

VARIOUS

IMPERIALISM
AND MR.
GLADSTONE

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Imperialism and Mr. Gladstone 1876-1887:*

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Various Imperialism and Mr. Gladstone 1876-1887

INTRODUCTION

This series of English History Source Books is intended for use with any ordinary textbook of English History. Experience has conclusively shown that such apparatus is a valuable – nay, an indispensable – adjunct to the history lesson. It is capable of two main uses: either by way of lively illustration at the close of a lesson, or by way of inference-drawing, before the textbook is read, at the beginning of the lesson. The kind of problems and exercises that may be based on the documents are legion, and are admirably illustrated in a *History of England for Schools*, Part I., by Keatinge and Frazer, pp. 377-381. However, we have no wish to prescribe for the teacher the manner in which he shall exercise his craft, but simply to provide him and his pupils with materials hitherto not readily accessible for school purposes. The very moderate price of the books in this series should bring them within reach of every secondary school. Source books enable the pupil to take a more active part than hitherto in the history lesson. Here is the apparatus, the raw material: its use we leave to teacher

and taught.

Our belief is that the books may profitably be used by all grades of historical students between the standards of fourth-form boys in secondary schools and undergraduates at Universities. What differentiates students at one extreme from those at the other is not so much the kind of subject-matter dealt with, as the amount they can read into or extract from it.

In regard to choice of subject-matter, while trying to satisfy the natural demand for certain "stock" documents of vital importance, we hope to introduce much fresh and novel matter. It is our intention that the majority of the extracts should be lively in style – that is, personal, or descriptive, or rhetorical, or even strongly partisan – and should not so much profess to give the truth as supply data for inference. We aim at the greatest possible variety, and lay under contribution letters, biographies, ballads and poems, diaries, debates, and newspaper accounts. Economics, London, municipal, and social life generally, and local history, are represented in these pages.

The order of the extracts is strictly chronological, each being numbered, titled, and dated, and its authority given. The text is modernized, where necessary, to the extent of leaving no difficulties in reading.

We shall be most grateful to teachers and students who may send us suggestions for improvement.

S. E. WINBOLT.

KENNETH BELL.

NOTE TO THIS VOLUME

I acknowledge, with thanks to the authors concerned, and to Messrs. Macmillan and Co., their kind permission to reprint in this volume the following passages: that on p. 102, from the Life of Lord Randolph Churchill, by the Right Hon. Winston Churchill; three extracts, on pp. 59, 62, 83, from Mahdiism and the Egyptian Soudan, by Sir Francis Wingate; the passages from Lord Morley's Life of Gladstone, on pp. 97, 98, 101, 110; and the passages from Lord Cromer's Modern Egypt, on pp. 68, 69, 70, 87. I acknowledge also with thanks the permission of the proprietors of The Times to reprint the various extracts from that journal; and the permission of the proprietors of The Saturday Review to reprint the extract on p. 35. In dealing with a period so recent, I have inevitably been very dependent upon the courtesy of the owners of copyright, and I wish to express my gratitude for the readiness with which that courtesy has been extended in these important cases.

I am also indebted to Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. for permission to print extracts from Professor Mackail's Life of William Morris, and from Mr. Bernard Holland's Life of the late Duke of Devonshire, and to Messrs. Kegan Paul and Co. for similar permission to quote from General Gordon's Journal.

R. H. G.

PURCHASE OF THE SUEZ CANAL SHARES (1876)

Source.—*Hansard*, Third Series, vol. 227, col. 95 (Debate on the Address, February, 1876)

Mr. Disraeli: ... When we acceded to office two years ago an International Commission had only just ceased its labours at Constantinople upon the dues of the Suez Canal, and upon the means of ascertaining and maintaining a limit of them, and it had arrived at reasons entirely protested against by the proprietary. What was the state of affairs there? Lord Derby had to deal with them. The proprietary of the canal threatened, and not only threatened, but proceeded, to stop the canal. They refused pilots; they threatened to change the signals; they took steps which would have interrupted that mode of intercourse with India... From that moment it became a matter of interest to those responsible for the government of this country to see what could be done to remedy those relations with the Suez Canal... But it suddenly comes to our knowledge that the Khedive, on whose influence we mainly depended, is going to part with his shares. We received a telegram from Cairo informing us that the Khedive was anxious to raise a considerable sum of money upon

his shares in the Suez Canal, and offered them to England. We considered the question immediately, and it appeared to us to be a complicated transaction – one to which there were several objections; and we sent back to say that we were favourably disposed to assist the Khedive, but that at the same time we were only prepared to purchase the shares outright. What was the answer? The answer was that the Khedive was resolved, if he possibly could, to keep his shares, and that he could only therefore avail himself of a loan. There matters seemed to end. Then suddenly there came news to the Government of this country that a French society – Société Générale – was prepared to offer the Khedive a large sum of money – very little inferior to the four millions – but on very onerous conditions. The Khedive communicated with us, and said that the conditions were so severe that he would sooner sell the shares outright, and – which I had forgotten to mention – that, in deference to his promise that England should always have the refusal of the shares if he decided to sell them, he offered them to the English Government. It was absolutely necessary to decide at that moment what course we should take. It was not a thing on which we could hesitate... To pretend that Lord Derby has treated this business as a mere commercial speculation is idle. If he did not act in accordance with the principles of high policy, I should like to know what high policy is, and how a man can pursue it.

