From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXXII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

STRANGERS IN THE HOUSE.

AMONGST the first work to be done in the new Session that opens this month is the re-appointment of the Select Committee nominated last year to inquire into the circumstances that led up to the raid on the Transvaal. It may be useful, for purposes of reference, to give a list of the members of the Committee as it is set forth in the columns of the Paris *Gil Blas*. It runs thus: Sir milord Willam Hardtcourte, Sir H. Campell Bamnermard, Sir Michael Chicks Black, Sir Richard Webster, Lydney Bluxtone, H. Lebouchère Bigham, Sir Hart-Dyki, and M. Chamtertain.

When on Mr. Gladstone's trip to the Kiel Canal the *Tantallon Castle* touched at Copenhagen, a local paper gave a list of the principal guests, which included Lord Randoll, Lord Welley, Sir Writh Pease, Sir John Leng Baith, and Sir Cuthbert Quiets. Under these disguises fellow-passengers recognised Lord Rendell, Lord Welby, Sir Joseph Pease, Sir John Leng, and (though this was more difficult) Mr. Cuthbert Quilter, M.P.

But for picturesque spelling of proper names Paris beats Copenhagen.

A STATUE FOR LORD RANDOLPH.

A suggestion thrown out on this page last year has been taken up by the member for Birkenhead, who has addressed to the First Lord of the Treasury inquiry as to the possibility of finding within the precincts of the Houses of Parliament a site for a memorial of Lord Randolph Churchill. Mr. Arthur Balfour diplomatically replies that if the First Commissioner of Works is approached on the subject by a responsible committee, he will give the matter his full consideration.

There, for the while, the matter rests. It is probable that, sooner or later, this honour will be done to one of the strongest, ablest, and most original Parliamentarians of the later Victorian age. One deterrent influence is the fearsome consequences of similar endeavour to do honour to the memory of Mr. Bright. The smug block of marble last year placed in the outer lobby of the House of Commons labelled John Bright casts a baleful shadow over further enterprise in analogous direction. It is felt that it would be better to leave Lord Randolph Churchill's memory enshrined in the hearts of those who knew him than to attempt to perpetuate it for posterity in the fashion Mr. Bright has been dealt with.

SIR GEORGE BALFOUR, K.C.B.

A notable, unvarying, and unexplained phenomenon of the House of Commons is the failure of men who enter it after having established high reputation in India. The matter is the more marvellous since success in such a career implies exceptional ability. Three cases within recent memory illustrate the rule. Sir George Balfour, who represented Kincardineshire in three Parliaments, had a distinguished executive and administrative career in India. Having served in the artillery till he rose to the rank of Major-General, he became President of the Military Finance Commission of India, and was, for a while, chief of the Military Finance Department.

In his sixty-third year he began a new life in London, entering upon Imperial politics with the zest of perennial youth. He took to speaking in the House of Commons as a duck takes to water. But no House—the great Liberal Parliament elected in 1868, the Conservative host under Mr. Disraeli's leadership in the 1874 Parliament, nor the Liberals, back again like a flood in 1880, would listen to the poor old General. For years he plodded on, his face growing more deeply furrowed, his voice taking on nearer resemblance to a coronach. In lapses of the roar of "'Vide! 'Vide! 'Vide!" that greeted his rising, the wail of the General was heard like the far-off cry of a drowning man in a storm at sea.

In the end he retired from the struggle, and for a Session or two sat silent in his familiar seat behind the Front Bench. A look of yearning pathos filled his eyes as he watched member after member upstanding, and delivering a speech to which the House more or less attentively listened, whereas him it had persistently shouted down.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL.

The member for Kirkcaldy was of tougher metal than his colleague of Kincardineshire. He was, moreover, a far abler man. Sir George was Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal during the great famine. Quitting

THE LATE SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL.

India whilst the plague had not been entirely stayed by his energetic and well-directed efforts, the *Times* threw its hands up in Editorial despair. The question of what would become of India when Sir George Campbell had forsaken it seemed at the time appalling.

When he first took his seat for Kirkcaldy, Sir George was still in the prime of life as time is counted in the political arena. Just turned fifty, he might reasonably count on fifteen, perhaps twenty, years of active life in which on new ground he might repeat, even excel, his triumphs in India. Indian questions he had at his finger ends. But in the course of an active life and wide reading he had amassed a store of information on a wider range.

Perhaps that was the secret of his Parliamentary failure. He could talk on any subject at any length, and was not indisposed to oblige. A further peculiar disadvantage was possession of one of the most rasping voices ever heard on land or sea. In the 1880 Parliament the mere sound of Sir George Campbell's voice at the opening sentence of a speech was sufficient to send the merry-hearted Unionist majority into a roar of laughter.

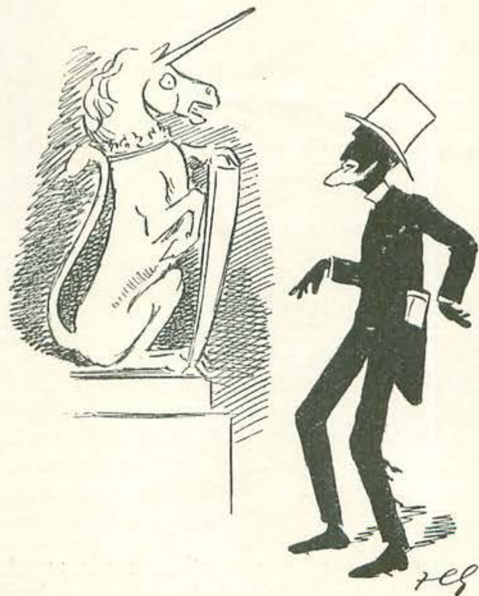
FEARFUL CREATURES!

The temptation to score off Sir George was great, since nothing pleased the House more than success in that direction. One afternoon questions, of which due notice had been given, were addressed to Mr. Plunket, then First Commissioner of Works, with respect to the carving of strange birds and beasts with which the new staircases in Westminster Hall had been ornamented. No one was dreaming of Sir George Campbell. It wasn't his show, but he must needs poke his nose into it. Mr. Plunket had disclaimed authority in the matter.

"Who, then," cried Sir George, at the top of his voice, "is responsible for these fearful creatures?"

Mr. Plunket returned to the table, and turning a beaming face upon Sir George said, in musical voice that contrasted pleasantly with the rasping of a file, "I am not responsible for the fearful creatures in Westminster Hall, or in this House either."

In the following Session Sir George accidentally and undesignedly gave a fresh point to this little gibe by a slip of the tongue. Having, in companionship with Mr. Storey, Mr. Conybeare, and two or three other members below the gangway, long withstood the Government in Committee of Supply, Sir George, in one of twenty-three speeches delivered on a single night, desired to make reference to "the band of us devoted



"WHAT A FEARFUL CREATURE!"

guerillas." In the tornado of his hurried speech he got a little mixed, and presented himself and his coadjutors to the notice of a delighted House as "the band of us devoted gorillas."

SIR GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

One of Sir George's minor fads was objection to the device of St. George and the Dragon employed for coins which passed currency in Scotland. St. George was all very well for mere Southerners. North of the Tweed, St. Andrew was the saint. In Committee of Supply he returned to this subject, dwelling upon it as if he approached it for the first time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had replied a score of times to the question, made no sign, and the Chairman of Committees had risen to put the question. Sir George bore down upon him with ungovernable fury, threatening to move to report progress if he were thus ignored. Mr. W. H. Smith, still with us at the time, interposed with characteristic effort to throw oil on the troubled waters. Sir George, in response, clamoured for a pledge that in any new coinage the familiar device should not be introduced. Hereupon, Sir Wilfred Lawson, ever a man of peace, suggested, as a compromise, that the die should be cut to represent *Sir* George and the Dragon.

Amid the uproarious laughter that followed, the vote under discussion was hastily put and further discussion by Sir George Campbell necessarily deferred.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE.

Still another eminent Indian statesman who found a low level in the House of Commons was Sir Richard Temple. Sir Richard has recently published the Story of his Life, from which it appears how intimately and directly he was connected with the growth and prosperity of India over a period of twenty-nine years. He was nine years older than Sir George Campbell when he entered the Parliamentary arena. In mental and physical vigour he was at least his equal. Sir Richard's career in India had been one of unchecked advancement—the reward of honest hard work and high administrative capacity. As he himself puts it, he "was fortunate in climbing rapidly up the steps of the ladder in a comparatively short time, and remaining at or near the top for the greater part of my official days."

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE TURNS HIS BACK ON THE HOUSE.

He came to Westminster just as Napoleon went to Spain after his triumphs in Italy and Germany, meaning to possess himself of a new territory as a matter of course. Excluding Irish members from the computation, Sir Richard in one respect beat the record. "In the Commons," he writes, on the day before he took the oath, "I wish to comport myself modestly and quietly." He began by making his maiden speech on the first night on the opening Session of a new Parliament!

Thereafter Sir Richard was one of the most active competitors in the game of catching the Speaker's eye. He had an advantage inasmuch as he was always on the spot. It was his boast that, out of the 2,118 divisions taken in the Parliament of 1886–92, he voted in 2,072. In respect of the mastery of other questions besides those specially pertaining to India, Sir Richard had exceptional claims to the attention of the House of Commons. But he never succeeded in catching its ear, and after a struggle not less gallant or prolonged than that of Sir George Balfour or Sir George Campbell, he shook the dust of the House from off his feet.

THE REASON WHY.

Macaulay, another eminent immigrant from India, after brief experience, described the House of Commons as the most peculiar audience in the world. "I should say," he wrote to Whewell sixty-six years ago next month, "that a man's being a good writer, a good orator at the Bar, a good mob orator, or a good orator in debating clubs, was rather a reason for expecting him to fail than for expecting him to succeed in the House of Commons. A place where Walpole succeeded and Addison failed; where Dundas succeeded and Burke failed; where Peel now succeeds and where Mackintosh fails; where Erskine and Scarlett were dinner-bells; where Lawrence and Jekyll, the two wittiest men, or nearly so, of their time, were thought bores, is surely a very strange place."

In the case of men who have made their mark in India there is not even this attraction of variety. They all prove dinner-bells.

One reason for this is that they enter the House too late in life. There are exceedingly few exceptions to the rule that men do not reach supreme position in the House of Commons unless they enter it on the sunny side of thirty.

More directly fatal to House of Commons success of Indian ex-Ministers and officials is the absolutely altered conditions of life. Stepping from Government House in one of the Provinces of India on to the floor of the House of Commons, they experience a more striking and not so attractive a transformation as Alice realized when she wandered into Wonderland. For years accustomed to autocratic power, his lightest whisper a command, the ex-Satrap finds himself an unconsidered member of a body of men who, unless their demeanour is misleading, would think nothing of tweaking the nose of the ex-Governor of Bombay or the ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

The lesson is learnt in time. To begin with, it is difficult for a man who, as Sir Richard Temple boasts in his own case, has ruled over millions, to realize that he must compete with borough members and the like in the effort to catch the Speaker's eye. His earliest natural impulse is to clap his hands and order the optic to be brought to him on a charger. By the time the hard lesson is learned the spirit is broken, ambition is smothered, old age creeps on, and strong, capable, successful men, who have thrown up high appointments in India, in order to serve their country and themselves in a Parliamentary career, find how much sharper than a serpent's tooth is House of Commons' ingratitude.

UNNAMED HEROES.

The gentlemen of England who live at home at ease, and, morning after morning, through an important debate in the House of Commons, glance down the report of speeches delivered on the previous night, reck little of tearless dumb tragedies that take place in the historic Chamber and find no record. It is all very well for the man who has worked off his speech, even if the benches should empty at his rising, and the newspapers give the barest summary of his argument.

> Alas, for those who never sing,
> But die with all their music in them.

WAITING FOR AN OPENING.

Through nights of big debates, for one member who catches the Speaker's eye there are, at least, twenty who compete in the emprise and lamentably fail. It is no uncommon thing to see a member sit hour after hour, notes of his speech in hand, waiting till successive orators have made an end of speaking, eagerly jump up, and be passed over by the Speaker. The House, long inured to the misfortune in others, passes it over without sign of emotion. But it is no light thing for the man directly concerned.

To begin with, he has presumably spent much time in studying the subject of debate and in laborious preparation of a speech. He must be down early to secure a seat. Whilst others go off to chat in the lobby, to smoke on the terrace, to read the papers, or leisurely to dine, he must remain at his post, ready to jump up whenever an opening is made. To take one turn at this and be disappointed is hard. To do it all through a night seems unendurable. To repeat the experience night after night, and hear the division called with the speech yet unspoken, is sufficient to blight existence.

Yet such a fate is by no means uncommon. In some cases a last pang is added by the consciousness that the wife of one's bosom, or the dutiful daughters who believe Pa's oratory would remove mountains of objection, regard the shameful scene from the seclusion of the Ladies' Gallery.

THE FRONT BENCHES.

Disgust and disappointment, born of this evil fate, occasionally find expression in protest against the number and length of speeches delivered from either Front Bench. It will be understood in what mood a member, smarting under constant repulse, sees another chance snatched from him by the interposition of a minor Minister or, worse still, by an ex-Under Secretary rising from the Front Opposition Bench, reeling off his speech as a matter of course and right. In big debates, where the pressure of oratory is overpowering and time limited, the Whips on either side make up a list in due order of precedence, which they hand to the Speaker. This he is glad

TRYING TO CATCH THE SPEAKER'S EYE.

enough to avail himself of, whilst not abrogating his right to make such selection as he pleases.

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

In olden times, before the closure was, the House was to a considerable extent at the mercy of a single member in the matter of closing a debate. Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell reduced to a perfected system the habit of interposing at the moment when a big debate seemed to have come to a natural conclusion. In his day there was neither the twelve o'clock rule nor closure. Talk might, not infrequently did, go on all through the night and fill the wearied hours of the succeeding morn. Mr. Gladstone, as Leader of the Opposition, would wind up the debate from the point of view of his party; Mr. Disraeli, as Leader of the House, would reply, a task usually completed between one and two o'clock in the morning. The Speaker would rise to put the question, and tired members would gratefully prepare for the march through the division lobbies, and the subsequent rush for cabs.

MISSED!

At this critical moment would be discovered below the gangway Mr. O'Donnell on his feet, leisurely fixing his eye-glass preparatory to delivering a long speech that might just as well have been spoken before dinner. The House howled, and, using the phrase in a Parliamentary sense, tore its hair and rent its garments. But it felt its impotence, and Mr. O'Donnell relentlessly used his power. When the continuous roar of "'Vide! 'Vide! 'Vide!" filled the Chamber, Mr. O'Donnell seized the opportunity of silence enforced on himself quietly to study his notes. The conflict lasted for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, according to the reckless heat of passion. But there was never any variation of the conclusion. When six hundred members had shouted themselves hoarse, Mr. O'Donnell continued and concluded his speech, to the prolongation of which members had contributed the odd ten or fifteen minutes.

"'VIDE! 'VIDE! 'VIDE!"

