

Lord Chelmsford - A defence.

As quoted from *Lord Chelmsford and the Zulu War*
By Major The Hon: G. French DSO. 1939 John Lane, The Bodley Head.

‘Nothing could have been more gratifying to Lord Chelmsford after his return from South Africa than the warm support he received from Queen Victoria. He could afford to avoid ‘the pack of curs barking at his heels’ and the pettiness, born of political prejudice, evinced by the Prime Minister, so long as he was assured of his Sovereign’s confidence.

Of this, abundant proof was forthcoming during the 22 years that elapsed since Lord Chelmsford’s return to England and the Queen’s death in 1901; for Her Majesty, whose strongly developed sense of justice revolted at the thought of her representatives who had borne the burden and the heat of the day in distant parts of the Empire being victimised by the press and sacrificed for political purposes, besides showing her disgust at such unworthy intrigues, made no secret of her keen appreciation of Lord Chelmsford’s services by graciously favouring him from time to time with the outward and visible signs of her esteem, including his appointment as Gold Stick.

It must indeed have been galling for Lord Beaconsfield to witness these numerous tokens of the Queen’s admiration for Lord Chelmsford’s qualities, having regard to his attempt to prejudice Her Majesty against the victor of Zululand and his refusal to see him privately.

But the great and wise monarch took her own counsel refusing to be deceived by the trumpeting of the press or the clamouring of politicians, and remained steadfast in her faith throughout the rest of her life’.

Editor’s note.

By March 1884 it was clear to Lord Chelmsford that compulsory retirement was looming, something which filled him with dread. Once again, the Queen intervened and, on the retirement of Lt. Gen. Maitland in May 1884, Chelmsford was appointed Lieutenant of the Tower of London. Further, in May 1884, the Queen appointed Chelmsford’s son, Eric, to be one of her Majesty’s Pages of Honour.

Various further military appointments were made and in 1901 he assisted with the funeral arrangements of Queen Victoria and in 1904 at that of the Duke of Cambridge. On King Edward VII’s accession to the throne, he retained his appointment as Gold Stick, and in the following year, in His Majesty’s birthday honours, Chelmsford was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Victorian Order (GCVO).

He died in 1905 aged 81.