

ing his fingers round upon them, could tell in the dark what o'clock it was to a minute, it wound up from the handle.

The Duke was no great promoter of high education among the working classes, and could not, therefore, be expected to originate schemes for its advancement in the army; but to say that he fought against the establishment of the new school system in regiments, is to say too much. He was jealous, whether rightly or wrongly, of the interference of the War Office in that matter, and believed that the arrangements for providing corps with more efficient school-masters would have been better left in the hands of the Commander-in-chief. But when the subject was fairly taken up, he never set himself against it; declaring on the contrary that, as far as his influence could avail, it should have fair play. Even in regard to the compulsory attendance of recruits at school, he declined to act upon the suggestions of those who were opposed to it. He did not deny that the recruit, on first joining, has so much both to learn and to unlearn in other respects, that to compel his attendance in school for a couple of hours daily, seems to tax his powers of application too far. But having accepted the proposition as made to him by the Secretary at War, nothing could induce him to go back from it. Indeed, it was a matter of principle with the Duke never, as Commander-in-chief, to place himself in an attitude of antagonism to any department of the Queen's Government; but, on the contrary, to afford all the assistance in his power to carry into effect the views of her Majesty's responsible advisers.

The general order which he issued, defining the sort of examination to which candidates for first commissions and for promotion should be subjected, indicates pretty plainly what his opinions were on the subject of education for officers. Long before that question was publicly agitated, he found opportunities over and over again to state, that a young gentleman intended for the military service of this country ought to receive the best education which the country can afford; that looking to the duties which he might be called upon to discharge, such education ought not to be



too professional; and that it was nowhere to be procured of a higher or more practical shape than at one of our great public schools or universities. "An officer in the British army," he used to say, "is not a mere fighting machine. He may be called upon any day to serve the Crown as governor of a colony, or in disturbed districts as a magistrate; and he will not be able to fill either post well, unless he know something of the constitution and laws of the land." The Duke's predilection in favour of military academies, and even of staff colleges, was not, therefore, very decided.

"You think that officers ought to be educated specially for the staff. Perhaps you would like to have a staff corps also. That is what they do in France, and in other continental countries, and the consequence is that their staff corps are generally made up of pedants and coxcombs. I am sure that I found the young gentlemen who came to me from High Wickham to be pretty much of that stamp. Indeed, the only good staff officers that I had, were men who knew their regimental duties thoroughly, and possessing a fair share of natural ability, soon learned to apply the principles of regimental handling to the handling of larger bodies. I don't mean to say that officers of engineers and of artillery can do without some knowledge of mathematics, or that sketching is not useful, as far as it goes, in all branches of the service; but if you limit a general in the selection of his staff to mathematicians, or to the members of a particular corps, instead of giving him, as he has now, the choice of the whole army, you will soon find that you have not chosen the best means of placing talent where it may be most usefully employed for the public service."

There was no question in the Duke's day about permanently organizing the army, on the home establishment, into divisions and brigades. I am, therefore, unable to say how far he would or would not have approved of the arrangement. But looking to the strong opinions which he entertained against increasing the expense of our military establishments, and even against bringing the army prominently into public view, it seems probable that the plan would

not have secured his hearty approval. Even camps of instruction he never recommended, which it is natural to suppose he would have done, had he considered that the sort of experience to be acquired in them was adequate to the cost. Be this, however, as it may, there can be no doubt of his hostility to other changes which have been effected since his death. Never having himself experienced the slightest inconvenience in his intercourse with the War Office, as it used to be, or with the Board of Ordnance, he was entirely opposed to the principle of amalgamation which now prevails. He used, on the contrary, to speak of the Ordnance as a perfect model for boards, and of the master-generalship as affording the best constitutional means of bringing an officer of experience and ability into the Cabinet.

The Duke was far from being satisfied with the constitution and management of the medical department of the army. He believed that it had become less instead of more efficient, through its intimate connection with the War Office. And with respect to the commissariat, his opinion was that of most men who have seen war, or thought much about it. It can never be rendered efficient except in the field; and should therefore, in time of peace, be kept to all intents and purposes in abeyance.

