From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXIII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

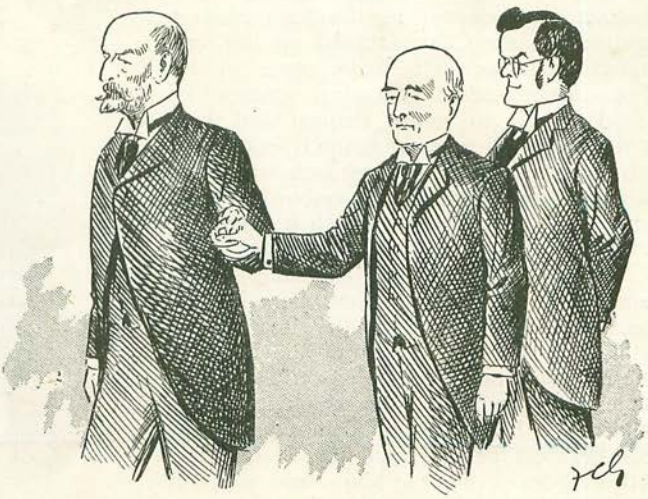
THE VACANT CHAIR.

SOME weeks before Easter the occasional illness of Mr. Speaker Peel, alternating with an attack of influenza suffered by the Deputy Speaker, brought into sharp prominence the danger that ever hovers above the House of Commons consequent upon existing arrangements with respect to the Chair. As far as Committee of the whole House is concerned, there is nothing to fear in the way of interruption of business consequent on the illness of the Chairman of Ways and Means. He has a corps of Deputies formally appointed at the beginning of each Session. When Mr. Mellor has been temporarily absent from the Chair owing to sickness, or in search of an hour's much-needed rest, one or other of these gentlemen takes his place, and business goes forward without a hitch. The arrangement is desirable in many ways other than that for which it was originally designed. It is an admirable training school for budding Chairmen and possible Speakers. It is comforting to the House to discover what wealth of resource it has in this matter, since of the members accidentally selected for the post of Deputy Chairman, each has during this Session displayed peculiar aptitude.

With the Speakership matters are essentially different. When, shortly after the opening of the Session, Mr. Peel was confined to his house by indisposition, only Mr. Mellor might take the Chair. Supposing his health had failed at this time, the House of Commons would have been obliged to close its doors, public business awaiting the convalescence of either the Speaker or his Deputy. Possibly even in such circumstances, supposing the term were not too far prolonged, the world would have gone round as heretofore, and the firmament would have looked on unwinking. Still, the crisis would have been a little ludicrous, the more deeply regretted because it would be so easy to reduce the possibility of its occurrence by nominating at least two Deputy Speakers.

INTERREGNUM.

The advances of the Speaker-elect to the full dignity and authority of the Chair are ordered with painful anxiety. His first approach is made when his election is declared, and his proposer and seconder are required to "take him by the hand and lead him to the Chair." In the House of Commons there are structural difficulties in the way of carrying out this injunction. In the case of Mr. Gully, he, awaiting the result of the contest for the Speakership, took up his quarters in his customary modest retreat on a back bench behind Ministers. It was physically impossible for mover and seconder there to approach him, and, each taking a hand, trip up to the Chair as if they were going a-Maying. What happened was that Mr. Whitbread with difficulty threaded his way among members seated on the gangway steps and, "making a long arm," as they say in Cork, clasped Mr. Gully's outstretched hand, and so conveyed him to the table.



MR. GULLY AND HIS ESCORT.

Not to speak profanely, this preliminary process of installing the Speaker was awkwardly akin to what is known in the parlance of certain style of clothing establishments as "a reach-me-down." When Mr. Whitbread had conveyed his precious charge as far as the table, fresh difficulty presented itself. There was Mr. Birrell, the seconder, waiting to play his part in conducting the Speaker-elect to the Chair. But not two, much less three, members might walk abreast between the Treasury Bench and the table of the House of Commons. Accordingly, after a little hesitation, the proposer went first, the Speaker-elect followed, and the seconder brought up the rear.

THE SERJEANT-AT-ARMS.

Not yet was Mr. Gully to take the Chair. Standing on the steps, with one foot on the topmost flight, he halted to thank the House for the honour done him. This attitude is a curious illustration of the ingrained conservatism of the House of Commons in all that relates to its ritual or procedure. There was no reason in the world why the more natural course should not have been taken of the Speaker-elect standing squarely on the daïs upon which the Speaker's Chair is set. Somewhere in the dim and distant ages came a new Speaker, with fine dramatic instinct, who, elected to the high position and led to the Chair, faltered on the topmost step overwhelmed by sense of his own unworthiness. In this attitude he stood humbly to return thanks, and there and thus, for all time since, the Speaker-elect has stood in attitude of approach, unable to take another step till he has unburdened his soul of the gratitude with which it overflows.

