From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

LXIII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE QUEEN'S PRAYERS FOR PARLIAMENT.

TALKING about the literary composition of the Queen's Speech on the opening and the closing of a Parliamentary Session, one who has occasionally had something to do with its production tells me a curious thing. The successive paragraphs of the Speeches naturally vary in topic with the events of the day. But whatever happens the Speech must close with a brief prayer. It is a point of honour with the Minister drafting the document that this petition, always the same in purpose, shall never be identical in phrase. Curious to see how this worked out, I have looked up the Speeches from the Throne delivered through the life of the last Parliament, and find the tradition carefully observed.

As will be remembered, the concluding prayer was omitted in the Queen's Speech last Session. This is not the first case of the kind. In the Queen's Speech delivered under the guidance of the third Salisbury Administration the accustomed concluding prayer was forgotten. The Speech abruptly closed with suggestion that consideration of legislative measures, except those necessary to provide for the administrative charges of the year, should be deferred to another Session.

When that arrived Ministers came to the front with a Speech of terrible length, concluding, "I commend these weighty matters to your experienced judgment, and pray that your labours may be blessed by the guidance and favour of Almighty God." On the prorogation in the same Session Her Majesty is made to say: "In bidding you farewell I pray that the blessing of Providence may rest upon all your labours." The Speech on the opening of Parliament in January, 1897, was again very long, leaving room only for the somewhat brusque remark, "I heartily commend your important deliberations to the guidance of Almighty God." At the close of the Session, which counted among its accomplished works the dole to denominational schools, the Queen prays that "the fruit of your labours may be assured by the protection and blessing of Almighty God."

MASTER ARTHUR WRITING A LETTER TO THE QUEEN.

The next Session opens with the prayer, "I heartily commend your momentous deliberations to the care and guidance of Almighty God." "I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may attend you" is the Queenly benediction at the close of the Session. In February, 1899, the Queen, addressing my lords and gentlemen, prays "that Almighty God may have you in His keeping and guide your deliberations for the good of my people." At the end of the Session—the principal fruit whereof was the Clergy Relief Bill—prayer is offered "that the blessing of Almighty God may attend upon the fruit of your labours for the benefit of my people."

The brief War Session of 1899 was opened with the prayer that "in performing the duties which claim your attention you may have the guidance and blessing of Almighty God." At the prorogation the war in South Africa gave a special turn to the phraseology. "I trust," the Queen is represented as saying, "that the Divine blessing may rest upon your efforts and those of my gallant Army to restore peace and good government to that portion of my Empire, and to vindicate the honour of this country." At the beginning of last Session the Queen, addressing both Houses of Parliament, "commended their deliberations in this anxious time to the blessing and guidance of Almighty God." Her Majesty's last words to the fourteenth Parliament of her reign prayed "that Almighty God may have you in His keeping, and that His blessing may be with you."

It will be seen from this unresponsive litany that though it is mainly compiled from a narrow circle of words, their arrangement is always studiously varied.

"MA'AM."

When Mr. Arthur Balfour writes his letters to the Queen, giving a summary of proceedings at the current sitting of the House of Commons, he observes a formula of address consecrated by long usage. "Mr. Balfour,"

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so the missive runs, "presents his humble duty to the Queen, and informs Her Majesty——." Here follows the narrative, which it is hoped the Leader of the House, in the dull times that prevailed at Westminster during the last five years, managed to make more sparkling than was possible to other Parliamentary summary-writers. This quaint form of address finds its parallel in the business or social communications of the Queen's *entourage*. In humbler domestic circles the old-fashioned word "Ma'am" is rarely heard. Servants and shopkeepers when they have occasion to approach its use go back to the more formal original. It is, "Yes, madam," or "No, madam." The Queen is still "Ma'am."

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND SIR ROBERT CECIL.

Lord Salisbury has good reason to know that in the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth the form of epistolary communication between her Ministers and Her Majesty was less formal than that in vogue with the Parliamentary letter-writer from the Treasury Bench to-day. The Premier is heritor of the correspondence of his great ancestor and namesake, Sir Robert Cecil. In the spring of 1598 Sir Robert was dispatched to the King of France on a diplomatic mission. Writing to the Queen under date 5th April of that year, he addresses her directly as "Most Gracious Sovereign," and throughout as "Your Majesty." In reporting his audience with the King—whom, by the way, "about three of the clock on Tuesday" the English Ambassador found in bed—the astute Cecil turns a pretty compliment. "We have," he writes, "thought it good to set down precisely the same language which I, the secretary, used, for we know your Majesty to be in all languages one of the *mieulx disans* of Europe, and most justly think that your Majesty had cause to be very jealous whether your meaning had been delivered in the French to the same sense which our English repetition should now express."

