

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THERE is a general impression from observation of Mr. Gladstone's manner in the House of Commons and its precincts that his head is kept so high in the empyrean of State affairs that he takes no note of men and things on a lower level. His ordinary habits in connection with persons on and off the Treasury Bench are certainly diametrically opposed to those of Lord Beaconsfield when he was still in the House of Commons. On the Treasury Bench Mr. Disraeli was wont to sit impassive, with arms folded and head bent forward, not without suspicion in the minds of those at a distance that he slept. Nearer observation would show that he was particularly wide awake. His eyes (with the exception of his hands, the last feature in his personal appearance to grow old) were ever alert and watchful, more particularly of right hon. gentlemen on the bench opposite. He rarely spoke to colleagues on either side of him, making an exception in favour of the late Lord Barrington. But it was only in dull times, in the dinner-hour or after, that he thus thawed. Even at such times he was rather a listener than a converser. Lord Barrington lived much in society and at the clubs. It was probably gossip from these quarters which he retailed for the edification of his chief, whose wrinkled face was often softened by a smile as Lord Barrington whispered in his ear.

Mr. Gladstone, on the Treasury Bench, is constantly in a state of irrepressible energy. He converses eagerly with the colleague sitting on his right or left, driving home with emphatic gestures his arguments or assertions. In quieter mood he makes a running com-

mentary on the speech that is going forward, his observations, I have been told, being refreshingly pungent and often droll. His deep, rich voice carries far. Occasionally it crosses the table, and the right honourable gentleman on his legs at the moment is embarrassed or encouraged by what he cannot help overhearing.

Occasionally the Premier seems a wary to be asleep, but it is not safe to assume as a matter of course that, because his eyes are closed and his head resting on the back of the bench, he is lapped in slumber. There is an eminent judge on the Bench whose lapses into somnolency are part of the ordered proceedings of every case that comes before him. For many terms he baffled the observation of the smartest junior, as of the most keen-sighted leader. He had his sleep, but instead of awaking with a more or less guilty start, and ostentatiously perusing his notes as others used, he, when he woke, scrupulously preserved exactly the same position and attitude as when he truly slept. Closely following for a few moments the argument of the

learned gentleman who had lulled him to sleep, he, softly opening his eyes, and not otherwise moving, interposed a remark pertinent to the argument. For a long time this device baffled the Bar. But it was discovered at last, and is to-day of no avail.

Mr. Gladstone has no occasion for the exercise of this ingenuity. He may, without reproach, snatch his forty winks when he will, none daring to make him afraid. He admits that, "at my time of life," he finds a long and prosy speech irresistible, often enriching him between questions and



"ASLEEP OR AWAKE?"



"FORTY WINKS."

the dinner-hour with the dower of a quiet nap.

IN THE DIVISION LOBBY. This contrast of demeanour on the Treasury Bench as between Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone was equally marked in the division lobby. The passage through the division lobby, which sometimes occupies a quarter of an hour, is for Mr. Gladstone an opportunity for continuing his work.

It was one of the most dramatic incidents on the historic night in June, 1885, when his Ministry fell that, engaged in writing a letter when the House was cleared for the particular division, he carried his letter-pad with him, sat down at a table in one of the recesses of the lobby, and went on writing as, at another tragic time of waiting, Madame Defarge went on knitting. It was his letter to the Queen recording the incidents of the night. Returning to the Treasury Bench, Mr. Gladstone, still Premier, placed the pad on his knee and quietly continued the writing, looking up with a glance of interested inquiry when the shout of exultation, led by Lord Randolph Churchill, following on the announcement of the figures, told him that he might incidentally mention to Her Majesty that the Government had been defeated by a majority of twelve.

On the very few occasions when A LOST VOTE. Mr. Gladstone visits the inner lobby on his way to and from the Whips' room, he strides through the groups of members with stiffened back and head erect, apparently seeing nobody. This is a habit, certainly not discourteously meant, which cost him a valuable friend, and made for the Liberal party one of its bitterest and most effective enemies. Twenty years ago there entered the House of Commons in the prime of life a man who early proved the potentiality of his becoming one of its brightest ornaments. A Radical by conviction, instinct, and habits dating from boyhood, he had raised in an important district the drooping flag of Liberalism, and amid the disaster that attended it at the General Election of 1874, had carried nearly every seat in his own county.

There were other reasons why he might have looked for warm welcome from the Liberal chief on entering the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone had a few years earlier, at another crisis in the fortunes of the party, been a guest at his father's house, and was indebted to him for substantial assistance in carrying the General Election of 1868. A singularly sensitive, retiring man, the new member felt disposed to shrink from the effusive reception that would naturally await him when he settled in London



"SEEING NOBODY."

within the circuit of personal communication with Mr. Gladstone. He was in his place below the gangway on the Opposition side for weeks through the Session of 1874. Mr. Gladstone, it is true, was not then in constant attendance, but he not infrequently looked in, and was at least within morning-call distance of the new member. They met for the first time in the quiet corridor skirting the Library, and Mr. Gladstone, his head in the air, passed his young friend, son of an old friend, without sign of recognition.

It was, of course, a mere accident, an undesigned oversight, certainly not enough to shape a man's political career. I do not say that alone it did it, but I have personal knowledge of the fact that it rankled deeply, and was the beginning of the end that wrecked a great career and has cost the Liberal party dearly.

MR. DISRAELI AND DR. O'LEARY.

There is a well-known story of close upon this date which illustrates Mr. Disraeli's manner in analogous circumstances. In the Parliament of 1874 there was a gentleman named Dr. O'Leary—William Haggarty O'Leary, member for Drogheda. The Doctor was a very small man, with gestures many sizes too big for him, and a voice that on occasion could emulate the volume of Major O'Gorman's. He was fierce withal, as one of his colleagues will remember. One night in the Session of 1875, when the Coercion Bill was under discussion, Dr. O'Leary was put up to move the adjournment. In those halcyon days it was possible for a member to recommend such a motion in a speech of any length to which he felt equal. Dr. O'Leary was proceeding apace when, his eye alighting on the immobile face of the noble lord who was then Mr. Dodson, he alluded to him as "the right hon. gentleman the Financial Secretary to the Treasury." A compatriot touched Dr. O'Leary's arm and reminded him that Mr. Dodson was no longer in office. "The late right hon. gentleman, then," retorted Dr. O'Leary, turning a blazing countenance on his interrupter.

It was pending the division on the third reading of the Empress of India Bill that Mr. Disraeli won over this irate Irishman. The Premier was anxious to have the third reading carried by a rattling majority, and spared no pains to gain doubtful votes. One night in a division on another Bill he came upon Dr. O'Leary in the Ministerial lobby, a place the then budding Parnellite party fitfully resorted to. Dizzy walked a few paces behind the member for Drogheda. Quickening his pace, he laid a hand on his shoulder and said: "My dear Doctor, you gave me quite a start. When I saw you I thought for a moment it was my old friend Tom Moore."

From that day the delighted Doctor's vote was unreservedly at the disposal of his eminent and discriminating friend.

Mr. Disraeli, while Leader of the House of Commons, turned the necessary idle moments of the division lobby to better account than finishing up his correspondence. In

the winter months he used to station himself at a fire in one of the recesses, standing with coat-tails uplifted, in an attitude which showed that, though of Oriental lineage, he had a British substratum. As the throng of members trooped towards the wicket, Dizzy, keenly watching them, would signal one out and genially converse with him for a few moments. Those thus favoured were generally members who had recently made a speech, and were gratified for the rest of their lives by a timely compliment. Others—those in the Conservative ranks much rarer—were men reported by the Whips to be showing a tendency towards restiveness, whom a few genial words brought back to the fold.

MR. GLADSTONE'S HAT AND STICK.

In a recent number, talking of hat customs in the House of Commons, I observed that there are

not many members of the present Parliament who have seen Mr. Gladstone seated on either Front Bench with his hat on. An exception was mentioned with respect to the Session of 1875, when, having retired from the leadership and looking in occasionally to see how things were getting on under Lord Hartington, he was accustomed to sit at the remote end of the Treasury Bench wearing his hat and carrying stick and gloves.

An esteemed correspondent, whose knowledge of Parliament is extensive and peculiar, writes: "There was a time when Mr. Gladstone most ostentatiously and designedly wore his hat after the year you mention. It was when, during the Bradlaugh scenes, he left the leadership, with the responsibility of persecuting Bradlaugh, to Stafford Northcote. He brought stick and hat into the House, and put the latter on during Northcote's proceedings, as much as to say, 'Well, as you have the House with you, carry your tyrannical procedure through yourself. I am not in it.' I think all this must be in your Parliament books."

I do not think it is; but I remember the episode very well, and the embarrassment into which the unexpected attitude plunged good Sir Stafford Northcote. The situation was remarkable, and, I believe, unparalleled. Mr. Gladstone had just been returned to power by a majority that exceeded a hundred.



"BEFORE THE FIRE."

The Conservative forces were shattered. Even with a Liberal majority, which at its birth always contains within itself the seeds of disintegration, it appeared probable that at least the first Session of the new Parliament would run its course before revolt manifested itself. It turned out otherwise. A resolution, moved by Mr. Labouchere, and supported from the Treasury Bench, giving Mr. Bradlaugh permission to make affirmation and so take his seat, was thrown out by a majority of 275 against 230.

It was after this Mr. Gladstone temporarily abrogated his position as Leader of the House, bringing in hat and stick in token thereof. When, on the next day, Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself, made straight for the table, and was subsequently heard at the bar, the Premier came in, not only with hat and stick in hand, but wearing his gloves. All eyes were turned upon him, when Mr. Bradlaugh, having finished his speech, withdrew at the Speaker's bidding. But he did not move, and then and thereafter, during the Session, Sir Stafford Northcote took the lead in whatever proceedings ensued on the lively action of Mr. Bradlaugh.

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE AND MR. BRADLAUGH.

What Sir Stafford thought of the duty thrust upon him by the action of keener spirits below the gangway was suspected at the

time. Years afterwards, disclosure was made in a letter written by his second son, Sir Stafford Northcote, and published by the *Daily News* in December last. When in 1886 the Conservatives returned to power, Mr. Bradlaugh, who had been furiously fought all through the life of the former Parliament, was permitted quietly to take his seat. Later, a motion was made by Dr. Hunter to expunge from the journals of the House the resolution declaring him incompetent to sit. This was an awkward position for a Government which included within its ranks men who had been most active in resistance to Mr. Bradlaugh's attempts to take his seat. After the debate had gone forward for an hour or two, the present Sir Stafford Northcote rose from the bench immediately behind Ministers, and urged

that with slight amendment the resolution should be accepted.

I remember well the scene, above all the startled manner in which Mr. W. H. Smith, then Leader of the House, turned round to regard this interposition from so unexpected a quarter. The House instinctively felt that it settled the matter. If a member habitually so unobtrusive as Sir Stafford Northcote felt compelled to interpose and support an amendment, which, however regarded, was a vote of censure on the conduct of the Conservative party through the Parliament of 1880, feeling in the Conservative ranks must be strong indeed. A Government who showed a disinclination to accept the resolution would find themselves in a tight place if they persisted. What course would Mr. W. H. Smith take?