Members of the present House of Commons have never heard the old Parliamentary roar of passionate wrath. Sometimes when an unwelcome member interposes in the debate, or another, having been on his legs for an hour, proposes to introduce his seventhly, there is a timid cry of "'Vide! 'Vide! 'Vide!" The change in Parliamentary habit and modes of thought is shown by the fact that the interruption is instantly met by a stern cry of "Order! Order!" in which, if the interruption be persisted in, the Speaker is sure to join. Not that the audience desire to have more of the eloquence from which they have suffered. But it is not, in these days, the fashion to shout down an obnoxious member.

TALKED OUT HIS OWN BILL.

Mr. Courtney remembers when things were quite otherwise. There was a Wednesday afternoon in June, in the Session of 1877, when the Woman's Suffrage Bill made

one of its successive appearances. The advocates of the measure—foremost among whom was Mr. Courtney—were flushed with hope of a good division. At a quarter past five, the champion rose to clench the argument in favour of the second reading. Under the standing orders then in force, Wednesday's debate must needs close at a quarter to six. If any member was on his feet when the hand of the clock touched the quarter, the debate would automatically stand adjourned. The House had had enough of debate carried on through a long summer afternoon. Members knew Mr. Courtney's views on the question, and would rather have the division than enjoy opportunity of hearing them formally stated. Accordingly, when he rose there were cries for the division.

But Mr. Courtney, though then comparatively new to Parliamentary life, was not to be put down by clamour. Disregarding the interruption, he went on with his remarks. As he continued the storm rose. Mr. Courtney's back was up, and occasionally so also was his clenched fist, shaken towards high Heaven in enforcement of his argument. At the end of a quarter of an hour a glass of water was brought by a considerate friend. Amid howls of contumely the orator gulped it down. Evidently refreshed, he began again. Nothing was heard beyond the invocation, "Mr. Speaker," and the chorus, "'Vide! 'Vide! 'Vide!" The roar of human voices filled the Chamber with angry wail. When it seemed dying away Mr. Courtney's lips moved, whereat the blast broke forth with renewed fury. Another glass of water was brought, and drank amid demoniac shouts.

MR. COURTNEY'S BACK UP.

So the moments sped till a quarter to six rang out from the clock tower, and Mr. Courtney sat down pale and breathless, secure in the rare triumph of having talked out the Bill whose passage through a second reading he had risen with intent to enforce. That is a scene the like of which members of the House of Commons living under the New Rules will never more look upon.

A NIGHT ALARM.

A well-known member of the House of Commons has brought up from the country a story which illustrates the responsibilities of hospitality. His house standing in an isolated position, with the highway skirting the park walls, he became concerned for the safety of many precious portable things collected under his roof. Taking advice in an experienced quarter, he was advised that the best thing to do was to have all the doors and windows on the ground floor connected with electric-bells. Any attempt to effect burglarious entry would result, not only in the ringing of the bell in the particular room upon which attempt was made, but in every room and every passage on the ground floor.

Shortly after midnight on what had been a peaceful Sabbath, the household were alarmed by a furious ringing of bells. The householder was up with delighted alacrity. Now he would have them! On the way downstairs he met several men of the house party, for the most part scantily dressed, but full of ardour for any possible fray.

As the bells were still ringing in all the rooms, it was difficult to hit upon the one assailed. The host was assisted by the appearance at one of the doors of an esteemed friend with painfully scared look. Explanations following, it appeared that the guest, fancying the room was warm, and being accustomed to sleep at home with his window open, unfastened the latch and threw up the window, with the astounding results recorded.

In future, guests sleeping on the ground floor will be warned of what they may expect as the result of too insistent search of fresh night air.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXXIII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

WORK-TIME AT WESTMINSTER.

IT is probable that amongst other results the new procedure governing Committee of Supply will settle the vexed question of the time of the year through which Parliament should sit. It has long been regarded as an unpardonable and unnecessary anomaly that Parliament should be condemned to hard labour through the fairest months of the year. Since the birth of organized obstruction in the Parliament of 1874, it has come to pass that members of the House of Commons have been practically debarred from enjoying the delights of the country when in its prime. The custom has been for Parliament to meet the first week in February, adjourning somewhere between the third week in August and the last week in September.

This arrangement of Parliamentary times and seasons is not consecrated by the dust of ages. It does not go even as far back as the Georgian Era. When George III. was King, Parliament met in November, sat till May or June, and thus earned a recess endowed with the warmth and light of summer time. As we are reminded by recurrence of the anniversary of Gunpowder Plot, the custom of Parliament meeting for a new Session early in November dates back beyond Stuart times. Seven years ago, Sir George Trevelyan made an attempt to induce the House to return to old Conservative customs. He moved a resolution recommending that the Session should open in November, that the House should adjourn for brief recess at Christmas, and not sit far into June. The proposal was negatived by a majority of four in a House of over 350 members.

Mr. W. H. Smith, then leading the Commons, was so impressed by this declaration of opinion, that it was resolved to try the experiment. Accordingly, in 1890, the Session commenced on the 25th of November. Parliament sat till the 9th of December, and adjourned till the 22nd of January. It was a rather long Christmas holiday, and it had to be paid for later on, the prorogation not being brought about till the 5th of August.

This was an arrangement fatal to a movement that had commenced with such sprightly hope. When members were brought

to town in November, they were promised that school should break up on or about Midsummer Day. What actually happened was that the prorogation took place about the date which was, prior to 1874, regarded as customary, the difference being that members had been in harness since November instead of meeting in February.

MR. BALFOUR'S PLAN.

Since that lamentable fiasco, there has been no further talk of winter Sessions and summer holidays. But Mr. Balfour's scheme of appointing a limited number of nights for Committee of Supply, banked up at the end by the Closure, will certainly—assuming good faith on the part of the Ministry—prevent the indefinite dragging out of the Session through August into September. In spite of all temptation, turning a deaf ear to the entreaty of powerful interests, Mr. Balfour last year kept faith with the House of Commons. The prorogation took place about the middle of August, as he had promised when, early in the Session, he appropriated the time of private members for Committee of Supply. As long as honourable understanding in this direction is observed, so long will the new procedure in the matter of Committee of Supply be adhered to. It admirably serves the larger purpose for which it was designed, discussion of the Estimates being made possible last year with a fulness of time and convenience of opportunity long unknown at Westminster.

MEN OF LETTERS IN PARLIAMENT.

The General Election of 1895 added to the historic store of the House of Commons one fresh opportunity of testing the problem whether there is insuperable obstacle to the Parliamentary success of a man who has made his earliest fame in literature. It was a fortunate accident, full of good augury, that Mr. Lecky's much-looked-for maiden speech was delivered without preparation. He chanced to be in the House when, on the Address, debate arose on the question of extending amnesty to the Fenian prisoners. He was moved by some remarks from Mr. Horace Plunkett, one of those simple, businesslike addresses with which the member for Dublin County occasionally varies the ordinary business of speech-making

in the House of Commons. Mr. Lecky, finding himself on his feet for the first time, going through the dread ordeal of speaking in the House of Commons, was manifestly nervous. He wrung his hands with despairing gesture; his knees, trembling, lent the appearance of a series of deprecatory curtsies towards the Chair. Soon he recovered his self-possession, and proceeded to the end of a wisely brief speech delivered in a pleasant voice with clear enunciation. He doubtless did much better than if, foreseeing the opportunity, he had in the retirement and leisure of his study prepared a more elaborate oration.

MR. LECKY'S MAIDEN EFFORT.

"OBITER DICTA."

Another man of letters, not brought in with the present Parliament, though in it he has made his first distinct bid for position as a debater, is Mr. Augustine Birrell. The member for West Fife undoubtedly prepares the good things he distributes through his Parliamentary speeches. But their point, and the happily natural manner of their delivery, invest them with the charm of the impromptu. The very best style of Parliamentary speaking is that illustrated by the successes of Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery, where the gift of public speaking is founded upon literary gift and literary training. Mr. Birrell has the combination of these good things. When, as in his case, there is added a strong savour of sprightly, occasionally audacious, humour, success is assured far beyond the measure that awaits the weightier and more distinguished historian of "England in the Eighteenth Century."

MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL'S "OBITER DICTA."

SUBTERRANEAN INFLUENCES.

One of the most elaborate and, by the public, least used underground avenues in the Metropolis connects Palace Yard with the Embankment. It is probable that of the hundreds of thousands of persons who cross Westminster Bridge in the course of twenty-four hours, not a dozen are aware of the existence of this subterranean thoroughfare. As a matter of fact, it is reserved exclusively for members and others proceeding to and from the House of Commons. It is open only whilst the House is sitting, the approach from the Embankment and the exit at the foot of the District Railway steps being locked as soon as the House is up.

The passage has a remarkable history, inasmuch as it is the result of the only occasion when a bribe was effectively offered to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. When the promoters of the Metropolitan District Railway came before Parliament for powers to construct the line, they were careful to point out that one of their stations would be conveniently set immediately opposite the Clock-tower Entrance to the Houses of Parliament. Also, there would be late trains going westward, which in ordinary circumstances would meet the convenience of members at the close of debate. Finally, the promoters undertook to connect Palace Yard and their railway station by a private subterraneous way.

That, of course, may have had no influence upon the decision of the Committee. As a matter of history, the Bill passed.

WHERE EDMUND SPENSER LIVED.

There is just now on foot a movement, in which Mr. Loder takes the lead, for extending this privilege of subterraneous locomotion. Thanks to the activity and persistence of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and the cordial concurrence of Mr. Akers-Douglas on succeeding him at the Board of Works, the long-contemplated improvement of the Parliament Street approach to Westminster Hall and Westminster Abbey will shortly be commenced. The unsightly block of houses which makes a sort of club-foot at the end of Parliament Street will be swept away, full view being opened of Westminster Abbey.

The narrow thoroughfare, King Street, at the back of this block was one time the principal approach to Westminster. There

is record of the crushing and trampling to death of a number of people crowding it when Queen Elizabeth, at the head of a cavalcade of her nobles, rode to Westminster to open Parliament in person. To-day the broadened thoroughfare of Parliament Street is not wide enough to hold the throng that gathers on the rare occasions when the Sovereign opens Parliament.

Soon it will be further widened by addition of the back street in which Edmund Spenser died for lack of bread. It was in a room of a house in King Street that the author of "Paradise Lost" received the tardy charity of twenty pieces of silver sent him by Lord Essex. He returned it with bitterly courteous expression of regret that he had "no time to spend them."

A NEW PROPOSAL.

Mr. Loder discovers in the contemplated improvement of Parliament Street an opportunity of adding to the comfort and convenience of Ministers and officials. He suggests that from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Downing Street a subway may start, landing in Palace Yard. As the money in this instance would be forthcoming not from the purse of a railway company, but from the coffers of the State, it is not probable the scheme will meet with the warm approval bestowed upon the passage under Bridge Street. Moreover, objection may reasonably be taken on behalf of the Man in the Street. During Mr. Gladstone's Premiership it was the daily delight of a crowd lining Downing Street, and of another clustered opposite the gates of Palace Yard, to await the coming of the veteran statesman. Had he, enticed by the privacy and shelter of the subway, gone underground, much innocent pleasure and excitement would have been lost. Nor would the public to-day willingly let die the opportunity of seeing Mr. Arthur Balfour, with long, swinging stride, and a pleasant smile on his still boyish face, pass daily through the Session on his way to the House of Commons.

PARVENU PEERS IN PARLIAMENT.

In the published letters of the late Archbishop Magee there are several indications, scratched by a ruthlessly sharp pen, of the heartburning that underlies the ordinary placid appearance of the House of Lords. "I am thoroughly sick of episcopal life in Parliament," moans Dr. Magee, after he had sat in it for ten years as Bishop of Peterborough. "We are hated by the Peers as a set of *parvenus* whom they would gladly rid themselves of if they dare, and only allowed on sufferance to speak now and then on Church questions after a timid and respectful sort."

Dr. Magee addressing any body of his fellow-creatures in timid and respectful attitude does not immediately jump with conclusions formed in reminiscence of his ordinary manner. The suggestion shows how deeply he was moved.

DEBATE IN LORDS AND COMMONS.

Differences in custom of debate tend to make things harder for an undesirable speaker in the House of Lords than for one similarly esteemed in the House of Commons. Though the Lord Chancellor is titularly Speaker, and, better still for Lord Halsbury, has a special salary of £4,000 a year as such, he has not any of that autocratic authority exercised by the Speaker of the House of Commons. On the occasion of big debates, the Speaker is accustomed to receive suggestions from the Whips on either side as to the persons who shall take part in the discussion, and the order in which they follow. But the communication is strictly in the form of a suggestion, leaving unquestioned the Speaker's absolute right to make selection. In the House of Lords there is no such procedure as that known in the other House as "catching the Speaker's eye." On ordinary occasions noble lords desiring to take part in a debate plunge in whenever they please. In the House of Commons, if two or more members rise at the same moment, the Speaker calls on one, and the others promptly resume their seats. In the House of Lords, if two peers rise at the same moment and neither will give way, the difficulty can be got over only by formal motion made that Lord A—— or Lord B—— be heard.

On big field-nights, such as the second reading of the Home Rule Bill or the Irish Land Bill, the list of speakers on one side, and the order of their appearance, is drawn up by Lord Salisbury, a similar list being prepared by the Leader of the party opposite. These lists serve as stone walls against the desire of any Lord of Parliament who may desire to enjoy his birthright by addressing his peers.

AN UNDELIVERED SPEECH.

In the debate on the second reading of the Irish Land Bill, passed by Lord Salisbury's Government, an Irish Law Lord who knows the question thoroughly, and whose racy speech is much relished by the House and the public, regarded it as a matter of course that he would be expected to take

part in the debate. He was, accordingly, at some pains to prepare a speech presumably full of good things. Inquiring where he was to come in, he was quietly told that he would not be wanted.

LORD MORRIS.

"So," he says, with a twinkle in his eye and a richer note in his brogue, "I'm saving this speech up for the next Irish Land Bill a Conservative Government will bring in."

A CHEERFUL SIMILE.

It seems natural enough that a clergyman, albeit an archbishop, projected into the political arena, should be possessed with that feeling of chilliness in the atmosphere of the House of Lords which Dr. Magee indicates in the passage quoted. But it affects even lawyers. A short time before his death the first Lord Coleridge, talking to me about the

THE LATE LORD COLERIDGE.

House of Lords, said: "I have had my seat there now for more than a dozen years. But when at this day I rise to speak I have something of the feeling that chilled me at my first essay. Making a set speech in the House of Lords is like getting up in a churchyard and addressing the tombstones."

A COLLOQUY AT THE ADMIRALTY.

The prospect of Lord Charles Beresford returning to the House of Commons, a happy event not likely to be long deferred, flutters the Admiralty with pleased anticipation. As seen from Whitehall, it is doubtful whether Lord Charles, being in Parliament, is better in office or out of it. Out of it he is always cruising round, continually threatening to run down the First Lords' frigate with his saucy gunboat. In office he is not any more tractable.

He tells a charming story of what happened to him "when I was at the Admiralty."