Apart from looking upon this as an investment, if the shares had been offered, and if there had been no arrangement of paying

interest for nineteen years, so far as I am concerned, I should have been in favour of the purchase of the shares. I should have agreed with Lord Derby in thinking that England would never be satisfied if all the shares of the Suez Canal were possessed by a foreign company. Then it is said, if any obstacles had been put in your way by the French proprietors of the canal, you know very well that ultimately it must come to force, and you will then obtain at once the satisfaction of your desire. Well, if the government of the world was a mere alternation between abstract right and overwhelming force, I agree there is a good deal in that observation; but that is not the way in which the world is governed. The world is governed by conciliation, compromise, influence, varied interests, the recognition of the rights of others, coupled with the assertion of one's own; and, in addition, a general conviction, resulting from explanation and good understanding, that it is for the interests of all parties that matters should be conducted in a satisfactory and peaceful manner... I cannot doubt that the moral influence of England possessing two-fifths of the shares in this great undertaking must have made itself felt, must have a considerable influence upon the conduct of those who manage the company... England is a Mediterranean Power; a great Mediterranean Power. This is shown by the fact that in time of war always, and frequently in time of peace, she has the greatest force upon those waters. Furthermore, she has strongholds upon those waters which she will never relinquish. The policy of England, however, is not

one of aggression. It is not provinces she wants. She will not interest herself in the redistribution of territory on the shores of the Mediterranean, as long as the redistribution does not imperil the freedom of the seas and the dominion which she legitimately exercises. And therefore I look upon this, that in the great chain of fortresses which we possess, almost from the Metropolis to India, that the Suez Canal is a means of securing the free intercourse of the waters, is a great addition to that security, and one we should prize.

ENGLAND, RUSSIA, AND AFGHANISTAN (1876)

Source.—*Parliamentary Publications*,
"Afghanistan," C 2, 190, of 1878, p. 156

Extract from Lord Salisbury's Despatch to the Viceroy of India, dated February 28, 1876

The increasing weakness and uncertainty of British influence in Afghanistan constitutes a prospective peril to British interests; the deplorable interruption of it in Khelat inflicts upon them an immediate inconvenience by involving the cessation of all effective control over the turbulent and predatory habits of the trans-Indus tribes. In view of these considerations, Her Majesty's Government have ... instructed the Viceroy to find an early occasion for sending to Cabul a temporary mission, furnished with such instructions as may, perhaps, enable it to overcome the Ameer's apparent reluctance to the establishment of permanent British Agencies in Afghanistan, by convincing His Highness that the Government of India is ... willing to afford him material

support in the defence of his territories from any actual and unprovoked external aggression, but that it cannot practically avert or provide for such a contingency without timely and unrestricted permission to place its own agents in those parts of his dominions whence they may best watch the course of events. It appears to Her Majesty's Government that the present moment is favourable for the execution of this last-mentioned instruction. The Queen's assumption of the Imperial title in relation to Her Majesty's Indian subjects, feudatories, and allies will now for the first time conspicuously transfer to her Indian dominion, in form as well as in fact, the supreme authority of the Indian Empire... The maintenance in Afghanistan of a strong and friendly power has at all times been the object of British policy. The attainment of this object is now to be considered with due reference to the situation created by the recent and rapid advance of the Russian arms in Central Asia towards the Northern frontiers of British India. Her Majesty's Government cannot view with complete indifference the probable influence of that situation upon the uncertain character of an Oriental Chief whose ill-defined dominions are thus brought, within a steadily narrowing circle, between the conflicting pressures of two great military Empires, one of which expostulates and remains passive, whilst the other apologizes and continues to move forward. It is well known that not only the English newspapers, but also all works published in England upon Indian questions, are rapidly translated for the information of the Ameer, and carefully studied by His Highness.

Sentiments of irritation and alarm at the advancing power of Russia in Central Asia find frequent expression through the English press, in language which, if taken by Shere Ali for a revelation of the mind of the English Government, must have long been accumulating in his mind impressions unfavourable to its confidence in British power... Her Majesty's Government would not, therefore, view with indifference any attempt on the part of Russia to compete with British influence in Afghanistan, nor could the Ameer's reception of a British Agent (whatever be the official rank or function of that Agent) in any part of the dominions of His Highness afford for his subsequent reception of a Russian Agent any pretext to which the Government of Her Majesty would not be entitled to, except as incompatible with the assurances spontaneously offered to it by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. You will bear in mind these facts when framing instructions for your mission to Cabul... The conduct of Shere Ali has more than once been characterized by so significant a disregard of the wishes and interests of the Government of India that the irretrievable alienation of his confidence in the sincerity and power of that Government is a contingency which cannot be dismissed as impossible. Should such a fear be confirmed by the result of the proposed negotiation, no time must be lost in reconsidering, from a new point of view, the policy to be pursued in reference to Afghanistan.

THE QUEEN AS EMPRESS OF INDIA (1876)

Source.—*Hansard*, Third Series, vol. 227, col. 1,736 (Debate on Royal Titles Bill, March 9, 1876)

Mr. Gladstone: . . . In my opinion this is a matter of the greatest importance. We have had some declarations in this House with respect to India. The hon. member for West Cumberland (Mr. Percy Wyndham), on the night when the right hon. gentleman first made his proposal, said that an Imperial title would be the one most suitable, because it would signify that Her Majesty governed India without the restraints of law or constitution.

Mr. Percy Wyndham: I said that the Government of India was a despotic Government, not in the hands of one person, and not, as in this country, a constitutional Government in the hands of the Queen and the Houses of Lords and Commons. The Government of India is essentially a despotic Government as administered by us, although it includes more than one individual.