Looking at his honest, ingenuous face, it was easy to read his thoughts. Startled at first by the appearance on the scene of the member for Exeter, he sat with head half turned watching and listening intently. Gradually conviction dawned upon him. It was Sir Stafford Northcote's revered father who had officially led the opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh. Now, whilst the son spoke, there seemed to come a voice from the grave pleading that enough had been done to vindicate Christianity and Constitutionalism, urg-

ing that the House of Commons would do well to perform a gracious and generous act and sooth Mr. Bradlaugh's last moments (he was that very night lying on his death-bed) with news that the obnoxious resolution had been erased. All this was glowingly written on Mr. Smith's face as Sir Stafford Northcote spoke, and when he followed everyone was prepared for the statement of acquiescence made on these lines. There was nothing more to be said, and without a division it was agreed to strike out the resolution from the journals of the House.

THE ARTFULNESS OF OLD MORALITY.

Sir Stafford Northcote's letter, dated from the House of Commons, 13th November, 1893, throws a flood of light on this historic episode and, incidentally, upon the methods of management of the



"WITH HAT AND STICK."

homely, innocent-looking gentleman who led the House of Commons from 1886 to his lamented death in the autumn of 1891. "Shortly after the debate on Dr. Hunter's motion began," Sir Stafford writes, "Mr. Smith asked me to come into his private room, and asked me what I thought of the motion. I replied that I did not see how the Government could accept it as it stood, as it conveyed a censure on the Conservative party for their action in the past; but that if this part of the motion were dropped, I thought that the rest of the resolution might be agreed to. I added that I would willingly make such an appeal to Mr. Smith publicly in the House. Mr. Smith quite approved my suggestion. I made the appeal from my place in the House, and Dr. Hunter consented to amend his motion."

Whence it will appear that the whole scene which entirely took in a trusting House of Commons was what in another walk of industry is called a put-up job.

On the late Lord Iddesleigh's feelings during the Bradlaugh campaign, his son's letter sheds a gentle light. "My suggestion to Mr. Smith," Sir Stafford writes, "was



LORD IDDESLEIGH.

partly based on the recollection that my father had often said to me that, while he had had no hesitation in discharging what he believed to be his duty in the various painful scenes with which Mr. Bradlaugh's name is associated, he had always felt much pain at having to take a course personally painful to a fellow-member of the House."

THE BIRTH OF THE FOURTH PARTY.

It is a mistake deeply rooted in the public mind that it was Lord Randolph Churchill who gave the first impulse to the creation of the Fourth Party. This is an error due to his fascinating personality, and

the prominent part he later took in directing what for its size and voting power is the most remarkable engine known in Parliamentary warfare. The real creator of the Fourth Party was Sir Henry Wolff, now Her



SIR HENRY WOLFF.

Majesty's Minister at the Court of Madrid. It was he who first saw the opportunity presented by the return of Mr. Bradlaugh for Northampton of harassing the apparently impregnable Government. It so happened that Lord Randolph Churchill was not present in the House at the time the first movement commenced.

In later stages of the struggle Mr. Bradlaugh, so far from showing indisposition to take the oath, insisted upon his right to do so, and even administered it to himself. There was nothing in the world to prevent his falling in with the throng that took the oath on the opening of the new Parliament on the 30th of April, 1880. Had he done so and quietly taken his seat, the course of events in that Parliament would have been greatly altered. But Mr. Bradlaugh was not disposed to miss his opportunity, and having allowed two or three days to elapse, during which prominence was given to his position and curiosity aroused as to his intention, he presented himself at the table and claimed the right to make affirmation.

Even then, had Mr. Gladstone been in his

place on the Treasury Bench, the danger might have been averted. But the Premier and his principal colleagues were at the time, pending re-election on acceptance of office, not members of the House. Lord Frederick Cavendish, then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and all unconscious of the tragedy that would close his blameless life, moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the circumstances. The attitude of the Conservative party at this moment was shown by the fact that Sir Stafford Northcote seconded the motion. It was agreed to as a matter of course.

It was on the nomination of this Committee eight days later that there were indications of trouble ahead. Sir Henry Wolff moved the previous question, and took a division on it. Here again the feeling of official Conservatives was shown by gentlemen on the Front Bench, led by Sir Stafford Northcote, leaving the House without voting. On the 21st of May, Mr. Bradlaugh brought matters to a crisis by advancing to the table claiming to take the oath. It was now that Sir Henry Wolff brought things to a crisis. Having strategically placed himself at the corner seat below the gangway, he threw himself bodily across Mr. Bradlaugh's passage towards the table, crying "I object!" This objection he sustained in an animated speech, concluding by moving a resolution that Mr. Bradlaugh be not permitted to take the oath. It was in support of this resolution that Lord Randolph Churchill appeared upon the scene, interposing in the adjourned debate.

He was not present during any earlier movement on the part of Sir Henry Wolff. But his keen eye saw the opening to which Sir Stafford Northcote was yet persistently blind. He joined hands with Sir Henry Wolff. To them entered a gentleman then known as Mr. Gorst, and much later Mr. Arthur Balfour. Thus was formed and welded a personal and political association which has given an Ambassador to Madrid, has bestowed upon the astonished Conservative party two leaders in succession, and has endowed Mr. Gorst, in some respect not exceeded in ability by any of his colleagues, with a modest knighthood and soothing recollections of a too brief

colleagueship with Lord Cross at the India Office.

NEW MEN
AND
OLD PLACES.

Mr. Gladstone has been singularly fortunate in the selection of new blood for his Ministry. Mr. Disraeli, by some happy hits—not the least effective the bringing of Mr. W. H. Smith within the ring fence of



SIR EDWARD GREY.

office—justly earned a high reputation for insight to character. Till this Parliament, one never heard of "Mr. Gladstone's young

men," the innate conservatism of his mind and character leading him to repose on level heights represented by personages like Lord Ripon and Lord Kimberley. Growing more audacious with the advance of years, Mr. Gladstone introduced new men to his last Ministry with success distinctly marked in each particular instance. Mr. Asquith, as Home Secretary; Mr. Acland, as Vice-President of the Council; Mr. Herbert Gardner, as Minister for Agriculture; Sir Edward Grey, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Foreign Office; Mr. Sydney Buxton, in a corresponding position at the Colonial Office; Mr. Burt, at the Board of Trade; Sir Walter Foster, at the Local Government Board, were all new to office when they received their appointments, and each has satisfied the expectation of the most critical Assembly in the world.

The Junior Lords of the Treasury who act



MR. GORST.

as Whips were also new to office, whilst Mr. Marjoribanks, though he had gone through a Parliament as Junior Whip, for the first time found in his hands the direction of one of the most important posts in a Ministry based upon a Parliamentary majority. The remarkable and unvaried success of the Liberal Whips—the team comprising Mr. Thomas Ellis, Mr. Causton, and Mr. McArthur—was recognised in these pages very early in the Session, and has since become a truism of political comment.

Mr. Seale-Hayne is another Minister new to the work who realizes for his chief the comfort of a department that has no annals. The office of Paymaster-General is not quite what it was in the days of Charles James Fox. A certain mystery broods over its functions and its ramifications. Mr. Seale-Hayne is, personally, of so retiring a disposition that he is apt to efface both his office and himself. But the fact remains that affairs in the office of the Paymaster-General have not cost Mr. Seale-Hayne's illustrious chief a single hour's rest. No Irish member, shut off by the Home Rule compact from foraging in familiar fields, has



MR. SEALE-HAYNE.

been tempted to put to the Paymaster-General an embarrassing question relating to the affairs of his office. Mr. Hanbury has left him undisturbed, and Cap'en Tommy Bowles has given him a clear berth. Whom Mr. Seale-Hayne pays, or where he gets the money from to meet his engagements, are mysteries locked in the bosom of the Master. It suffices for the country to know that Mr. Seale-Hayne is an ideal Paymaster-General.

Whilst all the new Ministers have been successes, the Home Secretary, by reason of the importance of his office and force of character, has done supremely well. This must be



MR. ASQUITH.

peculiarly grateful to Mr. Gladstone, since the member for Fife was his own especial find. That when a Liberal Ministry was formed some office would be allotted to Mr. Asquith was a conclusion commonly come to by those familiar with his career in the last Parliament. But I will undertake to say that his appointment at a single bound to the Home Secretaryship, with a seat in the Cabinet, was a surprise to everyone, not excepting Mr. Asquith, who is accustomed to form a very just estimation of his own capacity. The Solicitor-Generalship appeared to most people who gave thought to the subject the natural start on his official career of a young lawyer who had shown the aptitude for Parliamentary life displayed by Mr. Asquith. Mr. Gladstone knew better, and his prescience has been abundantly confirmed.

Next to the post of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, that of Home Secretary is by far the most difficult successfully to fill. Proof of this will appear upon review of the measure of success obtained by incumbents of the office since the time of Mr. Walpole. The reason for the pre-eminence and predicament is not far to seek. The Colonial Secretary has distant communities to deal with, and so has the Secretary of State for India. The Minister for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty each has his labour and responsibility confined within clearly marked limits. So it is with the

Postmaster-General, the First Commissioner of Works, and, in less degree, with the President of the Board of Trade and the President of the Local Government Board. The Home Secretary has all England for his domain, with occasional erratic excursions into Scotland.

There is hardly any point of the daily life of an Englishman which is not linked with the Home Office, and does not open some conduit of complaint. Before he had been twelve months in office Mr. Asquith was hung in effigy in Trafalgar Square. That, it is true, was a momentary exuberance on the part of the Anarchists. The incident leaves unchallenged the assertion that there has been no serious or well-sustained protest against Mr. Asquith's administration at the Home Office since he succeeded Mr. Matthews. Comparisons are undesirable. But the mere mention of the name of Mr. Asquith's predecessor reminds us that the case was not always thus.

In his Parliamentary career Mr. Asquith's success has been equally unchequered. It was a common saying among people indisposed to hamper novices by unwieldy weight of encouragement, that when Mr. Asquith was placed in a position where he would have to bear the brunt of debate, he would certainly break down. This cheerful prognostication was based upon the assertion that the speeches that had established his fame in the House of Commons were carefully prepared, written out, and, if not learned off by rote, the speaker was sustained in their delivery by the assistance of copious notes. This assertion was so confidently made, and appeared to be so far supported by a certain precision of epigram in the young member's Parliamentary style, that the theory obtained wide acceptance.

Everyone now admits that the Home Secretary, occasionally drawn into debate for which he has had no opportunity for preparation at his desk, has spoken much more effectively than Mr. Asquith was wont to do. He has the great gifts of simplicity of

style, lucidity of arrangement, and a fearless way of selecting a word that conveys his meaning, even though it may sound a little harsh. To this is added a determined, not to say belligerent, manner, which implies that he is not in any circumstances to be drawn a hair's-breadth beyond the line which duty, conscience, and conviction have laid down for him, and that if anyone tries to force him aside he will probably get hurt. This is an excellent foundation on which a Home Secretary may stand to combat all the influences of passion and prejudice that are daily and hourly brought to bear upon him.