Here follows, in French of the sixteenth century, what Sir Robert said to the King, sitting down by his bedside, "where we warmed him so well as, whether it was his physic or our message, Monsieur le Grand was fain to fetch drink for him."

THE OLD DIPLOMACY.

There is in this letter delightful disclosure of the ways of the old diplomacy. Reporting the reading of what purported to be the text of an important secret document, Sir Robert says: "First we left out any of those articles which showed the King of Spain's readiness to yield him (the King of France) all his desires, because that would have made him proud and to raise himself towards us. For though we think he knows too well what he shall have of Spain, yet we would not have him think that we know it out of the Spaniard's mouth. Secondly we left out anything to him that might show to him that the Spaniards meant to offer any injurious conditions to England, for then he would also have thought your Majesty's state the more irreconcilable, and therefore only acquainted him with the reports of Villeroie's speeches, of the Legate's speeches, of Belliurs his speeches, and other things which we have further set down in the enclosed."

Here is a picture for a painter in search of an historical subject. Henri Quatre, in bed at three o'clock on an April afternoon, alternating between the refreshment of medicine and strong drink; seated by his side the crafty English emissary, with innocent air, reading a carefully-trimmed document.

LORD SALISBURY AND HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.

But if the English diplomatist had his secrets the French King had his. The

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letter, now carefully treasured at Hatfield, is dated 5th April, 1598. Eight days later Henri Quatre promulgated the Edict of Nantes, with far-reaching consequences not only for the history of France but for the trade and commerce of England.

A NEW FIELD OF FICTION.

A notable thing in the candidature for election to the new Parliament was the rush of novelists into this new field of fiction. One remembers at least three—Conan Doyle, Anthony Hope, and Gilbert Parker. Mr. Barrie coquetted with a constituency, but came to the conclusion that he would bide a wee. Of the three first named, only Mr. Gilbert Parker was successful in securing one of the Seats of the Mighty. Mr. Conan Doyle was badly beaten, while Mr. Anthony Hope, like his acquaintance Quisanté, was, on the eve of the contest, attacked by illness. Unlike his hero, who struggled on and fell in the breach soon after it was won, Mr. Anthony Hope discreetly retired, regained his health, and lives to fight another day.

Mr. Henry Norman does not rank as a romancist, though he has written "The Real Japan." But he is a man of letters who by sheer ability has made his way to the front rank of journalism. He has the advantage, rare among our councillors at Westminster, of having studied foreign affairs, Western and Far Eastern, on the spot.

"THE REAL JAPAN"—MR. HENRY NORMAN.

LITERARY MEN IN PARLIAMENT.

Whether Parliament is the best place for men of letters is an interesting question. If conspicuous success in a new walk be counted as essential to the affirmative, the yea will be uttered with diffidence. It is not necessary to go back to the case of Bulwer Lytton, or the more painful one of John Stuart Mill, to support the assertion that there is something in the atmosphere of the House of Commons uncongenial to the ascendency of the literary man.

One brilliant exception is found in the case of Lord Rosebery, who is equally in command of himself and the situation whether writing books in his library or making speeches in the House of Lords and on the public platform. But there is no other. Mr. John Morley will be known to fame as a literary man, not as a member of the House of Commons. If any man might be counted upon in advance to command the attention of the House of Commons it was Mr. Justin McCarthy. A man of wide reading, retentive memory, varied knowledge of the world, gifted with humour, a ready speaker, here seemed every quality to compel success. Yet the author of "Dear Lady Disdain," and a score of other popular novels, never reached that place in the House which his talents seemed to merit, and for which his friends confidently designated him.

On the whole journalists do better in the House of Commons than do those ranking as men of letters. Mr. Courtney instructed the world through the leader columns of the *Times* before, encouraged by his success, he stepped on to the more prominent platform of the House of Commons to carry on his beneficent work. Mr. Labouchere is one of the most entertaining journalists of the age, not laying aside the pen even while he was steadily making his way to a position of influence in the House of Commons. If Mr. T. P. O'Connor had given himself up entirely to Parliamentary work he would have taken high rank as a debater. But the House of Commons will have nothing to do with men who give it only the odds and ends of their time. After living laborious days in discharge of his journalistic work Mr. O'Connor sometimes scorns delights, and remains in his place long enough to catch the Speaker's eye. Even with this desultory habit he commands an audience for a vigorous speech. The general result is, however, confirmatory of the axiom that no man can serve two masters.

