Fifteen Chapters of Autobiography

George William Erskine Russell

Title: Fifteen Chapters of Autobiography

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Release Date: May 27, 2007 [EBook #21624]

Language: English

Produced by Malcolm Farmer, Martin Pettit and the Online
Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

FIFTEEN CHAPTERS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

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Etc., etc.

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Fifteen Chapters

of

Autobiography

BY THE RIGHT HON.

GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL

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THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN
AND NEW YORK

NOTE.

This book was originally published under the title of "One Look Back."

TO

HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND

IN HONOUR OF THE BEST GIFT
WHICH OXFORD GAVE ME

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FIFTEEN CHAPTERS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I

BEGINNINGS

One look back—as we hurry o'er the plain,
Man's years speeding us along—
One look back! From the hollow past again,
Youth, come flooding into song!
Tell how once, in the breath of summer air,
Winds blew fresher than they blow;
Times long hid, with their triumph and their care,
Yesterday—many years ago!

E. E. BOWEN.

The wayfarer who crosses Lincoln's Inn Fields perceives in the midst of them a kind of wooden temple, and passes by it unmoved. But, if his curiosity tempts him to enter it, he sees, through an aperture in the boarded floor, a slab of stone bearing this inscription:

"On this spot was beheaded
William Lord Russell,
A lover of constitutional liberty,
21st July, A.D. 1683."[1]

Of the martyr thus temperately eulogized I am the great-great-great-great-grandson, and I agree with The Antiquary, that "it's a shame to the English language that we have not a less clumsy way of expressing a relationship of which we have occasion to think and speak so frequently."

Before we part company with my ill-fated ancestor, let me tell a story bearing on his historical position. When my father was a cornet in the Blues, he invited a brother-officer to spend some of his leave at Woburn Abbey. One day, when the weather was too bad for any kind of sport, the visitor was induced to have a look at the pictures. The Rembrandts, and Cuyps, and Van Dykes and Sir Joshuas bored him to extremity, but accidentally his eye lit on Hayter's famous picture of Lord Russell's trial, and, with a sudden gleam of intelligence, he exclaimed,

"Hullo! What's this? It looks like a trial." My father answered, with modest pride —"It is a trial—the trial of my ancestor, William, Lord Russell." "Good heavens! my dear fellow—an ancestor of yours tried? What a shocking thing! *I hope he got off*."

So much for our Family Martyr.

In analysing one's nationality, it is natural to regard one's four grand-parents as one's component parts. Tried by this test, I am half an Englishman, one quarter a Highlander, and one quarter a Welshman, for my father's father was wholly English; my father's mother wholly Scotch; my mother's father wholly Welsh; and my mother's mother wholly English. My grandfather, the sixth Duke of Bedford, was born in 1766 and died in 1839. He married, as his second wife, Lady Georgiana Gordon, sister of the last Duke of Gordon, and herself "the last of the Gordons" of the senior line. She died just after I was born, and from her and the "gay Gordons" who preceded her, I derive my name of George. It has always been a comfort to me, when rebuked for ritualistic tendencies, to recall that I am great-great-nephew of that undeniable Protestant, Lord George Gordon, whose icon I daily revere. My grandmother had a numerous family, of whom my father was the third. He was born in Dublin Castle, his father being then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in the Ministry of "All the Talents." My grandfather had been a political and personal friend of Charles James Fox, and Fox had promised to be godfather to his next child. But Fox died on the 13th of September, 1806, and my father did not appear till the 10th of February, 1807. Fox's nephew, Henry Lord Holland, took over the sponsorship, and bestowed the names of "Charles James Fox" on the infant Whig, who, as became his father's viceregal state, was christened by the Archbishop of Dublin, with water from a golden bowl.

The life so impressively auspicated lasted till the 29th of June, 1894. So my father, who remembered an old Highlander who had been out with Prince Charlie in '45, lived to see the close of Mr. Gladstone's fourth Premiership. He was educated at Rottingdean, at Westminster, where my family had fagged and fought for many generations, and at the University of Edinburgh, where he boarded with that "paltry Pillans," who, according to Byron, "traduced his friend." From Edinburgh he passed into the Blues, then commanded by Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, and thence into the 52nd Regiment. In 1832 he was returned to the first Reformed Parliament as Whig Member for Bedfordshire. He finally retired in 1847, and from that date till 1875 was Sergeant-at-Arms attending the House of Commons. He married in 1834, and had six children, of

whom I was the youngest by eight years, being born on the 3rd of February, 1853.[2]

My birthplace (not yet marked with a blue and white medallion) was 16, Mansfield Street; but very soon afterwards the official residences at the Palace of Westminster were finished, and my father took possession of the excellent but rather gloomy house in the Speaker's Court, now (1913) occupied by Sir David Erskine.

Here my clear memories begin. I have indeed some vague impressions of a visit to the widow of my mother's grandfather—Lady Robert Seymour—who died in her ninety-first year when I was two years old; though, as those impressions are chiefly connected with a jam-cupboard, I fancy that they must pertain less to Lady Robert than to her housekeeper. But two memories of my fourth year are perfectly defined. The first is the fire which destroyed Covent Garden Theatre on the 5th of March, 1856. "During the operatic recess, Mr. Gye, the lessee of the Theatre, had sub-let it to one Anderson, a performer of sleight-of-hand feats, and so-called 'Professor.' He brought his short season to a close by an entertainment described as a 'Grand Carnival Complimentary Benefit and Dramatic Gala, to commence on Monday morning, and terminate with a *bal masqué* on Tuesday night.' At 3 on the Wednesday morning, the Professor thought it time to close the orgies. At this moment the gasfitter discovered the fire issuing from the cracks of the ceiling, and, amid the wildest shrieking and confusion, the drunken, panic-stricken masquers rushed to the street. The flames burst through the roof, sending high up into the air columns of fire, which threw into bright reflection every tower and spire within the circuit of the metropolis, brilliantly illuminating the whole fabric of St. Paul's, and throwing a flood of light across Waterloo Bridge, which set out in bold relief the dark outline of the Surrey hills." That "flood of light" was beheld by me, held up in my nurse's arms at a window under "Big Ben," which looks on Westminster Bridge. When in later years I have occasionally stated in a mixed company that I could remember the burning of Covent Garden Theatre, I have noticed a general expression of surprised interest, and have been told, in a tone meant to be kind and complimentary, that my hearers would hardly have thought that my memory went back so far. The explanation has been that these good people had some vague notions of *Rejected Addresses* floating through their minds, and confounded the burning of Covent Garden Theatre in 1856 with that of Drury Lane Theatre in 1809. Most people have no chronological sense.

Our home was at Woburn, in a house belonging to the Duke of Bedford, but

given by my grandfather to my parents for their joint and several lives. My father's duties at the House of Commons kept him in London during the Parliamentary Session, but my mother, who detested London and worshipped her garden, used to return with her family to Woburn, in time to superintend the "bedding-out." My first memory is connected with my home in London; my second with my home in the country, and the rejoicings for the termination of the Crimean War.

Under the date of May 29, 1856, we read in *Annals of Our Time*, "Throughout the Kingdom, the day was marked by a cessation from work, and, during the night, illuminations and fireworks were all but universal." The banners and bands of the triumphal procession which paraded the streets of our little town—scarcely more than a village in dimensions—made as strong an impression on my mind as the conflagration which had startled all London in the previous March.

People who have only known me as a double-dyed Londoner always seem to find a difficulty in believing that I once was a countryman; yet, for the first twenty-five years of my life, I lived almost entirely in the country. "We could never have loved the earth so well, if we had had no childhood in it—if it were not the earth where the same flowers come up again every spring, that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat lisping to ourselves on the grass—the same hips and haws on the autumn hedgerows.... One's delight in an elderberry bush overhanging the confused leafage of a hedgerow bank, as a more gladdening sight than the finest cistus or fuchsia spreading itself on the softest undulating turf, is an entirely unjustifiable preference to a Nursery-Gardener. And there is no better reason for preferring this elderberry bush than that it stirs an early memory—that it is no novelty in my life, speaking to me merely through my present sensibilities to form and colour, but the long companion of my existence, that wove itself into my joys when joys were vivid."

I had the unspeakable advantage of being reared in close contact with Nature, in an aspect beautiful and wild. My father's house was remarkable for its pretty garden, laid out with the old-fashioned intricacy of pattern, and blazing, even into autumn, with varied colour. In the midst of it, a large and absolutely symmetrical cedar "spread its dark green layers of shade," and supplied us in summer with a kind of *al fresco* sitting-room. The background of the garden was formed by the towering trees of Woburn Park; and close by there were great tracts of woodland, which stretch far into Buckinghamshire, and have the character and effect of virgin forest.

Having no boy-companions (for my only brother was ten years older than myself), of course I played no games, except croquet. I was brought up in a sporting home, my father being an enthusiastic fox-hunter and a good all-round sportsman. I abhorred shooting, and was badly bored by coursing and fishing. Indeed, I believe I can say with literal truth that I have never killed anything larger than a wasp, and that only in self-defence. But Woburn is an ideal country for riding, and I spent a good deal of my time on an excellent pony, or more strictly, galloway. An hour or two with the hounds was the reward of virtue in the schoolroom; and cub-hunting in a woodland country at 7 o'clock on a September morning still remains my most cherished memory of physical enjoyment.

"That things are not as ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and now rest in unvisited tombs." Most true: and among that faithful number I must remember our governess,—Catherine Emily Runciman—who devoted forty years of her life, in one capacity or another, to us and to our parents. She was what boys call "jolly out of school," but rather despotic in it; and, after a few trials of strength, I was emancipated from her control when I was eight. When we were in London for the Session of Parliament, I attended a Day School, kept by two sisters of John Leech, in a curious little cottage, since destroyed, at the bottom of Lower Belgrave Street. Just at the age when, in the ordinary course, I should have gone to a boarding-school, it was discovered that I was physically unfit for the experiment; and then I had a series of tutors at home. To one of these tutors my father wrote—"I must warn you of your pupil's powers of conversation, and tact in leading his teachers into it."

But I was to a great extent self-taught. We had an excellent, though old-fashioned, library, and I spent a great deal of my time in miscellaneous reading. The Waverley Novels gave me my first taste of literary enjoyment, and *Pickwick* (in the original green covers) came soon after. Shakespeare and *Don Quixote* were imposed by paternal authority. Jeremy Taylor, Fielding, Smollett, Swift, Dryden, Pope, Byron, Moore, Macaulay, Miss Edgeworth, Bulwer-Lytton, were among my earliest friends, and I had an insatiable thirst for dictionaries and encyclopædias. Tennyson was the first poet whom I really loved, but I also was fond of Scott's poetry, the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, the *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*, and *The Golden Treasury*. Milton, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Matthew Arnold came later, but while I was still a boy. George Eliot, Thackeray, Ruskin, and Trollope came when I was at Oxford; and I am not sure that Browning ever

came. On the whole, I owe my chief enjoyment to Scott, Dickens, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, and to *Pickwick* more than to any single book. But I think the keenest thrill of intellectual pleasure which I ever felt passed through me when, as a boy at Harrow, I first read Wordsworth's "Daffodils."

Our home, in its outward aspects, was extremely bright and cheerful. We had, as a family, a keen sense of fun, much contempt for convention, and great fluency of speech; and our material surroundings were such as to make life enjoyable. Even as a child, I used to say to myself, when cantering among Scotch firs and rhododendrons, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." A graver element was supplied by a good deal of ill-health, by bereavements, and, in some sense, by our way of religion. My home was intensely Evangelical, and I lived from my earliest days in an atmosphere where the salvation of the individual soul was the supreme and constant concern of life. No form of worldliness entered into it, but it was full of good works, of social service, and of practical labour for the poor. All life was lived, down to its minutest detail, "as ever in the great task-Master's eye." From our very earliest years we were taught the Bible, at first orally; and later on were encouraged to read it, by gifts of handsomely bound copies. I remember that our aids to study were Adam Clarke's Commentary, Nicholl's *Help to Reading the Bible,* and a book called *Light in the Dwelling*. Hymns played a great part in our training. As soon as we could speak, we learned "When rising from the bed of death," and "Beautiful Zion, built above." "Rock of Ages" and "Jesu, Lover of my soul" were soon added. The Church Catechism we were never taught. I was confirmed without learning it. It was said to be too difficult; it really was too sacramental. By way of an easier exercise, I was constrained to learn "The Shorter Catechism of the General Assembly of Divines at Westminster." We had Family Prayers twice every day. My father read a chapter, very much as the fancy took him, or where the Bible opened of itself; and he read without note or comment. I recall a very distinct impression on my infant mind that the passages of the Old Testament which were read at prayers had no meaning, and that the public reading of the words, without reference to sense, was an act of piety. After the chapter, my father read one of Henry Thornton's Family Prayers, replaced in later years by those of Ashton Oxenden.

While we were still very young children, we were carefully incited to acts of practical charity. We began by carrying dinners to the sick and aged poor; then we went on to reading hymns and bits of Bible to the blind and unlettered. As soon as we were old enough, we became teachers in Sunday schools, and

conducted classes and cottage-meetings. From the very beginning we were taught to save up our money for good causes. Each of us had a "missionary box," and I remember another box, in the counterfeit presentment of a Gothic church, which received contributions for the Church Pastoral Aid Society. When, on an occasion of rare dissipation, I won some shillings at "The Race-Game," they were impounded for the service of the C.M.S., and an aunt of mine, making her sole excursion into melody, wrote for the benefit of her young friends:

> "Would you like to be told the best use for a penny?
> I can tell you a use which is better than any—
> Not on toys or on fruit or on sweetmeats to spend it,
> But over the seas to the heathen to send it."

I learned my religion from my mother, the sweetest, brightest, and most persuasive of teachers, and what she taught I received as gospel.

> "Oh that those lips had language! Life has past
> With me but roughly since I heard thee last."

Sit anima mea cum Sanctis. May my lot be with those Evangelical saints from whom I first learned that, in the supreme work of salvation, no human being and no created thing can interpose between the soul and the Creator. Happy is the man whose religious life has been built on the impregnable rock of that belief.

So much for the foundation. The superstructure was rather accidental than designed.

From my very earliest days I had a natural love of pomp and pageantry; and, though I never saw them, I used to read of them with delight in books of continental travel, and try to depict them in my sketch-books, and even enact them with my toys. Then came Sir Walter Scott, who inspired me, as he inspired so many greater men, with the love of ecclesiastical splendour, and so turned my vague love of ceremony into a definite channel. Another contribution to the same end was made, all unwittingly, by my dear and deeply Protestant father. He was an enthusiast for Gothic architecture, and it was natural to enquire the uses of such things as piscinas and sedilia in fabrics which he taught me to admire. And then came the opportune discovery (in an idle moment under a dull sermon) of the Occasional Offices of the Prayer Book. If language meant anything, those Offices meant the sacramental system of the Catholic Church; and the impression derived from the Prayer Book was confirmed by Jeremy Taylor and

The Christian Year. I was always impatient of the attempt, even when made by the most respectable people, to pervert plain English, and I felt perfect confidence in building the Catholic superstructure on my Evangelical foundation.

As soon as I had turned fourteen, I was confirmed by the Bishop of Ely (Harold Browne), and made my first Communion in Woburn Church on Easter Day, April 21, 1867.

After the Easter Recess, I went with my parents to London, then seething with excitement over the Tory Reform Bill, which created Household Suffrage in towns. My father, being Sergeant-at-Arms, could give me a seat under the Gallery whenever he chose, and I heard some of the most memorable debates in that great controversy. In the previous year my uncle, Lord Russell, with Mr. Gladstone as Leader of the House of Commons, had been beaten in an attempt to lower the franchise; but the contest had left me cold. The debates of 1867 awoke quite a fresh interest in me. I began to understand the Democratic, as against the Whig, ideal; and I was tremendously impressed by Disraeli, who seemed to tower by a head and shoulders above everyone in the House. Gladstone played a secondary and ambiguous part; and, if I heard him speak, which I doubt, the speech left no dint in my memory.

At this point of the narrative it is necessary to make a passing allusion to Doctors, who, far more than Premiers or Priests or any other class of men, have determined the course and condition of my life. I believe that I know, by personal experience, more about Doctors and Doctoring than any other man of my age in England. I am, in my own person, a monument of medical practice, and have not only seen, but felt, the rise and fall of several systems of physic and surgery. To have experienced the art is also to have known the artist; and the portraits of all the practitioners with whom at one time or another I have been brought into intimate relations would fill the largest album, and go some way towards furnishing a modest Picture-Gallery. Broadly speaking, the Doctors of the 'fifties and 'sixties were as Dickens drew them. The famous consultant, Dr. Parker Peps; the fashionable physician, Sir Tumley Snuffim; the General Practitioner, Mr. Pilkins; and the Medical Officer of the Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life Insurance Company, Dr. Jobling; are in the highest degree representative and typical; but perhaps the Doctor—his name, unfortunately, has perished—who was called to the bedside of little Nell, and came with "a great bunch of seals dangling below a waistcoat of ribbed black satin," is the most carefully finished portrait. Such, exactly, were the Family

Physicians of my youth. They always dressed in shiny black,—trousers, neckcloth, and all; they were invariably bald, and had shaved upper lips and chins, and carefully-trimmed whiskers. They said "Hah!" and "Hum!" in tones of omniscience which would have converted a Christian Scientist; and, when feeling one's pulse, they produced the largest and most audibly-ticking gold watches producible by the horologist's art. They had what were called "the courtly manners of the old school"; were diffuse in style, and abounded in periphrasis. Thus they spoke of "the gastric organ" where their successors talk of the stomach, and referred to brandy as "the domestic stimulant." When attending families where religion was held in honour, they were apt to say to the lady of the house, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made"; and, where classical culture prevailed, they not infrequently remarked—

Crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops.

By the way, my reference to "the domestic stimulant" reminds me that on stimulants, domestic and other, this school of Physicians relied with an unalterable confidence. For a delicate child, a glass of port wine at 11 was the inevitable prescription, and a tea-spoonful of bark was often added to this generous tonic. In all forms of languor and debility and enfeebled circulation, brandy-and-water was "exhibited," as the phrase went; and, if the dose was not immediately successful, the brandy was increased. I myself, when a sickly boy of twelve, was ordered by a well-known practitioner, called F. C. Skey, to drink mulled claret at bedtime; and my recollection is that, as a nightcap, it beat bromide and sulphonal hollow. In the light of more recent science, I suppose that all this alcoholic treatment was what Milton calls "the sweet poyson of misuséd wine," and wrought havoc with one's nerves, digestion, and circulation. It certainly had this single advantage, that when one grew to man's estate, and passed from "that poor creature, small beer," to the loaded port and fiery sherry of a "Wine" at the University, it was impossible to make one drunk. And thereby hangs a tale. I was once writing the same sentiment in the same words for a medical journal, and the compositor substituted "disadvantage" for "advantage," apparently thinking that my early regimen had deprived me of a real happiness in after-life.

Such were the Doctors of my youth. By no sudden wrench, no violent transition, but gently, gradually, imperceptibly, the type has transformed itself into that which we behold to-day. No doubt an inward continuity has been maintained, but the visible phenomena are so radically altered as to suggest to the superficial

observer the idea of a new creation; and even we, who, as Matthew Arnold said, "stand by the Sea of Time, and listen to the solemn and rhythmical beat of its waves," even we can scarcely point with confidence to the date of each successive change. First, as to personal appearance. When did doctors abandon black cloth, and betake themselves (like Newman, when he seceded to the Church of Rome) to grey trousers? Not, I feel pretty sure, till the 'seventies were well advanced. Quite certainly the first time that I ever fell into the hands of a moustached Doctor was in 1877. Everyone condemned the hirsute appendage as highly unprofessional, and when, soon after, the poor man found his way into a Lunatic Asylum, the neighbouring Doctors of the older school said that they were not surprised; that "there was a bad family history"; and that he himself had shown marked signs of eccentricity. That meant the moustache, and nothing else. Then, again, when was it first recognized as possible to take a pulse without the assistance of a gold chronometer? History is silent; but I am inclined to assign that discovery to the same date as the clinical thermometer, a toy unknown to the Doctors of my youth, who, indeed, were disposed to regard even the stethoscope as new-fangled. Then "the courtly manners of the old school"—when did they go out? I do not mean to cast the slightest aspersion on the manners of my present doctor, who is as polite and gentlemanlike a young fellow as one could wish to meet. But his manners are not "courtly," nor the least "of the old school." He does not bow when he enters my room, but shakes hands and says it's an A1 day and I had better get out in the motor. Whatever the symptoms presented to his observation, he never says "Hah!" or "Hum!" and he has never once quoted the Bible or Horace, though I have reason to believe that he has read both. Then, again, as a mere matter of style, when did Doctors abandon the majestic "We," which formerly they shared with Kings and Editors? "We shall be all the better when we have had our luncheon and a glass of sherry," said Sir Tumley Snuffim. "We will continue the bark and linseed," murmured Dr. Parker Peps, as he bowed himself out. My Doctor says, "Do you feel as if you could manage a chop? It would do you pounds of good"; and "I know the peroxide dressing is rather beastly, but I'd stick it another day or two, if I were you." Medical conversation, too, is an art which has greatly changed. In old days it was thought an excellent method of lubricating the first interview for the Doctor to ask where one's home was, and to state, quite irrespective of the fact, that he was born in the same neighbourhood; having ascertained that one was, say, a Yorkshireman, to remark that he would have known it from one's accent; to enlarge on his own connexions, especially if of the territorial caste; to describe his early travels in the South of Europe or the United States; and to discourse on water-colour drawing or the flute. "We doctors, too, have our hobbies; though, alas! the

demands of a profession in which *Ne otium quidem otiosum est* leave us little time to enjoy them."

Quite different is the conversation of the modern doctor. He does not lubricate the interview, but goes straight to business—enquires, examines, pronounces, prescribes—and then, if any time is left for light discourse, discusses the rival merits of "Rugger" and "Soccer," speculates on the result of the Hospital Cup Tie, or observes that the British Thoroughbred is not deteriorating when he can win with so much on his back; pronounces that the Opera last night was ripping, or that some much-praised play is undiluted rot. Not thus did Dr. Parker Peps regale Mrs. Dombey, or Sir Tumley Snuffim soothe the shattered nerves of Mrs. Wititterly. The reaction against alcoholic treatment can, I believe, be definitely dated from the 10th of January, 1872, when the heads of the medical profession published their opinion that "alcohol, in whatever form, should be prescribed with as much care as any powerful drug, and the directions for its use should be so framed as not to be interpreted as a sanction for excess." This was a heavy blow and deep discouragement to the school of Snuffim and Pilkins, and the system of port at 11, and "the domestic stimulant" between whiles, died hard.

But this is a long digression. I return to the Family Physician who prescribed for my youth. He was Dr. T. Somerset Snuffim, son of the celebrated Sir Tumley, and successor to his lucrative practice. His patients believed in him with an unquestioning and even passionate faith, and his lightest word was law. It was he who in 1862 pronounced me physically unfit for a Private School, but held out hopes that, if I could be kept alive till I was fourteen, I might then be fit for a Public School. Four years passed, and nothing particular happened. Then the time arrived when the decision had to be made between Public School and Private Tutor. After a vast amount of stethoscoping and pulse-feeling, Snuffim decided peremptorily against a Public School. My parents had a strong and just detestation of "private study" and its products, and they revolved a great many schemes for avoiding it. Suddenly my mother, who was not only the kindest but also the wisest of mothers, bethought herself of making me a Home-boarder at Harrow. She was one of those persons who, when once they are persuaded that a certain course is right, do not let the grass grow under their feet, but act at once. We did not desert our old home in Bedfordshire, and my father had still his official residence in Speaker's Court; but my parents took a house at Harrow, at the top of Sudbury Hill, and there we established ourselves in September, 1867.

On the 4th of November in that year, Matthew Arnold, who was contemplating a similar move, wrote to Lady de Rothschild:—"What you tell me is very

important and interesting. I think Lady Charles Russell has a boy who, like my eldest boy, is an invalid, and I dare say you will some time or other be kind enough to ascertain from her whether the school life is at all trying for him, or whether she has any difficulty in getting him excused fagging or violent exercises."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] The L.C.C., which placed this slab, made a topographical error. James Wright, in his *Compendious View of the late Tumults and Troubles in this Kingdom* (1683), says: "The Lord Russel ... was on the day following, viz. Saturday the 21st of July, Beheaded in Lincoln's Inn Fields. For which purpose a Scaffold was erected that Morning on that side of the Fields next to the Arch going into Duke Street, in the middle between the said Arch and the corner turning into Queen Street."

[2]

To the Editor of *The Times*.

SIR—As Links with the Past seem just now to be in fashion, permit me to supply two which concern my near relations.

1. My uncle, Lord Russell (1792-1878) visited Napoleon at Elba in December, 1814, and had a long conversation with him, which is reported in Spencer Walpole's "Life of Lord John Russell." There must be plenty of people now alive who conversed with my uncle, so this Link cannot be a very rare one.

2. My second Link is more remarkable. My father (1807-1894) remembered an old Highlander who had been "out" with Prince Charles Edward in 1745. Of course, this "linking" took place at the extremes of age, my father being a little boy and the Highlander a very old man. My grandfather, the sixth Duke of Bedford, was one of the first Englishmen who took a shooting in the Highlands (on the Spey), and the first time that my father accompanied him to the north, Prince Charlie's follower was still living near the place which my grandfather rented.

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL.

Sept. 6, 1910.

II

HARROW

Not to River nor Royal Keep,
  Low Meads nor level Close,
Up to the sturdy wind-worn steep,
  Levavi oculos;
To four red walls on a skyward climb,
Towering over the fields and Time.

E. MILNER-WHITE.

When Dr. Vaughan re-created Harrow School, after its long decadence under Longley and Wordsworth, he wished that the number should never exceed five hundred. Of late years the school has been greatly enlarged, but in my time we were always just about the number which, in Vaughan's judgment, was the largest that a Head-master could properly supervise. That number is embalmed in Edward Howson's touching song:—

"Five hundred faces, and all so strange!
  Life in front of me, Home behind—
  I felt like a waif before the wind,
Tossed on an ocean of shock and change."

Some of those faces I shall presently describe; but, in reviewing my life at Harrow, my first tribute must be paid to my Head-master—for forty-five years the kindest, most generous, and most faithful of friends. Henry Montagu Butler, youngest son of Dr. George Butler, Dean of Peterborough and sometime Head-master of Harrow, was born in 1833, and educated at Harrow. He was Head of the School, made the cock-score in the Eton match at Lords, was Scholar and Fellow of Trinity, and Senior Classic in 1855. He was elected to the Head-mastership of Harrow, in succession to Dr. Vaughan, when he was only a few months over 26, and entered on his reign in January, 1860. It is not easy to describe what a graceful and brilliant creature he seemed to my boyish eyes, when I first saw him in 1867, nor how unlike what one had imagined a Head-

master to be. He was then just thirty-four and looked much younger than he was. Gracefulness is the idea which I specially connect with him. He was graceful in shape, gesture, and carriage; graceful in manners and ways, graceful in scholarship, graceful in writing, pre-eminently graceful in speech. It was his custom from time to time, if any peculiar enormity displayed itself in the school, to call us all together in the Speech-Room, and give us what we called a "Pi-jaw." One of these discourses I remember as well as if I had heard it yesterday. It was directed against Lying, as not only un-Christian but ungentlemanlike. As he stood on the dais, one hand grasping his gown behind his back and the other marking his points, I felt that, perhaps for the first time, I was listening to pure and unstudied eloquence, suffused with just as much scorn against base wrongdoing as makes speech pungent without making it abusive. It should be recorded to Butler's credit that he was thoroughly feared. A Head-master who is not feared should be at once dismissed from his post. And, besides being feared, he was profoundly detested by bad boys. The worse the boy's moral character, the more he hated Butler. But boys who were, in any sense or degree, on the right side; who were striving, however imperfectly, after what is pure and lovely and of good report, felt instinctively that Butler was their friend. His preaching in the School Chapel (though perhaps a little impeded by certain mannerisms) was direct, interesting, and uplifting in no common degree. Many of his sermons made a lifelong impression on me. His written English was always beautifully pellucid, and often adorned by some memorable anecdote or quotation, or by some telling phrase. But once, when, owing to a broken arm, he could not write his sermons, but preached to us extempore three Sundays in succession, he fairly fascinated us. As we rose in the School and came into close contact with him, we found ever more and more to admire. It would be impertinent for me to praise the attainments of a Senior Classic, but no one could fail to see that Butler's scholarship was unusually graceful and literary. Indeed, he was literary through and through. All fine literature appealed to him with compelling force, and he was peculiarly fond of English oratory. Chatham, Burke, Canning, Sheil, and Bright are some of the great orators to whom he introduced us, and he was never so happy as when he could quote them to illustrate some fine passage in Cicero or Demosthenes. One other introduction which I owe to him I must by no means forget—Lord Beaconsfield's novels. I had read *Lothair* when it came out, but I was then too inexperienced to discern the deep truths which underlie its glittering satire. Butler introduced me to *Sybil*, and thereby opened up to me a new world of interest and amusement. When Butler entertained boys at breakfast or dinner, he was a most delightful host, and threw off all magisterial awfulness as easily as his gown. His conversation was full of fun and sprightliness, and he

could talk "Cricket-shop," ancient and modern, like Lillywhite or R. H. Lyttelton. In time of illness or failure or conscience-stricken remorse, he showed an Arthur-like simplicity of religion which no one could ignore or gainsay.

Next to Dr. Butler, in my list of Harrow masters, must be placed Farrar, afterwards Dean of Canterbury, to whom I owed more in the way of intellectual stimulus and encouragement than to any other teacher. I had, I believe, by nature, some sense of beauty; and Farrar stimulated and encouraged this sense to the top of its bent. Himself inspired by Ruskin, he taught us to admire rich colours and graceful forms—illuminated missals, and Fra Angelico's blue angels on gold grounds—and to see the exquisite beauty of common things, such as sunsets, and spring grass, and autumn leaves; the waters of a shoaling sea, and the transparent amber of a mountain stream. In literature his range was extremely wide. Nothing worth reading seemed to have escaped him, and he loved poetry as much as Butler loved oratory. When he preached in Chapel his gorgeous rhetoric, as yet not overwrought or over-coloured, held us spellbound; and though, or perhaps because, he was inclined to spoil the boys who responded to his appeals, and to rate them higher than they deserved, we loved and admired him as, I should think, few schoolmasters have been loved and admired.

When I speak of masters who were also friends, I should be ungrateful indeed if I omitted Arthur George Watson, in whose House I was placed as soon as the doctors were satisfied that the experiment could be tried without undue risks. Mr. Watson was a Fellow of All Souls, and was in all respects what we should have expected a member of that Society (elected the same day as the late Lord Salisbury) to be. It was said of C. P. Golightly at Oxford that, when he was asked his opinion of Dr. Hawkins, Provost of Oriel, he replied: "Well, if I were forced to choose the epithet which should be least descriptive of the dear Provost, I should choose *gushing*." Exactly the same might be said of Mr. Watson; but he was the most high-minded and conscientious of men, a thorough gentleman, inflexibly just, and a perfect House-Master. The days which I spent under his roof must always be reckoned among the happiest of my life.

Among masters who were also friends I must assign a high place to the Rev. William Done Bushell, who vainly endeavoured to teach me mathematics, but found me more at home in the sphere (which he also loved) of Ecclesiology. And not even the most thoughtless or ill-conditioned boy who was at Harrow between 1854 and 1882 could ever forget the Rev. John Smith, who, through a life-time overshadowed by impending calamity, was an Apostle to boys, if ever there was one, and the Guardian Angel of youthful innocence. Dr. Vaughan, no lover of

exaggerated phrases, called him, in a memorial sermon, "the Christ of Harrow;" and there must be many a man now living who, as he looks back, feels that he owed the salvation of his soul to that Christ-like character.

During my first two years at Harrow, Dr. Westcott, afterwards Bishop of Durham, was one of the masters, and it has always been a matter of deep regret to me that I had no opportunity of getting to know him. He was hardly visible in the common life of the School. He lived remote, aloof, apart, alone. It must be presumed that the boys who boarded in his House knew something of him, but with the School in general he never came in contact. His special work was to supervise the composition, English and classical, of the Sixth Form, and on this task he lavished all his minute and scrupulous scholarship, all his genuine enthusiasm for literary beauty. But, until we were in the Sixth, we saw Westcott only on public occasions, and one of these occasions was the calling over of names on half-holidays, styled at Eton "Absence," and at Harrow "Bill." To see Westcott performing this function made one, even in those puerile days, feel that the beautifully delicate instrument was eminently unfitted for the rough work of mere routine on which it was employed. We had sense enough to know that Westcott was a man of learning and distinction altogether outside the beaten track of schoolmasters' accomplishments; and that he had performed achievements in scholarship and divinity which great men recognized as great. "Calling Bill" was an occupation well enough suited for his colleagues—for Huggins or Buggins or Brown or Green—but it was actually pathetic to see this frail embodiment of culture and piety contending with the clamour and tumult of five hundred obstreperous boys.

It was not only as a great scholar that we revered Westcott. We knew, by that mysterious process by which school-boys get to know something of the real, as distinct from the official, characters of their masters, that he was a saint. There were strange stories in the School about his ascetic way of living. We were told that he wrote his sermons on his knees. We heard that he never went into local society, and that he read no newspaper except *The Guardian*. Thus when Liddon, at the height of his fame as the author of the great Bampton Lectures, came to Harrow to preach on Founder's Day, it was reported that Westcott would not dine with the Head-master to meet him. He could not spare three hours from prayer and study; but he came in for an hour's conversation after dinner.

All that we saw and heard in Chapel confirmed what we were told. We saw the bowed form, the clasped hands, the rapt gaze, as of a man who in worship was really *solus cum Solo*, and not, as the manner of some of his colleagues was,

sleeping the sleep of the just, or watching for the devotional delinquencies of the Human Boy. His sermons were rare events; but some of us looked forward to them as to something quite out of the common groove. There were none of the accessories which generally attract boyish admiration—no rhetoric, no purple patches, no declamation, no pretence of spontaneity. His anxious forehead crowned a puny body, and his voice was so faint as to be almost inaudible. The language was totally unadorned; the sentences were closely packed with meaning; and the meaning was not always easy. But the charm lay in distinction, aloofness from common ways of thinking and speaking, a wide outlook on events and movements in the Church, and a fiery enthusiasm all the more telling because sedulously restrained. I remember as if I heard it yesterday a reference in December, 1869, to "that august assemblage which gathers to-morrow under the dome of St. Peter's," and I remember feeling pretty sure at the moment that there was no other schoolmaster in England who would preach to his boys about the Vatican Council. But by far the most momentous of Westcott's sermons at Harrow was that which he preached on the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity, 1868. The text was Ephesians v. 15: "See then that ye walk circumspectly." The sermon was an earnest plea for the revival of the ascetic life, and the preacher endeavoured to show "what new blessings God has in store for absolute self-sacrifice" by telling his hearers about the great victories of asceticism in history. He took first the instance of St. Anthony, as the type of personal asceticism; then that of St. Benedict, as the author of the Common Life of equality and brotherhood; and then that of St. Francis, who, "in the midst of a Church endowed with all that art and learning and wealth and power could give, reasserted the love of God to the poorest, the meanest, the most repulsive of His children, and placed again the simple Cross above all the treasures of the world." Even "the unparalleled achievements, the matchless energy, of the Jesuits" were duly recognized as triumphs of faith and discipline; and the sermon ended with a passionate appeal to the Harrow boys to follow the example of young Antony or the still younger Benedict, and prepare themselves to take their part in reviving the ascetic life of the English Church.

"It is to a congregation like this that the call comes with the most stirring and the most cheering voice. The young alone have the fresh enthusiasm which in former times God has been pleased to consecrate to like services.... And if, as I do believe most deeply, a work at present awaits England, and our English Church, greater than the world has yet seen, I cannot but pray everyone who hears me to listen humbly for the promptings of God's Spirit, if so be that He is even now calling him to take a foremost part in it. It is for us, perhaps, first to

hear the call, but it is for you to interpret it and fulfil it. Our work is already sealed by the past: yours is still rich in boundless possibilities."

It may readily be believed that this discourse did not please either the British Parent or the Common Schoolmaster. A rumour went abroad that Mr. Westcott was going to turn all the boys into monks, and loud was the clamour of ignorance and superstition. Westcott made the only dignified reply. He printed (without publishing) the peccant sermon, under the title "Disciplined Life," and gave a copy to every boy in the School, expressing the hope that "God, in His great love, will even thus, by words most unworthily spoken, lead some one among us to think on one peculiar work of the English Church, and in due time to offer himself for the fulfilment of it as His Spirit shall teach." Those who remember that Charles Gore was one of the boys who heard the sermon may think that the preacher's prayer was answered.

With the masters generally I was on the best of terms. Indeed, I can only remember two whom I actively disliked, and of these two one was the absolute reproduction of Mr. Creakle, only armed with "thirty Greek lines" instead of the cane. Some of the staff were not particularly friends, but notable as curiosities; and at the head of these must be placed the Rev. Thomas Henry Steel. This truly remarkable man was born in 1806. He was Second Classic and Twentieth Wrangler, and Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He became a master at Harrow under Dr. Wordsworth in 1836; left the School in 1843, to take a country living; returned to Harrow, under Dr. Vaughan, in 1849, and in 1855 became (for the second time) master of The Grove, one of the largest boarding-houses in Harrow, where he remained till 1881. He was a keen, alert, and active old gentleman, with a rosy face and long white beard, like Father Christmas: and he carried, in season and out of season, a bright blue umbrella. His degree sufficiently proves that he was a ripe scholar, but, as George Eliot says, "to all ripeness under the sun there comes a further stage of development which is less esteemed in the market"; and, when I was in his Form, it was chiefly characterized by an agreeable laxity of discipline. As regards his boarding-house of forty boys, it was currently reported that he had never been seen in the boys' side of it. Perhaps he went round it when they were asleep. But it was on his preaching that his fame chiefly rested. His sermons were written in a most exuberant style of old-fashioned rhetoric, and abounded in phrases, allusions, and illustrations, so quaint that, once heard, they could never be forgotten. I believe that he kept a small stock of these sermons, and seldom added to it; but knowing, I suppose, that if preached twice they must inevitably be recognized,

he never preached a sermon a second time as long as there was even one boy in the School who had heard it on its first delivery. This was a very sensible precaution; but he little knew that some of his most elaborate passages had, by their sheer oddity, imprinted themselves indelibly on the memories of the hearers, and were handed down by oral tradition. One such especially, about a lady who used to visit the hospitals in the American War, and left a bun or a rose on the pillow of the wounded according as she thought that they would recover or die, had an established place in our annals; and it is not easy to describe the rapture of hearing a passage which, as repeated by one's schoolfellows, had seemed too absurd for credence, delivered from the School-pulpit, in a kind of solemn stage-whisper. However, "Tommy Steel" was a kind-hearted old gentleman, who believed in letting boys alone, and by a hundred eccentricities of speech and manner, added daily to the gaiety of our life. For one great boon I am eternally his debtor. He set me on reading Wordsworth, and chose his favourite bits with skill and judgment. I had been reared in the school that derided—

"A drowsy, frowsy poem called *The Excursion*,
Writ in a manner which is my aversion,"

and "Tommy Steel" opened my eyes to a new world of beauty. By the way, he had known Wordsworth, and had entertained him at Harrow; and he told us that the Poet always said "housen," where we say houses.

Another of our curiosities was Mr. Jacob Francis Marillier, a genial old gentleman without a degree, who had been supposed to teach writing and Mathematics, but long before my time had dropped the writing—I suppose as hopeless—and only played a mathematical barrel-organ. He had joined the staff at Harrow in 1819, and, as from my earliest days I had a love of Links with the Past, I learned from Mr. Marillier a vast amount about the ancient traditions of the School, which, even in 1869 (when he resigned), were becoming faint and forgotten.

Yet a third oddity must be commemorated; but in this case it is desirable to use a pseudonym. I think I remember in one of Bulwer-Lytton's novels a family called Sticktoright,[3] and that name will do as well as another. The Rev. Samuel Sticktoright was essentially what is called a "Master of the old school." He was born in 1808, came to Harrow in 1845, and had a large House for thirty years. I have just been contemplating his photograph in my Harrow album, and he certainly looks "the old school" all over, with his carefully-trimmed whiskers, double-breasted waistcoat, and large white "choker," neatly tied. By the boys generally he was regarded as an implacable tyrant, and I have heard (though this was before my time) that a special victim of his passionless severity was a pink-faced youth with blue eyes called Randall Thomas Davidson. Personally, I rather liked him; partly, no doubt, on the principle on which Homer called the Æthiopians blameless—namely, that he had nothing to do with them. But there was a sly twinkle in the corner of Mr. Sticktoright's eye which bespoke a lurking sense of humour, and in the very few words which he ever bestowed on me there generally was a suggestion of dry—very dry—fun. He was, of course, the most uncompromising of Tories, and every form of change, in Church or State or School, was equally abhorrent to him. In local society he played a considerable part, both giving and receiving hospitality; and it was the traditional pleasantry to chaff him as an inveterate bachelor, at whom all the young ladies of the place were setting their virginal caps. These jests he received very much as Tim Linkinwater received the allusions of Mr. Cheeryble to the "uncommonly handsome spinster," rather encouraging them as tributes to the fact that, though

now advanced in years, he was well preserved, and, as most people surmised, well off.

These facetious passages were, of course, confined to the society in which the masters moved, and we boys knew them only by hearsay. But what we saw with our own eyes was that the only human being who ever dared to "cheek" Mr. Sticktoright, or to interfere with his arrangements, or to disregard his orders, was his butler, whom we will call Boniface. Everyone who knows school-boys knows that they have a trick of saying things about those in authority over them, which really they do not the least believe but which they make a bold pretence of believing. So in the case of "Sticky" and Boniface. They were of much the same age, and rather similar in appearance; wherefore we said that they were brothers; that they had risen from a lowly station in the world, and had tossed up which should be master and which butler; that "Sticky" had won the toss, and that the disappointed Boniface held his brother in subjection by a veiled threat that, if he were offended, he would reveal the whole story to the world. This tradition seemed to present some elements of unlikelihood, and yet it survived from generation to generation; for not otherwise could we account for the palpable fact that the iron severity which held all boy-flesh in awe melted into impotence when Boniface was the offender.

The solution of the mystery was romantic. Dr. Butler, contrary to his usual practice, was spending the Christmas holidays of 1876-7 at Harrow. One day a stranger was announced, and opened the conversation by saying—"I regret to tell you that your colleague, Mr. Sticktoright, is dead. He died suddenly at Brighton, where he was spending the holidays. I am his brother-in-law and executor, and, in compliance with his instructions, I have to ask you to accompany me to his house." Those who know the present Master of Trinity can picture the genuine grief with which he received this notification. Mr. Sticktoright had been a master when he was a boy at school, and a highly-respected colleague ever since he became Head-master. That the bearer of the sad news should be Sticktoright's brother-in-law seemed quite natural, for he must have married a Miss Sticktoright; and the Head-master and the executor went together to the dead man's house. There, after some unlocking of drawers and opening of cabinets, they came upon a document to this effect: "In case of my dying away from Harrow, this is to certify that on a certain day, in a certain place, I married Mary Smith, sometime a housemaid in my service, by whom I leave a family."

So there had really been much more foundation for our tradition than we had ever dreamed, and Boniface had probably known the romantic history of his

master's life. The extraordinary part of the matter was that old Sticktoright had always spent the Easter, Summer, and Christmas holidays in the bosom of his family at Brighton, and that no one connected with Harrow had ever chanced to see him basking in their smiles. [N.B.—the names, personal and local, are fictitious.] In the north aisle of Harrow School Chapel, where departed masters are commemorated, you may search in vain for any memorial to the Rev. Samuel Sticktoright.

Yet one more curiosity must be named, this time not a Harrow master. "Polly Arnold" kept a stationer's shop, and, as a child, helping her grand-mother in the same shop, had sold pens—some added cribs—to Byron when a boy in the school. Here was a Link of the Past which exactly suited me, and, if only Polly could have understood the allusion, I should have said to her—"Ah, did you once see Byron plain?" I happened to have a sister who, though exceptionally clever and lively, had absolutely no chronological sense. I took her to see Polly Arnold one day, when this conversation ensued—"Well, Miss Arnold, I am very glad to make your acquaintance. I have often heard of you from my brother. He tells me you remember John Lyon. How very interesting!" [N.B.—John Lyon founded Harrow School in 1571.] To this tribute Polly replied with much asperity—"I know I'm getting on in life, Miss, but I'm not quite three hundred years old yet"—while my sister murmured in my ear—"Who *is* it she remembers? I know it's someone who lived a long time ago."