Of its general effect a striking and amusing illustration was forthcoming in the closing days of the winter Session. During Mr. Morley's temporary withdrawal on account of illness, Mr. Asquith undertook to take his place at question time in the House of Commons. For a night or two he read the answers to questions put by Irish members, and then, Mr. Morley's absence promising to be more protracted than was at

first thought probable, the Chancellor of the Duchy, a Minister with fuller leisure, relieved the Home Secretary of the task. Thereupon a story was put abroad that Mr. Asquith had been superseded upon the demand of the Irish members, who had privily conveyed to Mr. Gladstone a peremptory intimation that they could not stand the kind of answers Mr. Asquith chucked at them across the floor of the House. It was added that the appearance on the scene of Mr. Bryce averted an awkward crisis, the Irish members making haste to declare their perfect satisfaction with his replies, and their rejoicing at deliverance from Mr. Asquith's hectoring.

Then it turned out that the answers given through the course of the week in question had been neither Mr. Asquith's nor Mr. Bryce's. Each one had been written out by Mr. John Morley. Only, on two nights Mr. Asquith had read the manuscript, and on two others the task had been discharged by Mr. Bryce. Thus do manners make the man,



PROFESSOR BRYCE.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XIII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE
EMPTY
SEAT.

THE new Session is already fairly advanced, and in some sense it is sad to reflect that business goes forward very much as if Mr. Gladstone were still in his place by the brass-bound box. It seemed when the first announcement of his retirement was made that the House of Commons could scarcely survive the withdrawal. There is not a man in the House to-day who remembers the place when Mr. Gladstone was not a prominent figure in it. It is true Mr. Villiers, having continuously sat since he was first elected for Wolverhampton in 1835, is known as "The Father of the House." But in a Parliamentary sense Mr. Gladstone was born before his father, seeing that he took his seat for Newark in the year 1832. Moreover, whilst Mr. Villiers, literally bent under the weight of his more than ninety years, has long withdrawn from regular attendance on Parliamentary duties, Mr. Gladstone was, up to the end of last Session, daily in his place, actively directing affairs and ready at a moment's notice to deliver a speech which, standing alone, would make a Parliamentary reputation.

Up to the last his passion for Parliamentary life was overmastering.

He was, probably, never so happy as when seated in the House following a debate. Some speeches, to others unbearably blank of interest, were to him irresistibly attractive. During the last Parliament he, in deference to an undertaking extorted by Sir Andrew Clark, promised to limit his regular attendance on debate up to a point marked by the dinner-hour, not returning save upon exceptional occasions. He made up for restraint of opportunity by exacting use of the measure provided. Often between seven and eight o'clock, when the House was almost empty and some unimportant, unattractive member found his

chance, he had among his scanty audience the Prime Minister, sitting with hand to ear, apparently entranced. During the interminable Home Rule debates, Mr. Gladstone formed a habit, at which less excitable members used to smile, of moving to the gangway-end of the Treasury Bench, sitting there by the hour eagerly listening to a member whose measure of attraction for ordinary men was indicated by the emptiness of the benches. When in Opposition he carried this habit a step further, occasionally seating himself below the gangway the better to hear an Irish member.

Although immersed in affairs of the UNDER- State, Mr. Gladstone had that intimate personal knowledge of the House of Commons which seems more natural among the gossips in the smoke-room. He knew every man above the level of the absolutely silent members, and had formed a keen and well-defined judgment of their qualities. He was always on the look-out for promising young men among his own party, and sometimes found them, as in the cases of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Acland, Mr. Robertson, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Sydney Buxton. One evening during the Midlothian campaign, the conversation turned upon new members on the Conservative side who had made some mark in the last Parliament. I

ventured to name one Irish member, seated above the gangway, who had taken frequent part in debate on Irish affairs, and had shown intimate knowledge of the Irish question.

"Yes," said Mr. Gladstone, "but his manner is so funereal. In my humble way," he added, his face wrinkling into the smile that illumined it when he was much amused, "I call him the Undertaker."

There was something charming in this way of putting it, as if he were only a



"LISTENING."

beginner in the way of affixing nicknames to Parliamentary personages, and must not be understood in his "humble way" to be competing with practitioners.

One feeling that weighed with BAILED. everyone when Mr. Gladstone withdrew from the forefront of Parliamentary life was that he, the greatest, is also the last of a type not cast for modern Parliaments. There was about him in the heat of battle a certain chivalry of manner, and in the minutest relationships a courtesy, which is too truly known as "old-fashioned." With his departure the House of Commons loses a standard of daily conduct which, though unattainable for the average man, was ever a wholesome incentive. To gentlemen below the gangway this courtly bearing under, sometimes, almost brutal provocation, was an incomprehensible and undesirable thing. They wanted to see him hit back, give stroke for stroke, and could not understand his patient, dignified bearing. No man, under my observation in the House of Commons—and I have lived in it for more than twenty years—was ever assailed with such bitterness as Mr. Gladstone; and none have shown so little resentment. During his Ministry of 1880-5, he was nightly the object of vituperation on the part of the Irish members, who came nearer to the language of Billingsgate than of Westminster. It seems now, as it seemed then, that no man could ever forget, or forgive, the savagery of that prolonged onslaught. I do not know whether Mr. Gladstone has forgotten it. Certainly, through the last seven years he sat on one or other of the Front Benches he comported himself as if it had never been; as if the men whom he alluded to as "my hon. friends" had ever, as then, cooed him as gently as a sucking dove.

In private I have heard him speak of only two members of the House of Commons with abhorrence, and then the tone of voice and visage were terrible to hear and see. When he has appeared at the table following some bitter personal attack, and the House has hushed every sound in expectation of an

avalanche of scathing wrath, he has but lightly touched on the personal matter, and returned to the course of argument it had spitefully broken in upon. Once or twice last Session he turned upon Mr. Chamberlain, and delighted the House by the courtly grace and delightful skill of his reprisal. But it was never savage, or with any under-current of nastiness—which possibly, after all, made it the more effective.

The late Mr. Cavendish Bentinck was much treasured by the House of Commons by reason of the temptation, invariably irresistible, he laid in the way of Mr. Gladstone to indulge in lofty banter. Oddly enough, in these later years, the man who stirred the blackest water of his ire was Mr. Jesse Collings, whose almost venerable inoffensiveness of appearance, as Mr. Gladstone turned upon him, completed the enjoyment of the episode. Mr. Finlay was another member who seemed quite inadequately to stir his wrath. At one time a promising recruit to the Liberal party, Mr. Finlay in 1886 seceded with Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain. Like the other Dissident Liberals he retained his old seat, which happened to be immediately behind the Front Opposition Bench. His contiguity seemed to affect Mr. Gladstone with physical repulsion. In the heat of debate he would turn round to face Mr. Finlay, at the moment innocent of wrong-doing, fix him with

flaming eye, and pour over him a torrent of scorching denunciation.

Mr. Gladstone's marvellous patience has been shown most conspicuously in his bearing towards temporary recalcitrant followers. For at least a quarter of a century his worst enemies have been those of his own household. As soon as he has completed the structure of a Ministry, so soon have "caves" been dug around it by hands that assumed to be friendly. His progress has ever been clogged by Tea Room cabals, the incessant unrest culminating in the great disruption of 1886.

I do not remember seeing Mr. Gladstone



"DIGNITY AND COURTESY."

MONU-
MENTAL
PATIENCE.

more angry than he was one Wednesday afternoon in the Session of 1870. Here again his wrath was excited by an ordinarily inoffensive person. The Irish Education Bill was before the House, and there was, naturally, a Tea Room Party formed by good Liberals for the destruction of their Leader and the bringing in of the other side. Mr. Fawcett was foremost in the cabal, laying the foundation, after a manner not unfamiliar in politics, of the Ministerial position he later attained under the statesman whom he had attacked from the flank. Mr. Miall, in genial Nonconformist fashion, accused Mr. Gladstone of profiting by the support of the Opposition, thus earning the suspicion, distrust, and antagonism of his most earnest supporters.

By an odd coincidence, Mr. Miall sat that afternoon in the very seat where last year Mr. Gladstone was accustomed to find Mr. Chamberlain. When he sat down the Premier leaped to his feet and, turning upon him with angry gesture, as if he would sweep him bodily out of the House, said: "I hope my hon. friend will not continue his support of the Government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause he has at heart that he should do so."

Twenty-four years have sped since that Wednesday afternoon. But I can see, as if it were yesterday, the figure with outstretched hand, and hear the thunderous voice in which this never since repeated invocation to the Deity rang through the House. The outbreak was memorable because rare. Since then the provocation has been as persistent as that which on this same Irish Education Bill prepared for the foundering of the Liberal party in the earliest months of 1874, and led to all that came to pass in the next six years of the Disraeli Parliament. Occasionally Mr. Gladstone has been moved to outburst of resentment. But it has been slight compared with the incentive.

We have heard and read in recent months much about the courage, eloquence, and statesmanship of this great career. To me it seems that the most strongly marked feature in it has been its quiet long-suffering, its sublime patience. The fight is finished now, well done up to the very last, and to-day—

For thee, good knight and grey, whose gleaming
crest
Leads us no longer, every generous breast
Breathes benediction on thy well-won rest,

Mr. Gladstone is so accustomed to make passing references to his extreme age, and those in close intercourse with him have grown so habituated to the phenomenon, that the marvel of it comes to be considerably lessened. There are two personal recollections which serve to place the fact in full light. One was revived by Sir William Harcourt at one of the Saturday-to-Monday parties with which the Prince of Wales occasionally brightens Sandringham. A reference to the Premier's then approaching eighty-fourth birthday being made, Sir William Harcourt said he had a perfect recollection of an occasion when he was nursed on the knee of Mr. Gladstone. Sir William is



OLD WILLIAM AND YOUNG WILLIAM.

no chicken, either in years or girth, and recollection of this affecting scene carried him back nearly sixty years. It was too much for Mr. Frank Lockwood, who happened to be amongst the guests forming this particular house party. Through eyes softened with the gleam of tears, the Recorder of Sheffield sketched on the back of the menu a picture of the infantile Harcourt fondled on the knee of his right hon. friend, both unconscious of all the coming years held in store for them. The sketch is, I believe, now among the prized possessions of the Princess of Wales.

The other reminiscence also belongs to the records of a country house, and it is Mr. Gladstone who recalls it. Mr. Henry Chaplin

was a fellow guest. Mr. Gladstone one evening asked him whether his grandmother had not lived in a certain street in Mayfair. Mr. Chaplin assented. "Ah," said Mr. Gladstone, "I remember it very well. I lived next door to her for awhile when I was a child. She used to give evening parties. When the carriages were assembled to take up, my brother and I used to creep out of bed—it was in the summer time—softly open the window, get out our squirts, and discreetly fire away at the coachmen on the boxes. I remember the intense delight with which we used to see them look up to the sky and call out to ask each other whether it wasn't beginning to rain."

SIR ISAAC HOLDEN. Mr. Gladstone is not, after all, the oldest man in the present House of Commons. Sir Isaac Holden is his senior by two years. Of the twain, I fancy Sir Isaac is the younger-looking. During the winter



SIR ISAAC HOLDEN.