Mr. Gibson Bowles, perceiving this fundamental truth, has renounced journalism, in which profession he first made his mark, has

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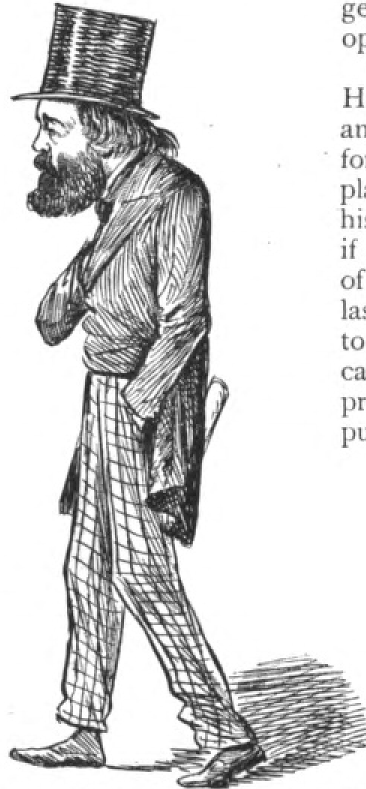
given himself up entirely to the House of Commons, and has made his way accordingly. It must not be forgotten that another member of Parliament, of almost equal knowledge of public affairs, followed the same course. Whilst the Marquis of Salisbury was still Lord Robert Cecil, he was a regular, even a struggling, journalist. His political career opening out, he gave up leader-writing, and devoted himself to the House of Commons. The advantage of his early training is felt and witnessed to this day in the exquisite perfection of the turn of his spoken sentences. The Premier is one of the very few of our public men whose political speeches have a subtle, indescribable, but unmistakable, literary flavour.



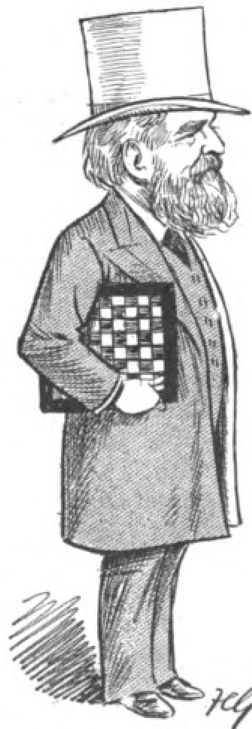
LORD ROBERT CECIL AS A STRUGGLING JOURNALIST.

THE PRESS.

The new Parliament shows a considerable advance in the number of members who in one way or the other are connected with the Press. Survivors of the last Parliament are Mr. Arthur Eliott, whose seat was saved from contest by the chance appearance in the Quarterly he edits of an article on the war; Sir John Leng, proprietor of the *Dundee Advertiser*, who does not often trouble the House with a set speech, has a searching way of putting questions which effects more practical good throughout a Session than the average of long speeches; Mr. Dalziel, who a dozen years ago entering the Lobby as a journalist, now sits for Kirkcaldy, holding it with increased majority, whilst all round him Liberals fell. His is another case of the not frequent incidence of equal facility with tongue and pen. He has the courage of his opinions, does not flinch from performance of what he regards as a public duty, and in a pleasant voice that adds to the aggravation "says things" that sometimes shock the sensibilities of the gentlemen of England seated opposite.

When he first entered the House he was unconsciously and undesignedly the occasion for embarrassment in high places. North of the Tweed his surname is pronounced as if all the letters had fallen out of it except the first and the last. When Mr. Gully came to the Chair he scrupulously called on "Mr. D L," the letters pronounced full length. The puzzlement displayed on the countenances of mere Southerners at sound of this unfamiliar name was embarrassing. To the Speaker, as to other Englishmen, the member for Kirkcaldy to-day is "Mr. Dal*zel*."

Other old members returned to the new Parliament are Mr. Scott, the editor of the ***Manchester Guardian***, and Mr. Willox, proprietor of the *Liverpool Courier*. Among new comers are Mr. Winston Churchill, who I venture to predict will make his mark in the House as he did in the armoured train; Mr. Cust, a former editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette;* Sir George Newnes, and Mr. Leicester Harmsworth, one of a notable band of brothers. The total of newspaper proprietors and journalists in the present House of Commons is thirty-three.



SIR GEORGE NEWNES.

TRADE IN PARLIAMENT.

Many years ago Mr. Gladstone, talking about the constitution of the first House of Commons in which he sat, told me there were in it not more than five members connected with trade and commerce. Things have in this matter considerably changed since that far-off day. Trade and commerce represent considerably more than half the muster of the fifteenth Parliament of the Queen. There are, to blurt out what the member of Parliament of the

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mid-century would regard as the most appalling fact, thirteen who rank as shopkeepers and traders.