"One morning," Lord Charles says, "a clerk came in with a wet quill pen, and said: 'Good-morning. Will you sign the Estimates of the year?' I said: 'What!' He said: 'Will you sign the Estimates for the year?' I said: 'My good man, I have not seen them.' 'Oh, well,' he said, shoving a little astern, 'the other Lords have signed them. It will be very inconvenient if you don't.' 'I'm very sorry,' I said. 'I'm afraid I'm altogether inconvenient in this place. Certainly I sha'n't sign Estimates I've not seen.' 'I must go and tell the First Lord,' said the horrified clerk. I assured him I didn't care a fig whom he told. Being at the time the Coal Lord, I knew the coal was not half enough to supply the fleet as it stood, and the fleet wasn't near enough the strength it ought to be. So I flatly refused to sign, and the Estimates were brought into the House without my signature. The omission was noted and an explanation demanded. 'Really,' said the First Lord, 'it does not matter whether the Junior Lord signs the Estimates or does not.'"

"I SHA'N'T SIGN THE ESTIMATES."

MR. GEDGE HAS A PLAN.

Mr. Sydney Gedge has thought out a means of saving public time in the House of Commons, which he will, in the course of the coming Session, invite the House to

embody in a Standing Order. It is aimed against the practice of a few recalcitrant members insisting upon dividing when their chances of prevailing in the lobby are ludicrously hopeless. A division taken in ordinary circumstances with a full House and only a moderate majority occupies a minimum of ten minutes. If the minority is exceptionally small and the House is full when the division bell rings, the time taken is longer, since a larger crowd of members throng one lobby.

This is an opportunity not lost upon obstructionists, who when they tire of talking have only to challenge a division, which secures for them a little wholesome exercise, combined with a waste of ten minutes of public time.

Mr. Gedge proposes that the Speaker, or if the House is in Committee the Chairman, may, after putting the question a second time and finding his opinion challenged, call for a show of hands. He may thereupon declare whether the "ayes" or "noes" have it, his decision to be final. In order to gratify the desire of members to see their names in the division list, Mr. Gedge further proposes that members may write their names, with the word "aye" or "no," on a card provided for the purpose, and deposit it in a box, the votes so signified to be printed in the division list.

FORESTALLED.

There is already in existence a Standing Order designed to effect the purpose Mr. Gedge has at heart. In accordance with it, the Speaker, or Chairman of Committees, regarding a division as frivolously claimed, may direct those clamouring for it to stand up in their places. The Committee clerks are summoned; the names of members on their feet are ticked off, and are printed with the votes on the following day.

This is an excellent rule, calculated to save time and to rebuke petulant obstruction. It is, however, very rarely invoked. Since it was added to the Order Book, successive Speakers and Chairmen of Committees have declined habitually to use it. They think it better to waste ten minutes of public time than to incur the reproach of limiting the freedom of duly elected members to take a division.

FRIVOLOUS DIVISIONS.

Once last Session Mr. Weir succeeded in provoking the Chairman of Committees to put in force the Standing Order. In Committee of Supply he, lamenting the slack attendance of Her Majesty's ships in the neighbourhood of the Hebrides, moved to reduce Mr. Goschen's salary by the sum of £1,500. The Chairman, putting the question, declared the "noes" had it. Mr. Weir insisted on the contrary, and claimed a division. Thereupon, the Chairman directed the "ayes" to stand up. Nine members, including Mr. Caldwell and Dr. Tanner, supported Mr. Weir.

It was a significant circumstance that on the next vote Dr. Tanner made a motion at least as frivolous. But the Chairman did not again have recourse to the Standing Order. In the division that followed the minority was eight. Whence it would appear that the challenge for a division was one-ninth more frivolous than the one upon which the Chairman had taken action.

THE NEW MEMBERS.

New members prominent in the proceedings of last Session, when they formed a considerable leavening of the whole, are this Session notable for the absence of peculiarities. Last year, more particularly in the early months, hardly a night passed but some new member was discovered walking out to a division with his hat on, or, strolling up the floor, unconcernedly walking between the speaker on his legs and the Speaker in the Chair. Probably no man ever does that twice. The blood-curdling roar of contumely that follows on his undesigned indiscretion is enough to make him walk warily for the rest of his legislative life. But many new members came to Westminster after the General Election of 1895, and a succession of them fell into the trap.

HAIR-CURLED ORATORY.

The most delightful incident in the evolution of new members of the present Parliament stands to the credit of a member who sits above the gangway on the Opposition benches. Very early after taking the oath he resolved to make his maiden speech. Impressed with the respect due to the Mother of Parliaments, he considered what he should do in order properly to render it. Discussing with himself various suggestions, he finally resolved that before he rose to catch the Speaker's eye he would have his hair curled.

One afternoon, to the astonishment of members in his immediate neighbourhood, he came down oiled and curled like an Assyrian bull. Unfortunately, the delicate attention he had paid to the House was not reciprocated by the Speaker. Up to dinner time, whenever a member taking part in the debate resumed his seat, a curled head was seen flashing up above the gangway, and a

voice issuing from below the fringe said, "Mr. Speaker!" But the owner was persistently ignored.

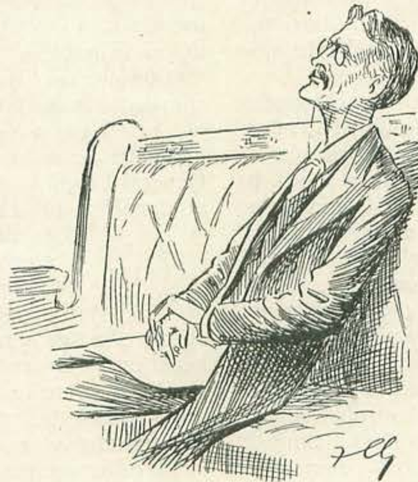
Wearied by reiterated effort and continual disappointment, he went out about the dinner hour to get some refreshment. He was back early in fresh quest of opportunity. But, even in the more favourable circumstances of lessened attendance and reduced competition, he did not get his chance. New members have a prescriptive right to precedence over all but the giants of debate. On this occasion new members seemed, with one accord, to have agreed to seize the opportunity.

It was eleven o'clock before the member above the gangway was called upon, by which time, partly owing to the heat of the atmosphere, partly to extreme mental perturbation, his hair was almost entirely out of curl. But the attention was well meant, and was much appreciated by members who in the course of the evening possessed themselves of the secret.

A NEW WORD.

It was another new member, fresh from Ireland, who, in the heat of oratory, flashed forth a new and delightfully expressive word. Mr. Gerald Balfour had declined to assent to one of the many proposals formulated by rival factions below the gangway opposite.

"Sir," said Mr. Murnaghan, fixing the Minister with flaming eye, "I can tell the Chief Secretary that his message will be received in Ireland with *constirpation*."



"GERALD."

A FEARFUL WARNING.

A friendly reader of these discursive pages sends me, as a token of his esteem, a rare pamphlet whose well-thumbed condition testifies to the interest it has excited. "A Short History of Prime Ministers in Great Britain" is its title, the imprint showing that it was "done by H. Haines, at Mr. Francklin's, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, 1733."

The history, much condensed, is designed to show how fatal for a nation's welfare is the delegation of kingly rule to the hands of a single man. The anonymous writer goes as far back as the time of William the Conqueror with his favourite Minister, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and passing through succeeding reigns, shows how A'Beckett, Hubert de Burgh, Mortimer, Somerset, Buckingham, and others placed in supreme power by the personal affection of the Sovereign, brought their country to the verge of ruin.

The gem of the work is reserved for the end, where the author, summarizing the history of Prime Ministers, shows how fearsome was their fate. Here is his list made out in the fashion of a butcher's weekly account for meat:—

DY'D by the Halter	3
Ditto by the Axe	10
Ditto by STURDY BEGGARS	3
Ditto untimely by private Hands	2
Ditto in Imprisonment	4
Ditto in Exile	4
Ditto Penitent	1
Saved by Sacrificing their Master	4
Sum Total of PRIME MINISTERS...	31

Like Captain Bunsby's remarks, the bearing of the pamphleteer's observations lies in the application thereof. Only one reference is made to current politics. "It would scarce have been safe," he writes, "I am sure it would not have been prudent, thus to entertain the Publick with the dismal Consequences, that have hitherto followed, upon vesting all Power in *One Man.* But at a Time like *This*, when it is the joy of all good Men to see that there is no one *Prime Minister* at the Helm; but that several *equally able, equally virtuous, and great Men* jointly draw on the *well-ballanced Machine of State*, which therefore cannot, as I pray it may not, totter."

The wicked slyness of the pamphleteer is realized when we recall the fact that at the time he launched his artfully prepared dart, Sir Robert Walpole was first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, had held the position for twelve years, and seemed likely, as indeed the event proved, to retain it for nine years longer.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXXIV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

FADED STARS.

IN this, its third Session, it becomes more than ever clear that the Fourteenth Parliament of Queen Victoria will not vary the level of respectable commonplace which has prevailed in the House of Commons in recent times. As far as individuality is concerned, the Parliament of 1874-80 marks the high tide. That was the assembly that provided a platform on which were played the high jinks of Major O'Gorman, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, Dr. Kenealy, Sir John Astley, Mr. Tom Connelly, Mr. David Davies, Mr. Delahunty, with his one-pound notes; Mr. McCarthy Downing, Mr. Plimsoll, and his famous achievement of standing on one leg and shaking his fist at the Speaker; Sir John Elphinstone, Mr. David McIver, honest John Martin, the Chevalier O'Clery, J. P. Ronayne, one of the wittiest of Irishmen; Dr. O'Leary, whose vote Dizzy won at a critical epoch by telling him almost with tears in his eyes how he reminded him of "my old friend Tom Moore"; Captain Stackpoole, Mr. Smollet, great grand nephew of the novelist and historian, who effectively reproduced in the House the manners of Humphrey Clinker; Mr. Whalley, with his grave suspicion of Mr. Newdegate, whom he once accused of being a Jesuit in disguise; Mr. Newdegate, with his funereal voice, his solemn manner, and his pocket-handkerchief of the hue of the Scarlet Lady whose existence disturbed his hours sleeping or waking—all these lived in the Parliament of 1874–80. All, all are gone, and there is none to take their place.

THE ADMIRAL.

I see I have omitted the Admiral from the list, which proves its abundant fulness. Yet, perhaps, of all the characters in that memorable Parliament, the Admiral was the most subtly humoristic. His proper style was Sir William Edmonstone, Bart., C.B., member for Stirlingshire. In the House he was never known by any other name than "the Admiral." Through the long Sessions of the '74 Parliament there was no more constant attendant than the Admiral, seated midway on the bench immediately behind Her Majesty's Ministers. Strangers in the gallery, attracted by certain growlings suggestive of limited allowance of rum in the forecastle, grew familiar with the spare figure, surmounted by a small head, from which the hand of Time had gently but firmly plucked the greater part of the hair. They knew and liked the thin, resolute looking face, with frail vestiges of whiskers, the mouth marked with lines telling of threescore years and ten.

In February, 1874, the Admiral came in with a crowd of new members, absolutely an unknown man. Circumstances had not been favourable to the development of that political acumen later developed in remarkable degree. Afloat or ashore, he had served his Queen and his country full fifty years. It was not by any fault of his that the only time he smelt gunpowder fiercely fired was when, as a lad of sixteen, a midshipman on the *Sybille*, he came across some pirates in the Archipelago. Since then the Admiral was present at many desperate actions, chiefly taking place in the House of Commons. He saw right honourable pirates on the Front Bench opposite again and again attempt to board the Treasury Bench, he standing by and cheering whilst the bold Ben Dizzy beat them off.

There were many things misty to the mind of the Admiral. One he could not comprehend was the perversity that would lead a member of the House, in whatsoever quarter he might be seated, to challenge a decision on the part of even a subordinate member of the Administration. Sir William Harcourt used to take great delight in "drawing" the Admiral. This was not a difficult thing to accomplish. Express in plain terms the conviction that the Government had blundered; say that a particular Minister had done something he ought not to have done, or left undone that which he should have done. Thereupon the House, wickedly watching for the consequence, beheld the Admiral, hitherto quiescent, begin to move as a river-boat rocks when caught in the swell of a passing steamer. He tossed petulantly from side to side, thrust one hand deep in his trouser pocket, brushed with the other his scanty locks, as he rested his elbow on the back of the bench. Finally, seizing a copy of the Orders of the Day, the Admiral, his lips angrily pursed, his brow black as thunder, began furiously to fan himself.

If the attack proceeded, he indulged in a series of coughs, the like of which was never heard on land or sea; at first eloquently expostulatory, then indignantly denunciatory, finally hopelessly despairing.

Early in the career of the Parnellites the Admiral devoted much attention to them. But for him, as for his esteemed leaders, they proved too much. During the Session of 1877, when organized obstruction was in full play, the Admiral was known to cough himself hoarse, and in a single night to use up, in the process of fanning himself, five copies of the Orders abstracted from unconscious members sitting near him. Mr. Parnell went on as had been his wont. Mr. Biggar took no note of the frantic semaphore signals made in his direction. Mr. O'Donnell blankly regarded the irate old gentleman with the added aggravation of an eye-glass.

In the course of time the Admiral accepted the Parnellites with the sort of pained resignation with which a man submits to untoward climatic phenomena. When one of them rose to speak, the gallant old salt, with a low groan, turned his face to the wall. Only an occasional tremor of the nervously folded Orders showed he was listening and in pain. The Admiral passed away with the Disraelian Parliament, and his type we shall never see more at Westminster.

A HORRIBLE DISCOVERY.

THE IRISH QUARTER.

When the new Parliament elected in 1892 met, and the Liberal Party, long straying in the wilderness, crossed over into the Canaan whose plains smile to the right of the Speaker's Chair, the Irish members, according to their wont, remained in their old quarters on the Opposition side. This was a piece of tactics suggested, I believe, by the late A. M. Sullivan. Certainly it was adopted under the leadership of Mr. Parnell. Up to 1880 the Irish members, Nationalist first and Liberals afterwards, were accustomed to follow the movements of the British Liberal Party. They sat with them in Opposition, and when the Liberals regained office, they crossed the floor in their wake. When the election of 1880 put Mr. Gladstone in power, the Parnellites, to the dismay and openly expressed disgust of the Conservative nobility and gentry, resolved to stay where they had been quartered when Parliament was dissolved. They were in full exercise of their right; and, accordingly, country squires, sons of peers, University men, and wealthy manufacturers had to grin and bear the company of Mr. Biggar, Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. Finnigan, and the rest.

There was no pride about Lord Randolph Churchill, and, when he had established himself in the leadership of the Fourth Party, he found the contiguity of the Parnellites highly convenient. He and they were joined in the yoke of common enmity to Mr. Gladstone and all his works. In those days, the Irish Nationalist member was in the House of Commons regarded in a light difficult for a younger generation to realize. He was a sort of political leper, with whom no man would associate. Quite a sensation was created when, from time to time, Lord Randolph Churchill was seen to turn round and converse with Mr. Healy or Mr. O'Donnell, who usually sat immediately behind his corner post.

A CUCKOO IN A DOVE'S NEST.