Session, lacking the impulse of the constant fight round the Home Rule standard, disappointed by the success of Obstructionist tactics, Mr. Gladstone, from time to time, showed a distinct falling-off from the splendid form he had presented through the long summer Session. Sometimes he sat on the Treasury Bench, with chin sunk on his chest, a grey paleness stealing over his face, and the light of battle faded from his eyes. He never failed to pull himself together on re-

turning to the House after a division. But the effort was made, not, as heretofore, in advance of his entrance, but after he had walked a few paces, with bent shoulders and weary gait.

Sir Isaac Holden, who has now entered on his eighty-seventh year, is as straight as a dart, and walks with springy step that shows no effort. He shares with Mr. Gladstone the characteristic, rare in a man of fourscore, that his eyes are still bright and clear. On occasions when the Standing Orders are suspended and the House sits late in anticipation of an important division, Sir Isaac waits till whatever hour is necessary in order to record his vote. When the House is up, he walks home.

Unlike Mr. Gladstone, Sir Isaac has leisure, means, and disposition to order his daily life upon carefully-considered rules. His day is automatically parcelled out: work, exercise, food, and recreation each having its appointed place and period. He is neither a vegetarian nor a teetotaler, though the main stock of his daily meals is fruit and vegetables. For wine he drinks a little claret. He has lived a busy, useful life, and owes a large fortune to his own industry and enterprise. Of singularly modest disposition, the only thing he thinks worthy of being mentioned to his credit is the fact that he invented the lucifer match.

THE EFFACEMENT OF THE IRISH MEMBER.

The still new Parliament possesses no more marked characteristic than the self-effacement of the Irish member. If any member of the 1874 or the 1880 Parliament were to revisit Westminster without knowledge of what had taken place since 1886, he would not recognise the scene. In those not distant days the Irish member pervaded the Chamber. Whatever the subject-matter of debate might be, he was sure to march in and make the question his own. If in any direct or indirect manner Ireland was concerned, this was natural enough. But any subject, found in China or Peru, would serve to occupy a night's sitting, and retard the progress of Government business. In the Parliament of 1880 two of the most prolonged and fiercest debates, inaugurated and carried on by the Irish members, related to flogging in the army and the state of affairs in South Africa.

This procedure was, up to 1886, part of a deliberate policy, of which Mr. Biggar and Mr. Parnell were the earliest exponents. They wanted their own Parliament on College Green. If the Saxon, regardless of entreaties

and demands, insisted on keeping them at Westminster, they would make themselves as obnoxious as possible. The habit of constantly taking part in debate being thus formed, and fitting easily gentlemen to whom public speaking comes by nature, it was observed, though with less persistence, during the last Parliament, when the Irish party was no longer a political Ishmael, but was the acknowledged ally of one of the great English armies.

With the opening of the present MR. Session a marvellous, almost SEXTON. miraculous, change has been wrought. Its most remarkable development, the fullest measure of rare personal sacrifice, is found in the case of Mr. Sexton. A man of rare gifts as a debater, no one takes so keen a pleasure in the delivery of Mr. Sexton's speeches as does the hon. member himself. This very excess of appreciation was at one time wont to mar his Parliamentary position. For the ordinary speaker, provision of one peroration per speech suffices. So illimitable are Mr. Sexton's natural resources, that he can toss off half-a-dozen perorations in the course of a single speech. In practice this habit grows a trifle tantalizing. Even the most indolent listener draws himself together and concentrates attention when a member, who has been talking for twenty minutes or half an hour, shows signs of coming to a conclusion. When, after declaiming a ringing peroration, the orator, recurring to leveller tones and less ornate style, quietly begins again, the feeling of disappointment is aggravated by a sense of having been betrayed.

In some of his set speeches, extending from one and a half to two hours, Mr. Sexton, doubtless unconsciously, has been known thus to impose on the confidence of the House three distinct times. This long-irresistible tendency to verbosity was regret-

table as spoiling a position won by natural ability, hampered rather than assisted by adventitious circumstances.

Since the first Session of the new Parliament opened the Irish members, including Mr. Sexton, have conducted themselves in a manner that testifies to the potency of patriotism. The one object they have in view is to get a Home Rule Bill added to the Statute Book. It is avowedly, as Lord Randolph Churchill long ago, with brusque frankness, admitted, a race against time. Every week's delay in the accomplishment of the end imperils the success of the movement. In these circumstances any Irish member who lengthens the proceeding by speech-making is a traitor to the cause. The Irish members have, therefore, with one accord taken and kept a vow of silence.

This is no new thing in RADICAL Parliamentary tactics. A dozen MARTYRS. years ago a similar effacement of another active party was brought about in the House of Commons. This was the active and useful private member, of whom the late Mr. Peter Rylands was a type, accustomed to sit through Committee of Supply worrying the Minister in charge of the Votes with innumerable questions and pin-pricking criticisms. The Irish were then the Obstructionists, and, taking full advantage of opportunity presented in Committee of Supply, they talked at large through the night in order to prevent Votes being taken. It came to pass that any honest, well-meaning member who desired to obtain information touching a particular Vote came to be regarded as a criminal. He was undoubtedly by his interposition playing the game of the Obstructionists. It was not only the time appropriated by his remarks that had to be taken into account. The quick-witted Irishmen, making the most of every opportunity, went off on the new trail opened, and followed it for the greater part of a sitting. The well-meaning economist was shunned by his friends, frowned on by his leaders, and took care not to repeat the indiscretion. Between 1880 and 1885 the old-fashioned custom of narrowly examining the Civil Service Estimates, not the least interesting function of a member of the House of Commons, received a blow from which it has not yet recovered.

The consequent self-repression was bad enough for sober Saxons like Mr. Peter Rylands and his mates in Committee. For the Celtic nature the strain must be much more severe. What Mr. Sexton suffers, as night after night he sits below the Gangway,



MR. SEXTON.

hearing other members talk and recognising how much better he could put the points, who shall say? As for Mr. Tim Healy, he providentially finds partial relief in a running commentary that occasionally draws upon him reproof from the Speaker or Chairman. Mr. Balfour, with the instincts of a leader partially responsible for good order in the House, once welcomed these little ebullitions. They were, he said, equivalent to the blowing-off of steam. Shut off the means of partial relief, and fatal explosion might follow.

THE
EXTINCT
IRISH
MEMBER.

It is curious but not inexplicable how the type of Irish member familiar eighteen or even thirteen years ago has disappeared. Of the band Isaac Butt reappeared on the political stage to lead, but few are left. Even of their successors, the body Mr. Biggar inspired and Mr. Parnell organized, those still in the House may be counted on the fingers of one hand. And what a rare group of individuals they formed! There were many characters that might have stepped out of the pages of Lever or Lover. Butt himself was an interesting figure, a relic of Parliamentary time and manner that to-day seem prehistoric. It is a pity that such a man, with his great gifts and his wide experience, should have been allowed to drop behind the horizon without the tribute of that bio-

graphy rendered to many far less interesting and important people. There was something pathetic about the renunciation of his leadership by the party he had created. When Parnell was a youth at college, Butt was fighting for Home Rule for Ireland. He was the Moses of this Irish pilgrimage. Some failings and shortcomings may have justified the edict which forbade him to enter the Promised Land. But it was a little hard that he should have been ousted from the command whilst still on the march he had planned.

I remember the night when, entering the House whilst the usual flood of questions was pouring from the Irish camp, he walked

on, crossed the Gangway, and took his seat behind the Front Opposition Bench. He did not long survive this severance from the majority of his party. He was not old as years are counted. But he had lived his days, had heard the chimes at midnight, was bowed in body, harassed in mind, and this last blow shattered him.

There were few to migrate with him above the Gangway. Almost alone, McCarthy Downing followed the old leader, a lachrymose comforter, sitting near him, as Butt, with his back turned to the Irish quarter, sat with his head leaning on his hands listening to the shrill gibes of Joseph Gillis, or the more polished but not therefore less acrid taunts of Parnell.

Mr. Mitchell Henry was one of the few who stood by the old chief, the rift thus developed widening as the influence of Parnell and Biggar prevailed, and open war was declared against law and order and the House of Commons. When the Liberals came in in 1880, and the Irish members, breaking through a new tradition, decided to remain stationary on the left of the Speaker, Mitchell Henry crossed the floor, sat with the Ministerialists, and became a favourite target of the Parnellites.

With him
went Sir
PATRICK Patrick
O'BRIEN. O'Brien,
the most delightful
embodiment of

genuine Irish humour of the unconscious, inconsequential order known to the present generation. Sir Pat, with his left hand in his trousers pocket, his right hand shaking defiance at his countrymen opposite, was a precious possession, for ever lost to an increasingly prosaic Parliament. He could not away with the new kind of Irish member represented by Mr. Kenny, "the young sea-sarpen from County Clare," as in a flight of lofty but vague eloquence he called him. "Order! order!" cried the Speaker, sternly. "Then, Mr. Speaker," said Sir Pat, with a courtly bow, "I will withdraw the sea-sarpen and substitute the hon. member for County Clare."



MR. TIM HEALY.
From an Irish MS. of the 19th Century.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XIV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

THERE is something gravely comical in the manner the London morning newspapers deal with the Queen's Speech on the morning preceding its communication to Parliament. They know all about it, and, as the event proves, are able to forecast it paragraph by paragraph. Yet, withal, they shrink from any assumption of positive knowledge, or even of attempt to foretell what will take place. "Her Majesty," they write, "must of necessity allude to the progress of events in Central Africa and on the East of that dark but interesting continent." You learn half a day in advance of the opening of Parliament exactly what Ministers have resolved to say on this particular topic. Other events of current interest at home and abroad are introduced in the same casual manner, and are dealt with in similar detail. Mr. Wemmick had carefully studied this style, and had successfully assimilated it with his ordinary conversation and methods of transacting business.

The general impression is that editors of the principal London papers receive a copy of the Queen's Speech on the night before the Session opens, with the understanding that they are to treat it gingerly, and, above all, to safeguard Ministers from suspicion of collusion in the premature publication. To adopt the consecrated style, I may observe that this will probably be found to be a misapprehension. Doubtless what happens is that the editor of the morning paper meets at his club a Cabinet Minister of his acquaintance, who, following immemorial usage, feels at liberty to give his friend a conversational summary of the points of the Speech. Or it may happen that an appointment is made with the Whip authorized to make such communication. Certainly it will, upon investigation, appear that there is no foundation for the fiction of a written copy of the Speech being supplied for editorial use. Years ago the editor, either of the *Times* or

the *Morning Chronicle*, profiting by personal acquaintance, was able on the morning of the meeting of Parliament to forecast the Queen's Speech. He invented, as desirable in the circumstances, the roundabout style of communication alluded to. The following year other papers, working the oracle on the same lines, adopted the same primly mysterious style. There is no reason why this should now be done; but done it is, as the eve of the Session, still young, testified. New journalism has been a potent agency in varying Press usages. It has not yet ventured to attack this decrepit old farce.

BEFORE DINNER AND AFTER.