HOME FROM THE WAR.

In this the first regular Session of the new Parliament the attendance in both Houses will be appreciably greater owing to the return of members who volunteered for active service in South Africa. Whilst the House of Commons contributed twenty-seven members, the House of Lords sent thirty-six, including the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, and Lord Methuen. Of the peers the Marquis of Winchester and the Earl of Airlie were killed on the field of battle. Lord Folkestone, who went out as major of the 1st Wiltshire Volunteer Rifle Corps, comes back Earl of Radnor, his father, once a well-known figure in the House of Commons, dying during his absence. This event removes a promising figure from the Commons. In the one or two speeches he made since his return for the Wilton Division in 1892, Lord Folkestone displayed a lively talent, which it is to be feared will be lost in the more languorous atmosphere of the House of Lords. He commenced his training for Parliamentary work by acting as assistant private secretary to Mr. Chaplin at the Board of Agriculture. Had it been possible for him to return to the new House of Commons he might have renewed his intimacy with his old chief on a back bench above the gangway.

ON A BACK BENCH—MR. CHAPLIN.

Other members who return to the familiar scene under altered circumstances are Lord Cranborne, who takes his seat on the Treasury Bench as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Stanley, who has been promoted from the Whips' Room to the important post of Financial Secretary to the War Office.

In the last Parliament Lord Stanley acted as Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, gallantly bearing the brunt of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's frontal attacks in the matter of the illegal sale of liquor at the Lobby bars. Lord Cranborne's migration from below the gangway will leave his brother Lord Hugh Cecil in the position of principal defender of the faith as enshrined in the Established Church.

WESTMINSTER HALL.

It is to be hoped that whilst the new Parliament is fresh and vigorous it will see to the removal of the ridiculous regulations that bar the public out of their heritage, Westminster Hall. At the time of the Fenian scare, when outrages were perpetrated at the Home Office, the *Times* office, and elsewhere, precautions were wisely taken to safeguard this unique monument of early English history. The public were rigidly excluded, and since that time Westminster Hall has remained a wilderness, untrodden, save by the foot of officials, and of members electing to choose that approach to the House.

The Hall was built with special view to having its flags trodden by a multitude. In modern times it never looked so well as at the period when the Law Courts were still an adjunct of the Palace of Westminster, and at the luncheon hour the crowd of barristers, clients, witnesses, and spectators poured out from the Courts to pace up and down the splendid thoroughfare. There was a later time when from earliest dawn till the close at eve on a succession of May Days the people crowded in with reverent steps, approached and passed the bier on which rested the coffin in which Mr. Gladstone slept, full of rest from head to foot.

A FORGOTTEN POLICEMAN.

To-day, with a solitary policeman on guard by the members' entrance, the Hall looks like a great gloomy vault. There is not even pretence of cause for maintaining restrictions imposed in troublesome times. At the time Westminster Hall was made desolate the watchful eye of the police was flashed upon a narrow passage running between Birdcage Walk and Queen Anne's Gate. The Irish Office may be reached

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through the same approach. A policeman was accordingly detailed to guard the passage and arrest any treasonable-looking men. Nearly twenty years have sped since, in the height of the Fenian scare, the policeman was placed on guard at this point. He may be there still; he certainly was at his post in the early part of last Session when I chanced to pass by this secluded entry. Nineteen years ago order was issued from Scotland Yard that night and day a policeman should patrol this otherwise neglected foot-passage. The order not having been withdrawn, night and day the policeman has been there, his not to wonder why.

On the same principle actuating the official mind, the public are to this day forbidden to enter Westminster Hall because eighteen years ago the Fenians attempted to blow up Sir William Harcourt in the Home Office.

SIR BENJAMIN STONE.

MEMORIAL BRASSES.

It will be remembered that when a few years ago the King of Siam paid us a visit he displayed curiosity far exceeding the habit of George III. He did not, so far as was known, come across an apple-dumpling. If he had he would not have sought his couch till he had mastered the mystery how the apple got in. On the night he visited the Houses of Parliament he passed out by St. Stephen's Chapel and Westminster Hall. Thanks to the reverential care of Sir Reginald Palgrave, long time Clerk of the House of Commons, the pavement is studded with small brasses, marking the precise spot where King Charles's chair was placed when he sat for his trial, where Perceval fell shot by Bellingham, and where other historical events in the history of Parliament took place. His Majesty of Siam, spotting the brass plates, ran about from one to the other wanting to know all about them.