As soon as the Speaker-elect has made this little speech, always in the same words, passed on from lips long silent, he takes the last step and seats himself in the Chair. Meanwhile, pending the election of the Speaker, the Mace has been suspended on the hooks attached to the front, upon which it reposes whilst the House is in Committee. The Speaker-elect being seated, the Serjeant-at-Arms advances, lifts the Mace, and places it on the table in token that the House is now in full Session. The consequent proceedings are commendably brief, consisting of the proposal "That this House do now adjourn."

THE BOB WIG.

Next time the Speaker-elect appears in the House of Commons he comes in semi-State. He is met in his room by the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Mace on his shoulder, accompanied by the Chaplain in full canonicals. He is attired in Court dress, with knee-breeches, silk stockings, silver-buckled shoes, and a bob wig of the kind barristers wear when pleading in court. A procession is formed, the Speaker coming first, the Serjeant-at-Arms and Mace following after. When the Speaker makes this daily journey his progress is announced by stentorian cry of "Mr. Speaker!" passed on from policeman to messenger. On his reappearance on the scene after his election, Mr. Gully was heralded with cry of "Mr. Speaker-elect!" a formula observed till he had been in the House of Lords and there, by the action of the Lords Commissioners, received "Her Majesty's Royal allowance and confirmation of the choice made by her faithful Commons." Thereafter he was "Mr. Speaker," and, exchanging the bob wig for a full-bottomed one, put on the flowing robe, which adds inexpressible but irresistible dignity to the office of Speaker.

MR. COURTNEY'S HAPPY THOUGHT.

It is a confession sad to make, but it is indubitably true, that business in the House of Commons would proceed much less smoothly if its deliberations were presided

THE NEW SPEAKER.

over by a gentleman attired in ordinary morning dress. This great truth is recognised in the case of the Chairman of Committees. He may not compete with the majesty of the Speaker in wig and gown. But he is required, when presiding in Committee, to appear in evening dress, even though it be a morning sitting. This monotonous regulation proved so irritating to the sensitive mind of Mr. Courtney that, midway in his career of Chairman of Ways and Means, he invented the famous blue coat with two brass buttons at the back, which still lends an air of culture to dinner tables and sometimes graces evening parties. To take part in the amenities of social life in the attire officially connected with his Parliamentary office was to invest life with a strain of unendurable monotony. With the famous buff waistcoat worn by day, and the blue coat with two brass buttons at the back by night, Mr. Courtney threaded his way through life with the quiet assurance that lapped the wandering Israelites in rest what time they beheld the sentinel cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

MR. COURTNEY.

PAT O'BRIEN.

The late Sir Patrick O'Brien was not known to the present House of Commons, which is its distinct loss. Of all the varied types with which the genius of Ireland diversified the Parliaments of 1874 and 1880, Pat O'Brien, as he was universally and affectionately known, was unique. I have heard Mr. Joseph Cowen speak of him as an effective Parliamentary debater, even an orator. That goes back to a date earlier than my personal acquaintance with the man who for nearly forty years uninterruptedly sat for King's County. Even in his late manner there were not lacking flashes of genuine eloquence. The pity of it was that their effect was obscured by lack of continuity, sometimes of coherency.

Imbued with reverence for Parliamentary forms and traditions, Sir Pat was one of the few Irish members who in the Parliament of 1880 dissevered themselves from Mr Parnell's lead. Whilst that gentleman and the militant force of Irish Nationalists remained on the Opposition Benches, where the Dissolution had left them, Pat O'Brien, with Mr. Mitchell Henry, Mr. William Shaw, and two or three others, following ancient custom with Irish Liberals, crossed over in Mr. Gladstone's train. Sir Pat sat in the middle of the second bench behind Ministers, a position from which he was able to keep a scornful, though not always pellucid, eye on his countrymen below the gangway opposite. He was even more delightful to them than to the rest of the House, since he afforded opportunity of keeping up a chorus of interruption whilst he spoke. With hands thrust deep in his trouser pockets, his face sternly set in the direction of the Irish camp, sometimes his eye blazing with anger, often his lip curling with scorn at great thoughts not yet intelligibly expressed, Sir Pat was much to the fore in the Parliament of 1880–5. It was thus and from this place he one day enigmatically alluded to Mr. Mat Kenny as the "young sea-serpent from County Clare."

"Order! order!" said the Speaker. "The honourable baronet's remarks are entirely out of place."

"Then, sir," rejoined Sir Pat, with courtly bow to the Chair, "I withdraw the young sea-serpent."

The younger Redmond, at that epoch much more grotesque than he remains after a considerable course of Parliamentary training, was ever an object of Sir Pat's most furious indignation.

"Humble animal as I am," he observed one night, with gesture of contempt towards the Parnellites, "I am not about to assume the character of a lion. If I were to do so, I should select as my jackal the hon. member for Wexford (Mr. W. Redmond)."

"Why? Why?" shouted the delighted Radicals below the gangway.

"Why?" answered Sir Patrick, in a voice of thunder, "because I scarcely ever speak without his calling out 'Order!'"