There never lived a man in high station and authority more patient than the Duke of the involuntary errors of those under him, or more anxious to keep them right if they were inadvertently going wrong. The perverse blunderings of wrong-headed officials, on the other hand, provoked him exceedingly. The following anecdotes will better illustrate these facts than any statements of mine.

A young officer of a distinguished regiment once brought his soldier servant to a court-martial, on charges—I believe, of theft—which he failed to establish. The commanding officer, conceiving that the officer had deliberately stated what was untrue, insisted upon his retiring from the corps; and was unfortunately supported in his view of the case by a majority of the other officers, who threatened, if the young man persisted in remaining with the regiment, to

send him to Coventry. This coming to the knowledge of the young man's father, he complained through the Adjutant-General to the Duke, and the Adjutant-General being desired to investigate the case, found that the ground assumed by the offended commanding officer was quite untenable. The commanding officer, however, an honourable but obstinate man, would not consent to change his course; and the case, as a matter of necessity, was laid before the Duke. It did not find him unprepared. He had read all the papers, and knew every incident as it had fallen out during the progress of the disagreement; and now, making the colonel sit down, he argued the matter with him, and advised, more like an indulgent father reasoning with a son, than a Commander-in-chief speaking to a subordinate. All, however, was of no avail. The colonel would not be convinced; and at last said, that if the officer were allowed to remain in the regiment he must quit it.

Upon this the Duke rose from his chair, and looking with some severity at the colonel, said, "that hitherto he had spoken to him as an officer of greater experience than his own; he must now address him as Commander-in-chief of the army, while he told him, that his conduct in this matter was unreasonable, and the views of discipline which he maintained quite incorrect."

I wish that it were in my power to add, that the high-minded but mistaken commanding officer was brought round to see the truth at last. Unfortunately it was not so. In anguish of spirit, and in spite of the advice of all his friends, he retired from the service by the sale of his commission; while the young officer behaved so gallantly throughout the Crimean campaign, that with one consent his brother officers took him to their hearts again, and whatever prejudice might have existed for a season against him, passed away.

My next anecdote is somewhat different, both in its details and in its moral. There were two noble lords then in the army, a marquis and an earl, both cavalry officers, though the marquis is now dead; who managed to be in constant hot water with somebody or another, and gave, in

consequence, a great deal of trouble at the Horse Guards. It happened that on a particular occasion the Adjutant-General went into the Duke's room with a bundle of papers in his hand, and found him seated at his table with a large pile of correspondence spread out before him. This was at Walmer, where, more perhaps than anywhere else, the Duke disliked to be worried with disputes and misunderstandings on points of discipline among officers; which, indeed, he declared never could take place, if officers would only study and make themselves acquainted with the regulations and established practice of the service. Looking up, evidently out of humour, the Duke asked what the Adjutant-General had there; and when the answer was, "Another complaint from Lord ——," the Duke seized the papers which were before him with both hands, dashed them down with a thump upon the table, and throwing himself back in his chair and crossing his arms on his chest, exclaimed, "By ——, these two lords, my Lord C—— and my Lord L——, would require a Commander-in-chief for themselves; there is no end to their complaints and remonstrances."

It turned out that the papers which the Duke had before him comprised a correspondence which had been forwarded to him by post between Lord L—— and the Military Secretary, in consequence of the objections raised by the former to the examination of candidates for commissions in the regiment of which he was colonel.

The Duke, as is well known, could not bear to be interrupted when engaged in business which he wished to transact in solitude. All who were acquainted with his habits, whether at the Horse Guards or elsewhere, did their best on such occasions to prevent his privacy from being broken in upon. With reasonable men they succeeded; with others they failed. General Brown has given the following story of himself:—"I don't know whether or not you are aware of the circumstance, that the Duke not only understood, but could write the Spanish language with considerable ease. I was going into his room one day, when Lord Raglan told me I had better not, for his Grace was at that moment writing a Spanish note to Marshal Narvaez, who happened then to be

in London." Of course General Brown followed Lord Raglan's advice. Not so a gallant officer of higher rank, who, either on that or some other day, desired, at an equally inconvenient moment, to have an interview with the Commander-in-chief. It was in vain that Lord Raglan, then Lord Fitzroy Somerset, told him that the Duke was much engaged, and that it would not do just at that moment to interrupt him. The noble officer insisted on Lord Raglan going to the Duke, which he at last agreed to do, placing his friend at the same time so close to the door, that he could overhear the terms in which his desire for an audience was received. I need not stop to particularize them. They were of such a nature as led to the precipitate retreat of the intruder; and they probably induced him to be guided ever after by the counsels of those who were more conversant than himself with the Duke's feelings and habits.