The only copy of the Queen's Speech which passes outside the Ministerial ken before the Session opens is that forwarded, with the compliments of the Leader of the House, to the Leader of the Opposition. This is an act of grace and courtesy, happily and accurately illustrating the spirit in which controversy is carried on in English politics. Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone maintained no social relations outside the House of Commons. But that was an exception to the ordinary course of things. At this

day the stranger in the gallery hearing Mr. Chamberlain pouring contumely and scorn on Sir William Harcourt, and observing the Chancellor of the Exchequer almost savagely retorting, may be forgiven if he supposes the cleavage in political relations has severed personal friendships. That is certainly not the fact in respect of these two former colleagues, or of other more or less prominent combatants in the Parliamentary arena. It frequently happens, in the course of the Session, that two members who, between the hours of five and seven-thirty, have been engaged in fiercest controversy in the House of Commons, will be found at eight o'clock sitting at the same dinner-table, discussing the situation from quite another point of view. This is a condition of affairs which does not exist,



"LOUNGING IN."

certainly not to equal extent, in any other political battlefield, whether at home or abroad.

THE FOURTH PARTY AND THE QUEEN'S SPEECH. When the Fourth Party was in the plenitude of its power, it pleased its members to assume all the customs of those larger political factions of which it was the microcosm. Since Ministers and the Leaders of the regular Opposition were in the habit of meeting together on the eve of a new Session, dining, and thereafter reviewing the situation and settling their policy, the Fourth Party had their pre-Sessional dinner. Lord Randolph Churchill tells me of a charming incident connected with this custom. Meeting on the eve of the Session of 1881, they solemnly agreed that they, as a Party, were at a disadvantage inasmuch as they had not before them a copy of the Queen's Speech. Lord Randolph accordingly wrote a formal letter, addressed to Lord Richard Grosvenor, then Ministerial Whip, asking him to be so good as to favour him and his colleagues with a copy of Her Majesty's gracious Speech, in accordance with custom when the Leaders of Her Majesty's Opposition were in conference on the eve of a Session. I do not know whether Lord Richard, in the fashion of his reply, rose to the sublime height of this joke. But the copy of the Speech was not forthcoming.

The Fourth Party at the beginning of their career went a step further than the regular Leaders of the Opposition whom they, only half in jest, affected to supersede. Her Majesty's Ministers, in accordance with custom, went down to Greenwich for a whitebait dinner at the end of the Session, the Leaders of the Opposition being content with a festive gathering on the eve of the opening of Parliament. The Fourth Party, equal to both occasions, not only convivially foregathered at the opening of the Session, but had their whitebait dinner at the end. In 1880, the year of their birth, they, never afraid of creating a precedent, invited an outsider to join the feast. This was Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Bradlaugh's standard-bearer, whom they had been fighting hand to hand all through the turbulent Session.

But it is a poor heart that never rejoices, and in their young days the Fourth Party were merry grigs.

Some time ago inquiry was made in the columns of a country paper as to the origin of the cognomen "County Guy," as attached to Lord Hartington. I happen to know that the phrase, much in vogue seventeen or eigh-

teen years ago, appeared in the series of papers entitled "Under the Clock," published weekly in the *World*. It was suggested by Sir Walter Scott's well-known lines:—

Bird, breeze, and flower proclaim the hour :
But where is County Guy ?

Lord Hartington was at the time Leader of the Opposition, vice Mr. Gladstone, convinced that "at my time of life"—he was sixty-five when he wrote—his public work was finished, and he had earned the right to spend his declining years in the comparative leisure of his library. Even the eminence of the position, and the hitherto unbroken habit of the Leader of a party being in his place when questions began, did not overcome Lord Hartington's constitutional inability to come up to time. It was characteristic of him that he scorned the opportunity provided for quietly dropping into his place, without fixing attention upon his delayed arrival. He might have entered from behind the Speaker's Chair and taken his seat without any but those in the immediate neighbourhood noting the moment of his appearance on the scene. He always walked in from the doorway under the clock, in full view of the House, usually with one hand in his pocket, his hat swinging in the other hand, lounging towards his seat as if he were rather five minutes too soon than half an hour too late. When, in the last Parliament, he returned to the Front Opposition Bench as Leader of the Liberal Unionists, he observed precisely the same custom. He was invariably late, even at critical epochs, and always walked in by the front door.

On one occasion he arrived very early in the morning, but that was an accident due to misunderstanding. It was during the passage of the Coercion Act of the Salisbury Parliament. The Irish members had kept things going all night. At five o'clock in the morning, Lord Hartington, in common with other absentees of his party, received a telegram to the following effect:—

"Been on duty all night. Only us two here. Come down to relieve us.

(Signed) "CHAMBERLAIN,
"RUSSELL."

This was enough to make even Lord Hartington hurry up. The picture of Mr. Chamberlain standing by the Government all night, warring with the common enemy, whilst the Leader was comfortably in his bed, was a reflection not pleasant to dwell upon. Hurrying on his clothes he made his way down to the House, one of a steady stream of Liberal Unionists like himself, abashed to think they had left Mr. Chamberlain in the

lurch. Entering the House, they came upon Mr. T. W. Russell and Mr. Richard Chamberlain, keeping guard on the heights where the Liberal Unionists encamp. It was all right, of course. But it was not Mr. Richard Chamberlain who was in their mind when they hurried down in obedience to the imperative command.

THE PRIVILEGES OF M.P.'S. Apart from the question of wages members of the British House of Commons do not condescend to acceptance of the various smaller privileges which ameliorate the condition of legislators in other countries. In some of the Continental Legislatures, and in most of the Colonies, M.P.'s travel free on the railways. For the British member, more especially for the Irish representative, the cost of locomotion when going about the country's business is a serious item.

Not to speak of the occasional discomforts of the voyage, it costs an Irish member over £5 to journey to and from Westminster. For many Dublin is merely the starting point for a more or less prolonged trip over the highly-priced and not conveniently-arranged home railways.

At Washington, members of the House of Representatives, in addition to a fixed salary and liberal allowance for railway fares, have various little pickings, in the way, for example, of stationery, which is supplied *ad libitum* for their private use. Another privilege, indispensable to the due performance of their labours, is a bath. Attached to the Legislative Chamber is one of the most luxurious bathing establishments in the world. Anything from the ordinary cold tub to the most elaborate Turkish bath, is at the disposal of members. The prospect of being able to retire from a heated debate and enjoy the long luxury of a Turkish bath is sufficient to make a British M.P.'s mouth water. Of course, there is the difficulty about the imminence of divisions. The sound of the division bell, suddenly clanging through the various chambers of a Turkish bath, would cause dire consternation. But daily use would suggest a means of minimizing possible inconvenience. There

might, for example, come into existence such a thing as a bath pair, corresponding with the present dinner pair.

A DRESSING-ROOM TRAGEDY. It will appear scarcely credible that the House of Commons,

though widely known as the best club in the world, lacks the accommodation, common to an ordinary club, of dressing-rooms where members may change their clothes for dinner. The convenience of such an arrangement is particularly obvious in the case of a body of men, the majority of whom dine out during the Session, and are frequently, by the imminence of a division, kept waiting about to within a quarter of an hour of the time at which they are due for dinner. Ministers have their private room. But for this purpose it is of less use to them than to the private member.

They are not supposed to dine out whilst the House is in Session, and if they, greatly daring, dine, they avail themselves of the privilege of presenting themselves in morning dress. Occasionally one lends his room to a private friend, hard pressed to keep a dinner engagement, possible only if he can save the time involved in going home to dress.

A few Sessions ago, a well-known Q.C. had an exciting adventure consequent upon changing his dress at the House. He had arranged with a friend in the Ministry, who had a chamber near the top of the staircase leading into Palace Yard, to use it as a dressing-room. He anxiously watched the course of the debate as it proceeded over seven o'clock, hoping it would conclude in time for him to run into his friend's room, and slip into his dinner-dress in time to keep his appointment. At half-past seven things began to look bad. A member, usually good for at least half an hour, had risen to continue the debate. On second thoughts, here was a chance. Suppose he were to retire now, change his clothes, and be ready to drive off as soon as the division lobby was cleared?

He acted on the idea with characteristic promptitude, and had reached an exceedingly critical stage in the change of raiment, when the division bell rang. The mem-



"KEEPING GUARD."

ber in possession of the House when he left it had been unexpectedly merciful, had brought his remarks within the limits of ten minutes, and the division was called. Only three minutes elapse between the clearing of the House for a division and the putting of the question. Supposing the Q.C. to be fully dressed, there was only time comfortably to reach the House from the Minister's room. He was certainly not dressed, and it was a nice question whether it would be a shorter process to go back to the chrysalis state of morning dress, or proceed to complete the butterfly development upon which he had embarked when almost paralyzed by the sound of the division bell. One thing was clear, he must take part in the division. An issue depended on it which would not incline the Whips to accept frivolous excuse for abstention.

Again a happy thought occurred to him. Suppose he were to put on an overcoat and so hide his collarless condition? But his overcoat was in the cloak-room, a flight lower down. The spectacle of a learned and somewhat adipose Q.C. rushing downstairs in shirt and trousers might lead to misapprehension. There was, however, nothing else to be done, and the flight was successfully accomplished. The hon. member safely reached the cloak-room, was helped on with his coat, and, with collar turned up closely buttoned at the throat, he passed through the Division Lobby, an object of much sympathy to his friends, who thought his cold must be bad indeed to justify this extreme precaution on a summer night.

It is a well-known fact, much PRIVILEGE. appreciated in quarters personally concerned, that no action for libel may be based upon words spoken in the House of Commons. This understanding has been confirmed by an action to which Mr. Arthur Balfour was an involuntary party. In the course of debate, in which he took part as Chief Secretary, he had spoken disrespectfully of a midwife in the south of Ireland. The lady's friends rallied round her, and guaranteed funds to cover the expenses of a civil action for damages brought against the Chief Secretary. Had the case come before a Cork jury, as was inevitable if it went to trial, it would doubtless have proved a profitable transaction for the plaintiff. Mr. Balfour appealed to a higher Court, on the ground that the words spoken in Parliamentary debate are privileged. The Court sustained this view, and the trial was set aside.

I have high judicial authority for the statement that in spite of this rule the

position of a member of Parliament in the matter of libel is not impregnable. He is quite safe, not only as far as words spoken in the House are concerned, but is not responsible for their publication in the newspapers, or their subsequent appearance in "Hansard." "Hansard," however, is accustomed to send to each member a report of his speech, leaving to him the option of revision. If the proof be not returned within a few days it is assumed that no correction is desired, and the speech goes down to posterity in the form it was handed in by the reporter. When a member has revised his speech the fact is intimated by a star.

It is herein the distinction in the matter of legal liability is established. A member having voluntarily revised his speech is assumed, by the fresh and independent action taken outside the House of Commons, to have assumed a liability he would otherwise have escaped. An action would lie against him, not for the speech delivered in Parliament, but for the publication of the libel under his revision, and upon his authority, in a widely circulated periodical. *Verb. sap.*

A glance over any volume of A PRECIOUS "Hansard" shows that it is only VOLUME. the new or inconsiderable member, whose speeches are not likely to become the texts of subsequent debate, who is at pains to revise reports of his Parliamentary utterances. Old Parliamentary hands like Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Chamberlain are, in the first place, too busy, and, in the second, too wise, to commit themselves to the task.