There is obvious opportunity for extension of Sir Reginald Palgrave's pious purpose. When Mr. Gladstone's coffin was carried through a mourning nation from his hushed home at Hawarden to the scene of his more than sixty years' service to the State, it was set down on the flags of Westminster Hall, just opposite the door opening on the stairway that gives access to the House of Commons. Here it rested whilst the innumerable procession passed by to take a farewell look, and thence it was carried —political foeman and friend bearing the pall—on its way to Westminster Abbey. Surely the spot is worth marking among the rest.

AN HISTORIC SCENE.

Amonga rare collection of photographs taken by his own camera Sir Benjamin Stone, photographer extraordinary to the House of Commons, has none more interesting than one which presents the scene in Westminster Hall in the early morning of the 19th May, 1898. The vast Hall is empty save for the presence in the coffin lying on the bier. A striking effect is obtained by the morning light streaming in from the windows on the eastern side. There is something deeply touching in the loneliness and silence of the Great Hall. Nothing to disturb the last rest of the tired workman.

THE KING OF SIAM AND THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

The boyish curiosity of the King of Siam was embarrassingly developed during his visit to the House of Lords. His kingly state was evidenced by the chair set for him in front of the steps of the Throne just behind the Woolsack. The House chanced to be in Committee, necessitating the Lord Chancellor going through a series of manœuvres that would be trying even to the stately manner of Lord Peel, which elevated the dignity of the Chair in the House of Commons. Lord Halsbury invests it with superfluity of comicality.

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The House being in Committee the Chairman presides at the table, the Lord Chancellor marking his temporary abrogation of the presidency by standing a pace to the left of the Woolsack. Here he remains whilst the Chairman rattles the Bill through Committee.

"The question is," says the Chairman, "that I report this Bill without amendment to the House."

Thereupon Lord Morley hops out of the Chair at the table, and simultaneously the Lord Chancellor skips back to the Woolsack and proceeds with the Orders of the Day. Another Bill getting into Committee he hops a pace to the left of the Woolsack, and the Chairman of Committees skips into the Chair at the table, rattles the New Bill through, puts the question about reporting it, and Lord Chancellor and Chairman repeat their *pas de deux*.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR AND THE CHAIRMAN REPEAT THEIR "PAS DE DEUX."

The movement is as automatic as that of the two figures in the mechanical weather indicator, one retiring to his box indicating rain, the other coming out to rejoice in fine weather.

The King of Siam, seated immediately behind the plump figure of the Lord Chancellor, watched the game with keenest interest. His big wig bobbing, his gown fluttering with the movement, there was about the Lord High Chancellor something reminiscent of John Leech's illustration to the "Christmas Carol," showing Mr. Fezziwig leading off the ball. If the King of Siam had been familiar with the masterpiece of Christmas stories he would have recalled the passage:—

"Hilli-ho," cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here. Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!"

Unaided by association, His Majesty thoroughly entered into the fun of the thing. In full view of the shocked House of Lords he dug his finger in the ribs of his chaperon, Lord Harris. I am not sure he did not wink. I well remember how, his face glowing with laughter, he nodded towards the broad back of the ambulant Lord Chancellor, drawing Lord Harris's attention to the performance with another playful touch in the ribs.

If, following the example of the Shah, he writes a book on his visit to England, this episode is sure to have justice done to it. It will remain rooted in his memory as part of the process of legislation by the Mother of Parliaments.

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From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

LXIV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE QUEEN AND PARLIAMENT.

FOR many years following on the death of the Prince Consort the Queen was an unfamiliar figure at Westminster. Members of reasonably long tenure of their seats never had opportunity of joining in the rush following the Speaker when he was bidden to the House of Lords to hear the Queen deliver her Speech. It was her personal esteem for Mr. Disraeli that, in 1876, when he, mounted on his horse, Spirited Foreign Policy, was in the flush of power and popularity, led her to break through her seclusion.

THE OPENING CEREMONY.

I was privileged to be present on the four occasions when the widowed Queen appeared at Westminster. Considering the brevity of the proceedings, preparation for due effect was made with infinite care. On such occasions only the peers wore their scarlet gowns. In order to make room for the peeresses, to whom the Opposition Benches were for the sitting allotted, benches were temporarily laid across the breadth of the floor. Another innovation was the mustering of Foreign Ministers on the Front Bench below the gangway to the right of the Woolsack, where in ordinary times the Bishops congregate. In addition to ladies on the floor of the House others garlanded the long lines of the side galleries. The Throne, which through the Session is jealously draped, was uncovered, a chair being placed to the left for the occupation of the Prince of Wales. The Princess of Wales sat on a bench at the back of the Woolsack facing the Throne. When the Queen was seated Black Rod was dispatched to bring the Commons. Soon was heard a tramping as if once more "armed men marched down the glen." As on the crest of a wave the Speaker, the Mace-Bearer, Black Rod, and the Chaplain were borne in and left stranded at the Bar. Behind them stood the Commons, wedged in tight as herrings in a barrel, only much more restive under the painful conditions. The Speech read, the Queen, saluting the spectators, withdrew, the whole business being over within the space of twenty minutes.