There is a strange belief abroad that the Duke cared little for the comforts of the soldier in barracks, or his rational and healthy recreations when off duty. This is a mistake. It was under his *régime* that the greatest improvement ever made in the soldier's condition as the inhabitant of a barrack-room was introduced. Till he became Commander-in-chief, each bed contained two soldiers; and in many barracks the beds were arranged, like berths on board of ship, in two tiers. The Duke did away with these practices, and gave every soldier his own bed; between which and the bed next to it a certain space was ordered to be kept clear. He was at the head of the army also when ball-courts were established, and cricket-grounds prepared at large military stations. To every suggestion that was offered for improving ventilation, as well as for affording facilities to improved cooking, and the means of cleanliness in the men's rooms, he gave prompt and favourable attention. He believed, indeed, that in this, as in other matters, ideas in themselves good might be carried too far; and that there was some danger, both of overtaxing the liberality of Parliament and of spoiling the soldier, by first creating for him, and then supplying, wants which before enlistment he had never felt. But this did not hinder him from going as far as he believed to be right in

bettering the soldier's condition, and dealing liberally with him. He never, indeed, became a convert to the notion, that the ranks can in this country be filled with persons of what is called a respectable position in life. He still looked to want of other employment, and to idle habits, as the readiest sources of recruitment. And so believing, he was reluctant to part with the power of maintaining discipline through the dread of corporal punishment. But all this never prevented him, on proper occasions, from standing forward as the champion of the rights and of the honour of the army. When the Ten Years' Enlistment Act was brought forward, and proposals were made for granting to non-commissioned officers and privates rewards for good conduct, he supported both measures. He did so, however, in the former case, only after he had obtained the insertion of a clause in the Bill, whereby ten years' men were allowed to re-enlist, counting their back service towards establishing a right to a pension. For, as he arrived at the conclusion that a good soldier will always re-enlist, so he held that the efficiency of an army depends quite as much upon the experience and soldierly habits of the men as upon the talents of the officers. And he illustrated his case by referring to the triumphs which a handful of British troops had recently achieved in China, Africa, and India. "I ask you, my lords," he said, after describing the night attack of the 80th regiment at Sobraon on some Sikh guns which were plunging shot among them in their bivouac, "I ask whether such a feat could have been performed, under such circumstances, except by old soldiers. It would have been impossible. Bear in mind the conduct of the Emperor Napoleon with respect to old soldiers; remember the manner in which he employed them. Recollect, too, how much they are prized by every Power all over the world; and then, I will once more entreat your lordships never to consent to any measure which would deprive her Majesty's service of old and experienced men; and thus pave the way for disasters which assuredly would follow when the army should come to be employed in war."

The same generous spirit appeared to animate him, as

often as the opportunity was afforded of speaking of the services of the army in the presence of an enemy. It was he who, when, at a critical moment, the Court of Directors recalled Lord Ellenborough, advised that Sir Henry Hardinge should take his place; and who, by and by, after the affair of Chillianwallah, forced the late Sir Charles Napier upon the reluctant authorities in Leadenhall Street. Indeed, he went further; for when Sir Charles expressed himself disinclined to serve again under masters with whom he was dissatisfied, the Duke overcame the scruple by exclaiming, "Then I must go myself." The result proved that there was no need for either Napier or anybody else to avert a disaster. Lord Gough had won the battle of Guzerat, and subdued the Sikhs before Napier quitted England. But not the less flattering to Sir Charles was this acknowledgment on the part of the great Duke that he held the military talents of that distinguished soldier in the highest esteem. It is, however, fair to add, that, admiring him as a soldier, the Duke was not always pleased with Napier's proceedings in time of peace, or with the terms in which he was wont to deliver an opinion. The Duke decided against the conqueror of Scinde in his difference with the late Marquis of Dalhousie; and criticised Sir Charles's order against gaming in the army in the following ludicrous manner. His attention being drawn to it one day in conversation, he looked at the speaker, leaned back in his chair, moved his head slowly from side to side, but said nothing. "Don't you think he is right?" was the question which followed. "I am of opinion, with Napoleon," replied the Duke, "that we had better wash our foul linen at home."