Mr. Gladstone: I am very much obliged, and I perceive completely the hon. member's meaning; but I am sorry that to that meaning, as it stands, I take the greatest objection. If it be true – and it is true – that we govern India without the restraints

of law, except such law as we make ourselves; if it be true that we have not been able to give to India the benefit and blessings of free institutions, I leave it to the hon. gentleman – I leave it to the right hon. gentleman if he thinks fit – to boast that he is about to place that fact solemnly upon record. By the assumption of the title of Empress, I for one will not attempt to turn into glory that which, so far as it is true, I feel to be our weakness and our calamity... It is plain that the government of India – that is, the entire India – never has yet, by statute, been vested in Her Majesty; but that which has been vested is the government of the countries which were held in trust for Her Majesty by the East India Company. I would be the last man to raise this question if it were a mere verbal quibble. It is as far as possible from being a question merely verbal... I am under the belief that to this moment there are important Princes and States in India over which we have never assumed dominion, whatever may have been our superiority of strength. We are now going, by Act of Parliament, to assume that dominion, the possible consequences of which no man can foresee; and when the right hon. gentleman tells us the Princes desire this change to be made, does he really mean to assure us that this is the case? If so, I require distinct evidence of the fact. There are Princes in India who, no doubt, have hitherto enjoyed no more than a theoretical political supremacy, but do they desire to surrender even that under the provisions of this Bill? The right hon. gentleman is going to advise the Queen to become

Empress of India. I raise the question, What is India? I have said that the dominion now vested in Her Majesty is limited to the territories vested in the East India Company. I ask whether the supremacy of certain important Native States in India ever was vested in the Company, or whether it was not? We are bound to ask the right hon. gentleman – and I think he is bound to answer the question through the medium of his best legal authorities – whether this supremacy is so vested or not, and whether he can assure us upon his responsibility that no political change in the condition of the Native Princes of India will be effected by this Bill. If there is a political change effected, I do not hesitate to say I do not think it would be possible to offer too determined an opposition to the proposal of the Government... I feel with the right hon. gentleman – indeed, I feel a little more than the right hon. gentleman – the greatness, the unsullied greatness, of the title which is now borne by the Queen of England. I think I use the language of moderation when I say that it is a title unequalled for its dignity and weight, unequalled for the glory of its historic associations, unequalled for the promise which it offers to the future, among the titles of the Sovereigns of Europe, among all the states and nations on earth. Sir, I have a jealousy of touching that title, and I am not to be told that this is a small matter. There is nothing small in a matter, in my judgment, which touches the honour and dignity of the Crown of England... The right hon. gentleman has indeed manfully contended that there is no inferiority in the title of King as compared with that of

Emperor. . . I want to know why I am to be dragged into novelties, or into comparisons on a subject of this sort?.. There is one other point on which I am anxious to make a few comments. I was, I own, struck by what fell from my right hon. friend the member for the University of London (Mr. Lowe) the other evening in reference to the colonies. Whether it be desirable to make any recital with regard to the colonies or not, it is a subject which requires much consideration whether we can wisely introduce reference to India in the title of the Sovereign, while we at the same time take no notice of the colonies.

BULGARIAN ATROCITIES (1876)

I. Thunder from Mr. Gladstone

Source.— Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, 1876, p. 10

In default of Parliamentary action, and a public concentrated as usual, we must proceed as we can, with impaired means of appeal. But honour, duty, compassion, and I must add shame, are sentiments never in a state of *coma*. The working-men of the country, whose condition is less affected than that of others by the season, have to their honour led the way, and shown that the great heart of Britain has not ceased to beat. And the large towns and cities, now following in troops, are echoing back, each from its own place, the mingled notes of horror, pain, and indignation... A curtain opaque and dense, which at the prorogation had been lifted but a few inches from the ground, has since then, from day to day, been slowly rising. And what a scene it has disclosed! And where!

... I have the fullest confidence in the honour and in the intelligence of Mr. Baring, who has been inquiring on behalf of

England. But he was not sent to examine the matter until the 19th of July, three months after the rising, and nearly one month after the first inquiries in Parliament. He had been but two days at Philippopolis, when he sent home, with all the despatch he could use, some few rudiments of a future report. Among them was his estimate of the murders, necessarily far from final, at the figure of twelve thousand.

We know that we had a well-manned Embassy at Constantinople, and a network of Consulates and Vice-Consulates, really discharging diplomatic duties, all over the provinces of European Turkey. That villages could be burned down by scores, and men, women, and children murdered, or worse than murdered, by thousands, in a Turkish province lying between the capital and the scene of the recent excitements, and that our Embassy and Consulates could know nothing of it? The thing was impossible. It could not be. So silence was obtained, and relief; and the well-oiled machinery of our luxurious, indifferent life worked smoothly on...

It was on the 20th of April that the insurrection broke out in Bulgaria... On the 9th of May Sir Henry Elliot ... observing a great Mohammedan excitement, and an extensive purchase of arms in Constantinople, wisely telegraphed to the British Admiral in the Mediterranean expressing a desire that he would bring his squadron to Besika Bay. The purpose was for the protection of British subjects, and of the Christians in general... These measures were substantially wise, and purely pacific. They

had, if understood rightly, no political aspect, or, if any, one rather anti-Turkish than Turkish. But there were reasons, and strong reasons, why the public should not have been left to grope out for itself the meaning of a step so serious as the movement of a naval squadron towards a country disturbed both by revolt and by an outbreak of murderous fanaticism. In the year 1853, when the negotiations with Russia had assumed a gloomy and almost a hopeless aspect, the English and French fleets were sent eastwards; not as a measure of war, but as a measure of preparation for war, and proximate to war. The proceedings marked a transition of discussion into that angry stage which immediately precedes a blow; and the place, to which the fleets were then sent, was Besika Bay. In the absence of information, how could the British nation avoid supposing that the same act, as that done in 1853, bore also the same meaning?.. The expectation of a rupture pervaded the public mind. The Russian funds fell very heavily, under a war panic; partisans exulted in a diplomatic victory, and in the increase of what is called our *prestige*, the bane, in my opinion, of all upright politics. The Turk was encouraged in his humour of resistance. And this, as we now know, while his hands were so reddened with Bulgarian blood. Foreign capitals were amazed at the martial excitement in London. But the Government spoke never a word... And this ostentatious protection to Turkey, this wanton disturbance of Europe, was continued by our Ministry, with what I must call a strange perversity, for weeks and weeks...