Mr. Chamberlain once suffered from yielding to the temptation to secure an accurate report of his deliverances on important political questions. In 1885, on the precipice below which unexpectedly lay the fissure in the Liberal Party, Messrs. Routledge brought out a series of volumes containing reports of the speeches of some six or eight statesmen on questions of the day. It was an "authorized" edition, the various contributors revising their speeches. At this epoch Mr. Chamberlain was the risen hope of the Radical Party. His vigorous argument and incisive invective were directed against the Conservative Party, its history, ancient and modern. It is from this little volume that Mr. Gladstone, in his speech at Edinburgh just before the Winter Session, drew the citation of Mr. Chamberlain's indictment of the House of Lords. It was not the first time it had been remembered.

But Mr. Gladstone's joyous discovery sent it trumpet-tongued throughout the English-speaking world. It is this compilation that rescued from the obscurity of daily newspaper reports the happily conceived, perfectly phrased, and now classical similitude drawn between Mr. Gladstone and a mountain.

"Sometimes I think," Mr. Chamberlain said in a passage the perfect literary form of which tempts to quotation, "that great men are like mountains, and that we do not appreciate their magnitude while we are still close to them. You have to go to a distance to see which peak it is that towers above its fellows; and it may be that we shall have to put between us and Mr. Gladstone a space of time before we shall know how much greater he has been than any of his competitors for fame and power. I am certain that justice will be done to him in the future, and I am not less certain that there will be a signal condemnation of the men who, moved by motives of party spite, in their eagerness for office, have not hesitated to treat with insult and indignity the greatest statesman of our time—who have not allowed even his age, which entitles him to their respect, or his high personal character, or his long services to his Queen and his country, to shield him from the vulgar affronts and the lying accusations of which he has nightly been made the subject in the House of Commons. He, with his great magnanimity, can afford to forget and forgive these things. Those whom he has served so long it behoves to remember them, to resent them, and to punish them."

The speech in which this gem lies entombed was delivered at Birmingham, on the 4th June, 1885. In the intervening nine years Mr. Chamberlain has had opportunities of regarding the mountain from other points of view, and has discovered quite new aspects.

This volume of Mr. Chamberlain's speeches has long been out of print. The shilling edition and the half-crown edition command considerably enhanced prices on the rare occasions when they come upon the market. There is one precious copy in the Library in the House of Commons, the condition of which testifies to the frequency of reference. The existence of such a record may be occasionally embarrassing to the politician, but if Mr. Chamberlain were vain, it must be gratifying to the man. It is only a strong personality that could evoke such testimony of eager interest.

LORDS
IN THE
COMMONS.

It is pretty to note the deathless attraction the House of Commons has for members who have left it to take their seats in another place. They may be peers privileged to sit in the stately Chamber at the other side of the Octagon Hall. But their hearts, untravelled, fondly turn to the plainer Chamber in which is set the Speaker's Chair. Even the Duke of Devonshire has not been able wholly to resist the spell. Whilst he was still member for Rossendale, it was only a



"A CHAT WITH SIR HENRY JAMES."

heroic, predominant sense of duty that brought him down to the Commons. Since he became a peer scarcely an evening passes in the Session that he does not look in, chatting with friends in the Lobby, sometimes sitting out an hour of debate, watched from the gallery over the clock. Lord Rowton never had a seat in the Commons other than that under the gallery allotted to the Private Secretary of the Leader of the House. But in earlier days he had much business in the Lobby of the House of Commons, and when in town and in attendance on the House of Lords, he rarely misses the opportunity of revisiting his old haunts.

It is many years since Lord Morris was "the boy for Galway," representing the county through several Sessions. Through that avenue he joked his way, first to be Solicitor-General, then Attorney-General, next Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, and

finally Lord of Appeal, with a life peerage. During the debates in the Commons last Session on the Home Rule Bill he was in constant attendance. Even when the subject-matter of debate is not one that touches the heart of a patriot, the ex-member for Galway is regularly seen in the Lobby of the House of Commons, his presence being indicated by a ripple of laughter in the group surrounding him.

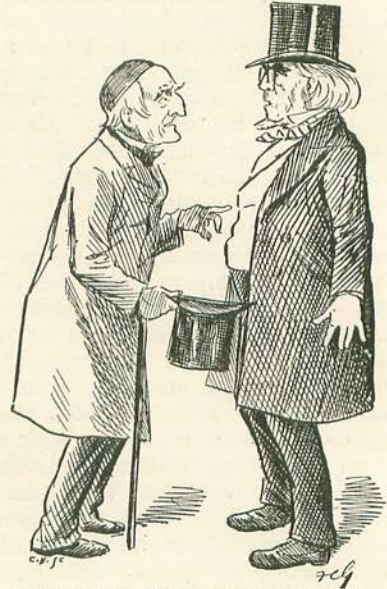
For some Sessions after the House of Commons suffered the irreparable loss of the counsel of Sir Richard Cross, the Lobby was occasionally suffused by the air of wisdom and respectability inseparable from the presence of Lord Cross. Last Session he intermitted this habit, the Lobby becoming in his absence almost a resort for the frivolous. Lord Monk-Bretton is another old Commoner who has not entirely overcome the habit of strolling into the Lobby of the House in whose Chair of Committees he once sat. Lord Playfair, another ex-Chairman of Committees, is often seen there. The Earl of Aberdeen, before Canada claimed him, was almost nightly in the Lobby and corridors of the House of Commons, albeit he was not drawn thither by personal recollections of former memberships. Dukes, except his Grace of Devonshire, rarely descend on the level of the Lobby, and no Bishop has been seen there since the Bishop of London, looking in in surplice and bands after debate in the House of Lords, was accosted by Mr. McClure and genially invited to take a glass of sherry and bitters.

Lord Bat-
OLD WHIPS tersea has
AND NEW. rather cut
the place
in which he long
lingered as a Whip,
and Lord Dartmouth
is not often seen in the
place where through
many Sessions Lord
Lewisham used to
walk about, Whips'
book in hand, en-
deavouring to keep a
House through the
dinner hour. Lord
Kensington is a reg-
ular frequenter of
the Lobby, and in-
stinctively takes his
stand near the door
leading to the stair-



MR. JOHN M'CLURE.

case where through many Sessions he kept guard, barring the passage of unpaired members. Lord Kensington is not a man of supercilious manner, but there was something of unmistakable scorn in his eyes when they first alighted on the screen which his successors in the Ministerial Whips' seat last Session introduced. Certainly a searching wind creeps up the staircase from Palace Yard when it is wintry weather. But Lord Kensington sat there from 1880 to 1885



LORD DENMAN AND MR. FARMER-ATKINSON.

without so much as a rug on his knees. A more degenerate race are inconsolable without some contrivance for warding off the draught. In ordinary circumstances this object might easily be attained. A screen of fair proportions flanking the bench by the Whips' side would be fully effective. But this is the main entrance to the Lobby. A full-sized screen would be impossible. Accordingly, a something has been made considerably too tall for the base upon which it stands. The consequence is embarrassing, sometimes appalling. Either the Thing falls outward when the glass door is opened, scaring the new arrival, or it flops inward, threatening to crush Mr. Causton, and cut off, in its flower, a useful life.

LORD DENMAN AND MR. ATKINSON. Lord Cranbrook has long got over the habit once dominant of revisiting the scenes in which his political fortunes were established. Lord Denman never had a seat in the Commons, but his sad, grey figure,

crowned with the purple smoking cap, was familiar in the Lobby in the last Parliament. The attraction for him was removed when Mr. Farmer-Atkinson retired from the political stage. In the former member for Boston, Lord Denman found a kindred spirit. They made a pact together whereby the peer was to take charge of the Commoner's Bills when they reached the Upper House, Mr. Atkinson performing a kindred service for his noble friend when his Woman's Suffrage Bill had run the gauntlet of the Lords. It came to pass that opportunity was not forthcoming on either side for fulfilment of this pledge. The Peers would not pass Lord Denman's Bill, nor did the Commons encourage Mr. Atkinson's legislative efforts. Still, they took counsel together, prepared for emergencies. Sometimes they would be found in consultation by the big brass gates that shut off the House of Lords from common people. Oftener Lord Denman, having fuller leisure, sought Mr. Atkinson in the Lobby of the Commons. Beyond particular measures for the good of the country in which they were interested, they cherished a dream of a combination between really sensible men of both Houses, who, rising above party purposes and prejudices, should devote themselves heart and soul to placing the empire on a sounder foundation.

The development of this plan was interrupted by officious friends placing some restraint on the movements of Mr. Farmer-Atkinson, and his (only temporary it is to be hoped) withdrawal from public life.

Lord Herschell, once TWO UMBRELLAS. a regular frequenter of the Lobby, does not often find time to look in now that he is Lord Chancellor, and in addition to the ordinary weighty calls of his office, has in hand the revision of the Commission of the Peace. Another peer, once a constant visitor, who has abandoned the place, is the Earl of Ravensworth. He was long known in the House of Commons as Lord Eslington, a representative of the highest type of county member. When he succeeded to the peerage he



LORD HERSHELL.

spent more time in the Lobby of the Commons than on the red benches of the House of Lords. Whatever the season of the year or the prospect of the weather, he brought his umbrella with him, a heavily constructed article, capable of sustaining the weight of a properly tall man when he leaned upon it, whilst he conversed with a circle of friends.

The only member whose faithful attachment to his umbrella equalled Lord Ravensworth's was the late Mr. Tom Collins. Judging from the shade of the gingham, the determination of the bulge in the middle where it was tied round with a piece of tape, and the worn condition of the ferrule, the umbrella dated back to the epoch of the Great Exhibition. So dear was it to the heart of its owner that he would not risk accident or loss by leaving it to take its chance with the miscellaneous multitude in the cloak-room. Like Lord Ravensworth, he carried it with him in all weathers, and before entering the House to take part in the solemn institution of prayers, he reverently deposited it behind the chair of the principal doorkeeper. Mr. Collins was not a man of abnormally suspicious nature. All his colleagues in the House of Commons were honourable men. Still, human nature is weak. To see an umbrella like that hanging loosely on a peg, or to find it ready to hand mixed up with a lot of ordinary articles, might prove too strong a temptation for a weak brother. Mr. Collins spared many a possible pang by placing his umbrella out of range of casual sight in personal charge of the doorkeeper.



LORD SPENCER.

SOME OTHER PEERS.

I never saw Lord Salisbury in the Lobby, and do not recall any time when his burly figure was seen looking down from the gallery on the arena in which the first Lord Robert Cecil played a lively part. Earl Spencer comes over occasionally for consultation with his colleagues. Lord Rosebery, with the cares of the Empire on his shoulders, finds time occasionally to look in at the House, for a seat in which, as he has sometimes hinted, he would gladly barter his coronet.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

DRESS IN THE IRISH PARLIAMENT. FORTUITOUSLY at a time when the re-establishment of an Irish Parliament at Dublin was within measurable distance, there has been brought to light a suit of clothes described as the Court garments of a member of the Irish Parliament who represented County Cavan in the year 1774. It has, of course, turned up in the United States, and is now on view in a shop in Chicago. The suit is described as being of a deep maroon broadcloth, embroidered with heavy solid gold bullion, with the figure of a harp surrounded by a wreath of shamrock, and a vine of the same extending around the skirt. The breeches are of a deep yellow plush, and the three-cornered cocked hat is of black beaver, covered with gold lace. From this it would appear that when Ireland had her own Parliament her sons spared neither money nor taste in the effort to live up to it in the matter of clothes. The suit, on the whole, seems almost to suggest the presence of a State coachman. Taken in the mass, it must have been very effective.