CHAPTER XL.

BREAK UP OF SIR ROBERT PEEL'S GOVERNMENT—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE EARL OF DERBY.

IT belongs to the biographer of Sir Robert Peel to relate how public affairs were managed between 1841 and 1846. The Administration was upon the whole very successful. It put an end to Mr O'Connell's influence in Ireland. It readjusted the balance between revenue and expenditure. Many changes were introduced into the commercial and fiscal system of the country, which without satisfying the founders of the Corn Law League, gave great offence to the Conservative party. By and by came the Irish famine, and with it Sir Robert Peel's desire to get rid of the Corn Laws altogether. In this desire the Duke of Wellington did not participate. He was unable to comprehend how the free admission of foreign wheat could benefit that portion of the empire wherein the people were without the means of purchasing wheaten bread at any price. He advocated rather the gratuitous supply of maize to the famishing Irish, till measures could be adopted for employing them in remunerative labour. He was not indeed averse, should the necessity arise, to suspend the operation of the Corn Laws, by an order in council; but he strongly objected, and the majority of his colleagues did the same, to their sudden repeal. The Duke, however, though jealous for the political influence of the landed gentry, which he believed to be dependent on the continuance of the Corn Laws, was still more jealous for a retention of the powers of Government in safe hands.

Hence when those differences in the Cabinet arose which led to Sir Robert Peel's resignation, and when Lord John Russell's failure to form a Government compelled Sir Robert to resume office, the Duke made at once a sacrifice of his own opinions, and used every endeavour to bring his friends, in the Cabinet and out of it, to the same state of mind. What the reasons were which induced him to follow this course, will be best understood if I give an extract from a letter addressed by him to a noble marquis, with whom he lived on terms of intimacy, and whom he was anxious both on public and private grounds to reconcile to a policy which had by that time become inevitable. "Lord John Russell," the letter says, "saw her Majesty on the 10th of December. On the 11th, he undertook to form an Administration, and continued his efforts to do so till Saturday, the 20th. It is necessary to bear in mind all these dates, for they are important."

"During the interval between the 10th and the 20th of December, those members of the Cabinet who had objected to the plan proposed by the minister, were required to state whether they, or any of them, were prepared or disposed to form an Administration on the principle of maintaining the Corn Laws as they are. I myself, and I believe all the rest, answered that they were not so prepared; and I added, that in spite of all that was said or written about protection, nobody had ever heard of any individual approaching the Queen with the advice that she should form an Administration on that principle.

"When Lord John resigned his commission on the 20th of December, her Majesty sent for Sir Robert Peel; who, before he went, wrote to me and informed me that, if the Queen should desire it, he would resume his office, and, even if he stood alone, would, as her Majesty's minister, enable her Majesty to meet her Parliament, rather than that her Majesty should be reduced to the necessity of taking for her minister a member of the League, or any of those connected with its politics.

"As soon as I heard of this determination, I applauded it, and declared my determination to co-operate in its exe-

cution. For the question to be considered then was, not what the Corn Laws should be, but whether the Queen should have a Government; and I felt myself bound to stand by the Sovereign, as I had done in 1834."

It thus appears that unwilling as the Duke was to assent to arrangements calculated in his opinion to affect injuriously the landed interests, he was still more reluctant to see a Whig Administration again in office, with the prospect not remote of a considerable accession to it of the Corn Law League or radical element.