What we have to guard against is imposture – that Proteus with a thousand forms. A few months ago the new Sultan served the turn, and very well. Men affirmed that he must have time. And now another new Sultan is in the offing. I suppose it will be argued that he must have time too. Then there will be, perhaps, new constitutions; firmans of reforms; proclamations to commanders of Turkish armies, enjoining extra humanity. All these should be quietly set down as simply zero. At this moment we hear of the adoption by the Turks of the last and most enlightened rule of warfare – namely, the Geneva Convention. They might just as well adopt the Vatican Council or the British Constitution. All these things are not even the oysters before the dinner. Still worse is any plea founded upon any reports made by Turkish authority upon the Bulgarian outrages... I return to, and I end with, that which is the Omega as well as the Alpha of this great and most mournful case. An old servant of the Crown and State, I entreat my countrymen, upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require, and to insist, that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner – namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from

the province they have desolated and profaned. This thorough riddance, this most blessed deliverance, is the only reparation we can make to the memory of those heaps on heaps of dead; to the violated purity alike of matron, of maiden, and of child; to the civilization which has been affronted and shamed; to the laws of God, or, if you like, of Allah; to the moral sense of mankind at large. There is not a criminal in a European gaol, there is not a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation would not rise and overboil at the recital of that which has been done, which has left behind all the foul and all the fierce passions that produced it, and which may again spring up, in another murderous harvest, from the soil soaked and reeking with blood, and in the air tainted with every imaginable deed of crime and shame.

II. Cold Water from Disraeli

Source.— Hansard, Third Series, vol. 231, col. 1,138, August 11, 1876 (Third Reading of the Appropriation Bill; Bulgarian Atrocities raised)

Mr. Disraeli: ... Let me at once place before the House what I believe is the true view of the circumstances which principally interest us to-night, for, after the Rhodian eloquence to which we have just listened, it is rather difficult for the House to see clearly the point which is before it. The Queen's Ambassador at Constantinople, who has at all times no easy duty to fulfil, found himself at the end of April and in the first three weeks of May in a position of extreme difficulty and danger. Affairs in Constantinople never had assumed – at least in our time, certainly – a more perilous character. It was difficult to ascertain what was going to happen; but that something was going to happen, and something of a character which might disturb the relations of the Porte with all the Powers of Europe, and might even bring about a revolution, the effect of which would be felt in distant countries, there was no doubt... In the present instance the hon. and learned gentleman has made one assumption throughout his speech – that there has been no communication whatever

between the Queen's Ambassador at Constantinople and Her Majesty's Ministers upon the subject in discussion; that we never heard of those affairs until the newspapers published accounts. The state of the facts is the reverse. From the very first period that these transactions occurred – from the very commencement – the Ambassador was in constant communication with Her Majesty's Ministers. (No, no.) Why, that may be proved by the papers on the table. Throughout the months of May and June the Ambassador is constantly referring to the atrocities occurring in Bulgaria and to the repeated protests which he is making to the Turkish Government, and informing Her Majesty's Government of interviews and conversations with the Grand Vizier on that subject. The hon. and learned gentleman says that when questions were addressed to me in this House I was perfectly ignorant of what was taking place. But that is exactly the question we have to settle to-night. I say that we were not perfectly ignorant of what was taking place... I agree that even the slightest estimate of the horrors that occurred in Bulgaria is quite enough to excite the indignation of this country and of Parliament; but when you come to say that we were ignorant of all that was occurring, and did nothing to counteract it, because we said in answer to Questions that the information which had reached us did not warrant the statements that were quoted in the House – these are two entirely different questions. In the newspaper which has been referred to the first account was, if I recollect aright, that 30,000 or 32,000 persons had been slain; that 10,000 were in prison; it

was also stated that 1,000 girls had been sold in the open market, that 40 girls had been burnt alive in a stable; and cartloads of human heads paraded through the streets of the cities of Bulgaria – these were some of, though not all, the statements made; and I was perfectly justified in saying that the information which had reached us did not justify these statements, and therefore we believed them to be exaggerated... Lord Derby telegraphed to Sir Henry Elliot that it was very important that Her Majesty's Government should be able to reply to the inquiries made in Parliament respecting these and other statements, and directed Sir Henry Elliot to inquire by telegram of the Consuls, and report as soon as he could. All these statements are untrue. There never were forty maidens locked up in a stable and burnt alive. That was ascertained with great care by Mr. Baring, and I am surprised that the right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford should still speak of it as a statement in which he has confidence. I believe it to be an entire fabrication. I believe also it is an entire fabrication that 1,000 young women were sold in the market as slaves. We have not received the slightest evidence of a single sale, even in those journals on which the right hon. gentleman the member for Bradford founded his erratic speech. I have been attacked for saying that I did not believe it was possible to have 10,000 persons in prison in Bulgaria. So far as I can ascertain from the papers, there never could have been more than 3,000. As to the 10,000 cases of torture, what evidence is there of a single case of torture? We know very well that there has been