This, so precisely describing the functions and habits of the jackal, settled the matter.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, not beyond suspicion of writing for a Dublin paper certain London correspondence in which the member for King's County was freely discussed, was

another object of Sir Pat's fiery aversion. What lent a special charm to his assaults on the enemy was their unexpectedness. One night, contributing a luminous speech in

"WHO CALLED ME A JACKAL?"

Committee on the vote for the salary of National School teachers in Ireland, Sir Pat, looking across the floor, happened to observe Mr. O'Connor laughing. Like a flash of lightning he was upon him.

"As the modern Plutarch who writes in the *Freeman's Journal* says that I am generally unintelligible, of course a Plutarch at ten guineas a week must be a much greater man than a Greek Plutarch."

It was in this same debate that Sir Patrick, always effective in his gibes at the pecuniary relations of the Parnellite members with their constituents, and with what he described as "the great army of servant girls in the United States," ascended to what was, even for him, an incomparable flight of eloquence.

"All persons in Ireland," he said, oracularly nodding his head, "whether Orangemen or Nationalists, or Whigs or Protestants, or members of the faith — if any faith were left in the country—or whether they belong to that still larger number which is waiting upon Providence, waiting to see whether the wind will always blow from the west across the Atlantic—all these ought to unite in promoting education."

Whilst the puzzled House was trying to follow this line of thought, Sir Pat, raising his voice and solemnly shaking his forefinger at his compatriots opposite, continued: "The wind may possibly blow across the Atlantic in a way very unpleasant for some people, notwithstanding the grand vertebræ and the big faces that I have so often heard thrown in the teeth of the Irish race."

CHALLENGES W. O'BRIEN TO A DUEL.

In these prosaic times it is forgotten how Sir Pat nearly forestalled Mr. Arthur Balfour in making an end of Mr. Wm. O'Brien. It was during the stormy Session of 1884. The House was still sitting, though the dawn of a midsummer day was struggling with the gaslight. The Bill under discussion dealt with the revision of jurors' and voters' list in the County of Dublin. Sir Pat had been dining out, and had, apparently, also been supping. It was three o'clock in the morning when he interposed, though on which side he spoke I forget, if indeed I ever was able to find out. His remarks being interrupted by Mr. T. Harrington, Sir Patrick turned aside to confide in the ear of Sir Arthur Otway (then in the Chair) the information that "Tim Harrington was carrying parcels at three-and-sixpence a week, whilst he (Sir Patrick) represented King's County in Parliament."

Subsiding for a short time, Sir Patrick waked up, and, looking across the House, his eye chanced to rest upon Mr. W. O'Brien, sitting half asleep. The more closely he regarded him the more certain he became that it was he, not Mr. Harrington, who, half an hour ago, had said something disrespectful about him. Sir Arthur Otway, rising to put the question that the clause under discussion stand part of the Bill, Sir Patrick jumped up, and thrusting his hands deeper than ever in his pockets, said, in blood-curdling voice:—

"Mr. Otway!" (It was too late at night for Sir Pat to remember that the Chairman of Committees had been knighted.) "The hon. member for Mallow just now interrupted me, and I desire now to give him an opportunity of explaining what he meant."

Then, leaning forward as if he would clutch at Mr. O'Brien's throat across the House, he shouted, "What do you want?"

Mr. O'Brien rubbed his eyes and began to wake up.

"What do you want?" Sir Pat shouted, again. "What do you want?" he roared, for the third time of asking.

"If the hon. baronet," said Mr. O'Brien, in blandest manner and softest tones, "is at all curious as to what I mean, I will be glad to let him know some day in King's County."

"Sir Arthur Otway," said Sir Patrick, punctiliously including the Chairman of

Committees in the conversation, and now remembering his title, "there is a much less distance than King's County at which the hon. member can ascertain what I think of him, and how I will deal with him."

Things beginning to look serious, the Chairman sternly interposed, and Sir Pat was reduced to silence. But it was only temporary. The debate continuing, the Committee was from time to time conscious of a voice breaking in on the ordered speech of the member on his feet. "Afraid?" it inquired, in a loud stage whisper. Whenever, for the next quarter of an hour, there was a lull in the conversation, this whispered inquiry, "Afraid?" resounded through the House.

It came from Sir Pat, who, again leaning forward, was intently, with mocking smile, watching Mr. O'Brien, who severely ignored his existence. The Chairman interposing with increasing sternness, Sir Pat rose and slowly strolled down the House, pausing before the bench where Mr. O'Brien sat and beckoning him to follow. He spent some time in the outer lobby, walking up and down like an angry tiger awaiting its evening meal. The O'Gorman Mahon chancing to pass, Sir Patrick engaged his services as a second; an arrangement of which he punctiliously informed Mr. O'Brien, taking it as a matter of course that he would make similar provisions on his own behalf. Judicious friends, interposing, got the irate baronet safely home, and Mr. O'Brien lived to suffer much in prison and, on his release, to carry on the Boulogne negotiations.