All that is changed now. Old members have even grown accustomed to Irish members being referred to by Ministers and ex-Ministers as "my hon. and learned friend." (Note.—Nearly all Irish Nationalist members have been called to the Bar.) Nevertheless when, in the first week parties settled down in the House of Commons elected in 1892, Mr. Willie Redmond was discovered seated on the fourth bench above the gangway on the Opposition side, something like a shudder ran through the Conservative host. That is the quarter of the House where, when the Conservatives are in Opposition, the flower of the Squirearchy

blooms. To indicate its precise bearing, it suffices to say that the bench Mr. Redmond marked for his own was the very one frequented by Sir Walter Barttelot when his side were in Opposition.

For Redmond Minor, above all Irish members, to plant himself out there was a procedure relieved only from the charge of effrontery by suspicion of a joke. There was no use trying to forestall him. Patriot squires banded themselves together, taking turn and turn about to be early at the House with design to secure all the seats on this bench. At whatever hour they arrived, they found on the seat next but one to that sacred to the memory of Sir Walter Barttelot a hat they recognised as hailing from East Clare.

The owner was always in his place at prayer-time to establish the claim he had thus pegged out. But men, like eels, grow accustomed by use to all extremes of adversity. After a while Mr. W. Redmond endeared himself to his immediate circle of neighbours by loudly interrupting Mr. Gladstone when he spoke on Irish matters, and by, from time to time, blandly inquiring across the gangway of Mr. Tim Healy: "Who killed Parnell?"

"WHO KILLED PARNELL?"

MR. REARDON.

A very old member of the House, who sits in this quarter when the Conservatives are in Opposition, recalls the company of another Irish member of eccentric habits. This was Mr. Reardon, who, some thirty years ago, represented a borough constituency. He had made his fortune at the auctioneer's rostrum, and when he took to politics, he shrewdly threw in his lot with what in later times have been called "the gentlemen of England." The Conservatives were then in power, and Mr. Reardon, as a faithful follower of Lord Derby and a moneyed man withal, sat on the fourth bench behind Ministers.

He had acquired an odd habit of slipping off his boots as a preliminary to going to sleep over an argument. The sight, and something more, of a pair of stockinged feet greatly irritated his neighbours. They dropped many hints of their preference for boots. But, more especially in hot weather, Mr. Reardon never failed to kick off his boots as a preliminary to settling down to close attention to debate.

One night he was in this condition when a division was challenged. A happy thought struck an honourable and long-suffering member who sat near him. Taking the brogues gingerly between finger and thumb, he passed out behind the Speaker's Chair, hiding the things under one of the benches at the back of the Chair.

Mr. Reardon, thoroughly comfortable about the feet, slept on whilst the question was put, and did not even awake when the Speaker called "Ayes to the right, noes to the left." The bustle of the parting hosts at length aroused him. The House was evidently dividing, and he had not the slightest idea what it was about. It was of small consequence, as the Whip would show him into which lobby he should walk. Easy on that score, he felt down for his boots, and, lo! they were not. He got down on his knees, peered all along under the bench, but, like the Spanish Fleet, they were not yet in sight.

The House was now nearly empty. The Speaker was regarding his movements with grave attention. The Whips at the doorway were impatiently signalling. There was only one thing to be done, and Mr. Reardon did it. He went forth and voted in his stockinged feet.

A GRATEFUL POLITICIAN.

The old member recalls yet another story about Mr. Reardon. When he came forward in the Conservative interest, the Lord Lieutenant of the day did everything, that one in his position might do discreetly, to assist the candidate. When Mr. Reardon won the seat, and called to pay his respects at the Viceregal Lodge, His Excellency jocularly remarked that the new member owed much to him, and that he really deserved some reward. Mr. Reardon was delighted. Touching the Lord Lieutenant lightly in the ribs, he whispered in his ear:—

"Certainly, my lord. I won't forget. There's a neat little bracelet in gold at the disposal of her ladyship."

It was not without some difficulty that the alarmed Lord Lieutenant succeeded in averting the consequences of his little joke.

SIR JOHN TENNIEL'S EARLIEST CARTOON.

The British public, long familiar with Sir John Tenniel's weekly cartoon in *Punch*, are not aware that this master in black and white at the outset of his career worked in colours. Nearly half a century ago he entered into competition for engagement to contribute to the frescoes on the walls of the then new Houses of Parliament. He was selected, together with Mr. Maclise, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Horsley, and Mr. Dyce, who have since all achieved the position of R.A.

In this respect, and in one other much more satisfactory, Sir John Tenniel stands in a position of splendid isolation. Very shortly after the frescoes were completed, the paintings began to disappear. As early as 1863, nine years after the completion of the work in the upper Waiting-Hall, the Fine Arts Commission reported the paintings to be partially decaying. Since then decay has spread, till, at the present day, some of the panels are blank save for suspicion of a smudge to be detected under a strong light. The one exception to the common lot is Tenniel's fresco of "St. Cecilia," to be found on the staircase leading down from the Committee-room corridor to the central lobby.

A TERRIBLE OFFENCE.

For some years patient and well-directed effort has been made to restore the other frescoes, but without effect. "St. Cecilia," on the contrary, having been dusted and cleaned with bread, was found to be in a fair state of preservation. It has lately received two coats of a paraffin wax solution invented by Professor Church, and all that is now wanted is a fairly good light in which it might be seen. The secret of this rare triumph is found, as in the case of other and older Masters, in the preparation and manipulation of colours. When the stripling Tenniel came to his work in 1849 it occurred to him that the best way to confront the peculiar difficulties of the case was to paint very thinly without impasto. In fact, he hardly did more than stain with his colours the white ground of the wall. Yet this is the one that has lasted, whilst Mr. Herbert's fresco, Mr. Horsley's, and the rest, dealt with what looked like fuller grip, and certainly with more colour, have vanished, leaving scarce a tone of colour behind.

There is, Professor Church says, no parallel to this case of a pure fresco which, for nearly half a century, has successfully resisted the influence of the London atmosphere, more especially as it is developed in contiguity to the Thames.

THE STRANGERS' GALLERY.

Considering how keen is the interest excited by Parliamentary proceedings, how high political feeling occasionally runs, it is remarkable how rare are the interruptions to debate by strangers indulging even in an ejaculation. The most common outbreak from the Strangers' Gallery takes the form of clapping hands. Some village Hampden on a visit to town, making his way to the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons, listening entranced to an impassioned speech, gives vent to his feelings in the ordinary way by clapping his hands. That is what is usually done in similar circumstances at meetings in the country he is

NOTICE TO QUIT.

accustomed to attend. Why it should be different in the House of Commons he does not at the moment realize. Full opportunity for thinking the matter over is invariably provided, he being summarily led forth by the attendant and conducted to the door of the outer lobby.

A VOICE FROM THE PRESS GALLERY.

The funniest disorderly interruption to debate I ever heard in the House of Commons passed undetected by the authorities. At the time, some years back, there was still in the Press Gallery a very old member. He had, in fact, been in the gallery so long, had heard so many speeches, seen so many processions of members coming and going, that familiarity had justified its proverbial consequence of breeding contempt. Perhaps of all members of the House, the one J. had the most rooted dislike for was Mr. Gladstone. This was partly based on political grounds, J. being from birth and associations a high old Tory of the Church-and-State kind. The objection was possibly nurtured by the fact that Mr. Gladstone was a voluminous speaker, whom it was necessary to report fully, and when, towards midnight, a man got a ten minute or quarter of an hour "turn," it meant unduly prolonged labour.

EVICTION.

Next to Mr. Gladstone, J. mostly disliked his own misguided countrymen, the Irish Nationalist members. As it was not always necessary to report what they said, he had the opportunity of listening, and was accustomed to growl out a commentary upon their speeches. One night, after dinner, Mr. Sexton introduced into his discourse a statement that particularly irritated J.

"No, no," he cried, in audible voice, shaking his head reprovingly at the member for Sligo.

Standing in his accustomed place below the gangway, at the other end of the House, Mr. Sexton distinctly heard the contradiction.

"An honourable member above the gangway," he observed, "says, 'No, no.'"

Members in the quarter addressed protested that they had not spoken, but Mr. Sexton had heard the contradiction, and in an aside of some length demonstrated its ineptitude.

J. was remarkably silent for the rest of his turn.

It was not he, but a venerable and esteemed colleague who, at the end of a quarter of an hour's "turn," during which reporters to right and left of him had been taking verbatim note of an important speech by Mr. Gladstone, was accustomed to bend over and in a hoarse whisper inquire, "What line is he taking?"

AN ANCIENT PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE.

The other day I saw treasured in a private library what is perhaps the earliest collection of Parliamentary speeches. They were delivered by Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, father of the more famous Francis Lord Verulam, and were spoken in successive Parliaments of Queen Elizabeth. The addresses are written out on parchment that has withstood the wear and tear of more than three centuries. Half-way down one of the speeches is a break marked by this note: "Hereafter ffolloweth that I intended to have saide if I had not byn countermaunded."

Here is consolatory suggestion for Parliament men in a reign that has lasted longer than Queen Elizabeth's. In Mr. Courtney's case, mentioned last month (when on a Wednesday afternoon he talked out a Woman's Rights Bill he had risen to support), had he been aware of the precedent, and disposed to follow it, he might have averted calamity to the measure in which he took such generous interest. Had he been content to discontinue his prepared speech at the point where interruption grew boisterous he might, on the next morning, have pasted in a book of pleasant reference whatever measure of report the newspapers gave. Then, with the prefatory note, "Hereafter followeth what I intended to have said if I had not been countermanded," might follow at length the precious apothegms whose delivery had

been checked by the noise of inconsiderate persons wearying to get home.

DUCAL DUPLICITY.

In the recently published life of Philip Duke of Wharton there leaps to light a record usefully illustrating the standard of morality in those "good old" Parliamentary times, whose lapse we occasionally hear deplored. When Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, was arraigned on a charge of treasonable conspiracy against good King George, Wharton espoused his cause and undertook the task of defending him before the House of Lords. When the indictment had proceeded a certain length, the Bishop's friends became anxious to know whether all had been alleged, or whether the representatives of the Crown had any cards up their sleeve. Wharton undertook to find out. He called upon Sir Robert Walpole, at the Prime Minister's residence in Chelsea, and protested his poignant regret at having hitherto adopted a line of conduct distasteful to the King and hurtful to his faithful Minister. By way of atonement he now offered to join in the denunciation of Atterbury, and begged the Premier to coach him up on the subject of the Bishop's guilt.

Walpole, delighted to secure so important a recruit on the Ministerial side, told him everything. Next day the Duke appeared in his place in the House of Lords, and with a thorough knowledge of the strong and weak points of the prosecution upon which the Premier had dilated for his instruction, he delivered a powerful speech in favour of the Bishop!

LORD ELCHO IN TWO PIECES.

It is happily impossible to parallel this achievement from modern Parliamentary records. The nearest approach to it, far removed from its slippery footing, was Lord Elcho's double dealing with the Derby Day. In the Session of 1890 he, in a speech that disclosed a real humorist, moved the adjournment of the House over the Derby Day. Two years later, in a discourse equally witty and not less convincing, he seconded an amendment by Sir Wilfrid Lawson traversing the proposal that the House should make holiday on account of the race on Epsom Downs.

That is obviously a very different thing from the deliberate turpitude of the Georgian Duke. It marks the higher standard of morality which governs Parliamentary life of to-day that the House of Commons was vaguely shocked, being only partially reassured by suspicion that it was all a joke. There may be no connection between the events, but it is certain that on the following day, the House having resolved to sit in spite of the Derby, no quorum was forthcoming, and within three weeks Parliament was dissolved.

CABINET COUNCILS.

No unalterable rule orders the location of a Cabinet Council. Through the Parliamentary Session it not infrequently happens that a consultation of Cabinet Ministers is summoned upon some news of the moment, and meets in the room of the First Lord of the Treasury. It is not formally called a Cabinet Council, or so recorded, with the list of Ministers present, in the papers of the next day. But it is really the same thing, and occasionally leads to exceptionally important conclusions.

In the ordinary course of events, Cabinet Councils are held in a large room on the first floor of the official residence of the First Lord of the Treasury in Downing Street. It was from this room that on a historic occasion, whilst awaiting a critical message from Constantinople, Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in his second Administration adjourned to the scanty walled-garden at the back of No. 10, Downing Street. A Government clerk chancing, in the rare leisure of a day's work, to look out of the window, happed upon the scene and sketched it, showing Lord Granville seated at a small table playing chess with a colleague, whilst the momentous message still tarried on the wires.

The room in which the Cabinet Council sit is plainly furnished, something after the style of the dining-room in a well-to-do boarding-house in the neighbourhood of Russell Square. One notes the double windows, a precaution not necessary to exclude sound from without, for though in the heart of London Downing Street is, back and front, one of its quietest dwelling-places. Possibly the device was adopted as final precaution against sounds from within escaping.

THE YELLOW WINDOW BLIND.

There lingers round the Chamber a tradition of the Cabinets of 1868–74 which took much wear and tear out of the Council-room. There was, at that epoch, a hideous yellow blind attached to one of the windows. In the course of some remarks on the Irish Education Bill, which led to the Ministerial crisis of 1873, Mr. Gladstone, restlessly walking to and fro, tugged at the blind as he passed it, displacing the

cord. The blind stuck fast half-way down on a painful slant. Mr. Disraeli, coming into power on the crest of the wave of the General Election of 1874, found the stranded yellow blind in precisely the position it had been left by Mr. Gladstone's undesigned effort. One of the weekly illustrated papers published in July, 1874, a sketch of the new Cabinet Council, which incidentally preserves the condition of the wrecked window-blind.

A CABINET COUNCIL OF TWO.

The daily newspapers are not backward in providing on the following morning outline sketches of events taking place within the jealously-guarded portals of the Cabinet Council. On the whole, for those having regard for accuracy, it is better to await the later appearance of letters and diaries, either of dead-and-gone Cabinet Ministers or of men intimately connected with Ministerial circles.

"COLD, ISN'T IT, ARTHUR?"

Horace Walpole gives a charming account of a Cabinet Council of two, held under the presidency of Pitt. The Premier, who during the term of his office lived in Downing Street, was in bed with the gout, and had summoned to conference his colleague the Duke of Newcastle. It was a bitterly cold day, and Pitt, according to his custom, having no fire in his room, had bed-clothes piled upon him mountains high. This was all very well for the Premier, but rather hard on the Duke, who, as Walpole says, "was, as usual, afraid of catching cold." He first sat down on Mrs. Pitt's bed as the warmest place, then drew himself up into it as it got colder. The lecture continued a considerable time, and the Duke at length fairly lodged himself under Mrs. Pitt's bed-clothes.

"AWFULLY COLD."

"A person from whom I had the story," Walpole writes, "suddenly going in, saw the two Ministers in bed at two ends of the room, while Pitt's long nose and black beard, unshaven for days, added to the grotesque character of the scene."

The well-regulated mind refuses to contemplate an analogous scene in Downing Street of to-day. The boldest imagination could not frame a picture calling up before the mind's eye Mr. Arthur Balfour in bed on one side of a room, whilst there peeped forth from beneath the coverlet of a couch at the other end of the chamber the *spirituel* countenance of the Lord Chancellor.

BY EARLIER BEDSIDES.

