

diture, effect all the objects which, without that military credit, can only result in much waste of blood and treasure.

Now, we were in the position of a financial operator who had raised his own credit by doubtful and dangerous operations. We had squandered our military credit at Majuba Hill, where we took up the position of a power that was willing to submit to any insult that might be placed upon it. We had proclaimed to the world that we were not ready to fight for our military renown, and the tradition of our ancestors was lost to us.

It was a false proclamation, a proclamation that the ministry had no mandate from the nation to make, and which the nation at the first opportunity forced them to disavow. But the disavowal has cost blood and treasure which, if they had been more careful of the reputation of this country, need never have been expended. Three years ago those who maintained such doctrines and insisted on the necessity of the maintenance of your military credit as one of the most precious inheritances of the nation, were denounced as "Jingoes!"

But these Jingoes are justified now. They have her Majesty's government for converts. They have forced her Majesty's government to demonstrate by action that which is their principal contention, that if you suffer military credit to be obscured the fault must be wiped out in blood.

I feel how inadequate I am to deal with a question like this in a place such as this. I know it has been occupied by a much greater artist; and I feel that there has been a loss to the world of splendid specimens of political denunciation, because the misdeeds of the ministry of 1882 are, unfortunately, not subject to the criticism of the orator of

1880. What magnificent lessons, what splendid periods of eloquence we have lost!

Just think that if Mr. Gladstone, when the spirit of 1880 was upon him, could have had to deal with the case of a ministry professing the deepest respect for the concert of Europe, and the deepest anxiety to obey its will — a ministry which, with these professions on its lips, assembled a conference and kept it for months in vain debate, and, under cover of its discussions, prepared armaments, asked for leave to invade a country, and then, when a refusal was given and the armaments were ready, calmly showed the conference to the door, and took, in despite of Europe's will, the country which they had asked the leave of Europe to take — if the orator of 1880 had had such a theme to dwell upon, what would he have said of disingenuousness and subtlety?

Or, take another case: supposing that unequalled orator had had before him the case of a government who sent a large fleet into a port where they had no international right to go, and when that fleet was there had demanded that certain arrangements should be made on land which they had no international right to demand, and when these demands were not satisfied had forthwith enforced that by the bombardment of a great commercial port, would you not have heard about political brigandage? What sermons you would have had to listen to with respect to the equality of all nations, of the weakest and the strongest, before the law of Europe; what denunciations would you not have heard of those who could for the sake of British interests expose such a city to such a catastrophe, and carry fire and sword among a defenceless people!

That great artist drew a picture of Sir Frederick Roberts. I cannot help wishing that he had to draw a portrait of Sir

Beauchamp Seymour; but allow me to say in passing that, if my poor pencil could be employed, it would be drawn in nothing but the most flattering colors.

I think if we can imagine anything so impossible as the orator of 1880 having to describe and comment on the events of 1882, that he would have noticed one of the most remarkable coincidences which the history of this country furnishes. It is a very curious fact that we have only had one member of the Society of Friends — commonly called on the Statute-book "Quakers" — so that I may use the name without offence — in the Cabinet, we have only had one Quaker; and only once in the history of the world, so far at least as this hemisphere is concerned, if I am not mistaken, has a great commercial city of the first class been subject to bombardment.

It is a remarkable fact that when the order was given to bombard that commercial city that Quaker was in the Cabinet. At any rate, grave as these events have been, I think they will furnish some good fruit at least for the future. I hope we have taken a new departure in Liberal politics. I trust that for the future any minister who cares about British interests, and thinks it right to go to war in their defence, will not be subject to denunciation on the part of the Liberal party for doing so.

I am quite aware British interests were treated with scant respect in 1880. I am quite aware Mr. Gladstone denounced as monstrous the idea that we could claim to control a country simply because it lay on our route to India. But if ever there was a war — I do not know what to call it — I believe it was not a war; but if ever there were sanguinary operations undertaken for the sake of British interests, undoubtedly these recent operations in Egypt have deserved the character. . . .

After this precedent it will be impossible for any Liberal government to limit, as they have done in the past, the rights of national self-defence. With respect to the end of that war we have yet to wait. We do not know what the present negotiations may bring forth. We must suspend our judgment until we see what the result will be. I confess that I should be inclined to look on all these circumstances to which I have alluded with a very indulgent eye if the result of the negotiations which are pending should be to extend the strength, the power, and the predominant influence of Great Britain, for I am old-fashioned enough to believe in that empire and believe in its greatness.

I believe that wherever it has been extended it has conferred unnumbered benefits upon those who have been brought within its sway, and that the extension of the empire, so far from being the desire of selfishness or acquisitiveness, as it has been represented to be — deserving to be compared to acts of plunder in private life — is in reality a desire not only to extend the commerce and to strengthen the power of the government here at home, but to give to others those blessings of freedom and order which we have always prized among ourselves.

Let us therefore in the negotiations which are before us not be ashamed of our empire. We are now the predominant power in Egypt. The valor of our troops has made us so. Let us observe with rigid fidelity every engagement we have made with the amiable and respectable prince who rules in Egypt; but as regards the other powers of Europe, let us follow our position to its logical result. We are the predominant power. Why should we cease to be so? Why should we allow diplomacy to fritter away what the valor of our soldiers has won?