AT THE ACADEMY BANQUET.

MODERN PORTRAITURE.

At the Royal Academy banquet Lord Rosebery gave utterance to a sentiment which found an echo in the breast of the distinguished gathering of painters who sat at table. "I venture to say," the Prime Minister declared, "that you will never have a satisfactory portrait gallery unless you are able to give commissions to living painters to paint living men."

The bearings of this observation lie in the application thereof. There are few living men whom painters would more gladly see sitting or standing before their easel than Lord Rosebery. And yet, in reply to incessant urgent entreaty, he will not supply the subject. I have the pleased and proud reflection that Lord Rosebery gave me the fullest proof of friendship when he went through the agony of sitting—or, to be more precise, of walking about—for his portrait to add to a little collection I have made upon the principle to which he gave pointed expression in his Academy speech. Doubtless he was, in this instance, beguiled by the promise that there should be no tiresome posing, no prolonged sitting. The artist would camp out with easel in his study in Berkeley Square, and paint him whilst he worked. This scheme has a double recommendation. Whilst it is the only one practicable for the collaboration of busy men, the portrait, when complete, is free from the aspect and pose inseparable from the ordinary circumstances of portraiture. Here is the living, breathing man, with just the expression into which his face fell when engrossed in his daily work.

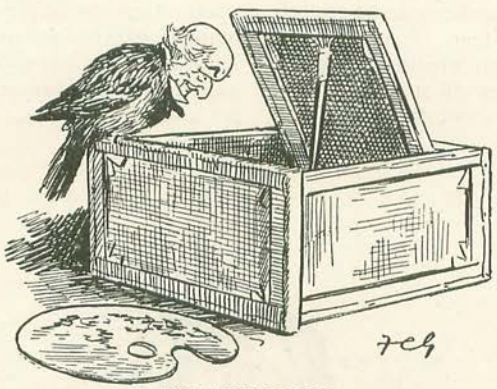
In Lord Rosebery's case, as in some others dealt with in similar circumstances, the success of the experiment was complete. Only, as the painter confided to me, the task was one of peculiar difficulty and delicacy.

"If," said Mr. E. A. Ward, "Lord Rosebery when he walked out of the room (and he was always walking out of the room) hadn't shut the door after him, I could have got on much better. But you can't do anything with your subject at the other side of a closed door."

PORTRAITS OF MR. G.

In this respect of distaste for being portrayed, either with brush or camera, Lord Rosebery much more closely resembles Lord Salisbury than he does his old chief and friend, Mr. Gladstone. There are many oil paintings and countless photographs of Mr. Gladstone. Lord Rosebery is the possessor of perhaps the most effective and picturesque—one in which Mr. Gladstone is painted in the

scarlet robes of his University office. Another portrait, now hanging at Hawarden, was painted by Sir John Millais some six or seven years ago. It was a commission forthcoming from a subscription of the women of Great Britain and Ireland. Mr. Gladstone is represented having at his knee his grandson, the eldest boy of the late W. H. Gladstone. Still another portrait, by Holl, was given to Mr. Gladstone on the jubilee of his married life. With it was presented a portrait of Mrs. Gladstone, by Herkomer, the gifts being the offering of six-score old colleagues or close personal friends. The late Lord Granville, who at the private gathering at Spencer House was spokesman for the subscribers, remarked that whilst he had known Mrs. Gladstone during the whole of the golden time that day celebrated, his acquaintance with Mr. Gladstone had extended to a longer period, of which the last thirty-five years had given him the distinction of being intimate as a personal and political friend, a colleague, and a loyal follower.



THE PORTRAIT TRAP.

A portrait less well known, but of peculiar interest, is enshrined at Hawarden. It is by William Bradley, a name now forgotten, but in high repute sixty years ago. Painted ten years after Mr. Gladstone entered the House of Commons, at the time when he was still "the rising hope of stern, unbending Toryism," it presents a full-length figure, the arms folded, the fine, strong face, with its curate-like whiskers and abundant hair, set in deep thought.

THE DESIRE OF MR. HERKOMER'S HEART.

Mr. Hubert Herkomer, R.A., has conceived a picture of Lord Rosebery which requires only the Premier's consent for realization on deathless canvas. The scene is the Prime Minister's room in Downing Street. The particular effect, alluring to the painter of the wonderful Burgomaster picture in the Royal Academy of this year, is the view from the window. In his mind's eye, Mr. Herkomer sees the living picture. At the table, at work among a pile of letters and documents, sits the Prime Minister, the head being relieved by the dark wall at the back. From the left side-window the light falls on the face, Mr. Herkomer's quick eye, surveying the room, noting the possibility of a bit of charming cross light from the right-hand window. It is from this window he would get the street scene, upon which he counts to make the picture unique among modern portraits.

"I feel inclined," he said, with a tear in his voice, "to paint the chamber and the scene even without a Prime Minister. But, of course, it would be nothing without the living figure."

