

assured the Duke, that out of the love which his Majesty bore him, he would never, unless driven to it by the sternest necessity, wage war with the Porte. I do not vouch for the truth of this tale, but it is a fact, and a remarkable one, that the future policy of Nicholas—whether he came under this direct obligation or not, was strictly in keeping with its tenor. The war between Russia and Turkey, which occurred a few months later, was not of his seeking. It was forced upon him, partly through the blunders of England, partly through the obstinacy of the Porte; and it was not pushed to an extremity. But scarcely was the Duke removed from the stage of life, ere the old views of the Court of St Petersburg revived. Prince Menschikoff's mission to Constantinople took place, and the campaign of the Crimea, and the fall of Sebastopol, with all the evils attending them, soon followed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF YORK—THE DUKE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF—DEATH OF LORD LIVERPOOL—MR CANNING PRIME MINISTER.

I HAVE gone much into detail while describing the Duke's mission to St Petersburg, partly because the story is probably new to most of my readers, partly because it introduces the Duke himself to our notice as a skilful negotiator, having delicate affairs to settle and very many diplomatists with whom to deal. Into other points of history I shall enter very briefly. It was at this time that the death of Don John VI. separated the empire of Brazil from the kingdom of Portugal. The new emperor, Don Pedro, preferring the crown of Brazil, made over that of Portugal to his daughter, and granted a constitution which was unfavourably looked upon by Spain, now under the sway of an absolute Sovereign. There arose out of this much ill blood between the two countries. Preparations were made in Spain to invade Portugal, and to give the crown, without a constitution, to Don Miguel, the uncle of the young Queen; and 5000 British troops were suddenly despatched to Lisbon for the purpose of repelling the invasion.

The Duke was a consenting party to this arrangement, upon the clear ground that neither Spain, nor any other foreign power, had the smallest right to interfere in the internal affairs of Portugal. He acted on the occasion as he afterwards did when Don Miguel succeeded in seizing the Portuguese crown; the principle of non-intervention being

with him a reality just as operative in the one case as the other. But circumstances, as I have already shown, had by this time forced him into the front rank of the Cabinet, and home politics became in consequence, quite as much as foreign, the subject of his care. They were in a most unsatisfactory state. A year or two of false prosperity, the result, as was alleged, of a liberalized tariff, had ended in the panic of 1825, and monetary embarrassment brought with it, as it always does, discontent with other matters. An outcry was raised against the corn laws. They had been modified once already, and now Mr Canning and his friends insisted upon modifying them still further. The condition of Ireland likewise, and the demands of the Roman Catholics, occasioned much uneasiness, and Lord John Russell was manifestly gaining ground in his advocacy of Parliamentary Reform. To much tampering with the corn laws, the Duke was conscientiously opposed. He regarded them as a great bulwark of the aristocratic element in the constitution, which was not in his opinion too strong. On the subject of Parliamentary Reform, he was prepared to go further than either Mr Canning or Mr Huskisson, but objected entirely to the sweeping measures which Lord John Russell brought forward. Ireland however and the Roman Catholic question constituted his great difficulty. He voted indeed with that section of the Cabinet which resisted emancipation; yet his opinions on the abstract merits of the case seem to have agreed, neither with theirs, nor with the views of their opponents. He could not bring himself to believe with Lord Eldon that the exclusion of Roman Catholics from political power formed the keystone of the British constitution. He was unable to assent to Mr Canning's argument that Roman Catholics were subjected by such exclusion to personal, or even to social, injustice. The laws excluding them from Parliament operated as other laws do which place more or less of restraint on individuals or on classes. They had been passed with a view to the public good, and till it could be shown that the public good would be more advanced by their repeal than by their retention, he saw no reason, on the ground of abstract right,

for interfering with them. But he saw at the same time, that till the question should be settled one way or another, there could be no freedom of action, either to the Government or to the legislature. There rested also upon his mind a painful conviction, that if matters long continued as they were, Ireland would break out into rebellion; for which, indeed, the bulk of its population were ripe, and from which they were kept back, only by the prudence, perhaps by the timidity, of Mr O'Connell and the subordinate leaders in the movement.