OMINOUS.

In 1876 there befell an incident which in earlier times might have been regarded as ominous. When the Queen took her place on the Throne she nearly lost the Crown of England. The long white strings which fell backward from the white cap, familiar in many portraits, caught under her dress as she seated herself, jerking cap and Crown on one side. Princess Beatrice, in watchful attendance, put matters right, and, the Lord Great Chamberlain humbly arranging a footstool, *petite* Majesty was made moderately comfortable on the high chair.

GREAT SEAL OF QUEEN VICTORIA—OBVERSE.

BENJAMIN EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

The most striking scene of the series was in 1877, when the Queen again opened Parliament in person. The special reason for this added grace was the fact that Mr. Disraeli had been raised to the peerage. On a night in the summer of 1876 he, without sign of anything unusual being to the fore, walked out of the House

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of Commons never more to pace its floor. When the Queen entered the House of Lords she was always accompanied by one peer carrying the Sword of State in front, another walking behind bearing the Cap of Maintenance. It was known that the first Minister of the Crown, the newly created Earl of Beaconsfield, would at the opening of the Session of 1877 perform the former function. It is not too much to say that interest in his appearance exceeded even that which surged round the coming of the Queen.

Never will fail from memory the sight of Dizzy's face as, robed in the unaccustomed crimson gown, slashed with ermine, denoting the Earl's rank, he marched before the Queen, holding aloft a sword whose scabbard was jewelled after a fashion his soul loved. One of Tenniel's most famous cartoons in *Punch* portrayed Dizzy in the likeness of the Sphinx that looks out across the boundless desert of Egypt. That was the expression, or, to be precise, the lack of expression, he now assumed. He was conscious that all eyes were bent upon him — by his peers on the benches, by the Foreign Ministers, by the ladies in the gallery, by the Commons cooped in at the Bar, probably amongst them — who should say? — Mr. Gladstone. With measured pace Dizzy moved along, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, his countenance inscrutable as the carved stone-work in the desert. If he had been wound up, interior arrangements of springs duly made in order to regulate his motion, he could not have advanced with more automatic step or with less expression on his face.

"HE MARCHED BEFORE THE QUEEN."

THE QUEEN'S LAST VISIT.

The last time the Queen opened Parliament was on the 21st of January, 1886. The circumstances were peculiar. Again, as on the three earlier occasions, a Conservative Ministry was in office. Lord Beaconsfield was dead and Lord Salisbury reigned in his stead. He was at the head of what Mr. Chamberlain in those unregenerate days called "The Stopgap Government." At the General Election, completed just before Christmas, Mr. Gladstone had obtained a majority within two of the combined forces of Conservatives and Irish Nationalists. Instead of forthwith resigning, Lord Salisbury elected to meet the new Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition held the Ministry in the hollow of his hand. At any convenient moment he might turn them out and take their places. The moment was seized during debate on the Address. Mr. Jesse Collings moved the amendment known to history in connection with three acres and a cow. On a division the Ministry were wofully beaten.

It was whilst this inevitable blow was pending that the Queen paid the falling Minister the compliment of appearing by his side on the opening day of the Session. Not since, though the Conservatives have meanwhile enjoyed the longer lease of power, has Her Majesty been seen in the House of Lords. Growing age and physical debility would have precluded desire even had it taken this direction. When in order for Her Majesty to reach the level of the floor of the House of Lords the building of a lift would be necessary there was an end of further conjecture as to her appearance on the opening day.

THE QUEEN'S SUMMARY WRITER.

Although the Queen's personal participation in the business of Parliament was thus intermittent she up to the end showed the keenest interest in its proceedings. Within the last twenty-five years the Parliamentary Summary, the bare skeleton of the older fashion more or less picturesquely clothed, has become a prominent and attractive feature in the morning newspapers. The first Parliamentary Summary writer was Lord North, some time Leader of the House of Commons during the reign of George III. At that epoch Parliamentary reporting, though considerably advanced beyond the stage reached in Dr. Johnson's time, was in an elementary condition. It is

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doubtful whether King George had his morning paper on his breakfast-table. However it be, he commanded the Premier to write him a letter towards the close of each sitting of the House, summarizing the proceedings.