Mr. Herkomer's idea, I should add, was conceived and communicated to me before Lord Rosebery's speech at the Academy banquet. The sentence quoted from that address seems to give peculiar point to the dream of the painter, and may even hold out promise of seeing it realized.

EXCITING MOMENTS IN THE SMOKE-ROOM.

Amongst the luxuries by addition of which Mr. Herbert Gladstone, most diligent of First Commissioners, is endeavouring to vindicate the ancient claim of the House of Commons to be the best club in the world, is a contrivance whereby the names of successive speakers in current debate are signalled to the members' smoking-room. Being somewhat remote from the Chamber, members retiring thither run the risk of missing the utterance of a man whom they particularly desire to hear. The chance is not so constantly recurrent as to induce them to remain in attendance awaiting it. So they go off for a cigar, a game of chess, or a chat. Still, they would like to be assured that they are not missing anything, and this new device places them at their ease.

It is on the principle of the tape lines at the clubs, which tick out strips of paper on which are printed the names of winning horses at the Derby, the latest prices on the Stock Exchange, fresh changes of the Ministry in France, and other items of current news.

The scene in the smoking-room when the sudden ticking of the instrument signals that a name is about to be spelled forth is of

never-failing interest. The latest orator has resumed his seat in the distant Chamber. The Speaker has called upon another member. Who is it? All eyes are turned upon the instrument, laboriously, with much clicking, spelling out the name.

"B." Arthur Balfour, perhaps; he was expected a little later, but may now have got up.

"A." Yes, it's Balfour.

"R," clicks the instrument. No, its Bartley; or Barran, someone suggests; or Dunbar Barton, says another.

"T." Ah; George Christopher Trout Bartley, for a shilling.

"L" "E." Yes, it's him.

"T" "T."—goes the instrument, choking with emotion.

Bartlett! No need to wait for the Ellis Ashmead. The smoking-room knows the man from Sheffield. Pipes and cigars are once more puffed with pleased assurance, and the game of chess goes forward with the certainty that it will not be interrupted for a good hour.*

PAIRING.

It is probable that before opportunity for carrying out his well-considered improvements closes for the present First Commissioner of Works, he will turn his attention to an inconvenience that bears heavily upon members nightly through a Session. It is the difficulty of obtaining pairs, either for the dinner-hour or for the current sitting. Probably, on the average of a night, there are a hundred men on either side who either have dinner arrangements, or, not being interested in the proceedings of the sitting, would like to clear out after questions are over. No division may be pending. But in order to avoid accidents it is necessary that members from either side temporarily withdrawing from the scene should be paired. The Whips do what they can to assist their friends, but there is no ordered system adequate to meet the necessity of the hour. Members, agonized by the near approach of their dinner engagement, wander about the lobby, pace the corridors, search through smoking-room, library, and newspaper-room for a pair.

It is quite possible, indeed, it frequently happens, that a member may meet a friend from the other side forlornly bent on exactly the same errand. But there is no outward and visible sign about a man who wants a pair. Thus the two go by like ships that pass in the night. I once, somewhere, suggested that members in search of a pair should wear a rosette or bit of ribbon in their button-hole —say blue for Tory and yellow for Liberal. Coming together in such circumstances, two men would forthwith be made happy. The proposal, made half in jest, was, I believe, seriously considered. But nothing came of it.

A not less simple and perhaps more practical way out of the difficulty would be that a book should be placed in the library or reading-room, wherein a member desiring a dinner pair, or a pair for the night, might enter his name on one side of a double column; a member of the opposite party, consumed by identical desire, writing his name against it. Thus pairs would be settled with a minimum of inconvenience, the saving of much valuable time, and needless worry.

"WE CAN PAIR YOU, MR. ALLAN, BUT WE CAN'T MATCH YOU."

* An illustration of this instrument will be found on page 79.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXIV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

DUMB BELLS.

ONE night early in the last Session of the Rosebery Parliament a breathless messenger brought news to the Serjeant-at-Arms that the bells would not ring. It happened that an important division, on which the fate of the Government depended, was within measurable distance. The House of Commons and its precincts are connected by an elaborate system of electric bells, commanded from the seat of the principal doorkeeper. When a division is called he touches a knob and, lo! in the smoking-room, dining-room, tea-room, library, along all the corridors, upstairs and downstairs, there throbs the tintinnabulation of the bells.

This phenomenon is so familiar, and works with such unerring regularity, that members absolutely depend upon it, absenting themselves from the Chamber with full confidence that, as long as they remain in the building, they cannot miss a division. The only places in the Palace at Westminster frequented by members of the House of Commons which the electric bells do not command are the bar and the galleries of the House of Lords. On the few occasions when attractive debate is going forward in the other Chamber, drawing to the audience a contingent of members of the House of Commons, special arrangements are made for announcing a division. A troop of messengers stand in the lobby like hounds in leash. At the signal of a division, they set off at the top of their speed, racing down the corridor, across the central lobby, into the Lords' lobby, and so, breathless, bring the news to Ghent.