Horace Walpole, who knew his Plato, might, had he chanced to think of it, have recalled an earlier bedside confabulation. It will be found in the Protagoras, giving an account of the visit of Socrates, accompanied by his friend Hippocrates, to the house of Callias, with intent to make the acquaintance of three famous sophists, Protagoras of Abdera, Hippias of Elis, and Prodicus of Ceos. Socrates relates how he found Prodicus lying in his bedchamber, rolled up in heaps of blankets, his disciples planting themselves on neighbouring beds whilst they talked. So great was the crowd, Socrates could not get in, and from the thronged portal listened to the resonant voice of Prodicus laying down the law.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXXV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

MR. GLADSTONE'S LAST YEARS IN THE COMMONS.

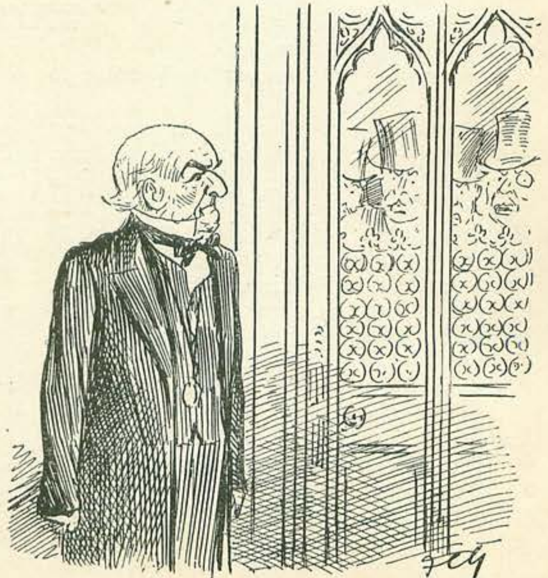
THOSE familiar with Mr. Gladstone's position in the House of Commons during the last five years of his long life there, find it difficult to realize a state of things that earlier existed. The period named was pretty equally divided between the Opposition side and the Treasury Bench. In either case, with one memorable exception—when, amid the tumult of the scene that accompanied the closing of Committee on the Home Rule Bill, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, shortly after knighted, sat on the Front Opposition Bench with hands on his knees bellowing contumely at the veteran statesman—he was treated in both camps with reverent respect. Possibly members felt that the end was not far off, that a career as memorable for its length as for greater achievements must soon close. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone was himself mellowed by advancing years and the deference paid to him. However it be, his appearance at the table, so far from being, as was once the case, the occasion for jeers and angry interruptions, was the signal for the gathering of a great congregation, drinking in with delight the flow of stately eloquence.

"BELLOWING CONTUMELY."

OTHER TIMES, OTHER MANNERS.

Possibly in these sunnier circumstances Mr. Gladstone's mind may have reverted to earlier times when he suffered from quite other manners. There was one night in the springtime of the Session of 1878, when, as Lord Salisbury, speaking in the Lords in January of this year, candidly admitted, Lord Beaconsfield and his Ministry were engaged in "putting their money on the wrong horse." (It was, of course, the money of the British taxpayer. But precision is often fatal to epigram.) The Jingo fever was at its height. Mr. Gladstone was carrying round the Fiery Cross, rousing popular enthusiasm that, in due time, swept the Conservative Government out of Downing Street. In the House of Commons, passion raged with rare turbulence.

On the particular night referred to, Mr. Gladstone was returning to his seat, having voted against the Government on a side issue. Some of the gentlemen of England, perceiving his approach through the glass door of the "Aye" lobby, began to howl. The noise brought others to the spot, and there arose, echoing round the wondering and, at the moment, empty House of Commons, a yell of execration. Mr. Gladstone, startled at the sudden outburst, looked up, and saw a crowd of faces pressed against the glass door, mouths open, eyes gleaming with uncontrollable hate. He walked close up and steadfastly regarded the yelling mob. Then, without a word, he turned and pursued his way into the House.



"HE STEADFASTLY REGARDED THE YELLING MOB."

THE MOB OUT OF DOORS.

This temper displayed in the High Court of Parliament was the reflex of the passion that filled the music-halls and similar places of public resort outside. A few days later a crowd assembled before Mr. Gladstone's private house and, or ever the police could be mustered, had smashed his windows.

Amongst his voluminous correspondence Mr. Gladstone probably preserves a roughly written scrawl inclosing a post-office order for £3 10s., that being the sum at which, according to the newspapers, the damage to his house-front was assessed. The writer said he was a working man; that he, his wife and family were so ashamed at reading how the great statesman's windows had been broken by a mob calling themselves British working men, that they had scraped together money to repair the damage, and inclosed it herewith.

A POINT OF ORDER.

When, after the General Election of 1880, Mr. Gladstone returned to power, master of a mighty majority, the personal animosity displayed towards him in Conservative circles was, if possible, increased. It found many channels during the long course of the Bradlaugh controversy. Overworked, sometimes broken down in health, irritated with the constant dribbling of personal animosity calculated to wear away any stone, Mr. Gladstone, by occasional outbreaks of temper, gave the enemy fresh cause to blaspheme.

There was a well-remembered scene when the Land Bill of 1881 was in Committee. The House had been cleared for a division. The bell clanged through all the corridors. Members who had not been present to listen to the arguments made up for the remissness by crowding in to vote. Suddenly, to the astonishment of everyone, to the consternation of Dr. Playfair—under that style Chairman of Committees at the time—the Prime Minister was discovered standing at the table commencing a speech. In the circumstances of the moment, that is a breach of order upon which it would seem impossible for the newest member to stumble. That the Leader of the House, a Parliamentarian of fifty years' standing, should thus fly in the face of the Standing Orders at first took away the breath of the Opposition. When regained, they used it to indulge in an angry roar, drowning the opening sentences of the Premier's remarks.

Nevertheless, he stood at the table, waiting till the tumult should subside. It is one of the quaint rules of debate in the Commons that when the House has been cleared for a division a member desiring to raise any point of order may speak, but he must needs do it seated with his hat on. Dr. Playfair rising to enforce this rule, Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary instinct automatically asserted itself and he resumed his seat.

"Put on your hat!" shouted the Premier's friends.

Over Mr. Gladstone's sternly set angry face there flashed for a moment an amused smile. He gently shook his head. He knew, what the House had forgotten, that he never brought his hat on to the Treasury Bench. At this critical moment it was hung on a peg in his room behind the Speaker's Chair. When this difficulty dawned upon his colleagues hats were proffered from various sides. The nearest at hand was that of Sir Farrer Herschell, then Solicitor-General. Mr. Gladstone took it, and tried to put it on. But it was one of his unlucky days. A new and fearsome difficulty presented itself. The hat was not nearly large enough. As the scene grew in tumult and time was precious, the Premier, dexterously balancing the hat on the crown of his head, said what he had to say, and, like the parson whose pulpit habits excited the admiration of the Northern Farmer, "coomed awää."

"DEXTEROUSLY BALANCING THE HAT."

FORGIVING AND FORGETTING.

Perhaps Mr. Gladstone, in the better times that dawned at the close of his Parliamentary life, never thought of these things. He had a great gift of forgetting personal affront, which stood him in good stead in the changing aspects of his political life. In this very Parliament of 1880-5, when Coercion Bills were passed, all-night sittings were as common as Wednesday afternoons, and Irish members were suspended in batches, the Premier was personally the object of that savage vituperation which, after the epoch of Committee Room No. 15, the Irish members turned upon each other.

"A vain old gentleman," Mr. Biggar once

called him across the floor of the House of Commons. That was a mild adjuration compared with some of the personal abuse directed at him. In the Home Rule Parliament, I have several times heard Mr. Gladstone courteously allude to an Irish member still with us as "my hon. friend." He never dropped the phrase, accompanied with friendly look and courteous gesture, but there flashed on my mind the memory of this same member standing below the gangway, shaking his clenched fist at the author of the Irish Land Bill, roaring at him in that vocal form Mr. O'Connell was once permitted to call "beastly bellowing."

"WITH COURTEOUS GESTURE."

Mr. Bright, subjected to the same experience, threw up his long-time advocacy of the Irish Nationalist cause, and became one of its most powerful enemies. Mr. Gladstone never, in any individual case, betrayed the slightest evidence of recollection of what had been. He had not only forgiven, but had apparently overcome the even greater difficulty of forgetting.

THE ETON BUST.

Now that Mr. Gladstone has withdrawn from the scene he so long graced, the last echo of the old personal resentment has died away. This state of things found pretty testimony in the movement which marked the opening of the Session for placing a bust of him in the Upper School at Eton. Etonians of all shades of politics are found both in the Lords and Commons. Lord Rosebery, representing the Peers, Mr. Arthur Balfour, the former Eton boy who leads the Commons, joined hands in carrying into effect the happy thought.

Twenty years ago—fifteen years ago—no member of Parliament with reputation for ordinary sanity would have conceived such an idea. Had he got over that initial difficulty and promulgated his scheme, he would have been promptly hustled on one side. This Session subscriptions poured in, old Eton boys, Liberals, Conservatives, whatever they be, each, all, proud of the boy whose name is entered in the school-books of Eton, in the month of September, 1821.

AN ETON DINNER.

To Mr. Seale-Hayne, another Etonian, first occurred the idea of gathering together a school of old Eton boys to do honour to Mr. Gladstone. Six years ago this very month, on the 22nd of April, 1891, the member for the Ashburton division of Devon entertained old Etonians at his town house in Upper Belgrave Street. It was a notable gathering. With a single exception all the old Eton boys present were members of one or other House of Parliament. The exception was Mr. Frank Burnand, who, as Editor of *Punch*, may be said to represent the universe.

In addition to the guest of the evening, then Leader of the Opposition, full of fire and zeal for the Home Rule Bill, was Lord Kimberley, who has this Session resumed his leadership of the House of Lords, and Lord Coleridge, then Lord Chief Justice, now gone to another place. Of commoners there were Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Leveson-Gower, Mr. Foljambe, Sir Arthur Hayter, Mr. Charles Parker, Mr. Harry Lawson, Mr. Milnes-Gaskell, and Mr. Bernard Coleridge. All these, members of the House of Commons at that time, have since retired from the Parliamentary scene. Mr. Stuart Rendel has become a peer; Sir Hussey Vivian, after a brief

"SOME OLD ETON BOYS."

sojourn in the House of Lords, died; Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen is now Lord Brabourne. Lord Kensington, also translated to the peers, died the other day. Sir R. Welby, of the Treasury, declining the title Lord Cut-emdown suggested on his being raised to the peerage, sits in the House of Peers as Lord Welby. Lord Monkswell is still happily to the fore.

Of the sixteen members of the House of Commons who then sat round Mr. Seale-Hayne's hospitable board only four retain seats in the present House—Earl Compton, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Mr. Labouchere, and the host himself. Even he has suffered change, having in the meanwhile, as a member of Mr. Gladstone's 1892 Ministry, had the opportunity of learning what is expected from the Paymaster-General.

"A GRAND OLD ETON BOY."

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN.

The gaps on the two front benches of the House of Commons grow wider year by year. Familiar faces seen there through many Parliaments look forth no more. Sometimes, as in the case of Lord Hartington, Lord James of Hereford, Lord Tweedmouth, and a score of other old House of Commons men, it is the House of Lords that draws to itself the life-blood of the Commons, and never shows surprise when it finds how dully it beats in the new veins. Occasionally the impulse to withdrawal from the arena comes from a sense of overpowering weariness after long strife. The scholar reasserts himself over the politician, and the lingering for the library becomes irresistible. Commonest of all, it is Death that with the abhorrëd shears cuts the thin-spun thread.

Happily, in the case of Sir George Trevelyan, his withdrawal from the scene in which he has for thirty years been an attractive and, for the greater part of the time, a prominent figure, is due chiefly to renewed hunger after literary work. In common with his contemporaries, he is not so young as he was. Beyond most of them he has toiled in the public service. He is good for years of work to come, and has earned a right to choose the field in which he shall chant his Angelus. The House of Commons—a large numerical section of which has not always been just, not to say generous, in its bearing towards the brilliant scholar-politician—is now united in its protestation that the loss, irreparable in its way, is all its own. For his own peace of mind and pleasure Sir George Trevelyan has undeniably taken a wise decision in closing his Parliamentary career. The admission is made the more ungrudgingly since the world looks forward to share his pleasure in the results of his fresh literary labours.

A CIVIL LORD WITH A CONSCIENCE.

His score of accomplished work, legislative and administrative, far exceeds the average. There is, nevertheless, a feeling among his friends and admirers that he did not, in his final achievement of Parliamentary position, justify the hopes his start excited. That may be said with fuller freedom since the reasons for it are all to Sir George's credit. The simple truth is he was too highly strung, too sensitive, too chivalrously honest, for the rough and tumble work of the House of Commons. This is the explanation of the occasional apparent indecision which excited the venomous criticism of meaner men.

"SIR HENRY JAMES GOING UP TO THE LORDS."

Early in his Ministerial career, when it seemed he had all the world before him where to choose, he, for conscience sake, took a step that seemed to wreck his voyage. When, in 1868, Mr. Gladstone came in on the wave of a great majority, his

shrewd eye discovered the capacity of the competition Wallah, and he made him Civil Lord of the Admiralty. Two years later, Mr. Forster's Education Bill embodying the principle of payment of State money in support of denominational schools, Mr. Trevelyan resigned. Of course he personally, or in any practical Ministerial relation, had no responsibility in the matter. He might have stuck to his ship in the Admiralty yard and let Mr. Forster adopt the compromise forced upon him by political exigencies. It is quite conceivable that, respecting his views, Mr. Gladstone would not have insisted upon his vote in the pending division.

To Mr. Trevelyan niceties of this kind were naughtinesses. As a student of Parliamentary history, and with a knowledge of men, he must have felt that the most disastrous thing a junior Minister can do is to resign on a question of Cabinet policy. Not only is such a course inconvenient to his leaders; it undesignedly smites them with reproof. It is made to appear that what First Lords and Secretaries of State can stomach is too strong meat for the tender moral constitution of a Civil Lord of the Admiralty. There is nothing a veteran Premier dislikes more than a Junior Lord or an Under-Secretary with a tendency to resign for conscience's sake.

SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

Sir George Trevelyan had another more memorable and finally fatal attack of the same disease at the epoch of Home Rule. He never recovered from the tossing about he then experienced. First he wouldn't have Home Rule, and abandoned place and power rather than support his old leader and revered friend. That was a hard thing to do. But, as we have seen, it was not a new thing. Harder still, bitterest pill of political life, Sir George, being convinced, upon reflection and fuller consideration, that Mr. Gladstone was right on the Home Rule question and he wrong, unhesitatingly avowed his error and went back to the fold.

That is in politics the unpardonable sin. A man may be forgiven for crossing over the way, leaving his early friends and ranging himself in the camp of the adversary. But before he goes back again, under whatever pressure of honest conviction, a man would do well to consider the advantages of the alternative course of tying a millstone round his neck and dropping into the sea.

THE TERROR IN DUBLIN.