But the name of Arnold, when connected with Harrow, suggests quite another train of thought. At Easter, 1868, Matthew Arnold came to live at Harrow, with a view of placing his three boys in the School. The eldest of the three was the invalid to whom his father referred in a letter quoted in my first chapter: I was able to show him some little kindnesses, and thus arose an intimacy with the parents, brothers, and sisters which I have always regarded as—

"Part of my life's unalterable good."

FOOTNOTE:

[3] "The wood belonged to the Hazeldeans, the furze-land to the Sticktorights—an old Saxon family if ever there was one." *My Novel*. Book I.

III

HARROVIANA

"I may have failed, my School may fail;
I tremble, but thus much I dare;
I love her. Let the critics rail,
My brethren and my home are there."

W. CORY.

Everyone who travels by the North Western, or the Great Central, or the Midland Railway, must be conversant with the appearance of that "Pinnacle perched on a Precipice," which was Charles II.'s idea of the Visible Church on Earth—the Parish Church of Harrow on the Hill. Anselm consecrated it, Becket said Mass in it, and John Lyon, the Founder of Harrow School, lies buried in it. When I was a Harrow boy, the Celebrations of the Holy Communion in the School Chapel were rare, and generally late; so some of us were accustomed to communicate every Sunday at the 8 o'clock service in the Parish Church. But even in holy places, and amid sacred associations, the ludicrous is apt to assert itself; and I could never sufficiently admire a tablet in the North aisle, commemorating a gentleman who died of the first Reform Bill.

"JOHN HENRY NORTH,

Judge of the Admiralty in Ireland.
Without an equal at the University, a rival at the Bar,
Or a superior in chaste and classic eloquence in Parliament.
Honoured, Revered, Admired, Beloved, Deplored,
By the Irish Bar, the Senate and his country,
He sunk beneath the efforts of a mind too great for
His earthly frame,
In opposing the Revolutionary Invasion of the Religion and
Constitution of England,
On the 29th of September, 1831, in the 44th year of his age."

Alas! poor Mr. North. What would he have felt if he had lived to see the Reform

Bills of 1867 and 1885? Clearly he was taken away from the evil to come.

Until the Metropolitan Railway joined Harrow to Baker Street, the Hill stood in the midst of genuine and unspoilt country, separated by five miles of grass from the nearest point of London, and encompassed by isolated dwellings, ranging in rank and scale from villas to country houses. Most of these have fallen victims to the Speculative Builder, and have been cut up into alleys of brick and stucco, though one or two still remain among their hay-fields and rhododendrons. When I first ascended Harrow Hill, I drove there from London with my mother; and, from Harlesden onwards, our road lay between grass meadows, and was shaded by hedgerow timber. Harrow was then a much prettier place than it is now. The far-seen elms under which Byron dreamed[4] were still in their unlopped glory, and the whole effect of the Hill was wooded. So an Eton man and Harrow master[5] wrote:—

"Collis incola frondei
Nympha, sive lubentius
Nostra Pieris audies,
Lux adest; ades O tuis
Herga[6] mater, alumnis!"

"Goddess of the leafy Hill,
Nymph, or Muse, or what you will,
With the light begins the lay,—
Herga, be our guest to-day."

The site now covered by the externally hideous Speech-room—a cross between a swimming-bath and a tennis-court—was then a garden. In truth, it only grew strawberries and cabbages, but to the imaginative eye, it was as beautiful as the hanging pleasaunces of Semiramis.

Dr. Butler, with a hundred gifts and accomplishments, had no æsthetic or artistic sense; and, under his rule, the whole place was over-run by terrible combinations of red and black brick; and the beautiful view from the School-Yard, stretching away across the Uxbridge plain, was obstructed by some kind of play-shed, with a little spout atop—the very impertinence of ugliness.

Of the various buildings at Harrow, by far the most interesting is what is now called "The Fourth Form Room," in the West wing of the Old School. It is the original room which John Lyon designed—"A large and convenient school-

house with a chimney in it,"—and in its appearance and arrangements it exactly bespeaks the village Day School that Harrow originally was. Its stout brick walls have faced the western breezes of three hundred years, and in their mellow richness of tint remind one of Hatfield House and Hampton Court. This single room has been the nucleus round which all subsequent buildings—Chapel and Library and School-Rooms and Boarding-Houses—have gathered; and, as long as it exists, Harrow will be visibly and tangibly connected with its Founder's prescient care.

John Lyon knew nothing of Conscience Clauses. He ordained that all his school-boys should attend the Parish Church; and so they did, stowed away in galleries where hearing was difficult and kneeling impossible. In 1836 Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, was elected Head-master of Harrow, in succession to the genial but too gentle Longley. Seeing that Worship was practically impossible for the boys under existing conditions, he set to work to build a Chapel. It occupied the same site as the present Chapel, but only one fragment of it remains, embedded in the West wall of Sir Gilbert Scott's more graceful structure. The Chapel was consecrated by the Visitor, Archbishop Howley, in 1839. Dr. Wordsworth, justly proud of his handiwork, invited his brother-master, Dr. Hawtrey of Eton, to view it. Much to Wordsworth's surprise, Hawtrey did not take off his hat on entering the Chapel; but, when he neared the altar, started back in confusion, and exclaimed, in hasty apology, "I assure you, my dear friend, I had no notion that we were already inside the Sacred Edifice."

So much for the æsthetics of Harrow Chapel as originally constructed, but time and piety have completely changed it. In 1855, Dr. Vaughan added a Chancel with an apsidal end, designed by Sir Gilbert Scott. Next, the central passage of the Chapel became a Nave, with pillars and a North Aisle. Then the South Aisle was added, and decorated with glass before which one shudders, as a Memorial to Harrow men who fell in the Crimea. So the Chapel remained till 1903, when two curious additions, something between transepts and side-chapels, were added in memory of Harrow men who fell in South Africa. The total result of these successive changes is a building of remarkably irregular shape, but richly decorated, and sanctified by innumerable memories of friends long since loved and lost. A tablet, near which as a new boy I used to sit, bears this inscription—

In mournful and
affectionate remembrance of
JOHN HYDE D'ARCY,
Scholar of Balliol College, Oxford,

and formerly Head of this School.
He passed through the Strait Gate
of Humility, Toil, and Patience,
into the clear light and true knowledge of Him
Who is our Peace.

"If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Few sermons have ever impressed me so powerfully as this significant memorial of a life which lasted only nineteen years.

The morning and evening services in the Chapel were what is called "bright and cheerful"—in other words, extremely noisy and not very harmonious or reverent. We had two sermons every Sunday. The Head-master preached in the evening; the Assistant-masters in the morning. Occasionally, we had a stranger of repute. Dr. Butler's preaching I have already described, and also that of Farrar and Westcott. Mr. Steel's traditional discourses were in a class by themselves. But other preachers we had, not less remarkable. I distinctly remember a sermon by Mr. Sticktoright, who told us that we did not know in what way the world would be destroyed—it might be by fire, or it might be by water (though this latter alternative seems precluded by Genesis ix. 11). The Rev. James Robertson, afterwards Head-master of Haileybury, compared the difference between a dull boy and a clever boy to that between an ox and a dog. "To the ox, the universe comprises only the impassive blue above, and the edible green beneath; while the dog finds a world of excitement in hunting, and a demi-god in man." Dean Stanley, preaching on Trinity Sunday, 1868, thus explained away the doctrine of the Trinity—"God the Father is God in Nature. God the Son is God in History. God the Holy Ghost is God in the Conscience." And Thring of Uppingham bellowed an exposition of Psalm lxxviii. 70 with such surprising vigour that he acquired among us the affectionate nickname of "Old Sheepfolds." It is a pleasure to place in contrast with these absurdities the truly pastoral and moving sermons of Mr. John Smith, whose apostolic work at Harrow I have already commemorated. His paraphrase of 1. St. Peter iv. 7-8 still lingers in my ear—"Be watchful, be prayerful, be very kind." He is thus described on a Memorial Tablet in the Chapel:

To the Young a Father,
To friends in joy or grief a Brother,
To the poor, the suffering, and the tempted,
A minister of Hope and Strength.

Tried by more than common sorrows,
And upborne by more than common faith,
His holy life interpreted to many
The Mind which was in Christ Jesus,
The Promise of the Comforter,
And the Vision granted to the Pure in Heart.

It may seem odd that one should remember so much about sermons preached so long ago, but Bishop Welldon's testimony illustrates the point. "When I came to Harrow, I was greatly struck by the feeling of the boys for the weekly Sermon; they looked for it as an element in their lives, they attended to it, and passed judgment upon it." (I may remark in passing that Dr. Welldon promptly and wisely reduced the Sunday Sermons from two to one.)

But the day of days in Harrow Chapel was Founder's Day, October 10th, 1868, when the preacher at the Commemoration Service was Liddon, who had lately become famous by the Bampton Lectures of 1866. The scene and the sermon can never be forgotten. Prayers and hymns and thanksgivings for Founder and Benefactors had been duly performed, and we had listened with becoming solemnity to that droll chapter about "Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing." When the preacher entered the pulpit, his appearance instantly attracted attention. We had heard vaguely of him as "the great Oxford swell," but now that we saw him we felt a livelier interest. "He looks like a monk," one boy whispers to his neighbour; and indeed it is a better description than the speaker knows. The Oxford M.A. gown, worn over a cassock, is the Benedictine habit modified by time and place; the spare, thin figure suggests asceticism; the beautifully chiselled, sharply-pointed features, the close-shaved face, the tawny skin, the jet-black hair, remind us vaguely of something by Velasquez or Murillo, or of Ary Scheffer's picture of St. Augustine. And the interest aroused by sight is intensified by sound. The vibrant voice strikes like an electric shock. The exquisite, almost over-refined, articulation seems the very note of culture. The restrained passion which thrills through the disciplined utterance warns even the most heedless that something quite unlike the ordinary stuff of school-sermons is coming. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The speaker speaks of the blessedness and glory of boyhood; the splendid inheritance of a Public School built on Christian lines; the unequalled opportunities of learning while the faculties are still fresh and the mind is still receptive; the worthlessness of all merely secular

attainment, however desirable, however necessary, when weighed in the balance against "the one thing needful." The congregation still are boys, but soon they will be men. Dark days will come, as Ecclesiastes warned—dark in various ways and senses, darkest when, at the University or elsewhere, we first are bidden to cast faith aside and to believe nothing but what can be demonstrated by "an appeal, in the last resort, to the organs of sense." Now is the time, and this is the place, so to "remember our Creator" that, come what may, we shall never be able to forget Him, or doubt His love, or question His revelation. The preacher leans far out from the pulpit, spreading himself, as it were, over the congregation, in an act of benediction. "From this place may Christ ever be preached, in the fulness of His creative, redemptive, and sacramental work. Here may you learn to remember Him in the days of your youth, and, in the last and most awful day of all, may He remember you."

Five minutes afterwards we are in the open air. Boys stare and gasp; masters hurry past, excited and loquacious. Notes are compared, and watches consulted. Liddon has preached for an hour, and the school must go without its dinner.

Enough has now been said about the Chapel and its memories. I must now turn to lighter themes. I remember once hearing Mrs. Procter, who was born in 1799 and died in 1888, say casually at a London dinner-party, when someone mentioned Harrow Speech-Day—"Ah! that used to be a pleasant day. The last time I was there I drove down with Lord Byron and Doctor Parr, who had been breakfasting with my step-father, Basil Montagu." This reminiscence seemed to carry one back some way, but I entirely agreed with Mrs. Procter. Speech-Day at Harrow has been for more than forty years one of my favourite holidays. In my time the present Speech-Room did not exist. The old Speech-Room, added to John Lyon's original building in 1819, was a well-proportioned hall, with panelled walls and large windows. Tiers of seats rose on three sides of the room; on the fourth was the platform, and just opposite the platform sat the Head-master, flanked right and left by distinguished visitors. There was a triumphal arch of evergreens over the gate, and the presence of the Beadle of the Parish Church, sumptuous in purple and gold, pointed to the historic but obsolescent connexion between the Parish and the School. The material of the "Speeches," so-called, was much the same as that provided at other schools—Shakespeare, Sheridan, Chatham, Aristophanes, Plautus, Molière, Schiller. An age-long desire to play the Trial in *Pickwick* was only attained, under the liberal rule of Dr. Wood, in 1909. At the Speeches, one caught one's first glimpse of celebrities whom one was destined to see at closer quarters in the years to come; and I

never can forget the radiant beauty of "Spencer's Faery Queen,"[7] as I saw her at the Speeches of 1869.

While I am speaking of Celebrities, I must make a short digression from Speech-Day to Holidays. Dr. Vaughan, some time Head-master of Harrow and afterwards Dean of Llandaff, was in 1868 Vicar of Doncaster. My only brother was one of his curates; the Vaughans asked my mother to stay with them at the Vicarage, in order that she might see her son, then newly ordained, at his work; and, the visit falling in the Harrow holidays, they good-naturedly said that she might bring me with her. Dr. Vaughan was always exceedingly kind to boys, and one morning, on our way back from the daily service, he said to me—"Sir Grosvenor Le Draughte[8] has proposed to break his journey here, on his return from Scotland. Do you know him? No? Well—observe Sir Grosvenor. He is well worthy of observation. He is exactly what the hymn-book calls 'a worldling.'" The day advanced, and no Sir Grosvenor appeared. The Doctor came into the drawing-room repeatedly, asking if "that tiresome old gentleman had arrived," and Mrs. Vaughan plied him with topics of consolation—"Perhaps he has missed his train. Perhaps there has been an accident. Perhaps he has been taken ill on the journey"—but the Doctor shook his head and refused to be comforted. After dinner, we sat in an awe-struck silence, while the Vaughans, knowing the hour at which the last train from Scotland came in, and the length of time which it took to drive from the station, listened with ears erect. Presently the wheels of a fly came rumbling up, and Dr. Vaughan, exclaiming, "Our worst anticipations are realized!" hurried to the front door. Then, welcoming the aged traveller with open arms, he said in his blandest tones—"Now, my dear Sir Grosvenor, I know you must be dreadfully tired. You shall go to bed at once." Sir Grosvenor, who longed to sit up till midnight, telling anecdotes and drinking brandy-and-water, feebly remonstrated; but the remorseless Doctor led his unwilling captive upstairs. It was a triumph of the *Suaviter in modo*, and gave me an impressive lesson on the welcome which awaits self-invited guests, even when they are celebrities. But all this is a parenthesis.

I should be shamefully ungrateful to a place of peculiar enjoyment if I forbore to mention the Library at Harrow. It was opened in 1863, as a Memorial of Dr. Vaughan's Head-mastership, and its delicious bow-window, looking towards Hampstead, was my favourite resort. On whole-holidays, when others were playing cricket, I used to read there for hours at a stretch; and gratified my insatiable thirst for Biographies, Memoirs, and Encyclopædias. The Library was also the home of the Debating Society, and there I moved, forty-two years ago,

that a Hereditary Legislative Body is incompatible with free institutions; and supported the present Bishop of Oxford in declaring that a Republic is the best form of Government. The mention of the Debating Society leads me to the subject of Politics. I have said in a former chapter that the Conservative Reform Bill of 1867 was the first political event which interested me. It was a stirring time all over the world, in France, in Italy, and in Mexico. There were rebellions and rumours of rebellion. Monarchical institutions were threatened. Secret Societies were in full activity. The whole social order seemed to be passing through a crisis, and I, like the Abbé Siéyes, fell to framing constitutions; my favourite scheme being a Republic, with a President elected for life, and a Legislature chosen by universal suffrage. But all these dreams were dispelled by the realities of my new life at Harrow, and, for a while, I perforce thought more of Imperial than of Papal Rome, of Greek than of English Republics. But in the summer of 1868, Mr. Gladstone's first attack on the Irish Church caused such an excitement as I had never before known. It was a pitched battle between the two great Parties of the State, and I was an enthusiastic follower of the Gladstonian standard. In November 1868 came the General Election which was to decide the issue. Of course Harrow, like all other schools, was Tory as the sea is salt. Out of five hundred boys, I can only recall five who showed the Liberal colour. These were the present Lord Grey; Walter Leaf, the Homeric Scholar; W. A. Meek, now Recorder of York; M. G. Dauglish, who edited the "Harrow Register," and myself. On the polling day I received my "Baptism of Fire," or rather of mud, being rolled over and over in the attempt to tear my colours from me. The Tory colour was red; the Liberal was blue; and my mother, chancing to drive through Harrow with the light blue carriage-wheels which my family have always used, was playfully but loudly hissed by wearers of the red rosette. Among the masters, political opinion was divided. Mr. Young, whom I quoted just now, was a Liberal, and a Tory boy called Freddy Bennet (brother of the present Lord Tankerville) covered himself with glory by pinning a red streamer to the back of Young's gown while he was calling "Bill."

In the following year our Politics found a fresh vent through the establishment of *The Harrovian*. I had dabbled in composition ever since I was ten, and had printed both prose and verse before I entered Harrow School. So here was a heaven-sent contributor, and one morning, in the autumn of 1869, as I was coming out of First School, one[9] of the Editors overtook me and said—

"We want you to contribute to *The Harrovian*. We are only going to employ fellows who can write English—not such stuff as 'The following boys *were given*

prizes.'" Purism indeed!

Here began my journalistic career. For three years I wrote a considerable part of the paper, and I was an Editor during my last year, in conjunction with my friends Dumbar Barton and Walter Sichel.

Harrow is sometimes said to be the most musical of Public Schools; and certainly our School Songs have attained a wide popularity. I believe that "Forty Years on" is sung all over the world. But, when I went to Harrow, we were confined to the traditional English songs and ballads, and to some Latin ditties by Bradby and Westcott, which we bellowed lustily but could not always construe. E. E. Bowen's stirring, though often bizarre, compositions (admirably set to music by John Farmer) began soon after I entered the school, and E. W. Howson's really touching and melodious verses succeeded Bowens' some ten years after I had left. Other song-writers, of greater or less merit, we have had; but from first to last, the thrilling spell of a Harrow concert has been an experience quite apart from all other musical enjoyments. "The singing is the thing. When you hear the great body of fresh voices leap up like a lark from the ground, and rise and swell and swell and rise till the rafters seem to crack and shiver, then you seem to have discovered all the sources of feeling." This was the tribute of a stranger, and an Harrovian has recorded the same emotion:—"John was singing like a lark, with a lark's spontaneous delight in singing; with an ease and self-abandonment which charmed eye almost as much as ear. Higher and higher rose the clear, sexless notes, till two of them met and mingled in a triumphant trill. To Desmond, that trill was the answer to the quavering, troubled cadences of the first verse; the vindication of the spirit soaring upwards unfettered by the flesh—the pure spirit, not released from the human clay without a fierce struggle. At that moment Desmond loved the singer—the singer who called to him out of heaven, who summoned his friend to join him, to see what he saw—'the vision splendid.'"[10]

I am conscious that, so far, I have treated the Moloch of Athletics with such scant respect that his worshippers may doubt if I ever was really a boy. Certainly my physical inability to play games was rendered less bitter by the fact that I did not care about them. I well remember the astonishment of my tutor, when he kindly asked me to luncheon on his carriage at my first Eton and Harrow match, and I replied that I should not be there.

"Not be at Lord's, my boy? How very strange! Why?"

"Because there are three things which I particularly dislike—heat, and crowds, and cricket." It certainly was a rather priggish answer, but let me say in self-defence that before I left the school I had become as keen on "Lord's," as the best of my compeers.

That, in spite of his reprehensible attitude towards our national game, I was still, as Mr. Chadband said, "a human boy," is proved by the intense interest with which I beheld the one and only "Mill" which ever took place while I was at Harrow.[11] It was fought on the 25th of February, 1868, with much form and ceremony. The "Milling-ground," now perverted to all sorts of base uses, is immediately below the School-Yard. The ground slopes rapidly, so that the wall of the Yard forms the gallery of the Milling-Ground. The moment that "Bill" was over, I rushed to the wall and secured an excellent place, leaning my elbows on the wall, while a friend, who was a moment later, sat on my shoulders and looked over my bowed head. It would be indiscreet to mention the names of the combatants, though I remember them perfectly. One was a red-headed giant; the other short, dark, and bow-legged. Neither had at all a pleasant countenance, and I must admit that I enjoyed seeing them pound each other into pulp. I felt that two beasts were getting their deserts. To-day such a sight would kill me; but this is the degeneracy of old age.

Now that I am talking about school-fellows, several names call for special mention. As I disliked athletics, it follows that I did not adore athletes. I can safely say that I never admired a boy because of his athletic skill, though I have admired many in spite of it. Probably Sidney Pelham, Archdeacon of Norfolk, who was in the Harrow Eleven in 1867 and 1868, and the Oxford Eleven in 1871, will never see this book; so I may safely say that I have seldom envied anyone as keenly as I envied him, when Dr. Butler, bidding him farewell before the whole school, thanked him for "having set an example which all might be proud to follow—unfailing sweetness of temper, and perfect purity of life." In one respect, the most conspicuous of my school-fellows was H.R.H. Prince Thomas of Savoy, Duke of Genoa, nephew of Victor Emmanuel, and now an Admiral in the Italian Navy. He came to Harrow in 1869, and lived with Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Arnold. He was elected King of Spain by a vote of the Cortes on the 3rd of October 1869. He was quite a popular boy, and no one had the slightest grudge against him; but, for all that, everyone made a point of kicking him, in the hope of being able to say in after-life that they had kicked the King of Spain. Unfortunately Victor Emmanuel, fearing dynastic complications, forbade him to accept the Crown; so he got all the Harrow kicks and none of the Spanish

half-pence. When I entered Harrow, the winner of all the classical prizes was Andrew Graham Murray, now Lord Dunedin and Lord President of the Court of Session; a most graceful scholar, and also a considerable mathematician. Just below him was Walter Leaf, to whom no form of learning came amiss; who was as likely to be Senior Wrangler as Senior Classic, and whose performances in Physical Science won the warm praise of Huxley. Of the same standing as these were Arthur Evans, the Numismatist, Frank Balfour, the Physiologist, and Gerald Rendall, Head-master of Charterhouse. Among my contemporaries the most distinguished was Charles Gore, whose subsequent career has only fulfilled what all foresaw; and just after him came (to call them by their present names) Lord Crewe, Lord Ribblesdale, Lord Spencer, Mr. Justice Barton of the Irish Bench, and Mr. Walter Long, in whom Harrow may find her next Prime Minister. Walter Sichel was at seventeen the cleverest school-boy whom I have ever known. Sir Henry McKinnon obtained his Commission in the Guards while he was still in the Fifth Form. Pakenham Beatty was the Swinburnian of the school, then, as now, a true Poet of Liberty. Ion Keith-Falconer, Orientalist and missionary, was a saint in boyhood as in manhood. Edward Eyre seemed foreordained to be what in London and in Northumberland he has been—the model Parish-Priest; and my closest friend of all was Charles Baldwyn Childe-Pemberton, who, as Major Childe, fell at the battle of Spion Kop, on a spot now called, in honour of his memory, "Childe's Hill." *De minimis non curat Respublica*; which, being interpreted, signifies—*The Commonwealth* will not care to know the names of the urchins who fagged for me.[12] But I cherish an ebony match-box carved and given to me by one of these ministering spirits, as a proof that, though my laziness may have made me exacting, my exactions were not brutal.

On the 15th of June, 1871, Harrow School celebrated the three-hundredth anniversary of its foundation. Harrovians came from every corner of the globe to take part in this Tercentenary Festival. The arrangements were elaborated with the most anxious care. The Duke of Abercorn, affectionately and appropriately nicknamed "Old Splendid," presided over a banquet in the School-Yard; and the programme of the day's proceedings had announced, rather to the terror of intending visitors, that after luncheon there would be "speeches, interspersed with songs, from three hundred and fifty of the boys." The abolition of the second comma dispelled the dreadful vision of three-hundred-and-fifty school-

boy-speeches, and all went merry as a marriage-bell—all, except the weather. It seemed as if the accumulated rain of three centuries were discharged on the devoted Hill. It was raining when we went to the early celebration in the Chapel; it was raining harder when we came out. At the culminating moment of the day's proceedings, when Dr. Vaughan was proposing "Prosperity to Harrow," the downpour and the thunder drowned the speaker's voice; and, when evening fell on the sodden cricket-ground, the rain extinguished the fireworks.

On that same cricket-ground nine days later, in the golden afternoon of Midsummer Day, George Clement Cottrell, a boy beautiful alike in face and in character, was killed in an instant by a blow from a ball, which struck him behind the ear when he was umpiring in the Sixth Form game. On the 29th of June his five hundred school-fellows followed him to his resting-place in the Churchyard on the Hill, and I believe we unanimously felt that he whom we had lost was the one, of all our number, of whom we could say, with the surest confidence, that he was fit to pass, without a moment's warning, into the invisible World. *Beati mundo corde*.

FOOTNOTES:

[4] Writing to John Murray in 1832, Byron said—"There is a spot in the Churchyard, near the footpath, on the brow of the Hill looking towards Windsor, and a tomb under a large tree (bearing the name of Peachie, or Peachey), where I used to sit for hours and hours as a boy: this was my favourite spot."

[5] The Rev. E. M. Young.

[6] Herga is the Anglo-Saxon name of Harrow.

[7] Charlotte Seymour, Countess Spencer, died 1903.

[8] The name is borrowed from "Sybil." The bearer of it was an ancient physician, who had doctored all the famous people of his time, beginning with "Pamela."

[9] Mr. R. de C. Welch.

[10] *The Hill*. Chapter vi.

[11] Some authorities say that it was the last on record.

[12] This paper appeared in *The Commonwealth*.

IV

OXFORD

"For place, for grace, and for sweet companee,
Oxford is Heaven, if Heaven on Earth there be."

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

The faithful student of "Verdant Green" will not have forgotten that Charlie Larkyns, when introducing his Freshman-friend to the sights of Oxford, called his attention to a mystic inscription on a wall in Oriel Lane. "You see that? Well, that's one of the plates they put up to record the Vice's height. F.P.—7 feet, you see: the initials of his name—Frederick Plumptre!" "He scarcely seemed so tall as that," replied Verdant, "though certainly a tall man. But the gown makes a difference, I suppose."

Dr. Plumptre was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford from 1848 to 1851, and Master of University College for thirty-four years. He died in 1870, and the College thereupon elected the Rev. G. G. Bradley, then Head-master of Marlborough, and afterwards Dean of Westminster, to the vacant post. It was an unfortunate choice. Mr. Bradley was a man of many gifts and virtues, and a successful schoolmaster; but the methods which had succeeded at Marlborough were not adapted to Oxford, and he soon contrived to get at loggerheads both with Dons and with Undergraduates.

However, there existed at that time—and I daresay it exists still—a nefarious kind of trades-unionism among the Headmasters of Public Schools; and, as Bradley had been a Head-master, all the Head-masters advised their best pupils to try the scholarships at University College.

So far as I had any academical connexions, they were exclusively with Trinity, Cambridge; and my father was as ignorant of Oxford as myself. All I knew about it was that it was the source and home of the Oxford movement, which some of my friends at Harrow had taught me to admire. Two or three of those friends were already there, and I wished to rejoin them; but, as between the different Colleges, I was fancy-free; so when, early in 1872, Dr. Butler suggested

that I should try for a scholarship at University, I assented, reserving myself, in the too probable event of failure, for Christ Church. However, I was elected at University on the 24th of February, 1872, and went into residence there on the 11th of the following October. The Vice-Chancellor who matriculated me was the majestic Liddell, who, with his six feet of stately height draped in scarlet, his "argent aureole" of white hair, and his three silver maces borne before him, always helped me to understand what Sydney Smith meant when he said, of some nonsensical proposition, that no power on earth, save and except the Dean of Christ Church, should induce him to believe it. As I write, I see the announcement of Mrs. Liddell's death; and my mind travels back to the drawing-room and lawns of the Deanery at Christ Church, and the garland of beautiful faces

> "Decking the matron temples of a place
> So famous through the world."

The 13th of October was my first Sunday in Oxford, and my friend Charles Gore took me to the Choral Eucharist at Cowley St. John, and afterwards to luncheon with the Fathers. So began my acquaintance with a Society of which I have always been a grateful admirer. But more exciting experiences were at hand: on the 20th of October it was Liddon's turn, as Select Preacher, to occupy the pulpit at St. Mary's. The impressions of that, my first University sermon, have never faded from my mind. A bright autumn morning, the yellow sunlight streaming in upon the densely crowded church, the long array of scarlet-robed doctors, the preacher's beautiful face looking down from the high pulpit, with anxious brow and wistful gaze. And then the rolling Latin hymn, and then the Bidding Prayer, and then the pregnant text—*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*. Are we listening to St. John the Baptist or St. John the Evangelist? The preacher holds that we are listening to the Evangelist, and says that the purpose of St. John's Gospel is condensed into his text. "If to believe in Him is life, to have known and yet to reject him is death. There is no middle term or state between the two.... In fact, this stern, yet truthful and merciful, claim makes all the difference between a Faith and a theory." And now there is a moment's pause. Preacher and hearers alike take breath. Some instinct assures us that we are just coming to the crucial point. The preacher resumes: "A statement of this truth in other terms is at present occasioning a painful controversy, which it would be better in this place to pass over in silence if too much was not at stake to warrant a course from which I shall only depart with sincere reluctance. Need

I say that I allude to the vexed question of the Athanasian Creed?" The great discourse which was thus introduced, with its strong argument for the retention of the Creed as it stands, has long been the property of the Church, and there is no need to recapitulate it. But the concluding words, extolling "the high and rare grace of an intrepid loyalty to known truth," spoke with a force of personal appeal which demands commemoration: "To be forced back upon the central realities of the faith which we profess; to learn, better than ever before, what are the convictions which we dare not surrender at any cost; to renew the freshness of an early faith, which affirms within us, clearly and irresistibly, that the one thing worth thinking of, worth living for, if need were, worth dying for, is the unmutilated faith of Jesus Christ our Lord,—these may be the results of inevitable differences, and, if they are, they are blessings indeed."[13]

The same Sunday was marked by another unforgettable experience—my first visit to St. Barnabas'. The church was then just three years old. Bishop Wilberforce had consecrated it on the 19th of October, 1869, and made this characteristic note in his diary:—"Disagreeable service. Acolyte running about. Paste squares for bread, etc., but the church a great gift." Three years later, a boy fresh from Harrow, and less sensitively Protestant than the good Bishop, not only thought "the church a great gift," but enjoyed the "acolyte running about," and found the whole service the most inspiring and uplifting worship in which he had ever joined. My impressions of it are as clear as yesterday's—the unadorned simplicity of the fabric, emphasizing by contrast the blaze of light and colour round the altar; the floating cloud of incense; the expressive and unfussy ceremonial; the straightforward preaching; and, most impressive of all, the large congregation of men, old and young, rich and poor, undergraduates and artisans, all singing Evangelical hymns with one heart and one voice. It was, if ever there was on earth, congregational worship; and I, for one, have never seen its like. The people's pride in the church was very characteristic: they habitually spoke of it as "our Barnabas." The clergy and the worshippers were a family, and the church was a home.

At the Dedication Festival of 1872, there was a strong list of preachers, including W. J. E. Bennett, of Frome, and Edward King, then Principal of Cuddesdon. But the sermon which made an indelible impression on me was preached by R. W. Randall, then vicar of All Saints, Clifton, and afterwards Dean of Chichester. It was indeed a memorable performance. "Performance" is the right word, for, young as one was, one realized instinctively the wonderful art and mastery and technical perfection of the whole. There was the exquisitely

modulated voice, sinking lower, yet becoming more distinct, whenever any specially moving topic was touched; the restrained, yet emphatic action—I can see that uplifted forefinger still—and the touch of personal reminiscence at the close, so managed as to give the sense that we were listening to an elder brother who, thirty years before, had passed through the same experiences, so awfully intermingled of hope and tragedy, which now lay before us on the threshold of our Oxford life. It was, in brief, a sermon never to be forgotten; it was "a night to be much remembered unto the Lord."

Some thirty years later, I was introduced to Dean Randall at a London dinner-party. After dinner, I drew my chair towards him, and said, "Mr. Dean, I have always wished to have an opportunity of thanking you for a sermon which you preached at St. Barnabas', Oxford, at the Dedication Festival, 1872." The Dean smiled, with the graceful pleasure of an old man honoured by a younger one, and said, "Yes? What was the text?" "The text I have long forgotten, but I remember the subject." "And what was that?" "It was the insecurity of even the best-founded hopes." "Rather a well-worn theme," said the Dean, with a half-smile. "But not, sir," I said, "as you handled it. You told us, at the end of the sermon, that you remembered a summer afternoon when you were an undergraduate at Christ Church, and were sitting over your Thucydides close to your window, grappling with a long and complicated passage which was to be the subject of next morning's lecture; and that, glancing for a moment from your book, you saw the two most brilliant young Christ Church men of the day going down to bathe in the Isis. You described the gifts and graces of the pair, who, between them, seemed to combine all that was best and most beautiful in body and mind and soul. And then you told us how, as your friends disappeared towards Christ Church Meadows, you returned to your work; and only were roused from it two hours later, when a confused noise of grief and terror in the quadrangle below attracted your attention, and you saw the dead bodies of Gaisford and Phillimore borne past your window from their 'watery bier' at Sandford Lasher."

On Advent Sunday, December 1, I saw and heard Dr. Pusey for the first time. He was then in broken health; but he gathered all his physical and mental energies for a great sermon on "The Responsibility of Intellect in Matters of Faith." The theme of this sermon was that Intellect is a great trust confided to us by God; that we are responsible to Him for the use of it; and that we must exercise it in submission to His revealed Will. What He has declared, that it is our duty to believe. Our Lord Himself had uttered the most solemn warning against wilful unbelief; the Athanasian Creed only re-echoed His awful words; and the storm

which assailed the Creed was really directed against the revealed Truth of God. "This tornado will, I trust, by God's mercy, soon pass; it is a matter of life and death. To remove those words of warning, or the Creed because it contains them, would be emphatically to teach our people that it is *not* necessary to salvation to believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in One God as He has made Himself known to us."

Immediately after delivering himself of this great apology for the Faith, Pusey went abroad for the benefit of his health, and did not return to Oxford till the Summer Term. I well remember the crowd of ancient disciples, who had missed their accustomed interview at Christmas, thronging his door in Christ Church, like the impotent folk at the Pool of Bethesda.

Another reminiscence, and of a very different kind, belongs to my first Term. Dean Stanley had been nominated as Select Preacher, and the old-fashioned High Churchmen made common cause with the Low Churchmen to oppose his appointment. There was a prodigious clamour, but Dr. Pusey held aloof from the agitation, believing—and in this he was conspicuously right—that "opposition would only aggravate the evil by enlisting the enthusiasm of the young." The vote was taken, in an unusually crowded Convocation, on the 11th of December. It was a noteworthy and rather an amusing scene, and was well described by an eyewitness.[14] "Oxford was fairly startled from the serenity which usually marks the fag-end of the Michaelmas Term by a sudden irruption of the outer world. Recognitions took place at every street-corner. The hotels were put upon their mettle. The porters' lodges of the Colleges were besieged, and Boffin's Refreshment Rooms ran over with hungry parsons from the country. As an evidence of the interest which the question of Dean Stanley's appointment excited beyond the walls of the University, I may mention that even the guards and porters at the railway hallooed to each other to know "the state of the betting"; but even they did not seem quite to have calculated on the matter being so warmly taken up in London and by the country at large." At half-past one o'clock the bell of St. Mary's gave notice to the combatants to prepare for the fray, and immediately the floor of the Theatre was sprinkled with representative men of all the schools. The non-residents appeared in gowns of various degrees of rustiness, some with chimney-pot hats and some with wide-awakes. The early comers conversed in small groups, hugging instinctively those sides of the building on which were written respectively *Placet* or *Non-Placet*, giving thereby an inkling of how they meant to vote. The gathering increased every moment, and soon the Doctors in their scarlet began to dot the seats around the

Vice-Chancellor's chair. Prince Leopold, by right of his royalty, entered the sacred enclosure with Dr. Acland, and afterwards took his seat among the Doctors. Before two o'clock every inch of the floor was full, the occupants standing in anticipation of the coming encounter. "Still they gravitated towards their respective voting-doors, and on the *Placet* side one descried the scholarly face of Professor Jowett, the sharply-cut features of the Rev. Mark Pattison, and the well-known physiognomy of Professor Max Müller. On the opposite side Mr. Burgon was marshalling his forces, and Dean Goulburn, from the Doctors' benches, looked out over the seething mass of M.A.'s below him." At two o'clock the Vice-Chancellor arrived, and forthwith commenced proceedings in Latin, which must have been extremely edifying to the ladies who, in large numbers, occupied the Strangers' Gallery, backed by a narrow fringe of Undergraduates. The object of the Convocation was stated as being the appointment of Select Preachers, and the names were then submitted to the Doctors and Masters for approval. "*Placetne igitur vobis huic nomini assentire?*" being the form in which the question was proposed.

The name first on the list was that of the Rev. Harvey Goodwin; and a faint buzz in the assembly was interpreted by the Vice-Chancellor, skilled in such sounds, as an expression of approval. Thereupon he passed on to name number two, which, with some agitation, but with clear, resonant voice, he read out as "Arthurus Penrhyn Stanley." Immediately there ensued a scene of the wildest confusion. On the *Placet* side, cheers and waving of trencher-caps; on the *Non-Placet* side feeble hisses; and from all sides, undergraduate as well as graduate, mingled shouts of *Placet* and *Non*, with an accompaniment of cheers and hisses; until the ringing voice of Dean Liddell pronounced the magic words *Fiat scrutinium*. Thereupon the two Proctors proceeded first of all to take the votes of the Doctors on their benches; and, when this was done, they took their station at the doors labelled *Placet* and *Non-placet*. During the process of polling we had an opportunity of criticizing the constituents of that truly exceptional gathering. It was certainly not true to say, as some said, that only the younger Masters voted for Dean Stanley. There was quite a fair proportion of white and bald heads on the *Placet* side. "The country contingent was not so numerous as one had expected, and I do not believe that all of these went out at the *Non-placet* door. Evidently, parties were pretty evenly balanced; and, when the *Non-placets* had all recorded their votes there were about twenty-five left on Dean Stanley's side, which probably would have nearly represented the actual majority, but, at the last moment, some stragglers, who had only arrived in Oxford by 2.25 train hurried in, and so swelled the numbers. One late-comer arrived without his

academicals, and some zealous supporter of the Dean had to denude himself, and pass his cap and gown outside to enable this gentleman to vote." Soon it was over. The Proctors presented their lists to the Vice-Chancellor, who, amid breathless silence, pronounced the fateful words—"*Majori parti placet.*" Then there was indeed a cheer, which rang through the building from basement to upper gallery, and was taken up outside in a way that reminded one of the trial of the Seven Bishops. The hisses, if there were any, were fairly drowned. Oxford had given its approval to Dean Stanley, the numbers being—*Placet*, 349; *Non-placet*, 287.

When the fuss was over, Liddon wrote thus to a friend:—"It was a discreditable nomination; but, having been made, ought, in the interests of the Faith, to have been allowed to pass *sub silentio*; for, if opposed, it must either be defeated or affirmed by Convocation—a choice, *me judice*, of nearly balanced evils. To have defeated it would have been to invest Stanley with the cheap honours of a petty martyrdom. To have affirmed it is, I fear, to have given a new impetus to the barren, unspiritual negations which he represents."

I went up to Oxford well supplied with introductions. Dr. Cradock, the well-beloved Principal of Brasenose, scholar, gentleman, man of the world, devout Wordsworthian, enthusiastic lover of cricket and boating, had married a connexion of my own, who had been a Maid of Honour in Queen Victoria's first household. Theirs was the most hospitable house in Oxford, and a portrait of Mrs. Cradock, not quite kind, but very lifelike, enlivens the serious pages of *Robert Elsmere*. Dr., afterwards Sir Henry, Acland, with his majestic presence, blandly paternal address, and ample rhetoric, was not only the Regius Professor of Medicine, but also the true and patient friend of many undergraduate generations. Mrs. Acland is commemorated in what I have always thought one of the grandest sermons in the English language—Liddon's "Worth of Faith in a Life to Come."[15] The Warden of Keble and Mrs. Talbot (then the young wife of the young Head of a very young College) were, as they have been for 40 years, the kindest and most constant of friends. Dr. Bright, Canon of Christ Church and Professor of Ecclesiastical History, was a lavish entertainer, "with an intense dramatic skill in telling a story, an almost biblical knowledge of all the pages of Dickens (and of Scott), with shouts of glee, and outpourings of play and fancy and allusion." But I need not elaborate the portrait, for everyone ought to know Dr. Holland's "Personal Studies" by heart. Edwin Palmer, Professor of Latin, was reputed to be the best scholar in Oxford, and Mrs. Palmer was a most genial hostess. Henry Smith, Professor of Geometry, was, I suppose, the most

accomplished man of his time;[16] yet he lives, not by his performances in the unthinkable sphere of metaphysical mathematics, but by his intervention at Gladstone's last contest for the University. Those were the days of open voting, and Smith was watching the votes in Gladstone's interest. Professor ——, who never could manage his h's, wished to vote for the Tory candidates, Sir William Heathcote and Mr. Gathorne Hardy, but lost his head, and said:—"I vote for Glad ——." Then, suddenly correcting himself, exclaimed, "I mean for 'Eathcote and 'Ardy." Thereupon Smith said, "I claim that vote for Gladstone." "But," said the Vice-Chancellor, "the voter did not finish your candidate's name." "That is true," said Smith, "but then he did not even begin the other two." Henry Smith kept house with an admirable and accomplished sister—the first woman, I believe, to be elected to a School Board, and certainly the only one to whom J. W. Burgon (afterwards Dean of Chichester) devoted a whole sermon. "Miss Smith's Sermon," with its whimsical protest against feminine activities, was a standing joke in those distant days. The Rev. H. R. Bramley, Fellow of Magdalen, used to entertain us sumptuously in his most beautiful College. He was a connecting link between Dr. Routh (1755-1854) and modern Oxford, and in his rooms I was introduced to the ablest man of my generation—a newly-elected Scholar of Balliol called Alfred Milner.

It is anticipating, but only by a Term or two (for Dr. King came to Christ Church in 1873), to speak of Sunday luncheons at the house of the Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology, and of Dr. Liddon's characteristic allusion to a remarkably bloated-looking Bishop of Oxford in balloon sleeves and a wig, whose portrait adorned the Professor's house. "How singular, dear friend, to reflect that *that person* should have been chosen, in the providential order, to connect Mr. Keble with the Apostles!"

But though the lines seem to have fallen unto me in ritualistic places, I was not without Evangelical advantages. Canon Linton, Rector of St. Peter-le-Bailey, was a dear old gentleman, who used to entertain undergraduates at breakfasts and luncheons, and after the meal, when more secularly-minded hosts might have suggested pipes, would lead us to a side-table, where a selection of theological works was displayed, and bid us take our choice. "Kay on the Psalms" was a possession thus acquired, and has been used by me from that time to this. Nor must this retrospective page omit some further reference to J. W. Burgon, Fellow of Oriel and Vicar of St. Mary-the-Virgin. Dean Church called him "the dear old learned Professor of Billingsgate," and certainly his method of conducting controversy savoured (as Sydney Smith said about Bishop Monk) of

the apostolic occupation of trafficking in fish. But to those whom he liked, and who looked up to him (for this was an essential condition), he was kind, hospitable, courteous, and even playful. His humour, which was of a crabbed kind quite peculiar to himself, found its best vent in his sermons. I often wondered whether he realized that the extreme grotesqueness of his preaching was the spell which drew undergraduates to the Sunday evening service at St. Mary's.

For my next reminiscence of hospitality to Freshmen I must rely on the assistance of a pseudonym. At the time of which I am writing, Oxford numbered among her Professors one who had graduated, at a rather advanced age, from Magdalen Hall. Borrowing a name from Dickens, we will call him "Professor Dingo, of European reputation." To the kindness of Professor and Mrs. Dingo I was commended by a friend who lived near my home in Bedfordshire, and soon after my arrival in Oxford they asked me to Sunday luncheon at their villa in The Parks. The conversation turned on a new book of Limericks (or "Nonsense Rhymes," as we called them then) about the various Colleges. The Professor had not seen it, and wanted to know if it was amusing. In my virginal innocence I replied that one rhyme had amused me. "Let's have it," quoth the Professor, so off I went at score—

"There once was at Magdalen Hall
A Man who knew nothing at all;
When he took his degree
He was past fifty-three—
Which is youngish for Magdalen Hall."

The Professor snarled like an angry dog, and said, witheringly, that, if *that* was a specimen, the book must be sorry stuff indeed. After luncheon I walked away with another undergraduate, rather senior to myself, who said rejoicingly, "You've made a good start. That rhyme is meant to describe old Dingo."

FOOTNOTES:

[13] "The Life of Faith and the Athanasian Creed." University Sermons. Series II.

[14] The Rev. C. M. Davies, D.D.

[15] University Sermons. Series II.