In an instant all is commotion in the space within the House of Lords allotted to the Commons. The time between signalling a division and closing the doors of the House of Commons against would-be participants is, nominally, two minutes. This is jealously marked by a sand-glass which stands on the clerks' table. When it empties, the doors are locked, the Speaker puts the question for the second time, and only those within hearing may vote. Two minutes is a somewhat narrow space of time for the double event of the race of the messengers to the door of the House of Lords and the rally of legislators to the door of the House of Commons. The always-waiting crowd of strangers in the lobby are on such occasions much astonished to find tearing along—some handicapped by years or undue weight of flesh, most of them out of training and breath—a long string of legislators.

From any of the ante-chambers of the House of Commons the race can be comfortably done under the stipulated time. But when electric bells fail, the situation becomes serious. With such majorities as the late Government commanded, the acci-

THE RUSH FROM THE LOBBY.

dent of half-a-dozen or a dozen of their supporters missing the call might, as it finally did, lead to defeat and dissolution. Happily, on the occasion here recorded, notice of the failure had been duly conveyed to the Serjeant-at-Arms. In order to avoid catastrophe, the police and messengers were specially organized. Each man had his appointed beat. When the signal was given he was to run along it, roaring "Division! Division!" It was rather an exciting pastime, but it succeeded, and the Ministry were for the time saved.

CUTTING THE WIRES.

When workmen arrived on the scene and traced the accident to its source, it was discovered that the central wire had become disconnected. It was evidently an accident, but it suggests possibilities which certainly on one occasion were realized. It happened in the earliest days of Irish obstruction. A little band, under the captaincy of Mr. Parnell, fought with their backs to the wall against the united Saxon host. All-night sittings were matters of constant occurrence. About this time the St. Stephen's Club was opened, and the Conservative wing cheerfully availed themselves of the opportunity of varying the monotony of long sittings by going across to dine. A special doorway opened out from the club on to the underground passage between the Houses of Parliament and the Metropolitan District Railway Station, which the Committee of the House of Commons, before whom the Company's Bill came, insisted upon as a condition of passing it. The club dining room was connected with the House of Commons by an electric bell, an extension of the system which called to divisions members within the precincts of the House. A series of experiments demonstrated that the division lobby could be reached in good time if the summons were promptly answered.

"DIVISION!"

One night, towards the close of a fighting Session, the Irish members moved an amendment to the passing of the Annual Mutiny Bill. They loudly protested their intention of sitting all night if necessary to delay, if it were not possible to defeat, the Government Bill. In view of this prospect, a good dinner, leisurely eaten at the St. Stephen's Club, promised an agreeable and useful break in the sitting. Just before eight o'clock the Gentlemen of England trooped off to the club. They were not likely to be wanted for the division till after midnight. If by accident a division were sprung upon the House, the bell would clang here as it did in the Commons' dining-room, and they would bolt off to save the State.

ANXIOUS MOMENTS.

Nothing happened. They ate their dinner in peace and quietness, and, strolling back about half-past ten, were met at the lobby door by the desperate Whip, who, in language permitted only to Whips and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, reproached them with their desertion. They learned to their dismay that soon after eight o'clock the Irish members had permitted the debate to collapse. Ministers, grateful for the deliverance and assured of a majority, made no attempt to prolong it. The bells clanged along the corridors and through all the rooms. The Irish members mustered in full force. Ministerialists trickled in in surprisingly small numbers. It was no business of the Liberal Opposition to help the Government on this particular issue. They had gone off comfortably to dinner. The Ministerial Whips had in hand, dining in the House, sufficient to make a quorum. Presently the St. Stephen's contingent would come rushing in, and all would be well.

Mr. Hart Dyke whipped his men into the lobby. The face of Mr. Rowland Winn grew stonier and stonier as he stood at the top of the stairway waiting for the hurried tramp of the diners-out. But Sister Anne saw no one coming, and just managed to get back herself before the doors closed. Ministers had a majority, but it was an exceedingly small one.

Investigation revealed the curious fact that the bell wire running along the underground

passage between the House and the St. Stephen's Club had been cut. Of course, it was never—at least, hardly ever—known who did it.

SIR ROBERT PEEL.

Richard Doyle, familiarly known as "Dicky," was, at least, once present at a debate in the House of Commons. The occasion was fortunate for posterity, since it chanced upon the night of the maiden speech of the late 'Sir Robert Peel, son of the great Commoner, whose last wish it was that he might "leave a name remembered by expression of good-will in those places which are the abode of men whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow."

THE LATE SIR ROBERT PEEL (AFTER RICHARD DOYLE).

