

It further aggrandized the power of Russia in Armenia; but I would not dwell upon that matter if it were not for a very strange circumstance. You know that an Armenian province was given to Russia after the war, but about that I own to you I have very much less feeling of objection. I have objected from the first vehemently and in every form to the granting of territory on the Danube to Russia, and carrying back the population of a certain country from a free state to a despotic state; but with regard to the transfer of a certain portion of the Armenian people from the government of Turkey to the government of Russia I must own that I contemplate that transfer with much greater equanimity. I have no fear myself of the territorial extensions of Russia in Asia, no fear of them whatever. I think the fears are no better than old women's fears. And I don't wish to encourage her aggressive tendencies in Asia or anywhere else. But I admit it may be and probably is the case that there is some benefit attending upon the transfer of a portion of Armenia from Turkey to Russia.

But here is a very strange fact. You know that that portion of Armenia includes the port of Batoum. Lord Salisbury has lately stated to the country that, by the treaty of Berlin the port of Batoum is to be only a commercial port. If the treaty of Berlin stated that it was to be only a commercial port, which of course could not be made an arsenal, that fact would be very important. But happily, gentlemen, although treaties are concealed from us nowadays as long and as often as is possible, the treaty of Berlin is an open instrument. We can consult it for ourselves; and when we consult the treaty of Berlin we find it states that Batoum shall be essentially a commercial port, but not that it shall be only a commercial port. Why, gentlemen, Leith is essentially a

commercial port, but there is nothing to prevent the people of this country if in their wisdom or their folly they should think fit from constituting Leith as a great naval arsenal or fortification; and there is nothing to prevent the Emperor of Russia, while leaving to Batoum a character that shall be essentially commercial, from joining with that another character that is not in the slightest degree excluded by the treaty, and making it as much as he pleases a port of military defence. Therefore I challenge the assertion of Lord Salisbury; and as Lord Salisbury is fond of writing letters to the "Times" to bring the Duke of Argyll to book, he perhaps will be kind enough to write another letter to the "Times" and tell in what clause of the treaty of Berlin he finds it written that the port of Batoum shall be only a commercial port. For the present I simply leave it on record that he has misrepresented the treaty of Berlin.

With respect to Russia I take two views of the position of Russia. The position of Russia in Central Asia I believe to be one that has in the main been forced upon her against her will. She has been compelled—and this is the impartial opinion of the world,—she has been compelled to extend her frontier southward in Central Asia by causes in some degree analogous to, but certainly more stringent and imperative than, the causes which have commonly led us to extend in a far more important manner our frontier in India; and I think it, gentlemen, much to the credit of the late government, much to the honor of Lord Clarendon and Lord Granville that when we were in office we made a covenant with Russia in which Russia bound herself to exercise no influence or interference whatever in Afghanistan, we on the other hand making known our desire that Afghanistan should continue free and independent. Both the powers acted with uniform strict-

ness and fidelity upon this engagement until the day when we were removed from office. But Russia, gentlemen, has another position—her position in respect to Turkey; and here it is that I have complained of the government for aggrandizing the power of Russia; it is on this point that I most complain.

The policy of her Majesty's government was a policy of repelling and repudiating the Slavonic populations of Turkey in Europe and of declining to make England the advocate for their interests. Nay, more; she became in their view the advocate of the interests opposed to theirs. Indeed she was rather the decided advocate of Turkey; and now Turkey is full of loud complaints—and complaints I must say not unjust—that we allured her on to her ruin; that we gave the Turks a right to believe that we should support them; that our ambassadors, Sir Henry Elliot and Sir Austin Layard, both of them said we had most vital interests in maintaining Turkey as it was, and consequently the Turks thought if we had vital interests we should certainly defend them; and they were thereby lured on into that ruinous, cruel, and destructive war with Russia. But by our conduct to the Slavonic populations we alienated those populations from us. We made our name odious among them. They had every disposition to sympathize with us, every disposition to confide in us. They are as a people desirous of freedom, desirous of self-government, with no aggressive views, but hating the idea of being absorbed in a huge despotic empire like Russia. But when they found that we and the other powers of Europe under our unfortunate guidance declined to become in any manner their champions in defence of the rights of life, of property, and of female honor,—when they found that there was no call which could find its way to the heart of England through its govern-

ment or to the hearts of other powers, and that Russia alone was disposed to fight for them, why naturally they said Russia is our friend. We have done everything, gentlemen, in our power to drive these populations into the arms of Russia. If Russia has aggressive dispositions in the direction of Turkey—and I think it probable that she may have them,—it is we who have laid the ground upon which Russia may make her march to the south,—we who have taught the Bulgarians, the Servians, the Roumanians, the Montenegrins, that there is one power in Europe and only one which is ready to support in act and by the sword her professions of sympathy with the oppressed populations of Turkey. That power is Russia, and how can you blame these people if in such circumstances they are disposed to say Russia is our friend? But why did we make them say it? Simply because of the policy of the government, not because of the wishes of the people of this country. Gentlemen, this is the most dangerous form of aggrandizing Russia. If Russia is aggressive anywhere, if Russia is formidable anywhere, it is by movements toward the south, it is by schemes for acquiring command of the straits or of Constantinople; and there is no way by which you can possibly so much assist her in giving reality to these designs as by inducing and disposing the populations of these provinces who are now in virtual possession of them, to look upon Russia as their champion and their friend, to look upon England as their disguised perhaps but yet real and effective enemy.