[16] "He had gained University honours, such as have been gained by no one now living, and will probably never be won again.... He was one of the greatest mathematical geniuses of the century. His chief and highest intellectual interests lay in an unknown world into which not more than two or three persons could follow. In that world he travelled alone."—*From a Memorial Sermon by B. Jowett.*

V

OXONIANA

"Mind'st thou the bells? What a place it was for bells,
lad!
Spires as sharp as thrushes' bills to pierce the sky with
song.
How it shook the heart of one, the swaying and the
swinging,
How it set the blood a-tramp and all the brains a-singing,
Aye, and what a world of thought the calmer chimes
came bringing,
Telling praises every hour
To His majesty and power,
Telling prayers with punctual service, summers,
centuries, how long?
The beads upon our rosary of immemorial song."

The Minstrelsy of Isis.

Oxford is a subject from which one cannot easily tear oneself: so I make no apology for returning to it. In that delightful book, "The Minstrelsy of Isis," I have found an anonymous poem beginning

"Royal heart, loyal heart, comrade that I loved,"

and, in the spirit of that line, I dedicate this chapter to the friend whom I always regarded as the Ideal Undergraduate.[17] Other names and other faces of contemporaries and companions come crowding upon the memory, but it is better, on all accounts, to leave them unspecified. I lived quite as much in other colleges as in my own, and in a fellowship which was gathered from all sorts and sections of undergraduate life. Let the reader imagine all the best and brightest men in the University between 1872 and 1876, and he will not go far wrong in assuming that my friends were among them.

My Oxford life was cut sharply into two halves by a very definite dividing-line;

the first half was cheerful and irresponsible enough. A large part of the cheerfulness was connected with the Church, and my earliest friendships (after those which I brought with me from Harrow) were formed in the circle which frequented St. Barnabas. I am thankful to remember that my eyes were even then open to see the moral beauty and goodness all around me, and I had a splendid dream of blending it all into one. In my second term I founded an "Oxford University Church Society," designed to unite religious undergraduates of all shades of Churchmanship for common worship and interchange of views. We formed ourselves on what we heard of a similar Society at Cambridge; and, early in the Summer Term of 1873, a youth of ruddy countenance and graceful address —now Canon Mason and Master of Pembroke—came over from Cambridge, and told us how to set to work. The effort was indeed well-meant. It was blessed by Churchmen as dissimilar as Bishop Mackarness, Edwin Palmer, Burgon, Scott Holland, Illingworth, Ottley, Lacey, Gore, and Jayne, now Bishop of Chester; but it was not long-lived. Very soon the "Victorian Persecution," as we used to call it, engineered by Archbishop Tait through the P.W.R. Act, made it difficult for ritualists to feel that they had part or lot with those who were imprisoning conscientious clergymen; so the O.U.C.S. fell to pieces and disappeared, to be revived after long years and under more peaceable conditions, by the present Archbishop of York, when Vicar of St. Mary's.

The accession of Dr. King to the Pastoral Professorship brought a new element of social delight into the ecclesiastical world of Oxford, and that was just what was wanted. We revered our leaders, but saw little of them. Dr. Pusey was buried in Christ Church; and though there were some who fraudulently professed to be students of Hebrew, in order that they might see him (and sketch him) at his lectures, most of us only heard him in the pulpit of St. Mary's. It was rather fun to take ritualistic ladies, who had fashioned mental pictures of the great Tractarian, to Evensong in Christ Church, and to watch their dismay as that very unascetic figure, with tumbled surplice and hood awry, toddled to his stall. "Dear me! Is that Dr. Pusey? Somehow I had fancied quite a different-looking man." Liddon was now a Canon of St. Paul's, and his home was at Amen Court; so, when residing at Oxford, he lived a sort of hermit-life in his rooms in Christ Church, and did not hold much communication with undergraduates. I have lively recollections of eating a kind of plum duff on Fridays at the Mission-House of Cowley, while one of the Fathers read passages from Tertullian on the remarriage of widows; but this, though edifying, was scarcely social.

But the arrival of "Canon King," with the admirable mother who kept house for

him, was like a sunrise. All those notions of austerity and stiffness and gloom which had somehow clung about Tractarianism were dispelled at once by his fun and sympathy and social tact. Under his roof, undergraduates always felt happy and at home; and in his "Bethel," as he called it, a kind of disused greenhouse in his garden, he gathered week by week a band of undergraduate hearers, to whom religion spoke, through his lips, with her most searching yet most persuasive accent.

Lovers of *Friendship's Garland* will remember that, during their three years at Oxford, Lord Lumpington and Esau Hittall were "so much occupied with Bullingdon and hunting that there was no great opportunity for those mental gymnastics which train and brace the mind for future acquisition." My ways of wasting time were less strenuous than theirs; and my desultory reading, and desultory Church-work, were supplemented by a good deal of desultory riding. I have some delicious memories of autumnal canters over Shotover and Boar's Hill, and racing gallops across Port Meadow, and long ambles on summer afternoons, through the meadows by the river-side, towards Radley and Nuneham. Having been brought up in the country, and having ridden ever since I was promoted from panniers, I looked upon riding as a commonplace accomplishment, much on a par with swimming and skating. Great, therefore, was my surprise to find that many undergraduates, I suppose town-bred, regarded horsemanship not merely as a rare and difficult art, but also as implying a kind of moral distinction. When riding men met me riding, I saw that they "looked at each other with a wild surmise;" and soon, perhaps as a consequence, I was elected to "Vincent's." When, after a term or two, my father suggested that I had better have my own horse sent from home, I was distinctly conscious of a social elevation. Henceforward I might, if I would, associate with "Bloods"; but those whom they would have contemned as "Ritualistic Smugs" were more interesting companions.

The mention of "Vincent's" reminds me of the Union, to which also I belonged, though I was a sparing and infrequent participator in its debates. I disliked debating for debating's sake; and, though I have always loved speaking on Religion or Politics or any other subject in which the spoken word might influence practice, it has always seemed to me a waste of effort to argue for abstract propositions. If by speaking I can lead a man to give a vote on the right side, or a boy to be more dutiful to his mother, or a sin-burdened youth to "open his grief," I am ready to speak all night; but the debates of the Oxford Union on the Falck Laws and the Imperial Titles Bill always left me cold.

The General Election of 1874 occurred during my second year at Oxford. The City of Oxford was contested by Harcourt, Cardwell, and the local brewer. Harcourt and Cardwell were returned; but immediately afterwards Cardwell was raised to the peerage, and a bye-election ensued. I can vividly recall the gratification which I felt when the Liberal candidate—J. D. Lewis—warmly pressed my hand, and, looking at my rosette, hoped that he might count on my vote and interest. Not for the world would I have revealed the damning fact that I was a voteless undergraduate.

In connexion with the Election of 1874, my tutor—C. A. Fyffe—told me a curious story. He was canvassing the Borough of Woodstock on behalf of George Brodrick, then an academic Liberal of the deepest dye. Woodstock was what was called an "Agricultural Borough"—practically a division of the County—and in an outlying district, in a solitary cottage, the canvassers found an old man whom his neighbours reported to be a Radical. He did not disclaim the title, but no inducements could induce him to go to the poll. Gradually, under persistent cross-examination, he revealed his mind. He was old enough to remember the days before the Reform Bill of 1832. His father had been an ardent reformer. Everyone believed that, if only the Bill were passed, hunger and poverty and misery would be abolished, and the poor would come by their own. He said—and this was the curious point—that firearms were stored in his father's cottage, to be used in a popular rising if the Bill were rejected by the Lords. Well, the Lords had submitted, and the Bill had been passed; and we had got our reform—and no one was any better off. The poor were still poor, and there was misery and oppression, and the great people had it all their own way. He had got his roof over his head, and "a bit of meat in his pot," and it was no good hoping for anything more, and he was never going to take any part in politics again. It was a notable echo from the voices which, in 1832, had proclaimed the arrival of the Millennium.

Oxford in those days was full of Celebrities. Whenever one's friends came "up" to pay one a visit, one was pretty certain to be able, in a casual stroll up the High or round Magdalen Walks or Christ Church Meadows, to point out someone of whom they had heard before. I have already spoken of Liddell and Pusey and Liddon and Acland and Burgon and Henry Smith. Chief perhaps among our celebrities was Ruskin, who had lately been made Slade Professor of Fine Art, and whose Inaugural Lecture was incessantly on the lips of such undergraduates as cared for glorious declamation.

"There is a destiny now possible to us—the highest ever set before a nation to be

accepted or refused. We are still undegenerate in race; a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but still have the firmness to govern, and the grace to obey. We have been taught a religion of pure mercy, which we must either now finally betray, or learn to defend by fulfilling. And we are rich in an inheritance of honour, bequeathed to us through a thousand years of noble history, which it should be our daily thirst to increase with splendid avarice, so that Englishmen, if it be a sin to covet honour, should be the most offending souls alive.... Will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts; faithful guardian of time-tried principles, under temptation from fond experiments and licentious desires; and, amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations, worshipped in her strange valour, of goodwill towards men? *Vexilla regis prodeunt.* Yes, but of which King? There are two oriflammes; which shall we plant on the farthest islands—the one that floats in heavenly fire, or that hangs heavy with foul tissue of terrestrial gold?"

Ruskin's lectures, ostensibly devoted to the Fine Arts, ranged over every topic in earth and heaven, and were attended by the largest, most representative, and most responsive audiences which had ever been gathered in Oxford since Matthew Arnold delivered his Farewell Lecture on "Culture and its Enemies."

Another of our Professors—J. E. Thorold Rogers—though perhaps scarcely a celebrity, was well known outside Oxford, partly because he was the first person to relinquish the clerical character under the Act of 1870, partly because of his really learned labours in history and economics, and partly because of his Rabelaisian humour. He was fond of writing sarcastic epigrams, and of reciting them to his friends, and this habit produced a characteristic retort from Jowett. Rogers had only an imperfect sympathy with the historians of the new school, and thus derided the mutual admiration of Green and Freeman—

> "Where, ladling butter from a large tureen,
> See blustering Freeman butter blundering Green."

To which Jowett replied, in his quavering treble, "That's a false antithesis, Rogers. It's quite possible to bluster and blunder, too!"

The mention of Oxford historians reminds me of my friend Professor Dingo, to whom reference has been made in an earlier chapter. He had a strong admiration for the virile and masterful character of Henry VIII., and was wont to conceal the

blots on his hero's career by this pathetic paraphrase—"The later years of this excellent monarch's reign were clouded by *much domestic unhappiness*."

Jowett has been mentioned more than once, and there is no need for me to describe him. Lord Beaconsfield, in *Endymion*, gave a snapshot of "a certain Dr. Comeley, an Oxford Don of the new school, who were initiating Lord Montfort in all the mysteries of Neology. This celebrated divine, who, in a sweet silky voice, quoted Socrates instead of St. Paul, was opposed to all symbols and formulas as essentially unphilosophical." Mr. Mallock, in the *New Republic*, supplied us with a more finished portrait of "Dr. Jenkinson," and parodied his style of preaching with a perfection which irritated the Master of Balliol out of his habitual calm. My own intercourse with Jowett was not intimate, but I once dined with him on an occasion which made an equally deep impression on two of the guests—Lord Milner and myself. When the ladies had left the dining-room, an eminent diplomatist began an extremely full-flavoured conversation, which would have been unpleasant anywhere, and, in the presence of the diplomatist's son, a lad of sixteen, was disgusting. For a few minutes the Master endured it, though with visible annoyance; and then, suddenly addressing the offender at the other end of the table, said, in a birdlike chirp, "Sir ——." "Yes, Master." "Shall we continue this conversation in the drawing-room?" No rebuke was ever more neatly administered.

Jowett's name reminds me, rather obliquely, of the Rev. H. O. Coxe, who in my time was Bodleian Librarian. He was clergyman, sportsman, scholar, all in one, with an infectious enthusiasm for the treasures in his charge, and the most unfailing kindness and patience in exhibiting them. "Those who have enjoyed the real privilege of hearing Mr. Coxe discuss points of historical detail, or have been introduced by him to some of the rarer treasures of the Bodleian, will bear witness to the living interest which such subjects acquired in his hands. How he would kindle while he recited Lord Clarendon's written resignation of the Chancellorship of the University! With what dramatic zest he read out the scraps of paper (carefully preserved by Clarendon) which used to pass between himself and his Royal Master across the Council-table!"

I quote this life-like description from Burgon's *Twelve Good Men*, and Burgon it is who supplies the link with Jowett. "It was shortly after the publication of *Essays and Reviews* that Jowett, meeting Coxe, enquired:—"Have you read my essay?" "No, my dear Jowett. We are good friends now; but I know that, if I were to read that essay, I should have to cut you. So I haven't read it, and I don't mean to.""—A commendable way of escape from theological controversy.

It is scarcely fair to reckon Cardinal Manning among Oxford celebrities; but during my undergraduateship he made two incursions into the University, which were attended by some quaint consequences. In 1873 he was a guest at the banquet held in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Union; and it was noted with amusement that, though he was not then a Cardinal, but merely a schismatic Archbishop, he contrived to take precedence of the Bishop of Oxford in his own cathedral city. Bishop Wilberforce had died three months before, and I remember that all the old stagers said:—"If Sam had still been Bishop of Oxford, this would not have happened." The Roman Catholics of Oxford were of course delighted; and when, soon afterwards, Manning returned as Cardinal to open the Roman Catholic Church in St. Giles's, great efforts were made to bring all undergraduates who showed any Rome-ward proclivities within the sphere of his influence. To one rather bumptious youth he said:—"And what are you going to do with your life?" "I'm thinking of taking Orders." "Take care you get them, my friend." Another, quite unmoved by the pectoral cross and crimson soutane, asked artlessly, "What was your college?" The Cardinal replied, with some dignity, "I was at Balliol, and subsequently at Merton." "Oh! that was like me. I was at Exeter, and I was sent down to a Hall for not getting through Smalls." "*I was a Fellow of Merton.*" No powers of type can do justice to the intonation.

At the time of which I speak Oxford was particularly rich in delightful and accomplished ladies. I have already paid my tribute to Mrs. Cradock, Mrs. Liddell, Mrs. Acland, Mrs. Talbot, and Miss Eleanor Smith. Miss Felicia Skene was at once a devoted servant of the poor and the outcast, and also one of the most powerful writers of her time, although she contrived almost entirely to escape observation. Let anyone who thinks that I rate her powers too highly read "The Divine Master," "La Roquette—1871," and "Hidden Depths."

No account of the famous women at Oxford would be complete without a reference to Miss Marion Hughes—the first Sister of Mercy in the Church of England—professed on Trinity Sunday, 1841, and still the Foundress-Mother of the Convent of the Holy and Undivided Trinity at Oxford.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that my Oxford life was divided sharply into two halves. Neither the climate nor the way of living ever suited my health. In my first term I fell into the doctor's hands, and never escaped from them so

long as I was an undergraduate. I well remember the decisive counsel of the first doctor whom I consulted (not Dr. Acland). "What wine do you drink?" "None—only beer." "Oh! that's all nonsense. You never will be able to live in this climate unless you drink port, and plenty of it."

To this generous prescription I dutifully submitted, but even port was powerless to keep me well at Oxford. I always felt "seedy"; and the nervous worry inseparable from a time of spiritual storm and stress (for four of my most intimate friends seceded to Rome) told upon me more than I knew. An accidental chill brought things to a climax, and during the Christmas vacation of 1874 I was laid low by a sharp attack of *myelitis*, mistaken at the time for rheumatic fever. I heard the last stroke of midnight, December 31, in a paroxysm of pain which, for years after, I never could recall without feeling sick. I lost two terms through illness, and the doctors were against my returning to the damps of Oxford. However, I managed to hobble back on two sticks, maimed for life, and with all dreams of academical distinction at an end. But what was more important was that my whole scheme of life was dissipated. Henceforward it was with me, as with Robert Elsmere after his malaria at Cannes—"It was clear to himself and everybody else that he must do what he could, and not what he would, in the Christian vineyard." The words have always made me smile; but the reality was no smiling matter. The remainder of my life at Oxford was of necessity lived at half-speed; and in this place I must commemorate, with a gratitude which the lapse of years has never chilled, the extraordinary kindness and tenderness with which my undergraduate friends tended and nursed me in that time of crippledom.[18] Prince Leopold, then an undergraduate of Christ Church, and living at Wykeham House in The Parks, used to lend me his pony-carriage, which, as it strictly belonged to the Queen, and bore her crown and cypher, did not pay toll; and, with an undergraduate friend at my side, I used to snatch a fearful joy from driving at full tilt through turnpike gates, and mystifying the toll-keeper by saying that the Queen's carriages paid no toll. For the short remainder of my time at Oxford I was cut off from riding and all active exercise, and was not able even to go out in bad weather. It was with me as with Captain Harville in *Persuasion*—"His lameness prevented him from taking much exercise; but a mind of usefulness and ingenuity seemed to furnish him with constant employment within."

Here I must close my recollections of Oxford, and, as I look back upon those four years—1872-1876—I find my thoughts best expressed by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who has done for Oxford in his *Alma Mater* just what Matthew Arnold did in the preface to *Essays in Criticism*....

"Know you her secret none can utter?
Hers of the Book, the tripled Crown?
Still on the spire the pigeons flutter;
Still by the gateway flits the gown;
Still on the street, from corbel and gutter,
Faces of stone look down.

* * * * *

Still on her spire the pigeons hover;
Still by her gateway haunts the gown;
Ah, but her secret? You, young lover,
Drumming her old ones forth from town,
Know you the secret none discover?
Tell it—when *you* go down."

Know you the secret none discover—none, that is, while they still are undergraduates?

Well, I think I do; and, to begin with a negative, it is not the secret of Nirvana. There are misguided critics abroad in the land who seem to assume that life lived easily in a beautiful place, amid a society which includes all knowledge in its comprehensive survey, and far remote from the human tragedy of poverty and toil and pain, must necessarily be calm. And so, as regards the actual work and warfare of mankind, it may be. The bitter cry of starving Poplar does not very readily penetrate to the well-spread tables of Halls and Common-rooms. In a laburnum-clad villa in The Parks we can afford to reason very temperately about life in cities where five families camp in one room. But, when we leave actualities, and come to the region of thought and opinion, all the pent energy of Oxford seethes and stirs. The Hebrew word for "Prophet" comes, I believe, from a root which signifies to bubble like water on the flame; and it is just in this fervency of thought and feeling that Oxford is Prophetic. It is the tradition that in one year of the storm-tossed 'forties the subject for the Newdigate Prize Poem was Cromwell, whereas the subject for the corresponding poem at Cambridge was Plato. In that selection Oxford was true to herself. For a century at least

(even if we leave out of sight her earlier convulsions) she has been the battle-field of contending sects. Her air has resounded with party-cries, and the dead bodies of the controversially slain lie thick in her streets. All the opposing forces of Church and State, of theology and politics, of philosophy and science, of literary and social and economic theory, have contended for mastery in the place which Matthew Arnold, with fine irony, described as "so unruffled by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!" Every succeeding generation of Oxford men has borne its part in these ever recurring strifes. To hold aloof from them would have been poltroonery. Passionately convinced (at twenty) that we had sworn ourselves for life to each cause which we espoused, we have pleaded and planned and denounced and persuaded; have struck the shrewdest blows which our strength could compass, and devised the most dangerous pitfalls for our opponents' feet which wit could suggest. Nothing came of it all, and nothing could come, except the ruin of our appointed studies and the resulting dislocation of all subsequent life. But we were obeying the irresistible impulse of the time and the place in which our lot was cast, and we were ready to risk our all upon the venture.

But now all that passion, genuine enough while it lasted, lies far back in the past, and we learn the secret which we never discovered while as yet Oxford held us in the thick of the fight. We thought then that we were the most desperate partisans; we asked no quarter, and gave none; pushed our argumentative victories to their uttermost consequences, and made short work of a fallen foe. But, when all the old battle-cries have died out of our ears, gentler voices begin to make themselves heard. All at once we realize that a great part of our old contentions was only sound and fury and self-deception, and that, though the causes for which we strove may have been absolutely right, our opponents were not necessarily villains. In a word, we have learnt the Secret of Oxford. All the time that we were fighting and fuming, the higher and subtler influences of the place were moulding us, unconscious though we were, to a more gracious ideal. We had really learnt to distinguish between intellectual error and moral obliquity. We could differ from another on every point of the political and theological compass, and yet in our hearts acknowledge him to be the best of all good fellows. Without surrendering a single conviction, we came to see the virtue of so stating our beliefs as to persuade and propitiate, instead of offending and alienating. We had attained to that temper which, in the sphere of thought and opinion, is analogous to the crowning virtue of Christian charity.

"Tell it—when *you* go down."

Not long ago I was addressing a company of Oxford undergraduates, all keenly alive to the interests and controversies of the present hour, all devotedly loyal to the tradition of Oxford as each understood it, and all with their eyes eagerly fixed on "the wistful limit of the world." With such an audience it was inevitable to insist on the graces and benedictions which Oxford can confer, and to dwell on Mr. Gladstone's dogma that to call a man a "typically Oxford man" is to bestow the highest possible praise.

But this was not all. Something more remained to be said. It was for a speaker whose undergraduateship lay thirty years behind to state as plainly as he could his own deepest obligation to the place which had decided the course and complexion of his life. Wherever philosophical insight is combined with literary genius and personal charm, one says instinctively, "That man is, or ought to be, an Oxford man." Chiefest among the great names which Oxford ought to claim but cannot is the name of Edmund Burke; and the "Secret" on which we have been discoursing seems to be conveyed with luminous precision in his description of the ideal character:—"It is our business ... to bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots as not to forget we are gentlemen; to cultivate friendships and to incur enmities; to have both strong, but both selected—in the one to be placable, in the other immovable."

Whoso has attained to that ideal has learnt the "Secret" of Oxford.

FOOTNOTES:

[17] The Rev. J. M. Lester.

[18] Here I must depart from my rule, and mention a name—FitzRoy Stewart.

VI

HOME

"Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home."

WORDSWORTH, "*To a Sky-lark*."

I said good-bye to Oxford on the 17th of June, 1876. What was the next step to be? As so often in my life, the decision came through a doctor's lips. He spoke in a figure, and this is what he said. "When a man has had a severe illness, he has taken a large sum out of his capital. Unless he has the wisdom to replace it, he must be permanently poorer; and, when the original stock was not large, the necessity of economizing becomes more urgent. You are in that case. My advice, therefore, is—Do nothing for the next two or three years. Concentrate all your efforts on getting better. Live as healthy a life as you can, and give mind and body a complete rest. If you will obey this counsel, you will find that you have replaced the capital, or, at any rate, some of it; and you may, in spite of all disabilities, be able to take your part in the life and work of the world." The prescription of total abstinence from effort exactly suited my disposition of the moment. Oxford, one way and another, had taken more out of me than till then I had realized, and I was only too thankful to have an opportunity of making good the loss.

It being, for the time, my prime object to recover some portion of health and strength, I was beyond measure fortunate in the possession of an absolutely ideal home. "'Home! Sweet Home!' Yes. That is the song that goes straight to the heart of every English man and woman. For forty years we never asked Madame Adelina Patti to sing anything else. The unhappy, decadent, Latin races have not even a word in their language by which to express it, poor things! Home is the secret of our honest, British, Protestant virtues. It is the only nursery of our Anglo-Saxon citizenship. Back to it our far-flung children turn, with all their memories aflame. They may lapse into rough ways, but they keep something sound at the core so long as they are faithful to the old home. There is still a

tenderness in the voice, and tears are in their eyes, as they speak together of the days that can never die out of their lives, when they were at home in the old familiar places, with father and mother, in the healthy gladness of their childhood."[19] To me home was all this and even more; for not only had it been my earthly Paradise when I was a child, but now, in opening manhood, it was a sanctuary and a resting-place, in which I could prepare myself to face whatever lot the future might have in store for me.

That London as well as country may be, under certain conditions, Home, I am well aware. For many natures London has an attractiveness which is all its own. And yet to indulge one's taste for it may be a grave dereliction of duty. The State is built upon the Home, and as a training-place for social virtue, there can surely be no comparison between a home in the country and a home in London. All those educating influences which count for so much in the true home are infinitely weaker in the town than in the country. In a London home there is nothing to fascinate the eye. The contemplation of the mews and the chimney-pots through the back-windows of the nursery will not elevate even the most impressible child. There is no mystery, no dreamland, no Enchanted Palace, no Bluebeard's Chamber, in a stucco mansion built by Cubitt, or a palace of terra-cotta on the Cadogan estate. There can be no traditions of the past, no inspiring memories of virtuous ancestry, in a house which your father bought five years ago and of which the previous owners are not known to you even by name. "The Square" or "The Gardens" are sorry substitutes for the Park and the Pleasure-grounds, the Common and the Downs. Crossing-sweepers are a deserving folk, but you cannot cultivate those intimate relations with them which bind you to the lodge-keeper at home, or to the old women in the almshouses, or to the septuagenarian waggoner who has driven your father's team ever since he was ten years old. Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, or All Saints, Margaret Street, may be beautifully ornate, and the congregation what Lord Beaconsfield called "sparkling and modish"; but they can never have the romantic charm of the Village Church where you were confirmed side by side with the keeper's son, or proposed to the Vicar's daughter when you were wreathing holly round the lectern. There is a magic in the memory of a country home with which no urban associations can compete.

Nowadays the world is perpetually on the move, but in the old days people who possessed a country house passed nine months out of the twelve under its sacred roof—sacred because it was inseparably connected with memories of ancestry and parentage and early association; with marriage and children, and pure

enjoyment and active benevolence and neighbourly goodwill. In a word, the country house was Home, and for those who dwelt in it the interests of life were very much bound up in the Park and the covers, the croquet-ground and the cricket-ground, the kennel, the stable, and the garden. I remember, when I was an undergraduate, lionizing some Yorkshire damsels on their first visit to Oxford, then in the "high midsummer pomps" of its beauty. But all they said was, in the pensive tone of unwilling exiles, "How beautifully the sun must be shining on the South Walk at home!"

The Village Church was a great centre of domestic affection. All the family had been christened in it. The eldest sister had been married in it. Generations of ancestry mouldered under the chancel-floor. Christmas decorations were an occasion of much innocent merriment, and a little ditty high in favour in Tractarian homes warned the decorators to be—

> "Unselfish—looking not to see
> Proofs of their own dexterity;
> But quite contented that 'I' should
> Forgotten be in brotherhood."

Of course, whether Tractarian or Evangelical, religious people regarded church-going as a spiritual privilege; and everyone, religious or not, recognized it as a civil duty. "When a gentleman is *sur ses terres*," said Major Pendennis, "he must give an example to the country people; and, if I could turn a tune, I even think I should sing. The Duke of St. David's, whom I have the honour of knowing, always sings in the country, and let me tell you it has a doosed fine effect from the Family Pew." Before the passion for "restoration" had set in, and ere yet Sir Gilbert Scott had transmogrified the Parish Churches of England, the Family Pew was indeed the ark and sanctuary of the territorial system—and a very comfortable ark too. It had a private entrance, a round table, a good assortment of armchairs, a fire-place, and a wood-basket. And I well remember a wash-leather glove of unusual size which was kept in the wood-basket for the greater convenience of making up the fire during divine service. "You may restore the church as much as you like," said the lay-rector of our parish, to an innovating Incumbent, "but I must insist on my Family Pew not being touched. If I had to sit in an open seat, I should never get a wink of sleep again."

A country home left its mark for all time on those who were brought up in it. The sons played cricket and went bat-fowling with the village boys, and not seldom joined with them in a poaching expedition to the paternal preserves. However

popular or successful or happy a Public-school boy might be at Eton or Harrow, he counted the days till he could return to his pony and his gun, his ferrets and rat-trap and fishing-rod. In after years, amid all the toil and worry of active life, he looked back lovingly to the corner of the cover where he shot his first pheasant, or the precise spot in the middle of the Vale where he first saw a fox killed, and underwent the disgusting Baptism of Blood.

Girls, living more continuously at home, entered even more intimately into the daily life of the place. Their morning rides led them across the Village Green; their afternoon drives were often steered by the claims of this or that cottage to a visit. They were taught as soon as they could toddle never to enter a door without knocking, never to sit down without being asked, and never to call at meal-time. They knew everyone in the village—old and young; played with the babies, taught the boys in Sunday School, carried savoury messes to the old and impotent, read by the sick-beds, and brought flowers for the coffin. Mamma knitted comforters and dispensed warm clothing, organized relief in hard winters and times of epidemic, and found places for the hobbledehoys of both sexes. The pony-boy and the scullery-maid were pretty sure to be products of the village. Very likely the young-ladies'-maid was a village girl whom the doctor had pronounced too delicate for factory or farm. I have seen an excited young groom staring his eyes out of his head at the Eton and Harrow match, and exclaiming with rapture at a good catch, "It was my young governor as 'scouted' that. 'E's nimble, ain't he?" And I well remember an ancient stable-helper at a country house in Buckinghamshire who was called "Old Bucks," because he had never slept out of his native county, and very rarely out of his native village, and had spent his whole life in the service of one family.

Of course, when so much of the impressionable part of life was lived amid the "sweet, sincere surroundings of country life," there grew up, between the family at the Hall and the families in the village, a feeling which, in spite of our national unsentimentality, had a chivalrous and almost feudal tone. The interest of the poor in the life and doings of "The Family" was keen and genuine. The English peasant is too much a gentleman to be a flatterer, and compliments were often bestowed in very unexpected forms. "They do tell me as 'is understanding's no worse than it always were," was a ploughman's way of saying that an uncle of mine was in full possession of his faculties. "We call 'im 'Lord Charles' because he's so old and so cunning," was another's description of a pony which had belonged to my father. "Ah, I know you're but a poor creature at the best!" was the recognized way of complimenting a lady on what she considered her

bewitching and romantic delicacy.

But these eccentricities were merely verbal, and under them lay a deep vein of genuine and lasting regard. "I've lived under four dukes and four 'ousekeepers, and I'm not going to be put upon in my old age!" was the exclamation of an ancient poultry-woman, whose dignity had been offended by some irregularity touching her Christmas dinner. When the daughter of the house married and went into a far country, she was sure to find some emigrant from her old home who welcomed her with effusion, and was full of enquiries about his Lordship and her Ladyship, and Miss Pinkerton the governess, and whether Mr. Wheeler was still coachman, and who lived now at the Entrance Lodge. Whether the sons got commissions, or took ranches, or became curates in slums, or contested remote constituencies, some grinning face was sure to emerge from the crowd with "You know me, sir? Bill Juffs, as used to go birds-nesting with you"; or, "You remember my old dad, my lord? He used to shoe your black pony." When the eldest son came of age, his condescension in taking this step was hailed with genuine enthusiasm. When he came into his kingdom, there might be some grumbling if he went in for small economies, or altered old practices, or was a "hard man" on the Bench or at the Board of Guardians; but, if he went on in the good-natured old ways, the traditional loyalty was unabated. Lord Shaftesbury wrote thus about the birth of his eldest son's eldest son:—"My little village is all agog with the birth of a son and heir in the very midst of them, the first, it is believed, since 1600, when the first Lord Shaftesbury was born. The christening yesterday was an ovation. Every cottage had flags and flowers. We had three triumphal arches; and all the people were exulting. 'He is one of us.' 'He is a fellow-villager.' 'We have now got a lord of our own.' This is really gratifying. I did not think that there remained so much of the old respect and affection between peasant and proprietor, landlord and tenant."

In the present day, if a season of financial pressure sets in, people shut up their country houses, let their shooting, cut themselves off with a sigh of relief from all the unexciting duties and simple pleasures of the Home, and take refuge from boredom in the delights of London. In London life has no duties. Little is expected of one, and nothing required.

But in old days, when people wished to economize, it was London that they deserted. They sold the "Family Mansion" in Portland Place or Eaton Square; and, if they revisited the glimpses of the social moon, they took a furnished house for six weeks in the summer; the rest of the year they spent in the country. This plan was a manifold saving. There was no rent to pay, and only very small

rates, for everyone knows that country houses are shamefully under-assessed. Carriages did not require re-painting every season, and no new clothes were wanted. As the ladies in *Cranford* said—"What can it matter what we wear here, where everyone knows who we are?" The products of the Park, the Home Farm, the hothouses, and the kitchen-garden kept the family supplied with food. A brother-magnate staying at Beaudesert with the famous Lord Anglesey waxed enthusiastic over the mutton, and, venturing on the privilege of an old friendship, asked how much it cost him. "Cost me?" screamed the hero. "Good Gad, it costs me nothing! I don't buy it. It's my own," and he was beyond measure astonished when his statistical guest proved that "his own" cost him about a guinea per pound. In another great house, conducted on strictly economical lines, it was said that the very numerous family were reared exclusively on rabbits and garden-stuff, and that their enfeebled constitutions and dismal appearance in later life were due to this ascetic regimen.

People were always hospitable in the country; but rural entertaining was not a very costly business. The "three square meals and a snack," which represent the minimum requirements of the present day, are a huge development of the system which prevailed in my youth. Breakfast had already grown from the tea and coffee, and rolls and eggs, which Macaulay tells us were deemed sufficient at Holland House, to an affair of covered dishes. Luncheon-parties were sometimes given—terrible ceremonies which lasted from two to four; but the ordinary luncheon of the family was a snack from the servants' joint or the children's rice pudding; and five o'clock tea had only lately been invented. To remember, as I just can, the Foundress[20] of that divine refreshment seems like having known Stephenson or Jenner.

Dinner was substantial enough in all conscience, and the wine nearly as heavy as the food. Imagine quenching one's thirst with sherry in the dog-days! Yet so we did, till about half-way through dinner, and then, on great occasions, a dark-coloured rill of champagne began to trickle into the V-shaped glasses. At the epoch of cheese, port made its appearance in company with home-brewed beer; and, as soon as the ladies and the schoolboys departed, the men applied themselves, with much seriousness of purpose, to the consumption of claret which was really vinous.

Grace was said before and after dinner. There was a famous squire in Hertfordshire whose love of his dinner was constantly at war with his pietistic traditions. He always had his glass of sherry poured out before he sat down to dinner, so that he might get at it without a moment's delay. One night, in his

generous eagerness, he upset the glass just as he dropped into his seat at the end of grace, and the formula ran on to an unexpected conclusion, thus: "For what we are going to receive, the Lord make us truly thankful—D—n!" But if the incongruities which attended grace before dinner were disturbing, still more so were the solemnities of the close. Grace after dinner always happened at the moment of loudest and most general conversation. For an hour and a half people had been stuffing as if their lives depended on it—"one feeding like forty." Out of the abundance of the mouth the heart speaketh, and everyone was talking at once, and very loud. Perhaps the venue was laid in a fox-hunting country, and then the air was full of such voices as these: "Were you out with the Squire to-day?" "Any sport?" "Yes, we'd rather a nice gallop." "Plenty of the animal about, I hope?" "Well, I don't know. I believe that new keeper at Boreham Wood is a vulpicide. I don't half like his looks." "What an infernal villain! A man who would shoot a fox would poison his own grandmother." "Sh! Sh!" "What's the matter?"

"*For what we have received*," &c.

"Do you know you've been talking at the top of your voice all the time grace was going on?"

"Not really? I'm awfully sorry. But our host mumbles so, I never can make out what he's saying."

"I can't imagine why people don't have grace after dessert. I know I'm much more thankful for strawberry ice than for saddle of mutton."

And so on and so forth. On the whole, I am not sure that the abolition of grace is a sign of moral degeneracy, but I note it as a social change which I have seen.

In this kind of hospitality there was no great expense. People made very little difference between their way of living when they were alone, and their way of living when they had company. A visitor who wished to make himself agreeable sometimes brought down a basket of fish or a barrel of oysters from London; and, if one had no deer of one's own, the arrival of a haunch from a neighbour's or kinsman's park was the signal for a gathering of local gastronomers. And in matters other than meals life went on very much the same whether you had friends staying with you or whether you were alone. The guests drove and rode, and walked and shot, according to their tastes and the season of the year. They were carried off, more or less willingly, to see the sights of the neighbourhood—ruined castles, restored cathedrals, famous views. In summer there might be a

picnic or a croquet-party; in winter a lawn-meet or a ball. But all these entertainments were of the most homely and inexpensive character. There was very little outlay, no fuss, and no display.

But now an entirely different spirit prevails. People seem to have lost the power of living quietly and happily in their country homes. They all have imbibed the urban philosophy of George Warrington, who, when Pen gushed about the country with its "long, calm days, and long calm evenings," brutally replied, "Devilish long, and a great deal too calm. I've tried 'em." People of that type desert the country simply because they are bored by it. They feel with the gentleman who stood for Matthew Arnold in *The New Republic*, and who, after talking about "liberal air," "sedged brooks," and "meadow grass," admitted that it would be a dreadful bore to have no other society than the Clergyman of the parish, and no other topics of conversation than Justification by Faith and the measles. They do not care for the country in itself; they have no eye for its beauty, no sense of its atmosphere, no memory for its traditions. It is only made endurable to them by sport and gambling and boisterous house-parties; and when, from one cause or another, these resources fail, they are frankly bored, and long for London. They are no longer content, as our fathers were, to entertain their friends with hospitable simplicity. So profoundly has all society been vulgarized by the worship of the Golden Calf that, unless people can vie with alien millionaires in the sumptuousness with which they "do you"—delightful phrase,—they prefer not to entertain at all. An emulous ostentation has killed hospitality. All this is treason to a high ideal.

Whatever tends to make the Home beautiful, attractive, romantic—to associate it with the ideas of pure pleasure and high duty—to connect it not only with all that was happiest, but also with all that was best, in early years—whatever fulfils these purposes purifies the fountain of national life. A home, to be perfectly a home, should "incorporate tradition, and prolong the reign of the dead." It should animate those who dwell in it to virtue and beneficence, by reminding them of what others did, who went before them in the same place, and lived amid the same surroundings. Thank God, such a home was mine.

FOOTNOTES:

[19] Henry Scott Holland.

[20] Anna Maria, Duchess of Bedford, died in 1857.

VII

LONDON

"O'er royal London, in luxuriant May,
While lamps yet twinkled, dawning crept the day.
Home from the hell the pale-eyed gamester steals;
Home from the ball flash jaded Beauty's wheels;
From fields suburban rolls the early cart;
As rests the Revel, so awakes the Mart."

The New Timon.

When I was penning, in the last chapter, my perfectly sincere praises of the country, an incongruous reminiscence suddenly froze the genial current of my soul. Something, I know not what, reminded me of the occasion when Mrs. Bardell and her friends made their memorable expedition to the "Spaniards Tea-Gardens" at Hampstead. "How sweet the country is, to be sure!" sighed Mrs. Rogers; "I almost wish I lived in it always." To this Mr. Raddle, full of sympathy, rejoined: "For lone people as have got nobody to care for them, or as have been hurt in their mind, or that sort of thing, the country is all very well. The country for a wounded spirit, they say." But the general verdict of the company was that Mrs. Rogers was "a great deal too lively and sought-after, to be content with the country"; and, on second thoughts, the lady herself acquiesced. I feel that my natural temperament had something in common with that of Mrs. Rogers. "My spirit" (and my body too) had been "wounded" by Oxford, and the country acted as both a poultice and a tonic. But my social instinct was always strong, and could not be permanently content with "a lodge in the vast wilderness" of Woburn Park, or dwell for ever in the "boundless contiguity of shade" which obliterates the line between Beds and Bucks.

I was very careful to observe the doctor's prescription of total idleness, but I found it was quite as easily obeyed in London as in the country. For three or four months then, of every year, I forsook the Home which just now I praised so lavishly, and applied myself, circumspectly indeed but with keen enjoyment, to the pleasures of the town.

"*One look back*"—What was London like in those distant days, which lie, say, between 1876 and 1886?

Structurally and visibly, it was a much uglier place than now. The immeasurable wastes of Belgravian stucco; the "Baker Streets and Harley Streets and Wimpole Streets, resembling each other like a large family of plain children, with Portland Place and Portman Square for their respectable parents,"[21] were still unbroken by the red brick and terra-cotta, white stone and green tiles, of our more æsthetic age. The flower-beds in the Parks were less brilliant, for that "Grand old gardener," Mr. Harcourt, to whom we are so much indebted, was still at Eton. Piccadilly had not been widened. The Arches at Hyde Park Corner had not been re-arranged. Glorious Whitehall was half occupied by shabby shops; and labyrinths of slums covered the sites of Kingsway and Shaftesbury Avenue.

But, though London is now a much prettier place than it was then, I doubt if it is as socially magnificent. The divinity which hedged Queen Victoria invested her occasional visits to her Capital with a glamour which it is difficult to explain to those who never felt it. Of beauty, stature, splendour, and other fancied attributes of Queenship, there was none; but there was a dignity which can neither be described nor imitated; and, when her subjects knelt to kiss her hand at Drawing Room, or Levee, or Investiture, they felt a kind of sacred awe which no other presence could inspire.

It was, of course, one of the elements of Queen Victoria's mysterious power, that she was so seldom seen in London. In the early days of her widowhood she had resigned the command of Society into other hands; and social London, at the time of which I write, was dominated by the Prince of Wales. Just at this moment,[22] when those who knew him well are genuinely mourning the loss of King Edward VII., it would scarcely become me to describe his influence on Society when first I moved in it. So I borrow the words of an anonymous writer, who, at the time at which his book was published, was generally admitted to know the subjects of which he discoursed.

"The Social Ruler of the English realm is the Prince of Wales. I call him the Social Ruler, because, in all matters pertaining to society and to ceremonial, he plays vicariously the part of the Sovereign. The English monarchy may be described at the present moment as being in a state of commission. Most of its official duties are performed by the Queen. It is the Prince of Wales who transacts its ceremonial business, and exhibits to the masses the embodiment of the monarchical principle. If there were no Marlborough House, there would be

no Court in London. The house of the Prince of Wales may be an unsatisfactory substitute for a Court, but it is the only substitute which exists, and it is the best which, under the circumstances, is attainable.

"In his attitude to English Society, the Prince of Wales is a benevolent despot. He wishes it to enjoy itself, to disport itself, to dance, sing, and play to its heart's content. But he desires that it should do so in the right manner, at the right times, and in the right places; and of these conditions he holds that he is the best, and, indeed, an infallible, judge.

"The Prince of Wales is the Bismarck of London society: he is also its microcosm. All its idiosyncrasies are reflected in the person of His Royal Highness. Its hopes, its fears, its aspirations, its solicitudes, its susceptibilities, its philosophy, its way of looking at life and of appraising character—of each of these is the Heir-Apparent the mirror. If a definition of Society were sought for, I should be inclined to give it as the social area of which the Prince of Wales is personally cognizant, within the limits of which he visits, and every member of which is to some extent in touch with the ideas and wishes of His Royal Highness. But for this central authority, Society in London would be in imminent danger of falling into the same chaos and collapse as the universe itself, were one of the great laws of nature to be suspended for five minutes."

Of the loved and gracious lady who is now Queen Mother, I may trust myself to speak. I first saw her at Harrow Speeches, when I was a boy of 18, and from that day to this I have admired her more than any woman whom I have ever seen. To the flawless beauty of the face there was added that wonderful charm of innocence and unfading youth which no sumptuosities of dress and decoration could conceal. To see the Princess in Society was in those days one of my chief delights, and the sight always suggested to my mind the idea of a Puritan Maiden set in the midst of Vanity Fair.

We have seen that the centre of Society at the period which I am describing was Marlborough House, and that centre was encircled by rings of various compass, the widest extending to South Kensington in the one direction, and Portman Square in the other. The innermost ring was composed of personal friends, and, as personal friendship belongs to private life, we must not here discuss it. The second ring was composed of the great houses—"The Palaces," as Pennialinus[23] calls them,—the houses, I mean, which are not distinguished by numbers, but are called "House," with a capital H. And first among these I must place Grosvenor House. As I look back over all the entertainments which I have

ever seen in London, I can recall nothing to compare with a Ball at Grosvenor House, in the days of Hugh, Duke of Westminster, and his glorious wife. No lesser epithet than "glorious" expresses the combination of beauty, splendour, and hospitable enjoyment, which made Constance, Duchess of Westminster, so unique a hostess. Let me try to recall the scene.

Dancing has begun in a tentative sort of way, when there is a sudden pause, and "God Save the Queen" is heard in the front hall. The Prince and Princess of Wales have arrived, and their entrance is a pageant worth seeing. With courtly grace and pretty pomp, the host and hostess usher their royal guests into the great gallery, walled with the canvasses of Rubens, which serves as a dancing-room. Then the fun begins, and the bright hours fly swiftly till one o'clock suggests the tender thought of supper, which is served on gold plate and Sèvres china in a garden-tent of Gobelins tapestry. '"What a perfect family!' exclaimed Hugo Bohun, as he extracted a couple of fat little birds from their bed of aspic jelly. 'Everything they do in such perfect taste. How safe you were to have ortolans for supper!'"[24]

Next in my recollection to Grosvenor House, but after a considerable interval, comes Stafford House. This is a more pretentious building than the other; built by the Duke of York and bought by the Duke of Sutherland, with a hall and staircase designed by Barry, perfect in proportion, and so harmonious in colouring that its purple and yellow *scagliola* might deceive the very elect into the belief that it is marble. There, as at Grosvenor House, were wealth and splendour and the highest rank; a hospitable host and a handsome hostess; but the peculiar feeling of welcome, which distinguished Grosvenor House, was lacking, and the aspect of the whole place, on an evening of entertainment, was rather that of a mob than of a party.

