is a terrible crisis.

With kindest regards, very truly yours,

JUSTIN MCCARTHY

Lady Russell to Mrs. Warburton

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 23, 1890

MY DEAREST ISABEL,—... Yes, dearie, it *was* a delightful visit, leaving delightful memories of all kinds; chats gay and grave trots long and short, drives, duets—will they ever come again? I am very glad this heart-breaking Irish thunderclap did not fall while you were here. It makes us so unhappy. Poor Ireland! her hopes are always dashed when

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about to be fulfilled. Nothing can palliate the fearful sin and almost more fearful course of miserable deception; but he might, by taking the one right and honourable course of resigning his leadership—if only for a time—at least have given a proof of shame, and have saved England and Ireland from the terrible pain of discussion and disagreement, and from the danger to Home Rule which his retention of the post must cause. His Parliamentary colleagues have done immense harm by their loud protestations in his favour. There is much to excuse them, but not him, for this course. Our poor Davitt is miserable, and is braving a storm of unpopularity by writing strongly against his (Parnell's) retention of the leadership. His whole thought is for Ireland, and he knows that his advice is that of a true friend to her—as well as to the wretched man himself....

Your ever affectionate,

MAMA

Mr. Michael Davitt had taken a house in Richmond, and was living there at this time. Some years earlier Lady Russell had read his "Prison Diary," and had written the following poem. She did not know him at that time.

Written after reading Michael Davitt's "Leaves from a Prison Diary"

DUNROZEL, *September,* 1887

Man's justice is not Thine, O God, his scales
Uneven hang, while he with padlocked heart
Some glittering shred of human tinsel sees
Outweigh the pure bright gold of noblest souls,
Who from the mists of earth their eyes uplift
And seek to read Thy message in the stars.

Thou hearest, Lord, beneath the felon's garb
The lonely throbbing of no felon's heart,
The cry of agony—the prayer of love
By agony unconquered—love, heaven-born,
That fills with holy light the joyless cell,
As with the daybreak of his prayer fulfilled,
The glorious dawn of brotherhood for man,
And freedom to the sorrowing land that bore him,
For whose dear sake he smiles upon his chains.
Thou gatherest, Lord, his bitter nightly tears
For home, for face beloved and trusted hand,
For the green earth, the freshly blowing breeze,
The heaven of Liberty, all, all shut out.

His vanished dreams, his withered hopes Thou knowest,
The baffled yearnings of his heart to snatch
From paths unhallowed childhood's tottering feet,
And lay a rosy smile on little lips
With homeless hunger pale, to curses trained,
Whereon no kiss hath left a memory sweet.

His chainless spirit, bruised by prison bars,
Wounded by touch of fellow-men in whom
Thy image lost he vainly sought, Thou seest
Unsullied still, lord of its own domain,
Soar in its own blue sky of faith and hope.

Such have there been and such there yet will be,
From whom the world's hard eye is turned in scorn,
But still for each a nation's tears will fall,
A nation's heart will be his earthly haven,
And when no earthly stay he needeth more,
Will he not, Father, feel Thy love enfold him,
And hear Thy voice, "Servant of God, well done."

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Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November 26, 1890*

Alas! alas! the last fortnight has indeed been one of darkness and sorrow over the country; railway and ocean horrors breaking many hundreds of hearts, disgrace to England in Africa, disgrace to a trusted leader dashing down the hopes of Ireland and bringing back disunion between the two nations. We made ourselves miserable over last night's news of the determination of his parliamentary followers to stand by him, and his acceptance of their re-election. Poor old Gladstone! I am sure you must admire his letter to Mr. Morley. To-day we are told to have a little hope that it may have influence in the right direction, but we hardly feel any. We heartily agree with every word you say on this most painful matter. The one consolation is to see such an increase of opinion that a leader must be a man of high private, as well as public, character. How often I have deplored the absence of any such opinion!

Lady Russell to Mr. Justin McCarthy

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November 27, 1890*

DEAR MR. MCCARTHY,—Your most kind letter was a relief to me as regarded the spirit in which you had taken what I wrote, but also made us very, very sad, and nothing that we have heard or read in newspapers since has given more than a mere ray of hope. And why should this be? Surely the path of honour and duty is plain. It cannot be taken without pain; but such moments as this are the test of greatness in men and nations. Gratitude untold is due to Mr. Parnell. Those who have been his friends will not withdraw their friendship; but surely that very friendship ought to resolve that the vast good he has done in the past should not be undone for the future, to his own eternal discredit, by encouragement to him to retain the leadership. Surely the claims of your country stand first; and is not the impending breach between English and Irish Home Rulers a misfortune to both countries, too terrible to be calmly faced? Already there is a tone in the Freeman's Journal which I could not have believed would be adopted towards men like Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley, who have identified themselves heart and soul with Ireland. Of course, they are far above being turned for a moment from their course by any such comments, but it must be a pain to them nevertheless. It almost seems aberration of mind in Mr. Parnell to be deaf to Mr. Gladstone's words of true patriotism, echoed as they are throughout England and Scotland, and I cannot but believe in thousands of Irish hearts besides. Surely this must have gone far to convince his friends that they would be more than justified in convincing him that retirement for awhile is his duty, or, if they cannot convince him, in acting upon their own convictions, if these are such as I hope. Indignation against the terrible revelations of his guilt has driven some English newspapers into

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language deeply to be deplored; but on the whole the feeling, as shown in speeches and in the Press, has been healthy and just. Sir Charles Russell's words struck us as among the very best. It is the deepest and highest love for Ireland that makes men speak and write as they do.Dear Mr. McCarthy, I think you can do much, and I know how firm, as well as how gentle, it is your nature to be. Save us all, for God's sake, from the dreaded disunion and the ruin of the cause. Do not let England and Ireland be again looked upon as separated in their hopes, interests, aspirations. May Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien help to the good work; but too much can hardly depend on men at a distance, excellent and patriotic as they are.