It was to this subject, therefore, more than to any other of public interest, that the Duke at this time directed his attention; and he already began to express himself concerning it to those who enjoyed the largest share of his confidence, with a reserve which grew day by day less guarded.

The Duke was absent from England when the dissolution of 1826 took place. He saw nothing, therefore, of the turmoil and bustle of the general election. But he found, on his return, that in its results it more than justified the worst fears which he had previously entertained respecting the state of feeling throughout the country. In Great Britain, not less than in Ireland, the point most keenly discussed between candidates and electors, had been Catholic Emancipation. In Ireland the Romanists carried all before them. Priests went about from parish to parish, canvassing as priests only can do; while pastoral letters, from bishops, charged the faithful to vote as the interests of holy Church and their religion required. In England and Scotland, on the other hand, a strong Protestant spirit had been roused; and a pledge to resist the demands of the Catholic Association was in many places required as the one great test of fitness for a seat in the legislature. Hence the temper of the House of Commons, which met in November, was a good deal changed from that of the previous May. From Ireland the cause of emancipation had achieved a large accession of strength, which, however, was more than counterbalanced by the exclusion of many members, who as representatives of English and Scotch constituencies had formerly voted for that measure.

Things were in this state when the Duke of York died. There could be but one opinion in England in regard to the individual whom it would become the Crown to select as his successor at the head of the army, and the Duke of Wellington became, as was fitting, commander-in-chief.* But a seat in the Cabinet being then considered incompatible with high military office, he was further entreated to remain at the head of the Board of Ordnance. Though far from hopeful that an administration so ill-assorted could long hold together, he would not, by withdrawing from it, precipitate the event of its fall. That, however, which probably no care on his part could have long deferred, an occurrence, as melancholy as it was unlooked for, hurried forward.

The Duke of York died on the 5th of December, 1826. His funeral was attended by most of the Cabinet ministers, including, among others, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Liverpool, and Mr Canning. On the 14th of February Lord Liverpool went up with an address of condolence from the House of Lords to the King, and on the 16th was smitten with paralysis, from which he never recovered. It was a terrible blow in every point of view to the Government; for though neither a very able minister nor a very eloquent debater, Lord Liverpool deserved and commanded the respect of all sections of his party. He had, no doubt, been carried away of late beyond that beaten track of traditional policy in which a portion of his colleagues loved to move. He had given himself up, in matters of fiscal and commercial arrangement, to the guidance of the political economists; but besides that he was still a determined enemy to the admission of Roman Catholics to power, he was too high-minded by far to negotiate with the leaders of the opposition for the success of any measure which might be distasteful to a majority of the Cabinet. The loss, therefore, to the Administration, was, in every point of view, serious, and consequences of a very serious nature were not slow in developing themselves.

Among other measures upon which ministers had agreed

* He was at the same time appointed Colonel of the Grenadier regiment of Foot Guards.

during the recess was the introduction of a bill into Parliament for settling a revised scale of duty according to which grain might be imported from abroad, and for rendering more easy the admission of bonded corn into the home market. Whether the Duke was beyond seas when this proposal was brought forward, I have not been able to ascertain; but it is clear from his speech in the House of Lords that he was not present at the Cabinet which discussed and finally adopted it. It is equally certain that, for the reasons elsewhere assigned, he regarded every approach to the establishment of free-trade in corn with apprehension; and that he could not in his heart approve of a measure which, according to his view of the case, would afford increased facilities to the evasion of the corn laws as they then existed. Still, the question having been considered, discussed, and formally approved, he felt himself constrained to assent to it, as one for which Lord Liverpool's Administration was responsible; though he never appears to have had an opportunity of studying its details till the bill itself came actually before Parliament.