considerable slaughter; that there must have been isolated and individual cases of most atrocious rapine, and outrages of a most atrocious kind; but still we have had communications with Sir Henry Elliot, and he has always assumed from what he knew that these cases of individual rapine and outrage were occurring. He knew that civil war there was carried on under conditions of brutality which, unfortunately, are not unprecedented in that country; and the question is whether the information we had justified the extravagant statements made in Parliament, which no one pretends to uphold and defend... The hon. and learned member (Sir W. Harcourt) has done full justice to the Bulgarian atrocities. He has assumed as absolutely true everything that criticism and more authentic information had modified, and in some cases had proved not merely to be exaggeration but to be absolute falsehoods. And then the hon. and learned gentleman says – "By your policy you have depopulated a province." Well, sir, certainly the slaughter of 12,000 individuals, whether Turks or Bulgarians, whether they were innocent peasants or even brigands, is a horrible event which no one can think of without emotion. But when I remember that the population of Bulgaria is 3,700,000 persons, and that it is a very large country, is it not a most extravagant abuse of rhetoric to say that the slaughter of so considerable a number as 12,000 is the depopulation of a province? Well, the hon. and learned gentleman said also that Her Majesty's Government had incurred a responsibility which is not possessed by any other country as regards our relations

with and our influence with the Turks. I say that we have incurred no responsibility which is not shared with us by all the other contracting Powers to the Treaty of Paris. I utterly disclaim any peculiar responsibility... That an hon. and learned gentleman, once a member of a Government and an ornament of that Government, should counsel as the solution of all these difficulties that Her Majesty's Government should enter into an immediate combination to expel the Turkish nation from Eastern Europe does indeed surprise me. And because we are not prepared to enter into a scheme so quixotic as that would be, we are held up as having given our moral, not to say our material, support to Turkey... We are, it is true, the allies of Turkey; so is Austria, so is Russia, so is France, and so are others. We are also their partners in a tripartite Treaty, in which we not only generally, but singly, guarantee with France and Austria the territorial integrity of Turkey. And if these engagements, renovated and repeated only four years ago by the wisdom of Europe, are to be treated by the hon. and learned gentleman as idle wind and chaff, and if we are to be told that our political duty is by force to expel the Turks to the other side of the Bosphorus, then politics cease to be an art, statesmanship becomes a mere mockery, and instead of being a House of Commons faithful to its traditions, and which is always influenced, I have ever thought, by sound principles of policy, whoever may be its leaders, we had better at once resolve ourselves into one of those revolutionary clubs which settle all political and social questions with the same

ease as the hon. and learned member.

[Note. – This was Disraeli's last speech as a member of the House of Commons. He was raised to the peerage on August 12, 1876.]

SIR THEOPHILUS SHEPSTONE'S COMMISSION (1877)

Source.—*The Times*, January 7

Whereas grievous disturbances have broken out in the territories adjacent to Our colonies in South Africa, with war between the white inhabitants and the native races, to the great peril of the peace and safety of Our said colonies; and whereas, having regard to the safety of Our said colonies, it greatly concerns Us that full inquiry should be made into the origin, nature, and circumstances of the said disturbances, and with respect to the measures to be adopted for preventing the recurrence of the like disturbances in the future; and whereas it may become requisite to this end that the said territories, or portions of them, should be administered in Our name and in Our behalf.

Now know you that We, having especial trust and confidence in the loyalty and fidelity of you, the said Sir Theophilus Shepstone, have appointed you to be Our special Commissioner for the purpose of making such inquiry as aforesaid ... and if the emergency seem to you to be such as to render it necessary, in order to secure the peace and safety of Our said colonies,

and of Our subjects elsewhere, that the said territories, or any portion or portions of the same, should be provisionally, and pending the announcement of Our pleasure, be administered in Our name and on Our behalf, then, and in such case only, We do further authorize you, the said Sir Theophilus Shepstone, by proclamation under your hand, to declare that from and after a day to be therein named, so much of any such territories aforesaid as to you, after due consideration, shall seem fit, shall be annexed and form part of Our dominions.

And We do hereby constitute and appoint you to be thereupon Administrator of the same provisionally and until Our pleasure is more fully known.

Provided, first, that no such proclamation shall be issued by you with respect to any district, territory, or state, unless you shall be satisfied that the inhabitants thereof, or a sufficient number of them, or the Legislature thereof, desire to become Our subjects; nor if any conditions unduly limiting Our power and authority therein are sought to be imposed...

RUSSIA DECLARES WAR ON TURKEY (1877)

Source.—*The Times*, April 25

We have not a word to say in defence of the Porte. We admit that it was guilty, as Lord Salisbury has confessed, of infatuation when it defied the Conference, and that it would have accepted even the Protocol, if it had possessed a tithe of the sagacity which was once a better protection of its weakness than ironclads are to-day. We may even admit that the Protocol was, what Prince Gortchakoff styles it, the last expression of the united will of Europe. But his story is fatally incomplete. It would have been desirable to know whether Russia has done her best to make it easy for Turkey to accept the undisguised tutelage of the European Powers. That question calls to mind how much the fanaticism of the Turks was inflamed by the covert aid which Russia gave to Servia. The Czar refers to the famous words which he spoke in the Kremlin. They were indeed the real declaration of war, for they prevented Russia from accepting anything less than the complete submission of Turkey. Russia might plead, no doubt, that as war was certain to be found an absolute necessity in the end, it mattered little how rudely she ruffled the Osmanli

pride. But in that case the negotiations of the past two years have been a series of hypocrisies. As it is, the general judgment is expressed by what Lord Derby said last night. While he found it hopeless to bend the will of Turkey towards submission, he equally found on the part of her Government "a deeply seated conviction that, do what they would, sooner or later war would be forced upon them." He believed that he and his colleagues have throughout been "engaged in the solution of a hopeless problem." Such, we fear, is the prosaic truth, and, whatever be the measure of Turkish obstinacy, Russia cannot escape condemnation. She has sometimes acted as if she wished to cut off a way of retreat both from herself and her foe... Russia has hastened to stop all further negotiations, and to act as if she and she alone had an interest in the tranquillity of the Turkish Empire. Thus she has forfeited any right to speak in the name of Europe. Nor has she given the Powers assurances which they had a right to expect. Nothing is said in the same strain as the declarations at Livadia, that Russia had no objects of territorial ambition... The Czar has committed a grave error by neglecting to proclaim that in no event would he seize Turkish territory.

