

## CHAPTER XLVIII

1900

### APPRECIATIONS

NUMEROUS telegrams, in which the deep regret felt throughout the country at the sad tidings from Inveraray was touchingly expressed, were received from Her Majesty Queen Victoria, members of the Royal Family, friends—and clansmen, who mourned the loss of their ‘beloved chief.’

The Queen who, during the previous anxious months, had written constantly to ask for tidings of the Duke, and to express her great sympathy, wrote without a moment’s delay :

‘VICEREGAL LODGE, DUBLIN,

‘*April 24th, 1900.*

‘DEAREST INA,

‘I do not like to miss a post without expressing in writing how truly and deeply I feel for you. It is a sad satisfaction that you have been able to devote yourself to Him through this most trying time, and I pray that you may be further supported in your overwhelming sorrow and desolation. I have lost a most kind friend of more than fifty years’ standing, and I shall ever cherish his memory.

‘Ever yours affectionately,

‘V. R. & I.’

From the many letters of sympathy and appreciation received at the time and at a later date, the following extracts are given :

*From the Earl of Halsbury, at that time Lord Chancellor.*

‘DEAR DUCHESS OF ARGYLL,

‘I need not say, I hope, with what great sorrow I learned the great calamity which has befallen you and the country itself. The great Duke was one of those men whose genius and eloquence were potent factors in our national greatness.

‘I felt much honoured by his friendship, and I most deeply deplore his loss, but to you the loss of one united to you by the tenderest of all ties is one with which I can only wish you to believe I can only very imperfectly express my deepest sympathy. There are some feelings which no human language can adequately represent. May I ask you to believe that my wife and I desire to join in your sorrow for one whom we so much admired and regarded with such respect and even affection.

‘Believe me, dear Duchess of Argyll,

‘Very truly yours,

‘HALSBURY.’

*From Earl Spencer.*

‘MY DEAR DUCHESS,

‘I have one letter from the Duke which I greatly value which shows how generous an opponent he was—a letter on my speech in 1892 in proposing the Home Rule Bill to the House of Lords.

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‘He was sometimes very strong, even bitter, in actual debate, but in private was always generous and friendly, and never made a difference as to his private friendship and kindness towards an old friend who might be in political opposition to him.

‘Yours very truly,

‘SPENCER.’

*From Mr. Chamberlain.*

‘MY DEAR DUCHESS,

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‘May I take this opportunity of saying how much I admired your husband. I say nothing of his oratory—now a lost art—although it placed him in the very front rank of speakers, but his courage, his love of justice, his strenuous adherence to the causes he believed to be right, and his far-seeing judgment on the larger movements of political and national life, combine to make him one of the greatest figures of my time.

‘Believe me,

‘Yours very truly,

‘J. CHAMBERLAIN.’

*From Sir John Murray, K.C.B.*

‘I look back on the hours which I have spent in the Duke’s company as the most interesting and instructive of my life. He was the most active-minded and many-sided man I have ever known.

‘He was always kind to me. His death is a loss not to be repaired.’

*From Professor Story Maskelyne (formerly the Head of the Mineralogical Department of the British Museum).*

‘May I be allowed to say how glad I am that there will be a record for those coming after us of the personality and the singularly fine nature of one whom we of the Victorian Era looked up to as a consistent statesman, a thoughtful and original writer on social and similar matters, and, as I can further testify, as a true naturalist.

‘And, withal, in what clear diction and native eloquence everything he spoke or wrote was clothed !

‘Forgive my taking this occasion to pay a humble tribute to the memory of one whose career I followed with admiration through some forty years, the career of an independent statesman and of a nobleman worthy of intellectual Scotland.’

*From Mr. Bosworth Smith.*

‘It is needless to say that I had the greatest admiration for the intellect and character of the Duke. His voice, whenever he spoke or wrote, was a voice, and not an echo.’

*From Canon Macoll.*

‘I am very glad your Grace is bringing out a Life of the Duke. He was a great man and a great orator. I remember asking Mr. Gladstone in the year 1877 whom he considered the greatest orator in the House of Lords. “The Duke of Argyll, without a doubt,” he answered.’

*From Mr. Dickie (one of the Oldest Tenants on the Argyll Estates, and a Member of the County Council).*

‘I have had forty-five years’ experience of the Duke as a proprietor, and a more kindly, straightforward, honourable nobleman no tenant could sit under. In that time also I have had a great deal of business of a public nature that led me to be mixed up with a great many other proprietors in this district, and for the weal of the general public and his tenantry the late Duke was head and shoulders above the others. Peace be to his ashes! As a tenant for such a long time of his Grace’s, I have had every reason to respect and admire him, and in my opinion he has not left his equal, as a man, in every capacity of life, in Great Britain to-day.’