It had been settled that the bill in question should be introduced simultaneously into both Houses; into the Lords by Lord Liverpool, into the Commons by Mr Canning; and the 17th of February was the day appointed for making this twofold motion. But on the 16th Lord Liverpool was struck down, and Mr Canning himself, having caught a violent cold at the funeral of the Duke of York, was obliged to remove for change of air to Brighton. Though there could be little or no hope that Lord Liverpool would ever be able to resume the labours of office, the King was not advised to appoint immediately a successor to him at the Treasury. Indeed, parties ran so high in the Cabinet, that no agreement could be come to respecting the individual under whom all would be willing to serve; while out of doors a course of negotiation was carried on, to expose which in all its ramifications would be to reveal secrets which could not be laid bare to the present generation without damage both to private feeling and to the public interests. The Liverpool Cabinet was still, therefore, in power, though destitute of an efficient

head, when on the 1st of March Mr Canning brought in his Corn Bill; and the bill, being backed by all the weight of the Government, passed with little opposition through the House of Commons. Before it reached the Lords, however, those changes had occurred which placed Mr Canning at the head of an Administration of which the Duke, Lords Eldon, Bathurst, Westmoreland, and Mr Peel, all declined to become members. His retirement from office appeared to the Duke to release him, in a great degree, from the engagements by which, as a minister, he was bound to support in their integrity measures brought forward by the Cabinet. He resolved, therefore, to take his own course in dealing with Mr Canning's Corn Bill, and when the proper time came he did so.

It is not my purpose to dwell upon the intrigues and negotiations which preceded and led up to this change of Government. Mr Canning had once before made a move to become the head of an Administration. He was now resolved that by no consideration of delicacy towards others, should he be restrained from accomplishing that great object of his ambition. He had friends in the Cabinet who honestly desired to see him the leader of the Tory party. He had others out of the Cabinet who desired, but for an opposite reason, to find him winner in the race for power. His activity, the activity of his adherents, the almost unanimous support of the daily press, and a palace camarilla, prevailed over the less energetic action of his opponents. On the 10th of April he wrote a letter to the Duke, in which he announced that the King had asked him to furnish a plan for the reconstruction of the Administration; and that he was exceedingly anxious to adhere, in so doing, to the principles on which Lord Liverpool's Government had long acted. There followed upon this a correspondence which is to be found at length in the "Annual Register" of 1827; and from which certain facts appear: viz., first, that Mr Canning had been previously made aware that Mr Peel, at least, would not hold office under him; and, next, that in conversation with the Duke a few days before, he had himself proposed that Mr Robinson should go to the House of Lords and

take office as First Lord of the Treasury. Neither this proceeding on Mr Peel's part, however, nor his own implied pledge, stood for a moment in Mr Canning's way. The King was worked upon to offer the chief place in the Cabinet to him; Mr Canning not only closed with the offer, but in some degree acted in anticipation of it; and the Duke, Lords Eldon, Westmoreland, Melville, and Mr Peel, all, without any previous communication with one another, sent in their resignations.

There can be no doubt that Mr Canning was deeply mortified by this. To say, as his friends said for him, that he was either surprised or disappointed, would be to go very much too far. He knew, at every stage in the course which he was pursuing, that such must be its issues; and the complaints to which he gave utterance of wrong done to him and to the Sovereign, were as groundless as they were uncandid. Some of the seceding ministers may have assigned reasons for their own conduct which scarcely expressed all that they felt. The Duke had no reserve. In the House of Lords he made a full statement of his own proceedings, and of the causes which produced them. He might serve *with* a colleague in whom his confidence was not settled: he could not possibly serve *under* him. It is to be regretted, perhaps, that the Duke allowed himself to be hurried into a diatribe against a corrupt press, and that he employed a phraseology which was open to misconstruction, and of which, in after years, he was repeatedly and most uncandidly reminded. Referring to the rumour which the friends of Mr Canning had put in circulation, that, having himself intrigued for high office, he quitted the Cabinet only because the foremost place in it was refused to himself, he denied the facts of the case, and then went on to contrast his position as it was at the head of the army, with what it would be were he placed at the head of an administration. "Does any one believe," he continued, "that I would give up such gratification (the gratification of being reunited to his old companions in arms) in order to be appointed to a situation in which I was not wished, and for which I was not qualified? . . . My Lords, I should have been worse than mad, had I thought of such a thing."

So ended this political struggle. Mr Canning came out of it First Lord of the Treasury, and surrounded himself with friends of his own. The Duke not only gave up his seat in the Cabinet with the Master-Generalship of the Ordnance, but resigned, at the same time, the command of the army. This last was a measure for which no one was prepared. Under ordinary circumstances it might have laid him open to the charge of disrespect towards the Sovereign. But he was not afraid, as matters then stood, of incurring even that reproach. His resignation afforded the strongest possible proof, that from the minister of the day his confidence was entirely withdrawn; and that the differences between them were more than political,—that they touched the point of private and personal honour. And so, when accounting for the step in the House of Lords, he explained them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DUKE IN OPPOSITION—DEATH OF MR CANNING—THE DUKE
A POLITICAL LEADER—THE GOVERNMENT—ITS DIFFICULTIES.