Sir George Trevelyan's courage has through all his life been equal to his convictions. This quality was shown in another way, when on the morrow of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish in Phœnix Park he accepted the proffered post of danger. Lord-Lieutenants and their Chief Secretaries who to-day live in Phœnix Park at ease know little of the daily and hourly existence of their predecessors in office fifteen years ago. Something it is true has since been realized upon disclosure of the systematic sneaking after Mr. Forster with murderous intent. Through the term of their office Lord Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan never drove through the streets without an armed escort, whilst protecting policemen followed them like shadows, not only in Dublin but in London.

From the window of his bedroom at the Viceregal Lodge, Lord Spencer, looking across the Park, could see the spot where Lord Frederick Cavendish was done to death. He had, indeed, been an actual witness of the murder on the fateful Saturday, regarding it with mild interest under the impression that it was some boys larking.

A WELCOME HOME.

A gruesome story is told in the Chief Secretary's lodge, pleasantly set amongst the woods, fronted by the gracious beauty of the Wicklow hills. Ten days after the new Chief Secretary had taken up his residence at the lodge, Lady Trevelyan looking round the drawing-room with housewifely care observed something lying under the sofa. Calling a servant to have it removed, it turned out to be the blood-stained, dust-begrimed, knife-pierced coat of poor Frederick Cavendish.

After the murder he was carried home. The coat, taken off and thrust under the sofa, escaped the notice of the diligent Irish housemaids. A ghastly home-coming this for a new tenant!

GREY-HAIRED.

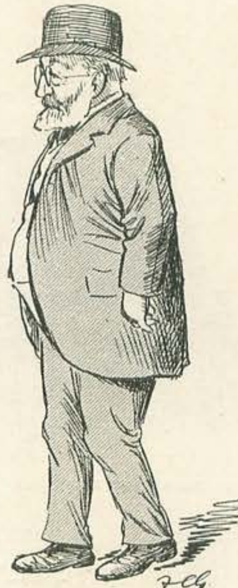
It was bad enough for Sir George to face the physical dangers and insuperable difficulties of his position in Ireland. But his place on the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons was scarcely less worrying. It is a favourite episode with old romancists how a night of terror whitens a man's hair. In May, 1882, when Sir George Trevelyan became Chief Secretary for Ireland, no thread of silver shone in his abundant hair. When, two years and a half later, he had lived through the time of terror, he was a grey-haired man.

He never complained of the storm and stress, but inevitably it must have told upon his strength.

It is worry that saps the strength. Sir George Trevelyan, who, though a little tired, came out of the stand-up fight in Ireland with a brave heart and unshaken resolution, never got over the snapping of old ties, the breaking up of ancient friendships, that, as it happened, befell him alternately in two political camps.

MR. ARCH, M.P.

As every student of Parliamentary history knows, it is primarily and largely due to Sir George Trevelyan's far-sighted pluck that the agricultural labourer and the small county householder to-day have their Parliamentary vote. His introduction of the Household Franchise (Counties) Bill in the early days of the Parliament of 1874 was notable for two things beyond the favourable impression made upon the House by the young member's brilliant speech. Mr. Burt, who has since won his way to the closest esteem of the most critical assembly in the world, took occasion to deliver his maiden speech.


MR. JOSEPH ARCH.

The other event shows how far we have travelled on the Liberal highway during the last quarter of a century. Mr. Forster, supporting the Bill, referred to Mr. Arch, then in the forefront of his crusade, as "that eminent man." The Squirearchy filled the House with roars of derisive laughter. That was nothing to the storm of angry indignation that burst forth when burly Mr. Forster went on to express a wish, "in the interests alike of Parliament and the country, that Mr. Arch had a seat in this House." If he had suggested Beelzebub as member for Birmingham, the outcry could not have been greater.

To-day, Mr. Arch represents a division of his county, to which he has been thrice elected in as many Parliaments. He has been, at Sandringham, the honoured guest of his colleague, on a Royal Commission, the Prince of Wales. Since the present Session opened, good Conservatives have freely joined in a subscription set on foot to soothe the arch-agitator's closing years with the anodyne of an annuity.

"IN PRISON OFTEN."

The altered status of the Irish member in these degenerate days is shown in the marked reduction of the proportion who have been in prison. Ten years ago an Irish member rarely addressed the House of Commons without incidentally referring to a time "when I was in gaol." As sure as this remark was dropped by one member, other of his colleagues seized the opportunity of reminding their constituents, and readers of the Nationalist newspapers, how they, too, had won this mark of distinction, a sort of Victoria Cross in Irish political warfare in Coercion days.

Mr. W. O'Brien earned and long enjoyed exceptional distinction in connection with his historic trousers. So uniform was the level of merit in this regard among his compatriots that it was necessary for a man emulous of exceptional fame to do something quite out of the way in a familiarly trodden pathway to glory.

MR. DAVITT.

Amongst Irish members sitting in the Parliament of to-day Mr. Davitt holds the second place in the roll of prison-martyrs. Mr. Dillon and his contemporaries in prison life had quite amateurish experience compared with the rigour of penal servitude through which Mr. Davitt passed in the solitude of his cell, brooding over and hatching the Land League scheme. Proud of his servitude, Mr. Davitt is not at all unready to discourse upon it. Early this Session, in debate on Sir Matthew White Ridley's release of the dynamitards, he told again how he was made a beast of burden; how, with a rope slung over his armless shoulder, he dragged about the stony causeways of Dartmoor a truck containing soil or rubbish.

Surely one of the most notable scenes the House of Commons presents—an ex-convict telling, without bitterness, of the indignities he suffered for what he held to be his

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT.

country's good, and a crowded House listening attentive, not quite free from sense of shame.

"BRITHER TO THE CORP."

In the matters of having stood in the dock on charge of conspiracy against the Crown, and having sat in a prison cell awaiting further developments, the senior member for Cork City takes the cake. It is James Francis Xavier O'Brien's distinction, unique among living citizens of this Empire, that, having been convicted of *crimen læsæ majestatis*, he was, in accordance with the statute of the good old days of Edward III., ordered to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. I never heard Mr. O'Brien, one of the most modest as he is, perhaps the mildest-mannered man in the House, allude to this incident in his early life. But it is rather a favourite topic with his colleagues, who, in some subtle sense, feel reflected upon them the glory that surrounds their colleague.

There is a well-authenticated story of a funeral in Glasgow, attended by a person, unknown to the undertaker, who assumed certain airs of importance that appeared beyond his anonymous condition. The undertaker, having long mutely suffered his apparent obtrusiveness, stopped him as he was about to enter the first mourning carriage, and asked him who he was.

"Man," he said, indignation flashing in his eyes, "I'm brither to the corp."

In respect of the many-initialled member for Cork City, the other Irish members are, politically, brothers to what almost became a corp, and are inclined to assert themselves accordingly.

As for Mr. O'Brien, he is in personal appearance the very last man a casual observer would associate with a tragic episode. It is true that a curiously long neck and a trick of bending his head forward might, to the morbidly imaginative mind, suggest reminiscences of preparing for meeting his doom. But that is an idle fancy. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien is one of the most respected members of the Irish Party, with a rare gift of silence. It is a charming trait in his character that, on being released from the penal servitude to which his capital sentence was commuted, he, instead of going about the country posing as a martyr, set up in business in Dublin in the wine and tea trade.

THE FOUR QUARTERS OF MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXXVI.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

TWO TRIALS AT WESTMINSTER.

IT is a striking coincidence in two careers passed on severed continents that, after a lapse of a hundred years, they should find a common stage in a Parliamentary inquiry at Westminster. The South African Committee, which actually, if not ostensibly, sat to try Cecil Rhodes, were located in a room off Westminster Hall. Warren Hastings, impeached before the House of Lords of high crimes and misdemeanours, alleged to have been committed during his Governor-Generalship in India, had much more space allotted to the splendid scene of which he was the chief figure.

The stage on which Warren Hastings loomed large was, Macaulay writes, "the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame."

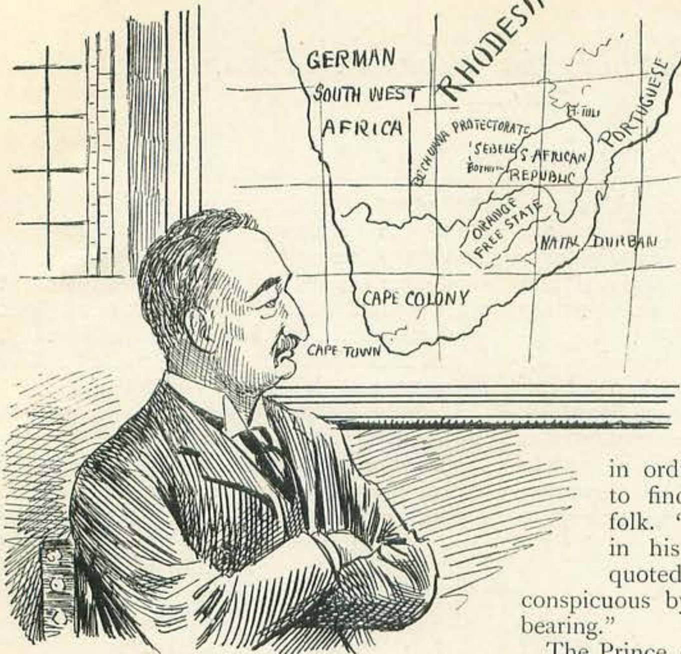
IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

The proceedings in connection with the investigation of the charges against the man who, in some respects, with limited opportunities, is the Warren Hastings of Africa, were strictly business-like. Here were no "peers robed in gold, scarlet, and ermine, marshalled by the herald under Garter King at Arms." No tall lines of Grenadiers guarded the way to Westminster Hall. No need to keep the streets clear by troops of jangling cavalry. The ultimate extreme in the other direction was reached. Too often the hearing of *causes célèbres* in London police-courts and in the High Courts of Justice are closely akin to first nights at the Lyceum. Celebrities of both sexes flock to the scene, eager for the new excitement. It was thus when Dr. Jameson made his first appearance at Bow Street Police Court.

Possibly profiting by experience then gained, the South African Committee resolved to exclude the general public. There being no appeal from this decision, there was no blocking of the approaches to the Committee-room. During the most exciting phases of the inquiry, the pigeons in Palace Yard placidly pursued their quest for stray grain. Within the chamber there prevailed a business air of studious simplicity. When Warren Hastings was tried in Westminster Hall, the grey old walls were hung with scarlet. For all decoration, the bare walls of the South Africa Committee-room were hung with a gigantic map of Africa.

PAINTING THE MAP RED.

A little more than two years ago I chanced to be a guest at Groote Schuur, Mr. Cecil Rhodes's much-loved Dutch house on the out-skirts of Cape Town, which did not long survive the temporary downfall of its master, accomplishing in some way an act of suttee. Musing over a map of Africa, with its patches of green rounding off Portuguese territory, its orange indicating German possession, its mauve marking where the French flag flies, its yellow colouring the Congo Free State under the Protectorate of Belgium, its wedge of light green thrust into Cape Colony showing where the Boers stand, its great splashes of red, England's mark on the map—



MR. RHODES AND THE MAP.

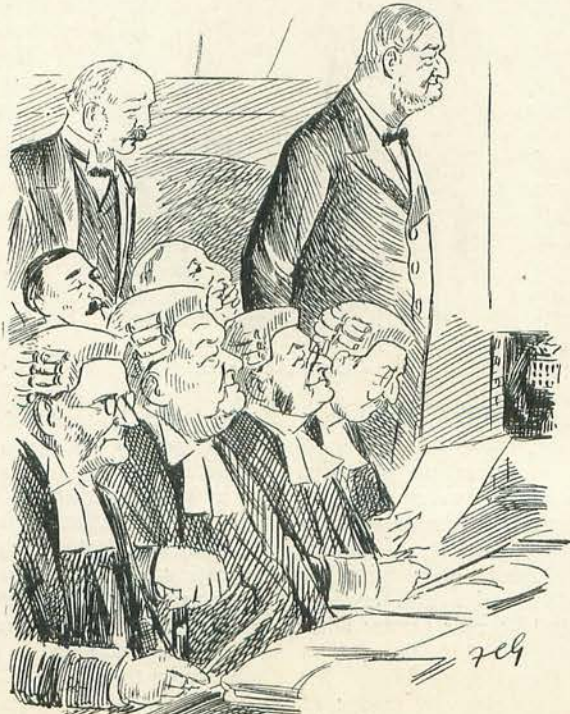
Mr. Rhodes, placing a finger on Cape Town and moving it with rapid sweep to the extreme north of the continent, said, "I want to paint the map red from here to there."

In the great map on the wall of the Committee-room the work thus far accomplished prominently shows. Mr. Rhodes, as he sat waiting the arrival of his judges on the opening day of the inquiry, frequently rested his eyes with proud content on the map. He may, as he admitted in reply to one of Sir William Harcourt's questions, have been "morally culpable." But there was Rhodesia.

PRINCE AND PEERS IN MUFTI.

It is curious, observing further points of resemblance between the two great State trials, to note how circumstances vary after the lapse of a century. There were peers at both. But whilst, when Warren Hastings was tried, their lordships arrived robed in gold and ermine, marshalled by the heralds under Garter King at Arms, when Mr. Cecil Rhodes was examined, noble lords dropped in in ordinary morning dress, thankful to find room to sit with humbler folk. "Last of all," writes Macaulay, in his famous description already quoted, "came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing."

The Prince of Wales was present on the opening days of the proceedings before the South African Committee. But he drove down in his private brougham, walked in unannounced, unattended, and, like the rest of the community, was kept waiting three-quarters of an hour whilst the Committee, deliberating in a private room, considered how they should dispose of three or four ladies who, in calm defiance of prohibition, had secured entrance to the Committee-room and, dressed all in their best, beamingly awaited the commencement of business.



ENTER THE COMMITTEE.

The procession of the Committee, headed by Sir William Harcourt, marching to seat them-

selves at the table, brushed past the Heir-Apparent without the courtly acknowledgment of his presence, perhaps never before omitted. It was a small matter, but strikingly indicative of the marble-like austerity of the proceedings, devoid from first to last of the pomp and circumstance attendant upon the scene Macaulay delighted to paint.

WARREN HASTINGS AND CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

There is another parallel of modern times to be found in Warren Hastings's Parliamentary experience and that of a famous man belonging to the end of this century. Just a quarter of a century after Hastings stood at the bar in Westminster Hall upon charges which, if proved, might have cost him his life, certainly his liberty, he again appeared on the Parliamentary scene. In the year 1813 the Charter of the East India Company came up for renewal. It was decided to examine witnesses at the bar of the House of Commons, and Warren Hastings, who since his acquittal had lived in retirement, was summoned to attend.

The object of the bitter resentment of yester-year presenting himself in obedience to the summons, the Commons received him with acclamation. When, after giving his evidence he retired, members rose *en masse*, bared their heads, and remained standing till his figure disappeared through the doorway.

MR. PARNELL RISES.

PARNELL'S APOGEE.