Northumberland House at Charing Cross, the abode of the historic Percys, had disappeared before I came to London, yielding place to Northumberland Avenue; but there were plenty of "Houses" left. Near where the Percys had flourished, the Duke of Buccleuch, a magnifico of the patriarchal type, kept court at Montagu House, and Londoners have not yet forgotten that, when the Thames Embankment was proposed, he suggested that the new thoroughfare should be deflected, so that it might not interfere with the ducal garden running down to the river. In the famous Picture-Gallery of Bridgewater House, Lord Beaconsfield harangued his disconsolate supporters after the disastrous election of 1880, and predicted that Conservative revival which he did not live to see. Close by at Spencer House, a beautiful specimen of the decorative work of the

Brothers Adam, the Liberal Party used to gather round the host, who looked like a Van Dyke. Another of their resorts was Devonshire House, which Horace Walpole pronounced "good and plain as the Duke of Devonshire who built it." There the 7th Duke, who was a mathematician and a scholar, but no lover of society, used to hide behind the door in sheer terror of his guests, while his son, Lord Hartington, afterwards 8th Duke, gazed with ill-concealed aversion on his political supporters. Lansdowne House was, as it still is, a Palace of Art, with all the dignity and amenity of a country house, planted in the very heart of London. During the last quarter of a century the creation of Liberal Unionism has made it the headquarters of a political party; but, at the time of which I write, it was only a place of select and beautiful entertaining.

Apsley House, the abode of "The Son of Waterloo," could not, in my time, be reckoned a social centre, but was chiefly interesting as a museum of Wellington relics. Norfolk House was, as it is, the headquarters of Roman Catholic society, and there, in 1880, was seen the unique sight of Matthew Arnold doing obeisance to Cardinal Newman at an evening party.[25] Dorchester House, architecturally considered, is beyond doubt the grandest thing in London; in those days occupied by the accomplished Mr. Holford, who built it, and now let to the American Ambassador. Chesterfield House, with its arcaded staircase of marble and bronze from the dismantled palace of the Dukes of Chandos at Edgeware, was built by the fourth Lord Chesterfield, as he tells us, "among the fields;" and contains the library in which he wrote his famous letters to his son. Holland House, so long the acknowledged sanctuary of the Whig party, still stands amid its terraces and gardens, though its hayfields have, I fear, fallen into the builders' hands. Macaulay's Essay, if nothing else, will always preserve it from oblivion.

I have written so far about these "Houses," because in virtue of their imposing characteristics they formed, as it were, an inner, if not the innermost, circle round Marlborough House. But of course Society did not dwell exclusively in "Houses," and any social chronicler of the period which I am describing will have to include in his survey the long stretch of Piccadilly, dividing the "W." from the "S.W." district. On the upper side of it, Portman Square, Grosvenor Square, Berkeley Square, the Grosvenor Streets and Brook Streets, Curzon Street, Charles Street, Hill Street; and below, St. James's Square and Carlton House Terrace, Grosvenor Place, Belgrave Square and Eaton Square, Lowndes Square and Chesham Place. Following Piccadilly westward into Kensington, we come to Lowther Lodge, Norman Shaw's most successful work, then beginning

its social career on the coming of age of the present Speaker,[26] April 1st, 1876. Below it, Prince's Gate and Queen's Gate and Prince's Gardens, and all the wilds of South Kensington, then half reclaimed; and that low-lying territory, not even half reclaimed, which, under Lord Cadogan's skilful management, has of late years developed into a "residential quarter" of high repute. Fill all these streets, and a dozen others like them, with rank and wealth and fashion, youth and beauty, pleasure-seeking and self-indulgence, and you have described the concentric circles of which Marlborough House was the heart. Sydney Smith, no mean authority on the social capacities of London, held that "the parallelogram between Oxford Street, Piccadilly, Regent Street, and Hyde Park, enclosed more intelligence and ability, to say nothing of wealth and beauty, than the world had ever collected in such a space before." This was very well for Sydney (who lived in Green Street); but he flourished when Belgravia had barely been discovered, when South Kensington was undreamed-of; and, above all, before the Heir Apparent had fixed his abode in Pall Mall. Had he lived till 1863, he would have had to enlarge his mental borders.

Of the delightful women and beautiful girls who adorned Society when I first knew it, I will not speak. A sacred awe makes me mute. The "Professional Beauties" and "Frisky Matrons" who disgraced it, have, I hope, long since repented, and it would be unkind to revive their names. The "Smart Men," old and young, the "cheery boys," the "dancing dogs,"—the Hugo Bohuns and the Freddy Du Canes—can be imagined as easily as described. They were, in the main, very good fellows; friendly, sociable, and obliging; but their most ardent admirers would scarcely call them interesting; and the companionship of a club or a ballroom seemed rather vapid when compared with Oxford:—

"The madness and the melody, the singing youth that went there,
The shining, unforgettable, imperial days we spent there."

But here and there, swimming rare in the vast whirlpool of Society, one used to encounter remarkable faces. Most remarkable was the face of Lord Beaconsfield, —past seventy, though nobody knows how much; with his black-dyed hair in painful contrast to the corpse-like pallor of his face; with his Blue Ribbon and diamond Star; and the piercing eyes which still bespoke his unconquerable vitality.

Sometimes Mr. Gladstone was to be seen, with his white tie working round

toward the back of his neck, and a rose in his button-hole, looking like a rather unwilling captive in the hands of Mrs. Gladstone, who moved through the social crush with that queenlike dignity of bearing which had distinguished her ever since the days when she and her sister, Lady Lyttelton, were "the beautiful Miss Glynnes." Robert Lowe, not yet Lord Sherbrooke, was a celebrity who might often be seen in Society,—a noteworthy figure with his ruddy face, snow-white hair, and purblind gaze. The first Lord Lytton—Bulwer-Lytton, the novelist—was dead before I came to London; but his brilliant son, "Owen Meredith," in the intervals of official employment abroad, was an interesting figure in Society; curled and oiled and decorated, with a countenance of Semitic type.

Lord Houghton—to me the kindest and most welcoming of hereditary friends—had a personality and a position altogether his own. His appearance was typically English; his manner as free and forthcoming as a Frenchman's. Thirty years before he had been drawn by a master-hand as Mr. Vavasour in *Tancred*, but no lapse of time could stale his infinite variety. He was poet, essayist, politician, public orator, country gentleman, railway-director, host, guest, ball-giver, and ball-goer, and acted each part with equal zest and assiduity. When I first knew him he was living in a house at the top of Arlington Street, from which Hogarth had copied the decoration for his "Marriage à la mode." The site is now occupied by the Ritz Hotel, and his friendly ghost still seems to haunt the Piccadilly which he loved.

> "There on warm, mid-season Sundays, Fryston's bard is
> wont to wend,
> Whom the Ridings trust and honour, Freedom's staunch
> and genial friend;
> Known where shrewd hard-handed craftsmen cluster
> round the northern kilns,
> He whom men style Baron Houghton, but the gods call
> Dicky Milnes."[27]

When first I entered Society, I caught sight of a face which instantly arrested my attention. A very small man, both short and slim, with a rosy complexion, protruding chin, and trenchant nose, the remains of reddish hair, and an extremely alert and vivacious expression. The broad Red Ribbon of a G.C.B. marked him out as in some way a distinguished person; and I discovered that he was the Lord Chief Justice of England,—Sir Alexander Cockburn, one of the most conspicuous figures in the social annals of the 'thirties and 'forties, the

"Hortensius" of *Endymion*, whose "sunny face and voice of music" had carried him out of the ruck of London dandies to the chief seat of the British judicature, and had made him the hero of the Tichborne Trial and the Alabama Arbitration. Yet another personage of intellectual fame who was to be met in Society was Robert Browning, the least poetical-looking of poets. Trim, spruce, alert, with a cheerful manner and a flow of conversation, he might have been a Cabinet Minister, a diplomatist, or a successful financier, almost anything except what he was. "Browning," growled Tennyson, "I'll predict your end. You'll die of apoplexy, in a stiff choker, at a London dinner-party."

The streams of society and of politics have always intermingled, and, at the period of which I am writing, Lord Hartington, afterwards, as 8th Duke of Devonshire, leader of the Liberal Unionists, might still be seen lounging and sprawling in doorways and corners. Mr. Arthur Balfour, weedy and willowy, was remarked with interest as a young man of great possessions, who had written an unintelligible book but might yet do something in Parliament; while Lord Rosebery, though looking absurdly youthful, was spoken of as cherishing lofty ambitions.

Later on, I may perhaps say more about private entertainment and about those who figured in it; but now I must turn to the public sights and shows. Matthew Arnold once wrote to his mother: "I think you will be struck with the aspect of London in May; the wealth and brilliancy of it is more remarkable every year. The carriages, the riders, and the walkers in Hyde Park, on a fine evening in May or June, are alone worth coming to London to see." This description, though written some years before, was eminently true of Rotten Row and its adjacent drives when I first frequented them. Frederick Locker, a minor poet of Society, asked in some pensive stanzas on Rotten Row:

> "But where is now the courtly troop
> That once rode laughing by?
> I miss the curls of Cantilupe,
> The laugh of Lady Di."

Lord Cantilupe, of whom I always heard that he was the handsomest man of his generation, died before I was born, and Lady Di Beauclerck had married Baron Huddleston and ceased to ride in Rotten Row before I came to London; so my survey of the scene was unmarred by Locker's reflective melancholy, and I could do full justice to its charm. "Is there," asked Lord Beaconsfield, "a more gay and graceful spectacle in this world than Hyde Park at the end of a long summer

morning in the merry month of May? Where can we see such beautiful women, such gallant cavaliers, such fine horses, such brilliant equipages? The scene, too, is worthy of such agreeable accessories—the groves, the gleaming waters, and the triumphal arches. In the distance the misty heights of Surrey and the lovely glades of Kensington." This passage would need some re-touching if it were to describe the Park in 1911, but in 1880 it was still a photograph.

With regard to Public Entertainments in the more technical sense, the period of which I am writing was highly favoured. We had Irving and Miss Terry at the height of their powers, with all the gorgeous yet accurate "staging" which Irving had originated. We had Lady Bancroft with that wonderful undertone of pathos in even her brightest comedy, and her accomplished husband, whose peculiar art blended so harmoniously with her own. We had John Hare, the "perfect gentleman" of Stage-land, and the Kendals with their quiet excellence in Drawing-room Drama; and the riotous glory of Mrs. John Wood, whose performances, with Arthur Cecil, at the Court Theatre, will always remain the most mirth-provoking memories of my life. Midway between the Theatre and the Opera, there was the long and lovely series of Gilbert and Sullivan, who surely must have afforded a larger amount of absolutely innocent delight to a larger number of people than any two artists who ever collaborated in the public service.

As to the Opera itself, I must quote a curious passage from Lord Beaconsfield, who figures so often in these pages, because none ever understood London so perfectly as he.

"What will strike you most at the Opera is that you will not see a single person you ever saw before in your life. It is strange; and it shows what a mass of wealth and taste and refinement there is in this wonderful metropolis of ours, quite irrespective of the circles in which we move, and which we once thought, entirely engrossed them."

Those words describe, roughly, the seasons of 1867-1870; and they still hold good, to a considerable extent, of my earlier years in London. The Opera was then the resort of people who really loved music. It had ceased to be, what it had been in the 'thirties and 'forties, a merely fashionable resort; and its social resurrection had scarcely begun.

Personally, I have always been fonder of real life than of its dramatic counterfeit; and a form of Public Entertainment which greatly attracted me was that provided

by the Law Courts. To follow the intricacies of a really interesting trial; to observe the demeanour and aspect of the witnesses; to listen to the impassioned flummery of the leading counsel; to note its effect on the Twelve Men in the Box; and then to see the Chinese Puzzle of conflicting evidence arranged in its damning exactness by a skilful judge, is to me an intellectual enjoyment which can hardly be equalled. I have never stayed in court after the jury had retired in a capital case, for I hold it impious to stare at the mortal agony of a fellow-creature; but the trial of Johann Most for inciting to tyrannicide; of Gallagher and his gang of dynamiters for Treason-Felony; and of Dr. Lampson for poisoning his brother-in-law, can never be forgotten. Not so thrilling, but quite as interesting, were the "Jockey Trial," in 1888, the "Baccarat Case," in 1891, and the "Trial at Bar," of the Raiders in 1896. But they belong to a later date than the period covered by this chapter.

My fondness for the Law Courts might suggest that I was inclined to be a lawyer. Not so. Only two professions ever attracted me in the slightest degree,—Holy Orders and Parliament. But when the dividing-line of 1874 cut my life in two, it occurred to my Father that, aided by name and connexions, I might pass a few years at the Parliamentary Bar, pleasantly and not unprofitably, until an opportunity of entering Parliament occurred. Partly with that end in view, and partly because it seemed disgraceful to have no definite occupation, I became, in 1875, a student of the Inner Temple. I duly ate my dinners; or, rather, as the Temple dined at the unappetizing hour of six, went through a form of eating them; and in so doing was constantly reminded of the experiences of my favourite "Pen." The ways of Law-students had altered wonderfully little in the lapse of forty years.

"The ancient and liberal Inn of the Inner Temple provides in its Hall, and for a most moderate price, an excellent and wholesome dinner of soup, meat, tarts, and port wine or sherry, for the Barristers and Students who attend that place of refection. The parties are arranged in messes of four, each of which quartets has its piece of beef or leg of mutton, its sufficient apple-pie, and its bottle of wine. 'This is boiled beef day, I believe, Sir,' said Lowton to Pen. 'Upon my word, Sir, I'm not aware,' said Pen. 'I'm a stranger; this is my first term; on which Lowton began to point out to him the notabilities in the Hall. 'Do you see those four fellows seated opposite to us? They are regular swells—tip-top fellows, I can tell you—Mr. Trail, the Bishop of Ealing's son, Honourable Fred Ringwood, Lord Cinqbars' brother, you know; and Bob Suckling, who's always with him. I say, I'd like to mess with those chaps.' 'And why?' asked Pen. 'Why! they don't come

down here to dine, you know, they only make believe to dine. *They* dine here, Lord bless you! They go to some of the swell clubs, or else to some grand dinner-party. You see their names in the *Morning Post* at all the fine parties in London. They dine! They won't dine these two hours, I dare say.' 'But why should you like to mess with them, if they don't eat any dinner?' Pen asked, still puzzled. 'There's plenty, isn't there?' 'How green you are,' said Lowton. 'Excuse me, but you are green! They don't drink any wine, don't you see, and a fellow gets the bottle to himself, if he likes it, when he messes with those three chaps. That's why Corkoran got in with them.'"

Such were dinners at the Temple in Thackeray's time, and such they were in mine. My legal studies were superintended by my friend Mr. J. S. Fox, now K.C., and Recorder of Sheffield. Should this book ever fall under his learned eye, I should be interested to know if he has ever completed the erudite work which in those distant days he contemplated undertaking,

"Tell a Lie and Stick to it:"
A Treatise on the Law of Estoppel.

But this is a digression.

Before I leave London as it was when first I dwelt in it, I ought to recall some of the eminent persons who adorned it. Lord Beaconsfield was at the zenith of his power and popularity. Mr. Gladstone, though the crowning triumph of 1880 was not far off, was so unpopular in Society that I was asked to meet him at a dinner as a favour to the hostess, who found it difficult to collect a party when he was dining. Lord Salisbury had just emerged from a seven years' retirement, and was beginning to play for the Premiership. Mr. Chamberlain was spoken of with a kind of awe, as a desperate demagogue longing to head a revolution; and Lord Randolph Churchill was hardly known outside the Turf Club.

Law was presided over, as I have already said, by the brilliant Cockburn, and the mellifluous Coleridge was palpably preparing to succeed him. People whispered wonders about Charles Bowen; and Henry James and Charles Russell had established their positions. In the hierarchy of Medicine there were several leaders. Jenner ruled his patients by terror; Gull by tact, and Andrew Clark by religious mysticism. To me, complaining of dyspepsia, he prescribed a diet with the Pauline formula: "I seek to impose a yoke upon you, that you may be truly free." In the chief seat of the Church sat Archbishop Tait, the most dignified prelate whom I have ever met in our communion, and a really impressive

spokesman of the Church in the House of Lords. The Northern Primate, Dr. Thomson, was styled "The Archbishop of Society"; and the Deanery at Westminster sheltered the fine flower of grace and culture in the fragile person of Dean Stanley. G. H. Wilkinson, afterwards Bishop of Truro and of St. Andrews, had lately been appointed to St. Peter's, Eaton Square, and had burst like a gunboat into a Dead Sea of lethargy and formalism.

Of course, the list does not pretend to be exhaustive. It only aims at commemorating a few of the figures, in different walks of life, which commanded my attention when I began to know—otherwise than as a schoolboy can know it—what London is, means, and contains. Five and thirty years have sped their course. My Home in the country has ceased to exist; and I find myself numbered among that goodly company who, in succeeding ages, have loved London and found it their natural dwelling-place. I fancy that Lord St. Aldwyn is too much of a sportsman to applaud the sentiment of his ancestor who flourished in the reign of Charles II., but it is exactly mine.

"London is the only place of England to winter in, whereof many true men might be put for examples. If the air of the streets be fulsome, then fields be at hand. If you be weary of the City, you may go to the Court. If you surfeit of the Court, you may ride into the country; and so shoot, as it were, at rounds with a roving arrow. You can wish for no kind of meat, but here is a market; for no kind of pastime, but here is a companion. If you be solitary, here be friends to sit with you. If you be sick, and one doctor will not serve your turn, you may have twain. When you are weary of your lodging, you may walk into St. Paul's ... in the Middle Aisle you may hear what the Protestants say, and in the others what the Papists whisper; and, when you have heard both, believe but one, for but one of both says true you may be assured."

We clear the chasm of a century, and hear Dr. Johnson singing the same tune as Squire Hicks.

"The happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I'll venture to say, there is more learning and science within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit, than in all the rest of the kingdom."

"London is nothing to some people; but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place."

"The town is my element; there are my friends, there are my books, to which I have not yet bid farewell, and there are my amusements."

But even Johnson, who is always quoted as the typical lover of London, was not more enthusiastic in its praise than Gibbon. To him "London was never dull, there at least he could keep the monster *Ennui* at a respectful distance." For him its heat was always tempered; even its solitude was "delicious." In "the soft retirement of my *bocage de* Bentinck Street" the dog-days pass unheeded. "Charming hot weather! I am just going to dine alone. Afterwards I shall walk till dark in *my* gardens at Kensington, and shall then return to a frugal supper and early bed in Bentinck Street. I lead the life of a philosopher, without any regard to the world or to fashion."

So much for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; we now return to the nineteenth and are listening to Sydney Smith. "I look forward anxiously to the return of the bad weather, coal fires, and good society in a crowded city." "The country is bad enough in summer, but in winter it is a fit residence only for beings doomed to such misery for misdeeds in another state of existence." "You may depend upon it, all lives lived out of London are mistakes, more or less grievous—but mistakes." "I shall not be sorry to be in town. I am rather tired of simple pleasures, bad reasoning, and worse cookery."

Let Lord Beaconsfield have the last word, as is his due; for truly did he know and love his London.

"It was a mild winter evening, a little fog still hanging about, but vanquished by the cheerful lamps, and the voice of the muffin-bell was heard at intervals; a genial sound that calls up visions of trim and happy hearths. If we could only so contrive our lives as to go into the country for the first note of the nightingale, and return to town for the first note of the muffin-bell, existence, it is humbly presumed, might be more enjoyable."

FOOTNOTES:

[21] Lord Beaconsfield, *Tancred*.

[22] Written in May, 1910.

[23] A nickname invented by the famous Eton tutor, "Billy Johnson," for a florid journalist.

[24] Lord Beaconsfield, *Lothair*.

[25] See M. Arnold's Letters, May 15, 1880.

[26] The Right Hon. J. W. Lowther.

[27] Sir George Trevelyan, *The Ladies in Parliament*.

VIII

HOSPITALITY

> "I never eat and I never drink," said the Cardinal. "I am sorry to say I cannot. I like dinner-society very much. You see the world, and you hear things which you do not hear otherwise."
>
> LORD BEACONSFIELD, *Lothair*.

The Cardinal was much to be pitied. He had a real genius for society, and thoroughly enjoyed such forms of it as his health and profession permitted. Though he could not dine with Mr. Putney Giles, he went to Mrs. Putney Giles's evening party, where he made an important acquaintance. He looked in at Lady St. Jerome's after dinner; and his visits to Vauxe and to Muriel Towers were fraught with memorable results.

Mrs. Putney Giles, though a staunch Protestant, was delighted to receive a Cardinal, and not less so that he should meet in her drawing-room the inexpressibly magnificent Lothair. That is all in the course of nature; but what has always puzzled me is the ease with which a youth of no particular pretensions, arriving in London from Oxford or Cambridge or from a country home, swims into society, and finds himself welcomed by people whose names he barely knows. I suppose that in this, as in more important matters, the helpers of the social fledgling are good-natured women. The fledgling probably starts by being related to one or two, and acquainted with three or four more; and each of them says to a friend who entertains—"My cousin, Freddy Du Cane, is a very nice fellow, and waltzes capitally. Do send him a card for your dance"—or "Tommy Tucker is a neighbour of ours in the country. If ever you want an odd man to fill up a place at dinner, I think you will find him useful." Then there was in those days, and perhaps there is still, a mysterious race of men—Hierophants of Society—who had great powers of helping or hindering the social beginner. They were bachelors, not very young; who had seen active service as dancers and diners for ten or twenty seasons; and who kept lists of eligible youths which they were perpetually renewing at White's or the Marlborough. To one of these the intending hostess would turn, saying, "Dear Mr. Golightly, *do* give me your list;" and, if Freddy Du Cane had contrived to ingratiate himself with Mr.

Golightly, invitations to balls and dances, of every size and sort, would soon begin to flutter down on him like snow-flakes. It mattered nothing that he had never seen his host or hostess, nor they him. Corney Grain expressed the situation in his own inimitable verse:

> "Old Mr. Parvenu gave a great ball—
> And of all his smart guests he knew no one at all.
> Old Mr. Parvenu went up to bed,
> And the guest said 'Good-night' to the butler instead."

But light come, light go. Ball-going is elysian when one is very young and cheerful and active, but it is a pleasure which, for nine men out of ten, soon palls. Dinner-society, as Cardinal Grandison knew, is a more serious affair, and admission to it is not so lightly attained.

When Sydney Smith returned from a visit to Paris, he wrote, in the fulness of his heart:

"I care very little about dinners, but I shall not easily forget a *matelote* at the 'Rochers de Cancale,' or an almond tart at Montreuil, or a *poulet à la Tartare* at Grignon's. These are impressions which no changes in future life can obliterate."

I am tempted to pursue the line of thought thus invitingly opened, but I forbear; for it really has no special connexion with the retrospective vein. I am now describing the years 1876-1880, and dinners then were pretty much what they are now. The new age of dining had begun. Those frightful hecatombs of sheep and oxen which Francatelli decreed had made way for more ethereal fare. The age-long tyranny of "The Joint" was already undermined. I have indeed been one of a party of forty in the dog-days, where a belated haunch of venison cried aloud for decent burial; but such outrages were even then becoming rare. The champagne of which a poet had beautifully said:

> "How sad and bad and mad it was,
> And Oh! how it was sweet!"

had been banished in favour of the barely alcoholic liquor which foams in modern glasses. And, thanks to the influence of King Edward VII, after-dinner drinking had been exorcised by cigarettes. The portentous piles of clumsy silver which had overshadowed our fathers' tables—effigies of Peace and Plenty, Racing Cups and Prizes for fat cattle—had been banished to the plate-closets;

bright china and brighter flowers reigned in their stead. In short, a dinner thirty-five years ago was very like a dinner to-day. It did not take me long to find that (with Cardinal Grandison) "I liked dinner-society very much," and that "you see the world there and hear things which you do not hear otherwise."

I have already described the methods by which ball-society was, and perhaps is, recruited. An incident which befell me in my second season threw a similar light on the more obscure question of dinner-society. One day I received a large card which intimated that Mr. and Mrs. Goldmore requested the honour of my company at dinner. I was a little surprised, because though I had been to balls at the Goldmores' house and had made my bow at the top of the stairs, I did not really know them. They had newly arrived in London, with a great fortune made in clay pipes and dolls' eyes, and were making their way by entertaining lavishly. However, it was very kind of them to ask me to dinner, and I readily accepted. The appointed evening came, and I arrived rather late. In an immense drawing-room there were some thirty guests assembled, and, as I looked round, I could not see a single face which I had ever seen before. Worse than that, it was obvious that Mr. and Mrs. Goldmore did not know me. They heard my name announced, received me quite politely, and then retired into a window, where their darkling undertones, enquiring glances, and heads negatively shaken, made it only too clear that they were asking one another who on earth the last arrival was. However, their embarrassment and mine was soon relieved by the announcement of dinner. As there were more male guests than women, there was no need to give me a partner; so we all swept downstairs in a promiscuous flood, and soon were making the vital choice between *bisque* and *consommé*. Eating my dinner, I revolved my plans, and decided to make a clean breast of it. So, when we went up into the drawing-room, I made straight for my hostess. "I feel sure," I said, "that you and Mr. Goldmore did not expect me to-night." "Oh," was the gracious reply, "I hope there was nothing in our manner which made you feel that you were unwelcome." "Nothing," I replied, "could have been kinder than your manner, but one has a certain social instinct which tells one when one has made a mistake. And yet what the mistake was I cannot guess. I am sure it is the right house and the right evening—Do please explain." "Well," said Mrs. Goldmore, "as you have found out so much, I think I had better tell you all. *We were not expecting you.* We have not even now the pleasure of knowing who you are. We were expecting Dr. Russell, the *Times* Correspondent, and all these ladies and gentlemen have been asked to meet him." So it was not my mistake after all, and I promptly rallied my forces. "The card certainly had my first name, initials, and address all right, so there was nothing to make me suspect a mistake.

Besides, I should have thought that everyone who knew the *Times* Russell knew that his first name was William—he is always called 'Billy Russell.'" "Well"—and now the truth coyly emerged—"the fact is that we *don't* know him. We heard that he was a pleasant man and fond of dining out, and so we looked him up in the *Court Guide*, and sent the invitation. I suppose we hit on your address by mistake for his." I suppose so too; and that this is the method by which newcomers build up a "Dinner-Society" in London.

One particular form of dinner deserves a special word of commemoration, because it has gone, never to return. This was the "Fish Dinner" at Greenwich or Blackwall, or even so far afield as Gravesend. It was to a certain extent a picnic; without the formality of dressing, and made pleasant by opportunities of fun and fresh air, in the park or on the river, before we addressed ourselves to the serious business of the evening; but that was serious indeed. The "Menu" of a dinner at the Ship Hotel at Greenwich lies before me as I write. It contains turtle soup, eleven kinds of fish, two *entrées*, a haunch of venison, poultry, ham, grouse, leverets, five sweet dishes, and two kinds of ice. Well, those were great days—we shall not look upon their like again. Let a poet[28] who knew what he was writing about have the last word on Dinner.

"We may live without poetry, music, and art;
We may live without conscience and live without heart;
We may live without friends; we may live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without Cooks.

"He may live without lore—what is knowledge but
grieving?
He may live without hope—what is hope but deceiving?
He may live without love—what is passion but pining?
But where is the man that can live without dining?"

There is an exquisite truth in this lyrical cry, but it stops short of the fulness of the subject. It must be remembered that "dining" is not the only form of eating. Mr. Gladstone, who thought modern luxury rather disgusting, used to complain that nowadays life in a country house meant three dinners a day, and, if you reckoned sandwiches and poached eggs at five o'clock tea, nearly four. Indeed, the only difference that I can perceive between a modern luncheon and a modern dinner is that at the former meal you don't have soup or a printed *Menu*. There have always been some houses where the luncheons were much more famous than the dinners. Dinner, after all, is something of a ceremony; it requires forethought, care, and organization. Luncheon is more of a scramble, and, in the case of a numerous and scattered family, it is the pleasantest of reunions.

My uncle Lord John Russell (1792-1878) published in 1820 a book of *Essays and Sketches*, in which he speaks of "women sitting down to a substantial luncheon at three or four," and observes that men would be wise if they followed the example. All contemporary evidence points to luncheon as a female meal, at which men attended, if at all, clandestinely. If a man habitually sat down to luncheon, and ate it through, he was regarded as indifferent to the claims of dinner, and, moreover, was contemned as an idler. No one who had anything to do could find time for a square meal in the middle of the day. But, as years went on, the feeling changed. Prince Albert was notoriously fond of luncheon, and Queen Victoria humoured him. They dined very late, and the luncheon at the Palace became a very real and fully recognized meal. The example, communicated from the highest quarters, was soon followed in Society; and, when I first knew London, luncheon was as firmly established as dinner. As a rule, it was not an affair of fixed invitation; but a hostess would say, "You will always find us at luncheon, somewhere about two"—and one took her at her

word.

The luncheon by invitation was a more formal, and rather terrible, affair. I well remember a house where at two o'clock in June we had to sit down with curtains drawn, lights ablaze, and rose-coloured shades to the candles, because the hostess thought, rightly as regarded herself, less so as regarded her guests, that no one's complexion could stand the searching trial of midsummer sunshine.

"Sunday Luncheon" was always a thing apart. For some reason, not altogether clear, perhaps because devotion long sustained makes a strong demand on the nervous system, men who turned up their noses at luncheon on weekdays devoured roast beef and Yorkshire pudding on Sundays, and went forth, like giants refreshed, for a round of afternoon calls. The Sunday Luncheon was a recognized centre of social life. Where there was even a moderate degree of intimacy a guest might drop in and be sure of mayonnaise, chicken, and welcome. I can recall an occasion of this kind when I saw social Presence of Mind exemplified, as I thought and think, on an heroic scale. Luncheon was over. It had not been a particularly bounteous meal; the guests had been many; the chicken had been eaten to the drumstick and the cutlets to the bone. Nothing remained but a huge Trifle, of chromatic and threatening aspect, on which no one had ventured to embark. Coffee was just coming, when the servant entered with an anxious expression, and murmured to the hostess that Monsieur de Petitpois—a newly-arrived attaché—had come, and seemed to expect luncheon. The hostess grasped the situation in an instant, and issued her commands with a promptitude and a directness which the Duke of Wellington could not have surpassed. "Clear everything away, but leave the Trifle. Then show M. de Petitpois in." Enter De Petitpois. "Delighted to see you. Quite right. Always at home at Sunday luncheon. Pray come and sit here and have some Trifle. It is our national Sunday dish." Poor young De Petitpois, actuated by the same principle which made the Prodigal desire the husks, filled himself with spongecake, jam, and whipped cream; and went away looking rather pale. If he kept a journal, he no doubt noted the English Sunday as one of our most curious institutions, and "Le Trifle" as its crowning horror.

Supper is a word of very different significances. There is the Ball Supper, which I have described in a previous chapter. There is the Supper after the Missionary Meeting in the country, when "The Deputation from the Parent Society" is entertained with cold beef, boiled eggs, and cocoa. There is the diurnal Supper, fruitful parent of our national crudities, eaten by the social class that dines at one; and this Supper (as was disclosed at a recent inquest) may consist of steak,

tomatoes, and tea.

And yet, again, there is the Theatrical Supper, which, eaten in congenial company after *Patience* or *The Whip*, is our nearest approach to the "Nights and Suppers of the Gods." This kind of supper has a niche of its own in my retrospects. It was my privilege when first I came to London to know Lady Burdett-Coutts, famous all over the world as a philanthropist, and also, in every tone and gesture, a survival from the days when great station and great manner went together. Lady Burdett-Coutts was an enthusiastic devotee of the drama; and, when her Evening Parties were breaking up, she would gently glide round the great rooms in Stratton Street, and say to a departing guest:

"I hope you need not go just yet. I am expecting Mr. Irving to supper after the play, and I am asking a few friends to meet him."

As far as I know, I am the only survivor of those delightful feasts.

Dinner and luncheon and supper must, I suppose, be reckoned among the permanent facts of life; but there is, or was, one meal of which I have witnessed the unwept disappearance. It had its roots in our historic past. It clung to its place in our social economy. It lived long and died hard. It was the Breakfast-Party. When I first lived in London, it was, like some types of human character, vigorous but unpopular. No one could really like going out to breakfast; but the people who gave Breakfast-Parties were worthy and often agreeable people; and there were few who had the hardihood to say them Nay.

The most famous breakfast-parties of the time were given by Mr. Gladstone, on every Thursday morning in the Session; when, while we ate broiled salmon and drank coffee, our host discoursed to an admiring circle about the colour-sense in Homer, or the polity of the ancient Hittites. Around the table were gathered Lions and Lionesses of various breeds and sizes, who, if I remember aright, did not get quite as much opportunity for roaring as they would have liked; for, when Mr. Gladstone had started on a congenial theme, it was difficult to get in a word edgeways. One of these breakfast-parties at 10, Downing Street, stands out in memory more clearly than the rest, for it very nearly had a part in that "Making of History" which was then so much in vogue. The date was April 23, 1885. The party comprised Lady Ripon, Lord Granville, Dean Church, and Miss Mary Anderson, then in the height of her fame and beauty. We were stolidly munching and listening, when suddenly we heard a crash as if heaven and earth had come together; and presently we learned that there had been an explosion of

dynamite at the Admiralty, about a hundred yards from where we were sitting. The proximity of nitro-glycerine seemed to operate as a check on conversation, and, as we rose from the table, I heard Miss Anderson say to Miss Gladstone, "Your pa seemed quite scared."

Other breakfast-givers of the time were Lord Houghton, Lord Arthur Russell, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre (afterwards Lord Eversley), and Sir John Lubbock (afterwards Lord Avebury); and there were even people so desperately wedded to this terrible tradition that they formed themselves into Clubs with no other object than to breakfast, and bound themselves by solemn pledges to meet one morning in every week, and eat and argue themselves into dyspepsia. Sydney Smith wrote thus to a friend: "I have a breakfast of philosophers to-morrow at ten punctually—muffins and metaphysics, crumpets and contradiction. Will you come?" That inviting picture, though it was drawn before I was born, exactly describes the breakfast-parties which I remember. One met all sorts of people, but very few Mary Andersons. Breakfasters were generally old,—politicians, diplomatists, authors, journalists, men of science, political economists, and everyone else who was most improving. No doubt it was a priceless privilege to meet them; yet, as I heard them prate and prose, I could not help recalling a favourite passage from Mrs. Sherwood's quaint tale of *Henry Milner*:—

"Mr. Dolben, as usual, gave utterance at breakfast to several of those pure and wise and refined principles, which sometimes distil as drops of honey from the lips of pious and intellectual old persons." It was breakfast that set Mr. Dolben off. We are not told that he distilled his honey at dinner or supper; so his case must be added to the long list of deleterious results produced by breakfasting in public.

Conversation must, I think, have been at rather a low ebb when I first encountered it in London. Men breakfasted in public, as we have just seen, in order to indulge in it; and I remember a terrible Club where it raged on two nights of every week, in a large, dark, and draughty room, while men sat round an indifferent fire, drinking barley-water, and talking for talking's sake—the most melancholy of occupations. But at these dismal orgies one never heard anything worth remembering. The "pious and intellectual old persons" whom Mrs. Sherwood admired had withdrawn from the scene, if indeed they had ever figured on it. Those who remained were neither pious nor intellectual, but compact of spite and greediness, with here and there worse faults. But some brighter spirits were coming on. To call them by the names which they then bore, Mr. George Trevelyan and Mr. John Morley were thought very promising, for

social fame in London takes a long time to establish itself. Sir William Harcourt was capital company in the heavier style; and Lord Rosebery in the lighter. But Mr. Herbert Paul was known only to the *Daily News*, and Mr. Augustine Birrell's ray serene had not emerged from the dim, unfathomed caves of the Chancery Bar.

So far, I have been writing about Conversation with a capital "C,"—an elaborate and studied art which in old days such men as Sharpe and Jekyll and Luttrell illustrated, and, in times more modern, Brookfield and Cockburn and Lowe and Hayward. For the ordinary chit-chat of social intercourse—chaff and repartee, gossip and fun and frolic—I believe that London was just as good in 1876 as it had been fifty years before. We were young and happy, enjoying ourselves, and on easy terms with one another. "It was roses, roses all the way." Our talk was unpremeditated and unstudied, quick as lightning, springing out of the interest or the situation of the moment, uttered in an instant and as soon forgotten. Everyone who has ever made the attempt must realize that to gather up the fragments of such talk as this is as impossible as to collect shooting stars or to reconstruct a rainbow.

But, though I cannot say what we talked about in those distant days, I believe I can indicate with certainty two topics which were never mentioned. One is Health, and the other is Money. I presume that people had pretty much the same complaints as now, but no one talked about them. We had been told of a lady who died in agony because she insisted on telling the doctor that the pain was in her chest, whereas it really was in the unmentionable organ of digestion. That martyr to propriety has no imitator in the present day. Everyone has a disease and a doctor, and young people of both sexes are ready on the slightest acquaintance to describe symptoms and compare experiences. "Ice!" exclaimed a pretty girl at dessert. "Good gracious, no. So bad for indy!" And her companion, who had not travelled with the times, learned with interest that "indy" was the pet name for indigestion.

Then, again, as to money. In the "Sacred Circle of the Great Grandmotherhood," I never heard the slightest reference to income. Not that the Whigs despised money. They were at least as fond of it as other people, and, even when it took the shape of slum-rents, its odour was not displeasing; but it was not a subject for conversation. People did not chatter about their neighbours' incomes; and, if they made their own money in trades or professions, they did not regale us with statistics of profit and loss. To-day everyone seems to be, if I may use the favourite colloquialism, "on the make"; and the devotion with which people

worship money pervades their whole conversation, and colours their whole view of life. "Scions of Aristocracy," to use the good old phrase of Pennialinus, will produce samples of tea or floor-cloth from their pockets, and sue quite winningly for custom. A speculative bottle of extraordinarily cheap peach-brandy will arrive with the compliments of Lord Tom Noddy, who has just gone into the wine-trade; and Lord Magnus Charters will tell you that, if you are going to rearrange your electric light, his firm has got some really artistic fittings which he can let you have on specially easy terms.

So far I have spoken of Hospitality as if it consisted wholly in eating and drinking. Not so. In those days Evening Parties, or Receptions, or Drums, or Tails, for so they were indifferently called, took place on four or five nights of every week. "Tails" as the name implies, were little parties tacked on to the end of big dinners, where a few people looked in, rather cross at not having been invited to dine, or else in a desperate hurry to get on to a larger party or a ball. The larger parties were given generally on Saturday evenings; and then, amid a crushing crowd and a din which recalled the Parrot-House at the Zoo, one might rub shoulders with all the famous men and women of the time. When Mr. St. Barbe in *Endymion* attended a gathering of this kind, he said to his companion, "I daresay that Ambassador has been blundering all his life, and yet there is something in that Star and Ribbon. I do not know how you feel, but I could almost go down on my knees to him.

'Ye stars which are the poetry of heaven,'

Byron wrote; a silly line, he should have written—

'Ye stars which are the poetry of dress.'"

Political "Drums" had a flavour which was all their own. If they were given in any of the Great Houses of London, where the stateliness and beauty of the old world still survived, such guests as Lord Beaconsfield's creations, Mr. Horrocks, M.P., and Trodgitts, the unsuccessful candidate, would look a little subdued. But in the ordinary house, with a back and front drawing-room and a buffet in the dining-room, those good men were quite at home, and the air was thick with political shop—whether we should loose Pedlington or save Shuffleborough with a struggle—whether A would get office and how disgusted B would be if he did.

Here and there a more thrilling note was sounded. At a Liberal party in the

spring of 1881 an ex-Whip of the Liberal party said to a Liberal lady, as he was giving her a cup of tea: "Have you heard how ill old Dizzy is?" "Oh, yes!" replied the lady, with a rapturous wink, "I know—dying!" Such are the amenities of political strife.

A much more agreeable form of hospitality was the Garden-Party. When I came to live in London, the old-fashioned phrase—a "Breakfast"—so familiar in memoirs and novels, had almost passed out of use. On the 22nd of June, 1868, Queen Victoria signalized her partial return to social life by commanding her lieges to a "Breakfast" in the gardens of Buckingham Palace; and the newspapers made merry over the notion of Breakfast which began at four and ended at seven. The old title gradually died out, and by 1876 people had begun to talk about "Garden-Parties."

By whichever names they were called, they were, and are, delightful festivals. Sometimes they carried one as far as Hatfield, my unapproached favourite among all the "Stately homes of England"; but generally they were nearer London—at Syon, with the Thames floating gravely past its lawns—Osterley, where the decorative skill of the Brothers Adam is superimposed on Sir Thomas Gresham's Elizabethan brickwork—Holland House, rife with memories of Fox and Macaulay—Lowther Lodge, with its patch of unspoiled country in the heart of Western London. Closely akin to these Garden-Parties were other forms of outdoor entertainment—tea at Hurlingham or Ranelagh; and river-parties where ardent youth might contrive to capsize the adored one, and propose as he rescued her, dripping, from the Thames.

It is only within the last few years that we have begun to talk of "Week-Ends" and "week-Ending." These terrible phrases have come down to us from the North of England; but before they arrived the thing which they signify was here. "Saturday-to-Monday Parties" they were called. They were not so frequent as now, because Saturday was a favourite night for entertaining in London, and it was generally bespoken for dinners and drums. But, as the summer advanced and hot rooms became unendurable, people who lived only forty or fifty miles out of London began to ask if one would run down to them on Friday or Saturday, and stay over Sunday. Of these hospitalities I was a sparing and infrequent cultivator, for they always meant two sleepless nights; and, as someone truly observed, just as you had begun to wear off the corners of your soap, it was time to return to London. But there were people, more happily constituted, who could thoroughly enjoy and profit by the weekly dose of fresh air and quiet. It was seldom that Mrs. Gladstone failed to drag Mr. Gladstone to

some country house "from Saturday to Monday."

As I re-read what I have written in this chapter, I seem to have lived from 1876 to 1880 in the constant enjoyment of one kind or another of Hospitality. It is true; and for the kindness of the friends who then did so much to make my life agreeable, I am as grateful as I was when I received it. My social life in London seems to me, as I look back, "a crystal river of unreproved enjoyment"; and some of those who shared it with me are still among my closest friends.

One word more, and I have done with Hospitality. I brought with me from Oxford a simple lad who had been a College servant. In those more courteous days a young man made it a rule to leave his card at every house where he had been entertained; so I made a list of addresses, gave it to my servant with a nicely-calculated batch of cards, and told him to leave them all before dinner. When I came in to dress, this dialogue ensued: "Have you left all those cards?" "Yes, sir." "You left two at each of the houses on your list?" "Oh no, sir. I left one at each house, and all the rest at the Duke of Leinster's." Surely Mrs. Humphry Ward or Mr. H. G. Wells might make something of this bewildering effect produced by exalted rank on the untutored mind.

FOOTNOTE:

[28] The second Lord Lytton.

IX

ELECTIONEERING

> "Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window than be absolutely excluded. Mr. Grenville, advancing towards me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing.... He is very young, genteel, and handsome, and the town seems to be much at his service."
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> *W. Cowper*, 1784.

Gladstone's first administration, which had begun so gloriously in 1868, ended rather ignominiously at the General Election of 1874. Matthew Arnold wrote to his friend, Lady de Rothschild, "What a beating it is! You know that Liberalism did not seem to me quite the beautiful and admirable thing it does to the Liberal party in general, and I am not sorry that a new stage in its growth should commence, and that the party should be driven to examine itself, and to see how much real stuff it has in its mind, and how much claptrap."

That wholesome discipline of self-examination was greatly assisted by the progress of events. England was now subjected to the personal rule of Disraeli. In 1868 he had been for ten months Prime Minister on sufferance, but now for the first time in his life he was in power. His colleagues were serfs or cyphers. He had acquired an influence at Court such as no other Minister ever possessed. He had conciliated the House of Lords, which in old days had looked askance at the picturesque adventurer. He was supported by a strong, compact, and determined majority in the House of Commons. He was the idol of Society, of the Clubs, and of the London Press. He was, in short, as nearly a dictator as the forms of our constitution permit; and the genius, which for forty years had been hampered and trammelled by the exigencies of a precarious struggle, could now for the first time display its true character and significance. Liberals who had been bored and provoked by the incessant blunders of the Liberal ministry in its last years, and, like Matthew Arnold, had welcomed a change of government, soon began to see that they had exchanged what was merely fatuous and foolish for what was actively mischievous. They were forced to ask themselves how much of the political faith which they had professed was "real stuff," and how

much was "claptrap." Disraeli soon taught them that, even when all "claptrap" was laid aside, the "real stuff" of Liberalism—its vital and essential part—was utterly incompatible with Disraelitish ideals.