I HAVE arrived at a stage of English history so recent of date, and in which the part played by the Duke of Wellington is so generally known, that I can venture to pass lightly over most of the important events which marked its progress.

The Duke, taking his seat on the opposition benches of the House of Lords, became the acknowledged head of a great political party. He modified, and in so doing defeated, the Ministerial Corn Bill after a rather curious correspondence with Mr Huskisson. This was a severe blow to Mr Canning, who counted on no such result, and still hoped, by conciliating, to win back the friends of his youth. Forced now into the arms of the Whigs, they likewise deserted him in his hour of need. On a motion affecting the representation of Penryn he found himself in a minority of 69, and abandoned for ever all hope of playing to a successful issue the game on which he had entered. Indeed he never held up his head again. Soon after the prorogation of Parliament, which occurred on the 2nd of July, he retired to the Duke of Devonshire's house at Chiswick; and there, on the 8th of August, in the same chamber in which Fox had breathed his last, he died.

Mr Canning was succeeded as First Lord of the Treasury by Mr Robinson, who went to the House of Lords by the title of Viscount Goderich. It was the season of the recess, which the new ministers spent chiefly in quarrelling among

themselves, while the leaders of the opposition went about from place to place seeking to make a favourable impression on the constituencies. Among others the Duke paid a series of visits in the North of England, which though ostensibly those of private friendship, were by others rather than by himself converted into political demonstrations. He was feasted by Dr Van Mildert, Bishop of Durham, with princely splendour in the old hall of Auckland Castle. He was the guest of Lord Ravensworth, at Ravensworth, and dined with the Mayor and Corporation of Sunderland in their court house. Gentlemen who sat down with him to table hung upon his words and cheered him loudly, and ladies, as their custom was, courted and flattered him wherever he appeared. The case was somewhat different with the mob. They, too, crowded to look upon him, but their greeting was cold. Had he come among them fresh from his triumphs in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, they would have greeted him as heartily as their betters. But he was now a politician, and a party politician, advocating, or being supposed to advocate, opinions of which they disapproved. Nor were there wanting those among the educated classes, Sir Walter Scott being of the number, who felt that he had stooped to become what they saw him, and lamented the circumstance. Not so the Duke. He was never more in earnest in his life, than while striving to set up a Government which should do what he conceived to be its duty to the Crown and to the people; and in order to secure that end, he was ready to sacrifice, not popularity alone, but everything that was personally dear to him. The Duke returned from his tour satisfied that what he called the intelligence of the country was with him, and before Parliament met again he found himself at the head of affairs.

Lord Goderich's ill-assorted Cabinet fell to pieces after the battle of Navarino. The King sent for the Duke, and not without difficulty prevailed upon him to undertake the task of forming a new Administration. He would have willingly declined that honour had any legitimate means of escape been open to him; but it was not consistent with his principle of duty to refuse obedience to what amounted to a



command on the part of the Sovereign. The manner in which he accomplished the task offended, as much as it surprised, men of extreme opinions on both sides of the House. While Lord Goderich was in office, the Duke had consented to resume the command of the army. He now offered to Lord Goderich himself, and to the Canningites of the old Cabinet, seats in the new; and filled up the vacancies occasioned by the exclusion of the Whigs, by bringing in Mr Peel and others of his own friends. It was an arrangement dictated by an honest desire of securing for the public service the largest attainable amount of talent combined with moderation. Yet the Government so constituted carried within itself the seeds of failure. Mr Huskisson and the Duke never drew very cordially together. It is a mistake to assume that the one was all for progress, the other for obstruction. On fiscal questions the Duke was disposed to go as far as Mr Huskisson, bating only his strong predilection in favour of the corn laws. On points affecting the representation of the people he was desirous to go farther. They differed, however, in their views of what members of the same Cabinet owed to one another, and that difference parted them. Words spoken by Mr Huskisson on the hustings, whither after joining the Duke's Government he went for re-election, brought them first into collision, and that collision doubtless paved the way for the more serious misunderstanding which took place not long afterwards.