IRISH OBSTRUCTION IN ITS EARLY DAYS (1877)

Source.—*The Times*, August 1

Mr. Parnell and his special friends greatly distinguished themselves in the House of Commons last night by the multiplicity of the motions in committee on the South Africa Bill. The Government adopted special means to wear out the tenacity of the members who thus consume hour after hour, for it had arranged that the House should sit until the work should be done, even if the discussion should last till breakfast time. But it does injustice to Mr. Parnell. He is the most misunderstood and most ill-used man in the House of Commons. Such is the burden of the long letter from him which we printed on Monday. He has been accused of trying to stop public business by floods of irrelevant speech. He has been charged with something like open disrespect for the authority of Mr. Speaker. He has been suspected of a wish to make Irish members intolerable, in the hope that weary Englishmen and Scotchmen would bid them begone to enjoy the beatitudes of Home Rule. He has made the Leader of the House, although the mildest of men, propose to banish him to the penal settlement of silence, and

the House has done him the honour of framing two new rules to impede the flow of his speech during the rest of the Session... The incorrectness of that accusation, he replies, is proved by the comparatively small use he has made of almost boundless opportunities. If his enemies speak of what he has done, he appeals to what he might have done. Has he obstructed every clause of every Bill? Has he even obstructed every Bill? Has he exhausted all the forms of the House even yet? These questions oppress us with a sense of his moderation. If he has done so much, he might have done so much more! As most Bills have at least ten clauses, as most clauses contain at least a hundred words, and as at least one amendment might be moved after each word, Mr. Parnell could have opposed each Bill with at least a thousand amendments, and he himself, Mr. Biggar, and Mr. O'Donnell could each have delivered at least a thousand speeches.

PLEVNA AFTER THE SIEGE (1877)

Source.—*The Times*, December 15

**From Our Special Correspondent. —
Plevna, December 11**

As I rode up the slope of the hill east of Plevna towards the redoubt defending the road between the town and the village of Radicheve, a ghastly scene was presented. Hundreds of Russian skeletons lay glistening on the hillsides, where they had fallen during the assault of September. The bones were generally completely bare. Those nearest to the earthwork had been covered with a few inches of earth, which had been washed off by the first shower, and now they lay as naked as the others. The Moslem outpost pits were among these skeletons, many of them not being more than a yard distant. Singular as it may seem, many of these skeletons had distinct expressions, both in the attitude in which they had fallen and in the position of the fleshless jaws. I could distinguish those who had fallen without suffering from those who had died in agony, and the effect was such as I shall never forget. The Russian soldiers who marched into Plevna in

the rear of Osman's sallying force passed among these remains of their unburied comrades... On entering the town I was surprised to find it so little injured by the cannonading...

Within a short time after Osman's surrender at the bridge over the Vid, on the Sofia road, the 16,000 prisoners were turned back into the town, with the artillery and transport trains... The Turks were well fed in appearance, but were generally ragged, and were all wearing sandals. No boots were to be seen, though most of them had overcoats... The contrast between these tatterdemalion battalions and the well-dressed men guarding them made the war appear a one-sided affair, until the reflection came that a ragged man shot as well as one perfectly equipped. Later in the day, standing on the Sofia road, in the Gravitza valley west of Plevna, I surveyed the whole basin forming Osman's position. The herbage and all other growing things had so effectually disappeared that the earth's surface looked as if a conflagration had swept over every square foot of it. The colour was a dull brown, and I never gazed upon a more dismal-looking region. The sides of the basin were serried by ravines, all centering in the valley where I stood, and upon the surrounding edges of the basin were the Turkish and Allied batteries planted in irregular line, but commanding every vantage-point of the neighbourhood... Where the Gravitza *chaussée* crosses the elevation the Turkish redoubts were weakest, and here the Russian artillery fire had been chiefly concentrated. The front and rear of the earthworks were ploughed up by shells, and in truth there was scarcely

a square yard which had not been struck. Thousands of such missiles, varying from 3 inches to 6 inches in diameter, lay unexploded upon the surface of the earth. In a previous telegram I said that these redoubts were battered to pieces; but I now discover that this was a curious error of vision. The works are practically uninjured. So far as the earthworks are concerned, the Russian artillery ammunition has been absolutely wasted, and from an inspection of the trenches I do not believe that the garrison has suffered more than their defences. Neither do I believe that any artillery could have accomplished more. The fact is that shells against earthworks are useless at a greater distance than 500 or 600 yards, and then the guns cannot be worked on account of the enemy's sharpshooters. The Turkish soldiers in the redoubts had bomb-proof abodes in the back walls of the pits... I was very much surprised to find the Turkish lines of fortification so weak, as far as the quantity of earthwork is concerned. The redoubts are much smaller than I supposed them to be... There are no double lines of infantry trenches – in fact, no interior lines of any sort; neither are there trenches on the hillsides below the redoubts. There are no lines of intrenchments for the reserves; indeed, there were apparently no reserves. When I saw this technically weak line I could not but admire the efficiency of the weapons with which it had been defended, and the stubborn tenacity of the men who could hold it against such assaults as the Allies have delivered against it. The Allies had double and treble lines around Plevna. Their works are much better constructed

than those of the Turks, so far as finish is concerned; but for safety I would rather trust myself to the latter... The Roumanian trenches, however, were well constructed and capacious. The best trench is within 25 feet of the Turkish counterscarp [of a redoubt]. From the bottom of this trench two shafts were sunk about 15 feet in depth, and from the bottom two galleries had been pushed under the Turkish parapet, and the mines were nearly ready when the Moslems evacuated their positions. But the strangest part of the history of this siege is the fact that the Turks had also mined the Gravitza redoubt opposite, and before leaving their earthwork they had fired the mining fuse. The Roumanians, discovering their departure, entered their ditches, found the gallery, and reached the fuse in time to quench it before it had burned to the explosive charge; so that each was prepared to blow the other up without knowing, apparently, that counter-operations were in progress...

