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Buckingham Palace, February 5, 1880.

THIS day Her Majesty proceeded in state from Buckingham Palace to the House of Peers, where she arrived soon after two o'clock; and was received on alighting from Her state carriage, by the Lord Chancellor, the Deputy Lord Great Chamberlain (Lord Aveland), Garter King of Arms, and Black Rod, and proceeded into the House in the usual order;—The Crown was borne by the Duke of Northumberland (Lord Privy Seal), the Sword of State by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon (Lord President of the Council), and the Cap of Maintenance by the Marquess of Winchester.

Her Majesty being seated on the Throne, and the Great Officers of State and others standing in their respective places on the right and left, Black Rod was sent with a message from Her Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their immediate attendance in the House of Peers. The Commons being come thither accordingly, Her Majesty was pleased to deliver to the Lord Chancellor the following most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, which Her Majesty commanded his Lordship to read, and which he accordingly did:

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

It is with much satisfaction that I again resort to the advice and assistance of my Parliament.

My relations with all the Powers continue to be friendly. The course of events since the prorogation of Parliament has tended to furnish additional security to the maintenance of European peace, on the principles laid down by the Treaty of Berlin. Much, however, still remains to be done to repair the disorder with which the late war has affected many parts of the Turkish Empire.

A Convention for the suppression of the Slave Trade has been concluded between my Government and that of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

At the close of your last Session I expressed my hope that the Treaty of Gundamak had happily terminated the war in Afghanistan. In conformity with its provisions, my Envoy, with his retinue, was honourably received and entertained by the Ameer at Cabul. While engaged, however, in the exercise of their duty, he and those connected with the Embassy were treacherously attacked by overwhelming numbers, and, after an heroic defence, were almost all massacred. An outrage so intolerable called for condign chastisement, and my troops, which, pursuant to the stipulations of the Treaty, either had withdrawn or were withdrawing from the terri-

tories governed by the Ameer, were ordered to retrace their steps. The skill exhibited in the rapid march upon Cabul, and in the advances upon the other lines of action, reflects the highest credit upon the officers and men of my British and native forces, whose bravery has shone with its wonted lustre in every collision with the enemy.

The abdication of the Ameer and the unsettled condition of the country render the recall of my troops impossible for the present; but the principle on which my Government has hitherto acted remains unchanged, and, while determined to make the frontiers of my Indian Empire strong, I desire to be in friendly relations alike with those who may rule in Afghanistan and with the people of that country.

My anticipations as to the early establishment of peace in South Africa have been fulfilled. The capture and deposition of the Zulu King, and the breaking up of the military organization on which his dynasty was based, have relieved my possessions in that part of the world from a danger which has seriously impeded their advancement and consolidation. In Basutoland, a native outbreak of considerable importance has been effectually quelled by my Colonial forces; while the Transvaal has been freed from the depredations of a powerful Chief, who, having successfully resisted the former government of the country, had persistently rejected our attempts at conciliation. I have reason to hope that the time is now approaching when an important advance may be made towards the establishment of a Union or Confederation under which the powers of self-government, already enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony, may be extended to my subjects in other parts of South Africa.

Papers on these and other matters will be forthwith laid before you.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I have directed the Estimates of this year to be prepared and presented to you without delay.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

The Commission which, at the close of the Session, I informed you I had issued to inquire into the causes of agricultural depression throughout the United Kingdom, is pursuing its labours. In the meantime, the serious deficiency in the usual crops in some parts of Ireland has rendered necessary special precautions on the part of my Government to guard against the calamities with which those districts were threatened.

With this view, they have called upon the authorities charged with the duty of administering