That the Duke over-estimated the immediate danger of this combination to the great institutions of the country, experience has made manifest. Posterity, however, would be unable to arrive at a just estimate of his character, were any phase of his great mind, however apparently extravagant, kept out of view. I consider myself bound, therefore, to paint him, as he has painted himself in an unrestrained and generous correspondence. On the other hand, his loyalty to a pledge once given, no consideration whatever could shake. Many letters were addressed to him by politicians, in and out of Parliament, calling upon him to stand firm, and assuring him that the country would support him. Among others the late Mr John Wilson Croker wrote, in a style highly characteristic, to this effect: "that the Duke ought to extricate himself from the false position in which Sir Robert Peel had placed him; that he ought not to be a party to measures, which would destroy the gentry, the aristocracy, and the monarchy, but should withdraw from the Administration, leaving Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell to work together. In this case," the letter goes on to say, "while you command an army of observation, they will find themselves unable to effect much mischief, and will certainly not succeed in carrying repeal." The following was the Duke's reply:—

"Though there is no more sincere well-wisher to the existing Corn Laws and the Sliding Scale than myself, and though I have done, and shall continue to do, everything in my power to maintain them, the position which I have taken up is not the Corn Laws. My object is to maintain a Government

in the country. For that I have always contended, and always will contend. I am very sensible that any influence which I may possess, any good which I may aid in doing, any evil which I may contribute to avert, must depend upon the kindness and good opinion of my friends. Such influence may easily be written, or cried, or even talked down. So be it; I cannot avoid the evil. But I positively and distinctly decline to take a step, which must have the effect of dissolving the Government, of which the dissolution must be followed by the loss of Corn Laws and everything else.

“I will not attempt to reason upon the hypothetical views which you take of Sir Robert Peel’s propositions. I hope soon to see what they are. In the mean time I endeavour to prevail upon those who desire to learn, or are willing to read, or to listen in conversation to my opinions, to wait and see what Peel will propose, before they decide upon the course which they shall take when his proposals see the light. This would be reasonable in any course, except, perhaps, in one involving party politics.”

How these negotiations and contests ended, all the world knows. Sir Robert Peel brought forward and carried in the House of Commons a Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws. He retained office till this Bill passed the House of Lords, and then, being defeated on another measure, he resigned. Once more the great Conservative party fell to pieces, and once more the Duke set himself to the task, at that moment apparently hopeless, of reuniting it. He addressed himself to Lord Stanley, now Earl of Derby, as the person most fitted from talent, influence, and position, to accomplish that great work. The subjoined correspondence will show in what temper this negotiation was carried on.

“St James’s Square, 18th Feb., 1846.

“MY DEAR DUKE,

“The kindness with which you have always spoken to me on public matters since we became members of the same Government, and especially what fell from you the other night at Apsley House, induces me to address you with a

frankness and unreserve which our relative positions would hardly justify in circumstances less critical than those in which the country is now placed. We cannot disguise from ourselves that the unfortunate measure now under consideration has, for the time at least, completely dislocated and shattered the great Conservative party in both Houses, and that the sacrifice of your own private opinion, which you and others have made for the purpose of keeping it together, has failed, as I feared it would, to effect your object. You may remember my appealing to Sir Robert Peel himself in the Cabinet, to confirm my statement, that if his measure were carried, it would be by the aid of the whole body of his opponents, and the lukewarm support of a few of his friends, against the angry opposition of the great mass of the Conservative party. It is evident that these anticipations have been realized to the fullest extent, and I think it very doubtful whether even your great name and influence will induce the Lords to sanction the Bill, especially if the majority in the House of Commons be not far greater than seems now to be anticipated. I am obliged to add frankly, that I think confidence has been so shaken in Sir Robert Peel, that in spite of his pre-eminent abilities and great services, he can never reunite that party under his guidance. Nor do I at present see any one in the House of Commons of sufficient ability and influence to do so; yet it is clear that if the party is to be efficient, in office or out of office, but especially in office, it must have leaders of eminence in that House. In the House of Lords the case is widely different. There your influence and authority are and must be paramount, and much as many of your followers may regret the course which a sense of duty has led you to take on this occasion, they will still regard you with undiminished personal respect and attachment; and while you are at their head, will follow no other leader, if any were ill-judged enough to set himself up in opposition to you. And this leads me to speak with entire unreserve of my own position, to which you referred in such kind terms the other evening. I will not affect to deny that my wish to be removed to the Upper House was influenced in great measure by my desire to assist