At noon to-day the Emperor arrived at the redoubt defending the approach to Plevna by the Gravitza *chaussée*... [After a religious service] the whole party rode into Plevna, taking the less frequented streets, lest some assassin might fire upon the Emperor. In a small house, surrounded by a high stone wall, lunch was served, after which there was a sudden hush, and Osman Pasha was carried into the yard and through the portico by a Cossack officer and one of his own attendants. As he passed through the crowd of staff officers, every one saluted him, and shouted, "Bravo, Osman!" He then passed into the presence of

the Emperor, who shook hands with him, and informed him that, in consideration of his gallant defence of Plevna, he had given orders that his sword should be returned to him, and that he could wear it.

STRAINED RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA (1878)

I

Source.—*Hansard*, Third Series, vol. 237, cols. 1,326, 1332 (Questions, February 8, 1878)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer: Mr. Speaker, the Government have received a telegram to-day from Mr. Layard, containing a summary of the articles of the armistice... The telegram ends by saying that the Turks have begun to remove their guns from the Constantinople lines. Now it is quite evident that, whatever may have been the arrangements with regard to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, a neutral zone has been declared, which includes the lines of Tchekmedje, which protect Constantinople; and according to the terms of the armistice the Turks are bound not to retain those fortresses, and accordingly are bound to remove – and are quietly beginning to remove – their guns and armaments from the fortifications by lines and to specified places... The consequence is that, although the Russians do not occupy those lines themselves, they occupy

an outpost close to them, while the lines themselves are being thoroughly disarmed. They have the power, therefore, at any moment, subject to the necessity of giving three days' notice of the termination of the armistice, of advancing on Constantinople without hindrance... I may perhaps venture to call the attention of the House to one of the papers which we laid upon the table yesterday. That contains a copy of a Memorandum which was communicated to the Russian Ambassador by Her Majesty's Government on the 28th of July last, in which they say they "look with much anxiety at the state of things in Constantinople, and the prospect of the disorder and bloodshed, and even anarchy, which may occur as the Russian forces draw near to the capital. The crisis which may at any time arrive in Constantinople may be such as Her Majesty's Government could not overlook, while they had the means of mitigating its horrors. Her Majesty's Government are fully determined (unless it should be necessary for the preservation of interests which they have already stated they are bound to maintain) not to depart from the line of neutrality which they have declared their intention to observe; but they do not consider that they would be departing from this neutrality, and they think that Russia will not consider they are doing so, if they should find themselves compelled to direct their fleet to proceed to Constantinople, and thus afford protection to the European population against internal disturbance." The Government, I may add, feel that the state of affairs disclosed by the armistice has given rise to the danger which they thus

apprehended, and they have, in the circumstances, thought it right to order a portion of the fleet to proceed at once to Constantinople for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of British subjects.

Cols. 1622-1623 (Questions, February 13, 1878)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer: I stated, I think, or at all events referred on Monday to the fact, that communications had been made to the Porte to ascertain whether permission would be given, or a *firman* be granted, for the British fleet to enter the Dardanelles. That permission was refused, but Her Majesty's Government thought it right to direct the ships to proceed, and they have proceeded accordingly. No material opposition was offered, and they are by this time, I presume, anchored in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. I may perhaps mention that a communication has been made by the Russian Government to the effect that, in view of the intended sending of the fleet by Her Majesty's Government to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, it would be a matter for the consideration of the Russian Government whether they should not themselves occupy the city. In answer to that Her Majesty's Government have sent a communication which will be laid on the table of the House to-night, in which they protest against that view, and state that they cannot acknowledge that in the case of the two countries the circumstances are parallel, or that the despatch of the British

fleet for the purpose indicated justifies the Russian Government in the step which they announce it to be their intention to take.

II

Source.—*The Times*, March 29, 1878

The uncertainty which has prevailed during the last few days respecting the course which our Government would pursue, in view of the difference respecting the Congress which had arisen between ourselves and Russia, has received a startling and momentous solution. When the House of Lords met yesterday, Lord Derby no longer occupied his seat on the Ministerial Bench, and he at once announced that he had resigned the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs... The explanations given yesterday remove all doubt respecting the relative positions assumed by our Government and Russia in regard to the Congress. Sir Stafford Northcote stated in the House of Commons the import of the communications which have passed between ourselves and Russia... Russia's reply amounted to a clear intimation that she claims to withhold from the cognizance of the Powers any articles of the preliminary Treaty she may choose. Such a reserve as she asserts is tantamount to a definite claim to alter an existing Treaty by force of arms without consulting the other Powers who signed it, and towards whom she is under honourable obligations. There being this imminent danger that the Congress may not meet – it

being, as Lord Beaconsfield said, "the belief" of the Government "that the Congress would not meet," it became necessary for the Government to consider what further course they would take... We do not know what course Lord Derby would have advised, and it is possible he would not immediately have taken any fresh steps. But the rest of the Government decided that in the interests of peace, and for the due protection of the rights of the Empire, it was their duty "to advise Her Majesty to avail herself of those powers which she has for calling for the services of her Reserved Forces." As subsequently explained by Mr. Hardy in the House of Commons, this step is one which is rendered necessary by the new organization of the Army... Its result will be to raise our regular forces to their utmost efficiency. In other words, it will place the land forces which actually exist in readiness for prompt action; and it is thus a plain declaration – a declaration rendered emphatic by Lord Derby's resignation – that we are prepared to act promptly if the course on which Russia has entered directly injures our honour or our interests. Such a declaration of our being determined to adhere to the claims we have put forward is perhaps the most momentous step which has yet been taken by this country.