One can imagine how naturally Mr. Field would take to a revival of this uniform. In the Saxon Parliament he represents the St. Patrick's Division of Dublin City. He sits below the gangway, and on summer afternoons distinctly endows that portion of the House with a haze of reflective light. It is from his shirt-front, which in the matter of displayed area is, at any time before the dinner-hour, remarkable, whilst its glossiness is almost dazzling. With this snowy expanse cunningly set-off by contrast with a black necktie reposing under a turned-down collar and with his long hair haughtily

brushed back behind his ears, Mr. Field might be anything in the high art line, from a poet to a harpist. Actually he is, apart from politics, something in the victualling business. He is great at question time, and is a terror to the Chief Secretary. Having put his question and received his answer, he invariably rises, and, expanding his chest and throwing out his right arm with impressive gesture, slowly says: "Em I to understand that the right honourable gentleman means——" Here follows a supplementary question of expanse proportionate to the shirt-front. As a rule, it turns out that he is not to understand anything of the kind. But he has had his fling, and let St. Patrick know that William Field, M.P., is on the look-out tower.

SEVENTY YEARS AGO. I have an engraving showing a view of the interior of the House of Commons during the Session of 1821-3. It is the old House of Commons, illumined by candles alight below the ventilator, a recess wherein ladies

found their only opportunity of being present at a debate. It was, as I mentioned some time ago, out of a chink in this part of the roof that Mr. Gladstone once in the middle of an exciting debate saw a bracelet fall. It was not the habit of the House of Commons to assemble in anything like uniform, but the dress of the gentlemen of the day was much more picturesque than ours. On this night, in a Session more than seventy years dead, every member of the House wears a coat buttoned



"EM I TO UNDERSTAND?"

across his chest, with deep collar rising, in some cases, up to his ears. Some display shirt collars of the kind Mr. Gladstone sports to this day. They are in a few cases

sustained by a black stock, more frequently by a white scarf loosely tied, in which is set a pin. For the most part the coats are cut away at the hip, the trousers are preternaturally tight, and, where top-boots are not worn outside, are strapped under the instep.

This was the Long Parliament under the Premiership of Lord Liverpool. Summoned on the 9th June, 1812, it was dissolved on the 24th April, 1827, having lasted the almost unprecedented period of fourteen years 319 days. Eldon was Lord Chancellor for the fourth and last time. F. J. Robinson and Vansittart succeeded each other at the Exchequer. Sir Robert Peel was sometime Home Secretary, sometime Irish Secretary. Castlereagh and Canning shared between them, in succession, the office of Foreign Secretary. All their portraits, with the exception of Lord Eldon's, are shown in this engraving, being the careful work of one Robert Bowyer. In pictures of the House of Commons done in these later times, a majority of members are shown wearing their hats, as is the custom in the House. Whether for artistic purposes, or because seventy years ago it was not the thing to wear the hat in the presence of the Speaker, no hats are shown in this old engraving. This circumstance brings into fuller notice the greater average age of members of Parliament in those days. On all the closely packed seats one finds only here and there a face that looks as young as thirty.

Up to recent times, the unwritten law of the House of Commons with respect to dress was severe. There was a wholesome impression that a man setting out for Westminster should array himself very much as if he were going to church. Twenty years ago no member would have thought of entering the precincts of the House wearing anything other than the consecrated stove-pipe hat. It was the



OLD STYLE.

Irish members who broke down this ancient custom, as they are responsible for changing the manners of Parliament in more important respects. John Martin was, as far as I remember, the first member who crossed the Lobby of the House in a low-crowned hat. But he shrank from obtruding it on the notice of the Speaker. He carried it in his hand, stowing it away out of sight during a debate. Even this modest demeanour led to an interview with the Speaker. Mr. Brand was then in the Chair. He sent for Mr. Martin, courteously but firmly explained to him that he was breaking an unwritten law of Parliament, and asked him to provide himself with head-gear more usually seen at Westminster. Mr. Martin at once obeyed the injunction, a conclusion of the story which shows how far we have marched in the last eighteen years.

Mr. Martin belonged to the Irish party, parliamentary *sapeurs* to whom nothing is sacred. Of English members, the first to break the traditions of the House in this matter was Mr. Joseph Cowen. In the course of an already distinguished career, he had never possessed a top-hat, and even the honour of representing Newcastle in Parliament could not drive him to alter the fashion of his head-gear. But like John Martin, he, whilst pleasing his own fancy, was careful not to offend the prejudices of others. He always entered the House bare-headed, and so sat throughout a debate, his broad-brimmed, soft felt hat not being donned till he had passed the doors. At this day the Speaker looking round a moderately full House will see half-a-dozen top-hats of various ages and shades of colour fearlessly worn. Mr. Keir Hardie, desiring to go one better in the effort to flout "the classes," was obliged to come down in a greasy tweed cap.

The exceptionally hot summer of last year gave opportunity for fresh lapse from the decent gravity of dress in the House of Commons. It was Lord Wolmer who first flashed a kamarband within sight of the astonished



MR. JOSEPH COWEN.

Mace, a circumstance that made resistance hopeless. Had the fashion been adventured by some frisky but inconsiderable new member, it might have been frowned down before it had time to spread. But when the thing was seen round the moderately slim waist of the son, not only of an ex-Lord Chancellor, but of the gravest-mannered peer in the House of Lords, all was lost. Mr. Austen Chamberlain promptly followed suit; Mr. McArthur seized the opportunity to display an arrangement in silk of the Maori colours. The Irish members, determined that ordinarily slighted Ireland should not lag behind, met in Committee Room No. 15, and subscribed a shilling each to purchase a brilliant green kamarband for their Whip, Sir Thomas Esmonde. The fashion spread till, looked upon at question time of a summer afternoon, the House in the aggregate presented something of the appearance of a crazy quilt. The Front Opposition Bench had already succumbed to the epidemic. Every day when the House met members turned instinctively towards the Treasury Bench to see if Sir William Harcourt and the Solicitor-General had yielded to the prevailing influence. Happily before that befell the weather changed, the thermometer fell, and waistcoats were worn again.

Whilst members of the House of the House Commons have no special dress OF LORDS. even for gala days, the House of Lords cherishes the immemorial custom of wearing robes on State occasions.



LORD WOLMER'S
KAMARBAND.



GARTER KING-AT-ARMS AND NEW PEER.

Whenever a new peer takes his seat, not only is he robed himself, but is the cause of robing in others. The peers who introduce him are clad in raiment of scarlet cloth, slashed with ermine in varying fashion, indicating their rank in the Peerage. With them comes Garter King-at-Arms, the Royal Arms of England embroidered on his back.

The only time the Lords sit robed *en masse* is on the occasions, now rare, when the Queen opens Parliament in person. That is one of the stateliest scenes in the pageantry of English public life. In modern times its most effective rendering was seen on the day when Mr. Disraeli, just made Earl of Beaconsfield, escorted his Sovereign to the throne, holding before him the sword of State. When "Dizzy" was yet a young man pushing his way to the front, he used to write almost daily to his sister, giving her a piquant account of scenes in which he had taken part. Of all his published works this, perhaps the least known, is the most charming. On the day when Vivian Grey, having realized the dream of his youth and become Lord Beaconsfield, marched into the House of Lords escorting his Sovereign, the sister was dead, and for "Dizzy" the opportunity and habit of writing familiar letters had passed away. A pity this, for an account of the scene and of the impressions made on his mind, written in the sprightly style of Disraeli the Younger, would be invaluable.

Years have passed since the event, but I can see, as if it had stridden past this morning, the familiar figure, looking taller by reason of the flowing robe that encircled it, the wrinkled face with eyes reverently bent down, and over all an air of supernatural solemnity.

There is no one "BAKER like Sir PAT-PASHA." rick O'Brien left to the present House of Commons, neither is there anyone who resembles

Mr. Biggar or Mr. Dawson, sometime Lord Mayor of Dublin, a patriot with fuller allowance of spirit than of inches. It was he who, during debate on a provision of the Peace Preservation Bill, sternly regarding



MR. FORSTER.

the bulky form of Mr. Forster, then Chief Secretary, warned him that if, armed with the powers of this infamous Act, he were to approach the bedside of Mrs. Dawson in the dead of the night it should be over his (the Lord Mayor's) body. "Baker Pasha," as he was called in recognition of his commercial pursuits before drawn into the vortex of politics, went back to his shop, his early rolls, and his household bread, and soon after flitted to still another scene.

"PAM'S" Captain Stacpoole was not much known to the reader of Parliamentary reports, but was long a familiar figure in the House. He had sat in it whilst Palmerston was leader, and his intimate friends had reason to believe that he had more to do with the direction of that statesman's policy and the destinies of the world than met the eye in contemporary records. It was Captain Stacpoole's custom of an afternoon to stand in the Lobby with his hat pressed on the back of his head, his legs apart, his hands thrust in his trousers pockets—with the exception of his little fingers, for occult State reasons always left outside. In this attitude, swinging backwards and forwards on heel and toe, he told at length what he had said to "Pam" on occasion, and what "Pam" had said to him.

He did not often interpose in debate, his best remembered appearance on the scene not being altogether successful. It happened, I think, in the year 1877, in debate on the Irish Sunday Closing Bill. The Captain joined a minority of some dozen of the Irish Nationalist members in oppos-

ing the measure. Mr. Macartney, father of the member for South Antrim, who at this day worthily maintains the Parliamentary prestige of the family, observed that of this group of members there was not one who was not connected with the liquor trade. Hereupon Captain Stacpoole jumped up, and, falling into his favourite position, shouted out, "I deny that. I have no connection with the trade."

"I beg the hon. member's pardon," said Mr. Macartney, "he is the one exception to the rule. He is not a producer, he is only a consumer," a hit at the Captain's convivial habits much appreciated by the Committee.

Captain Stacpoole has gone to MAJOR rejoin his old friend and pupil, O'GORMAN. "Pam." Gone, too, are the O'Gorman Mahon, Mr. Delahunty, Mr. Ronayne, and Major O'Gorman, noblest Roman of them all. The Major had physical advantages which placed him head and shoulders above all contemporary humorists, conscious or unconscious. Whether he sailed up the House like an overladen East Indiaman; whether he sat on the bench with the tips of his fingers meeting across his corpulence, whilst his mouth twitched sideways as if he were trying to catch a fly; or whether he stood on his feet addressing the House apparently through a speaking trumpet, the Major irresistibly moved to laughter.

I suppose no man was so genuinely surprised as he when his maiden speech was received with shouts of laughter, members literally rolling about in their seats, holding with both hands their pained sides. The occasion was Mr. Newdegate's annual motion for the inspection of convents. The Major, not only a chivalrous gentleman but a good Catholic, was shocked at the threat of desecration of the privacy of Irish ladies by Commissioners armed with the authority of the law. He had devoted much care and research to the preparation of a speech opposing Mr. Newdegate's motion. The choicest part of it, to which everything led up, was the picture of some historic nun, boldly facing the Commissioners, with a verbatim report of her remarks on the occasion. It was understood that the nun in question was of Royal birth, who, either wearied of pomp and vanity, or driven from her high estate by cruel man, had betaken herself to a nunnery.

