

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD PANMURE,
MINISTER OF WAR.

WHEN Lord Palmerston became charged with the commands of her Majesty to form a Government, in place of being made War Minister, he applied to Lord Panmure to fill that important office. In commenting on that appoint-

ment the noble Lord, who might be said to have originated it, paid a high compliment to the talents of Lord Panmure, and asserted his fitness for the post. Speaking of the new War Minister, he said, that he was a perfect master of all the principles which regulate an army, and of all the details. He would, he had no doubt, turn his attention to every improvement relative to the supply of the army, and would not be induced to adopt, under the name of improvements, innovations which might be destructive of the army, but would adopt those improvements which the science of the present day would enable him to carry out. Lord John Russell also expressed his conviction that Lord Panmure would be ready to act in a manner which would increase the efficiency of our army, which had suffered, not from the want of discipline or the want of military organisation, but from the failure of the civil department. These were high praises and strong promises; but the past career of Lord Panmure led to the opinion that they were not exaggerated or hazardous, but that they would be borne out by his subsequent proceedings.

It is as Mr. Fox Maule that Lord Panmure is better known in the political and Parliamentary history of his country.

During some twenty years he has filled, while his party have been in power, positions more or less important in the Government, and has invariably acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his superiors and of the public. He is one of those scions of the aristocracy whose whole life and conduct discredit the clamours which are now being raised against our existing institutions. He has those abilities, those qualities of mind and heart, those hard-working instincts, and those popular manners, which would have enabled him to rise in the State, had he entered Parliament only with the ordinary advantages, and trusted to his own powers to make his way. He is descended from the same family as the Earl of Dalhousie. His father was the youngest son of the eighth Earl of Dalhousie (the present Marquis is the tenth); but he changed his name from Ramsay to Maule on succeeding, through his grandmother, to the estates of the old Earls of Panmure. When he was raised to the Peerage in the year 1831 (we speak still of the father of the subject of this notice) he took the title of Panmure, thus perpetuating indirectly the extinct honours of his family. It might be supposed that it was to the influence derived from these family associations that Mr. Fox Maule owed his selection and advancement in political life. So far from this being the case, it is generally understood that he derived no advantage whatsoever from the wealth and position of his father, for reasons into which it is needless here to enter.

Mr. Fox Maule, then, entered public life with scarcely any more advantages than those of any other public gentleman seeking advancement in the State.

Born in 1801, he early obtained a commission in the 79th Highlanders, in which regiment he served for twelve years. It was not until the age of thirty-four that he entered the civil service of the country. On the reaccession to power of Lord Melbourne, in April, 1835, that nobleman offered to Mr. Fox Maule the post of Under Secretary of State for the Home Department; and he continued to discharge its duties until the month of June, 1841. He was early

noticed as a collected and fluent speaker, a good man of business, remarkable for *bonhomie*, and yet always commanding the respect of the House by his quiet dignity and self-possession. The excellent manner in which he had discharged the duties of this subordinate post led to his being nominated Vice-President of the Board of Trade in the month of June, 1841.

In the opposition, if such it can be called, which was maintained by Lord John Russell and the Liberal party against Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Fox Maule took a distinguished, and sometimes even a leading, part; and on more than one occasion he developed striking debating powers. On the rupture between Sir Robert Peel and his party which was the consequence of his repeal of the Corn-laws Mr. Fox Maule came into office with Lord John Russell. It was now that he first became connected with the War Department, for which his military experience, as well as his general temperament, fitted him. In discharge of his duties as Secretary at War, from the accession of the Russell Ministry in July, 1846, to certain changes which preceded its downfall in February, 1852, he commanded the confidence of his colleagues, and generally satisfied his critics in



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the army. How he performed those duties may be inferred from the spontaneous tribute of praise on the part of Lord John Russell to which we have already alluded. Lord Palmerston, as the Foreign Minister of that Government, also enjoyed constant opportunities of appreciating the services of the right hon. gentleman, and to this date we must refer the formation of the opinion which led to Lord Panmure's appointment to the most onerous and responsible office in the Ministry. Mr. Fox Maule's official career was once more varied by a change of office ere he temporarily retired from political life. After yielding up the War-office at the commencement of February, 1852, he became President of the Board of Control, and continued to hold that post until the resignation of Lord Russell's Administration. Lord Panmure—for by the death of his father he had now succeeded to the title—took no part in the arrangements which led to the formation of the Coalition Government; but the reputation he had made led to his almost immediate selection for the office of War Minister, as soon as it became clear that Earl Grey could not accept the post.

Lord Panmure was born at Brecon Castle, in Forfarshire, in 1801; so that he is still in the full vigour and maturity of his powers; and he married, in 1831, the eldest daughter of the first Lord Abercromby. In June, 1849, he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Forfarshire; and in May, 1853, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal of Scotland. Lord Panmure has no children, and his heir presumptive is his brother.