Why, now, gentlemen, I have said that I think it not unreasonable either to believe or at any rate to admit it to be possible that Russia has aggressive designs in the east of Europe. I do not mean immediate aggressive designs. I do not believe that the Emperor of Russia is a man of aggressive schemes or policy. It is that, looking to that question in the

long run, looking at what has happened and what may happen in ten or twenty years, in one generation, in two generations, it is highly probable that in some circumstances Russia may develop aggressive tendencies toward the south.

Perhaps you will say I am here guilty of the same injustice to Russia that I have been deprecating because I say that we ought not to adopt the method of condemning anybody without cause and setting up exceptional principles in proscription of a particular nation. Gentlemen, I will explain to you in a moment the principle upon which I act and the grounds upon which I form my judgment. They are simply these grounds: I look at the position of Russia, the geographical position of Russia relatively to Turkey. I look at the comparative strength of the two empires; I look at the importance of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus as an exit and a channel for the military and commercial marine of Russia to the Mediterranean; and what I say to myself is this: If the United Kingdom were in the same position relatively to Turkey which Russia holds upon the map of the globe I feel quite sure that we should be very apt indeed both to entertain and to execute aggressive designs upon Turkey. Gentlemen, I will go further and will frankly own to you that I believe if we, instead of happily inhabiting this island, had been in the possession of the Russian territory and in the circumstances of the Russian people we should most likely have eaten up Turkey long ago. And consequently in saying that Russia ought to be vigilantly watched in that quarter I am only applying to her the rule which in parallel circumstances I feel convinced ought to be applied and would be justly applied to judgments upon our own country.

Gentlemen, there is only one other point on which I must still say a few words to you, although there are a great many

upon which I have a great many words yet to say somewhere or other.

Of all the principles, gentlemen, of foreign policy which I have enumerated that to which I attach the greatest value is the principle of the equality of nations; because without recognizing that principle there is no such thing as public right and without public international right there is no instrument available for settling the transactions of mankind except material force. Consequently the principle of equality among nations lies in my opinion at the very basis and root of a Christian civilization, and when that principle is compromised or abandoned with it must depart our hopes of tranquillity and of progress for mankind.

I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that I feel it my absolute duty to make this charge against the foreign policy under which we have lived for the last two years, since the resignation of Lord Derby. It has been a foreign policy in my opinion wholly, or to a perilous extent, unregardful of public right and it has been founded upon the basis of a false, I think an arrogant and a dangerous, assumption, although I do not question its being made conscientiously and for what was believed the advantage of the country,—an untrue, arrogant, and dangerous assumption that we are entitled to assume for ourselves some dignity which we should also be entitled to withhold from others and to claim on our own part authority to do things which we would not permit to be done by others. For example when Russia was going to the Congress at Berlin we said: "Your treaty of San Stefano is of no value. It is an act between you and Turkey; but the concerns of Turkey by the treaty of Paris are the concerns of Europe at large. We insist upon it that the whole of your treaty of San Stefano shall be submitted to the Congress at

Berlin that they may judge how far to open it in each and every one of its points, because the concerns of Turkey are the common concerns of the powers of Europe acting in concert."

Having asserted that principle to the world what did we do? These two things, gentlemen: secretly, without the knowledge of Parliament, without even the forms of official procedure, Lord Salisbury met Count Schouvaloff in London and agreed with him upon the terms on which the two powers together should be bound in honor to one another to act upon all the most important points when they came before the Congress at Berlin. Having alleged against Russia that she should not be allowed to settle Turkish affairs with Turkey because they were but two powers and these affairs were the common affairs of Europe and of European interest, we then got Count Schouvaloff into a private room, and on the part of England and Russia, they being but two powers, we settled a large number of the most important of these affairs in utter contempt and derogation of the very principle for which the government had been contending for months before, for which they had asked Parliament to grant a sum of £6,000,000, for which they had spent that £6,000,000 in needless and mischievous armaments. That which we would not allow Russia to do with Turkey, because we pleaded the rights of Europe, we ourselves did with Russia, in contempt of the rights of Europe. Nor was that all, gentlemen. That act was done, I think, on one of the last days of May, in the year 1878, and the document was published, made known to the world, made known to the Congress at Berlin, to its infinite astonishment unless I am very greatly misinformed.