The *Senatus Academicus* and the General Council of the University of St. Andrews, of which the Duke had been Chancellor for forty-eight years, sent the following expressions of the admiration and esteem in which he was held in that ancient Scottish University :

‘The *Senatus Academicus* avail themselves of the opportunity of this, the first Ordinary Meeting after the death of His Grace the Duke of Argyll, Chancellor of the University, to express and place on record their sense of the great loss which the University has sustained by that sad event. For almost half a century the University has been honoured by having as its official head one of the most eminent Scotsmen of his time, one who employed the great position to which he was born that he might render signal service to his Sovereign and fellow-countrymen, and might further by his influence every cause which seemed to him just and good. By his gifts as an orator, by his literary and scientific works, full of profound thought, patient investigation, and earnest eloquence, and by his services as a statesman, he added lustre to an ancient and historic name. The *Senatus* recognise with gratitude the deep interest which he took in the welfare of the University, evinced not least in the fact that several of his own sons were enrolled among its *alumni*, and in his readiness to give the aid of his counsel and active effort whenever occasion demanded.’

*From the General Council of the University of  
St. Andrews.*

‘That this Council desires to record its regret at the loss sustained by the University in the death of its Chancellor, the late Duke of Argyll, who, as a statesman of the first rank, one of the most polished orators of his time, and an eminent man of science, presided over the University with great dignity for the long period of forty-eight years.’

From the Church in all parts of Scotland came touching expressions of grief for the irreparable loss of one who, like his ancestors, had all his life been her defender and supporter. Space only permits of two Minutes from the presbyteries being included; these have been selected as giving the most complete record of the Duke's services to the Church of Scotland.

*From the Presbytery of Kintyre.*

'The members of the Presbytery resolved to record, as they hereby do record, their keen regret at the death of the Duke of Argyll, and their deep sense of the loss thereby sustained by the country.

'They recall with gratitude to Almighty God the unwearied devotion with which, in sunshine and in storm, he gave to the service of the State and of the Church the resources of a mind the brilliancy of whose powers placed him amongst the greatest men of his generation.

'They hold in special remembrance the readiness with which, true to the traditions of his family, he championed the cause of the Church of Scotland in the day of her adversity; and they will never let out of memory the faithfulness with which, all through a busy life, he defended her against her enemies, and, at the expense of disagreement with political associates, sought to make her as efficient as possible an instrument in advancing the kingdom of heaven within this realm, thus evincing alike his piety and his patriotism.'

*From the Presbytery of Dumbarton.*

'It was moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed to place on record the sincere regret of the Presbytery at the death of George Douglas Campbell, eighth Duke of Argyll, and its admiration of the many Christian graces and devotion to duty which characterized his life. The late Duke throughout his long life was ever

a steadfast friend and loyal son of the Church of Scotland, and by his many services he increased the debt of gratitude which the Church owes to the House of Argyll. The Presbytery recalls with gratitude his assiduous efforts in helping to carry through Parliament the Patronage Abolition Act of 1874, his generous refusal to claim any compensation from the parishes of which he was the patron, and his recent magnificent gift to the Church of Iona Cathedral. A trusted adviser of his Sovereign, a statesman who for fifty years had the good of his country always at heart, a man of unique parts in literature and science, the Presbytery recalls with thankfulness to Almighty God that the late Duke used his exalted position and consecrated his great talents to the cause of truth, justice, and righteousness.'

From the many societies with which the Duke was connected, tributes were received, from which a few extracts are quoted.

*From the Elder Brethren of Trinity House.*

'MADAM,

'I have it in command from the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House to convey to you the expression of the deep sorrow with which at their Board yesterday they heard of the death of your illustrious husband, who for many years past, as one of the most honoured members of this Corporation, afforded it his countenance and support.

'The Elder Brethren, in venturing to express to your Grace their keen appreciation and esteem of the high character of one who did honour to this Corporation, desire me also to convey to you their sincere sympathy with you in your affliction, and their earnest hope that the Almighty may be pleased to comfort you in your great sorrow.

'(Signed) CHAS. A. KENT.'

*From the Royal Humane Society, of which the Duke resigned the Office of President in 1899, when he was succeeded by H.R.H. the Duke of York (now Prince of Wales).*

‘I have the honour to express to your Grace the deep regret of the members of the Royal Humane Society at the death of His Grace the Duke of Argyll, K.G., K.T., who for so many years filled the office of President of this Society, and to assure you of their deep sympathy.

