

Durham could not count upon much support, except from leaders of the stamp of Grote, and Molesworth. The philosophic Radicals appreciated Durham, the others were ready to accept him if he could convince them that he had the gift of leadership.

Durham was, however, too dangerous to leave at liberty, and he was sent a second time to St. Petersburg. Again Durham felt out of his element, and soon returned. He met with a great reception from the Radicals, and for a moment the ministers were alarmed. Durham's irresolution, fortunately for himself, allowed the chance to pass. It was an ingenious scheme to send the Radical Earl to Canada to restore order, and mediate between the warring parties there. In any case the ministry would score; if Durham succeeded—an unlikely event—the ministry might hope for a further lease of power from the country, and they would share the credit of his success; if he failed, it would provide an excuse for acknowledging the independence of a troublesome colony, as the Radicals proposed, while at the same time it would ruin Durham politically for ever. The Earl had only one friend in the Cabinet—Lord John Russell; Melbourne despised Durham's abilities as much as he feared his ambition. In sending Durham the ministry, from their own point of view, made a mistake, as Melbourne acknowledged in a private letter a few months afterwards. At last the Earl felt himself his own master, and his terms were hard. Only at the personal request of the Queen would Durham accept the post. He had his way. It was not the first time that Durham had been designated as Governor-General of Canada. Before Lord Gosford set out on his ill-omened mission, Durham was sounded, but the Earl knew little about Canada; his interests lay in political reform at home, and his personal health was not good.

On January 16th, 1838, Parliament reassembled. Men were on the tiptoe of expectation; for the Christmas recess had occurred too soon after the outbreak of the rebellion to