Good-bye, dear Mr. McCarthy. May God guide and unite our two countries on the road of justice and truth and happiness. Pray, pray forgive me once more for writing.

Ever most sincerely yours,

F. RUSSELL

In 1891 Mr. Rollo Russell married Miss Gertrude Joachim, niece of the great violinist, Dr. Joachim, and Lady Russell found new joy in his happiness.

Queen Victoria to Lady Russell

January 1, 1891

DEAR LADY RUSSELL,—You are indeed right in thinking that I should always take an interest in anything that concerned you and your family, and I rejoice to hear that your son is going to make a marriage which gives you pleasure, and trust it may conduce to your comfort as well as to his happiness. It is a long time since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, dear Lady Russell, and I trust that some day this may be possible. Past days can never be forgotten—indeed, one loves to dwell on them, though the thought is mingled with sadness. Pray remember me to Agatha, and believe me always,

Yours affectionately,

V.R.I.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 14, 1892

... Most truly do you say that, while we can shelter ourselves from the demands that assail our physical being, no defence has been found against the bitter blasts which batter against our mental and spiritual structure—no *defence*, only endurance, in hope

and faith and endeavour after Marcus Aurelius's "Equanimitas," and the knowledge that the higher man's mental and moral capacity the greater is his capacity for suffering.... And nobody has shown more than you do in "Psalms of the West" that sorrow is not *all* sorrow, but has a heavenly sacredness that gives strength to bear its burden "in quietness and confidence" to the end. How entirely I feel with you that this has been a glorious century. Not all the evil and the misery and the vice and the meanness and pettinesses which abound on every side, as we look around, can blind me to the blessed truth that the eyes of mankind have

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been opening to see and to deplore these things, and to give their lives to the study of their causes, and the discovery and practice of means to put an end to them. The wonderful intellectual strides, which my long life enables me not only to be aware of, but to remember as they have one by one been made, are in close connection with this moral and religious development; and all these together will, I believe, raise the education of the people (already so far above the standard of fifty, much more of a hundred years ago) to something of the kind to which you look forward—"more high, more wide, more various, more poetic, more inspiring, more full of principles and less full of facts "—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *June* 22, 1892

Day of much weakness. The sense of failing increases rapidly. May the short time that remains to me make me less unfit to meet my God. Oh, that I could begin life again! How different it would be from what has been. I have had everything to help me upward; joys and sorrows, encouragement and disappointment, the love and example of my dearest husband and children in our daily companionship and communion, the never-failing and precious affection and help of brothers, sisters, and friends—and yet my life seems all a failure when I think what it might have been.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

THE GRANGE, HINDHEAD, HASLEMERE, *July* 20, 1892

Yes, elections are hard tests of character, and there are too, too many excellent people on both sides who are led on to say hard, unjust, untrue things of their opponents.... But there *is* another side to elections—a grand and noble one—which makes me feel to my inmost soul the greatness and the blessed freedom of this dear old country, and always brings to my mind what John used to say with something of a boy's enthusiasm, "I *love* a contested election."

THE GRANGE, HINDHEAD, *October* 6, 1892

Tennyson died about one o'clock a.m. A great and good light extinguished.

October 7th

Agatha and I early to Aldworth. Went in by Hallam's wish to the room where he lay. I dread and shrink from the sight of death, and wish to keep the recollection of the life I have known and loved undisturbed by its soulless image. But in this case I rejoice to have seen on that noble face the perfect peace which of late years was wanting—it was really "the rapture of repose." A volume of Shakespeare which he had asked for, and

the leaves of which he had turned over yesterday, I believe to find “Cymbeline,” at which place it was open, lay on the bed. His hands were crossed on his breast, beautiful autumn leaves lay strewn around him on the coverlet, and white flowers at the foot of the bed.

Lady Russell to Lady Charlotte Portal

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PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 2, 1892

Oh, Lotty, how is it that, standing as I am on the very brink of the known, with the unknown about to sweep me into its depths, how is it that there is still such intense interest in the course of this wondrous world, in all the problems now floating about unsolved, in all the social, moral, political work going on around us. It is true that these things are of eternal moment, and therefore links between earth and heaven. Yet it often seems to me foolish to care about them very much when the solution of all enigmas is so near at hand.

Lady Russell to Mrs. Rollo Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 17, 1893

... The chief Pembroke Lodge event since I wrote is that I went on Monday to Windsor Castle to luncheon; after which morning meal with the household, almost all strangers to me, I saw the Queen alone and had a good long and most easy and pleasant conversation with her. She was as cordial as possible, and I am *very* glad to have seen her again; although there was much sadness mingled with the gladness in a meeting after a period of many, many years, which had brought their full number of changes to me—and some to her.

Lady Russell to Mr. Rollo Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, RICHMOND, SURREY, *July* 7, 1893

I feel intensely all you say about laying aside, if it were possible, one's own personality and seeing the silent growth of all truth and goodness, without the disturbance of names and parties; but the world being as it is for the present, we can only keep our minds fixed on the good and the true, with whomsoever and with whatsoever party we may find it, and follow it with honest conviction. If I could, I would put an end to Party Government to-morrow, and my great wish for M.P.'s is that each one should, upon each subject, vote exactly according to his opinion, and no Ministry be turned out except upon a vote of want of confidence. I honour and love Mr. Gladstone, and while ardently sympathetic with him on Home Rule and all other Liberal measures, I am no less antipathetic on Church matters. Happily, however, they have become with him matters chiefly of personal attachment to Anglicanism, and no longer (I believe) likely to affect his legislation. "Gladstonian" is a word he does not admit, nor do those of whom it is used.*July* 9, 1893.—Well, to go on with our politics: "a new policy" Home Rule undoubtedly is, a new departure from the "tradition" of any English party; but *not* a departure from Liberal principles, only a new application of old ones, and I think it is a pity to speak of it as being against Liberal principles, for is there anybody of average intelligence who would not have predicted that if it should ever be adopted by any party it would be by the Liberals? Exactly the same thing was said about Turkey:

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the Whig tradition was to support her, Liberals were forsaking their principles by taking part with Bulgaria against her. It is the proud distinction of Liberals to *grow* perpetually, and to march on with eyes open, and to discover, as they are pretty sure to do, that they have not always in the past been true to their principles. There is no case exactly parallel with that of Ireland; but there are some in great measure analogous, and it is the Liberals who have listened to the voice of other countries, some of them our own dependencies, in their national aspirations or their desire for Parliaments of their own, expressed by Constitutional majorities. I admire the Unionists for standing by their own convictions with regard to Home Rule, and always have done so; but I cannot call it "devotion to the Union *and to* Liberal principles," and I am not aware of there being a single Home Ruler not a Liberal. The Unionists, especially those in Parliament, have been, and are, in a very dangerous position, and have yielded too readily to the temptation of a sudden transference of party loyalty upon almost every question from Liberal to Tory leaders. But for those, whether in or out of Parliament, who have remained Liberals—and I know several such—I don't see why, after Home Rule is carried, they should not be once more merged in the great body of Liberals, and have their chances, like others, of being chosen to serve their country in Parliament and in office....

> I am reading a book by Grant Allen, "Science in Arcady." ... He brings wit and originality into these essays on plants, lakes, spiders, *etc*.
>
> *Lady Russell to Lady Agatha Russell*
>
> PEMBROKE LODGE, *September* 22, 1893

... With regard to the modern attraction of ugly subjects (*not* when the wish to remedy gross evils makes it a duty to study and live among them; but as common talk between young men and young women), I feel very strongly that the contemplation of God, and all that is God-like in the souls that He has created, is our best safeguard against evil, and that the contemplation of the spirit of evil, and all the hideous variety of its works, gradually taints us and weakens our powers of resistance.

> *Lady Russell to Lady Agatha Russell*
>
> PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 21, 1893

... I entirely agree with you, that poetry and music "teach us of the things that are unseen" as nothing else can do. Music especially, which is an unseen thing, not the product of man at all, but found from man as a gift from God's own hand. I don't know what at some periods of my life I should have done without these blessed sympathizers and outlets and uplifting friends.

Lady Russell to Mrs. Drummond

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 16, 1893

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Your long interesting letter is most welcome. You are very good and brave to do so much for the good of others, while suffering yourself. How much harder it is to *bear* patiently, and keep up sympathy and fellow-feeling within us in spite of illness, than to do any amount of active work while in health. I always find my highest examples in those who know how to “suffer and be strong,” because it is my own greatest difficulty.Oh, my dear child, what opinions *can* poor I give on the almost insoluble problems you put before me? I wish I knew of any book or any man or woman who could tell me whether a Poor Law, even the very best, is on the whole a blessing or a curse, and how the “unemployed” can be chosen out for work of any useful or productive kind without injury to others equally deserving, and what are the just limits of State interference with personal liberty. The House of Lords puzzles me less. I would simply declare it, by Act of the House of Commons, injurious to the best interests of the nation and for ever dissolved. Then it may either show its attachment to the Constitution by giving its assent to its own annihilation, or oblige us to break through the worn-out Constitution and declare their assent unnecessary. It is beyond all bearing that one great measure after another should be delayed, or mutilated, year after year, by such a body, and I chafe and fret inwardly to a painful degree. Oh for a long talk with you! I will not despair of going to you, “gin I be spared” till the days are reasonably long.

Lady Russell to Lady Agatha Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 10, 1894

... Alas! for our dear Oliver Wendell Holmes! He has left the world much the poorer by his death, but much the richer by his life and works.... Lord Grey gone too, and with him what recollections of my young days, before and after marriage, when he and Lady Grey and we were very much together. We loved them both. He was a very trying political colleague to your father and others, but a very faithful friend. The longer I live the more firmly I am convinced that in most cases to know people well is to like them—-to forget their faults in their merits. But no doubt it is delightful to have no faults to forget.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *March* 3, 1894

Touching accounts of meeting of the Cabinet—the last with dear noble old Gladstone as Minister. Tears in the eyes of his colleagues. He made his last speech as Minister in the House of Commons, a grand and stirring one.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 23, 1895

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Finished “Erasmus” a few days ago—a great intellect, much wit, clear insight into the religion “falsely so-called” of monks and clergy, but a soul not great enough to utter his convictions aloud in the face of danger, or to perceive that conciliation beginning by hypocrisy must end in worse strife and bitterness. He saw the evil of the new dogmas and creeds introduced by Luther, of *any* new creed the rejection of which was penal, but he did not or would not see the similar evil of the legally enforced old creeds and dogmas.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *May* 15, 1895

Armenian refugees here to tea—a husband and wife whose baby *she* had *seen* murdered by Turkish soldiers, and a friend who is uncertain whether his wife is alive or murdered—these three in native dress; hers very picturesque, and she herself beautiful. The three refugees, all of whom had been eye-witnesses of massacres of relations, looked intensely sad. She gave an account of some of the hardships they had suffered, but neither they nor we could have borne details of the atrocities. What they chiefly wished to express, and did express, was deep gratitude for the sympathy of our country, veneration for the memory of John as a friend of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and thanks to ourselves.... They kissed our hands repeatedly, and the expression of their countenances as they looked at us, though without words, was very touching.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *February* 24, 1896

Visit from Mr. Voysey, earnest, interesting, and pathetic in accounts of Whitechapel experiences. His Theism fills him with the joy of unbounded faith in a perfect God; but his keen sense of the evil done by the worship of Jesus as another and equal God leads him to a painful blindness to that divine character and teaching.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *August* 5, 1897

Sinclair [115] has been reading a great deal to me since my illness began. Miss Austen’s “Emma,” which kept its high ground with me although I had read it too often to find much novelty in the marvellous humour and reality of the characters. Then “Scenes of Clerical Life” ... the contrast between the minds and the brain-work of Jane Austen and George Eliot very striking. Jane Austen all ease and spontaneousness and simplicity, George Eliot wonderful in strength and passion, and fond of probing the depths of human anguish, but often ponderous in long-drawn philosophy and metaphysics, and with a tediously cynical and flippant tone underlying her portraits of human beings—and a wearisome lingering over uninteresting details. Her defects are, I think, far more prominent in this than in her best later books.

