the Queen settled the matter by at once sending for Lord Salis­bury, who became prime minister for the first time in 1885.

The “ Forwards ’’ among the Conservatives, headed by Lord Randolph Churchill, brought so much pressure to bear that Northcote was induced to enter the House of Lords as earl of Iddesleigh, while Sir Michael Hicks Beach was made leader of the House of Commons, Lord Randolph Churchill secretary for India, and Mr Arthur

Balfour president of the Local Government Board. The new Government had only to prepare for the general election in the autumn. The ministerial programme was put forward by Salisbury on the 7th of October in an important speech addressed to the Union of Conservative Associations assembled at Newport, in Monmouthshire; and in this he outlined large reforms in local government, poured scorn upon Mr Chamberlain’s Radical policy of “ three acres and a cow,’’ but promised cheap land transfer, and opposed the disestablishment of the Church as a matter of life or death to the Conservative party. In this Lord Salisbury was declaring war against what seemed to be the danger should Mr Chamberlain’s “ unauthorized programme ” succeed; while the comparative slightness of his references to Ireland showed that he had no more suspicion than anybody else of the event which was about to change the whole face of British politics, to break up the Liberal party and to change the most formidable of the advanced Radicals into an ally and a colleague. The general election took place, and there were returned to parliament 335 Liberals, 249 Conservatives and 86 Home Rulers; so that if the last two parties had combined, they would have exactly tied with the Liberals. The Conservative Government met parliament, and after a short time were put into a minority of 79 on a Radical land motion, brought in by Mr Chamberlain’s henchman, Mr Jesse Collings. Mr Gladstone’s return to office, and his announcement of a Bill giving a separate parliament to Ireland, were quickly followed by the secession of the Unionist Liberals; the defeat of the Bill; an appeal to the country; and the return of the Unionist party to power with a majority of 118. Salisbury at once offered to make way for Lord Hartington, but the suggestion that the latter should form a Government was declined; and the Conservatives took office alone, with an Irish policy which might be summed up, perhaps, in Salisbury’s words as

“ twenty years of resolute government.” For a few months, until just before his sudden death on the 12th of January 1887, Lord Iddesleigh was foreign secretary; but Salisbury, who meantime had held the post of lord privy seal, then returned to the Foreign Office. Meanwhile the increasing friction between him and Lord Randolph Churchill, who, amid many qualms on the part of more old-fashioned Conservatives, had become chancellor of the exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, had led to the latter’s resignation, which, to his own surprise, was accepted; and from that date Salisbury’s effective primacy in his own party was unchallenged.

Only the general lines of Salisbury’s later political career need here be sketched. As a consequence of the practical monopoly of political power enjoyed by the Unionist party after the Liberal disruption of 1886—for even in the years 1892-1895 the situation was dominated by the permanent Unionist majority in the House of Lords—Salisbury’s position became unique. These were the long-looked-for days of Conservative reaction, of which he had never despaired. The situation was complicated, so far as Salisbury personally was concerned, by the coalition with the Liberal Unionists, which was confirmed in 1895 by the inclusion of the duke of Devonshire, Mr Chamberlain, and other Liberal Unionists in the Cabinet. But though it appeared anomalous that old antagonists like Lord Salisbury and Mr Chamberlain should be working together in the same ministry, the prime minister’s position was such that he could disregard a superficial criticism which paid too little heed to his political faculty and his patriotic regard for the requirements of the situation. Moreover, the practical work of reconciling Conservative traditions with domestic reform depended rather on Salisbury’s nephew, Mr Balfour, who led

the House of Commons, than on Salisbury, who devoted himself almost entirely to foreign affairs. The new Conservative move­ment, moreover, in the country at large, was, in any case, of a more constructive type than Salisbury himself was best fitted to lead, and he was not the real source of the political inspiration even of the Conservative wing of the Unionist party during this period. He began to stand to some extent outside party and above it, a moderator with a keenly analytic and rather sceptical mind, but still the recognized representative of the British empire in the councils of the world, and the trusted adviser of his sovereign. Though himself the last man to be selected as the type of a democratic politician—for his references to extensions of popular government, even when made by his own party, were full of mild contempt—Salisbury gradually acquired a higher place in public opinion than that occupied by any contemporary statesman. His speeches—which, though carelessly composed, continued to blaze on occasion with their old fire and their some­what mordant cynicism—were weightier in tone, and became European events. Without the genius of Disraeli or the personal magnetism of Gladstone, he yet inspired the British public with a quiet confidence that under him things would not go far wrong, and that he would not act rashly or unworthily of his country. Even political opponents came to look on his cautious and balanced conservatism, and his intellectual aloofness from interested motives or vulgar ambition, as standing between them and something more distasteful. Moreover, in the matter of foreign affairs his weight was supreme. He had lived to become, as was indeed generally recognized, the most experienced working diplomatist in Europe. His position in this respect was shown in nothing better than in his superiority to criticism. In foreign affairs many among his own party regarded him as too much inclined to “ split the difference ” and to make “ grace­ful concessions ”—as in the case of the cession of Heligoland to Germany—in which it was complained that Great Britain got the worst of the bargain. But though occasionally, as in the with- drawal of British ships from Port Arthur in 1898, such criticism became acute, the plain fact of the preservation of European peace, often in difficult circumstances, reconciled the public to his conduct of affairs. His patience frequently justified itself, notably in the case of British relations with the United States, which were for a moment threatened by President Cleveland’s message concerning Venezuela in 1895. And though his loyalty to the European Concert in connexion with Turkey’s dealings with Armenia and Crete in 1895-1898 proved irritatingly in­effectual—the pace of the concert, as Lord Salisbury explained, being rather like that of a steam-roller—no alternative policy could be contemplated as feasible in any other statesman’s hands. Salisbury’s personal view of the new situation created by the methods of the sultan of Turkey was indicated not only by a solemn and unusual public warning addressed to the sultan in a speech at Brighton, but also by his famous remark that in the Crimean War Great Britain had “ put her money on the wrong horse. ” Among his most important strokes of diplomacy was the Anglo-German agreement of 1890, delimiting the British and German spheres of influence in Africa. The South African question from 1896 onwards was a matter for the Colonial Office, and Salisbury left it in Mr Chamberlain’s hands.

A peer premier must inevitably leave many of the real problems of democratic government to his colleagues in the House of Commons. In the Upper House Lord Salisbury was paramount. Yet while vigorously opposing the Radical agitation for the abolition of the House of Lords, he never interposed a *non possumus* to schemes of reform. He was always willing to consider plans for its improvement, and in May 1888 himself introduced a bill for reforming it and creating life peers; but he warned reformers that the only result must be to make the House stronger. To abolish it, on the other hand, would be to take away a necessary safeguard for protecting “ Philip drunk ” by an appeal to “ Philip sober. ”

Lord Salisbury suffered a severe loss by the death in 1900 of his wife, whose influence with her husband had been great, as her devotion had been unswerving. Her protracted illness was