Seventy-six years later, as far as I know with no parallel instance in the meanwhile, a similar honour was done to another man. None present in the House of Commons on a night in the early spring of 1889 will forget one of the most dramatic scenes ever witnessed on this stage of illimitable possibilities. The House had been engaged for five nights in debate on an amendment to the Address challenging the Irish policy of the Government. Mr. Parnell, engaged in attendance on the Commission associated with his name, had been long absent from his place below the gangway. It was rumoured that he was coming to-day. The town still throbbed with excitement of the news from Madrid. On the previous Monday Pigott, the mainstay of the charges against Mr. Parnell, breaking down under the masterly cross-examination of Sir Charles Russell, fled. On this 1st of March came news that he had finished his career with a pistol-shot.

The incident served to intensify the sympathy with the man against whom Pigott had deliberately plotted. The sitting wore on towards midnight, and still Parnell did not come. It was so much his usual manner to avoid anything like fulfilment of expectation, to stay away when he was expected, to turn up when no one was looking for him, that members came to the conclusion he would not be seen.

Suddenly, just after eleven o'clock, a sharp ringing cheer from the Irish members drew all eyes in the direction of their camp. There was Mr. Parnell, standing in the modest place he affected, half way down the second bench below the gangway. He had entered quietly, unnoticed.

Mr. Asquith, who was at the moment on his legs, having made an end of speaking, the Irish Leader proposed to continue the debate. His followers, growing in excitement, leaped up, waving their hats. English members below and above the gangway followed their example. Mr. Gladstone, turning round and observing Parnell in his place, rose to his feet, an example instantly followed by all but one of his colleagues on the Front Bench.

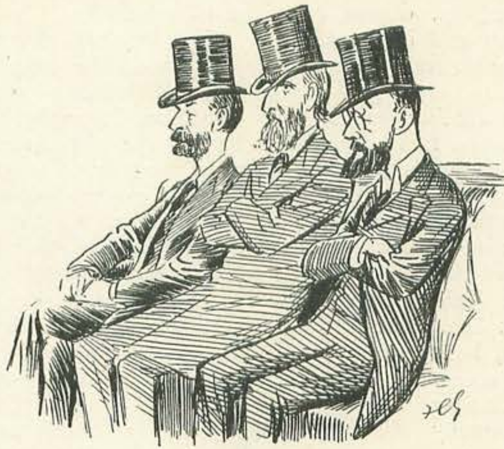
Thus, for some moments, they stood, as if they were in presence of Royalty. Whereas it was only the uncrowned King of Ireland who had returned to his seat in the House of Commons, after triumphant passage through a terrible ordeal.

NADIR.

One short year later, Mr. Parnell, sitting in the very place whence he had risen to front that memorable scene, sadly recalled it. Once the arbiter between the two great parties in English politics, he was now disgraced and impotent. Twelve months earlier the autocratic leader of a united party, to-day there were none to do him reverence.

It was characteristic of the stern, unbending nature of the man that during the brief time he remained in the House after his fall he took a course specially calculated to mark

its abyssmal depths. The large majority of his former following who had broken away from him after the scuffle in Committee-room No. 15, retained their old places on the benches below the gangway. Parnell and the faithful few who stood by him might conveniently have found a place, as the Redmondites have since done, on the bench behind. To retire would be to admit the power of "gutter sparrows" to depose the eagle. There was a certain place on the second bench below the gangway where he had sat whilst he enjoyed Sultanic honours amongst the Irish members. There was nothing changed in him. Only they were faithless.



AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION.

So, night after night, he took his old seat in the centre of the camp of the enemy—the bitterest of all enemies, the estranged friend. With Mr. Tim Healy on one side and Mr. Sexton on the other, he sat by the hour in haughty silence, ignoring their existence as utterly as if they had been stocks and stones.

A SOLITARY FIGURE.

This particular parallel with the Parliamentary history of Warren Hastings is carried out in a minute and interesting particular. It was not everyone who in the House of Commons of more than sixty years ago rose to their feet to do honour to the great pro-Consul. One or two of the managers of the impeachment were present. Macaulay writes: "They sat in the same seats they had occupied when they had been thanked for the services rendered in Westminster Hall. These gentlemen were not disposed to admit that they had employed several of the best years of their lives in persecuting an innocent man. They accordingly kept their seats, and pulled their hats over their brows."

At the time when Parnell returned to his Parliamentary duties, whilst echo of Pigott's pistol-shot still sounded through the streets of London, Mr. Gladstone's colleagues, seceding from his leadership on the question of Home Rule, had not taken the final step of going over to the Tory camp. As ex-Ministers they still claimed the right of places on the Front Opposition Bench. Thus it came to pass that when Mr. Gladstone and his Home Rule colleagues rose to do honour to the man who, in conjunction with his cause, had cost the Liberal Party so much, and was in the near future to cost them everything, one figure remained stubbornly seated at the gangway end of the bench, with hat tilted over his brow.

It was Lord Hartington.

AN OLD-STYLE MEMBER.

Sir Henry Edwards, who did not live long enough to see this year's daffodils—

> daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares—

was type of a Parliament man almost extinct. It is thirty years next month since he entered the House of Commons as member for Weymouth. He was just in time to witness Mr. Disraeli's historic gyrations on the platform of Parliamentary reform. He remained member for Weymouth till another Reform Bill swept the little borough into the limbo where linger the ghosts of Gatton and Old Sarum. There were just under seventeen hundred voters on the register. Every man of them knew the warm pressure of Henry Edwards's hand. Not a poor wife in the circle that had not benefited by his blankets. As for the children, some for the first time in their little lives, as they munched his cake and sucked his

WITH HAT TILTED OVER BROW.

SIR HENRY EDWARDS AND HIS STATUE.

"goodies," realized how kind a phenomenon a father might be.

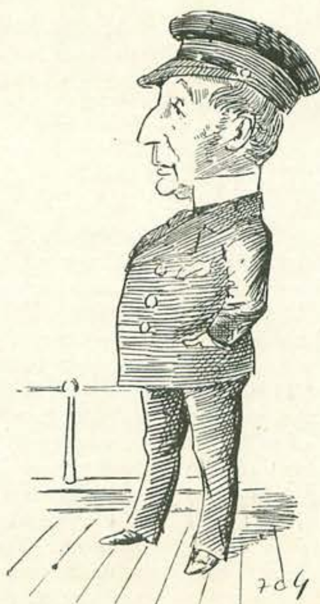
Unlike other members whose connection with a constituency is peremptorily severed, Henry Edwards to the last kept up his friendly relations with Weymouth. As surely as the name of Calais was seared on the heart of Queen Elizabeth, so, if search were made, Weymouth would be found written on the heart of Henry Edwards. As regularly as Christmas came round the aged poor of the disfranchised borough banqueted upon his bounty. Weymouth was not ungrateful, setting up his statue in her most public place. Edmund Yates, a very old friend, was the originator of the fable that the principal contributor to the statue fund was Henry Edwards himself.

"A good, kind man," Yates used to say, "not letting his left hand know what his right hand did. He gave the money secretly, and blushed to find it a statue."

Yates had a circumstantial story of strolling through Weymouth on a moonlight night and coming upon Henry Edwards walking round and about the statue, observing its effect from varying distances. But Edwards was accustomed to being chaffed by his friends, and as it was always done good-humouredly, with display of real personal liking, he suffered with a smile.

He made a considerable fortune during the Crimean War, the result of a lucky consignment of linseed. Whence the style of "Linseed Edwards" under which he was known amid ancient House of Commons' smoking-room coteries. It would not have been difficult for him to find a seat elsewhere after Weymouth was absorbed in the county. But his faithful heart could not woo another constituency. He and Weymouth were a sort of political Darby and Joan. When the ruthless hand of the reformer severed the union, he to the end of his days remained a Parliamentary widower.

At the Reform Club and elsewhere he retained many of the friendships and acquaintances made in the House of Commons. He aimed at winning the distinction of *le véritable Amphitryon, l'Amphitryon ou l'on dîne.* He was justly proud of his cheerful little dinners in Berkeley Square. In their composition W. S. Gilbert's idea of a perfect dinner was realized, the company on the chairs being selected with skill and care equal to those bestowed upon the viands and the wine on the table.



SIR HENRY EDWARDS ON A TRIAL TRIP.

Another scene on which Henry Edwards was found at great advantage was a trial trip of the P. and O.'s ever-increasing, ever-improving fleet. It was an ominous sign that, when the *India* set forth on her trial trip last August, he was obliged to decline the invitation sent to him by his old friend Sir Thomas Sutherland. I suppose it was the first he had missed for twenty years. At other times he was sure to be found among the company. It was delightful to see him when the seas were calm, pacing the snowy deck in a natty serge suit suggestive of the trained yachtsman, his peaked cap cocked a

little to one side so that he might keep his win'ard eye on the offing.

A kindly soul, withal shrewd-headed, he lived a fortunate life and died a happy death. For as the newspaper report hath it, "he died in his sleep."

HATS AND HEADS.

A paragraph has been going the rounds to the effect that at a meeting of the Kildare Archæological Society a hat worn by Daniel O'Connell was exhibited. There was no mistake about the article, for O'Connell, mindful of the company he occasionally frequented, had written his name inside. That seems to have been a supererogatory precaution, for the hat was so large it would have been useful to but few of O'Connell's contemporaries. The chairman putting it on partially disappeared from view of the alarmed audience, the rim of the hat coming down to his chin.

TRYING ON O'CONNELL'S HAT.

It is stated that "the width of the hat was 8½in.; its longer diameter 10in."

I have garnered some particulars of the sizes of the heads of eminent men, but have come upon nothing so big as this. Mr. Gladstone requires a hat of the size of 7⅜, exactly Lord Macaulay's measurement. Lord Beaconsfield wore a hat of 7 inches, an undesigned but characteristically courtly imitation of the Prince of Wales, whose hat is of the same size. Charles Dickens, the late Lord Selborne, and Mr. John Bright wore hats 7⅛ size. The late Earl Russell wanted an eighth more. Charles Dickens's hat would have been too small for Thackeray by half an inch. Louis Philippe and, strange conjunction, M. Julien wore hats of 7¾. An illustrious man of recent times who took the smallest hat on my list was Dean Stanley, for whom 6¾ sufficed. For his friend Dr. Thompson, Archbishop of York, a hat of full eight inches diameter was necessary.

A SINGULAR PULPIT ATTRACTION.

Dean Stanley's hat, comparatively small as it was, on one occasion held more than his head. There still lingers round St. Margaret's Church echoes of a story, told about a sermon preached by the Dean to a morning congregation, including the accustomed leavening of members of the House of Commons. When the service was over, the Dean, evidently much pleased, remarked to his wife on the exceeding close attention the congregation had paid him.

"I don't wonder at it, my dear," she said, "when one of your gloves was all the time on the top of your head."

The Dean was habitually immobile in the pulpit, and accustomed to walk there with steady step. Removing his hat before entering, of his gloves there stored one rested on the top of his head, and remained through his discourse.

At least, that is the story told in ordinarily reputable Parliamentary circles.

THE LATE MR. REARDON, M.P.

The following letter addressed to me by Miss Reardon is about as complete as denial can be made:—

"My father was not a Conservative, and never a follower of Lord Derby. The anecdote of his slipping off his boots and having to walk to the division, in his stockinged feet, is a pure invention. He never came forward in the Conservative interest. The Lord-Lieutenant of the day did not assist him in his candidature or in any shape or form, and he never came in contact with the then Viceroy."

I am exceedingly sorry if the linking of the story with the name of Mr. Reardon has given any of his relatives pain. It was told me by an old member of the House, who, as I understood him, was present on the occasion. The boot was, however, evidently on quite another leg, and my friend has confounded two personages.

From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

XXXVII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE QUEEN AND PARLIAMENT.

IN this month that marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's reign it becomes certain that never again will Her Majesty seat herself on the Throne in the House of Lords to greet her faithful Parliament on its opening day. On the 17th of next month it will be sixty years since Her Majesty first appeared in the House of Lords. The occasion was not to welcome the coming guest in the person of a new House of Commons, but to speed the parting guest—the last Parliament of the reign of William IV. All London flocked forth to greet the girl-Queen as she passed through the streets on her way, for the first time, to sit in Parliament. She captured the crowd with her grace and beauty, her progress being accompanied by a salvo of cheering. It is noted in contemporary record that she was dressed in a white satin robe decorated with jewels and gold, the Garter on her arm, a mantle of velvet over her shoulders.

A gay summer garb this, compared with the sombre habiliments in which the Queen made her final entrances to the House of Lords. But it is not nearly so pretty as that described by Miss Wynn, the very first in which the new Queen presented herself to her subjects.

AN EARLY MORNING VISIT.

It was the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain who were privileged to behold the vision of loveliness. William IV. died just before the dawn of the 20th of June, 1837. The Primate and the Lord Chamberlain were in attendance waiting the end. When it came they posted off to Kensington Palace, where the girl, straightway become a Queen, lived with her mother.

It was five o'clock in the morning when they reached the Palace. Naturally no one was up. Archbishop and Lord Chamberlain took turns in thumping at the gate, and at length brought up the porter. He thought the courtyard was near enough access to the house for elderly gentlemen out at such time in the morning. The Archbishop and his companion, after forlornly hanging round, found their way into a room off the courtyard. Here at least was a bell, which, being in good training with their exercise at the door, they vigorously rang. After long delay they saw the Princess's maid, who said her mistress was fast asleep and could not be disturbed. Their message, they urged, brooked no delay. So the Princess was awakened, and Miss Wynn writes: "In a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white night-gown and shawl, her night-cap thrown off, her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified."

I wonder some great artist has not transferred this simple picture to imperishable canvas. It does not seem too late to begin even in the sixtieth year of the reign which opened in this room off the courtyard.

HER MAJESTY'S LAST VISIT TO WESTMINSTER.

The last time the Queen opened Parliament in person was on the 5th of February, 1880. Through her long reign Her Majesty has rigorously observed the condition pertaining to constitutional monarchy that the Sovereign shall not pose as a political partisan. The Queen is, after all, human, and surely may have her preferences in common with the humblest of her subjects. One of these ruled her conduct in the matter of opening Parliament in person. Never once through Mr. Gladstone's succession of Premierships was the Queen seen at Westminster. In 1876, the third Session of the first Parliament in which Mr. Disraeli was seated as Premier, she broke through the habitude of long years and went down in State to open Parliament. In the following year she again bestowed this mark of special favour upon Mr. Disraeli, now transformed into the Earl of Beaconsfield.

In the Royal procession that entered the crowded House on this dull February day,

1877, the Commons crowded at the Bar saw their old leader disguised in red cloak, tipped with ermine, walking before the Queen, bearing aloft the Sword of State in jewelled scabbard. After Lord Beaconsfield's death the Queen again relapsed into the custom of abstention broken through two successive years. In January, 1880, the Ministry established by Mr. Disraeli, led now by Lord Salisbury, into whose hands Lord Beaconsfield had bequeathed the staff of office, was crumbling to a fall. It had nearly completed its sixth year. Dissolution could not be long postponed, and Ministers girded up their loins with intent to make a spurt that should give them some impetus through the General Election. The Queen graciously consented to lend the grace and dignity of her presence to the occasion of the setting forth of the programme of what must needs be their last Session.