But that was not all. Nearly at the same time we performed the same operation in another quarter. We objected to a treaty between Russia and Turkey as having no authority,

though that treaty was made in the light of day—namely, to the treaty of San Stefano; and what did we do? We went not in the light of day but in the darkness of the night,—not in the knowledge and cognizance of other powers, all of whom would have had the faculty and means of watching all along and of preparing and taking their own objections and shaping their own policy,—not in the light of day, but in the darkness of the night, we sent the ambassador of England in Constantinople to the minister of Turkey and there he framed, even while the Congress of Berlin was sitting to determine these matters of common interest, he framed that which is too famous, shall I say, or rather too notorious, as the Anglo-Turkish convention.

Gentlemen, it is said and said truly that truth beats fiction; that what happens in fact from time to time is of a character so daring, so strange, that if the novelist were to imagine it and put it upon his pages the whole world would reject it from its improbability. And that is the case of the Anglo-Turkish convention. For who would have believed it possible that we should assert before the world the principle that Europe only could deal with the affairs of the Turkish empire and should ask Parliament for six millions to support us in asserting that principle, should send ministers to Berlin who declared that unless that principle was acted upon they would go to war with the material that Parliament had placed in their hands and should at the same time be concluded a separate agreement with Turkey, under which those matters of European jurisdiction were coolly transferred to English jurisdiction; and the whole matter was sealed with the worthless bribe of the possession and administration of the island of Cyprus! I said, gentlemen, the worthless bribe of the island of Cyprus, and that is the truth. It is worthless for our purposes—not

worthless in itself; an island of resources, an island of natural capabilities, provided they are allowed to develop themselves in the course of circumstances without violent and unprincipled methods of action. But Cyprus was not thought to be worthless by those who accepted it as a bribe. On the contrary you were told that it was to secure the road to India; you were told that it was to be the site of an arsenal very cheaply made and more valuable than Malta; you were told that it was to revive trade. And a multitude of companies were formed and sent agents and capital to Cyprus and some of them, I fear, grievously burned their fingers there. I am not going to dwell upon that now. What I have in view is not the particular merits of Cyprus, but the illustration that I have given you in the case of the agreement of Lord Salisbury with Count Schouvaloff and in the case of the Anglo-Turkish convention, of the manner in which we have asserted for ourselves a principle that we had denied to others—namely, the principle of overriding the European authority of the treaty of Paris and taking the matters which that treaty gave to Europe into our own separate jurisdiction.

Now, gentlemen, I am sorry to find that that which I call the pharisaical assertion of our own superiority has found its way alike into the practice and seemingly into the theories of the government. I am not going to assert anything which is not known, but the prime minister has said that there is one day in the year—namely, the 9th of November, Lord Mayor's day—on which the language of sense and truth is to be heard amidst the surrounding din of idle rumors generated and fledged in the brains of irresponsible scribes. I do not agree, gentlemen, in that panegyric upon the 9th of November. I am much more apt to compare the 9th of November—certainly a well-known day in the year—but as to some of the

speeches that have lately been made upon it I am very much disposed to compare it with another day in the year well known to British tradition and that other day in the year is the 1st of April. But, gentlemen, on that day the prime minister, speaking out,—I do not question for a moment his own sincere opinion,—made what I think one of the most unhappy and ominous allusions ever made by a minister of this country. He quoted certain words easily rendered as “Empire and Liberty”—words (he said) of a Roman statesman, words descriptive of the state of Rome—and he quoted them as words which were capable of legitimate application to the position and circumstances of England. I join issue with the prime minister upon that subject and I affirm that nothing can be more fundamentally unsound, more practically ruinous, than the establishment of Roman analogies for the guidance of British policy. What, gentlemen, was Rome? Rome was indeed an imperial state, you may tell me,—I know not, I cannot read the counsels of Providence,—a state having a mission to subdue the world, but a state whose very basis it was to deny the equal rights, to proscribe the independent existence of other nations. That, gentlemen, was the Roman idea. It has been partially and not ill described in three lines of a translation from Virgil by our great poet Dryden, which runs as follows:

“O Rome! 'tis thine alone with awful sway
To rule mankind, and make the world obey,
Disposing peace and war thine own majestic way.”

We are told to fall back upon this example. No doubt the word “empire” was qualified with the word “liberty.” But what did the two words “liberty” and “empire” mean in a Roman mouth? They meant simply this: “Liberty for ourselves, empire over the rest of mankind.”