The practice thus established was observed by Lord North's successor, and existed to the last day of the nineteenth century. Newspapers grew and multiplied. Parliamentary reports were, on suitable occasion, extended the full breadth of a page. Summaries of the debate, pictures of the scenes accompanying it, were prepared for readers who had not time or inclination to trudge through the long columns of verbatim report. Just the same, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. W. H. Smith, and Mr. Arthur Balfour, when the long night was drawing to a close, began to write their letter to the Queen, presenting a summary of the night's proceedings.

THE LETTER TO THE QUEEN.

A peculiarity of the anachronism is that the letter shall be written on the Treasury Bench in full view of the House. How this custom was established is evident. In days not more remote than those in which Mr. Disraeli lived, the Leader of the House of Commons was in his place on the Treasury Bench practically from the time the Speaker took the Chair till the cry, "Who goes home?" rang in the outer lobby. If he had letters to write he must pen them there. Accordingly, he took a blotting-pad from the table, laid it on his knee, and proceeded to write with one ear open to the hon. or right hon. gentleman at the moment on his legs.

These letters are bound up with other pages of history written by other makers of it, and preserved in the library at Windsor Castle. Amongst the contributors are Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. W. H. Smith, Lord Randolph Churchill—what a bracketing!—Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Balfour. Presumably, as in the case of Sir Theodore Martin, these living records of Parliamentary episodes are, by special permission, open to the inspection of the historian. Some day, not in ours, they may leap into the light of print for the delight and instruction of the nation.

THE 9TH OF JUNE, 1885.

One of peculiar interest will be found under date the 9th of June, 1885. If precision were observed to the last point it would be marked "2 a.m." On the previous afternoon the House met for discussion of the Budget introduced by Mr. Childers. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach moved an amendment aimed against the increased duties on beer and spirits. He further protested against a slight increase of those death duties, upon the fuller extension of which by Sir William Harcourt he and his colleagues in Lord Salisbury's Fourth Administration are able to build ships and marshal armies. For some hours the proceedings were dull, neither Sir M. Hicks-Beach nor Mr. Childers being orators of the class that thrills a popular assembly. There was no apprehension of a defeat of the Government. The Irish members, a well-disciplined body under the dictatorship of Mr. Parnell, were, largely owing to Lord Randolph Churchill's generalship, in league with the Conservative Party. Still, the Ministerial Whips counted upon a majority of at least a score.

For some hours the House was only half full and altogether listless. Urgent whips were out on both sides. Members trooping down after dinner, the aspect of the Chamber began to change. Towards midnight a whisper went round that the Government were not so safe as they reckoned. At ten minutes to one, cheered by a n-w crowded and excited House, Mr. Gladstone threw himself into the fray. He delivered a magnificent speech. When at half-past one in the morning he resumed his seat the division bell clanged through all the rooms and corridors. For a while the Premier sat with folded arms and flushed brow. Then he suddenly remembered something. His letter to the Queen!

Members were already streaming forth into the division lobby. The Premier snatching a blotting-pad off the table and taking up a square sheet of letter-paper hurried out into the lobby and, seating himself at a table in one of the recesses, rapidly wrote. The passage of the Ministerial host did not afford time sufficient to finish the missive. When the Leader returned to the House he still held the blotting-pad and unfinished letter. Then followed the memorable scene watched with marvel by the admiring throng. The Chamber was full of the bustle and movement, the excited conversation that preludes the announcement of a critical division. It was a quarter to two, and members were still pouring in from either lobby. Ministers on the Treasury Bench and right hon. gentlemen on the Front Bench opposite anxiously looked for sign of cessation at one doorway or the other. Upon the issue depended the fate of the Ministry, in degree

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the destiny of the Empire. The man most nearly concerned, the one with the largest personal stake, went on writing, steadily, rapidly, as if he were seated in his study in the quietness of a summer morning.

Everyone knew he was writing to tell the Queen what was taking place at the sitting. How far in the narrative had he got at the moment when, amid a buzz of sharpened excitement, the Ministerial and the Opposition Whips were observed almost simultaneously making their way through the crowds on either hand? Evidently it was a neck-and-neck race. Which had won? No one could know till, the tellers having handed their record of figures to the Clerk standing at the end of the table, he, on comparing them, would hand the paper back to the Whip whose forces were in the majority.

DELIGHT OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

A loud shout of triumph broke the moment's stillness. Mr. Gladstone looked up from his blotting-pad and saw Lord Randolph Churchill standing on his seat at the corner bench below the gangway wildly waving his hat. The Clerk had handed the paper to Mr. Rowland Winn, the Opposition Whip. Sir M. Hicks-Beach's amendment had been carried, and the Government, defeated on their Budget scheme, must needs resign.