The House had with difficulty kept merri- ment within bounds up to the moment when the Royal recluse faced the wicked Commissioners. Thereupon the Major, having

to speak the nun's part, with dramatic instinct assumed a plaintive, almost a piping, voice. The nun was supposed to give a summary of her personal history to the Commissioners. But the Major never got beyond the detail, "I had a sister, her name was Sophia——." Even Disraeli,



THE SPHINX SMILES.

accustomed to sit sphinx-like on the Treasury Bench, joined in the shout of laughter that greeted this effort, and brought the Major's address to incoherent conclusion. This speech lifted the Major into a favoured position occupied by him till, cut off by the relentless command of Mr. Parnell, who had no sympathy with this kind of thing, he exchanged the Senate for the Board Room of the Waterford Poor Law Guardians.

Possibly there is no place in the present Parliament for a Major O'Gorman. Certainly there was no one returned at the last General Election who could fill it.

BALLOTING FOR PLACES. Among the not least substantial reforms effected in the present Session is that whereby, on the opening day, the process of balloting for places for private motions was relegated to an upper chamber. When, last year, the House of Commons, fresh from the polls, met on the eve of a memorable Session, two full hours of its precious time were wasted by a process that would not be tolerated in any other business assembly of the world. Out of a total of 670 members, 400 came down inflamed with desire to set somebody or something right. This they proposed to do either by moving a resolution or introducing a Bill. The House of Commons, whose order of procedure dates back to the Commonwealth, has ever been accustomed to this human weakness. It provided for it by the regulation that private members so possessed should

ballot for precedence. Ministers, who also have a Bill or two to bring in, being masters of the situation, forthwith fix the day upon which they will take action. Private members must take the chances of the ballot.

That was all very well in former times, when at the opening of a new Session ten, twenty, or at most thirty members struggled for "an early day." On Tuesday, the 1st of February, 1893, the day which marked the doom of an ancient practice, over four hundred members desired to give notice of motion. Whilst preliminary business was going forward, the stranger in the Gallery would see a long line of members slowly making their way between the table and the Front Opposition Bench, to the great inconvenience of right hon. gentlemen seated thereon. Arrived by the clerk's desk, each man wrote his name on a sheet of foolscap, and passed gloomily on, making himself a fresh nuisance by returning to his seat along the crowded back benches. Each line of the foolscap on which a name was written was numbered. The clerk at the table prepared slips of paper carrying corresponding numbers, which he twisted up and threw into the box before him.

When the House presumably set down to business, the Speaker took in hand the sheets of foolscap containing the list of members desiring to give notice. The clerk at the table tossed together the folded pieces of paper in the box, as if he were making a salad with his fingers. Then he took one out and called aloud the figure printed on it. Say it was 380. The Speaker, turning over his sheaf of papers, found that on the line 380 was written the name of Mr. Weir or Dr. Macgregor, and in sonorous voice recited it. That meant that the member in question had secured first place for his motion, and was at liberty to select what with due regard to all circumstances he looked upon as the most favourable day.

Suppose Mr. Weir were the happy man. He would rise, glance slowly round the House, produce his *pince-nez*, place it on his nose with solemn gesture, and in thrilling voice observe: "Mr. Speaker, Sir—I beg to give notice that on such and such a day I shall ask leave to bring in a Bill authorizing the local authorities at Ardmurchan Point to remove the village pump three yards and a half to the west of the point at which it now stands." What French reporters call *mouvement* consequent upon this announcement having subsided, Mr. Milman, most patient and

long-suffering of men, dived once more into the lucky box and fished out, with ostentatious integrity, another chance missive. The Speaker consulted his list again; possession of the second place was determined—and so on to the melancholy end.

Regarded as a parlour game, this performance has recommendations at least equal to Consequences, or Cross Questions and Crooked Answers. There is the excitement amongst members whose names have been written down as to who may be concerned in the fateful figure just drawn. Then there is the sort of book-keeping by double entry that must needs go on throughout the process. When the chances of the ballot have given away the best day, the next best day must be ticked off, and members yet uncalled must be ready to spring up when their time comes and claim it. For the general body of members there is the joke, endeared by long acquaintance, of the member who has written his name first on the list, having his number turn up, as it usually does, at the end of the first hour and a half of the process.

Even regarded as a parlour game, it palls upon one after the first hour and a half. Writing about it in the *Daily News*, of the 2nd of February in last year, I ventured to describe it as "a mechanical performance which might well be added to the useful labours of the Committee clerks, leaving the Speaker and the House of Commons opportunity for devoting their energies to more delicate duties." Twelve months later, Mr. Gladstone, incited by a question on the paper, privily brought the subject under the notice of the Speaker, who, with that courage which enables him from time to time to rise superior to effete traditions—and such courage when displayed in the Chair of the House of Commons is heroic—undertook to make an end of the absurdity. When the House of Commons met for the new Session in March last, the process of balloting for places was quietly and effectively carried on by private members in one of the Committee rooms, and two hours of time, with much vexation of spirit, was saved to the House of Commons.



MR. WEIR: "MR. SPEAKER, SIR."

IN DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS. Now this absurdity has been boldly grappled with there is hope that another anachronism may be relegated to its appropriate limbo. It is quite time the House of Commons, if it is to vindicate its claim to be a business assembly, should make an end of the whole machinery of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. This, also, was well enough in the days of Old Sarum. It is now, for all practical purposes, as archaic as the hunt for traces of Guy Fawkes, which to this day precedes the opening of each Session, and it is not nearly so picturesque.

The object with which debate on the Address was originally devised was to provide convenient opportunity of challenging the existence of the Government, or at least of seriously debating some crucial line of their policy. It was a full-dress affair, chiefly confined to the giants of debate. If business were not meant, the conversation was usually brought to a conclusion before the dinner-hour on the opening night of the Session. It was confined to the mover and seconder of the Address, the Leader of the Opposition who criticised the Ministerial programme, and the Leader of the House who replied. There, as a rule, was an end of it. Even if fighting were meant and a division contemplated, it was only on rare occasions that the combat was carried over a single night. The House cheerfully sat till one or two in the morning to reach a conclusion of the matter.

The last time the House of Commons completed the debate on the Address at a single sitting was in the first Session of the Parliament elected in 1874. That same Parliament saw the birth of a party which, in a few years, changed many things in the ordinary procedure of the House of Commons. It was the Irish members, with Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar just coming to the front, who discovered the opportunities latent in the ceremony of debate on the Address for obstructing business and embarrassing the Ministry. The lesson was quickly assimilated by other factions, and of late years it has come to be a matter of course that debate on the Address shall be extended beyond a week. Last year ten of the freshest

days of the young Session were thus wasted. If the Address were the only opportunity presented for raising miscellaneous questions of public interest, the procedure would be defensible, even commendable. What happens is, that on the Address prolonged preliminary conversations take place round subjects which already stand upon the agenda of business, and will, in due course, be discussed again at further length, upon a notice of motion or the introduction of a Bill.

The House of Commons framing its Rules of Procedure, and anxious above all things to provide even overlapping opportunities for speech-making, supplies a final illimitable opportunity on the Appropriation Bill. This is brought in at the close of a Session, and upon its second reading members may discuss any subject under the sun. Any speech a member may have prepared at an earlier period of the Session, upon any subject whatsoever, may, failing the first legitimate opportunity, be worked off on the Appropriation Bill. This measure plays the part of the seven baskets in the parable. All the elocutionary or disputatious fragments that remain after the feast of the Session are picked up and crammed within its ample folds.

That is bad enough. But since discovery was made of potentialities of debate on the Address, that occasion has been utilized in analogous fashion. Now we have an Appropriation Bill debate at the beginning of the Session, with pleasing prospect of another at its close.

The present Session will be memorable in the long record, since it witnessed an innovation that is probably the beginning of the end of an absurd custom. From time immemorial it has been ordained that members moving and seconding the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne shall array themselves in uniform if they have the right to wear it. Failing that, they must strut in the velvet and ruffles of Court dress. This Session Mr. Fenwick was selected to second the Address. The member for the Wansbeck Division of Northumberland is one of the most highly esteemed members

of the House of Commons, a man of modest mien and great capacity, an excellent speaker, who has the priceless gift of conveying to an audience conviction that he knows what he is talking about and means what he says.

Mr. Fenwick, as he has proudly recorded in the pages of "Dod," began his career as a working collier, and when, in 1885, elected to a seat in the House of Commons, he threw down his pick in the Bebside Colliery as a preliminary to having a good wash, changing his clothes, and going up to Westminster. Court dress is, of course, not common at Bebside, neither is the crimson and gold lace of the dauntless Colonel of Militia, or the epaulettes and tightly-buttoned frock-coat of the Rear-Admiral. If Mr. Fenwick had been inclined to act up to the spirit of the ordinance, he might have appeared in his old collier's garb. With pick and spade under his arm, and lantern in his hand, he would have made a picturesque

figure. That, however, did not seem to occur to him, and he had the good sense to break through the tradition by appearing



MR. FENWICK.



MOVER AND SECONDER.

in his ordinary Sunday go-to-meeting clothes, leaving his colleague who moved the Address to dazzle the House with sight of the uniform of the 4th Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

THE HORSE GUARDS' GATE. A member of Parliament may at this day send from the House of Commons, post free, a certain number of copies of Parliamentary papers. This is a poor relic of the privilege of franking, long since abolished. Ministers still have the privilege of sending their letters post free. This is done by the medium of the stamp that marks an envelope "Official: Paid." Presumably this limits the privilege to official correspondence. But the line is, as a rule, not too closely drawn. When is added the fact, only recently established, and, I believe, not widely known in the House, that members may obtain from the post-office in the Lobby packets of excellent envelopes at the bare cost of the postage-stamps with which they are embossed, the list of special privileges pertaining to the estate of a member of the British Parliament corresponding with those enjoyed by foreign legislatures is completed.

There is one privilege much coveted by members domiciled in the neighbourhood of the House of Commons. It is the oppor-

tunity of approaching the West-end by driving through the Horse Guards' entrance by Whitehall. A supporter of the late Government who lived in Whitehall Gardens, and to whom this avenue would have been a particular convenience, used all his influence to obtain the coveted permission. In reply to his importunate demands, significantly addressed to the Chief Whip of his party, then in power, he received for answer: "My dear fellow, if you like I'll get you made an Irish Peer. But not being on the list, you may not ride or drive through the Horse Guards."

The thing has, nevertheless, been done. A popular Q.C. is accustomed to ride every morning along the Embankment to the Courts. One day, taking the upper ride skirting St. James's Park, he came out on the Horse Guards' Parade, and thought he would try the sentinelled passage into Whitehall. Walking his horse through, he was challenged by the sentry.

"Don't you know me?" he sternly said. "I am one of Her Majesty's Counsel."

The soldier saluted, and Mr. Frank Lockwood gravely rode on.