The Session of 1874 began quietly enough, and the first disturbance proceeded from a quite unexpected quarter. The two Primates of the English Church were at this time Archbishop Tait and Archbishop Thomson. Both were masterful men. Both hated Ritualism; and both worshipped the Man in the Street. The Man in the Street was supposed to be an anti-Ritualist; so the two Archbishops conceived the happy design of enlisting his aid in the destruction of a religious movement which, with their own unaided resources, they had failed to crush. Bishop Wilberforce, who would not have suffered the Ritualists to be bullied, had been killed in the previous summer. Gladstone, notoriously not unfriendly to Ritualism, was dethroned; so all looked smooth and easy for a policy of persecution. On the 20th of April, 1874, Archbishop Tait introduced his "Public Worship Regulation Bill" into the House of Lords; and, in explanation of this measure, Tait's biographers say that it merely "aimed at reviving in a practical shape the *forum domesticum* of the Bishops, with just so much of coercive force added as seemed necessary to meet the changed circumstances of modern times." I have always loved this sentence. *Forum domesticum* is distinctly good, and so is "coercive force." The *forum domesticum* has quite a comfortable sound, and, as to the "coercive force" which lurks in the background, Ritualists must not enquire too curiously. The Bishops were to have it all their own way, and everyone was to be happy. Such was the Bill as introduced; but in Committee it was made infinitely more oppressive. Henceforward a single lay-judge, to be appointed by the two Archbishops, was to hear and determine all cases relating to irregularities in Public Worship.

When the Bill reached the House of Commons, it was powerfully opposed by Gladstone; but the House was dead against him, and Sir William Harcourt, who, six months before, had been his Solicitor-General, distinguished himself by the truculence with which he assailed the Ritualists. On the 5th of August, Gladstone wrote to his wife: "An able but yet frantic tirade from Harcourt, extremely bad in tone and taste, and chiefly aimed at poor me.... I have really treated him with forbearance before, but I was obliged to let out a little to-day."

Meanwhile, Disraeli, seeing his opportunity, had seized it with characteristic skill. He adopted the Bill with great cordiality. He rejected all the glozing euphemisms which had lulled the House of Lords. He uttered no pribbles and prabbles about *forum domesticum*, and paternal guidance, and the authoritative

interpretation of ambiguous formularies. "This," he said, "is a Bill to put down Ritualism." So the naked truth, carefully veiled from view in episcopal aprons and lawn-sleeves, was now displayed in all its native charm. Its success was instant and complete. The Second Reading passed unanimously; and the Archbishops' masterpiece became at once a law and a laughing-stock. The instrument of tyranny broke in the clumsy hands which had forged it, and its fragments to-day lie rusting in the lumber-room of archiepiscopal failures.

But in the meantime the debates on the Bill had produced some political effects which its authors certainly had not desired. Gladstone's vehement attacks on the Bill, and his exhilarating triumph over the recalcitrant Harcourt, showed the Liberal party that their chief, though temporarily withdrawn from active service, was as vivacious and as energetic as ever, as formidable in debate, and as unquestionably supreme in his party whenever he chose to assert his power. Another important result of the controversy was that Gladstone was now the delight and glory of the Ritualists. The Committee organized to defend the clergy of St. Alban's, Holborn, against the *forum domesticum* and "coercive force" of Bishop Jackson, made a formal and public acknowledgment of their gratitude for Gladstone's "noble and unsupported defence of the rights of the Church of England." Cultivated and earnest Churchmen, even when they had little sympathy with Ritualism, were attracted to his standard, and turned in righteous disgust from the perpetrator of clumsy witticisms about "Mass in masquerade." In towns where, as at Oxford and Brighton, the Church is powerful, the effect of these desertions was unmistakably felt at the General Election of 1880.

It has been truly said that among the subjects which never fail to excite Englishmen is Slavery. "No public man," said Matthew Arnold, "in this country will be damaged by having even 'fanaticism' in his hatred of slavery imputed to him." In July, 1875, the Admiralty issued to Captains of Her Majesty's ships a Circular of Instructions which roused feelings of anger and of shame. This circular ran counter alike to the jealousy of patriots and to the sentiment of humanitarians. It directed that a fugitive slave should not be received on board a British vessel unless his life was in danger, and that, if she were in territorial waters, he should be surrendered on legal proof of his condition. If the ship were at sea, he should only be received and protected until she reached the country to which he belonged. These strange and startling orders were not in harmony either with the Law of Nations or with the law of England. They infringed the invaluable rule which prescribes that a man-of-war is British territory, wherever

she may be; and they seemed to challenge the famous decision of Lord Mansfield, that a slave who enters British jurisdiction becomes free for ever. Parliament had risen for the recess just before the circular appeared, so it could not be challenged in the House of Commons; but it raised a storm of indignation out of doors which astonished its authors. Disraeli wrote "The incident is grave;" and, though in the subsequent session the Government tried to whittle down the enormity, the "incident" proved to be graver than even the Premier had imagined; for it showed the Liberals once again that Toryism is by instinct hostile to freedom.

But events were now at hand before which the Public Worship Regulation Act and the Slave Circular paled into insignificance.

In the autumn of 1875 an insurrection had broken out in Bulgaria, and the Turkish Government despatched a large force to repress it. This was done, and repression was followed by a hideous orgy of massacre and outrage. A rumour of these horrors reached England, and public indignation spontaneously awoke. Disraeli, with a strange frankness of cynical brutality, sneered at the rumour as "Coffee-house babble," and made odious jokes about the Oriental way of executing malefactors. But Christian England was not to be pacified with these Asiatic pleasantries, and in the autumn of 1876 the country rose in passionate indignation against what were known as "the Bulgarian Atrocities." Preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral, Liddon made a signal departure from his general rule of avoiding politics in the pulpit, and gave splendid utterance to the passion which was burning in his heart. "Day by day we English are learning that this year of grace 1876 has been signalized by a public tragedy which, I firmly believe, is without a parallel in modern times.... Not merely armed men, but young women and girls and babes, counted by hundreds, counted by thousands, subjected to the most refined cruelties, subjected to the last indignities, have been the victims of the Turk." And then came a fine burst of patriotic indignation. "That which makes the voice falter as we say it is that, through whatever misunderstanding, the Government which is immediately responsible for acts like these has turned for sympathy, for encouragement, not to any of the historical homes of despotism or oppression, not to any other European Power, but alas! to England —to free, humane, Christian England. The Turk has, not altogether without reason, believed himself, amid these scenes of cruelty, to be leaning on our country's arm, to be sure of her smile, or at least of her acquiescence."

And soon a mightier voice than even Liddon's was added to the chorus of righteous indignation. Gladstone had resigned the leadership of the Liberal Party

at the beginning of 1875, and for sixteen months he remained buried in his library at Hawarden. But now he suddenly reappeared, and flung himself into the agitation against Turkey with a zeal which in his prime he had never excelled, if, indeed, he had equalled it. On Christmas Day, 1876, he wrote in his diary—"The most solemn I have known for long; I see that eastward sky of storm and of underlight!" When Parliament met in February, 1877, he was ready with all his unequalled resources of eloquence, argumentation, and inconvenient enquiry, to drive home his great indictment against the Turkish Government and its champion, Disraeli, who had now become Lord Beaconsfield. For three arduous years he sustained the strife with a versatility, a courage, and a resourcefulness, which raised the enthusiasm of his followers to the highest pitch, and filled his antagonists with a rage akin to frenzy. I well remember that in July, 1878, just after Lord Beaconsfield's triumphant return from Berlin, a lady asked me as a special favour to dine with her: "Because I have got the Gladstones coming, and everyone declines to meet him." Strange, but true.

1878 was perhaps the most critical year of the Eastern question. Russia and Turkey were at death-grips, and Lord Beaconsfield seemed determined to commit this country to a war in defence of the Mahomedan Power, which for centuries has persecuted the worshippers of Christ in the East of Europe. By frustrating the sinister design Gladstone saved England from the indelible disgrace of a second Crimea. But it was not only in Eastern Europe that he played the hero's part. In Africa, and India, and wherever British arms were exercised and British honour was involved, he dealt his resounding blows at that odious system of bluster and swagger and might against right, on which the Prime Minister and his colleagues bestowed the tawdry nickname of Imperialism. In his own phrase he devoted himself to "counterworking the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield," and all that was ardent and enthusiastic and adventurous in Liberalism flocked to his standard.

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

One could not stand aloof—the call to arms was too imperious. We saw our Leader contending single-handed with "the obscene empires of Mammon and Belial," and we longed to be at his side in the thick of the fight. To a man born and circumstanced as I was the call came with peculiar power. I had the love of Freedom in my blood. I had been trained to believe in and to serve the Liberal cause. I was incessantly reminded of the verse, which, sixty years before, Moore

had addressed to my uncle, Lord John Russell,

"Like the boughs of that laurel, by Delphi's decree
Set apart for the Fane and its service divine,
So the branches that spring from the old Russell tree
Are by Liberty claimed for the use of her shrine."

In 1841 that same uncle wrote thus to his eldest brother: "Whatever may be said about other families, I do not think ours ought to retire from active exertion. In all times of popular movement, the Russells have been on the 'forward' side. At the Reformation, the first Earl of Bedford; in Charles the First's days, Francis, the Great Earl; in Charles the Second's, William, Lord Russell; in later times, Francis, Duke of Bedford; our father; you; and lastly myself in the Reform Bill."

These hereditary appeals were strong, but there were influences which were stronger. A kind of romantic and religious glamour, such as one had never before connected with politics, seemed to surround this attack on the strongholds of Anti-Christ. The campaign became a crusade.

Towards the end of 1879 I accepted an invitation to contest "the Borough and Hundreds of Aylesbury" at the next General Election. The "Borough" was a compact and attractive-looking town, and the "Hundreds" which surrounded it covered an area nearly coextensive with the present division of Mid Bucks. Close by was Hampden House, unaltered since the day when four thousand freeholders of Buckinghamshire rode up to Westminster to defend their impeached member, John Hampden. All around were those beech-clad recesses of the Chiltern Hills, in which, according to Lord Beaconsfield, the Great Rebellion was hatched. I do not vouch for that fact, but I can affirm that thirty years ago those recesses sheltered some of the stoutest Liberals whom I have ever known. The town and its surroundings were, for parliamentary purposes, a Borough, and, as all householders in Boroughs had been enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1867, the Agricultural Labourers of the district were already voters.

It happens that Agricultural Labourers are the class of voters with which I am most familiar; and an intimate acquaintance with these men has taught me increasingly to admire their staunchness, their shrewdness, and their racy humour. Two or three of the old sayings come back to memory as I write. "More pigs and less parsons" must have been a survival from the days of Tithe. "The Black Recruiting Sergeant" was a nickname for a canvassing Incumbent. "I tell

you how it is with a State-Parson," cried a Village Hampden: "if you take away his book, he can't preach. If you take away his gown he mayn't preach. If you take away his screw, he'll be d—d if he'll preach." A Radical M.P. suddenly deserted his constituency and took a peerage, and this was the verdict of the Village Green: "Mister So-and-so says he's going to the House of Lords to 'leaven it with Liberal principles.' Bosh! Mr. So-and-so can't no more leaven the House of Lords than you can sweeten a cartload of muck with a pot of marmalade."

Aylesbury returned two Members to Parliament, and its political history had been chequered. When first I came to know it, the two members were Mr. Samuel George Smith and Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild (afterwards Lord Rothschild). Mr. Smith was a Tory. Sir Nathaniel professed to be a Liberal; but, as his Liberalism was of the sort which had doggedly supported Lord Beaconsfield all through the Eastern Question, the more enthusiastic spirits in the constituency felt that they were wholly unrepresented. It was they who invited me to stand. From the first, Sir Nathaniel made it known that he would not support or coalesce with me; and perhaps, considering the dissimilarity of our politics, it was just as well. So there were three candidates, fighting independently for two seats; there was no Corrupt Practices Act in those days; and the situation was neatly summarized by a tradesman of the town. "Our three candidates are Mr. S. G. Smith, head of 'Smith, Payne & Co.;' Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, head of 'N. M. Rothschild & Sons,' and Mr. George Russell, who, we understand, has the Duke of Bedford behind him. So we are looking forward to a very interesting contest." That word *interesting* was well chosen.

Now began the most vivid and enjoyable portion of my life. Everything conspired to make it pleasant. In the first place, I believed absolutely in my cause. I was not, as Sydney Smith said, "stricken by the palsy of candour." There were no doubts or questionings or ambiguities in my mind. My creed with regard both to foreign and to domestic politics was clear, positive, and deliberate. I was received with the most extraordinary kindness and enthusiasm by people who really longed to have a hand in the dethronement of Lord Beaconsfield, and who believed in their politics as part of their religion.

After my first speech in the Corn Exchange of Aylesbury I was severely reprehended because I had called Lord Beaconsfield a "Jew." If I had known better, I should have said "a Semite" or "an Israelite," or—his own phrase—"a Mosaic Arab," and all would have been well. I had and have close friends among the Jews, so my use of the offending word was not dictated by racial or social

prejudice. But it expressed a strong conviction. I held then, and I hold now, that it was a heavy misfortune for England that, during the Eastern Question, her Prime Minister was one of the Ancient Race. The spiritual affinity between Judaism and Mahomedanism, founded on a common denial of the Christian Creed, could not be without its influence on a statesman whose deepest convictions, from first to last, were with the religion of his forefathers. In 1876 Mr. Gladstone wrote—"Some new lights about Disraeli's Judaic feeling, in which he is both consistent and conscientious, have come in upon me." And similar "lights" dictated my action and my language at the crisis of 1879-1880.

Another element of enjoyment was that I was young—only twenty-six. Youth is an invaluable asset in a first campaign. Youth can canvass all day, and harangue all night. It can traverse immense distances without fatigue, make speeches in the open air without catching cold, sleep anywhere, eat anything, and even drink port with a grocer's label on it, at five in the afternoon. Then again, I had a natural and inborn love of public speaking, and I have known no enjoyment in life equal to that of addressing a great audience which you feel to be actively sympathetic.

Yes, that spring of 1880 was a delightful time. As the condemned highwayman said to the chaplain who was exhorting him to repentance for his life of adventure on the road—"You dog, it was delicious." It was all so new. One emerged (like Herbert Gladstone) from the obscurity of College rooms or from the undistinguished herd of London ball-goers, or from the stables and stubbles of a country home, and became, all in a moment, a Personage. For the first time in one's life one found that people—grown-up, sensible, vote-possessing people—wished to know one's opinions, and gave heed to one's words. For the first time, one had "Colours" of one's own, as if one were a Regiment or a University; for the first time one beheld one's portrait, flattering though perhaps mud-bespattered, on every wall. For the first time one was cheered in the street, and entered the Corn-Exchange amid what the Liberal paper called "thunders of applause," and the opponent's organ whittled down to "cheers."

But canvassing cannot, I think, be reckoned among the pleasures of a candidature. One must be very young indeed to find it even tolerable. A candidate engaged in a house-to-house canvass has always seemed to me (and not least clearly when I was the candidate) to sink beneath the level of humanity. To beg for votes, as if they were alms or broken victuals, is a form of mendicancy which is incompatible with common self-respect, and yet it is a self-abasement which thirty years ago custom imperatively demanded. "If my vote

ain't worth calling for, I suppose it ain't worth 'aving" was the formula in which the elector stated his requirement.

To trudge, weary and footsore, dusty and deliquescent, from door to door; to ask, with damnable iteration, if Mr. So-and-so is at home, and to meet the invariable rejoinder, "No, he isn't," not seldom running on with—"And, if he was, he wouldn't see you;" to find oneself (being Blue) in a Red quarter, where the very children hoot at you, and inebriate matrons shout personalities from upper windows—all this is detestable enough. But to find the voter at home and unfriendly is an experience which plunges the candidate lower still. A curious tradition of privileged insolence, which runs through all English history from the days when great men kept Jesters and the Universities had their *Terræ Filii*, asserts itself, by immemorial usage, at an election. People who would be perfectly civil if one called on them in the ordinary way, and even rapturously grateful if they could sell one six boxes of lucifers or a pound of toffee, permit themselves a freedom of speech to the suppliant candidate, which tests the fibre of his manhood. If he loses his temper and answers in like sort, the door is shut on him with some Parthian jeer, and, as he walks dejectedly away, the agent says —"Ah, it's a pity you offended that fellow. He's very influential in this ward, and I believe a civil word would have won him." If, on the other hand, the candidate endures the raillery and smiles a sickly smile, he really fares no better. After a prolonged battle of wits (in which he takes care not to be too successful) he discovers that the beery gentleman in shirtsleeves has no vote, and that, in the time which he has spent in these fruitless pleasantries, he might have canvassed half the street.

There is, of course, a pleasanter side to canvassing. It warms the cockles of one's heart to be greeted with the words, "Don't waste your time here, sir. My vote's yours before you ask for it. There's your picture over the chimney-piece." And when a wife says, "My husband is out at work, but I know he means to vote for you," one is inclined to embrace her on the spot.

These are the amenities of electioneering; but a man who enters on a political campaign expecting fair treatment from his opponents is indeed walking in a vain shadow. The ordinary rules of fairplay and straightforward conduct are forgotten at an election. In a political contest people say and do a great many things of which in every-day life they would be heartily ashamed. An election-agent of the old school once said to me in the confidence of after-dinner claret, "For my own part, when I go into a fight, I go in to win, and I'm not particular to a shade or two." All this is the common form of electioneering, but in one

respect I think my experience rather unusual. I have been all my life as keen a Churchman as I am a Liberal, and some of my closest friends are clergymen. I never found that the Nonconformists were the least unfriendly to me on this account. They had their own convictions, and they respected mine; and we could work together in perfect concord for the causes of Humanity and Freedom. But the most unscrupulous opponents whom I have ever encountered have been the parochial clergy of the Church to which I belong, and the bands of "workers" whom they direct. Tennyson once depicted a clergyman who—

> "From a throne
> Mounted in heaven should shoot into the dark
> Arrows of lightnings,"

and graciously added that he "would stand and mark." But, when the Vicar from his pulpit-throne launches barbed sayings about "those who would convert our schools into seminaries of Atheism or Socialism, and would degrade this hallowed edifice into a Lecture-Hall—nay, a Music-Hall," then the Liberal candidate, constrained to "sit and mark" these bolts aimed at his cause, is tempted to a breach of charity. The Vicar's "workers" follow suit, but descend a little further into personalities. "You know that the Radical Candidate arrived drunk at one of his meetings? He had to be lifted out of the carriage, and kept in the Committee Room till he was sober. Shocking, isn't it? and then such shameful hypocrisy to talk about Local Option! But can you wonder? You know he's an atheist? Oh yes, I know he goes to Church, but that's all a blind. His one object is to do away with Religion. Yes, they do say he has been in the Divorce Court, but I should not like to say I know it, though I quite believe it. His great friend, Mr. Comus, certainly was, and Mr. Quickly only got off by paying an immense sum in hush-money. They're all tarred with the same brush, and it really is a religious duty to keep them out of Parliament."

Such I have observed to be the attitude of parochial clergy and church-workers towards Liberal candidates.

"They said their duty both to man and God
Required such conduct—which seemed very odd."

I suppose they would have justified it by that zeal for Established Churches and Sectarian Schools which, if it does not actually "eat up" its votaries, certainly destroys their sense of proportion and perspective.[29]

Though I have said so much about the pugnacity of the clergy, I would not have it supposed that the Tory laity were slack or backward in political activity. To verbal abuse one soon became case-hardened; but one had also to encounter physical violence. In those days, stones and cabbage-stalks and rotten eggs still played a considerable part in electioneering. Squires hid their gamekeepers in dark coppices with instructions to pelt one as one drove past after dark. The linch-pin was taken out of one's carriage while one was busy at a meeting; and it was thought seriously unsafe for the candidate to walk unescorted through the hostile parts of the borough.

But, after all, this animosity, theological, moral, physical, did no great harm. It quickened the zeal and strengthened the resolve of one's supporters; and it procured one the inestimable aid of young, active, and pugnacious friends, who formed themselves into a body-guard and a cycle-corps, protecting their candidate when the play was rough, and spreading the light all over the constituency.

Why did not Lord Beaconsfield dissolve Parliament in July, 1878, when he returned in a blaze of triumph from the Congress of Berlin? Probably because his nerve had failed him, and he chose to retain his supremacy unquestioned, rather than commit it to the chances of a General Election. Anyhow, he let the moment pass; and from that time on his Government began to lose ground. In 1879 *Vanity Fair*, a strongly Disraelitish organ, pronounced (under a cartoon) that Gladstone was the most popular man in England. In the autumn of that year, the "Mid-Lothian Campaign" raised him to the very summit of his great career; and, when Christmas came, most Liberals felt that it was all over except the shouting.

On the 9th of March, 1880, Lord Beaconsfield announced that he had "advised the Queen to recur to the sense of her people." His opponents remarked that the nonsense of her people was likely to serve his turn a good deal better; and to the task of exposing and correcting that nonsense we vigorously applied ourselves

during the remaining weeks of Lent. It is true that the same statesman had once declared himself "on the side of the Angels" in order to reassure the clergy, and had once dated a letter on "Maundy Thursday" in order to secure the High Church vote. Encouraged by these signs of grace, some of his followers mildly remonstrated against a Lenten dissolution and an Easter poll. But counsels which might have weighed with Mr. Disraeli, M.P. for Bucks (who had clerical constituents), were thrown away on Lord Beaconsfield, who had the Crown, Lords, and Commons on his side; and on the 24th of March the Parliament which he had dominated for six years was scattered to the winds.

Electioneering in rural districts was pure joy. It was a delicious spring, bright and yet soft, and the beech-forests of the Chilterns were in early leafage.

"There is a rapturous movement, a green growing,
Among the hills and valleys once again,
And silent rivers of delight are flowing
Into the hearts of men.

"There is a purple weaving on the heather,
Night drops down starry gold upon the furze;
Wild rivers and wild birds sing songs together,
Dead Nature breathes and stirs."[30]

In the spring of 1880, Nature had no monopoly of seasonable life. Humanity was up and doing. Calm people were roused to passion, and lethargic people to activity. There was hurrying and rushing and plotting and planning, and all the fierce but fascinating bustle of a great campaign. One hurried across the Vale from a Farmers' Ordinary, where one had been exposing Lord Beaconsfield's nonsense about the "Three Profits" of agricultural land, to a turbulent meeting in a chapel or a barn (for the use of the schoolroom was denied to the Liberal candidate). As we drove through the primrose-studded lanes, or past the village green, the bell was ringing from the grey tower of the Parish Church, and summoning the villagers to the daily Evensong of Holy Week. The contrast was too violent to be ignored; and yet, for a citizen who took his citizenship seriously, the meeting was an even more imperative duty than the service. Hostilities were suspended for Good Friday, Easter Even, and Easter Day, but on Easter Monday they broke out again with redoubled vigour; and, before the week was over, the Paschal Alleluias were blending strangely with pæans of victory over conquered foes. When even so grave and spiritually-minded a man

as Dean Church wrote to a triumphant Gladstonian, "I don't wonder at your remembering the Song of Miriam," it is manifest that political fervour had reached a very unusual point.

On the 2nd of April I was returned to Parliament, as colleague of Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, in the representation of Aylesbury. We were the last Members for that ancient Borough, for, before the next General Election came round, it had been merged, by Redistribution, in Mid Bucks. The Liberal victory was overwhelming. Lord Beaconsfield, who had expected a very different result, resigned on the 18th of April, and Gladstone became Prime Minister for the second time. Truly his enemies had been made his footstool. On the 30th of April I took the oath and my seat in the House of Commons, and a fresh stage of life began.

FOOTNOTES:

[29] I must except from this general indictment the Rev. A. T. Lloyd, Vicar of Aylesbury in 1880, and afterwards Bishop of Newcastle. A strong Conservative, but eminently a Christian gentleman.

[30] Archbishop Alexander.

X

PARLIAMENT

"Still in the Senate, whatsoe'er we lack,
It is not genius;—call old giants back,
And men now living might as tall appear;
Judged by our sons, not us—*we* stand too near.
Ne'er of the living can the living judge—
Too blind the affection, or too fresh the grudge."

BULWER-LYTTON, *St. Stephen's*.

"In old days it was the habit to think and say that the House of Commons was an essentially 'queer place,' which no one could understand until he was a Member of it. It may, perhaps, be doubted whether that somewhat mysterious quality still altogether attaches to that assembly. 'Our own Reporter' has invaded it in all its purlieus. No longer content with giving an account of the speeches of its members, he is not satisfied unless he describes their persons, their dress, and their characteristic mannerisms. He tells us how they dine, even the wines and dishes which they favour, and follows them into the very mysteries of their smoking-room. And yet there is perhaps a certain fine sense of the feelings, and opinions, and humours of this Assembly which cannot be acquired by hasty notions and necessarily superficial remarks, but must be the result of long and patient observation, and of that quick sympathy with human sentiment, in all its classes, which is involved in the possession of that inestimable quality styled tact.

"When Endymion Ferrars first took his seat in the House of Commons, it still fully possessed its character of enigmatic tradition. For himself, Endymion entered the Chamber with a certain degree of awe, which, with use, diminished, but never entirely disappeared. The scene was one over which his boyhood even had long mused, and it was associated with all those traditions of genius, eloquence, and power that charm and inspire youth. His acquaintance with the forms and habits of the House was of great advantage to him, and restrained that excitement which dangerously accompanies us when we enter into a new life,

and especially a life of such deep and thrilling interests and such large proportions."[31]

I quote these words from a statesman who knew the House of Commons more thoroughly than anyone else has ever known it; and, though Lord Beaconsfield was describing the Parliament which assembled in August, 1841, his description would fit, with scarcely the alteration of a word, the Parliament in which I took my seat in April, 1880.[32]

The "acquaintance with the forms and habits of the House," which Lord Beaconsfield attributes to his favourite Endymion, was also mine; from my earliest years I had been familiar with every nook and corner of the Palace of Westminster. My father's official residence in Speaker's Court communicated by a private door with the corridors of the Palace, and my father's privilege as Sergeant-at-Arms enabled him to place me in, or under, the Gallery whenever there was a debate or a scene of special interest. I was early initiated into all the forms and ceremonies of the House; the manœuvres of the mace, the obeisances to the Chair, the rap of "Black Rod" on the locked door, the daily procession of Mr. Speaker and his attendants (which Sir Henry Irving pronounced the most theatrically effective thing of its kind in our public life).

The Sergeant-at-Arms has in his gift the appointment of all the doorkeepers, messengers, and attendants of the House; and, as my father was Sergeant from 1848 to 1875, the staff was almost exclusively composed of men who had been servants in our own or our friends' families. This circumstance was vividly brought home to me on the day on which I first entered the House. In the Members' Lobby I was greeted by a venerable-looking official who bowed, smiled, and said, when I shook hands with him, "Well, sir, I'm glad, indeed, to see you here; and, when I think that I helped to put both your grandfather and your grandmother into their coffins, it makes me feel quite at home with you."

The first duty of a new House of Commons is to elect a Speaker, and on the 7th of April, 1880, we re-elected Mr. Henry Brand (afterwards Lord Hampden), who had been Speaker since 1872. Mr. Brand was a short man, but particularly well set up, and in his wig and gown he carried himself with a dignity which fully made up for the lack of inches. His voice was mellow, and his utterance slightly pompous, so that the lightest word which fell from his lips conveyed a sense of urbane majesty. He looked what he was, and what the traditions of the House required—a country gentleman of the highest type. One of the most noticeable traits was his complexion, fresh and rosy as a boy's. I well remember one day,

after a stormy "all-night sitting," saying to his train-bearer, "The Speaker has borne it wonderfully. He looks as fresh as paint." Whereupon the train-bearer, a man of a depressed spirit, made answer, "Ah! sir, it's the Speaker's 'igh colour that deceives you. 'E'll 'ave that same 'igh colour when 'e's laid out in 'is coffin."

The election of the Speaker having been duly accomplished, and the Members sworn in, the House adjourned till the 20th of May, then to meet for the despatch of business; and this may be a convenient point for a brief recapitulation of recent events.

Lord Hartington (afterwards eighth Duke of Devonshire) had been, ever since the beginning of 1875, the recognized leader of the Liberal Party. But, when Gladstone re-entered the field as the foremost assailant of Lord Beaconsfield's policy, Lord Hartington's authority over his party was sensibly diminished. Indeed, it is not too much to say that he was brushed on one side, and that all the fervour and fighting power of the Liberal Party were sworn to Gladstone's standard.

When the General Election of 1880 reached its close, everyone felt that Gladstone was now the real, though not the titular, leader of the Liberal Party, and the inevitable Prime Minister. Lord Beaconsfield did not wait for an adverse vote in the new House, but resigned on the 18th of April. We do not at present know, but no doubt we shall know when Mr. Monypenny's "Life" is completed, whether Queen Victoria consulted Lord Beaconsfield as to his successor. A friend of mine once asked the Queen this plain question: "When a Prime Minister goes out, does he recommend a successor?" And the Queen replied, with equal plainness, "Not unless I ask him to do so." There can, I think, be little doubt that Her Majesty, in April, 1880, asked Lord Beaconsfield's advice in this delicate matter, and we may presume that the advice was that Her Majesty should follow the constitutional practice, and send for Lord Hartington, as being the leader of the victorious party. This was done, and on the 22nd of April Lord Hartington waited on Her Majesty at Windsor, and was invited to form an Administration. Feeling in the Liberal Party ran very high. It was not for this that we had fought and won. If Gladstone did not become Prime Minister, our victory would be robbed of half its joy; and great was our jubilation when we learned that the task had been declined. As the precise nature of the transaction has often been misrepresented, it is as well to give it in Lord Hartington's own words—

"The advice which Lord Hartington gave to the Queen from first to last was that Her Majesty should send for Mr. Gladstone, and consult him as to the formation

of a Government; and that, if he should be willing to undertake the task, she should call upon him to form an Administration.

"Lord Hartington had up to that time had no communication with Mr. Gladstone on the subject, and did not know what his views as to returning to office might be. With the Queen's permission, Lord Hartington, on his return from Windsor, informed Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, but no other person, of what had passed between Her Majesty and himself."

The result of that interview was a foregone conclusion. If Lord Hartington consented to form an Administration, Gladstone would not take a place in it. If he was not to be Prime Minister, he must remain outside. Having put this point beyond the reach of doubt, Lord Hartington returned next day to Windsor, accompanied by Lord Granville, who led the Liberal Party in the House of Lords. They both assured the Queen that the victory was Gladstone's, and that the Liberal Party would be satisfied with no other Prime Minister. The two statesmen returned to London in the afternoon, and called on Gladstone. He was expecting them and the message which they brought. He went down to Windsor without an hour's delay, and that evening "kissed hands" as Prime Minister for the second time.

This was the climax of his career. He had dethroned Lord Beaconsfield. He had vindicated the cause of humanity and freedom all over the world; and he had been recalled, by unanimous acclamation, to the task of governing the British Empire. On the 20th of May he met his twelfth Parliament, and the second in which he had been Chief Minister of the Crown. "At 4.15," he wrote in his diary, "I went down to the House with Herbert.[33] There was a great and fervent crowd in Palace Yard, and much feeling in the House. It almost overpowered me, as I thought by what deep and hidden agencies I have been brought into the midst of the vortex of political action and contention.... Looking calmly on the course of experience, I do believe that the Almighty has employed me for His purposes in a manner larger or more special than before, and has strengthened me and led me on accordingly, though I must not forget the admirable saying of Hooker, that even ministers of good things are like torches—a light to others, waste and destruction to themselves."

The conviction so solemnly expressed by Gladstone was entertained by not a few of his followers. We felt that, *Deo adjuvante*, we had won a famous victory for the cause of Right; and, as a Party, we "stood on the top of golden hours." An overwhelming triumph after a desperate fight; an immense majority, in which

internecine jealousies were, at least for the moment, happily composed; a leader of extraordinary powers and popularity; an administration of All the Talents; an attractive and practicable programme of Ministerial measures—these were some of the elements in a condition unusually prosperous and promising. But trained observers of political phenomena laid even greater stress on Gladstone's personal ascendancy over the House of Commons. Old and experienced Members of Parliament instructed the newcomer to watch carefully the methods of his leadership, because it was remarkable for its completeness, its dexterity, and the willing submission with which it was received.

The pre-eminence of the Premier was, indeed, the most noteworthy feature which the new House presented to the student of Parliamentary life. Whether considered morally or intellectually, he seemed to tower a head and shoulders above his colleagues, and above the Front Opposition Bench. The leader of the Opposition was the amiable and accomplished Sir Stafford Northcote, afterwards Lord Iddesleigh, a

> "scrupulous, good man,
> Who would not, with a peremptory tone,
> Assert the nose upon his face his own."

In his youth he had been Gladstone's Private Secretary, and he still seemed to tremble at his old chief's glance.

But, when everything looked so fair and smiling, Speaker Brand quietly noted in his diary, that the Liberal Party "were not only strong, but determined to have their way in spite of Mr. Gladstone." And this determination to "have their way" was soon and startlingly manifested, and challenged the personal ascendancy of which we had heard so much.

Charles Bradlaugh, a defiant Atheist, and the teacher of a social doctrine which decent people abhor, had been returned as one of the Members for Northampton. When the other Members were sworn, he claimed a right to affirm, which was disallowed on legal grounds. He thereupon proposed to take the oath in the ordinary way; the Tories objected, and the Speaker weakly gave way. The House, on a division, decided that Bradlaugh must neither affirm nor swear. In effect, it decreed that a duly elected Member was not to take his seat. On the 23rd of June, Bradlaugh came to the table of the House, and again claimed his right to take the oath. The Speaker read the Resolution of the House forbidding it. Thereupon Bradlaugh asked to be heard, and addressed the House from the

Bar. I happened to be dining that night with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone in Downing Street. Gladstone came in full of excitement, and pronounced Bradlaugh's speech "consummate." However, it availed nothing. Bradlaugh was ordered to withdraw from the House; refused, and was committed to a farcical imprisonment of two days in the Clock Tower; and so, as Lord Morley says, there "opened a series of incidents that went on as long as the Parliament, clouded the radiance of the Party triumph, threw the new Government at once into a minority, dimmed the ascendancy of the great Minister, and showed human nature at its worst." From the day when Bradlaugh's case was first mooted, it became apparent that the Liberal Party contained a good many men who had only the frailest hold on the primary principles of Liberalism, and who, under the pressure of social and theological prejudice, were quite ready to join the Tories in a tyrannical negation of Religious Liberty. Gladstone, though deserted and defeated by his own followers, maintained the righteous cause with a signal consistency and courage. There was no one in the world to whom Bradlaugh's special opinions could have been more abhorrent; but he felt—and we who followed him felt the same—that the cause of God and morality can never be served by the insolent refusal of a civil right.

There is no need to recapitulate the story in all its stages, but one incident deserves commemoration. In April, 1883, Gladstone brought in an Affirmation Bill, permitting Members of Parliament (as witnesses in Law-Courts were already permitted) to affirm their allegiance instead of swearing it. On the 26th of April he moved the Second Reading of the Bill in the finest speech which I have ever heard. Under the existing system (which admitted Jews to Parliament, but excluded Atheists), to deny the existence of God was a fatal bar, but to deny the Christian Creed was no bar at all. This, as Gladstone contended, was a formal disparagement of Christianity, which was thereby relegated to a place of secondary importance. And then, on the general question of attaching civil penalties to religious misbelief, he uttered a passage which no one who heard it can forget. "Truth is the expression of the Divine Mind; and, however little our feeble vision may be able to discern the means by which God may provide for its preservation, we may leave the matter in His hands, and we may be sure that a firm and courageous application of every principle of equity and of justice is the best method we can adopt for the preservation and influence of Truth."

The Bill was lost by a majority of three, recreant Liberals again helping to defeat the just claim of a man whom they disliked; and Bradlaugh did not take his seat until the new Parliament in 1886 admitted, without a division, the right which

the old Parliament had denied. Meanwhile, a few of us, actuated by the desperate hope of bringing the clergy to a right view of the controversy, printed Gladstone's speech as a pamphlet, and sent a copy, with a covering letter, to every beneficed clergyman in England, Scotland, and Ireland. One of the clergy thus addressed sent me the following reply, which has ever since been hoarded among my choicest treasures:

June 16th, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your recommendation to read carefully the speech of Mr. Gladstone in favour of admitting the infidel Bradlaugh into Parliament. I did so, when it was delivered, and I must say that the strength of argument rests with the Opposition. I fully expect, in the event of a dissolution, the Government will lose between 50 and 60 seats.

Any conclusion can be arrived at, according to the premises laid down. Mr. G. avoided the Scriptural lines and followed his own. All parties knew the feeling of the country on the subject, and, notwithstanding the bullying and majority of Gladstone, he was defeated.

Before the Irish Church was robbed, I was nominated to the Deanery of Tuam; but, Mr. Disraeli resigning, I was defrauded of my just right by Mr. Gladstone, and my wife, Lady —— ——, the only surviving child of an Earl, was sadly disappointed, but there is a just Judge above. The letter of nomination is still in my possession.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,
—— ——, D.D. and LL.D.

One is often asked if Gladstone had any sense of humour. My simple and sufficient reply is that, when he had read this letter, he returned it to my hands with a knitted brow and flashing eyes, and this indignant question: "What does the fellow mean by quoting an engagement entered into by my predecessor as binding on me?"

The good fortune, which had so signally attended Gladstone's campaign against Lord Beaconsfield, seemed to desert him as soon as the victory was won. The

refusal of the House to follow his lead in Bradlaugh's case put heart of grace into his opponents, who saw thus early in the new Parliament a hopeful opening for vicious attack. The Front Opposition Bench, left to its own devices, would not have accomplished much, but it was splendidly reinforced by the Fourth Party—a Party of Four—Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff, Sir John Gorst, and Mr. Arthur Balfour. Some light has been cast by recent memoirs on the mutual relations of the Four; but beyond question the head and front of the Party was Lord Randolph. That ingenious man possessed a deadly knack of "drawing" Gladstone, as the boys say. He knew the great man's "vulnerable temper and impetuous moods,"[34] and delighted in exercising them. He pelted Gladstone with rebukes and taunts and gibes, and the recipient of these attentions "rose freely." There was something rather unpleasant in the spectacle of a man of thirty playing these tricks upon a man of seventy; but one could not deny that the tricks were extremely clever; and beyond doubt they did a vast deal to consolidate the performer's popularity out of doors. It is not too much to say that, by allowing himself to be drawn, Gladstone made Lord Randolph.

The most formidable enemy of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons was Parnell; and, when he joined forces with the Fourth Party and their adherents, the conjunction was disastrous to Liberalism. He figures in Lord Morley's "Life" of Gladstone as a high-souled and amiable patriot. I always thought him entirely destitute of humane feeling, and a bitter enemy of England. I remember the late Lord Carlisle, then George Howard and Member for East Cumberland, gazing at Parnell across the House and quoting from *The Newcomes*—"The figure of this garçon is not agreeable. Of pale, he has become livid." A lady who met him in a country house wrote me this interesting account of him:

"I cannot exaggerate the impression he made on me. I never before felt such power and magnetic force in any man. As for his eyes, if he looks at you, you can't look away, and, if he doesn't, you are wondering how soon he will look at you again. I'm afraid I have very little trust in his goodness—I should think it a very minus quantity; but I believe absolutely in his strength and his power of influence. I should be sorry if he were my enemy, for I think he would stop at nothing."

At the General Election of 1880, Irish questions were completely in the background. The demand for Home Rule was not taken seriously, even by Mr. John Morley,[35] who stood unsuccessfully for Westminster. Ireland was politically tranquil, and the distress due to the failure of the crops had been alleviated by the combined action of Englishmen irrespective of party. But

during the summer of 1880 it was found that the Irish landlords were evicting wholesale the tenants whom famine had impoverished. To provide compensation for these evicted tenants was the object of a well-meant but hastily drawn "Disturbance Bill," which the Government passed through the Commons. It was rejected by an overwhelming majority in the Lords, and the natural consequence of its rejection was seen in the ghastly record of outrage and murder which stained the following winter.

The Session of 1881 opened on the 6th of January. The speech from the Throne announced two Irish Bills—one to reform the tenure of land, and one to repress crime and outrage. The combination was stigmatized by Mr. T. P. O'Connor as "weak reform and strong coercion"; and the same vivacious orator, alluding to Mr. Chamberlain's supposed sympathy with the Irish cause, taunted the Right Honourable gentleman with having had "if not the courage of his convictions, at least the silence of his shame."

The debate on the Address in the Commons lasted eleven nights, the Irish Members moving endless amendments, with the avowed object of delaying the Coercion Bill, which was eventually brought in by Forster on the 24th January. The gist of the Bill was arrest on suspicion and imprisonment without trial. The Irish Members fought it tooth and nail, and were defied by Gladstone in a speech of unusual fire. "With fatal and painful precision," he exclaimed, "the steps of crime dogged the steps of the Land League; and it is not possible to get rid of facts such as I have stated, by vague and general complaints, by imputations against parties, imputations against England, or imputations against Government. You must meet them, and confute them, if you can. None will rejoice more than myself if you can attain such an end. But in the meantime they stand, and they stand uncontradicted, in the face of the British House of Commons." The speech in which this tremendous indictment was delivered attracted loud cheers from Liberals and Conservatives alike, but stirred the Irish to fury. I remember Mr. O'Connor saying to me, "If only Gladstone had been in opposition, how he would have enjoyed tearing into shreds the statistics which he has just quoted!" The resistance to the Bill became impassioned. The House sat continuously from the afternoon of January 31st to the forenoon of February 2nd. Members were divided, like miners, into Day-Shifts and Night-Shifts. The Refreshment-Rooms at the House were kept open all night, and we recruited our exhausted energies with grilled bones, oysters, and champagne, and went to bed at breakfast-time. At 9.30 on Wednesday morning, February 2nd, Mr. Speaker Brand, who had been absent from the House for some hours, suddenly resumed

the Chair, and, without waiting for J. G. Biggar to finish his speech, put the question that leave be given to bring in the Coercion Bill. The Irish raved and stormed, and cried out against the Speaker's action as "a Breach of Privilege." That it was not; but it was an unexpected and a salutary revolution. When questioned, later in the day, as to the authority on which he had acted, the Speaker said, "I acted on my own responsibility, and from a sense of my duty to the House." Thus was established, summarily and under unprecedented circumstances, that principle of Closure which has since developed into an indispensable feature of Parliamentary procedure.

The Session as a whole was extremely dull. The Irish Land Bill was so complicated that, according to common report, only three persons in the House understood it, and they were Gladstone, the Irish Chancellor,[36] and Mr. T. M. Healy. The only amusing incident was that on the 16th of June, owing to the attendance of Liberal Members at Ascot Races, the majority on a critical division fell to twenty-five. Having occupied the whole Session, the Bill was so mangled by the House of Lords that the best part of another year had to be spent on mending it. Meanwhile, the Coercion Bill proved, in working, a total failure. Forster had averred that the police knew the "Village Ruffians" who incited to crime, and that, if only he were empowered to imprison them without trial, outrages would cease. But either he did not lay hold of the right men, or else imprisonment had no terrors; for all through the autumn and winter of 1881 agrarian crimes increased with terrible rapidity. In a fit of desperation, Forster cast Parnell into prison, and Gladstone announced the feat amid the tumultuous applause of the Guildhall. But things only went from bad to worse, and soon there were forty agrarian murders unpunished. Having imprisoned Parnell without trial, and kept him in prison for six months, the Government now determined to release him, in the hope, for certainly there was no assurance, that he would behave like a repentant child who has been locked up in a dark cupboard, and would use his influence to restore order in Ireland. Dissenting, as well he might, from this policy, Forster resigned. His resignation was announced on the 2nd of May. That evening I met Gladstone at a party, and, in answer to an anxious friend, he said: "The state of Ireland is very greatly improved." Ardent Liberals on both sides of the Channel shared this sanguine faith, but they were doomed to a cruel disappointment. On the 6th of May, the Queen performed the public ceremony of dedicating Epping Forest, then lately rescued from depredation, to the service of the public. It was a forward spring; the day was bright, and the forest looked more beautiful than anything that Doré ever painted. I was standing in the space reserved for the House of Commons, by W.

H. O'Sullivan, M.P. for the County of Limerick. He was an ardent Nationalist, but recent events had touched his heart, and he overflowed with friendly feeling. "This is a fine sight," he said to me, "but, please God, we shall yet see something like it in Ireland. We have entered at last upon the right path. You will hear no more of the Irish difficulty." Within an hour of the time at which he spoke, the newly-appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland—the gallant and high-minded Lord Frederick Cavendish—and the Under Secretary, Mr. Burke, were stabbed to death in the Phœnix Park at Dublin, and the "Irish difficulty" entered on the acutest phase which it has ever known.

