

## SOME GAETIES AND GRAVITIES OF PARLIAMENT.

**P**RINCE METTERNICH tells us in his autobiography that "the men who *make* history have no time to write it—at least, I have not," he adds. This is not true of all makers of history, however. In this country, at any rate, the men who do most at history-making are obliged to find time to write it.

Strangers sitting in the gallery of the House of Commons have often wondered what those sheets contained which the Prime Minister was writing, portfolio on knee, while the House was in full debate, or at the close of a critical division. They would have watched him with a deeper curiosity if they had known, what was probably the fact, that the great statesman was penning the story of that night's proceedings for the information of the Sovereign.

The Queen possesses a "Diary of Two Parliaments," written for her sole use by the two most distinguished members of these Parliaments, one volume being the work of Lord Beaconsfield, and the other the work of Mr. Gladstone. It is possible that some day this "Diary," or "leaves" from it, may be graciously given to the world, but while waiting for a work of such supreme historical interest as that would be, we may well content ourselves with the Diary of those very



THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

(Reduced, by permission, from the portrait in "A Diary of Two Parliaments.")

Parliaments\* with which Mr. H. W. Lucy has recently enriched our libraries.

\* "A Diary of Two Parliaments." 2 vols. Cassell & Co., Limited.

This Diary was also written in the House; not on the Treasury Bench, however, but in the Reporters' Gallery. It is the "Diary of events passing under the eye of an observer"—a series of pen-pictures of Parliament in its dullest and in its most excited moods; of portraits (instantaneous photographs, we might call them) of many of its most famous members; and of incidents which interested the whole nation at the time they occurred, and have now become historical.

Everybody knows that the secret of Mr. Disraeli's intended elevation to the peerage had been so well kept, that very few members of the House of Commons suspected they had heard his voice in that Chamber for the last time when he closed the debate on "Bulgarian Atrocities," on the 11th of August, 1876. He left the House that night without a word of farewell and without any token to its members that the place which had known him forty years would know him no more for ever. On February 8th, 1877, he entered the Gilded Chamber as Earl of Beaconsfield, and "the House of Lords presented an appearance such as has seldom been witnessed during the present reign." The House was so crowded that even the turret over the throne was occupied. "Lord Beaconsfield, clad in peer's robes, entered, preceded by the Deputy Black Rod, the Garter King-at-Arms, and the Earl Marshal, who led him within the railings. Here the Earl of Derby appeared, and, in company with the Earl of Bradford, presented Lord Beaconsfield to the Lord Chancellor. Then the new peer approached the table, and handed the clerk his writ of summons as Earl of Beaconsfield and Viscount Hughenden. This done, accompanied by Earl Bradford and Lord Derby he walked round to the Viscounts' bench, in which the three seated themselves, and gravely saluted the Chancellor by thrice raising their three-cornered hats, which they put on as they sat down. The Lord Chancellor, also wearing his hat, raised it in acknowledgment of the salute. Next, the three Lords proceeded to the Earls' bench, in which they again seated themselves and bowed to the Lord Chancellor, this time with their three-cornered hats in their hands. Finally, Lord Beaconsfield walked out of the House, and returning in ten minutes, divested of his cumbersome cloak, took up his seat on the Ministerial bench."

Just now it may be interesting to note from Mr. Lucy's Diary that Mr. Chamberlain's first speech in the House of Commons was delivered the week after the ceremony just described. "It is reported that Sir Walter Barttelot expected this fearsome Radical would enter the House making a 'cart-wheel' down the floor, like ragged little boys do adown the pavement when a drag or an omnibus passes." The good baronet had evidently evolved some fancy picture of Mr. Chamberlain before he met him face to face in the House, and his surprise at seeing the junior member for Birmingham in a coat and even a waistcoat, and on hearing him speak very good English in a quiet, undemonstrative manner, was un-

disguised. There was "an affecting scene" when Mr. Chamberlain sat down. Sir Walter, "awkwardly conscious of disguising his cart-wheel and no waistcoat theory, publicly abandoned it, and held out, over the heads of Henley and Beresford Hope, the right hand of fellowship to the Radical member for Birmingham."