Dicky Doyle, after a fashion still common to his brethren and successors on the *Punch* staff, was accustomed to illustrate his private correspondence with pen-and-ink sketches. In a letter dated from 17, Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park, March 27th, 1851, Doyle sent to Lady Duff Gordon a sketch of the then new member for Tamworth, which, by the courtesy of Mr. Fisher Unwin, F. C. G. is permitted here to reproduce. The letter will be found, with much other interesting matter, in Mistress Janet Ross's "Three Generations of Englishwomen."

HIS MAIDEN SPEECH.

"Through the kindness of the Speaker," Doyle writes, "I have been permitted every evening almost during the 'Aggression' debates to sit in that part of the House of Commons devoted to the peers and foreign Ministers. Under which of these denominations I passed it is impossible for me to decide, but we will suppose it was a diplomatic 'poor' relation from Rome. In this distinguished position I heard the speeches of Sir James Graham with delight, of Mr. Newdegate with drowsiness, of Mr. Drummond with shame mingled with indignation, of the new Sir Robert Peel with surprise and contempt. This (the sketch) is what the last-named gentleman is like. How like his father, you will instantly say. His appearance created in the 'House' what Miss Talbot's did in the fashionable world, according to Bishop Hendren, a 'sensation'; and when he rose to speak, shouts of 'New member!' rose from every side, and expectation rose on tiptoe, while interest was visible in every upturned and outstretched countenance, and the buzz of eager excitement prevailed in the 'first assembly of gentlemen in the world.' There he stood, leaning upon a walking-stick, which from its bulk you would have fancied he carried as a weapon of defence, young and rather handsome, but with a somewhat fierce and, I would say, truculent look about the eyes; hair brown, plentiful, and curly, shirt collar turned down, and, O shade of his father! a large pair of moustaches upon his Republican-looking 'mug'!!! He has a manly voice and plenty of confidence, and his speech made up by its originality what it wanted in common-sense, and was full of prejudice, bigotry, and illiberal Radicalism, while it lacked largeness of view, and was destitute of statesmanship."

That is to say, the new member differed entirely from Doyle on the subject under discussion. Whence these remarks which show that, in the matter of political criticism, things did not greatly differ in the Exhibition Year from the manner in which they run to-day.

THE LATE SIR ROBERT PEEL.

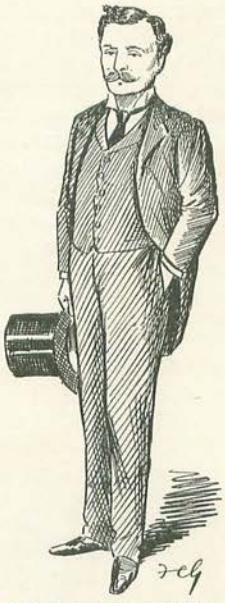
HIS PARLIAMENTARY CAREER.

Sir Robert Peel was elected member for Tamworth in 1850, and had not been in the House many months when he made his maiden speech. To the end he succeeded in sustaining that interest of the House of Commons which the shrewd, if prejudiced, observer in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery noted forty-four years ago. There was a time when Sir Robert promised to sustain in the political and Parliamentary world the high reputation with which his name had been endowed by his illustrious father. He was promptly made a Lord of the Treasury, and

in 1861 Lord Palmerston promoted him to the post of Chief Secretary for Ireland. Sir Robert was always original, and he asked to be relieved from this post for a reason Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. John Morley will contemplate with amazed interest. There was not enough for him to do, he said, and he must needs clear out.

He sat for Tamworth through an uninterrupted space of thirty years. The wave of Radical enthusiasm that brought Mr. Gladstone into power in 1880 swept away Sir Robert Peel and many others, whose Liberalism was not sufficiently robust for the crisis. For four years he was out of Parliament. But his heart, untravelled, fondly turned to the scene with which his family traditions and the prime of his own life were closely associated. In 1884 he returned as member for Huntingdon, to find fresh lustre added to the name of Peel. His brother had, in the previous month, been elected Speaker, and the House was already beginning to recognise in him supreme ability for the post.

I have to this day a vivid recollection of the play of Sir Robert's lips and the twinkle in his eye when Sir Erskine May, then still Chief Clerk, brought him up in the usual fashion to introduce him to the Speaker. Sir Robert bowed with courtly grace, and held out his hand with respectful gesture towards his new acquaintance. One mindful for the decorum of Parliamentary proceedings could not help being thankful when the episode was over. There was something in Sir Robert's face, something in his rolling gait as he approached the Chair, that would not have made it at all astonishing if he had heartily slapped the Speaker on the shoulder, or even playfully poked him in the ribs, and observed, "Halloa, old fellow! Who'd have thought of finding you here? Glad to see you!"



MR. ROCHFORT MAGUIRE.

"IT SMELLS AN ENGLISH NAME."