## A BURNING QUESTION

DELIVERED DURING DEBATE ON THE QUEEN'S SPEECH IN THE  
HOUSE OF LORDS, FEBRUARY 15, 1883

WE learn from the speech that her Majesty's government have suppressed with rapidity and completeness a formidable rebellion in Egypt. Then we are told that "the withdrawal of the British troops is proceeding as expeditiously as a prudent consideration of the circumstances will admit."

But the great anxiety of the world is to know whether the British troops are to be withdrawn altogether, and when; and upon neither of those questions does the speech give us the slightest hint as to the intentions of her Majesty's government. The government are able to say that they have submitted to the friendly consideration of the powers the mysterious arrangement by which the stability of the Khedive and the prosperity and happiness of the Egyptian people are to be secured. But we have not a hint that any one of those powers has expressed its approval of the arrangement proposed. . . . Hitherto we have spoken of the announcements of the Queen's speech. If the present practice is followed we shall have to drop the phrase and speak of the innuendoes of the Queen's speech. . . . The policy of dealing by innuendoes with unimportant measures might be passed over without remark; but with respect to the burning questions of the day, I cannot help thinking that it is singularly misplaced. First take Egypt.

With respect to that country we have undoubtedly, since Parliament met last year, witnessed a great transformation

scene. For the first six months the policy of the government was instinct with the doctrines connected with the name of that distinguished gentleman, Mr. Bright, who has left the government. For the last six months they have returned to an earlier and a sounder model; but their repentance does not entirely wash away their sin.

It does not efface the effects of their temporary concession to the policy of weakness, vacillation, and self-effacement. The result of their action, or want of action at the proper time, has been that the mechanism has been destroyed by which the results they now look for should be attained. Had they interfered in time, the Khedive's government would have remained upright, and the future conduct of Egypt might not have been difficult. But all the powers that the Khedive's government possessed of itself have been swept away, and for the future all the power of Egypt must be derived from the protective influence of the British government. . . . But if we rightly understand the policy of her Majesty's government — at present we have it only from non-official sources — they intend to rely for the future predominance of England in Egypt only on the prestige derived from the success of the arms of my noble and gallant friend [Lord Wolseley].

I do not dispute the greatness of that prestige. I do not dispute that our army has dealt a good lesson to Egypt and the eastern world, but the recollection of the power of it will speedily fade away. Remember this, that you failed before in your endeavor to maintain the government of Egypt, whether by your own fault or not, though you had not only your own military prestige, proved in every quarter of the world, to sustain you, but the prestige of France as well. . . .

The time is come when it would be of great diplomatic

importance, and of great assistance to the conduct of England in the future, that her position with respect to Egypt should be fully and rigidly defined. We hear from one member of the government that the troops are not to stay in Egypt. We hear from another member that they are to stay until certain objects are achieved, which we know cannot be achieved at an early period. We hear from Mr. Chamberlain that, considering the interests it has, it is impossible for England to look with apathy on anarchy in Egypt; and from Mr. Courtney we hear an inspired panegyric on anarchy, which he appears to regard as the highest blessing that can be bestowed upon a nation. That seems to show that you have no definite policy; and those who look forward to the time when their own influence and power will be restored again, are encouraged to make their preparations for that period, and to keep alive every source of discontent and disturbance that may be at their command.

#### SPEECH ON THE ABANDONMENT OF GENERAL GORDON

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 26, 1885

[The words of Lord Salisbury's motion of censure were, "That this House, having taken into consideration the statements that have been made on behalf of her Majesty's government, is of opinion that the deplorable failure of the Soudan expedition to obtain its object has been due to the undecided councils of the government and to the culpable delay attending the commencement of operations; that the policy of abandoning the whole of the Soudan after the conclusion of military operations will be dangerous to Egypt and inconsistent with the interests of the empire."]

THE motion which I have the honor to lay before your lordships has a double aspect — it passes judgment on the past, and expresses an opinion with regard to the policy of the future. Some people receive with considerable impatience the idea that, at the present crisis of

our country's destiny, we should examine into the past, and spend our time in judging of that which cannot be recalled.

But I think that such objections are unreasonable. We depend in one of the greatest crises through which our country has ever passed on the wisdom and decision of those who guide our counsels, and we can only judge of what dependence is rightly to be placed by examining their conduct in the past, and seeing whether what they have done justifies us in continuing that confidence in the difficulties which are to come.

Now, whatever else may be said of the conduct of her Majesty's government, I think those who examine it carefully will find that it follows a certain rule and system, and that in that sense, if in no other, it is consistent. Their conduct at the beginning of the Egyptian affair has been analogous to their conduct at the end; throughout there has been an unwillingness to come to any requisite decision till the last moment.

There has been an absolute terror of fixing upon any settled course, and the result has been that, when the time came that external pressure forced a decision on some definite course, the moment for satisfactory action had already passed, and the measures that were taken were taken in haste, with little preparation, and often with little fitness for the emergencies with which they had to cope. The conduct of the government has been an alternation of periods of slumber and periods of rush. The rush, however vehement, has been too unprepared and too unintelligent to repair the damage which the period of slumber has effected.

I do not wish to go far back into the Egyptian question, but it is necessary to point out the uniformity of the character and conduct of the government. The first commence-