you as a colleague, and to take a portion of the weight of public business off your shoulders;—nor that I looked forward to making myself so known to the members of that House as to qualify me in some degree to act as your successor whenever you should yourself desire to be relieved from the burthens of office. But when, with that disregard of yourself which you have shown throughout your life, you advise that I should now endeavour to rally the Conservative party, I am forced to remind you that in the present state of affairs and feelings they could only be so rallied in opposition to the measures of your own Government. I may be compelled by a strong sense of the impolicy of the present measures to give my vote against them; but I have resisted, and I shall continue to resist, entreaties that I would take an active part, and put myself at the head of a movement to throw them out. Such a course would be wholly repugnant to my personal feelings, and I think it would not be for the public good, nor even for the ultimate interests of the Conservative party, which I think it would tend rather to dis-unite than to consolidate. Whatever course, therefore, I may take, I feel it to be for the general advantage, as it is consistent with my own feelings, that it should be the least prominent that circumstances will allow; and above all, that it should be such as to place me as little as I can help in even apparent competition with you. It is very difficult, in the present entangled posture of affairs, even to guess at the course of events; but I must avow my conviction, that whatever be the result of this measure, the days of the present Government are numbered, and that the country must again, for a time, be subjected to a Whig Government. And this is the natural course of events, as the overthrow of the present Administration will be effected by some Whig majority, aided by the absence of some of the dissatisfied Conservatives in the House of Commons, where alone a defeat will justify the resignation of the Cabinet. The party which succeeds in overthrowing Peel must replace him; and, in the formation of an Administration verging on Radicalism, I see the only chance of re-uniting, in opposition, the great Conservative party, and training the House of Commons

members of it to the conduct of public business. While the present Government lasts, the Conservatives will be disunited and discontented. If it were possible, which I think it is not, to form a Protection Government now, they would be separated from that section of the party which has adhered to Peel ; but, in opposition, both sections would again rally, forgetting past differences, and, in our House, following as readily as before your lead, so long as you are able and willing to give them the benefit of your counsel and guidance. It is possible that I may hereafter be called on to take a more active part, and though my personal wishes would lead me to withdraw as much as possible from politics, I suppose that, like others, I must obey the call ; but at present I can do little but harm by putting myself forward ; and if I have been unable to prevent a separation of party, which I deplore, I will not do anything to widen that separation, and make the present unhappy breach irreparable.

“ I am sure, my dear Duke, that you will forgive me for having spoken of these matters as openly as if you and I were only spectators, with no personal interest in the issue. Your frankness has encouraged mine, and I am quite confident that the public good is the main consideration which influences both of us. If you desire to see me on the state of public affairs, I will readily obey your call ; but after what you have said to me, I have thought it best that you should be fully aware of the view which I am disposed to take, and of the consideration by which my course, so far as I can yet judge of it, is likely to be influenced.

“ Believe me, my dear Duke,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ STANLEY.

“ His Grace the Duke of Wellington, K.G., &c.”

“ February 19.

“ MY DEAR LORD STANLEY,

“ I did not receive your letter till I returned home yesterday evening ; and having been under the necessity of dining with the members of the Cabinet at the Duke of Buccleugh’s, I can only now write an answer to it. I am

much flattered by the confidence which you repose in me ; and I will write to you with as little reserve, relying with confidence that what passes between us will be communicated only by the consent of both.

“ You are aware how anxious I have been throughout these discussions, commencing in October last, to preserve and maintain the Administration of Sir Robert Peel, for the sake of the Queen’s ease ; knowing what he had performed,—the restoration of the finance of the country ; the settlement of the banking system ; the revival of commerce ; the settlement of this very Corn question, and his defence of what had been settled ; the success in Ireland in putting down the monster meetings ; the universal tranquillity prevailing throughout Great Britain ; the confidence which there was felt in his Government abroad, and even in the United States. To this, add the confidence in him and respect for him felt in the great manufacturing and commercial towns of the country, such as Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, &c.