‘GEORGE,  
‘President.’

*From the Geological Society.*

‘That the Council desires to place on record their deep sense of the loss which both science and literature have sustained in the death of the Duke of Argyll, who was the oldest surviving past President of the Geological Society.’

*From the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.*

‘MADAM,

‘I am directed by the Committee of Management of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution to tender your Grace their respectful and deep sympathy in the great sorrow which has befallen you and your family in the death of the Duke of Argyll. His Grace had been a Vice-President of this Institution for the long period of thirty-five years, during which time he had on several occasions shown the great interest which he took in the lifeboat cause.

‘I am to express the earnest hope and prayer of the committee that He who is the God of the widow and of all comfort may support and solace you in this your sore time of need and grief.

‘(Signed) CHARLES DIBDIN,  
‘Secretary.’



*From the Scottish Society of Literature and Art.*

‘YOUR GRACE,

‘I am instructed by this Society, of which your late noble husband was for many years one of the patrons, to express our high regard for his character, our great regret at his death, and our deep sympathy with your Grace in the irreparable loss you have sustained.

‘During his long lifetime your husband served his generation well and faithfully, and especially endeared himself to Scotsmen. His gifts were many, and he used them wisely. As the head of a historic house, the chief of a highland clan, a counsellor in affairs of State, and a man of learning and letters, his name must find a place among the great ones of the century.

‘With deep respect and sympathy,

‘GEO. MIDDLETON,

‘Secretary.’

*From the Highland Society of London.*

‘MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

‘We are desired by the directors and members of the Highland Society of London to express to your Grace the profound regret with which they received the sad intelligence of the death of the Duke of Argyll. He has been a member for nearly fifty years, and in 1853 occupied the position of President. It may safely be said that no member ever enjoyed the confidence and respect of the Society in a greater measure than he did. His rare mental attainments and culture, his wide scientific knowledge, his high accomplishments as a statesman and as an orator, his keen patriotism and tender kindness of heart, have always through his long and honourable career secured him the admiration and devotion of every member of the Society; and they, as fellow-Highlanders, rejoiced that his own native talent and personality had gained him a most prominent position amongst the distinguished men of his time.’

The Scottish Geographical Society paid a tribute to the Duke, who had been President of the Society for several years, in an article, from which the following extracts are taken :

‘ When on April 24 last the Duke of Argyll died, the Nestor of British politics, perhaps also of British science, passed away. Born in 1823, he took his place in public life very early, having when only nineteen startled Scottish ecclesiastical circles by the views expressed in a pamphlet entitled “ A Letter to the Peers from a Peer’s Son.”

‘ A witty Scottish nobleman is alleged to have remarked, when search was being made for a biographer of the late Mr. Gladstone, that it would require a joint-stock company to write Mr. Gladstone’s Life. The same remark applies to the late Duke of Argyll. There was no field of human thought which he did not enter, no region of science which he did not explore ; there was nothing in Nature which did not interest him, and there were few subjects upon which he could not discourse.

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‘ As a field geologist, the Duke achieved considerable celebrity by his interesting discovery in 1851 of several bands of tertiary strata, containing leaves of dicotyledonous plants, in the sea-cliffs forming the headland of Ardtun, on the west coast of Mull. These leaf-beds were covered by a sheet of basalt, and the Duke’s discovery was declared by Sir Charles Lyell to raise the question whether the basalt of Antrim in Ireland and the famous Giant’s Causeway may not be of the same age as that of Mull.

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‘ Not only did the late Duke sail constantly in his yacht and explore the most unfrequented shores of the Western Highlands—not only was every feature of that wild coast familiar to his eye or chronicled in his

sketch-book, but also he took a deep interest in several sciences essential to a thorough knowledge of geography. As a naturalist—above all, an ornithologist—as a geologist, as a meteorologist, and as an agriculturist, he held high rank, breaking even a lance with Charles Darwin on the subject of natural selection, and having his objections to Darwin's theory enshrined in Lyell's classic, "Principles of Geology."

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'Scotland will miss the intellectual searchlight which streamed from Inveraray Castle, where every leader of science has been a welcome guest during the past half-century, and from whence issued original views upon every subject. There "the Mac-Caillein-Mòr"\* lived in true Highland dignity and state, but not in luxury or idleness, for every day of his long and useful life was spent in the study of Nature and in the cultivation of his mind.'

\* 'Son of the Great Colin.' Sometimes erroneously written Mac-Callum-Mòr, 'Son of the Great Malcolm.'