It was noted at the time as a curious incident that in the course of the proceedings the Queen very nearly lost her crown. Seating herself on the throne, the long white ribbon pendant from the back of the cap on which the crown was set caught in her dress. But for the presence of mind of the Princess Beatrice, who deftly released the ribbon, the least that would have happened would have been that the Queen would have presented to the brilliant assembly the curious effect of the Crown askew on the top of her head, portrayed in the melancholy design of the coinage struck a few years later.

A RARE SCENE.

The ceremony of the opening of Parliament by the Queen in person is worthy of the occasion, and has been only too seldom seen by the present generation. There is nothing in Court proceedings, whether at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, or Marlborough House, that approaches it in dignity and importance. The stage is the historic one of the Houses of Parliament. The *dramatis personæ* are men who govern the greatest empire in the universe. All foreign States are represented by their Ministers in official array. The judges come in their wigs and gowns. The Church is represented by bishops in full canonicals. The peers are robed. The galleries are garlanded with rows of fair women dressed all in their best. The peeresses have given up to them all but the front row of the benches on one side of the floor of the House. (It is, of course, purely by accident that the custom has been established on occasions of this rare concession of Parliamentary right of seating ladies on the Opposition side.) The Prince and Princess of Wales and the rest of the Royal Family appear in State. The Queen with the blue ribbon of the Garter across her shoulder, a miniature crown of diamonds flashing on her head, other diamonds glistening like stars on her breast, approaches, preceded by four gorgeously clad heralds, escorted by a peer bearing the Cap of Maintenance, another holding aloft the Sword of State, whilst Norroy King-of-Arms, Clarenceaux King-

A ROYAL COMMISSION.

of-Arms, Garter King-of-Arms, follow as rear-guard.

At the Bar stands the Speaker, with his chaplain on one hand and on the other the Sergeant-at-Arms. Behind the Speaker seeth the mass of Commons, straining their eyes to catch glimpses of the scene.

SIMULACRE.

That is magnificent, and it makes all the more ludicrous the maimed performance that takes place at the inauguration of recurrent Sessions when the Queen does not come to Westminster. This is known as opening Parliament by Royal Commission. The Commissioners are the Lord Chancellor and four other noble lords of Ministerial standing. Alone among their peers, they wear their robes—also cocked hats, which play a prominent part in the puerile ceremony. Seated all in a row on a bench before the Woolsack, they are irresistibly suggestive of preparations for an Easter-day game on Hampstead Heath.

Even non-sportive members of the House of Commons, clustered at the Bar, instinctively close hands over an imaginary stick, and think how they would willingly give more than a penny for three shies at the cloaked figures with intent to knock off their cocked hats.

THE ROYAL ASSENT.

But there are always lower depths, and the House of Lords survives something even more ludicrous than the ceremony of opening a new Session of Parliament by Royal Commission. This is known as giving the Royal Assent to Bills. It is ten or fifteen times worse than the opening ceremony, since through a Session it is repeated as often. Trouble begins at the very outset. Black Rod is dispatched to the House of Commons to invite the attendance of members of that honourable House to hear the Lords Commissioners give their assent to certain Bills. The treatment of Black Rod in the course of his mission is deliberately contumelious. As soon as he is spied crossing the outer lobby, arrayed in uniform with an undertaker's wand on his shoulder, and an expression of woe on his face that would make his fortune in professional circles, the door of the House of Commons is closed in his very face. Three times he knocks. A wicket is withdrawn. The janitor inquires, "Who's there?"

"Black Rod!" replies the emissary of the House over the way.

The door is straightway opened, and the doorkeeper advancing to the Sergeant-at-Arms' chair, shouts at the top of his voice, "Black Rod!" It may happen, and it frequently did, that this brusque interruption falls at a moment of serious business in the Commons. Once Mr. Gladstone was shut up in the middle of a sentence, and a little later in the same Session Mr. Balfour underwent similar discipline.

GENERAL BIDDULPH—THE NEW BLACK ROD.

These were the last straws that broke the back of the long-tried patience of the Commons. Arrangements were made whereby Black Rod's entrance should be less inopportune. At best, he has a bad time of it. It is no joke for a gentleman, usually well-advanced in years, who has spent an honourable life in quite other associations, to walk up the floor of the House of Commons amid dead silence, conscious of being stared at by four hundred pairs of eyes. Worse still is the ordeal of retirement to be accomplished only by walking backwards.

The first time the present esteemed incumbent of the office of Black Rod appeared in the House of Commons, he having safely reached the table suddenly bethought him how he was to get back. The consequence was a sudden access of paralysis. Instead of delivering his message he stood mutely staring at the Speaker, whilst for two minutes by Westminster clock—it seemed two hours—the House looked on. Black Rod is an old soldier, not to be cast down by defeat howsoever momentarily disastrous. Next

time he came on duty he deftly carried, in the recesses of his cocked hat, a card, on which his "part" was fairly written out. When time to speak, a cocked eye was strategically brought in line with the cocked hat, and all went well.

A SERIO-COMEDY. Under the best of circumstances, with brusqueness of interruption reduced to a minimum, the ceremony of the Royal Assent to Bills being given by Commission is a waste of time for which there is no compensation. It is required that the Speaker should leave the Chair in the House of Commons and, escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms, accompanied by at least one Minister and as many members as care to go, repair to the House of Lords. They find the Lords Commissioners in accustomed array on the bench before the Woolsack. Three times the figures solemnly raise their cocked hats in acknowledgment of the presence of the Speaker and the Mace. The Clerk of Parliament advancing midway along the table reads the Royal Commission, a prolix document appointing "Our trusted and well-beloved counsellors" to their distinguished office. At the name of each Commissioner the Clerk bows low towards the five cloaked figures. Whereat the one named discloses his identity by raising his hat.

BLACK ROD'S MANŒUVRE.

The Commission read, the process of giving the Royal Assent to what may be an interminable list of Bills is ground out, as if with the assistance of a crank wheel. A fellow clerk—he of the Crown—in wig and gown steps forth and takes his place on the Opposition side of the table. By the right hand of the Clerk of Parliament is a pile of Bills which have passed successive stages in both Houses. One of these the Clerk of Parliament takes up and, turning to face the figures on the Woolsack, bows almost to his feet. The Clerk of the Crown on the other side of the table makes similar obeisance. The more simultaneous the action the safer on its basis stands the British Constitution.

Having read the title of the Bill, the Clerk of Parliament wheels round to the right. The Clerk of the Crown on the other side of the table turns on his heel to the left, and thus the two face each other. The Clerk of the Crown in solemn voice intones "*La Reyne le veult.*" That is the cue for the Clerks to turn their several ways so that again they face the five cloaked figures, before whom they once more profoundly bow. Then they turn back as before. The Clerk of the Crown takes up another Bill, reads its title, and through the abashed chamber rings again the solemn chant, "*La Reyne le veult.*"

If, as sometimes happens, there are a hundred Bills, public and private, awaiting the Royal Assent, this gravely comic performance goes on for the space of fifteen or twenty minutes, the cloaked figures on the bench sitting impassive, the Speaker in wig and gown standing at the Bar. For all practical purposes the business of giving the Royal Assent to Bills would be equally effective, and would be accomplished with much simpler dignity, if the Lords Commissioners performed their task in the privacy of the Lord Chamberlain's office.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL. In this column in the April number of the STRAND of last year appears the following passage: "Within the walls of the Palace at Westminster, and on the grass-plots in its immediate neighbourhood, statues are appropriately raised to great Parliament men. The muster will surely be incomplete if place be not found for a counterfeit presentment of Lord Randolph Churchill . . . . . . The House of Commons will not always refrain from doing honour to one of its most brilliant, if one of its most wilful, sons."

This was a very obvious suggestion, needing only to be thrown out to find acceptance. During the recess some correspondence privily took place among members, and as soon as the Session opened a small committee got to work and threw the project into practical shape. It was wisely resolved to have, not a full-length statue with the inevitable stone legs and marble fringe to a

modern frock-coat, but a bust, to be placed in one of the passages of the House, where it might be seen by members going to and fro on their ordinary business.

The subscription, limited to a guinea, is open only to members of the House of Commons who were contemporaries at one stage or other of Lord Randolph's meteoric career. The list is of itself striking. If it were possible to engrave the names in columns on the pedestal it would add considerably to the historic value and interest of the monument. How much has happened since Lord Randolph sat in the House as member for Woodstock is found in conjunction of the two simple matters of fact that Mr. Gladstone sent his subscription from Cannes, where, far removed from the vortex of political life, he was making spring holiday in a green old age; and that the plain Drummond Wolff of Fourth Party days sent his tribute from Madrid by the cheque of his Excellency the Right Hon. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Her Majesty's Minister to Alfonso XIII., King of Spain.

"OLD MORALITY." If Lord Randolph's esteemed successor in the Leadership of the House of Commons were still alive, there is no doubt that, forgetful of some bitter memories, his guinea would also be forthcoming with intent to keep green the memory of *l'enfant terrible* of his troubled times. By a happy chance Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. W. H. Smith, sometimes divided in life by sharp turns of controversy, united in death, will in memories of future Parliaments live together in close companionship. It is arranged that, when completed, Lord Randolph's bust shall have an honoured place found for it in the corridor leading out from the lobby, by the main staircase, where the placid face of "Old Morality" looks out on the stream of members hurrying to and from the House.

THE PORTRAIT. Another indication of the wisdom that prevails in the councils of the committee in charge of the bust is found in the fact that they have determined the face reproduced shall be that familiar to the House of Commons prior to Lord Randolph's journey to South Africa. The Lord Randolph who set forth in quest of sport and gold and health carried the face familiar in the House of Commons, on public platforms, and in a thousand illustrated journals. He was closely shaven with the exception of a heavy moustache, the tugging of which during debate in the House of Commons was an appreciable assistance in concentrating his thoughts and shaping his replies. He came back almost unrecognisable, with short, thick, brown beard, cultivated amid the exigencies of life on the veldt.

I am the fortunate possessor of a portrait for which Lord Randolph sat in the year 1891. It was painted in his library at Connaught Place, and is admitted to be the most faithful presentment of the living man.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.
Sketched by F. C. Gould from the Painting by E. A. Ward.

When in the year following Lord Randolph set out on his travels through South Africa he commissioned the artist, Mr. E. A. Ward, to paint a replica. This, on the eve of his journey, he presented to his mother, the Duchess of Marlborough, with whom it

remains a precious possession. It is the face here pictured, mature, resolute, in the very prime of life, that the sculptor will carve in indelible marble.

NEWSPAPERS IN THE HOUSE.

When, the other day, an Irish member read long extracts from a Cork paper, alleging iniquity against a Government official, proceeding thereupon to put a question to Mr. Gerald Balfour, the Speaker ruled him out of order. If, the Speaker said, he were prepared on his own responsibility to affirm belief in certain statements published in a newspaper, he might thereupon put a question to the Minister. But a question might not be so addressed merely upon the authority of a newspaper report.

MR. CURZON IGNORES THE PRESS.

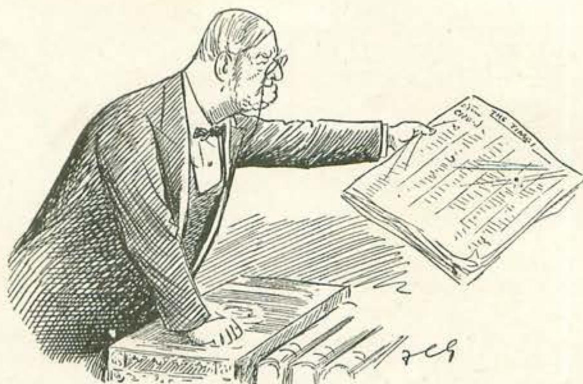
Mr. Gully is so habitually accurate and sound in his rulings that he, doubtless, has with him in this judgment the authority of the law and the support of the prophets. It is, nevertheless, a little startling to people familiar with the ordinary usage of the House. It is no exaggeration to say that one-third of the total of questions put in the course of a Session, an alarming aggregate, are avowedly based upon newspaper reports. In most instances the newspaper is named as the authority, the Minister being definitively questioned as to whether he has seen it.

CONTRABAND GOODS.

The rule, doubtless, had its birth in times when newspapers were not, or only furtively existed. To this day newspapers remain under a bann. A member dare no more take one out of his pocket and glance at it whilst the House is in Session than he dare take off his coat and sit in his shirt-sleeves. Strangers, safe in the panoply of ignorance, have been known in dull passages of debate to produce an evening newspaper, spread it forth, and propose to themselves a study of its contents. None has lived to repeat the indiscretion. The manner in which the offender is pounced down upon by janitors from either side of the gallery is in its vehemence sufficient to shatter the strongest nerves.

One of the most important debates which have taken place this Session on affairs in Crete was opened ostensibly and exclusively upon a newspaper report. In the morning the *Daily News* published exclusive information of the bombardment of the Cretan camp by the allied fleets of Europe. The Foreign Office had not, as yet, come up with the activity of the newspaper arrangements. Mr. Balfour had no particulars to give, and for three hours, apparently in dissonance with the Speaker's ruling quoted above, the debate followed the course of the newspaper telegrams.

On the same night Sir William Harcourt, wanting to illustrate a pet point, sent to the reading-room for a copy of the *Times*. It was pretty to see the Leader of the Opposition, conscious of disorderly proceedings, endeavouring to turn over the big sheet under the table, where it might not catch the Speaker's eye. He apparently succeeded in the attempt. Later, carried away by the excitement of debate, he brandished the paper across the table in the face of Mr. Balfour, a scene never witnessed before by the oldest member. So demoralizing was the effect, that an hour later Mr. Darling brought in a copy of the *Westminster Gazette* and, unashamed, unrebuked, read passages from it to the House.



HE BRANDISHED THE PAPER ACROSS THE TABLE.

These are matters trivial in themselves. To some minds, cultured in the earlier traditions of the House, they will mark signs of the deterioration of the Mother of Parliaments.

"ANOTHER PLACE."

Another quaint House of Commons' ordinance coming down from ancient times forbids direct reference to the House of Lords or any of its works. The rule is evaded by cautious reference to "another place." But that device may not be pushed far without risk of reproof from the Chair. In existing circumstances, not only with the Premier in the other House but with his lordship exercising the functions of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the rule has obvious inconveniences. These are sharpened by a pleasant habit, native to Lord Salisbury's mind, of ignoring the existence of the House of Commons, treating the House of Lords to confidences which at the very moment he is speaking may, under his instructions, be denied to the Commons by the representative of the Foreign Office in that House. The effect of such procedure on the placid mind of Sir William Harcourt is easily imagined. The consequences are aggravated since the rule of debate in the House of Commons precludes him from giving full expression to his feelings.

Oddly enough, the rule does not extend to the House of Lords, where not only are debates and proceedings in the Commons discussed with untrammelled freedom, but members accustomed to the stately rotundity of personal reference in their own House are startled to hear themselves and others alluded to, not in connection with their respective constituencies, but bluntly by name. On the whole, the restriction is well devised and worth keeping. Life is short and debate is long. What would happen if members of the House of Commons were at liberty at recurring political crises to say all they thought of the House of Lords, is a prospect from which the dazed eyeballs shrink.

LORD MELBOURNE—1837.

LORD SALISBURY—1897.

TWO PRIME MINISTERS.