[115] “While in Norfolk Street (in 1882) engaged Sinclair, my good and faithful Sinclair, as maid and housekeeper” (*Recollections*). She remained with Lady Russell till her death, and served her with devotion to the end.

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In the summer of 1897 she had a severe illness, from which, as the following letter shows, she partially recovered.

Mrs. Warburton to Lady Agatha Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *October* 11, 1897

You can't imagine, or rather you can, what a happiness it is to be able to record a perfect drive round the Park again with Mama this most beautiful day, she enjoying it as of yore, and as full of pleasure and observation as I ever remember. In short, it is quite difficult to me to realize how ill she has been since I saw her in June. She seems and looks so well. She is a marvellous person, so young and fresh in all her interests, sight and hearing betraying so little sign of change. She says she is out of practice, and her *playing* is not as easy or as vigorous as it was, I thought; but how few people of her age would return to it at all after such a long illness. (There are the sounds of music overhead as I sit here in the drawing-room—how she enjoys it!) ... About the reading—-Dr. Gardiner [116] was against her being prevented from a little—she enjoys it so much. Sinclair reading to her is a great comfort.

[116] Medical attendant and valued friend for over twelve years, partner to Dr. Anderson, of Richmond, with whom he attended Lady Russell till her death.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November* 15, 1897

Eighty-two this day. God be praised for all he has given to brighten my old age. God be praised that I am still able to love, to think, to rejoice, and to mourn with those dear to me. But the burden of wasted years of a long life, in which I see failure on every side, is weighty and painful, and can never be lightened. I can only pray that the few steps left to me to take may be on a holier path—the narrow path that leads to God. My own blessings only brought more vividly to my mind the masses of toiling, struggling, poverty-stricken fellow-creatures, from whom the pressure of want shuts out the light of life.My Agatha well, weather beautiful, and seventy very happy boys and girls from the school to see a ventriloquist and his acting dolls (drawing-room cleared for the occasion). The children's bursts and shouts of laughter delightful to hear.

Lady Russell was wonderfully well that day—her last birthday on earth—and joined in the fun and laughter as heartily as any of the children. Old age had not lessened her keen enjoyment of humour, nor dimmed the brightness of her brave spirit.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *December* 11, 1897

A beautiful day for old scholars' meeting. Ninety-four came, a larger number than ever before; table spread in drawing-room and bow-room. Not able to go down to see them, but all went well and merrily. I was able to get to my sitting-room in the afternoon, and

all came up to me by turns for a hand-shake. It was pleasant to see so many kindly, happy faces.

PEMBROKE LODGE, *January* 1, 1898

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> What will 1898 bring of joy or sorrow, good or evil, life or death, to our home, our country, the world? May we be ready for all, whatever it may be.

Six days later she was attacked by influenza, which turned to bronchitis, and very soon she became seriously ill. There was for one day a slight hope that she might recover, but the rally was only temporary, and soon it was certain that death was near.

The last book that her daughter had been reading to her was the “Life of Tennyson,” by his son, which she very much enjoyed. She begged her daughter to go on reading it to her in the last days of her life, and her keen interest in it was wonderful, even when she was too ill to listen to more than a few sentences at a time.

For some years Lady Russell had found great amusement and delight in the visits of a little wild squirrel—squirrels abounded among the old trees at Pembroke Lodge—which gradually became more and more tame and friendly. It used to climb up to her windows by a lilac-bush or a climbing rose-tree and look brightly in at her while enjoying the nuts she gave it on the window-sill. Before long it became very venturesome, and would enter the room daily and frisk about, or sit on her writing-table or on the tea-table in perfect content, taking food from her hand. On the last day of her life the doctor [117] was sitting by her bedside when suddenly he noticed the beautiful little squirrel bounding in at her window. It was only a few hours before she died, but her face lighted up at once, and she welcomed her faithful little friend, for the last time, with her brightest smile.

[117] Dr. Anderson, who had been for nearly thirty years a true and devoted friend.

During her illness she had spoken confidently of recovery, but the night before her death she realized quite clearly that the end was near. Her son and daughter were with her; and just before she sank into a last sleep she spoke, in a firm clear voice, words of love and faith. Her mind had remained unclouded, and her end was as calm and peaceful as those who loved her could have wished. She died on January 17, 1898.

CHAPTER XIV

The immense number of letters received by Lady Russell’s son and daughter, from men and women of all classes and creeds, bore striking testimony to the widespread and reverent devotion felt for her memory. Only very few selections will be given here. The first letter—written on the day of her death—is from Mr. Farrington, the respected minister of the Richmond Free Church, who had known Lady Russell intimately for many years.

Rev. Silas Farrington to Lady Agatha Russell

January 17, 1898

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To me your mother has become more and more an inspiration—a kind of tower of cheerful courage and strength. By her steadfast mental and moral bravery, by the sunshine she has been beneath the heavy clouds that have been sweeping over her, she has made one ashamed of the small things that troubled him and rebuked his petty discontent and repining. No one can ever be told how much I both have honoured and loved her for the very greatness of her noble spirit.

Rev. Stopford A. Brooke to Lady Agatha Russell

January 18, 1898

How little I thought when I saw Lady Russell last [118] that I should see her no more! She looked so full of life, and her interest in all things was so keen and eager that I never for a moment thought her old or linked to her lite the imagination of death. It is a sore loss to lose one so fresh, so alive, so ardent in all good and beautiful things, and it must leave you in a great loneliness.... How well, how nobly she lived her life! It shames us to think of all she did, and yet it kindles us so much that we lose our shame in its inspiration.

[118] On October 31, 1897.