We now know that public opinion had by this time received a more decided bias towards liberalism than the Duke or the majority of his colleagues supposed. The Test and Corporation Acts had long been complained of; by many sound churchmen as prostituting the most sacred symbols of their faith, by dissenters as affixing to them a stigma which was intolerable. Neither party seemed to be satisfied with the annual bill of indemnity, though to all intents and purposes it set the law aside. And now Lord John Russell, on the 28th of February, 1828, proposed that the House of Commons should resolve itself into a committee with a view to inquire and report upon the whole subject. The Govern-

ment opposed the motion. Mr Huskisson and Lord Palmerston both spoke against it. But the feeling of the House could not be misunderstood, and in order to avoid the appearance of defeat, the ministers withdrew before the question was put. A bill founded on the resolution was brought into the House, which the Government adopted as its own, and adding to it, in the Lords, two not unimportant clauses, carried it through. Thus the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed. The clauses added in the House of Lords were highly conservative. One required each non-conformist member, before he took his seat, to swear that he would not use his influence as a legislator to the damage of the Established Church in her rights or property. The other obliged him to assent to certain specified opinions, "on the true faith of a Christian."

This defeat, for a defeat it virtually was, damaged the Government not a little. The Government received a still heavier blow three months later, by the secession from its ranks of Mr Huskisson, Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Mr Charles Grant. Undoubtedly Mr Huskisson was the first, and therefore the most to blame, in this gratuitous quarrel. After over-ruling the Duke and Mr Peel in the Cabinet, on a question affecting the disfranchisement of Penryn, Mr Huskisson, when the question came on in the House of Commons, suddenly rose, and spoke against the very conclusion which he had constrained his leader to adopt. And this somewhat extraordinary proceeding he followed up, by writing immediately afterwards to the Duke in these words: "I owe it to you as the head of the Administration, and to Mr Peel as the leader of the House of Commons, to lose no time in affording you an opportunity of placing my office in other hands." The Duke had a perfect right to read this letter as he did. It was a tender of resignation by the writer, neither more nor less; yet looking to the condition of the Government at the moment, and still more to the state of feeling out of doors, it would be difficult to say that the Duke exercised a wise prudence in accepting the resignation without a remonstrance. I say nothing against the strict fairness of the Duke's conduct; that can-

not be disputed. Nor is there anything to show that other causes of distrust may not have operated to restrain him from listening to the explanations which Mr Huskisson was subsequently anxious to offer. But considering how weak he was in the House of Commons, and how little able to supply the talent thus lost to his Administration, it is not, I think, going too far to say, that the Duke, in breaking with Mr Huskisson and his friends upon a point which came at last to be little more than one of etiquette, made a greater sacrifice than a more practised politician would have done, to that high sense of honour which formed part of his nature.

Before this schism took place, the Government had succeeded in preparing a new Corn Bill, with a scale of duties rising and falling according to the average price of grain in the home markets. The bill never became popular, and the success of the ministers' in carrying it did them no good. Neither were their hands strengthened by the course which the Duke considered it his duty to take with reference to Portugal. Another revolution had given the crown of that kingdom to Don Miguel, and Don Pedro was preparing by force of arms to expel his brother and establish his infant daughter on the throne. This was one of those cases in which, according to the Duke's view, no foreign nation had a right to interfere. His predecessor had broken off diplomatic relations with the usurper, and the Duke took time to consider when and how it would be expedient to renew them. But he refused to extend the protection of England to Donna Maria, and as far as the law would allow put the Foreign Enlistment Act in force against the armaments which Don Pedro hastened to equip in this country. He was censured for so doing by the Liberal members in both Houses of Parliament, and by the masses out of doors, but he felt that he was doing his duty, and he went his own way.