That Sir Robert was not to be warned off from the use of colloquialisms by seriousness of surroundings was often proved during the latter portion of his Parliamentary career. On the historic night in the Session of 1878, when the House of Commons was thrown into a state of consternation by a telegram received from Mr. Layard, announcing that the Russians were at the gates of Constantinople, Sir Robert Peel airily lectured the House in general, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright in particular, for "squabbling about little points." A bolder and better remembered passage in his speech occurred to him when discussing a vote in Committee of Supply on account of a so-called work of art just added to the national store by the sculptor Boehm. Sir Robert's peculiar pronunciation of the word, his dramatic sniffing of the nostrils as he looked round, and his exclamation, "Boehm? Boehm? It *smells* an English name," immensely delighted an after-dinner audience.

TWO SERVICES AT ST. MARGARET'S.

The last time I saw Sir Robert Peel was at St. Margaret's Church, on the occasion of the wedding of his niece, the Speaker's daughter, to Mr. Rochfort Maguire. He came in late and stayed for awhile, looking upon the scene from the top of the aisle. His bright face, upright figure, and general bearing gave no premonition of the fact that three weeks later, to the very day, St. Margaret's Church would be filled again, partly by the same congregation, and once more the occasion closely connected with the Peel family history. But now the wedding chimes were hushed; the funeral bells took up the story, telling how, at that hour, in the parish church where his father had worshipped and where he had himself slumbered through long sermons in schoolboy days, the second Sir Robert Peel was laid to his final rest.

A CHILD OF NATURE.

Many years ago, on an Atlantic steamer outward bound, I made the acquaintance of a notable man. It was at the time when, long before South Africa had become Tom Tiddler's ground, cattle ranches were a booming market for the English speculators. My friend, who was, of course, a Colonel, had commenced life as a cowboy, and had gradually acquired flocks and herds till he became rich beyond the dreams of avarice. He was a man of distinguished appearance, of gentlest manner, and, as I soon learned, of most chivalrous nature. But so deeply ingrained were his cowboy habits, so recently applied the veneer of

civilization, that in the course of conversation—and on some subjects his talk had all the freshness and charm of a little child—he interpolated a prolonged and fearsome oath.

"Ex-cuse," he said, when these fits came over him, bowing his head and speaking in gentlest tones. Then he went on talking with his musical drawl till suddenly he stumbled into another pitfall of bad language, coming out again with bowed head, sweet smile, and his long-drawn, plaintive, "Ex-cuse."

One thing he told me of his first appearance in civilization befell him on his first visit to Chicago. Putting up, as became a man of his wealth, at the best hotel in the city, he was struck with the magnificence of the dining saloon, with its rich, soft, thick carpets, its massive chandeliers, its gilt pillars, and its many mirrors. Seeing another large room leading out of the one in which he stood at gaze, the Colonel advanced to explore it—and walked right into a mirror, smashing the glass and cutting himself. He had never in his life seen anything of that kind. The delusion was complete, broken only with the shivered glass.

A SPECTRE GUEST.

I thought of my friend the Colonel the other night at the house of a well-known Amphitryon. It was an evening party, at which Royalty was present in unusual muster. A brilliant company had gathered to meet them, many of the women fair, and most of the men bravely attired in Ministerial, Court, naval, or military uniforms. At midnight the room in which a sumptuous supper was spread was crowded. At one table stood a well-known member of the House of Commons, in animated conversation with a group of friends. Bidding them good-night, he turned to leave the room, and strode straight up to a mirror that covered a wall at one end.

He halted abruptly as he observed a man walking with rapid pace to meet him. He stood and looked him straight in the face, the other guest regarding him with equal interest. The hon. member, the pink of courtesy, slightly bowed and moved a step to the right to let the new-comer enter. By an odd coincidence (not uncommon in these encounters) the stranger took exactly the same direction, and there they stood face to face again. With a smile and another bow, the hon. member moved smartly to the left.

Never shall I forget the look of amazement reflected in his face as, staring into the glass, he discovered that the stranger had once more made a corresponding movement and stood before him.

"I beg your pardon," he murmured, in faltering tones.

Whether the sound of his own voice broke the spell, or whether he saw the lips of his *vis-à-vis* moving and recognised his identity, I do not know. The truth flashed upon him, and with rapid step he made for the door in the corner at right angles with the mirror and disappeared.

AN IRISH PEERAGE.

As to a story told me by an Irish member with reference to a peerage (which, by the way, in discoursing on the subject I did not name), G. S. writes from County Antrim :—

"My father spent his youth very near Woodlands, now Luttrellstown, Lord Annally's place in County Dublin. I often heard him speak of Luke White, the bookseller, father to the first Lord Annally, and as to his accumulation of wealth. The report current at that time was that he found in a book not bank-notes but a lottery ticket, which came out a prize for a large sum. A small document like this would be more likely to escape notice than a number of bank-notes. This Luke White kept, among his other avocations, a lottery office in Dublin, and, probably, made large profits by it : at any rate, he left his four sons well off. Three of them were Colonels of Irish Militia regiments and members of Parliament. The youngest of these three Colonels, Henry White, was created first Baron Annally. Hoping you will excuse the liberty in sending you these few particulars."