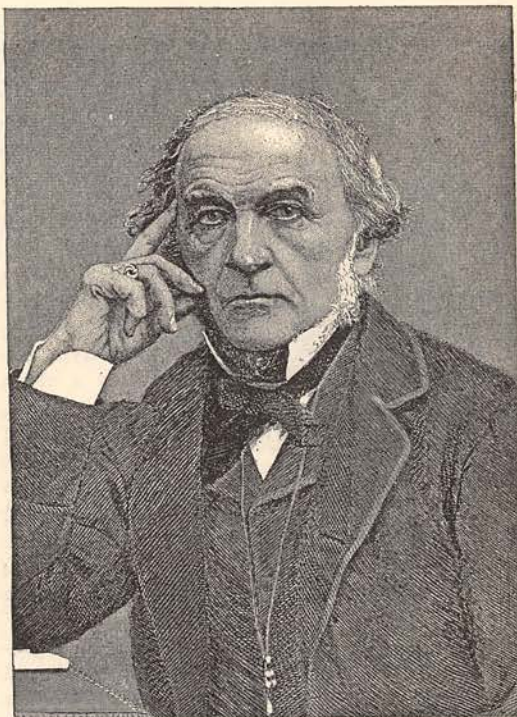
What to do with their hats is a most perplexing problem to some members of the House, and the effort to solve it has led to many an amusing scene. Sir George Bowyer, to avoid danger, used to place his hat far out on the floor of the House, where it stood "a melancholy monument of long usage and rough weather." On one occasion Sir Julian Goldsmid, on rising to address the House, judiciously placed his hat on the seat behind him. Carried away by the musical tones of his own voice, he unfortunately forgot all about his hat, and having brought his remarks to a conclusion, he abruptly sat down in the very middle of the article. "Never was there such a complete wreck of a hat. The curious 'crunching' sound emitted by the astonished and swiftly collapsing cylinder was heard all over the House, and it was in vain that Goldsmid, leaping up as if he had sat on a wasp's nest, began diligently and unconcernedly to straighten out the wreck and brush it with his arm as if nothing had happened."

"The House of Lords is not much given to cheering, and studiously eschews the vulgarity of laughter," says Mr. Lucy, but his volumes afford abundant evidence that in the Lower House

"A little nonsense, now and then,  
Is relished by the wisest men."

Whenever Mr. Whalley essayed to give a quotation in support of his argument he was, for a long time, invariably greeted with the cry of "Sing, sing!" followed by roars of laughter. The cry of "Sing!" arose in this way. Whalley was addressing the House upon his favourite theme, and, wishing to gain its opinion upon a certain hymn accustomed to be sung in a Sunday-school, he drew "a little book from his pocket, observing that he would read it to the House." A member struck with a happy thought called out, "Sing it!" and forthwith arose a unanimous shout of "Sing, sing!" Mr. Jacob Bright one night "accidentally stumbled upon an error which greatly delighted both sides. He alluded to Lord Randolph Churchill as 'the noble lord the member for Woodcock,' a mistake which, he observed, when the prolonged laughter had subsided, 'might have been considerably less appropriate to circumstances.'"

"June 10th, 1880—Mr. Gladstone's last Budget," is a notable "side-heading" in Mr. Lucy's Diary, and the scene on that occasion is most graphically sketched. "The House was crowded in every part, members competing for seats even in the long gallery facing the Treasury Bench. Strangers flooded the gallery as soon as the doors were open, and all night St. Stephen's Hall and the Octagon Hall were thronged with people waiting for the remote chance of somehow or other getting within sound of the Premier's voice." "It was half-past five before Mr. Gladstone found his



*W. H. Woodcut*  
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opportunity, his pale face flushing at the sound of the cheers that welcomed him back in his old rôle of Chancellor of the Exchequer. He spoke for two hours by the clock, but such was the charm of his oratory, so easy was the way made for listeners, and so intent the interest, that when the audience woke from its trance to find the malt tax gone, it was surprised to find that it was also half-past seven."

A division recently took place in the House of Commons, and on the numbers being announced at the table it was found that only one member had passed through one of the lobbies. At the time many people supposed that this incident was unique in Parliamentary history. Mr. Lucy, however, records as one of the most interesting incidents in the career of the Tory Whip, Mr. Rowland Winn (now Lord St. Oswald), that on the 25th of April, 1875, he had to announce a similar result. "Four hundred and thirty-three members—Whigs, Tories, Liberals, and Conservatives—trooped in from the left lobby, whilst from the right issued a single figure—Major O'Gorman. Here was an unprecedented thing that would have perilled the self-possession of an ordinary man. But Mr. Rowland Winn was equal to the occasion. When the cheers and laughter had subsided, his voice resounded through the still House, 'The Aye to the right is one, the Noes to the left are 433.'"

J. T. G.