Never within the memory of living men had there been an Administration so severely economical in its management of the finances of the country as that of the Duke. He reduced the army and the navy far below what we should now consider to be safe. He introduced improvements into

the manner of keeping the public accounts, and so managed matters generally that in 1828, 1829 there was a considerable balance in the Exchequer over a revenue which amounted to £36,000,000. Yet with all this he could not succeed in making his Government popular. Neither of the two great parties in the state liked him. The Whig aristocracy, aware of his aversion to them as a body, repaid the feeling with interest, and made no secret of their sentiments. The old Tories, indignant at their exclusion from office, gave him but a lukewarm support in Parliament, and spoke bitterly of him out of doors. A cry was got up that he ruled, or aspired to rule, his Administration and the country as he used to rule his armies of old. Those who lived with him on terms of intimacy, his colleagues in the Cabinet, his confidential friends elsewhere, knew how unjust these whispers were. But the whispers spread, nevertheless, far and wide; and were, perhaps, the more readily believed, because of the jealousy which was then all but universal of military influence. A minister so circumstanced could hope to keep his place only by watching every breath of popular prejudice as it rose, and trimming his sails to catch it. Of such a course the Duke was incapable. He had assumed the burden of office with the single view of serving the King and benefiting the country, and he never for a moment thought of using the power which office gave him for any other purpose.

His great difficulty of all was Ireland, swayed and turned hither and thither by Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association. In that unhappy country law had no force. The magistrates were intimidated; the King's Government was powerless. A central board, sitting in Dublin, issued its orders, and was obeyed throughout the island. Meetings called by directions from that body, were attended by thousands; tens of thousands walked in military array, as often as demonstrations were considered necessary. There were comparatively few crimes committed, little or no violence offered to persons or to property. But there was the most perfect organization for either passive or active resistance to constituted authority of which history makes men-

tion. And all avowedly directed to one end,—the repeal of the laws disqualifying Roman Catholics from sitting in both Houses of Parliament, and from exercising elsewhere the same political rights which were exercised by their Protestant fellow-subjects.

For years the struggle had gone on, till at last a bold measure suggested by Mr O'Connell was tried with complete success. After proclaiming to the world that there was no statute in existence which disabled a Roman Catholic from sitting in the House of Commons, he avowed his intention of standing for the representation of the county of Clare, which the acceptance, by Mr Vesey Fitzgerald, of the presidency of the Board of Control, had rendered vacant. His cause was at once taken up by the whole body of Roman Catholics in Ireland. All the old ties which bound landlord and tenant together were broken; every altar in the land, from the Hill of Howth to Cape Clear, became, as Mr Shiel well expressed it, a tribune. The progress of the agitator to the hustings was a triumph, and after a brief trial of his own weakness, Mr Vesey Fitzgerald withdrew from the contest.

The results of the Clare election took all parties by surprise. It filled the Roman Catholics and their supporters in Parliament with delight. It stirred a feeling of anger and scorn among their opponents. The Duke saw that matters were brought by it to a crisis. To go on as former Administrations had done, discussing the Catholic Question from year to year, and throwing out in the Lords bills passed by the Commons, was no longer possible. He must, therefore, choose between two courses, both difficult, and even dangerous, though not, as it appeared to him, in the same degree.

The Government, if it should determine, under existing circumstances, to maintain the statutes excluding Roman Catholics from power, must ask for new laws, the old having quite broken down. They must bring in a bill, requiring candidates for seats in Parliament to take at the hustings the oaths of supremacy and allegiance; otherwise they could not prevent Roman Catholics from contesting every

vacant county and borough in the United Kingdom, and from becoming *ipso facto* members of Parliament, should constituencies see fit to elect them. Practically speaking, there might be small risk that either in England or Scotland this result would follow, at least to any extent. But what was to be expected in Ireland? That every constituency, with the exception, perhaps, of the university and city of Dublin, and of the counties and boroughs of the north, would, whenever the opportunity offered, return Roman Catholics; and that, the members so returned being prevented from taking their seats, three-fourths at least of the Irish people must remain permanently unrepresented in Parliament. Was it probable, looking to the state of parties in the House of Commons, that such a measure, if proposed, could be carried? For many years back the majorities in favour of repeal had gone on increasing session after session. Even the present Parliament, elected as it had been under a strong Protestant pressure, had swerved from its faithfulness. The small majority which threw out Lord John Russell's bill in 1827, had been converted in 1828 into a minority; and among those who voted on that occasion with Mr Peel, many gave him warning that hereafter they should consider themselves free to follow a different course.