Mr. Frederic Harrison to Lady Agatha Russell

February 16, 1898

...The news of the great sorrow which has fallen on you came upon my wife and myself as a dreadful surprise.... Over and over again I tried to say to the world outside all that I felt of the noble nature and the grand life of your mother, but every time I tried my pen fell from my hand. I was too sad to think or write; full only of the sense of the friend whom I had lost, and of the great example she has left to our generation. She has fulfilled her mission on earth, and all those who have known her—and they are very many—will all their lives be sustained by the memory of her courage, dignity, and truth. She had so much of the character of the Roman matron—a type we know so little nowadays—who, being perfect in all the beauty of domestic life, yet even more conspicuously raised the public life of her time. I shall never, while I have life, forget the occasions this last summer and autumn when I had been able to see more of her than ever before, and especially that last hour I spent with her, when you were away at Weston, the memory of which now comes back to me like a death-bed parting. To have known her was to ride above the wretched party politics to which our age is condemned. I cannot bear to think of all that this bereavement means to you. It must be, and will remain, irreparable.

Mr. James Bryce [119] to Lady Agatha Russell

March 10, 1898

Your mother always seemed to me one of the most noble and beautiful characters I had ever known—there was in her so much gentleness, so much firmness, so much earnestness, so ardent a love for all high things and all the best causes. One always came away from seeing her struck afresh by these charms of nature, and feeling the better for having seen how old age had in no way lessened her interest in the progress of the world, her faith in the triumph of good.

[119] The Right Hon. James Bryce, British Ambassador at Washington.

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Mrs. Sinclair to Mr. Rollo Russell

January, 1900

I loved and honoured my dear lady more than any one I ever served.
In my long life of service, where all had been good and kind to me,
she was the dearest and best.

The funeral service was held on the 21st of January in the village church at Chenies, where her husband had been buried among his ancestors. The Burial Service of the Church of England, the solemnity and beauty of which she had always deeply felt, was read in the presence of many friends and relations assembled to pay their last tribute of respect to her memory.

Not long before her death Lady Russell had written these lines:

O shadowy form majestic, nearer gliding,
And ever nearer! Thou whose silent tread
Not ocean, chasm, or mountain can delay,
Not even hands in agony outstretched,
Or bitterest tears of breaking hearts, that fain
Would stay thy dread approach to those most dear.
Vainly from thee we seek to hide; thou wield'st
A sceptred power that none below may challenge;
Yet no true monarch thou—but Messenger
Of Him, Monarch supreme and Love eternal,
Who holdeth of all mysteries the key;—
And in thy dark unfathomable eyes
A star of promise lieth.
Then O! despite all failure, guilt and error,
Crushing beneath their weight my faltering soul,
When my hour striketh, when with Time I part,
When face to face we stand, with naught between,
Come as a friend, O Death!
Lay gently thy cold hand upon my brow,
And still the fevered throb of this blind life,
This fragment, mournful yet so fair—this dream,
Aspiring, earth-bound, passionate—and waft me
Where broken harmonies will blend once more,
And severed hearts once more together beat;
Where, in our Father's fold, all, all shall be fulfilled.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FRANCES, COUNTESS RUSSELL

BY JUSTIN McCARTHY

Some of the dearest and most treasured memories of my lifetime are those belonging to the years during which I had the honour of being received among her friends by the late Countess Russell.

That friendship lasted more than twenty years, and its close on this earth was only brought about by Lady Russell's death.

There hangs now in my study, seeming to look down upon me while I write, a photograph of Lady Russell with her name written on it in her own handwriting. That photograph I received but a short time before her death, and it is to be with me so long as I live and look upon this earth.

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I had some slight, very slight, acquaintance with the late Earl Russell, ever best known to fame as Lord John Russell, some years before I became one of his wife's friends. I met Lord John Russell for the first time in 1858, when he was attending a meeting of the Social Science Association, held in Liverpool, where I was then a young journalist, and I had the good fortune to be presented to him. After that, when I settled in London, I met him occasionally in the precincts of Westminster Palace, and I had some interesting conversations with him which I have mentioned in published recollections of mine. During all that time I had, however, but a merely slight and formal acquaintanceship with his gifted wife.

When I came to know her more closely she had settled herself in her home at Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park, and it is with that delightful home that my memories of her are mainly associated. She received her friends and acquaintances in general there on certain appointed days in each week. I need hardly say how gladly I availed myself of every opportunity for the enjoyment of such a visit, and especially for the enjoyment of Lady Russell's conversation and companionship.

I have known many gifted women, among them many gifted authoresses, but I have not known any woman who could have surpassed Lady Russell in the varied charms of her conversation. Most of us, men and women, have usually the habit of carrying our occupations with us, metaphorically at least, wherever we go, and therefore have some difficulty in entering with full appreciation into conversational fields in which we do not find ourselves quite at home.

Lady Russell was not like most of us in that quality. Her chief natural interest, one might readily suppose, would have been centred in questions belonging to the domain of politics, national and international, she having been for so great a part of her life the wife and the close companion of one of England's leading statesmen.

But Lady Russell was endowed with a peculiarly receptive mind, and she felt an interest quite natural and spontaneous in every subject which could interest educated and rational human beings—in art, literature, and science; in the history and the growth of all countries; in the condition of the poor and the struggling throughout the world; in every effort made by knowledge, benevolence, and enlightened purpose for the benefit of humanity. She had evidently also a strong desire to add to her own large stock of information, and she appears to have felt that whenever she came into converse with any fellow-being she was in communication with one who could tell her something which she did not already know.

In this characteristic she reminded me strongly of William Ewart Gladstone.

There is, or there used to be, a common impression throughout many social circles in this country, that when Gladstone in private was the centre of any company, he generally contrived to keep most of the talk to himself. This always seemed to me an

entire misconception, for I had many opportunities of observing that Gladstone in social companionship seemed much more anxious to get some new ideas from those around him than to pour out to them from his own treasures of information.

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Lady Russell loved to draw forth from the artist something about his art, from the scholar something about his books, to compare the ideas of the politician with her own, to lead the traveller into accounts of his travels, to get from the scientific student some of his experiences in this or that domain of science, and from those who visited the poor some suggestions which might serve her during her constant work in the same direction.