At that time Lord Northbrook was First Lord of the Admiralty, and on Saturday evening, the 6th of May, he gave a party at his official residence. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh were among the guests, and there was some music after dinner. In the middle of the performance, I noticed a slight commotion, and saw a friend leading Mrs. Gladstone out of the room. The incident attracted attention, and people began to whisper that Gladstone, who was not at the party, must have been taken suddenly ill. While we were all wondering and guessing, a waiter leaned across the buffet in the tea-room, and said to me, "Lord Frederick Cavendish has been murdered in Dublin. I am a Messenger at the Home Office, and we heard it by telegram this evening." In an incredibly short time the ghastly news spread from room to room, and the guests trooped out in speechless horror. That night brought a condition more like delirium than repose. One felt as though Hell had opened her mouth, and the Powers of Darkness had been let loose. Next day London was like a city of the dead, and by Monday all England was in mourning. Sir Wilfrid Lawson thus described that awful Sunday: "The effect was horrifying—almost stupefying. No one who walked in the streets of London that day can ever forget the sort of ghastly depression which seemed to affect everyone. Perfect strangers seemed disposed to speak in sympathizing, horror-stricken words with those whom they met. In short, there was a moral gloom which could be felt over the whole place."

FOOTNOTES:

[31] Lord Beaconsfield. *Endymion.*

[32] The following incident may be worth recording for the information of such as are interested in the antiquities of Parliament. I first took my seat on the highest bench above and behind the Treasury Bench, under the shadow of the Gallery. A few days later, an old Parliamentarian said to me, "That's quite the

wrong place for you. That belongs to ancient Privy Councillors, and they sit there because, if any difficulty arises, the Minister in charge of the business can consult them, without being observed by everyone in the House." That was the tradition in 1880, but it has long since died out.

[33] Afterwards Lord Gladstone.

[34] Gladstone's own phrase.

[35] Afterwards Lord Morley of Blackburn.

[36] The Right Hon. Hugh Law.

XI

POLITICS

"Ne'er to these chambers, where the mighty rest,
Since their foundation came a nobler guest;
Nor e'er was to the bowers of bliss conveyed
A fairer spirit, or more welcome shade."

T. TICKELL, *On the death of Mr. Addison*.

Lord Frederick Cavendish was laid to rest with his forefathers at Edensor, near Chatsworth, on the 11th of May, 1882—and on the evening of that day the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, brought in a "Prevention of Crimes Bill" for Ireland, designed to supersede the Coercion Act which had proved such a dismal failure. The new Bill provided for the creation of special tribunals composed of Judges of the Superior Courts, who could sit without juries; and gave the police the right of search at any time in proclaimed districts, and authorized them to arrest any persons unable to give an account of themselves. The Bill was succinctly described as "Martial Law in a Wig," and, as such, it was exactly adapted to the needs of a country in which social war had raged unchecked for two years. The murderous conspiracy died hard, but experience soon justified those who had maintained that, as soon as a proper tribunal was constituted, evidence would be forthcoming. The Act was courageously administered by Lord Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan, under circumstances of personal and political peril which the present generation can hardly realize. In less than two years the murderers of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke had been hanged; the conspiracy which organized the murders had been broken up; and social order was permanently re-established.

Such were the excellent effects of the Crimes Act of 1882, and annalists treating of this period have commonly said that the Act was due to the murders in the Phœnix Park. Some years ago Lord James of Hereford, who, as Attorney-General, had been closely associated with these events, placed in my hands a written statement of the circumstances in which the Act originated, and begged

that, if possible, the truth of the matter might be made known. This may be a convenient opportunity for giving his testimony.

"The Bill of 1882 was designed, and on the stocks, during the month of April. I saw F. Cavendish as to some of its details almost immediately before his starting for Ireland. As Chief Secretary, he discussed with me the provisions the Bill should contain. On Sunday, May 7, 1882, when the news of F. Cavendish's murder became known, I went to see Harcourt. He begged me to see that the drawing of the Bill was hastened on. About 2 o'clock I went to the Irish Office, and found the Irish Attorney-General hard at work on the Bill. The first draft of it was then in print. No doubt F. Cavendish's death tended to affect the subsequent framing of the Bill. Harcourt came upon the scenes. T—— and J —— were called to the assistance of the Irish draftsmen, and no doubt the Bill was rendered stronger in consequence of the events of May 6.

"I also well remember the change of front about the power of Search. The Irish Members in the most determined manner fought against the creation of this power.... Harcourt, who had charge of the Bill, would listen to none of these arguments, but Mr. Gladstone was much moved by them. There was almost a crisis produced in consequence of this disagreement; but Harcourt gave way, and the concession was announced."

It is not my purpose in these chapters to speak about my own performances in Parliament, but the foregoing allusion to the concession on the Right of Search tempts me to a personal confession. In the Bill, as brought in, there was a most salutary provision giving the police the right to search houses in which murders were believed to be plotted. After making us vote for this clause three times—on the First Reading, on the Second Reading, and in Committee—the Government, as we have just seen, yielded to clamour, and proposed on Report to alter the clause by limiting the Right of Search to day-time. I opposed this alteration, as providing a "close time for murder," and had the satisfaction of helping to defeat the Government. The Big-Wigs of the Party were extremely angry, and Mr. R. H. Hutton, in *The Spectator*, rebuked us in his most grandmotherly style. In reply, I quoted some words of his own. "There is nothing which injures true Liberalism more than the sympathy of its left wing with the loose ruffianism of unsettled States." "Such a State," I said, "is Ireland; and if, under the pressure of extraordinary difficulties, Ministers vacillate or waver in their dealings with it, the truest Liberalism, I believe, is that which holds them firmly to their duty."

In that sad Session of 1882 the troubles of the Government "came not single

spies, but in battalions," and the most enduring of those troubles arose in Egypt. For the benefit of a younger generation, let me recall the circumstances.

Ismail Pasha, the ruler of Egypt, had accumulated a national debt of about £100,000,000, and the pressure on the wretched peasants who had to pay was crushing. Presently they broke out in revolt, partly with the hope of shaking off this burden, and partly with a view to establishing some sort of self-government. But the financiers who had lent money to Egypt took fright, and urged the Government to interfere and suppress the insurrection. A meeting of Tories was held in London on June 29th and the Tory Leaders made the most inflammatory speeches. Unhappily, the Government yielded to this show of violence. It was said by a close observer of Parliamentary institutions that "When the Government of the day and the Opposition of the day take the same side, one may be almost sure that some great wrong is at hand," and so it was now. On July 10th our fleet bombarded Alexandria, smashing its rotten forts with the utmost ease, and killing plenty of Egyptians. I remember to this day the sense of shame with which I read our Admiral's telegraphic despatch: "Enemy's fire weak and ineffectual."

The protest delivered on the following day, by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the most consistent and the most disinterested politician whom I ever knew, deserves to be remembered.

"I say deliberately, and in doing so I challenge either Tory or Liberal to contradict me, that no Tory Government could have done what the Liberal Government did yesterday in bombarding those forts. If such a thing had been proposed, what would have happened? We should have had Sir William Harcourt stumping the country, and denouncing Government by Ultimatum. We should have had Lord Hartington coming down, and moving a Resolution condemning these proceedings being taken behind the back of Parliament. We should have had Mr. Chamberlain summoning the Caucuses. We should have had Mr. Bright declaiming in the Town Hall of Birmingham against the wicked Tory Government; and as for Mr. Gladstone, we all know that there would not have been a railway-train, passing a roadside station, that he would not have pulled up at, to proclaim non-intervention as the duty of the Government."

On the 12th of July John Bright retired from the Government, as a protest against the bombardment, and made a short speech full of solemn dignity. "I asked my calm judgment and my conscience what was the path I ought to take. They pointed it out to me, as I think, with an unerring finger, and I am humbly

endeavouring to follow it."

But it was too late. The mischief was done, and has not been undone to this day. I remember Mr. Chamberlain saying to me: "Well, I confess I was tired of having England kicked about all over the world. I never condemned the Tory Government for going to war; only for going to war on the wrong side." It was a characteristic saying; but this amazing lapse into naked jingoism spread wonder and indignation through the Liberal Party, and shook the faith of many who, down to that time, had regarded Gladstone as a sworn servant of Peace. The Egyptian policy of 1882 must, I fear, always remain the blot on Gladstone's scutcheon; and three years later he gave away the whole case for intervention, and threw the blame on his predecessors in office. In his Address to the Electors of Midlothian before the General Election of 1885 he used the following words: "We have, according to my conviction from the very first (when the question was not within the sphere of Party contentions), committed by our intervention in Egypt a grave political error, and the consequence which the Providential order commonly allots to such error is not compensation, but retribution."

But, though Providence eventually allotted "retribution" to our crimes and follies in Egypt, and though they were always unpopular with the Liberal Party out of doors, it was curious to observe that the position of the Government in the House of Commons was stronger at the end of 1882 than it was at the beginning. That this was so was due, I think, in part to the fact that for the moment we were victorious in Egypt,[37] and in part to admiration for the vigour with which Lord Spencer was fighting the murderous conspiracy in Ireland. The Government enjoyed the dangerous praise of the Opposition; obstruction collapsed; and some new Rules of Procedure were carried by overwhelming majorities. Here let me interpolate an anecdote. Mr. M—— L—— was a barrister, an obsequious supporter of the Government, and, as was generally surmised, on the lookout for preferment. Mr. Philip Callan, M.P. for County Louth, was speaking on an amendment to one of the new Rules, and Mr. M—— L—— thrice tried to call him to order on the ground of irrelevancy. Each time, the Chairman of Committee ruled that, though the Honourable Member for Louth was certainly taking a wide sweep, he was not out of order. Rising the third time from the seat Callan said: "I may as well take the opportunity of giving notice that I propose to move the insertion of a new Standing Order, which will read as follows: 'Any Hon. Member who three times unsuccessfully calls another Hon. Member to order, shall be ineligible for a County Court Judgeship.'" Mr. M—— L—— looked coy, and everyone else shouted with glee.

The Session of 1883 opened very quietly. The speech from the Throne extolled the success of the Ministerial policy in Ireland and Egypt, and promised a series of useful but not exciting measures. Meanwhile the more active Members of the Liberal Party, among whom I presumed to reckon myself, began to agitate for more substantial reforms. We had entered on the fourth Session of the Parliament. A noble majority was beginning to decline, and we felt that there was no time to lose if we were to secure the ends which we desired. Knowing that I felt keenly on these subjects, Mr. T. H. S. Escott, then Editor of the *Fortnightly*, asked me to write an article for his Review, and in that article I spoke my mind about the Agricultural Labourers' Suffrage, the Game Laws, the reform of the City of London, and an English Land Bill. "The action of the Peers," I said, "under Lord Salisbury's guidance will probably force on the question of a Second Chamber, and those who flatter themselves that the Liberal Party will shrink from discussing it will be grievously disillusioned. Disestablishment, begun in Ireland, will inevitably work round, by Scotland, to England. And who is to preside over these changes?"

I returned to the charge in the June number of the *Nineteenth Century*, and urged my points more strongly. I pleaded for social reform, and for "a Free Church in a Free State." I crossed swords with a noble Lord who had pronounced dogmatically that "A Second Chamber is absolutely necessary." I gave my reasons for thinking that now-a-days there is very little danger of hasty and ill-considered legislation, and I pointed out that, when this danger disappears, the reason for a Second Chamber disappears with it. "But," I said, "granting, for the sake of argument, that something of this danger still survives, would it not be fully met by limiting the power of the Lords to a Veto for a year on a measure passed by the Commons?"

These articles, coupled with my speeches in the House and in my constituency, gave dire offence to the Whigs; and I was chastened with rebukes which, if not weighty, were at any rate ponderous. "Not this way," wrote the *St. James's Gazette*, in a humorous apostrophe, "not this way, O Junior Member for Aylesbury, lies the road to the Treasury Bench," and so, indeed, it seemed. But, on returning from an evening party at Sir Matthew Ridley's, on the 5th of June, 1883, I found a letter from Mr. Gladstone, offering me the post of Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board. One sentence of that letter I may be allowed to quote:

"Your name, and the recollections it suggests, add much to the satisfaction which, independently of relationship, I should have felt in submitting to you this

request." It was like Gladstone's courtesy to call his offer a "request."

Thus I became harnessed to the machine of Government, and my friends, inside the House and out of it, were extremely kind about the appointment. Nearly everyone who wrote to congratulate me used the same image: "You have now set your foot on the bottom rung of the ladder." But my staunch friend George Trevelyan handled the matter more poetically, in the following stanza:

"As long as a plank can float, or a bolt can hold together,
When the sea is smooth as glass, or the waves run
mountains high,
In the brightest of summer skies, or the blackest of dirty
weather,
Wherever the ship swims, there swim I."

The part of "the ship" to which I was now fastened was certainly not the most exalted or exciting of the public offices. The estimation in which it was held in official circles is aptly illustrated by a pleasantry of that eminent Civil Servant, Sir Algernon West. When the Revised Version of the New Testament appeared, Gladstone asked Sir Algernon (who had begun life in the Treasury), if he thought it as good as the Authorized Version. "Certainly not," was the reply. "It is so painfully lacking in dignity." Gladstone, always delighted to hear an innovation censured (unless he himself had made it), asked for an illustration. "Well," said West, "look at the Second Chapter of St. Luke. *There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.* Now that always struck me as a sublime conception—a tax levied on the whole world by a stroke of the pen—an act worthy of an Imperial Treasury. But I turn to the Revised Version, and what do I read? *That all the world should be enrolled*—a census—the sort of thing the Local Government Board could do. That instance, to my mind, settles the question between Old and New."

But in the office thus contemned by the Paladins of the Treasury, there was plenty of interesting though little-observed work. In the autumn of 1883 I undertook, in conjunction with the President of the Board, a mission of enquiry into the worst slums in London. There is no need to recapitulate here all the horrors we encountered, for they can be read in the evidence given before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor which was appointed in the following year; but one incident made a peculiar impression on my mind. The Sanitary Officer reported some underground dwellings in Spitalfields as being perhaps the worst specimens of human habitation which we should find, and he offered to be my guide. I entered a cellar-like room in a basement, which, till one's eyes got used to the dimness, seemed pitch-dark. I felt, rather than saw, the presence of a woman, and, when we began to talk, I discerned by her voice that she was not a Londoner. "No, sir," she replied, "I come from Wantage, in Berkshire." Having always heard of Wantage as a kind of Earthly Paradise, where the Church, the Sisterhood, and the "Great House" combined to produce

the millennium, I said, involuntarily, "How you must wish to be back there!" "Back at Wantage!" exclaimed the Lady of the Cellar. "No, indeed, sir. This is a poor place, but it's better than Wantage." It was instructive to find this love of freedom, and resentment of interference, in the bowels of the earth of Spitalfields.

An incident which helps to illustrate Gladstone's personal ascendancy belongs to this period. Those were the days of agitation for and against a Channel Tunnel, eagerly promoted by speculative tunnel-makers, and resolutely opposed by Mr. Chamberlain, then President of the Board of Trade. Gladstone, when asked if he was for or against the Tunnel, said very characteristically, "I am not so much in favour of the Tunnel, as opposed to the opponents of it"; and this of course meant that he was really in favour of it. About this time I met him at dinner, and after the ladies had gone, I think we were eight men round the table. Gladstone began praising the Tunnel; one of the hearers echoed him, and the rest of us were silent. Looking round triumphantly, Gladstone said, "Ah, this is capital! Here we are—eight sensible men—and all in favour of the Tunnel." Knowing that several of us were against the Tunnel, I challenged a division and collected the votes. Excepting Gladstone and his echo, we all were anti-tunnelites, and yet none of us would have had the hardihood to say so.

In this year—1883—Gladstone's Government had regained some portion of the popularity and success which they had lost; but when the year ran out, their success was palpably on the wane, and their popularity of course waned with it. The endless contradictions and perplexities, crimes and follies, of our Egyptian policy became too obvious to be concealed or palliated, and at the beginning of 1884 the Government resolved on their crowning and fatal blunder. On the 18th of January, Lord Hartington (Secretary of State for War), Lord Granville, Lord Northbrook, and Sir Charles Dilke had an interview with General Gordon, and determined that he should be sent to evacuate the Soudan. Gladstone assented, and Gordon started that evening on his ill-starred errand. In view of subsequent events, it is worth recording that there were some Liberals who, from the moment they heard of it, condemned the undertaking. The dithyrambics of the *Pall Mall Gazette* drew from William Cory[38] the following protest:

"January 21, 1884.

> "It's really ludicrous—the P. M. G. professing a clearly suprarational faith in an elderly Engineer, saying that he will cook the goose if no one interferes with him ... as if he could go to Suakim, 'summon' a barbarous

potentate, make him supply his escort to Khartoum, and, when at Khartoum, issue edicts right and left; as if he could act without subaltern officers, money, stores, gold, etc.; as if he were an *homme drapeau*, and had an old army out there ready to troop round him, as the French veterans round Bonaparte at Fréjus."

In Parliament, the principal work of 1884 was to extend the Parliamentary Franchise to the Agricultural Labourer. A Tory Member said in debate that the labourers were no more fit to have the franchise than the beasts they tended; and Lord Goschen, who had remained outside the Cabinet of 1880 sooner than be party to giving them the vote, used to say to the end of his life that, if the Union were ever destroyed, it would be by the agricultural labourers. I, however, who had lived among them all my life and knew that they were at least as fit for political responsibility as the artisans, threw myself with ardour into the advocacy of their cause. (By the way, my speech of the Second Reading of the Franchise Bill was answered by the present Speaker[39] in his maiden speech.) All through the summer the battle raged. The Lords did not refuse to pass the Bill, but said that, before they passed it, they must see the accompanying scheme of Redistribution. It was not a very unreasonable demand, but Gladstone denounced it as an unheard-of usurpation. We all took our cue from him, and vowed that we would smash the House of Lords into atoms before we consented to this insolent claim. Throughout the Parliamentary recess, the voices of protest resounded from every Liberal platform, and even so lethargic a politician as Lord Hartington harangued a huge gathering in the Park at Chatsworth. Everything wore the appearance of a constitutional crisis. Queen Victoria, as we now know, was seriously perturbed, and did her utmost to avert a rupture between Lords and Commons. But still we persisted in our outcry. The Lords must pass the Franchise Bill without conditions, and when it was law, we would discuss Redistribution. A new Session began on 23rd of October. The Franchise Bill was brought in again, passed, and sent up to the Lords. At first the Lords seemed resolved to insist on their terms; then they wavered; and then again they hardened their hearts. Lord Salisbury reported that they would not let the Franchise Bill through till they got the Redistribution Bill from the Commons. Meanwhile, all sorts of mysterious negotiations were going on between the "moderate" men on both sides; and it was known that Gladstone dared not dissolve on the old franchise, as he was sure to be beaten in the Boroughs. His only hope was in the agricultural labourers. Then, acting under pressure which is not known but can be easily guessed, he suddenly announced, on the 17th of November, that he was prepared to introduce the Redistribution Bill before the

Lords went into Committee on the Franchise Bill. It was the point for which the Tories had been contending all along, and by conceding it, Gladstone made an absolute surrender. All the sound and fury of the last six months had been expended in protesting that we could never do what now we meekly did. It was the beginning of troubles which have lasted to this day. The House of Lords learned the welcome lesson that, when the Liberal Party railed, they only had to sit still; and the lesson learnt in 1884 was applied in each succeeding crisis down to August 1911. It has always been to me an amazing instance of Gladstone's powers of self-deception that to the end of his life he spoke of this pernicious surrender as a signal victory.

Early in 1885, it became my duty to receive at the Local Government Board a deputation of the Unemployed, who then were beginning to agitate the habitual calm of the well-fed and the easy-going. It was a curious experience. The deputation consisted of respectable-looking and apparently earnest men, some of whom spoke the language of *Alton Locke*, while others talked in a more modern strain of dynamite, Secret Societies, and "a life for a life." The most conspicuous figure in the deputation was an engineer called John Burns,[40] and those who are interested in political development may find something to their mind in the report of the deputation in *The Times* of February 17th, 1885. There they will read that, after leaving Whitehall, the crowd adjourned to the Embankment, where the following resolution was carried, and despatched to the President of the Local Government Board:

> "That this meeting of the unemployed, having heard the answer given by the Local Government Board to their deputation, considers the refusal to start public works to be a sentence of death on thousands of those out of work, and the recommendation to bring pressure to bear on the local bodies to be a direct incitement to violence; further, it will hold Mr. G. W. E. Russell and the members of the Government, individually and collectively, guilty of the murder of those who may die in the next few weeks, and whose lives would have been saved had the suggestion of the deputation been acted on.
>
> (Signed) JOHN BURNS, *Engineer*.
> JOHN E. WILLIAMS, *Labourer*.

WILLIAM HENRY, *Foreman*.
JAMES MACDONALD, *Tailor*."

The threats with which the leaders of the Unemployed regaled us derived a pleasing actuality from the fact that on the 24th of January simultaneous explosions had occurred at the Tower and in the House of Commons. I did not see the destruction at the Tower, but I went straight across from my office to the House of Commons, and saw a curious object-lesson in scientific Fenianism. In Westminster Hall there was a hole in the pavement six feet wide, and another in the roof. I had scarcely done examining these phenomena when another crash shook the whole building, and we found that an infernal machine had been exploded in the House of Commons, tearing the doors off their hinges, wrecking the galleries, and smashing the Treasury Bench into matchwood. The French Ambassador, M. Waddington, entered the House with me, and for a while stood silent and amazed. At length he said, "There's no other country in the world where this could happen." Certainly it must be admitted that at that moment our detective organization was not at its best.

However, neither mock-heroics nor actual outrage could obscure the fact that during the spring of 1885 there Was an immense amount of unemployment, and consequent suffering, among the unskilled labourers. I suggested that we should issue from the Local Government Board a Circular Letter to all the Local Authorities in London, asking them, not to invent work, but to push forward works which, owing to the rapid extension of London into the suburbs, were becoming absolutely necessary. But the President of the Board, a bond slave of Political Economy, would not sanction even this very mild departure from the precepts of the Dismal Science. The distress was peculiarly acute at the Docks, where work is precarious and uncertain in the highest degree. Some well-meaning people at the West End instituted a plan of "Free Breakfasts" to be served at the Dock-Gates to men who had failed to obtain employment for the day. On one of these occasions—and very pathetic they were—I was the host, and the *Saturday Review* treated me to some not unkindly ridicule.

Child of the Whigs whose name you flout,
  Slip of the tree you fain would fell;
Your colleagues own, I cannot doubt,
  Your plan, George Russell, likes them well,
"What will regain," you heard them cry,
  "That popular praise we once enjoyed?"

And instant was your smart reply,
"Free Breakfasts to the Unemployed."

And then, after six more verses of rhythmical chaff, this prophetic stanza:

And howsoe'er profusely flow
The tea and coffee round the board,
The hospitality you show
Shall nowise lack its due reward.
For soon, I trust, our turn 'twill be,
With joy by no regret alloyed,
To give the present Ministry
A Breakfast for the Unemployed.

The Parliamentary work of 1885 was Redistribution. The principles had been settled in secret conclave by the leaders on both sides; but the details were exhaustively discussed in the House of Commons. By this time we had become inured to Tory votes of censure on our Egyptian policy, and had always contrived to escape by the skin of our teeth; but we were in a disturbed and uneasy condition. We knew—for there was an incessant leakage of official secrets—that the Cabinet was rent by acute dissensions. The Whiggish section was in favour of renewing the Irish Crimes Act. The Radicals wished to let it expire, and proposed to conciliate Ireland by a scheme of National Councils. Between the middle of April and the middle of May, nine members of the Cabinet, for one cause or another, contemplated resignation. After one of these disputes Gladstone said to a friend: "A very fair Cabinet to-day—only three resignations." Six months later, after his Government had fallen, he wrote: "A Cabinet does not exist out of office, and no one in his senses could covenant to call *the late Cabinet* together." The solution of these difficulties came unexpectedly. The Budget introduced by Hugh Childers on the 30th of April proposed to meet a deficit by additional duties on beer and spirits; and was therefore extremely unpopular. Silently and skilfully, the Tories, the Irish, and the disaffected Liberals laid their plans. On Sunday, June 7th, Lord Henry Lennox—a leading Tory—told me at luncheon that we were to be turned out on the following day, and so, sure enough, we were, on an amendment to the Budget moved by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.[41] It was thought at the time that the Liberal wirepullers welcomed this defeat, as a way out of difficulties. Certainly no strenuous efforts were made to avert it. The scene in the House when the fatal figures were announced has been often described, and in my

mind's eye I see clearly the image of Lord Randolph Churchill, dancing a kind of triumphant hornpipe on the bench which for five momentous years had been the seat of the Fourth Party. On the 24th of June Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister for the first time.

The break-up of the Government revealed to all the world the fact that the Liberal Party was cleft in twain. The Whig section was led by Lord Hartington, and the Radical section by Mr. Chamberlain. Gladstone did his best to mediate between the two, and so to present an unbroken front to the common foe. But the parting of the ways soon became painfully apparent. The fall of the Government involved, of course, the return of Lord Spencer from Ireland, and some of his friends resolved, after the manner of admiring Englishmen, to give him a public dinner. The current phrase was that we were to "Dine Spencer for coercing the Irish." As he had done that thoroughly for the space of three years, and, at the risk of his own life, had destroyed a treasonable and murderous conspiracy, he was well entitled to all the honours which we could give him. So it was arranged that the dinner was to take place at the Westminster Palace Hotel on the 24th of July. Shortly before the day arrived, Mr. Chamberlain said to me: "I think you had better not attend that dinner to Spencer. I am not going, nor is D——. Certainly Spencer has done his duty, and shown capital pluck; but I hope we should all have done the same, and there's no reason to mark it by a dinner. And, after all, coercion is not a nice business for Liberals, though we may be forced into it." However, as I had greatly admired Lord Spencer's administration, and as his family and mine had been politically associated for a century, I made a point of attending, and a capital evening we had. There was an enthusiastic and representative company of two hundred Liberals. Lord Hartington presided, and extolled Lord Spencer to the skies; and Lord Spencer justified the Crimes Act by saying that, when it was passed, there was an organization of thirty thousand Fenians, aided by branches in Scotland and England, and by funds from America, defying the law of the land in Ireland. Not a word in all this about Home Rule, or the Union of Hearts, but we cheered it to the echo, little dreaming what the next six months had in store for us.

Though I was thoroughly in favour of resolute dealing with murder and outrage, I was also—and this was a combination which sorely puzzled *The Spectator*—an enthusiastic Radical, and specially keen on the side of social reform. My views on domestic politics were substantially the same as those set forth with extraordinary vigour and effect in a long series of speeches by Mr. Chamberlain, who was now unmuzzled, and was making the fullest use of his freedom. He was

then at the very zenith of his powers, and the scheme of political and social reform which he expounded is still, in my opinion, the best compendium of Radical politics; but it tended in the direction of what old-fashioned people called Socialism, and this was to Gladstone an abomination. One day, to my consternation, he asked me if it was true that Socialism had made some way among the younger Liberals, of whom I was then one. Endeavouring to parry a question which must have revealed my own guilt, I feebly asked if by Socialism my venerable Leader meant the practice of taking private property for public uses, or the performance by the State of what ought to be left to the individual; whereupon he replied, with startling emphasis: "I mean both, but I reserve my worst Billingsgate for the attack on private property."

On the 18th of September Gladstone issued his Address to the Electors of Midlothian—an exceedingly long-winded document, which seemed to commit the Liberal Party to nothing in particular. *Verbosa et grandis epistola*, said Mr. John Morley. "An old man's manifesto," wrote the *Pall Mall*. By contrast with this colourless but authoritative document, Mr. Chamberlain's scheme became known as "The Unauthorized Programme," and of that programme I was a zealous promoter.

As soon as the Franchise Bill and the Redistribution Bill had passed into law, it was arranged that the dissolution should take place in November. The whole autumn was given up to electioneering. The newly-enfranchised labourers seemed friendly to the Liberal cause, but our bewildered candidates saw that their leaders were divided into two sections—one might almost say, two camps. This was a condition of things which boded disaster to the Liberal Party; but Gladstone never realized that Chamberlain was a power which it was madness to alienate.

On the 2nd of October I went on a visit to Hawarden, and the next day Gladstone opened a conversation on the state of the Party and the prospects of the Election. He said: "I believe you are in Chamberlain's confidence. Can you tell me what he means?" I replied that I was not the least in Chamberlain's confidence, though he had always been very friendly to me, and I admired his Programme. "But," I said, "I think that what he means is quite clear. He has no thought of trying to oust you from the Leadership of the Liberal Party; but he is determined that, when you resign it, he, and not Hartington, shall succeed you." This seemed to give the Chief some food for reflection, and then I ventured to follow up my advantage. "After all," I said, "Chamberlain has been your colleague for five years. Surely your best plan would be to invite him here, and ascertain his

intentions from himself." If I had suggested that my host should invite the Sultan or the Czar, he could not have looked more surprised. "I have always made a point," he said, "of keeping this place clear of political transactions. We never invite anyone except private friends." "Well," I said, "but we are within six weeks of the Election, and it will never do for us to go to the country with you and Chamberlain professing two rival policies."

Backed by Mrs. Gladstone, I carried my point, and with my own hand wrote the telegram inviting Mr. Chamberlain. Unfortunately I had to leave Hawarden on the 6th of October, so I was not present at the meeting which I had brought about; but a few days later I had a letter from Mr. Chamberlain saying that, though his visit had been socially pleasant, it had been politically useless. He had not succeeded in making Gladstone see the importance of the Unauthorized Programme, and "if I were to drop it now," he said, "the stones would immediately cry out."

What then ensued is matter of history. Parliament was dissolved on the 18th of November. When the elections were finished, the Liberal Party was just short of the numerical strength which was requisite to defeat a combination of Tories and Parnellites. Lord Salisbury, therefore, retained office, but the life of his administration hung by a thread.

On the 24th of November, 1884, the great Lord Shaftesbury, moved by the spirit of prophecy, had written: "In a year or so we shall have Home Rule disposed of (at all hazards) to save us from daily and hourly bores." On the 17th of December, 1885, the world was astonished by an anonymous announcement in two newspapers—and the rest followed suit next day—that, if Gladstone were returned to power, he would be prepared to deal, in a liberal spirit, with the demand for Home Rule. This announcement was an act of folly not easy to explain or condone. We now know whose act it was, and we know that it was committed without Gladstone's privity. As Lord Morley says: "Never was there a moment when every consideration of political prudence more imperatively counselled silence." But now every political tongue in the United Kingdom was set wagging, and Gladstone could neither confirm nor deny. Our bewilderment and confusion were absolute. No one knew what was coming next; who was on what side; or whither his party—or, indeed, himself—was tending. One point only was clear: if Gladstone meant what he seemed to mean, the Parnellites would support him, and the Tories would be turned out. The new Parliament met on the 21st of January, 1886. On the—, the Government were defeated on an amendment to the Address, in favour of Municipal Allotments, and Lord

Salisbury resigned. It was a moment of intense excitement, and everyone tasted for a day or two "the joy of eventful living."

On the 29th of January, I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone. The host was in a grim mood of suppressed excitement, anger, and apprehension. All day long he had been expecting a summons from the Queen, and it had not arrived. "It begins to look," he said, "as if the Government meant after all to ignore the vote of the House of Commons, and go on. All I can say is that, if they do, the Crown will be placed in a worse position than it has ever occupied in my lifetime." But after the party had broken up, Sir Henry Ponsonby arrived with the desired message from the Queen; and on the 1st of February Gladstone kissed hands, as Prime Minister for the third time.

"When Gladstone runs down a steep place, his immense majority, like the pigs in Scripture but hoping for a better issue, will go with him, roaring in grunts of exultation." This was Lord Shaftesbury's prediction in the previous year; but it was based on an assumption which proved erroneous. It took for granted the unalterable docility of the Liberal Party. I knew little at first hand of the transactions and tumults which filled the spring and early summer of 1886. At the beginning of February I was laid low by serious illness, resulting from the fatigue and exposure of the Election; and when, after a long imprisonment, I was out of bed, I went off to the seaside for convalescence. But even in the sick-room I heard rumours of the obstinate perversity with which the Liberal Government was rushing on its fate, and the admirably effective resistance to Home Rule engineered by Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain. The Liberal leaders ran down the steep place, but an important minority of the pigs refused to follow them. The Home Rule Bill was thrown out on the 8th of June. Parliament was immediately dissolved. The General Election gave a majority of more than a hundred against Home Rule; the Government retired and Lord Salisbury again became Prime Minister.

In those distant days, there was a happy arrangement by which once a year, when my father was staying with me, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone dined with me to meet him. My father and Gladstone had both entered public life at the General Election of 1832, and my father loved to describe him as he appeared riding in Hyde Park on a grey Arabian mare, "with his hat, narrow-brimmed, high up on the centre of his head, sustained by a crop of thick, curly hair," while a passer-by said: "That's Gladstone. He is to make his maiden speech to-night. It will be worth hearing." The annual rencounter took place on the 21st of July, 1886. After dinner, Gladstone drew me into a window and said: "Well, this Election

has been a great disappointment." I replied that we could certainly have wished it better, but that the result was not unexpected. To my amazement, Gladstone replied that it was completely unexpected. "The experts assured me that we should sweep the country." (I always wish that I could have had an opportunity of speaking my mind to those "experts.") Pursuing the subject, Gladstone said that the Queen had demurred to a second election in six months, and that some of his colleagues had recommended more moderate courses. "But I said that, if we didn't dissolve, we should be showing the white feather."

It is no part of my purpose to trace the dismal history of the Liberal Party between 1886 and 1892. But one incident in that time deserves to be recorded. I was dining with Lord and Lady Rosebery on the 4th of March, 1889; Gladstone was of the company, and was indulging in passionate diatribes against Pitt. One phrase has always stuck in my memory. "There is no crime recorded in history—I do not except the Massacre of St. Bartholomew—which will compare for a moment with the means by which the Union was brought about." When the party was breaking up, one of the diners said: "I hope Mr. Gladstone won't draw that parallel, between the Union and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, on a public platform, or we shall stand even less well with the thinking public than we do now."

Parliament was dissolved in June, 1892, and, when the elections were over, it was found that the Liberal Party, including the Irish, had only a majority of 40. When Gladstone knew the final figures, he saw the impossibility of forcing Home Rule through the Lords, and exclaimed: "My life's work is done." However, as we all remember, he took the Premiership for a fourth time, and during the Session of 1893 passed a Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons. The Lords threw it out by 419 to 41, the minority being mainly wage-receivers. Other troubles there were, both inside the Government and outside it; Mr. Gladstone told his friends that the Naval Estimates demanded by the Admiralty were "mad and drunk"; and people began to suspect that the great change was at hand.

On the 1st of March, 1894, Gladstone made his last speech in the House of Commons. In that speech he bequeathed to his party the legacy of a nobly-worded protest against the irresponsible power of the "Nominated Chamber"; and then, having accomplished sixty-one years of Parliamentary service, he simply disappeared, without ceremony or farewell. In my mind's eye I see him now, upright as ever, and walking fast, with his despatch-box dangling from his right hand, as he passed the Speaker's Chair, and quitted the scene of his life's

work for ever.

In spite of warnings and anticipations, the end had, after all, come suddenly; and, with a sharp pang of regretful surprise, we woke to the fact that "our master was taken away from our head to-day." Strong men were shaken with emotion and hard men were moved to unaccustomed tears, as we passed out of the emptied House in the dusk of that gloomy afternoon.

On the 6th of March, 1894, Gladstone wrote to me as follows, in reply to my letter of farewell:

"My speculative view into the future shows me a very mixed spectacle, and a doubtful atmosphere. I am thankful to have borne a part in the emancipating labours of the last sixty years; but entirely uncertain how, had I now to begin my life, I could face the very different problems of the next sixty years. Of one thing I am, and always have been, convinced—it is not by the State that man can be regenerated, and the terrible woes of this darkened world effectually dealt with. In some, and some very important, respects, I yearn for the impossible revival of the men and the ideas of my first twenty years, which immediately followed the first Reform Act. But I am stepping out upon a boundless plain.

"May God give you strength of all kinds to perform your appointed work in the world."

FOOTNOTES:

[37] The British troops entered Cairo on the 14th of September, 1882.

[38] Better known as "Billy Johnson," the famous Eton Tutor.

[39] The Right Hon. J. W. Lowther.

[40] Afterwards the Right Hon. John Burns, M.P., President of the Local Government Board.

[41] Afterwards Lord St. Aldwyn.

XII

ORATORY

> ἐστι δ' οὐχ ὁ λογός τὸυ ῥήτορος, Αισχίνη, τίμιον, οὐδ' ὁ τονός τής φωνής, ἀλλά τό ταὐτά προαιρείσθαι τοίς πολλοίς, καί τό τοὺς αὐτοὺς μισείν καί φιλείν, οὐσπερ ἀν ἡ πατρίς.
>
> [Greek: esti d' ouch ho logos tou rhêtoros, Aischinê, timion, oud' ho tonos tês phônês, alla to tauta proaireisthai tois pollois, kai to tous autous misein kai philein, housper an hê patris.]
>
> DEMOSTHENES. *De Corona*.
>
> The important thing in public speaking is neither the diction nor the voice. What is important is that the speaker should have the same predilections as the majority, and that his country's friends and foes should be also his own.

I hope that I shall not be reproached with either Pedantry or Vanity (though I deserve both) if, having begun so classically, I here introduce some verses which, when I was a boy at Harrow, my kind Head Master addressed to my Father. The occasion of these verses was that the recipient of them, who was then Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Commons and was much exhausted by the long Session which passed the first Irish Land Act, had said in his haste that he wished all mankind were dumb. This petulant ejaculation drew from Dr. Butler the following remonstrance:

Semper ego auditor? Requies data nulla loquelæ
  Quæ miseras aures his et ubique premit?
Tot mala non tulit ipse Jobas, cui constat amicos
  Septenos saltem conticuisse dies.
"Si mihi non dabitur talem sperare quietem,
  Sit, precor, humanum sit sine voce genus!"
Mucius[42] hæc secum, sortem indignatus iniquam,
  (Tum primum proavis creditus esse minor)
Seque malis negat esse parem: cui Musa querenti,
  "Tu genus humanum voce carere cupis?

Tene adeo fatis diffidere! Non tibi Natus
Quem jam signavit Diva Loquela suum?
En! ego quæ vindex 'mutis quoque piscibus' adsum,
Donatura cycni, si ferat hora, sonos,
Ipsa loquor vates: Patriæ decus addere linguæ
Hic sciet, ut titulis laus eat aucta tuis.
Hunc sua fata vocant; hunc, nostro numine fretum,
Apta jubent aptis ponere verba locis.
Hunc olim domus ipsa canet, silvæque paternæ,
Curiaque, et felix vatibus Herga parens.
Nec lingua caruisse voles, quo vindice vestræ
Gentis in æternum fama superstes erit."

H. M. B.,
Aug., 1870.

The prophecy has scarcely been fulfilled; but it is true that from my earliest days I have had an inborn love of oratory. The witchery of words, powerful enough on the printed page, is to me ten times more powerful when it is reinforced by voice and glance and gesture. Fine rhetoric and lofty declamation have always stirred my blood; and yet I suppose that Demosthenes was right, and that, though rhetoric and declamation are good, still the most valuable asset for a public speaker is a complete identification with the majority of his countrymen, in their prejudices, their likings, and their hatreds.

If Oratory signifies the power of speaking without premeditation, Gladstone stands in a class by himself, far above all the public speakers whom I have ever heard. The records of his speaking at Eton and Oxford, and the reports of his earliest performances in Parliament, alike give proof that he had, as Coleridge said of Pitt, "a premature and unnatural dexterity in the combination of words"; and this developed into "a power of pouring forth, with endless facility, perfectly modulated sentences of perfectly chosen language, which as far surpassed the reach of a normal intellect as the feats of an acrobat exceed the capacities of a normal body."

His voice was flexible and melodious (in singing it was a baritone); though his utterance was perceptibly marked by a Lancastrian "burr"; his gestures were free and graceful, though never violent; every muscle of his face seemed to play its part in his nervous declamation; and the flash of his deep-set eyes revealed the fiery spirit that was at work within. It may be remarked in passing that he

considered a moustache incompatible with effective speaking—"Why should a man hide one of the most expressive features of his face?" With regard to the still more expressive eyes, Lecky ruefully remarked that Gladstone's glance was that of a bird of prey swooping on its victim.

Lord Chief Justice Coleridge told me that he had once asked Gladstone if he ever felt nervous in public speaking. "In opening a subject," said Gladstone, "often; in reply never," and certainly his most triumphant speeches were those in which, when winding up a debate, he recapitulated and demolished the hostile arguments that had gone before. One writes glibly of his "most triumphant" speeches; and yet, when he was among us, he always delivered each Session at least one speech, of which we all used to say, with breathless enthusiasm, "That's the finest speech he ever made." On the platform he was incomparable. His fame as an orator was made within the walls of Parliament; but, when he ceased to represent the University of Oxford, and was forced by the conditions of modern electioneering to face huge masses of electors in halls and theatres and in the open air, he adapted himself with the utmost ease to his new environment, and captivated the constituencies as he had captivated the House. His activities increased as his life advanced. He diffused himself over England and Wales and Scotland. In every considerable centre, men had the opportunity of seeing and hearing this supreme actor of the political stage; but Midlothian was the scene of his most astonishing efforts. When, on the 2nd of September, 1884, he spoke on the Franchise Bill in the Waverley Market at Edinburgh, it was estimated that he addressed thirty thousand people.

> "Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
> And wave on wave flowed into space away,
> Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
> Even to the centre of the hosts around;
> And, as I thought, rose the sonorous swell,
> As from some church-tower swings the silvery bell.
> Aloft and clear, from airy tide to tide,
> It glided, easy as a bird may glide;
> To the last verge of that vast audience sent,
> It played with each wild passion as it went;
> Now stirred the uproar, now the murmur stilled:
> And sobs or laughter answered as it willed:"[43]

It is painful to descend too abruptly from such a height as that: but one would be

giving a false notion of Gladstone's speaking if one suggested that it was always equally effective. Masterly in his appeal to a popular audience, supernaturally dexterous in explaining a complicated subject to the House of Commons, supremely solemn and pathetic in a Memorial Oration, he was heard to least advantage on a social or festive occasion. He would use a Club-dinner or a wedding-breakfast, a flower-show or an Exhibition, for the utterance of grave thoughts which had perhaps been long fermenting in his mind; and then his intensity, his absorption in his theme, and his terrible gravity, disconcerted hearers who had expected a lighter touch. An illustration of this piquant maladroitness recurs to my memory as I write. In 1882 I was concerned with a few Radical friends in founding the National Liberal Club.[44] We certainly never foresaw the palatial pile of terra-cotta and glazed tiles which now bears that name.[45] Our modest object was to provide a central meeting-place for Metropolitan and provincial Liberals, where all the comforts of life should be attainable at what are called "popular prices." Two years later, Gladstone laid the foundation-stone of the present Club-house, and, in one of his most austere orations, drew a sharp contrast between our poor handiwork and those "Temples of Luxury and Ease" which gaze in haughty grandeur on Pall Mall. We had hoped to provide what might seem like "luxury" to the unsophisticated citizen of Little Pedlington; and, at the least, we meant our Club to be a place of "ease" to the Radical toiler. But Gladstone insisted that it was to be a workshop dedicated to strenuous labour; and all the fair promises of our Prospectus were trodden under foot.[46]

I have often heard Gladstone say that, in the nature of things, a speech cannot be adequately reported. You may get the words with literal precision, but the loss of gesture, voice, and intonation, will inevitably obscure the meaning and impede the effect. Of no one's speaking is this more true than of his own. Here and there, in the enormous mass of his reported eloquence, you will come upon a fine peroration, a poetic image, a verse aptly cited, or a phrase which can be remembered. But they are few and far between—*oases* in a wilderness of what reads like verbiage. Quite certainly, his speeches, in the mass, are not literature, as those found to their cost who endeavoured to publish them in ten volumes.

For speeches which are literature we must go to John Bright; but then Bright's speaking was not spontaneous, and therefore, according to the definition suggested above, could not be reckoned as Oratory. Yet, when delivered in that penetrating voice, with its varied emphasis of scorn and sympathy and passion; enforced by the dignity of that noble head, and punctuated by the aptest gesture,

they sounded uncommonly like oratory. The fact is that Bright's consummate art concealed the elaborate preparation which went to make the performance. When he was going to make a speech, he was encompassed by safeguards against disturbance and distraction, which suggested the rites of Lucina. He was invisible and inaccessible. No bell might ring, no door might bang, no foot tread too heavily. There was a crisis, and everyone in the house knew it; and when at length the speech had been safely uttered, there was the joy of a great reaction.

