

But it was not until 1886 that the Earl of Aberdeen reached that tide in the affairs of men which, in some cases, leads to success, and, not unfrequently, ends in disaster. During the brief Gladstone Ministry of that year, he accepted and held the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. It was a difficult position at the best, and at that time was rendered unusually so by the political uncertainty over the Home Rule Bill, and the partisan bitterness which seemed to reign supreme from one end of Ireland to the other.

The new Viceroy had to inaugurate a new policy; to conciliate hostile factions; to calm the excited feelings of the hour; and to soothe the intense opposition of sections of the community to the Government of which he was a member. It would be inaccurate to say that he was particularly successful from a party standpoint. There was not time for that. But there was abundant opportunity for the display of tact, geniality, and kindness, and the cultivation of a popularity which still remains strong throughout the Green Isle. No Lord Lieutenant in recent times has so endeared himself to the people, and when it is remembered that Lord Aberdeen was there only from February to July, the following tribute from a Conservative paper—the *Newcastle Chronicle*, May 13th, 1893—will testify to his possession of some remarkable qualities:

“The immense popularity of Earl Fitzwilliam is not yet forgotten, and when the Earl of Aberdeen left Ireland, nothing like the regret which his departure evoked had been witnessed there since the departure of Earl Fitzwilliam in 1795.”

Of course, much of this feeling was due to the popularity of Home Rule as a panacea for all distress, and to Lord Aberdeen, as the representative of that principle. But, as was shown by the comments of papers like the *Times*, when the change of Government relegated him once more to private life, there were other reasons as well for this great popularity. It was not all plain sailing. Before Lord

and Lady Aberdeen had been in Dublin a week, strong addresses were presented from two hundred Methodist ministers, from the representatives of the Presbyterian Church, and from other bodies, protesting against Home Rule, and indirectly stigmatising Her Majesty's representative as disloyal. But Lord Aberdeen took, as far as was possible, a non-partisan ground, and before long, though party feeling was not greatly modified, it had ceased to be directed against him in person. As early as March 7th, following their appointment, the Countess of Aberdeen started the movement which has lately been so successfully exemplified at the World's Fair, by writing an open letter, which urged a due representation of Irish industries at the approaching Exhibition in Edinburgh. In the endeavor to promote this and other laudable objects, Lord Aberdeen joined, and during May they were able to take a prolonged tour through Southern Ireland, and were warmly received everywhere. In no place was this reception more enthusiastic than in Cork, where the Lord-Lieutenant was able to speak of “the combination of loyalty and national feeling” which appeared to exist.

Curiously enough, Canada came to the front during this period in connection with the Home Rule question. In April, the Quebec Assembly passed a resolution unanimously in favor of Home Rule, and a little later Hon. Edward Blake failed in carrying one through the Dominion House, an amendment being adopted, however, which expressed the very general and praiseworthy wish that measures be adopted, which, while “preserving the integrity and well-being of the empire, and the rights and status of the minority, would be satisfactory to the people of Ireland, and permanently remove the discontent so long unhappily prevailing in that country.”

In July, Mr. Gladstone was defeated upon appealing to the country, and Lord Aberdeen prepared to surrender