Even on subjects concerning which the greatest and sharpest divisions of opinion might naturally arise—political questions, for instance—Lady Russell seemed as much interested in listening to the clear exposition and defence of a political opponent's views as she might have been in the cordial exchange of sympathetic and encouraging opinions. When I first began to make one of Lady Russell's frequent visitors, there was, of course, between us a natural sympathy of political opinion which was made all the stronger because of momentous events that had lately passed, or were then passing, in the world around.

The great Civil War in the North American States had come to an end many years before I began to visit Lady Russell at her home, and I need hardly remind my readers that by far the larger proportion of what we call "society" in England had given its sympathies entirely to the cause of the South, and had firmly maintained, almost to the very end, that the South was destined to have a complete victory over its opponents. Lady Russell gave her sympathies to the side of the Northern States, as was but natural, seeing that the success of the North would mean the abolition of that system of slavery which was to her heart and to her conscience incapable of defence or of palliation.

I had paid my first visit to the United States not many years after the end of the Civil War—a visit prolonged for nearly two years and extending from New York to San Francisco and from Maine to Louisiana. I had therefore a good deal to tell Lady Russell about the various experiences I had had during this my first visit to the now reunited States, and the lights which they threw for me on the origin and causes of the Civil War.

I may say here that Lady Russell was always very anxious that the public should fully understand and appreciate the attitude taken by her late husband with regard to the Civil War. In a letter written to me on October 20, 1879, Lady Russell refers me to a speech made by her husband on March 23, 1863, and she goes on to say:

It shows unanswerably how strong was his opinion against the recognition of the Southern States, even at a moment when the tide of battle was so much in their favour that he, in common, I think, with most others, looked upon separation as likely to be the final issue. As long as the abolition of slavery was not openly announced, as he thought it ought to have been, as one of the main objects of the war on the part of the Federals, he felt no warm sympathy with their cause. But after President Lincoln's proclamation it

was quite different, and no man rejoiced with deeper thankfulness than he did at the final triumph of the Northern States, for no man held slavery in more utter abhorrence.

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I have thought it well to introduce this quotation just here because it is associated at once with my earliest recollections of Lady Russell, and at the same time with a subject of controversy which may almost be said to have passed out of the realms of disputation since that day.

The American States have now long been absolutely reunited; there is no difference of opinion whatever in this country with regard to the question of slavery, and yet it is quite certain that during the American Civil War a large number of conscientious, humane, and educated Englishmen were firmly convinced that the American Republic was about to break in two, and that the sympathies of England ought to go with the rebelling Southern States. It is well, therefore, that we should all be reminded of Lord Russell's attitude on these subjects.

I had much to tell Lady Russell of the various impressions made on me during my wanderings through the States, and by the distinguished American authors, statesmen, soldiers—Emerson, Longfellow, Bryant, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, General Grant, General Sherman. With the public career of each of these men Lady Russell was thoroughly acquainted, but she was much interested in hearing all that I could tell her about their ways of life and their personal habits and characteristics.

Then there were, of course, political questions at home concerning which there was deep sympathy between Lady Russell and me, and on which we had many long conversations. She had the most intense and enlightened sympathy with the great movements going on in these countries for the spread of political equality and of popular education.

Every statesman who sincerely and actively supported the principles and measures tending towards these ends was regarded as a friend by this noble-hearted woman.

I had been for many years a leader-writer and more recently editor of the *Morning Star*, the London daily newspaper which advocated the views of Cobden and Bright, and I had more recently still been elected to the House of Commons as a member of the Irish Nationalist Party, and thus again I found myself in thorough sympathy with the opinions and the feelings of my hostess.

Lady Russell had long been an advocate of that truly Liberal policy towards Ireland which is now accepted as the only principle by all really enlightened Liberal English men and women; and she thoroughly understood the condition, the grievances, the needs, and the aspirations of Ireland. The readers of this volume will see in some passages extracted from Lady Russell's diaries and letters how deep and strong were her feelings on the subject. She followed with the most intense interest and with the most penetrating observation the whole movement of Ireland's national struggle down to the

very close of her life. Her letters on this question alone—letters addressed to me—-would in themselves serve to illumine

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even now the minds of many English readers on this whole subject. Lady Russell was in no sense a partisan on any political question—I mean she never gave her approval to everything said or done by the leaders of any political party merely because the one main object of that party had her full sympathy and approval. Reading over many of her letters to me on various passages of the Home Rule agitation inside and outside Parliament, I have been once again filled with admiration and with wonder at the keen sagacity, the prophetic instinct, which she displayed with regard to this or that political movement or political man.

All through these letters it becomes more and more manifest that Lady Russell's devotedness was in every instance to principle rather than to party, to measures rather than to men. By these words I do not mean to convey the idea that her nature led her habitually into any cold and over-calculating criticism of political leaders whom she admired, and in whom she had been led to feel confidence.

Her generous nature was enthusiastic in its admiration of the men whose leadership in some great political movement had won her sympathy from the first; but even with these her admiration was overruled and kept in order by her devotion to the principles which they were undertaking to carry into effect, and by the fidelity with which they adhered to these principles. Even among intelligent and enlightened men and women we often find in our observation of public affairs that there are instances in which the followers of a trusted leader are carried away by their personal devotion into the championship of absolute errors which the leader is committing—errors that might prove perilous or even, for the time, fatal to the cause of which he is the recognised advocate.

Lady Russell always set the cause above the man, regarding him mainly as the instrument of the cause; and if the alternative were pressed upon her, would have withdrawn from his leadership rather than tacitly allow the cause to be misled. This, however, would have been done only as a last resort and after the most full, patient, and generous consideration of the personal as well as the public question.

We men do not expect to find in an enthusiastic, tender, and what may be called exquisitely feminine woman the quality of clear and guiding discrimination between the policy of the leader and the principles of the cause which he undertakes to lead. We are inclined to assume that the woman in such a case, if she has already made a hero of the man, will be apt to think that everything he proposes to do must be the right thing to do, and that any question raised as to the wisdom and justice of any course adopted by him is a treason against his leadership.