“ I felt that he deserved, if he did not possess, the entire confidence of both Houses of Parliament, and I attributed his want of it, particularly in the House of Commons, very much to his omission to make use of the majority which he had at his disposition.

“ I am very much afraid that the confidence of Parliament has vanished, and that there is no chance of its revival ; on the contrary, I am convinced that if his opponents in either House were to move a vote of want of confidence in him, it would pass in the Commons by a large majority,—and would be opposed in the House of Lords only by you and myself, and his and my colleagues, a few in the Queen’s household, and very few personal friends of his, and relations and personal friends of mine.

“ This is a sad change, and I am very apprehensive that there is no prospect of an improvement. That which I look for therefore is, the holding together in other hands the great, and at this moment powerful, Conservative party ; and this for the sake of the Queen, of the religious and other ancient institutions of the country, of its resources, influence, and power ; all necessary for its prosperity, and the

contentment and happiness of the people. It is quite obvious that I am not the person who can pretend to undertake, with any chance of success, to perform this task. It is not easy to account for my being in the situation which I have so long filled in the House of Lords. Its commencement was merely accidental. I was Commander-in-chief of the army, and Master-general of the Ordnance, when Lord Liverpool was struck by palsy; and although I had not, I believe, once spoken in Parliament for twenty years, I at once succeeded to the influence and power which he had for many years exercised in the House of Lords, always in high office; which, however unworthily, I have held ever since, whether in or out of office. But circumstances have for a length of time tended to bring the exercise of this influence to a termination, as I will show you in this letter, and I will likewise show you that if it has not already terminated, it must terminate in a very short period of time.

“You will see, therefore, that the stage is entirely clear and open for you, and that notwithstanding that I am, thank God, in as good health as I was twenty years ago, I am as much out of your way, as you contemplated the possibility that I might be when you desired to be removed to the House of Lords.

“I think that you were quite right in doing so; and I rejoiced, and still more now rejoice, that you did so.

“For many years, indeed from the year 1830, when I retired from office, I have endeavoured to manage the House of Lords upon the principle on which I conceive that the institution exists in the constitution of the country, that of Conservatism. I have invariably objected to all violent and extreme measures, which is not exactly the mode of acquiring influence in a political party in England, particularly one in opposition to Government. I have invariably supported Government in Parliament upon important occasions, and have always exercised my personal influence to prevent the mischief of anything like a difference or division between the two Houses,—of which there are some remarkable instances, to which I will advert here, as they will tend to show you the nature of my management, and possibly, in

some degree, account for the extraordinary power which I have for so many years exercised, without any apparent claim to it.

“Upon finding the difficulties in which the late King William was involved by a promise made to create peers, the number, I believe, indefinite, I determined myself, and I prevailed upon others, the number very large, to be absent from the House in the discussion of the last stages of the Reform Bill, after the negotiations had failed for the formation of a new Administration.

“This course gave at the time great dissatisfaction to the party; notwithstanding that I believe it saved the existence of the House of Lords at the time, and the constitution of the country.

“Subsequently, throughout the period from 1835 to 1841, I prevailed upon the House of Lords to depart from many principles and systems which they as well as I had adopted and voted, on Irish tithes, Irish corporations, and other measures, much to the vexation and annoyance of many. But I recollect one particular measure, the union of the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, in the early stages of which I had spoken in opposition to the measure, and had protested against it; and in the last stages of it I prevailed upon the House to agree to, and pass it, in order to avoid the injury to the public interests of a dispute between the Houses upon a question of such importance.

“Then I supported the measures of the Government, and protected the servant of the Government, Captain Elliot, in China. All of which tended to weaken my influence with some of the party; others, possibly a majority, might have approved of the course which I took.

“It was at the same time well known that, from the commencement at least of Lord Melbourne’s Government, I was in constant communication with it, upon all military matters, whether occurring at home or abroad, at all events. But likewise upon many others.

“All this tended, of course, to diminish my influence in the Conservative party, while it tended essentially to the ease and satisfaction of the Sovereign, and to the