I do not think, gentlemen, that this ministry or any other ministry is going to place us in the position of Rome. What I object to is the revival of the idea. I care not how feebly, I care not even how, from a philosophic or historical point of view, how ridiculous the attempt at this revival may be. I say it indicates an intention—I say it indicates a frame of mind, and the frame of mind unfortunately I find has been consistent with the policy of which I have given you some illustrations—the policy of denying to others the rights that we claim ourselves. No doubt, gentlemen, Rome may have had its work to do and Rome did its work. But modern times have brought a different state of things. Modern times have established a sisterhood of nations, equal, independent, each of them built up under that legitimate defence which public law affords to every nation, living within its own borders and seeking to perform its own affairs; but if one thing more than another has been detestable to Europe it has been the appearance upon the stage from time to time of men who, even in the times of Christian civilization, have been thought to aim at universal dominion. It was this aggressive disposition on the part of Louis XIV, King of France, that led your forefathers, gentlemen, freely to spend their blood and treasure in a cause not immediately their own and to struggle against the method of policy which, having Paris for its centre, seemed to aim at an universal monarchy.

It was the very same thing a century and a half later which was the charge launched and justly launched against Napoleon, that under his dominion France was not content even with her extended limits, but Germany, and Italy, and Spain, apparently without any limit to this pestilent and pernicious process, were to be brought under the dominion or influence of France and national equality was to be trampled under foot

and national rights denied. For that reason England in the struggle almost exhausted herself, greatly impoverished her people, brought upon herself and Scotland too the consequences of a debt that nearly crushed their energies, and poured forth their best blood without limit in order to resist and put down these intolerable pretensions.

Gentlemen, it is but in a pale and weak and almost despicable miniature that such ideas are now set up, but you will observe that the poison lies—that the poison and the mischief lie—in the principle and not the scale.

It is the opposite principle which I say has been compromised by the action of the ministry and which I call upon you and upon any who choose to hear my views to vindicate when the day of our election comes; I mean the sound and the sacred principle that Christendom is formed of a band of nations who are united to one another in the bonds of right; that they are without distinction of great and small; there is an absolute equality between them,—the same sacredness defends the narrow limits of Belgium as attaches to the extended frontiers of Russia or Germany or France. I hold that he who by act or word brings that principle into peril or disparagement, however honest his intentions may be, places himself in the position of one inflicting—I won't say intending to inflict—I ascribe nothing of the sort—but inflicting injury upon his own country and endangering the peace and all the most fundamental interests of Christian society.

ON THE BEACONSFIELD MINISTRY

DELIVERED IN EDINBURGH, MARCH 17, 1880

GENTLEMEN,—When I last had the honor of addressing you in this hall I endeavored in some degree to open the great case which I was in hopes would, in conformity with what I may call constitutional usage, then have been brought at once before you. The arguments which we made for a dissolution were received with the usual contempt, and the Parliament was summoned to attempt for the first time in our history the regular business of a seventh session. I am not going now to argue on the propriety of this course, because, meeting you here in the capital of the county and of Scotland, I am anxious to go straight to the very heart of the matter, and amidst the crowd of topics that rush upon the mind to touch upon some of those which you will judge to be most closely and most intimately connected with the true merits of the great issue that is before us.

At last the dissolution has come, and I postpone the consideration of the question why it has come, the question how it has come, on which there are many things to be said. It has come, and you are about to give your votes upon an occasion which, allow me to tell you, entails not only upon me, but upon you, a responsibility greater than you ever had to undergo. I believe that I have the honor of addressing a mixed meeting, a meeting principally and very largely composed of freeholders of the county, but in which warm and decided friends are freely mingled with those who have not

declared in our favor, or even with those who may intend to vote against us.

Now, gentlemen, let me say a word in the first place to those whom I must for the moment call opponents. I am not going to address them in the language of flattery. I am not going to supplicate them for the conferring of a favor. I am not going to appeal to them on any secondary or any social ground. I am going to speak to them as Scotchmen and as citizens; I am going to speak to them of the duty that they owe to the empire at this moment; I am going to speak to them of the condition of the empire, of the strength of the empire, and of the honor of the empire; and it is upon these issues that I respectfully ask for their support. I am glad that, notwithstanding my Scotch blood, and notwithstanding the association of my father and my grandfather with this country, it is open to our opponents if they like to describe me as a stranger; because I am free to admit that I stand here in consequence of an invitation, and in consequence of treatment the most generous and the most gratifying that ever was accorded to man. And I venture to assure every one of my opponents that if I beg respectfully to have some credit for upright motives, that credit I at once accord to them. I know very well they are not accustomed to hear it given me; I know very well that in the newspapers which they read they will find that violent passion, that outrageous hatred, that sordid greed for office, are the motives and the only motives by which I am governed. Many of these papers constitute in some sense their daily food; but I have such faith in their intelligence, and in the healthiness of their constitution as Scotchmen, that I believe that many of them will by the inherent vigor of that constitution correct and neutralize the poison thus administered; will consent to meet