My Father, unlike most of the Whigs, had a warm admiration for Bright; and Bright showed his appreciation of this feeling by being extremely kind to me. Early in my Parliamentary career, he gave me some hints on the art of speech-making, which are interesting because they describe his own practice. "You cannot," he said, "over-prepare the substance of a speech. The more completely you have mastered it, the better your speech will be. But it is very easy to over-prepare your words. Arrange your subject, according to its natural divisions, under three or four heads—not more. Supply each division with an 'island'; by which I mean a carefully-prepared sentence to clinch and enforce it. You must trust yourself to swim from one 'island' to another, without artificial aids. Keep your best 'island'—your most effective passage—for your peroration; and, when once you have uttered it, sit down at once. Let no power induce you to go on."

Anyone who studies Bright's speeches will see that he exactly followed his own rule. The order and symmetry are perfect. The English is simple and unadorned. Each department of the speech has its notable phrase; and the peroration is a masterpiece of solemn rhetoric. And yet after all what Demosthenes said is true of these two great men—the Twin Stars of Victorian Oratory. Each had all the graces of voice and language, and yet each failed conspicuously in practical effect whenever he ran counter to the predilections and passions of his countrymen. Gladstone succeeded when he attacked the Irish Church, and denounced the abominations of Turkish misrule: he failed when he tried to palliate his blunders in Egypt, and to force Home Rule down the throat of the "Predominant Partner." Bright succeeded when he pleaded for the Repeal of the Corn Laws and the extension of the Suffrage: he failed when he opposed the Crimean War, and lost his seat when he protested against our aggression on China. It must often fall to the lot of the patriotic orator thus to set himself against the drift of national sentiment, and to pay the penalty. No such perils beset the Demagogue.

I should not ascribe the title of orator to Mr. Chamberlain. He has nothing of the inspiration, the poetry, the "vision splendid," the "faculty divine," which make

the genuine orator. But as a speaker of the second, and perhaps most useful, class, he has never been surpassed. His speaking was the perfection of clearness. Each argument seemed irresistible, each illustration told. His invective was powerful, his passion seemed genuine, his satire cut like steel and froze like ice. His perception of his hearers' likes and dislikes was intuitive, and was heightened by constant observation. His friends and his enemies were those whom he esteemed the friends and the enemies of England; and he never committed the heroic but perilous error of setting himself against the passing mood of national feeling. He combined in rare harmony the debating instinct which conquers the House of Commons, with the power of appeal to popular passion which is the glory of the Demagogue.

The word with which my last sentence closed recalls inevitably the tragic figure of Lord Randolph Churchill. The adroitness, the courage, and the persistency with which between 1880 and 1885 he sapped Gladstone's authority, deposed Northcote, and made himself the most conspicuous man in the Tory Party, have been described in his Biography, and need not be recapitulated here. Mr. Chamberlain, who was exactly qualified to resist and abate him, had not yet acquired a commanding position in the House of Commons; and on the platform Churchill could not be beaten. In these two men each party possessed a Demagogue of the highest gifts, and it would have puzzled an expert to say which was the better exponent of his peculiar art. In January, 1884, Churchill made a speech at Blackpool, and thus attacked his eminent rival—"Mr. Chamberlain a short time ago attempted to hold Lord Salisbury up to the execration of the people as one who enjoyed great riches for which he had neither toiled nor spun, and he savagely denounced Lord Salisbury and his class. As a matter of fact, Lord Salisbury from his earliest days has toiled and spun in the service of the State, and for the advancement of his countrymen in learning, in wealth, and in prosperity; but no Radical ever yet allowed himself to be embarrassed by a question of fact. Just look, however, at what Mr. Chamberlain himself does; he goes to Newcastle, and is entertained at a banquet there, and procures for the president of the feast a live Earl—no less a person than the Earl of Durham. Now, Lord Durham is a young person who has just come of age, who is in the possession of immense hereditary estates, who is well known on Newmarket Heath, and prominent among the gilded youth who throng the doors of the Gaiety Theatre; but he has studied politics about as much as Barnum's new white elephant, and the idea of rendering service to the State has not yet commenced to dawn on his ingenuous mind. If by any means it could be legitimate, and I hold it is illegitimate, to stigmatize any individual as enjoying

great riches for which he has neither toiled nor spun, such a case would be the case of the Earl of Durham; and yet it is under the patronage of the Earl of Durham, and basking in the smiles of the Earl of Durham, and bandying vulgar compliments with the Earl of Durham, that this stern patriot, this rigid moralist, this unbending censor, the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, flaunts his Radical and levelling doctrines before the astonished democrats of Newcastle. 'Vanity of Vanities,' saith the preacher, 'all is vanity.' 'Humbug of Humbugs,' says the Radical, 'all is humbug.'"

And with that most characteristic specimen of popular eloquence, we may leave the two great demagogues of the Victorian Age.

At the period of which I am speaking the House of Commons contained two or three orators surviving from a class which had almost died away. These were men who, having no gift for extempore speaking, used to study the earlier stages of a debate, prepare a tremendous oration, and then deliver it by heart. Such, in days gone by, had been the practice of Bulwer-Lytton, and, as far as one can see, of Macaulay. In my day it was followed by Patrick Smyth, Member for Tipperary, and by Joseph Cowen, Member for Newcastle. Both were real rhetoricians. Both could compose long discourses, couched in the most flowery English, interlarded with anecdotes and decorated with quotations; and both could declaim these compositions with grace and vigour. But the effect was very droll. They would work, say, all Tuesday and Wednesday at a point which had been exhausted by discussion on Monday, and then on Thursday they would burst into the debate just whenever they could catch the Speaker's eye, and would discharge these cascades of prepared eloquence without the slightest reference to time, fitness, or occasion.

My uncle, Lord Russell, who entered Parliament in 1813, always said that the first Lord Plunket was, on the whole, the finest speaker he had ever heard, because he combined a most cogent logic with a most moving eloquence; and these gifts descended to Plunket's grandson, now Lord Rathmore, and, in the days of which I am speaking, Mr. David Plunket, Member for the University of Dublin. Voice, manner, diction, delivery, were all alike delightful; and, though such finished oratory could scarcely be unprepared, Mr. Plunket had a great deal too much of his nation's tact to produce it except when he knew that the House was anxious to receive it. In view of all that has happened since, it is curious to remember that Mr. Arthur Balfour was, in those days, a remarkably bad speaker. No one, I should think, was ever born with less of the orator's faculty, or was under heavier obligations to the Reporters' Gallery. He shambled and stumbled,

and clung to the lapels of his coat, and made immense pauses while he searched for the right word, and eventually got hold of the wrong one. In conflict with Gladstone, he seemed to exude the very essence of acrimonious partisanship, and yet he never exactly scored. As Lord Beaconsfield said of Lord Salisbury, "his invective lacked finish."

A precisely opposite description might befit Sir Robert Peel, the strangely-contrasted son of the great Free Trader. Peel was naturally an orator. He could make the most slashing onslaughts without the appearance of ill-temper, and could convulse the House with laughter while he himself remained to all appearance unconscious of the fun. His voice, pronounced by Gladstone the most beautiful he ever heard in Parliament, was low, rich, melodious, and flexible. His appearance was striking and rather un-English, his gestures were various and animated, and he enforced his points with beautifully shaped hands. If voice and manner could make a public speaker great, Sir Robert Peel might have led the Tory Party; but Demosthenes was right after all. The graces of oratory, though delightful for the moment, have no permanent effect. The perfection of Parliamentary style is to utter cruel platitudes with a grave and informing air; and, if a little pomposity be superadded, the House will instinctively recognize the speaker as a Statesman. I have heard Sir William Harcourt say, "After March, comes April," in a tone which carried conviction to every heart.

A word must be said about speakers who read their speeches. I do not think I shall be contradicted if I say that in those distant days Sir William Harcourt, Sir George Trevelyan, and Mr. Gibson, now Lord Ashbourne, wrote every word, and delivered their speeches from the manuscript. In late years, when Harcourt had to pilot his famous Budget through Committee, he acquired a perfect facility in extempore speech; but at the beginning it was not so. The Irish are an eloquent nation, and we are apt to send them rather prosy rulers. "The Honourable Member for Bletherum was at that time perambulating the district with very great activity, and, I need not say, with very great ability." Such a sentence as that, laboriously inscribed in the manuscript of a Chief Secretary's speech, seems indeed to dissipate all thoughts of oratory. Mr. Henry Richard, a "Stickit Minister" who represented Merthyr, was the worst offender against the Standing Order which forbids a Member to read his speech, though it allows him to "refresh his memory with notes"; and once, being called to order for his offence, he palliated it by saying that he was ready to hand his manuscript to his censor, and challenged him to read a word of it.

The least oratorical of mankind was the fifteenth Lord Derby, whose formal adhesion to the Liberal Party in 1882 supplied *Punch* with an admirable cartoon of a female Gladstone singing in impassioned strain—

"Always the same, Derby my own!
Always the same to your old Glad-stone."

Lord Derby wrote every word of his speeches, and sent them in advance to the press. It was said that once he dropped his manuscript in the street, and that, being picked up, it was found to contain such entries as "Cheers," "Laughter," and "Loud applause," culminating in "'But I am detaining you too long.' (Cries of 'No, no,' and 'Go on.')"

The mention of Lord Derby reminds me of the much-criticized body to which he belonged. When I entered Parliament, the Chief Clerk of the House of Commons was Sir Thomas Erskine May, afterwards Lord Farnborough—an hereditary friend. He gave me many useful hints, and this among the rest—"Always go across to the House of Lords when they are sitting, even if you only stop five minutes. You may often happen on something worth hearing; and on no account ever miss one of their full-dress debates." I acted on the advice, and soon became familiar with the oratory of "the Gilded Chamber," as Pennialinus calls it. I have spoken in a former chapter of the effect produced on me as a boy by the predominance of Disraeli during the debates on the Reform Bill of 1867. He had left the House of Commons before I entered it, but that same mysterious attribute of predominance followed him to the House of Lords, and indeed increased with his increasing years. His strange appearance—un-English features, corpse-like pallor, blackened locks, and piercing eyes—marked him out as someone quite aloof from the common population of the House of Lords. When he sat, silent and immovable, on his crimson bench, everyone kept watching him as though they were fascinated. When he rose to speak, there was strained and awe-stricken attention. His voice was deep, his utterance slow, his pronunciation rather affected. He had said in early life that there were two models of style for the two Houses of Parliament—for the Commons, *Don Juan*: for the Lords, *Paradise Lost*. As the youthful Disraeli, he had out-Juaned Juan; when, as the aged Beaconsfield, he talked of "stamping a deleterious doctrine with the reprobation of the Peers of England," he approached the dignity of the Miltonic Satan. It was more obviously true of him than of most speakers that he "listened to himself while he spoke"; and his complete mastery of all the tricks of speech countervailed the decay of his physical powers. He had always known the value of an artificial pause, an effective hesitation, in heralding the apt word or the memorable phrase; and just at the close of his life he used the method with a striking though unrehearsed effect. On the 4th of March, 1881, he was speaking

in support of Lord Lytton's motion condemning the evacuation of Kandahar. "My Lords," he said, "the Key of India is not Merv, or Herat, or,"—here came a long pause, and rather painful anxiety in the audience; and then the quiet resumption of the thread—"It is not the place of which I cannot recall the name—the Key of India is London."

At a dinner at Lord Airlie's in the previous month Lord Beaconsfield, talking to Matthew Arnold, had described the great (that is, the fourteenth) Lord Derby as having been "a man full of nerve, dash, fire, and resource, who carried the House irresistibly along with him." Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was reckoned by Mr. Gladstone as one of the three men who, of all his acquaintance, had the greatest natural gift of public speaking.[47] Both the Bishop and the Statesman found, each in the other, a foeman worthy of his steel; but both had passed beyond these voices before I entered Parliament, leaving only tantalizing traditions—"Ah! but you should have heard Derby on the Irish Church," or "It was a treat to hear 'Sam' trouncing Westbury." Failing those impossible enjoyments, I found great pleasure in listening to Lord Salisbury. I should reckon him as about the most interesting speaker I ever heard. His appearance was pre-eminently dignified: he looked, whether he was in or out of office, the ideal Minister of a great Empire—

> "With that vast bulk of chest and limb assigned
> So oft to men who subjugate their kind;
> So sturdy Cromwell pushed broad-shouldered on;
> So burly Luther breasted Babylon;
> So brawny Cleon bawled his agora down;
> And large-limb'd Mahomed clutched a Prophet's crown."

In public speaking, Lord Salisbury seemed to be thinking aloud, and to be quite unconscious of his audience. Though he was saturated with his subject there was apparently no verbal preparation. Yet his diction was peculiarly apt and pointed. He never looked at a note; used no gesture; scarcely raised or lowered his voice. But in a clear and penetrating monotone he uttered the workings of a profound and reflective mind, and the treasures of a vast experience. Though massive, his style was never ponderous: and it was constantly lightened by the sallies of a pungent humour. In the debate on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill of 1893, Lord Ribblesdale, then recently converted from Unionism to Gladstonianism, and Master of the Buckhounds in the Liberal government, had given the history of his mental change. In replying, Lord Salisbury said, "The next speech, my lords, was a confession. Confessions are always an interesting

form of literature—from St. Augustine to Rousseau, from Rousseau to Lord Ribblesdale." The House laughed, and the Master of the Buckhounds laughed with it.

One of the most vigorous orators whom I have ever heard, in the House of Lords or out of it, was Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough, and afterwards Archbishop of York. He had made his fame by his speech on the Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill, and was always at his best when defending the temporal interests of ecclesiastical institutions. No clergyman ever smacked so little of the pulpit. His mind was essentially legal—clear, practical, logical, cogent. No one on earth could make a better case for a bad cause; no one could argue more closely, or declaim more vigorously. When his blood was up, he must either speak or burst; but his indignation, though it found vent in flashing sarcasms, never betrayed him into irrelevancies or inexactitudes.

A fine speaker of a different type—and one better fitted for a Churchman—was Archbishop Tait, whose dignity of speech and bearing, clear judgment, and forcible utterance, made him the worthiest representative of the Church in Parliament whom these latter days have seen. To contrast Tait's stately calm with Benson's fluttering obsequiousness[48] or Temple's hammering force, was to perceive the manner that is, and the manners that are not, adapted to what Gladstone called "the mixed sphere of Religion and the *Sæculum*."

By far the greatest orator whom the House of Lords has possessed in my recollection was the late Duke of Argyll. I have heard that Lord Beaconsfield, newly arrived in the House of Lords and hearing the Duke for the first time, exclaimed, "And has this been going on all these years, and I have never found it out?" It is true that the Duke's reputation as an administrator, a writer, a naturalist, and an amateur theologian, distracted public attention from his power as an orator; and I have been told that he himself did not realize it. Yet orator indeed he was, in the highest implication of the term. He spoke always under the influence of fiery conviction, and the live coal from the altar seemed to touch his lips. He was absolute master of every mood of oratory—pathos, satire, contemptuous humour, ethical passion, noble wrath; and his unstudied eloquence flowed like a river through the successive moods, taking a colour from each, and gaining force as it rolled towards its close.

On the 6th of September, 1893, I heard the Duke speaking on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill. He was then an old man, and in broken health; the speech attempted little in the way of argument, and was desultory beyond

belief. But suddenly there came a passage which lifted the whole debate into a nobler air. The orator described himself standing on the Western shores of Scotland, and gazing across towards the hills of Antrim: "We can see the colour of their fields, and in the sunset we can see the glancing of the light upon the windows of the cabins of the people. This is the country, I thought the other day when I looked on the scene—this is the country which the greatest English statesman tells us must be governed as we govern the Antipodes." And he emphasized the last word with a downward sweep of his right hand, which in a commonplace speaker would have been frankly comic, but in this great master of oratory was a master-stroke of dramatic art.

Before I close this chapter, I should like to recall a word of Gladstone's which at the time when he said it struck me as memorable. In August, 1895, I was staying at Hawarden. Gladstone's Parliamentary life was done, and he talked about political people and events with a freedom which I had never before known in him. As perhaps was natural, we fell to discussing the men who had been his colleagues in the late Liberal Ministry. We reviewed in turn Lord Spencer, Sir William Harcourt, Lord Rosebery, Mr. John Morley, Sir George Trevelyan, and Mr. Asquith. It is perhaps a little curious, in view of what happened later on, that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was not mentioned; but, with regard to the foregoing names, I perfectly recollect, though there is no need to repeat, the terse and trenchant judgment passed on each. When we had come to the end of my list, the ex-Premier turned on me with one of those compelling glances which we knew so well, and said with emphasis, "But you haven't mentioned the most important man of all." "Who is that?" "Edward Grey—there is the man with the real Parliamentary gift." I am happy to make the Foreign Secretary a present of this handsome compliment.

FOOTNOTES:

[42] Mucius Scævola per multos annos "Princeps Senatûs."

[43] Bulwer-Lytton, *St. Stephen's*.

[44] Mr. A. J. Willams, Mr. A. G. Symond, Mr. Walter Wren, Mr. W. L. Bright, and Mr. J. J. Tylor were some of them; and we used to meet in Mr. Bright's rooms at Storey's Gate.

[45] "It is an extraordinary big club done in a bold, wholesale, shiny, marbled style, richly furnished with numerous paintings, steel engravings, busts, and full-

length statues of the late Mr. Gladstone."—H. G. Wells, *The New Machiavelli*.

[46] "Speaking generally, I should say there could not be a less interesting occasion than the laying of the foundation-stone of a Club in London. For, after all, what are the Clubs of London? I am afraid little else than temples of luxury and ease. This, however, is a club of a very different character."

[47] The others were the late Duke of Argyll and the eighth Lord Elgin.

[48] "I had to speak in the House of Lords last night. It is a really terrible place for the unaccustomed. Frigid impatience and absolute goodwill, combined with a thorough conviction of the infallibility of laymen (if not too religious) on all sacred subjects, are the tone, *morale*, and reason, of the House as a living being. My whole self-possession departs, and ejection from the House seems the best thing which could happen to one."—Archbishop Benson to the Rev. B. F. Westcott, March 22, 1884.

XIII

LITERATURE

> There was Captain Sumph, an ex-beau, still about town, and related in some indistinct manner to Literature and the Peerage. He was said to have written a book once, to have been a friend of Lord Byron, to be related to Lord Sumphington.... This gentleman was listened to with great attention by Mrs. Bungay; his anecdotes of the Aristocracy, of which he was a middle-aged member, delighted the publisher's lady.
>
> W. M. THACKERAY, *Pendennis*.

When I am writing Reminiscences, I always feel dreadfully like Captain Sumph; but, in order to make the resemblance quite exact, I must devote a chapter to Literature.

I seem, from my earliest conscious years, to have lived in a world of books; and yet my home was by no means "bookish." I was trained by people who had not read much, but had read thoroughly; who regarded good literature with unfeigned admiration; and who, though they would never have dreamt of forcing or cramming, yet were pleased when they saw a boy inclined to read, and did their best to guide his reading aright. As I survey my early life and compare it with the present day, one of the social changes which impresses me most is the general decay of intellectual cultivation. This may sound paradoxical in an age which habitually talks so much about Education and Culture; but I am persuaded that it is true. Dilettantism is universal, and a smattering of erudition, infinitely more offensive than honest and manly ignorance, has usurped the place which was formerly occupied by genuine and liberal learning. A vast deal of specialism, "mugged up," as boys say, at the British Museum or the London Library, may coexist with a profound ignorance of all that is really worth knowing. It sounds very intellectual to chatter about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, or to scoff at St. John's "senile iterations and contorted metaphysics"; but, when a clergyman read St. Paul's eulogy on Charity, instead of an address, at the end of a fashionable wedding, one of his hearers said, "How very appropriate that was! Where did you get it from?" Everyone can patter nonsense about the traces of Bacon's influence in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and can ransack their

family histories for the original of "Mr. W. H." But, when *Cymbeline* was put on the stage, Society was startled to find that the principal part was not a woman's. When some excellent scenes from Jane Austen were given in a Belgravian drawing-room, a lady of the highest notoriety, enthusiastically praising the performance, enquired who was the author of the dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. John Dashwood, and whether he had written anything else. I have known a Lord Chief Justice who had never seen the view from Richmond Hill; a publicist who had never heard of Lord Althorp; and an authoress who did not know the name of Izaak Walton.

Perhaps these curious "ignorances," as the Prayer Book calls them, impressed me the more forcibly because I was born a Whig, and brought up in a Whiggish society; for the Whigs were rather specially the allies of learning; and made it a point of honour to know, though never to parade, the best that has been thought and written. Very likely they had no monopoly of culture: the Tories may have been just as well-informed. But a man "belongs to his belongings"; one can only describe what one has seen; and here the contrast between Past and Present is palpable enough. I am not thinking of professed scholars and students, such as Lord Stanhope the Historian, and Sir Edward Bunbury the Senior Classic; or of professed blue-stockings, such as Barbarina, Lady Dacre, and Georgiana, Lady Chatterton; but of ordinary men and women of good family and good position, who had received the usual education of their class, and had profited by it.

Mr. Gladstone used to say that, in his schooldays at Eton, a boy might learn much, or learn nothing; but he could not learn superficially. A similar remark would have applied to the attainments of people who were old when I was young. They might know much, or they might know nothing; but they did not know superficially. What they professed to know, that you could be sure they knew. The affectation of culture was despised; and ignorance, where it existed, was avowed. For example, everyone knew Italian, but no one pretended to know German. I remember men who had never been at a University, but had passed straight from a Public School to a Cavalry Regiment or the House of Commons, and who yet could quote Horace as easily as the present generation quotes Kipling. These people inherited the traditions of Mrs. Montagu, who "vindicated the genius of Shakespeare against the calumnies of Voltaire," and they knew the greatest poet of all time with an absolute ease and familiarity. They did not trouble themselves about various readings, and corrupt texts, and difficult passages. They had nothing in common with that true father of all Shakespearean criticism, Mr. Curdle, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, who had written a

treatise on the question whether Juliet's nurse's husband was really "a merry man," or whether it was only his widow's affectionate partiality that induced her so to report him. But they knew the whole mass of the Plays with a natural and unforced intimacy; their speech was saturated with the immortal diction, and Hamlet's speculations were their nearest approach to metaphysics. Pope was quoted whenever the occasion suggested him, and Johnson was esteemed the Prince of Critics. Broadly speaking, all educated people knew the English poets down to the end of the eighteenth century. Byron and Moore were enjoyed with a sort of furtive and fearful pleasure; Wordsworth was tolerated, and Tennyson was "coming in." Everyone knew Scott's novels by heart, and had his or her favourite heroine and hero.

I said in a former chapter that I had from my earliest days free access to an excellent library; and, even before I could read comfortably by myself, my interest in books was stimulated by listening to my elders as they read aloud. The magic of words and cadence—the purely sensuous pleasure of melodious sound—stirred me from the time when I was quite a child. Poetry, of course, came first; but prose was not much later. I had by nature a good memory, and it retained, by no effort on my part, my favourite bits of Macaulay and Scott. *The Battle of Lake Regillus* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the impeachment of Warren Hastings and the death of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf, are samples of the literature with which my mind was stored. Every boy, I suppose, attempts to imitate what he admires, and I was eternally scribbling. When I was eleven, I began a novel, of which the heroine was a modern Die Vernon. At twelve, I took to versification, for which the swinging couplets of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* supplied the model. Fragments of prose and verse came thick and fast. When I was thirteen, I made my first appearance in print; with a set of verses on a Volunteer Encampment, which really were not at all bad; and at fourteen I published (anonymously) a religious tract, which had some success in Evangelical circles.

The effect of Harrow was both to stimulate and to discipline my taste for literature. It was my good fortune to be taught my Sophocles and Euripides, Tacitus and Virgil, by scholars who had the literary sense, and could enrich school-lessons with all the resources of a generous culture. My sixteenth and seventeenth years brought me a real and conscious growth in the things of the mind, and with that period of my life I must always gratefully associate the names of Frederic Farrar, Edward Bowen, and Arthur Watson.[49]

Meanwhile I was not only learning, but also practising. My teachers with one

accord incited me to write. Essay-writing formed a regular part of our work in school and pupil-room, and I composed a great deal for my own amusement. I wrote both prose and verse, and verse in a great many metres; but it was soon borne in upon me—conclusively after I had been beaten for the Prize Poem[50]—that the Muse of Poetry was not mine. In prose, I was more successful. My work for *The Harrovian* gave me constant practice, and I twice won the School-Prize for an English Essay. In writing, I indulged to the full my taste for resonant and rolling sound; and my style was ludicrously rhetorical. The subject for the Prize Essay in 1872 was "Parliamentary Oratory: its History and Influence," and the discourse which I composed on that attractive theme has served me from that day to this as the basis of a popular lecture. The "Young Lion" of the *Daily Telegraph* thus "roared" over my performance—

"The English Essay now takes a higher place on Speech Day than it did in the old season; and the essay which was crowned yesterday was notable alike for the theme, the opinions, and the literary promise of the writer. The young author bore the historical name of Russell, and he was really reviewing the forerunners and the fellow-workers of his own ancestors, in describing the rhetorical powers of the elder and the younger Pitt, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Canning and Grey.... The well-known Constitutional note of Lord Russell was heard in every page, and the sonorous English was such as the Earl himself might have written fifty years ago, if the undergraduates of that day had been able to copy a Macaulay. The essayist has read the prose of that dangerous model until he has imitated the well-known and now hackneyed devices of the great rhetorician with a closeness which perilously brought to mind the show passages of the 'Essays' and the 'History.' Mr. Russell has caught the trick of cutting up his paragraphs into rolling periods, and short, sharp, and disjointed sentences; but he will go to more subtle and more simple masters of style than Macaulay, when he shall have passed the rhetorical stage of youth."

This prophecy was soon fulfilled, and indeed the process of fulfilment had already begun. In the Sixth Form, we naturally were influenced by Dr. Butler, who, though he certainly did not despise fine rhetoric, wrote a beautifully simple style, and constantly instructed us in the difference between eloquence and journalese. "Let us leave *commence* and *partake* to the newspapers," was an admonition often on his lips. Our Composition Masters were Edward Young, an exquisite scholar of the Eton type, and the accomplished Henry Nettleship, who detested flamboyancy, and taught us to admire Newman's incomparable easiness and grace. And there was Matthew Arnold living on the Hill, generously

encouraging every bud of literary promise, and always warning us against our tendency to "Middle-class Macaulayese."

At Oxford, the chastening process went on apace. Newman became my master, as far as language was concerned; and I learned to bracket him with Arnold and Church as possessing "The Oriel style." Thackeray's Latinized constructions began to fascinate me; and, though I still loved gorgeous diction, I sought it from Ruskin instead of Macaulay.

All this time I was writing—in a very humble and obscure way, certainly, but still writing. I wrote in local newspapers and Parish Magazines. I published anonymous comments on current topics. I contributed secretly to ephemeral journals. I gave lectures and printed them as pamphlets. It was all very good exercise; but the odd part of it seems to me, in looking back, that I never expected pay, but rather spent my own money in printing what I wrote. That last infirmity of literary minds I laid aside soon after I left Oxford. I rather think that the first money which I made with my pen was payment for a character-study of my uncle, Lord Russell, which I wrote for *The World*; thereby eliciting from Matthew Arnold the urbane remark, "Ah, my dear George, I hear you have become one of Yates's hired stabbers."

After I entered Parliament, opportunities of writing, and of writing for profit, became more frequent. I contributed to the *Quarterly*, the *New Quarterly*, the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly*, the *Contemporary*, the *Spectator*, and the *Pall Mall*. Yet another magazine recurs pleasantly to my mind, because of the warning which was inscribed on one's proof-sheet—"The cost of *corrigenda* will be deducted from *honoraria*." What fine language! and what a base economy!

It did not take me long to find that the society in which I habitually lived, and which I have described in a former chapter, was profoundly ignorant. A most amusing law-suit between a Duchess and her maid took place about the time of which I am writing, and the Duchess's incriminated letter, beginning in the third person, wandering off into the first, and returning with an effort to the third, was indeed an object-lesson in English composition. A young sprig of fashion once said to me, in the tone of a man who utters an accepted truth, "It is so much more interesting to talk about people than things"—even though those "things" were the literary triumphs of humour or tragedy. In one great house, Books were a prohibited subject, and the word "Books" was construed with such liberal latitude that it seemed to include everything except Bradshaw. Even where people did not thus truculently declare war against literature, they gave it an

uncommonly wide berth, and shrank with ill-concealed aversion from such names as Meredith and Browning. "Meredith," said Oscar Wilde, "is a prose-Browning—and so is Browning." And both those forms of prose were equally eschewed by society.

Of course, when one is surveying a whole class, one sees some conspicuous exceptions to the prevailing colour; and here and there one had the pleasure of meeting in society persons admirably accomplished. I have already mentioned Lord Houghton, poet, essayist, pamphleteer, book-lover, and book-collector, who was equally at home in the world of society and the world of literature. Nothing that was good in books, whether ancient or modern, escaped his curious scrutiny, and at his hospitable table, which might truly be called a "Festive Board," authors great and small rubbed shoulders with dandies and diplomats and statesmen. On the 16th of June, 1863, Matthew Arnold wrote—"On Sunday I dined with Monckton Milnes,[51] and met all the advanced Liberals in religion and politics, and a Cingalese in full costume.... The philosophers were fearful! George Lewes, Herbert Spencer, a sort of pseudo-Shelley called Swinburne, and so on. Froude, however, was there, and Browning, and Ruskin."

The mention of Matthew Arnold reminds me that, though I had admired and liked him in a reverent sort of way, when I was a Harrow boy and he was a man, I found him even more fascinating when I met him on the more even terms of social life in London. He was indeed the most delightful of companions; a man of the world entirely free from worldliness, and a man of letters without the faintest trace of pedantry. He walked through the world enjoying it and loving it; and yet all the time one felt that his "eyes were on the higher loadstars" of the intellect and the spirit. In those days I used to say that, if one could fashion oneself, I should wish to be like Matthew Arnold; and the lapse of years has not altered my desire.

Of Robert Browning, as he appeared in society, I have already spoken; but here let me add an instance which well illustrates his tact and readiness. He once did me the honour of dining with me, and I had collected a group of eager disciples to meet him. As soon as dinner was over, one of these enthusiasts led the great man into a corner, and began cross-examining him about the identity of *The Lost Leader* and the meaning of *Sordello*. For a space Browning bore the catechism with admirable patience; and then, laying his hand on the questioner's shoulder, he exclaimed, "But, my dear fellow, this is too bad. *I* am monopolizing *you*," and skipped out of the corner.

Lord Tennyson was scarcely ever to be encountered in society; but I was presented to him at a garden-party by Mr. James Knowles, of the *Nineteenth Century*. He was, is, and always will be, one of the chief divinities of my poetical heaven; but he was more worshipful at a distance than at close quarters, and I was determined not to dispel illusion by a too near approach to the shrine. J. A. Froude was a man of letters whom from time to time one encountered in society. No one could doubt his cleverness; but it was a cleverness which rather repelled than attracted. With his thin lips, his cold smile, and his remorseless, deliberate, way of speaking, he always seemed to be secretly gloating over the hideous scene in the hall of Fotheringay, or the last agonies of a disembowelled Papist. Lord Acton was, or seemed to be, a man of the world first and foremost; a politician and a lover of society; a gossip, and, as his "Letters" show, not always a friendly gossip.[52] His demeanour was profoundly sphinx-like, and he seemed to enjoy the sense that his hearers were anxious to learn what he was able but unwilling to impart. His knowledge and accomplishments it would, at this time of day, be ridiculous to question; and on the main concerns of human life—Religion and Freedom—I was entirely at one with him. All the more do I regret that in society he so effectually concealed his higher enthusiasms, and that, having lived on the vague fame of his "History of Liberty," he died leaving it unwritten.

I am writing of the years when I first knew London socially, and I may extend them from 1876 to 1886. All through those years, as through many before and since, the best representative of culture in society was Mr., now Sir, George Trevelyan—a poet, a scholar to his finger-tips, an enthusiast for all that is best in literature, ancient or modern, and author of one of the six great Biographies in the English language. There is no need to recapitulate Sir George's services to the State, or to criticize his performances in literature. It is enough to record my lively and lasting gratitude for the unbroken kindness which began when I was a boy at Harrow, and continues to the present hour.

I have spoken, so far, of literary men who played a more or less conspicuous part in society; but, as this chapter is dedicated to Literature, I ought to say a word about one or two men of Letters who always avoided society, but who, when one sought them out in their own surroundings, were delightful company. Foremost among these I should place James Payn.

Payn was a man who lived in, for, and by Literature. He detested exercise. He never travelled. He scarcely ever left London. He took no holidays. If he was forced into the country for a day or two, he used the exile as material for a story

or an essay. His life was one incessant round of literary activity. He had published his first book while he was an Undergraduate at Trinity, and from first to last he wrote more than a hundred volumes. *By Proxy* has been justly admired for the wonderful accuracy of its local colour, and for a masterly knowledge of Chinese character; but the writer drew exclusively from encyclopædias and books of travel. In my judgment, he was at his best in the Short Story. He practised that difficult art long before it became popular, and a book called originally *People, Places, and Things*, but now *Humorous Stories*, is a masterpiece of fun, invention, and observation. In 1874, he became "Reader" to Messrs. Smith and Elder, and in that capacity had the happiness of discovering *Vice Versa*, and the less felicitous experience of rejecting *John Inglesant* as unreadable.

It was at this period of his life that I first encountered Payn, and I fell at once under his charm. His was not a faultless character, for he was irritable, petulant, and prejudiced. He took the strongest dislikes, sometimes on very slight grounds; was unrestrained in expressing them, and was apt to treat opinions which he did not share very cavalierly. But none of these faults could obscure his charm. He was the most tender-hearted of human beings, and the sight, even the thought, of cruelty set his blood on fire. But, though he was intensely humane, he was absolutely free from mawkishness; and a wife-beater, or a child-torturer, or a cattle-maimer would have had short shrift at his hands. He was genuinely sympathetic, especially towards the hopes and struggles of the young and the unbefriended. Many an author, once struggling but now triumphant, could attest this trait. But his chief charm was his humour. It was absolutely natural; bubbled like a fountain, and danced like light. Nothing escaped it, and solemnity only stimulated it to further activities. He had the power, which Sydney Smith described, of "abating and dissolving pompous gentlemen with the most successful ridicule;" and, when he was offended, the ridicule had a remarkably sharp point. It was of course, impossible that all the humour of a man who joked incessantly could be equally good. Sometimes it was rather boyish, playing on proper names or personal peculiarities; and sometimes it descended to puns. But, for sheer rapidity, I have never known Payn's equal. When a casual word annoyed him, his repartee flashed out like lightning. I could give plenty of instances, but to make them intelligible I should have to give a considerable amount of introduction, and that would entirely spoil the sense of flashing rapidity. There was no appreciable interval of time between the provoking word and the repartee which it provoked.

Another great element of charm in Payn was his warm love of Life,

"And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world."

While he hated the black and savage and sordid side of existence with a passionate hatred, he enjoyed all its better—which he believed to be its larger—part with an infectious relish. Never have I known a more blithe and friendly spirit; never a nature to which Literature and Society—books and men—yielded a more constant and exhilarating joy. He had unstinted admiration for the performances of others, and was wholly free from jealousy. His temperament indeed was not equable. He had ups and downs, bright moods and dark, seasons of exaltation and seasons of depression. The one succeeded the other with startling rapidity, but the bright moods triumphed, and it was impossible to keep him permanently depressed. His health had always been delicate, but illness neither crushed his spirit nor paralysed his pen. Once he broke a blood-vessel in the street, and was conveyed home in an ambulance. During the transit, though he was in some danger of bleeding to death, he began to compose a narrative of his adventure, and next week it appeared in the *Illustrated London News*.

During the last two years of his life he was painfully crippled by arthritic rheumatism, and could no longer visit the Reform Club, where for many years he had every day eaten his luncheon and played his rubber. Determining that he should not completely lose his favourite, or I should rather say his only, amusement, some members of the Club banded themselves together to supply him with a rubber in his own house twice a week; and this practice was maintained to his death. It was a striking testimony to the affection which he inspired. In those years I was a pretty frequent visitor, and, on my way to the house, I used to bethink me of stories which might amuse him, and I used even to note them down between one visit and another, as a provision for next time. One day Payn said, "A collection of your stories would make a book, and I think Smith and Elder would publish it." I thought my anecdotage scarcely worthy of so much honour; but I promised to make a weekly experiment in the *Manchester Guardian*. My *Collections and Recollections* ran through the year 1897, and appeared in book-form at Easter, 1898. But Payn died on the 25th of the previous March; and the book, which I had hoped to put in his hand, I could only inscribe to his delightful memory.

Another remarkable man of letters, wholly remote from the world, was Richard Holt Hutton, for thirty-six years (1861-1897) the honoured Editor of *The Spectator*. Hutton was a "stickit minister" of the Unitarian persuasion, who had

been led, mainly by the teaching of F. D. Maurice, to the acceptance of orthodox Christianity; and who devoted all the rest of his life to the inculcation of what he conceived to be moral and religious truth, through the medium of a weekly review. He lived, a kind of married hermit, on the edge of Windsor Forest, and could hardly be separated, even for a week's holiday, from his beloved *Spectator*. His output of work was enormous and incessant, and was throughout critical and didactic. The style was pre-eminently characteristic of the man—tangled, untidy, ungraceful, disfigured by "trailing relatives" and accumulated epithets; and yet all the time conveying the sense of some real and even profound thought that strove to express itself intelligibly. As the style, so the substance. "*The Spectator*," wrote Matthew Arnold in 1865, "is all very well, but the article has Hutton's fault of seeing so very far into a mill-stone." And, two years later, "*The Spectator* has an article in which Hutton shows his strange aptitude for getting hold of the wrong end of the stick." Both were sound criticisms. When Hutton addressed himself to a deep topic of abstract speculation, he "saw so very far into it" that even his most earnest admirers could not follow the visual act. When he handled the more commonplace subjects of thought or action with which ordinary men concern themselves, he seemed to miss the most obvious and palpable points. He was a philosophical thinker, with a natural bent towards the abstract and the mystical—a Platonist rather than an Aristotelian. He saw things invisible to grosser eyes; he heard voices not audible to ordinary ears; and, when he was once fairly launched in speculation on such a theme as Personal Identity or the Idea of God, he "found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

But the very quality of aloofness from other men and their ways of thinking, which made it impossible for him to be the exponent of a system or the founder of a school, made him a peculiarly interesting friend. In homely phrase, you never knew where to have him; he was always breaking out in a fresh place. Whatever subject he handled, from impaled Bulgarians to the credibility of miracles, was certain to be presented in a new and unlooked-for aspect. He was as full of splendid gleams as a landscape by Turner, and as free from all formal rules of art and method. He was an independent thinker, if ever there was one, and as honest as he was independent. In his belief, truth was the most precious of treasures, to be sought at all hazards, and, when acquired, to be safeguarded at all costs. His zeal for truth was closely allied with his sense of justice. His mind came as near absolute fairness as is possible for a man who takes any part in live controversies. He never used an unfair argument to establish his point, nor pressed a fair argument unduly. He was scrupulously careful in stating his adversary's case, and did all in his power to secure a judicial and patient hearing

even for the causes with which he had least sympathy. His own convictions, which he had reached through stern and self-sacrificing struggles, were absolutely solid. By the incessant writing of some forty years, he enforced the fundamental truth of human redemption through God made Man on the attention of people to whom professional preachers speak in vain, and he steadily impressed on his fellow-Christians those ethical duties of justice and mercy which should be, but sometimes are not, the characteristic fruits of their creed. It was a high function, excellently fulfilled.

The transition is abrupt, but no catalogue of the literary men with whom I was brought in contact could be complete without a mention of Mr. George Augustus Sala. He was the very embodiment of Bohemia; and, alike in his views and in his style, the fine flower of such journalism as is associated with the name of the *Daily Telegraph*. His portrait, sketched with rare felicity, may be found in Letter XII. of that incomparable book, *Friendship's Garland*. "Adolescens Leo" thus describes him—"Sala, like us his disciples, has studied in the book of the world even more than in the world of books. But his career and genius have given him somehow the secret of a literary mixture novel and fascinating in the last degree: he blends the airy epicureanism of the *salons* of Augustus with the full-bodied gaiety of our English cider-cellar. With our people and country, *mon cher*, this mixture is now the very thing to go down; there arises every day a larger public for it; and we, Sala's disciples, may be trusted not willingly to let it die."

That was written in 1871; and, when sixteen years had elapsed, I thought it would be safe, and I knew it would be amusing, to bring Sala and Matthew Arnold face to face at dinner. For the credit of human nature let it be recorded that the experiment was entirely successful; for, as Lord Beaconsfield said, "Turtle makes all men equal," and vindictiveness is exorcised by champagne.

The Journalist of Society in those days was Mr. T. H. S. Escott, who was also Editor of the *Fortnightly* and leader-writer of the *Standard*. I should be inclined to think that no writer in London worked so hard; and he paid the penalty in shattered health. It is a pleasure to me, who in those days owed much to his kindness, to witness the renewal of his early activities, and to welcome volume after volume from his prolific pen. Mr. Kegan Paul, essayist, critic, editor, and ex-clergyman, was always an interesting figure; and his successive transitions from Tractarianism to Latitudinarianism, and from Agnosticism to Ultramontanism, gave a peculiar piquancy to his utterances on religion. He deserves remembrance on two quite different scores—one, that he was the first publisher to study prettiness in the production of even cheap books; and the

other, that he was an early and enthusiastic worker in the cause of National Temperance. It was my privilege to be often with him in the suffering and blindness of his last years, and I have never seen a trying discipline more bravely borne.

More than once in these chapters I have referred to "Billy Johnson," as his pupils and friends called William Cory in remembrance of old times. He was from 1845 to 1872 the most brilliant tutor at Eton: an astonishing number of eminent men passed through his hands, and retained through life the influence of his teaching. After leaving Eton, he changed his name from Johnson to Cory, and established himself on the top of the hill at Hampstead, where he freely imparted the treasures of his exquisite scholarship to all who cared to seek them, and not least willingly to young ladies. He was a man of absolutely original mind; paradoxical, prejudiced, and intellectually independent to the point of eccentricity. His range was wide, his taste infallible, and his love of the beautiful a passion. He lived, from boyhood to old age, the life of the Intellect; and yet posterity will know him only as having written one thin book of delightful verse; [53] a fragmentary History of England; and some of the most fascinating letters in the language.

A friend and brother-Scholar of mine at Oxford was "Willy" Arnold, son of Mr. Thomas Arnold, and nephew of Matthew. After taking his degree, he joined the staff of the *Manchester Guardian*, and before long became one of the first journalists of his time. He was not merely a journalist, but also a publicist, and could have made his mark in public life by his exceptional knowledge of European politics. We had not seen one another for a good many years, when we met casually at dinner in the summer of 1887. To that chance meeting I owed my introduction to the *Manchester Guardian*. My first contribution to it was a description of the Jubilee Garden-Party at Buckingham Palace on the 29th of June, 1887; so I can reckon almost a quarter of a century of association with what I am bold to call (defying all allusion to the fabled Tanner) the best newspaper in Great Britain.

But journalism, though now practised on a more dignified level, was only a continuation and development of a life-long habit; whereas, though I had been scribbling ever since I was a boy, I had never written a book. In 1890 Messrs. Sampson Low started a series of *The Queen's Prime Ministers*. Froude led off, brilliantly, with Lord Beaconsfield; and the editor[54] asked me to follow with Mr. Gladstone. Before acceding to this proposal, I thought it right to ask whether Gladstone had any objection; and, supposing that he had not, whether he would

give me any help. His reply was eminently characteristic,—

"When someone proposed to write a book about Harry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, the Bishop procured an Injunction in Chancery to stop him. I shall not seek an Injunction against you—but that is all the help I can give you."

Thus encouraged, or rather, I should say, not discouraged, I addressed myself to the task, and the book came out in July, 1891. I was told that Gladstone did not read it, and this assurance was in many respects a relief. But someone told him that I had stated, on the authority of one of his school-fellows, that he played no games at Eton. The next time I met him, he referred to this point; declared that I had been misinformed; and affirmed that he played both cricket and football, and "was in the Second Eleven at Cricket." In obedience to his request, I made the necessary correction in the Second Edition; but *a priori* I should not have been inclined to suspect my venerated leader of having been a cricketer.

It is no part of my plan to narrate my own extremely humble performances in the way of authorship. The heading of the chapter speaks not of Book-making, but of Literature; and for a man to say that he has contributed to Literature would indeed be to invite rebuff. I am thinking now, not of what I have done, but of what I have received; and my debt to Literature is great indeed. I do not know the sensation of dulness, but, like most human beings, I know the sensation of sorrow; and with a grateful heart I record the fact that the darkest hours of my life have been made endurable by the Companionship of Books.