Lady Russell never seemed to me to yield for a moment to any such sentiment of mere hero-worship. She set, as I have said, the cause above the man, and she measured the man according to her interpretation of his policy towards the cause.

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But at the same time she was never one of those who cannot be convinced that some particular course is not the wisest and most just to adopt without at once rushing to the conclusion that the leader who makes any mistakes must be in the wrong because of wilfulness or mere incapacity, and is therefore not worthy any longer of admiration and trust.

I have many letters from her, written at the time of some serious crisis in the fortunes of the Irish National movement, which show the keenest and the earliest intelligence of some mistake in the policy of the party on this or that immediate question without showing the slightest inclination to diminish her confidence in the sincerity and the purposes of its leaders, any more than in the justice of the cause. I can well recollect that in many instances she proved to be absolutely in the right when she thus gave me her opinion, and that events afterwards fully maintained the wisdom and the justice of her criticism. The reason why so many of Lady Russell's opinions were conveyed to me by letter was that I had to be, like all my companions of the Irish Parliamentary Party, a constant attendant at the debates in the House of Commons, and that many days often passed without my having an opportunity to visit Lady Russell and converse with her on the subjects which had so deep an interest for her as well as for me. I therefore was in the habit of writing often to her from the House of Commons in order to give her my own ideas as to the significance and importance of this or that debate, of this or that speech and its probable effect on the House and on the outer public. Lady Russell never failed to favour me with her own views on such subjects, and the views were always her own, and were never a mere good-natured and friendly adoption of the opinions thus offered to her.

Then, when I had the opportunity of visiting her at Pembroke Lodge, we were sure to compare and discuss our views in the conversations which she made so delightful and so inspiring.

One of her marvellous qualities was that her interest and her intellect were never wholly absorbed in the passing political questions, but that she could still keep her mind open to other and entirely different subjects. The chamber of her mind seemed to me to be like one of those mysterious apartments about which we read in fairy stories, which were endowed with a magical capacity of expansion and reception.

I have come to her home at a time when, for those whose lives were mainly passed in political work, there was some subject then engaging the attention of all politicians in these countries—some subject in which I well knew that Lady Russell was deeply and thoroughly interested.

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But it sometimes happened that there were friends just then with her who did not profess any interest in politics, and who were mainly concerned about some new topic in letters or art or science, and I often observed with admiration the manner in which Lady Russell could give herself up for the time to the question in which those visitors were chiefly interested, and could show her sympathy and knowledge as if she had not lately been thinking of anything else. About this there was evidently no mere desire to please her latest visitors, no sense of obligation to submit herself for the time to their especial subject, but a genuine sympathy with every effort of human intellect, and a sincere desire to gather all that could be gathered from every garden of human culture.

Many of Lady Russell's letters to me on the events and the fortunes, the hopes and the disasters of our Irish National movement have in them an actual historical interest, such as the one dated November 27, 1890, which is quoted in this volume. It was written during the crisis which came upon our Irish National party at the time when the hopes of Mr. Parnell's most devoted friends in England as well as in Ireland were that after the result of a recent divorce suit Parnell would resign, for a time at least, the leadership of the party and only seek to return to it when he should have made what reparation was in his power to his own honour and to public feeling. In a letter of December 26, 1891, Lady Russell says: "Your poor country has risen victorious from many a worse fall, and will not be disheartened now, nor bate a jot of heart or hope."

Lady Russell's letters not merely illustrate her deep and noble sympathy with the cause and the hopes of Ireland, but also they are evidence of the clear judgment and foresight which were qualities at once of her intellect and of her feeling. Scattered throughout her letters to me are many other evidences of the same kind with regard to other great political and social questions then coming up at home or abroad. I wish to say, however, that her letters do not by any means occupy themselves only with political questions, with Parliamentary debates, and with legislative measures. To paraphrase the words of the great Latin poet, whatever men and women were doing in arts and letters, in social progress, and in all that concerns humanity, supplied congenial subjects for the letters written by this most gifted, most observant, most intellectual woman to her friends.

One certainly has not lived in vain who has had the honour of being admitted to that friendship for some twenty years.

I have no words, literally none, in which to express adequately the admiration and the affection and the devotion which I felt for Lady Russell. No higher type of womanhood has yet been born into our modern world.

Lady Agatha Russell is rendering a most valuable service to humanity in preparing and giving to the world the records of her mother's life which appear in this volume. A monument more appropriate and more noble could not be raised over any grave than that which the daughter is thus raising to the memory of her mother.

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APPENDIX

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

BY FREDERIC HARRISON

After Lady Russell's death a few friends decided—unknown to her family, who were touched by this mark of respect—to put up a tablet to her memory and hold a Memorial Service in the Free Church at Richmond, Surrey. The tablet, which is of beaten copper, beautifully worked, bears the following inscription:—

In memory of Frances Anna Maria, daughter of Gilbert, second Earl of Minto, and widow of Lord John Russell, who was born November 15, 1815, and died January 17, 1898. In gratitude to God for her noble life this tablet is placed by her fellow-worshippers.

The Memorial Service was held on July 14, 1900, when the tablet was unveiled and the following address was delivered by Mr. Frederic Harrison.