But perhaps it might be possible to get a bill passed to disfranchise the Irish forty-shilling freeholders, a class of voters who, as they had been created for acknowledged purposes of corruption in the Irish Parliament, would have nobody to stand up for them in high places, now that they refused to play their patron's game. This was quite as improbable an issue as the other. The disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders had indeed been talked of in former years: but if effected at all, it was to be in connection with a measure of Catholic Emancipation. To propose it now for the avowed purpose of rendering Catholic Emancipation impossible would be to insure the rejection of the bill. That plan, therefore, fell at once to the ground. And there remained but two others.

The minister might ask Parliament for power to suspend

the Habeas Corpus Act, and to place all Ireland under military law. To ask for less would be ridiculous; because the act against unlawful assemblies had failed, and on account of its helplessness was suffered to expire. Now would Parliament grant such extensive powers to any Government, merely that the Government might be enabled to debar his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects a little longer from enjoying equal political privileges with Protestants? The issue was very doubtful,—perhaps it was not doubtful at all; Parliament would never grant such powers. But assuming that the powers were given, what must follow? A general insurrection, to be put down after much bloodshed and suffering, and then a return to that state of sullen discontent which would render Ireland, ten times more than she had ever been, a mill-stone round the neck of Great Britain. And by and by, when military law ceased, and the same measure of personal liberty was granted to Irishmen which the natives of England and Scotland enjoyed, a renewal of agitation, only in a more hostile spirit, and the necessity of either reverting again and again to measures of coercion, or of yielding at last, what, upon every principle of humanity and common sense, ought not to have been thus far withheld. But the minister, if the existing Parliament refused to give the powers which he asked, might dissolve, and go to the country with a strong Protestant cry; and this cry might serve his purpose in England and Scotland. Doubtless; but what would occur in Ireland? The return of Roman Catholic members in the proportion of four to one over Protestants, and the virtual disfranchisement thereby of four-fifths of the Irish people. Would Ireland submit quietly to any law carried against herself, in a House of Commons so constituted? Was it not much more probable, that a dissolution would only lead to the same results which had been shown to be inevitable in the event of the existing Parliament acquiescing in the minister's views? And was there not, at all events, a chance that the electors, even of England and Scotland, might refuse to abet a policy so pregnant with danger to themselves and to the commonwealth?

But why move at all? Mr O'Connell had been elected by the priests and rabble of Clare to represent them in Parliament. Let him retain his empty honour, or better still, let him be summoned by a call of the House to the bar; and on his refusal to take the oaths, issue a new writ, and go to a new election. In the first place, Mr O'Connell could not be forced to attend to a call of the House, such call being obligatory only on members chosen at a general election; and in the next, if he did attend, what then? As soon as the new writ was issued, he would take the field again as a candidate, and again be elected, and so the game would continue to be played, till a dissolution occurred, when all those consequences of which we have elsewhere spoken would inevitably come to pass.*

* The substance of a paper in the Duke's handwriting, as yet unpublished

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CATHOLIC QUESTION—DUEL WITH LORD WINCHELSEA.

I MUST refer the reader who is curious in such matters to the larger edition of this work, for a detailed account of the process by which the Duke prepared his own mind and the minds of others for the course of policy which his judgment directed him to follow. He opened his plan, and the reasons on which it was founded, elaborately to the King, before submitting it to his colleagues, or taking counsel with others than Mr Peel and Lord Lyndhurst. He found his Majesty very little disposed to yield to so stern a necessity—indeed, the King more than hinted at a dissolution on a Protestant cry, and the certainty of securing thereby a Parliament which would settle the question very differently. Something, too, was said at the Palace and elsewhere, of Protestant Clubs, and of the influence to be exercised by them over public opinion. But to Political Clubs of every kind the Duke entertained a well-grounded aversion; and from the thought of civil war, which must inevitably follow such a course as the King suggested, he turned with abhorrence. The result was that the King consented to the consideration of the Duke's plan in Cabinet—the substance of which it is necessary to explain; and for the explanation of which, a few words will suffice.

The Duke's plan embraced eight separate points.

1. He provided for throwing open to Roman Catholics, all, except certain specified offices under the Crown, on con-