FOOTNOTES:

[49] To Mr. Watson I owed my introduction to Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*—a real event in one's mental life.

[50] By Sir Walter Strickland; whose poem on William Tyndale was justly admired.

[51] Richard Monckton Milnes was created Lord Houghton, August 20, 1863.

[52] It is only fair to observe that those "Letters" were written in the strictest confidence.

[53] Ionica.

[54] Mr. Stuart J. Reid.

XIV

SERVICE

> May He "in knowledge of Whom standeth our eternal life, Whose service is perfect freedom"—*Quem nosse vivere, Cui servire regnare est*—teach us the rules and laws of that eternal service, which is now beginning on the scene of time.
>
> R. W. CHURCH, *Human Life and its Conditions*.

It was my happiness to be born and brought up in a home where Religion habitually expressed itself in Social Service. I cannot remember a time when those nearest to me were not actively engaged in ministering to the poor, the sick, the underfed, and the miserable. The motive of all this incessant ministration was the Christian Faith, and its motto was *Charitas Christi urget nos*. The religion in which the children of an Evangelical home were reared was an intensely vivid and energetic principle, passionate on its emotional side, definite in its theory, imperious in its demands, practical, visible, and tangible in its effects. If a boy's heart—

> "Were less insensible than sodden clay
> In a sea-river's bed at ebb of tide,"

it could scarcely fail to carry with it into the world outside the impressions stamped by such a training. I can remember quite clearly that, even in my Harrow days, the idea of Life as Service was always present to my mind: and it was constantly enforced by the preaching of such men as Butler, Westcott, and Farrar.

"Here you are being educated either for life or for fashion. Which is it? What is your ambition? Is it to continue, with fewer restrictions, the amusements which have engrossed you here? Is it to be favourite or brilliant members of a society which keeps want and misery at a distance? Would this content you? Is this your idea of life? Or may we not hope that you will have a nobler conception of what a Christian manhood may be made in a country so rich in opportunities as our own now presents?"[55]

In Dr. Butler's sermons our thoughts were directed to such subjects as the Housing of the Working Classes, Popular Education, and the contrast between the lot of the rich and the lot of the poor. "May God never allow us to grow proud, or to grow indolent, or to be deaf to the cry of human suffering." "Pray that God may count you worthy to be foremost in the truly holy and heroic work of bringing purity to the homes of the labouring classes, and so hastening the coming of the day when the longing of our common Lord shall be accomplished." "Forget not the complaints, and the yet more fatal silence, of the poor, and pray that the ennobling of your own life, and the gratification of your own happiness, may be linked hereafter with some public Christian labour."

Thus the influences of school co-operated with the influences of home to give one, at the most impressionable age, a lively interest in Social Service; and that interest found a practical outlet at Oxford. When young men first attempt good works, they always begin with teaching; and a Sunday School at Cowley and a Night School at St. Frideswide's were the scenes of my (very unsuccessful) attempts in that direction. Through my devotion to St. Barnabas', I became acquainted with the homes and lives of the poor in the then squalid district of "Jericho"; and the experience thus acquired was a valuable complement to the knowledge of the agricultural poor which I had gained at home. It was at this time that I first read *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*. The living voice of Ruskin taught us the sanctity of work for others. A fascinating but awful book called *Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism* laid compelling hands on some young hearts; and in 1875 Dr. Pusey made that book the subject of a sermon before the University, in which he pleaded the cause of the poor with an unforgettable solemnity.[56]

For two or three years, illness and decrepitude interfered with my active service, but the ideal was still enthroned in my heart; and, as health returned, the shame of doing nothing for others became intolerable. Return to activity was a very gradual process, and, if one had ever "despised the day of small things," one now learned to value it. When I came up to London, two or three of us, who had been undergraduate friends at Oxford, formed a little party for workhouse-visiting. One of the party has since been a Conservative Minister, one a Liberal Minister, and one a high official of the Central Conservative Association. Sisters joined their brothers, and we used to jog off together on Saturday afternoons to the Holborn Workhouse, which, if I remember right, stood in a poetically-named but prosaic-looking street called "Shepherdess Walk." The girls visited the women, and we the men. We used to take oranges and flowers to the wards, give short

readings from amusing books, and gossip with the bedridden about the outside world. We always had the kindest of welcomes from our old friends; and great was their enthusiasm when they learned that two of their visitors had been returned to Parliament at the General Election of 1880. As one of the two was a Conservative and one a Liberal, the political susceptibilities of the ward were not offended, and we both received congratulations from all alike. One quaint incident is connected with these memories. Just outside the Workhouse was a sort of booth, or "lean-to," where a very respectable woman sold daffodils and wall-flowers, which we used to buy for our friends inside. One day, when one of the girls of our party was making her purchase, the flower-seller said, "Would your Ladyship like to go to the Lady Mayoress's Fancy Dress Ball? If so, I can send you and your brother tickets. You have been good customers to me, and I should be very glad if you would accept them." The explanation was that the flower-seller was sister to the Lady Mayoress, whom the Lord Mayor had married when he was in a humbler station. The tickets were gratefully accepted; and, when we asked the giver if she was going to the Ball, she replied, with excellent sense and taste, "Oh, no. My sister, in her position, is obliged to give these grand parties, but I should be quite out of place there. You must tell me all about it next time you come to the Workhouse."

Meanwhile, during this "day of small things" a quiet but momentous revolution had been going on all round us, in the spheres of thought and conscience; and the earlier idea of individual service had been, not swamped by, but expanded into, the nobler conception of corporate endeavour.

It had been a work of time. The Christian Socialism of 1848—one of the finest episodes in our moral history—had been trampled underfoot by the wickedness of the Crimean War. To all appearance, it fell into the ground and died. After two years of aimless bloodshed, peace was restored in 1856, and a spell of national prosperity succeeded. The Repeal of the Corn Laws had done its work; food was cheaper; times were better; the revenue advanced "by leaps and bounds." But commercialism was rampant. It was the heyday of the Ten Pound Householder and the Middle Class Franchise. Mr. Podsnap and Mr. Gradgrind enounced the social law. Bright and Cobden dominated political thinking. The Universities were fast bound in the misery and iron of Mill and Bain. Everywhere the same grim idols were worshipped—unrestricted competition, the survival of the fittest,

and universal selfishness enthroned in the place which belonged to universal love. "The Devil take the hindermost" was the motto of industrial life. "In the huge and hideous cities, the awful problem of Industry lay like a bad dream; but Political Economy warned us off that ground. We were assured that the free play of competitive forces was bound to discover the true equipoise. No intervention could really affect the inevitable outcome. It could only hinder and disturb."[57] The Church, whose pride it had been in remoter ages to be the Handmaid of the Poor, was bidden to leave the Social Problem severely alone; and so ten years rolled by, while the social pressure on labour became daily more grievous to be borne. But meanwhile the change was proceeding underground, or at least out of sight. Forces were working side by side which knew nothing of each other, but which were all tending to the same result. The Church, boldly casting aside the trammels which had bound her to wealth and culture, went down into the slums; brought the beauty and romance of Worship to the poorest and the most depraved, and compelled them to come in. Whenever such a Church as St. Alban's, Holborn, or St. Barnabas, Oxford, was established in the slums of a populous city, it became a centre not only of religious influence, but of social, physical, and educational reform. Ruskin's many-coloured wisdom, long recognized in the domain of Art, began to win its way through economic darkness, and charged cheerfully against the dismal strongholds of Supply and Demand. *Unto this Last* became a handbook for Social Reformers. The teaching of Maurice filtered, through all sorts of unsuspected channels, into literature and politics and churchmanship. In the intellectual world, Huxley transformed "the Survival of the Fittest," by bidding us devote ourselves to the task of fitting as many as possible to survive. At Oxford, the "home" not of "lost" but of victorious "causes," T. H. Green, wielding a spiritual influence which reached farther than that of many bishops, taught that Freedom of Contract, if it is to be anything but a callous fraud, implies conditions in which men are really free to contract or to refuse; and insisted that all wholesome competition implies "adequate equipment for the competitors."

It is impossible to say exactly how all these influences intertwined and co-operated. One man was swayed by one force; another by another; and, after long years of subterranean working, a moment came, as it comes to the germinating seed deep-hidden in the furrow, when it must pierce the superincumbent mass, and show its tiny point of life above ground.[58] The General Election of 1880, by dethroning Lord Beaconsfield and putting Gladstone in power, had fulfilled the strictly political objects which during the preceding three years my friends and I had been trying to attain. So we, who entered Parliament at that Election,

were set free, at the very outset of our public career, to work for the Social Reform which we had at heart. We earnestly desired to make the lives of our fellow-men healthier, sweeter, brighter, and more humane; and it was an ennobling and invigorating ambition, lifting the pursuit of politics, out of the vulgar dust of office-seeking and wire-pulling, into the purer air of unselfish endeavour. To some of us it was much more; for it meant the application of the Gospel of Christ to the practical business of modern life. But the difficulties were enormous. The Liberal party still clung to its miserable old mumpsimus of *Laissez-faire*, and steadily refused to learn the new and nobler language of Social Service. Alone among our leading men, Mr. Chamberlain seemed to apprehend the truth that political reform is related to social reform as the means to the end, and that Politics, in its widest sense, is the science of human happiness.

But, in spite of all discouragements, we clung to "a Social Philosophy which, however materialistic some of its tendencies might have become, had been allied with the spiritual Hegelianism with which we had been touched. It took its scientific shape in the hands of Karl Marx, but it also floated to us, in dreams and visions, using our own Christian language, and invoking the unity of the Social Body, as the Law of Love, and the Solidarity of Humanity."[59]

At the sound of these voices the old idols fell—*Laissez-faire* and *Laissez-aller*, Individualism and Self-content, Unrestricted Competition and the Survival of the Fittest. They all went down with a crash, like so many dishonoured Dagons; and, before their startled worshippers had time to reinstate them, yet another voice of warning broke upon our ears. *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, describing the enormous amount of preventable misery caused by over-crowding, startled men into recognizing the duty of the State to cope with the evil. Then came Henry George with his *Progress and Poverty*, and, as Dr. Holland says, he "forced us on to new thinking." That "new thinking" took something of this form—"Here are the urgent and grinding facts of human misery. The Political Economy of such blind guides as Ricardo and Bastiat and Fawcett has signally failed to cure or even mitigate them. Now comes a new prophet with his gospel of the Single Tax. He may, or may not, have found the remedy, but at any rate he has shown us more clearly than ever the immensity of the evil, and our responsibility for suffering it to continue. We profess and call ourselves Christians. Is it not about time that, casting aside all human teachings, whether Economic or Socialistic, we tried to see what the Gospel says about the subject, and about our duty in regard to it?"

Out of this stress of mind and heart arose "The Christian Social Union." It was

founded in Lent, 1889, and it set forth its objects in the following statement—

> "This Union consists of Churchmen who have the following objects at heart:—
>
> (i) To claim for the Christian Law the ultimate authority to rule social practice.
>
> (ii) To study in common how to apply the moral truths and principles of Christianity to the social and economic difficulties of the present time.
>
> (iii) To present CHRIST in practical life as the Living Master and King, the enemy of wrong and selfishness, the power of righteousness and love."

The Christian Social Union, originating with some Oxford men in London, was soon reinforced from Cambridge, which had fallen under the inspiring though impalpable influence of Westcott's teaching. Westcott was, in some sense, the continuator of Mauricianism; and so, when Westcott joined the Union, the two streams, of Mauricianism and of the Oxford Movement, fused. Let Dr. Holland, with whom the work began, tell the rest of the story—"We founded the C. S. U. under Westcott's presidentship, leaving to the Guild of St. Matthew their old work of justifying God to the People, while we devoted ourselves to converting and impregnating the solid, stolid, flock of our own church folk within the fold.... We had our work cut out for us in dislodging the horrible cast-iron formulæ, which were indeed wholly obsolete, but which seemed for that very reason to take tighter possession of their last refuge in the bulk of the Church's laity."

> "Let no man think that sudden in a minute
> All is accomplished and the work is done;—
> Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it,
> Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun."[60]

The spirit which created the Christian Social Union found, in the same year, an unexpected outlet in the secular sphere. In the Session of 1888, the Conservative Ministry, noting the general disgust which had been aroused by the corrupt misgovernment of Greater London, passed the "Local Government Act," which, among other provisions, made London into a County, gave it a "County Council," and endowed that Council with far-reaching powers. To social reformers this was a tremendous event. For forty years they had been labouring

to procure something of the sort, and now it dropped down from the skies, and seemed at first almost too good to be true. Under the shock of the surprise, London suddenly awoke to the consciousness of a corporate life. On every side men were stirred by an honest impulse to give the experiment a good start; to work the new machine for all it was worth; and to make the administration of Greater London a model for all lesser municipalities. The Divisions of London, for the purposes of its new Council, were the same as its Parliamentary Divisions, but each constituency returned two members, and the City four. Every seat (except those for St. George's, Hanover Square) was contested, and there were often as many as six or seven candidates for one division. It was said at the time that "the uncertainty of the issues, the multitude of candidates, and the vagueness of parties made it impossible to tabulate the results with the same accuracy and completeness which are possible in the case of the House of Commons." Some candidates stood professedly as Liberals, and others as Conservatives. The majority, however, declared themselves to be "strictly non-political." Some leading objects, such as Better Housing of the Poor, Sanitary Reform, and the abolition of jobbery and corruption, were professed by all alike; and the main issues in dispute were the control of the Police by the Council, the reform of the Corporation of London and of the City Guilds, the abolition of dues on coal coming into the Port of London, and the taxation of ground-rents.

In such projects as these it was easy to discern the working of the new spirit. Men were trying, earnestly though amid much confusion, to translate the doctrines of Social Reform into fact. "Practicable Socialism" became the ideal of the reforming party, who styled themselves "Progressives." Their opponents got the unfortunate name of "Moderates"; and between the ideas roughly indicated by those two names the battle was fought. The Election took place in January, 1889. The result was that 71 candidates labelled "Progressive" were returned, and 47 "Moderates." The Act empowered the Council to complete its number by electing 19 Aldermen. Of these, 18 were Progressives, and one was a Moderate; so the total result was a "Progressive" majority of 41.

By the time of which I write I had become, by habitual residence, a Londoner; and I hope I was as keen on Social Reform as anyone in London, or outside it. But, after what I said in an earlier chapter, it will surprise no one that I declined to be a candidate for the London County Council. My dislike of electioneering is so intense that nothing on earth except the prospect of a seat in Parliament would tempt me to undertake it; so to all suggestions that I should stand in the Progressive interest I turned a resolutely deaf ear. But, when the election was

over and the Progressive majority had to choose a list of Aldermen, I saw my opportunity and volunteered my services. By the goodwill of my friends on the Council, I was placed on the "Progressive List," and on the 5th of February I was elected an Alderman for six years. Among my colleagues were Lord Meath, Lord Lingen, Lord Hobhouse, Mr. Quintin Hogg, Sir Thomas Farrer, and Mr. Frederic Harrison. Lord Meath was accepted by the Progressive party, in recognition of his devoted services to the cause of social amelioration, especially in the matter of Public Gardens and Open Spaces; but, with this sole exception, the list was frankly partisan. The Progressives had got a majority on the new "Parliament of London," and had no notion of watering it down.

Before the Council was created, the governing body for Greater London had been the "Metropolitan Board of Works," which had its dwelling in Spring Gardens. The old building had to be adapted to its new uses, and, while the reconstruction was in progress, the County Council was permitted by the Corporation to meet in the Guildhall. There we assembled on the 12th of February, a highly-diversified, and, in some respects, an interesting company. A careful analysis of our quality and occupations gave the following results: Peers, 4; M.P.'s and ex-M.P.'s, 9; Clergymen, 2; Barristers, 14; Solicitors, 3; Soldiers, 4; Doctors, 5; Tutors, 2; Architects, 2; Builders, 4; Engineers, 3; Journalists, 4; Publisher, 1; Bankers, 5; Stock-Exchange men, 5; Auctioneers, 3; Brewer, 1; Clothiers, 2; Confectioner, 1; Drapers, 2; Grocers, 2; Mineral Water-maker, 1; Optician, 1; Shoemaker, 1; Merchants, 22; Manufacturers, 13; Gentlemen at large, 8; "Unspecified," 10. And to these must be added three ladies, who had been illegally elected and were soon unseated. A current joke of the time represented one of our more highly-cultured Councillors saying to a colleague drawn from another rank,—"The acoustics of this Hall seem very defective"—to which the colleague, after sniffing, replies—"Indeed? I don't perceive anything unpleasant." Which things were an allegory; but conveyed a true impression of our social and educational diversities.

The first business which we had to transact was the election of a Chairman. Lord Rosebery was elected by 104 votes to 17; and so began the most useful portion of his varied career. The honorary office of Vice-Chairman was unanimously conferred on Sir John Lubbock, afterwards Lord Avebury; and for the Deputy Chairmanship, a salaried post of practical importance, the Council chose Mr. J. F. B. Firth, who had made his name as an exponent of the intricacies of Metropolitan Government.

To watch the methods of Lord Rosebery's chairmanship was an interesting study.

After much experience of public bodies and public meetings, I consider him the best chairman but one under whom I ever sat. The best was Mr. Leonard Courtney, now Lord Courtney of Penwith, who to the gifts of accuracy, promptness, and mastery of detail, added the rarer grace of absolute impartiality. Lord Rosebery had the accuracy, the promptness, and the mastery, but he was not impartial. He was inclined to add the functions of Leader of the House to those of Speaker, which were rightly his. When a subject on which he felt strongly was under discussion, and opinion in the Council was closely balanced, Lord Rosebery would intervene just at the close of the debate, with a short, strong, and emphatic speech, and so influence the division in favour of his own view. This practice is, in my judgment, inconsistent with ideal chairmanship, but in the early days of the Council it was not without its uses.

We had to furnish ourselves with a constitution, to distribute our various powers, to frame rules of debate, and to create an order of business. To do all this in a full Council of 137 members, most of them quite unversed in public life, many of them opinionated, all articulate, and not a few vociferous, was a work of the utmost difficulty, and Lord Rosebery engineered it to perfection. He was suave and courteous; smoothed acrid dissensions with judicious humour; used sarcasm sparingly, but with effect; and maintained a certain dignity of bearing which profoundly impressed the representatives of the Great Middle Class. "By Jove, how these chaps funk Rosebery!" was the candid exclamation of Sir Howard Vincent; and his remark applied quite equally to his own "Moderate" friends and to my "Progressives." It was characteristic of these gentry that they longed to call Lord Rosebery "My Lord," and were with difficulty induced to substitute "Mr. Chairman." The one member of the Council who stands out in my memory as not having "funked" the Chairman is Mr. John Burns, whose action and bearing in the Council formed one of my most interesting studies. The events of February, 1885, were still present to my memory, though the Councillor for Battersea had probably forgotten them. The change which four years had wrought was extraordinary. He spoke constantly and effectively, but always with moderation, good feeling, and common sense. At the same time, he maintained a breezy independence, and, when he thought that the Chair ought to be defied, defied it. This was awkward, for the Chairman had no disciplinary powers, and there was no executive force to compel submission to his rulings. As far as I could observe, Mr. Burns never gave way, and yet he soon ceased to enter into conflict with the Chair. What was the influence which tamed him? I often wondered, but never knew.

The Council had got itself duly divided into Committees, and it was noticeable that there was an enormous rush of Councillors anxious to serve on the Housing Committee. The "Bitter Cry of Outcast London" had not been raised in vain, and every man in the Council seemed anxious to bear his part in the work of redressing an intolerable wrong. The weekly Session of the Council was fixed for Tuesday afternoon, to the disgust of some Progressives who hankered after the more democratic hour of 7 p.m. The main part of the business was the discussion of the Reports brought up from the various Committees, and, when those were disposed of, abstract motions could be debated. Some earnest Liberals were always trying to raise such questions as Home Rule, Land Law, Enfranchisement of Leaseholds, and other matters which lay outside the purview of the Council; and it was delightful to see Lord Rosebery damping down these irregular enthusiasms, and reminding his hearers of the limits which Parliament had set to their activities. Those limits were, in all conscience, wide enough, and included in their scope Housing, Asylums, Bridges, Fire-Brigades, Highways, Reformatory Schools, Main Drainage, Parks, Theatres, and Music-Halls, besides the complicated system of finance by which all our practice was regulated. The Committees dealing with these subjects, and several others of less importance, were manned by able, zealous, and conscientious servants of the public, who gave ungrudgingly of their time (which in many cases was also money), thought, and labour. The Council as a whole displayed a voracious appetite for work, and rendered, without fee or reward, a service to Greater London which no money could have purchased.

In the autumn of this year—1889—some correspondence appeared in newspapers and reviews about what was called "The New Liberalism." By that title was meant a Liberalism which could no longer content itself with the crudities of official politics, but longed to bear its part in the social regeneration of the race. In an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, I commented on the insensibility of the Liberal Leaders to this new inspiration. "Who would lead our armies into Edom?" I confess that I thought of Lord Rosebery as our likeliest champion; but I put the cause above the man. "Wherever our leader may come from, I am confident that the movement will go on. *Ça ira! Ça ira! Malgré les mutins, tout réussira!* The cause of Social Service arouses that moral enthusiasm which cannot be bought and cannot be resisted, and which carries in itself the pledge of victory. The terrible magnitude and urgency of the evils with which we have to cope cannot be overstated. Those who set out to fight them will have to encounter great and manifold difficulties—ignorance, stupidity, prejudice, greed, cruelty, self-interest, instincts of class, cowardly distrust of popular movements,

'spiritual wickedness in high places.' And, in the face of these opposing forces, it is cheering to think that, after long years of single-handed striving, the good cause now has its workers everywhere. And to none does it make a more direct or a more imperious appeal than to us Liberal politicians. If we are worthy of the name, we must be in earnest about a cause which promises happiness, and health, and length of days to those who by their daily labour of hand and head principally maintain the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race. We must be impatient of a state of society in which healthy dwellings and unadulterated food and pure water and fresh air are made the monopolies of the rich. We must be eager to do our part towards abolishing filth and eradicating disease, and giving free scope to those beneficent laws of Nature which, if only we will obey them, are so manifestly designed to promote the welfare and the longevity of man. If we believe that every human being has equally and indefeasibly the right to be happy, we must find our chief interest and most satisfying occupation in Social Service. Our aim is, first, to lighten the load of existence for those thronging thousands of the human family whose experience of life is one long suffering, and then to 'add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier.' The poor, the ignorant, the weak, the hungry, the over-worked, all call for aid; and, in ministering to their wants, the adherent of the New Liberalism knows that he is fulfilling the best function of the character which he professes, and moreover is helping to enlarge the boundaries of the Kingdom of God."

When those words were written, the London County Council had just begun its work. I served on it till March, 1895; and during those six years it had proved in practice what a right-minded Municipality can do towards brightening and sweetening human life. It cut broad roads through squalid slums, letting in light and air where all had been darkness and pollution. It cleared wide areas of insanitary dwellings, where only vice could thrive, and re-housed the dispossessed. It broke up the monotony of mean streets with beautiful parks and health-giving pleasure-grounds. It transfigured the Music-Halls, and showed that, by the exercise of a little firmness and common sense, the tone and character of the "Poor Man's Theatre" could be raised to the level of what would be applauded in a drawing-room. By forbidding the sale of refreshments in the auditorium, it crushed the old-fashioned superstition that public entertainment and alcoholic drink are inseparably connected. In some of these good works it was my privilege to bear a part; and, in that matter of the purification of the Music-Halls, I was proud to follow the lead of Sir John McDougall, who has since been Chairman of the Council, and who, at the time of which I am writing, fearlessly exposed himself to unbounded calumny, and even physical violence,

in his crusade for the moral purity of popular amusement. Those were six years of fruitful service; and, though a long time has elapsed since I left the Council, I have constantly watched its labours, and can heartily assent to the eulogy pronounced by my friend Henry Scott Holland, when he was quitting his Canonry at St. Paul's for his Professorship at Oxford:

"As for London, my whole heart is still given to the lines of the Progressive policy on the County Council. I still think that this has given London a soul; and that it has been by far the most effective work that one has watched happening.... The hope of London lies with the County Council."

Before I say goodbye to this portion of my "Autobiography," let me record the fact that the London County Council produced a poet of its own. The first Council came to an end in March, 1892, and the second, elected on the 5th of that month, gave the Progressives a greatly increased majority. One of the newly-elected Councillors uttered his triumphant joy in song.

"Here then you have your answer, you that thought
To find our London unawakened still,
A sleeping plunder for you, thought to fill
The gorge of private greed, and count for naught
The common good. Time unto her has brought
Her glorious hour, her strength of public will
Grown conscious, and a civic soul to thrill
The once dull mass that for your spoil you sought.
Lo, where the alert majestic city stands,
Dreaming her dream of golden days to be,
With shaded eyes beneath her arching hands
Scanning the forward pathway, like a seer
To whom the riven future has made clear
The marvel of some mighty destiny."[61]

Moved by the desire to gratify a young ambition, I introduced the poet to Mr. Gladstone, and that great man, who never damned with faint praise, pronounced that this was the finest thing written about London since Wordsworth's Sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge."

In August, 1892, Gladstone became Prime Minister for the fourth time. He gave me a place in his Government; and for the next three years my activities were limited to North Bedfordshire, which I then represented, the House of Commons,

and Whitehall. I was restored to liberty by the dissolution of July, 1895. In my chapter about Oxford, I spoke of the Rev. E. S. Talbot, then Warden of Keble, and now Bishop of Winchester, as one of those whose friendship I had acquired in undergraduate days. After serving for a while as Vicar of Leeds, he was appointed in 1895 to the See of Rochester, which then included South London. Soon after he had entered on his new work, he said to me, "Men of leisure are very scarce in South London. Will you come across the Thames, and lend us a hand?"

FOOTNOTES:

[55] Dr. Butler's Harrow Sermons. Series II.

[56] "Christianity without the Cross a Corruption of the Gospel of Christ."

[57] Rev. H. Scott Holland, D.D.

[58] Honourable mention ought here to be made of "The Guild of St. Matthew," founded by the Rev. Stewart Headlam in 1877. Its object was "To justify God to the People," and it prepared the way for later organizations.

[59] The Rev. H. S. Holland, D.D.

[60] F. W. H. Myers.

[61] F. Henderson, *By the Sea, and other poems*.

XV

ECCLESIASTICA

> The English Church, as established by the law of England, offers the Supernatural to all who choose to come. It is like the Divine Being Himself, Whose sun shines alike on the evil and on the good.
>
> J. H. SHORTHOUSE, *John Inglesant*.

Mr. Shorthouse, like most people who have come over to the Church from Dissent, set an inordinate value on the principle of Establishment. He seemed (and in that particular he resembled Archbishop Tait) incapable of conceiving the idea of a Church as separate from, and independent of, the State. The words "as established by the law of England" in the passage which stands at the head of this chapter appear to suggest a doubt whether the English Church, if she ceased to be "established," could still discharge her function as the divinely-appointed dispenser of sacramental grace to the English people. Those who, like Mr. Gladstone, believe that no change in her worldly circumstances could "compromise or impair her character as the Catholic and Apostolic Church of this country," would omit Mr. Shorthouse's qualifying words, and would say, simply, that the English Church, whether established or not, offers the Supernatural to all who choose to come, and that she is, has been, and always will be, "historically the same institution through which the Gospel was originally preached to the English Nation." But this is not the place for theorization; so, for the moment, I am content to take Mr. Shorthouse's statement as it stands, and to say that a loving pride in the English Church has been the permanent passion of my life. I hold with Dean Church, a man not given to hyperbole, that "in spite of inconsistencies and menacing troubles, she is still the most glorious Church in Christendom."

I was baptized in the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Woburn, formerly a chapel dependent on the Cistercian Abbey hard by, which the first Earl of Bedford received as a gift from Henry VIII.[62] This truly interesting church was destroyed, to please an innovating incumbent, in 1864; but my earliest impressions of public worship are connected with it, and in my mind's eye I can see it as clearly as if it were still standing. It had never been "restored "; but had

been decorated by my grandfather, who inherited the ecclesiastical rights of the Abbots of Woburn, and whose "Curate" the incumbent was.[63] My grandfather was a liberal giver, and did his best, according to his lights, to make the Church beautiful. He filled the East Window with stained glass, the central subject being his own coat of arms, with patriarchs and saints grouped round it in due subordination. Beneath the window was a fine picture, by Carlo Maratti, of the Holy Family. The Holy Table was a table indeed, with legs and drawers after the manner of a writing-table, and a cover of red velvet. The chancel was long; and the south side of it was engrossed by "the Duke's Pew," which was enclosed within high walls and thick curtains, and contained a fireplace. The north side of the chancel was equally engrossed by a pew for the Duke's servants. The choir, male and female after their kind, surrounded the organ in a gallery at the West End. The whole Church was pewed throughout, and white-washed, the chancel being enriched with plaster mouldings. On the capital of each pillar was a scutcheon, bearing the arms of some family allied to our own. The largest and most vivid presentment of the Royal Arms which I have ever seen crowned the chancel-arch.

Our clerical staff consisted of the incumbent (who became a "Vicar" by Act of Parliament in 1868) and a curate. Our list of services was as follows: Sunday—11 a.m., Morning Prayer, Litany, Table-prayers, and Sermon; 6 p.m., Evening Prayer and Sermon. There was Evening Prayer with a sermon on Thursdays, and a prayer-meeting in the schoolroom on Tuesday evenings. There were no extra services in Lent or Advent, nor on any Holy Days except Good Friday and Ascension Day. The Holy Communion was administered after Morning Service on the first Sunday of the month, and on Christmas and Easter Days; and after Evening Service on the third Sunday. The black gown was, of course, worn in the pulpit, and I remember a mild sensation caused by the disuse of bands. The prayers were preached; the Psalms were read; and the hymn-book in use was "The Church and Home Metrical Psalter and Hymnal"—a quaint compilation which I have never seen elsewhere. It would not be easy to describe the dreariness of the services; and the preaching corresponded to them. This is curious, for Evangelical preaching generally was rousing and effective. I remember that we heard preaching of that type from strangers who occasionally "took duty" or "pleaded for Societies"; but our own pastors always expatiated on Justification by Faith only. I cannot recall any other subject; and, even in enforcing this, "Pulpit-eloquence," topical allusions, and illustrations whether from nature or from books, were rigidly eschewed. "As dull as a sermon" is a proverbial saying which for me in early boyhood had an awful truth.

It has been stated in an earlier chapter that I discovered the Sacramental System of the Church by the simple method of studying the Prayer Book. Certainly I got no help in that direction from my spiritual pastors. The incumbent was, I should think, the Lowest Churchman who ever lived. He was a Cambridge man; a thorough gentleman; well-read; wholly devoted to his sacred calling; and fearless in his assertion of what he believed to be right. (He once refused to let Jowett preach in our pulpit, though the noble patron made the request.) He was entirely insensible to poetry, beauty, romance, and enthusiasm; but his mind was essentially logical, and he followed his creed to its extremest consequences. Baptismal grace, of course, he absolutely denied. He prepared me for Confirmation, and he began his preparation by assailing my faith in the Presence and the Succession. He defined Confirmation as "a coming of age in the things of the soul." I perfectly remember a sermon preached on "Sacrament Sunday," which ended with some such words as these, "I go to yonder table to-day; not expecting to meet the Lord, because I know He will not be there." I have seldom heard the doctrine of the Real Absence stated with equal frankness.

All my religious associations were with the Evangelical school, of which my parents were devoted adherents. My uncle, the Rev. Lord Wriothesley Russell (1804-1886), had been a disciple of Charles Simeon at Cambridge, but had completely discarded such fragments of Churchmanship as lingered in his master's teaching. My mother (1810-1884) had been in early life closely allied with "the Clapham Sect"; and our friendship with the last survivor of that sect, Miss Marianne Thornton (1797-1887), linked us to the Wilberforces, the Venns, and the Macaulays. My acquaintance with Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885) I have always esteemed one of the chief honours of my life. He combined in a singular degree the gifts which make a Leader. He had an imperious will, a perfervid temper, unbounded enthusiasm, inexhaustible energy. Any movement with which he was connected he controlled. He brooked neither opposition nor criticism. His authority was reinforced by advantages of aspect and station; by a stately manner, by a noble and commanding eloquence. But all these gifts were as nothing when compared with the power of his lifelong consistency. When he was a boy at Harrow, a brutal scene at a pauper's funeral awoke his devotion to the cause of the poor and helpless. Seventy years later, when he lay on his deathbed, his only regret was that he must leave the world with so much misery in it. From first to last, he was an Evangelical of the highest and purest type, displaying all the religious and social virtues of that school in their perfection. Yet he left it on record that he had been more harshly treated by the Evangelical party than by any other. Perhaps the explanation is that those excellent people

were only kicking against the pricks of a too-absolute control.

Such were the religious associations of my early life; and I am deeply thankful for them. I have found, by much experiment, that there is no foundation on which the superstructure of Catholic religion can be more securely built than on the Evangelical confession of man's utter sinfulness, and of the free pardon purchased by the Blood of Christ. A man trained in that confession may, without sacrificing a jot of his earlier creed, learn to accept all that the Catholic Church teaches about Orders and Sacraments; but to the end he will retain some characteristic marks of his spiritual beginnings. For my own part, I hold with Mr. Gladstone that to label oneself with an ecclesiastical nickname would be to compromise "the first of earthly blessings—one's mental freedom[64]"; but if anyone chose to call me a "Catholic Evangelical," I should not quarrel with the designation.

I said in an earlier chapter that I had an inborn fondness for Catholic ceremonial, and this, I suppose, was part of my general love of material beauty. Amid such surroundings as I have described, it was a fondness not easily indulged. When I was twelve years old, I was staying at Leamington in August, and on a Holy Day I peeped into the Roman Church there, and saw for the first time the ceremonies of High Mass; and from that day on I longed to see them reproduced in the Church of England. During one of our periodical visits to London, I discovered the beautiful church in Gordon Square where the "Adherents of a Restored Apostolate" celebrate Divine Worship with bewildering splendour. The propinquity of our house to Westminster Abbey enabled me to enter into the more chastened, yet dignified, beauty of the English rite. At Harrow the brightness and colour of our School-Chapel struck my untutored eye as "exceeding magnifical"; and the early celebrations in the Parish Church had a solemnity which the Chapel lacked.

But the happiest memory of all is connected with a little Church[65] about two miles from my home. It is a tiny structure of one aisle, with the altar fenced off by a screen of carved oak. It served a group of half a dozen houses, and it stood amid green fields, remote from traffic, and scarcely visible except to those who searched for it. There an enthusiastic and devoted priest spent five and twenty years of an isolated ministry; and there, for the first time in our communion, I saw the Divine Mysteries celebrated with the appropriate accessories.

My walks to that secluded altar, in the fresh brightness of summer mornings, can never be forgotten until the whole tablet is blotted. On the sky-line, the great

masses of distant woodland, half-veiled in mist, lay like a blue cloud. Within, there was "the fair white linen cloth upon the wooden table, with fresh flowers above, and the worn slabs beneath that record the dim names of the forgotten dead"; and there "amid the faint streaks of the early dawn, the faithful, kneeling round the oaken railing, took into their hands the worn silver of the Grail—

"The chalice of the Grapes of God."[66]

Perhaps it was just as well for a boy that these glimpses of beautiful worship were few and far between. One was saved from the perils of a mere externalism, and was driven inward on the unseen realities which ceremonial may sometimes obscure. And then, when one got up to Oxford, one found all the splendours of the sanctuary in rich abundance, and enjoyed them with a whole-hearted self-abandonment. I need not repeat what I have already said about St. Barnabas and Cowley and the other strongholds of Catholic worship. I am eternally their debtor, and the friends with whom I shared them have helped to shape my life.

But, in spite of all these enjoyments, religious life at Oxford between 1872 and 1876 was not altogether happy. A strong flood of Romanism burst upon the University, and carried some of my best friends from my side; and, concurrently with this disturbance, an American teacher attacked our faith from the opposite quarter. He taught an absolute disregard of all forms and rites, and, not content with the ordinary doctrine of instantaneous conversion, preached the absolute sinlessness of the believer. The movement which, in 1874, he set on foot was marked by disasters, of which the nature can best be inferred from a characteristic saying, "The believer's conflict with Sin is all stuff." This teaching had its natural consequences, and the movement issued in spiritual tragedy.

In the following year we were touched by the much more wholesome enterprise of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. Their teaching was wholly free from the perilous stuff which had defiled the previous mission; and though it shook the faith of some who had cultivated the husk rather than the kernel of ritualism, still all could join in the generous tribute paid by Dr. Liddon on Whitsun Day, 1876:

"Last year two American preachers visited this country, to whom God had given, together with earnest belief in some portions of the gospel, a corresponding spirit of fearless enterprise. Certainly they had no such credentials of an Apostolic Ministry as a well-instructed and believing Churchman would require.... And yet, acting according to the light which God had given them, they threw themselves on our great cities with the ardour of Apostles; spoke of a higher world to thousands who pass the greater part of life in dreaming only of this; and made many of us feel that we owe them at least the debt of an example, which He Who breatheth where He listeth must surely have inspired them to give us." [67]

When I came up to London after leaving Oxford, "the world was all before me where to choose," and I made a pretty wide survey before deciding on my habitual place of worship. St. Paul's Cathedral had lately awoke from its long sleep, and, under the wise guidance of Church, Gregory, and Liddon, was beginning to show the perfection of worship on the strict line of the English Prayer-Book.

Being by temperament profoundly Gothic, I hold (with Sir William Richmond) that Westminster Abbey is the most beautiful church in the world. But it had nothing to offer in the way of seemly worship; and, while Liddon was preaching the Gospel at St. Paul's, Dean Stanley at Westminster was delivering the fine rhetoric and dubious history which were his substitutes for theology, and with reference to which a Jewish lady said to me, "I have heard the Dean preach for eighteen years, and I have never heard a word from him which I could not accept." At the Temple, Dr. Vaughan was at the height of his vogue, and Sunday after Sunday was teaching the lawyers the effective grace of a nervous and finished style.

All Saints, Margaret Street, St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, and St. Barnabas, Pimlico, showed a type of worship refined, artistic, and rather prim. St. Alban's, Holborn, "the Mother and Mistress" of all ritualistic churches, combined Roman ceremonial with the passionately Evangelical teaching of the greatest extempore preacher I have ever heard, Arthur Stanton. St. Michael's, Shoreditch, and St. Peter's, London Docks, were outposts of the ritualistic army. The Low Church congregated at Portman Chapel, and Belgrave Chapel, and Eaton Chapel (all since demolished), at St. Michael's, Chester Square, and St. John's, Paddington. Broad Churchmen, as a rule, were hidden in holes and corners; for the bizarre magnificence of Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, had not yet superseded the humble structure in which Henry Blunt had formerly preached into the Duchess of Beaufort's[68] ear-trumpet; and St. Margaret's, Westminster, had only just begun to reverberate the rolling eloquence of Dr. Farrar. At St. Peter's, Eaton Square, amid surroundings truly hideous, George Wilkinson, afterward Bishop of St. Andrews, dominated, sheerly by spiritual force, a congregation which, having regard to the numbers, wealth, and importance of the men who composed it, was the most remarkable that I have ever seen. Cabinet Ministers, great noblemen, landed proprietors, Members of Parliament, soldiers, lawyers, doctors, and "men about town," were the clay which this master-potter moulded at his will.

Then, as now, Society loved to be scolded, and the more Mr. Wilkinson thundered, the more it crowded to his feet. "Pay your bills." "Get up when you

are called." "Don't stay at a ball till two, and then say you are too delicate for early services." "Eat one dinner a day instead of three, and try to earn that one." "Give up champagne for the season, and what you save on your wine-merchant's bill send to the Mission-Field." "You are sixty-five years old, and have never been confirmed. Never too late to mend. Join a Confirmation Class at once, and try to remedy, by good example now, the harm you have done your servants or your neighbours by fifty years' indifference." "Sell that diamond cross which you carry with you into the sin-polluted atmosphere of the Opera, give the proceeds to feed the poor, and wear the only real cross—the cross of self-discipline and self-denial." These are echoes, faint, indeed, but not, I think, unfaithful, of St. Peter's pulpit in its days of glory.

When I look back upon the Church in London as it was when I first knew it, and when I compare my recollections with what I see now, I note, of course, a good many changes, and not all of them improvements. The Evangelicals, with their plain teaching about sin and forgiveness, are gone, and their place is taken by the professors of a flabby latitudinarianism, which ignores sin—the central fact of human life—and therefore can find no place for the Atonement. Heresy is preached more unblushingly than it was thirty years ago; and when it tries to disguise itself in the frippery of æsthetic Anglicanism, it leads captive not a few. In the churches commonly called Ritualistic, I note one great and significant improvement. English Churchmen have gradually discovered that they have an indigenous ritual of their own—dignified, expressive, artistic, free from fuss and fidgets—and that they have no need to import strange rites from France or Belgium. The evolution of the English Rite is one of the wholesome signs of the times. About preaching, I am not so clear. The almost complete disuse of the written sermon is in many ways a loss. The discipline of the paper protects the flock alike against shambling inanities, and against a too boisterous rhetoric. No doubt a really fine extempore sermon is a great work of art; but for nine preachers out of ten the manuscript is the safer way.

As regards the quality of the clergy, the change is all to the good. When I was a boy at Harrow, Dr. Vaughan, preaching to us on our Founder's Day, spoke with just contempt of "men who choose the Ministry because there is a Family Living waiting for them; or because they think they can make that profession—that, and none other—compatible with indolence and self-indulgence; or because they imagine that a scantier talent and a more idle use of it can in that one calling be made to suffice." "These notions," he added, "are out of date, one Act of Disestablishment would annihilate them." That Act of Disestablishment has not

come yet, but the change has come without waiting for it. Even the "Family Living" no longer attracts. Young men seek Holy Orders because they want work. Clerical dreams of laziness or avarice, self-seeking or self-indulgence, have gone out for ever; and the English Church has in her commissioned service a band of men whose devotion and self-sacrifice would be a glory to any Church in Christendom.

An active politician, as I was thirty years ago, has not much leisure; but all through my parliamentary work I sought to bear in mind that Life is Service. I helped to found the White Cross League, and worked hard for the cause which it represents. I bore a hand in Missions and Bible-classes. I was a member of a Diocesan Conference. I had ten years of happy visiting in Hospitals, receiving infinitely more than I could ever give. And I should think that no man of my age has spoken on so many platforms, or at so many Drawing Room meetings. But all this was desultory business, and I always desired a more definite obligation.

On St. Luke's Day, 1895, my loved and honoured friend, Edward Talbot, formerly Warden of Keble, was consecrated 100th Bishop of Rochester; and the diocese at that time included all South London. As soon as he established himself there, the new Bishop, so I have already stated, asked me to come across the Thames, and do some definite work in South London. At first, that work consisted of service on a Public Morals Committee, and of lecturing on ecclesiastical topics; but gradually the field contracted in one direction and expanded in another.

It was in 1891 that Dr. Temple, then Bishop of London, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, being anxious to lighten the burden of preaching which lies so heavily on hardworked clergy, determined to license lay-readers to speak in consecrated buildings. It was a bold step, and of doubtful legality; but the Bishop characteristically declared that he would chance the illegality, feeling sure that, when the Vicar and Churchwardens invited a lay-reader to speak, no one would be churlish enough to raise legal objections. The result proved that the Bishop was perfectly right, and the Diocese of London has now a band of licensed lay-preachers who render the clergy a great deal of valuable aid. I was from the first a good deal attracted by the prospect of joining this band, but Parliament and Office left me no available leisure. When Dr. Talbot became Bishop of Rochester, he at once took in hand the work of reorganizing the body of Lay-Readers in his Diocese; and before long had determined to follow the example set by Bishop Temple, and to license some of his readers to speak at extra services in consecrated buildings. He made it quite clear from the first—

and the point has subsequently been established by Convocation—that there was no idea of reviving the Minor Orders. The lay-reader was to be, in every sense, a layman; and, while he might speak, under proper restrictions, in a consecrated building, he still would speak not "as one having authority," but simply as brother-man to brother-men.

I was admitted to the office of a Diocesan Lay-Reader, in the Private Chapel of the Bishop's House at Kennington, on the 15th of January, 1898, and have been permitted to spend fifteen years of happy service in this informal ministry.

FOOTNOTES:

[62] Cf. Froude's "Short Studies in Great Subjects."

[63] It may perhaps be worth noting that my parents were married, in 1834, by a Special License issued by my grandfather as Abbot of Woburn.

[64] *Letters on the Church and Religion.* Vol. I., p. 385.

[65] Pottesgrove.

[66] J. H. Shorthouse—Introduction to George Herbert's *Temple*.

[67] *Influences of the Holy Spirit.* University Sermons, Series II.

[68] Charlotte Sophia, Duchess of Beaufort, a leader of the Evangelical party, died 1854—aged eighty-four.

THE END

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

George William Erskine Russell

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