Now that our gathering of to-day has given full scope to the loving sorrow and filial piety of the children, descendants, and family of her whom we meet to commemorate and honour—now that the minister, whom she was accustomed to hear, and the worshippers, with whom she was wont to join in praise and prayer, have recorded their solemn union in the same sacred memory, I crave leave to offer my humble tribute of devotion as representing the general circle of her friends, and the far wider circle of the public to whom she was known only by her life, her character, her nobility of soul, and her benefactions.I do not presume to speak of that beauty of nature which Frances Countess Russell showed in the sanctity of the family, in the close intimacy of her private friends. Others have done this far more truly, and will continue to bear witness to her life whilst this generation and the next shall survive. My only title to join my voice to-day with that of her children and of this congregation resides in the fact that my memory of her goes back over so long a period; that I have known her under circumstances, first, of the highest public activity, and then again, in a time of severe retirement and private simplicity; that I have seen her in days of happiness and in days of mourning; at the height of her influence and dignity in the eyes of our nation and of the nations about us, as well as in her days of grief and disappointment at the failure of her hopes, and the break up of the causes she had at heart. And I have known her always, in light or in gloom, in joy or in misery, the same brave, fearless, natural, and true heart—come fair or foul, come triumph or defeat.Yes! it was my privilege to have known Lady Russell in the lifetime of the eminent statesman whose name she bore, and whose life of toil in the public service she inspired; I knew them five-and-thirty years ago, when he was at the head of the State Government and immersed in public cares. And I am one of those who can bear witness to the simple dignity

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with which she adorned that high station and office, and the beautiful affection and quiet peace of the home-life she maintained, like a Roman matron, when her husband was called to serve the State. And it so happened that I passed part of the last summer that she lived to see, here in Richmond, within a short walk of her house. There I saw her constantly and held many conversations with her upon public affairs; and perhaps those were amongst the last occasions on which her powerful sense and heroic spirit had full play before the fatal illness which supervened in that very autumn.I do not hesitate to speak of her powerful sense and her heroic spirit, for she united the statesman-like insight into political problems with the unflinching courage to stand by the cause of truth, humanity, and justice. She was not impulsive at all, not hasty in forming her decisions, still less did she seek publicity or take pleasure in heading a movement. But, with the great experience of politicians and of political things which in her long life and her rare opportunities she had acquired, she saw straight to the heart of so many vexed problems of our day; and when once convinced of the truth, she held fast to it with a noble intrepidity of soul. In a life more or less conversant with public men now for forty years past, I have rarely known either man or woman who had a more sound judgment in great public questions. And I have known none who surpassed her in courage, in directness, and in fixity of purpose. No sense that she and her friends had to meet overwhelming odds would ever make her faint-hearted. No desertion by friends and old comrades ever caused her to waver. No despair ever touched that stalwart soul, however dark the outlook might appear; for it was her faith that no right or just cause was ever really lost, however for the time it were defeated and contemned.Lady Frances Elliot, as she was before marriage, came of a race of soldiers, governors, and tried servants of the State, and she married into a race which has long stood in the front rank of the historic servants of the Crown and of the people. But neither the house of Elliot nor that of Russell in so many generations ever bred man or woman with a keener sense of public duty, a more generous nature, and a more magnanimous soul. In the annals of that famous house, whose traditions are part of the history of England, there has been no finer example of the old motto, *noblesse oblige*, if we understand it to mean—those who have high place inherit with it heavy responsibilities. That idea was the breath of her life to Countess Russell, as assuredly it was also to her husband, and she whose memory we keep sacred to-day is worthy to take her place beside that Rachel Lady Russell of old, who, more than two centuries ago, suffered so deeply in the cause of freedom and of conscience; she whose blood runs in the veins of the children who to-day revere the memory of their mother.

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The Italians call a man of heroic nature—a Garibaldi or a Manin—*uomo antico*—“one of the ancient type”—one whom we rarely see in our modern days of getting on in the world and following the popular cry. I have never heard the phrase applied to a lady, and, perhaps, *donna antica* might be held to bear a double sense. But we need some such phrase to describe the fine quality of the spirit which lit up the whole nature of Frances Countess Russell. She had within her that rare flame which we attribute to the martyrs of our sacred and secular histories—that power of inspiring those whom she impressed with the resolve to do the right, to seek the truth, to defend the oppressed, at all cost, and against all odds.It has been my privilege to have listened to many men and to some women who in various countries and in different causes have been held to have exerted great influence, and to have forced ideas, principles, and reforms on the men of their time. But I have listened to none in our country or abroad who seemed to me to inspire the spirit more purely with the desire to hold fast by the right, to thrust aside the wrong, to be just, faithful, considerate, and honourable, to feel for the fatherless and the poor, and not to despise the humble and the meek. I know that all my remaining term of life there will remain deeply engraven on my memory all that she said, all that she felt, in the last conversation I ever held with her at the very commencement of her last fatal illness. Weak and suffering as she was, unable to rise from her invalid chair, she asked me to come and tell her what I knew, and to hear what she felt about the public crisis of that time (I speak of the end of 1897). The storm of South Africa was even then rising like a cloud no bigger than a man’s hand out of the southern seas. I listened to her: and her deep and thrilling words of indignation, shame, pity, and honour sank into my mind, as if they had been the last words of some pure and higher spirit that was about to leave us, but would not leave us without words of warning and exhortation to follow honour, to serve truth, to eschew evil and to do good, to seek peace and ensue it. I knew well that I was listening to her for the last time; for her life was visibly ebbing away. But I listened to her as to one who was passing into a world of greater permanence and of more spiritual meaning than our fleeting and too material world of sense and sight. And for the rest of my life I shall continue to bear in my heart this message as it seemed to me of a nobler world and of a higher truth.Yes! she has passed into a nobler world and to a higher truth—the world of the good and just men and women whose memory survives their mortal career, and whose inspiring influence works for good ever in generations to come. In this Free Church I can speak freely, for I too profoundly believe in a future life of every good

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and pure soul beyond the grave, in the perpetuity of every just and noble life in the sum of human progress and enlightenment. And in a sense that is quite as real as yours, even if it differ from your sense in form, I also make bold to say, this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality—Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of Humanity, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in Humanity.Surely we have before us a high example of what it is to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in good work, in the memory of Frances Elliot Countess Russell, who united in herself principles typified in the historic mottoes of her own house and that of her husband's—who kept her high courage under all adversities and opposition, in the spirit of *che sara sara*, "stand fast come what may"—in the spirit of that other motto of the Elliots, *suaviter el fortiter*, "with all the gentleness of a woman and all the fortitude of a man."

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