PEACE WITH HONOUR (1878)

Source.—*The Times*, July 17

The Premier alighted at his official residence in Downing Street, and was met on the threshold by General Ponsonby, bearing a bouquet of rare flowers, sent to him by the gracious forethought of Her Majesty the Queen... The ground was well kept by the police, till the Prime Minister appeared at a window and began to speak. Then a rush swept the police away. Three cheers for Lord Beaconsfield were given. For the second time in the day the Prime Minister was visibly affected. He had to wait long for silence, but when an approach to quiet had been obtained Lord Beaconsfield said: "I can assure you that no recognition of neighbours could be more gratifying to my feelings than these expressions of the sentiments of those among whom I see many of my oldest and most cherished friends. Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back peace, but a peace, I hope, with honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign, and tend to the welfare of the country."

THE SECRET AGREEMENTS IN BEACONSFIELD'S POCKETS (1878)

Source.—*Hansard*, Third Series, vol. 242, col. 344 (House of Lords: Debate on the Protocols of Berlin, August, 1878)

The Earl of Rosebery rose to call attention to a memorandum purporting to have been signed by the Marquis of Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff on May 30, 1878, and to ask if it was the intention of the Government to lay it on the table of the House... The course the Government had pursued with respect to their policy was, he would venture to say, one of obscurity enlivened with sarcasm. In the whole history of the negotiations there were five cardinal points – points which became salient to everyone who had studied the history of these transactions. First, there was the San Stefano treaty; the second was the circular of the 1st of April; the third, the alleged secret agreement of May 30th; the fourth, the secret convention of June 4th with Turkey; and the fifth was the treaty signed at Berlin on the 30th of July. As to the secret agreement between Russia and England, it would be well

to recall how they came to have any cognizance of it at all. The substance of it appeared in the *Globe* within, he thought, three or four days after it was signed, and it was on the 14th of June, he thought, that the entire text was given in the columns of the same journal. . . . They had all heard that the agreement was not to be laid on the table, because there were documents in connection with it which it would be necessary to present at the same time; but other Powers would not allow us to produce them. What he gathered from all this was that, if it had not been for the ill-advised conduct of a very subordinate clerk in the Foreign Office, who was entrusted with the copying of the agreement at the rate of 10d. an hour, the English public would not at this moment have the faintest conception of such an agreement, and the keystone of the whole purpose of the Government would be wrapped in obscurity. This was alarming in itself, because, if these subterranean methods were employed as a rule, they would give the public some little dismay in regard to the course of further negotiations. . . . Having signed this agreement, and having signed another secret agreement within two or three days with Turkey, Her Majesty's Plenipotentiaries proceeded, fortified with them, to the Congress. Now came the most extraordinary point in all the history of these negotiations, so far as they knew it. Eight days after the signature, or alleged signature, of this agreement, in which, if the House would remember, we consented to the abandonment of Batoum and other Russian conquests in Armenia, the Foreign Secretary addressed a despatch to our

Resident Plenipotentiary in Berlin, in which he urged him to use his exertions to the utmost on behalf of Batoum. The words were so remarkable that he might be pardoned for quoting them to their lordships. On the 8th of June the noble Marquis wrote to Lord Odo Russell: "There is no ground for believing that Russia will willingly give way in respect to Batoum, Kars, or Ardahan; and it is possible that the arguments of England urged in Congress will receive little assistance from other Powers, and will not be able to shake her resolution in this respect." Well, that was not likely under the circumstances. The noble Marquis continued in this letter of June 8th: "You will not on that account abstain from earnestly pressing upon them and upon Russia the justice of abstaining from annexations which are unconnected with the professed object of the war, and profoundly distasteful to the populations concerned, and the expediency, in regard to the future tranquillizing of Asia, of forbearing to shake so perilously the position of the Government of Turkey..." Now, the great point with regard to this was, was Lord Odo Russell, when he received that communication, cognizant of the agreement which had been signed on the 30th of May? Because what they wanted to know was this, was Lord Odo Russell one of a company, or was he a simple actor put up to recite the arguments of Batoum, with a prompter by to keep him to his part?.. Then, on the same day, Mr. Secretary Cross addressed a despatch to the Plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty, urging them to make great exertion on behalf of Greece. He should say

that the position of a Plenipotentiary who entered the Congress to struggle on behalf of Batoum, Kars, Ardahan, and Greece must have been a somewhat melancholy one in the retrospect; because, when the questions came up, the Turkish positions were abandoned, and Greece was ignored... He did not pretend that secret understandings were unknown to us, but he believed this was the first time we had called a European Congress with the view of discussing great treaties, and standing forth on behalf of public law, we ourselves having, at the same time, bound ourselves in private to consent to those stipulations which we had denounced, and which we continued to denounce.

GLADSTONE INDIGNANT AGAIN (1878)

Source.—*The Times*, December 2

Mr. Gladstone (at Greenwich): I want to ask you, and I think after these two years it is about time, who are the true friends of Russia? Is it we, gentlemen, who met two years and a half ago on Blackheath, and said it was most mischievous to leave to any single country the settlement of the Eastern question?.. Who brought Russia back to the Danube? Those very men who are continually denouncing us as the friends of Russia. We had in 1856 by the fortune of war driven Russia back from the Danube; the present Government have brought Russia back to the Danube. They made a secret memorandum with Count Schouvaloff by which they engaged – unless they could convert him by their arguments – to vote in the Congress for bringing Russia back to the Danube... Who gave Russia the fortress of Kars? The present Government. These people say they want to keep down the power of Russia. Want to keep down the power of Russia! Why, they have left it in her power to make herself the liberator of Bulgaria, and secure for herself the influence which always follows upon gratitude.

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