Mr. Gladstone's letter was not finished yet. He had at least to add the figures of the division, notifying to Her Majesty the momentous fact that her Ministers had been routed. He went on quietly writing while the Clerk ran through the Orders of the Day. Then, with the letter and blotting-pad in his left hand, the pen in his right, he quietly moved the adjournment of the House — a step preparatory in such circumstances to announcement on the following day of the resignation of Ministers.

"HE WENT ON QUIETLY WRITING."

KING EDWARD IN OTHER DAYS.

It is probable that with a new century and a new King the Leader of the House of Commons may be relieved from this archaic duty. Even in ordinary times it imposes useless labour on an overworked Minister. In critical epochs, such as that just described, it fulfils the function of the proverbial last straw.

King Edward VII. comes into his new estate with an intimate personal knowledge of Parliamentary life possessed by none of his predecessors. For fully twenty-five years it has had a powerful fascination for him. For ten years following 1875 it was the House of Commons that proved the more attractive for the Prince of Wales. During the turbulent times of Irish obstruction, varied by Mr. Bradlaugh's incursions, his pleasant presence viewing the scene from the seat over the clock in the Peers' Gallery was almost nightly familiar.

He was seated there when Mr. Biggar achieved a Parliamentary feat, exceeding even his memorable performance when, with the assistance of a Blue-book, he made a speech four hours long by Westminster clock. It was on a Wednesday afternoon in the early part of the Session of 1875. Mr. Chaplin had secured the first place on the Orders for a motion dealing with the breed of horses. It excited a good deal of interest in the

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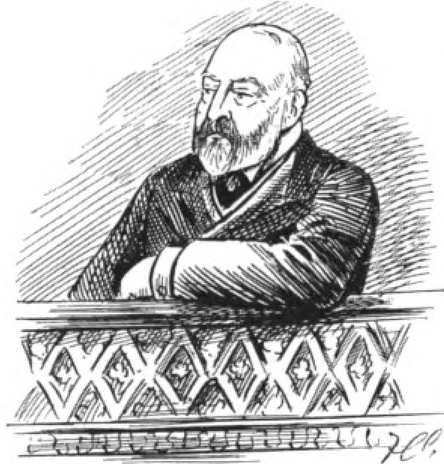
neighbourhood of Epsom and Newmarket. The Prince of Wales came down to hear the debate, accompanied by a retinue of peers. Among other strangers in the diplomatic gallery was the German Ambassador.

It was a great day for Mr. Chaplin, and he was prepared to fill it. Called on by the Speaker, he rose, produced with a flourish from his breast-pocket a roll of manuscript, fixed his eye-glass, complacently surveyed the crowd of listeners, and said, "Mr. Speaker." That was as far as his speech went at this particular stage. From the Benches below the gangway immediately opposite a shrill voice was heard, exclaiming, "Mr. Speaker, sir, I believe there are strangers in the House." The Speaker went as far as was possible to him to evade noticing the interruption. But Mr. Biggar was master of the situation, and few human faces offer an opening exceeding the breadth of his smile as he surveyed it.



THE PRINCE OF WALES IN THE PEERS' GALLERY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

At that time there was in operation the ancient order of a House jealous of its privileged sanctity that upon any member, however insignificant, calling attention to the presence of strangers the Speaker must forthwith, without question put, order their withdrawal. There was nothing for it but that the Prince of Wales, the representative of the German Emperor, the belted earls and barons in the Peers' Gallery, should file forth at the bidding of a gentleman who, when not assisting in the Government of the Empire, was engaged in the pork and bacon business in Belfast.

THE PRINCE OF WALES IN THE LORDS.

Of late years, the House of Commons falling upon dull times, the Prince of Wales was rarely seen in the gallery. But he was the more constant in his attendance on the business of his own House. Whenever an important debate came on in the Lords His Royal Highness was sure to be found at the corner seat of the Front Cross Bench. That is a quarter naturally resorted to by peers of judicial mind. Hence Lord Wemyss affects it, from time to time delivering tremendous tirades from the bench immediately behind that on which the Prince of Wales and the Royal Dukes sit.

THE KING AND PARLIAMENT.

The Prince of Wales absolutely preserved the character of what Lord Granville happily designated the Cross Bench mind. He took no part in debate, and, with one exception, abstained from the division lobby. The exception was found on occasions when the Deceased Wife's Sisters Bill came to the fore. The Prince of Wales frequently presented petitions in favour of the measure. When the motion for its second reading was divided upon he invariably went out in the lobby in support of it, counting as an item in the number of peers who vote "content."

We shall probably never again see in the House of Commons the once familiar figure whose presence used to brighten the Peers' Gallery. Last time a King of England entered the House of Commons was on the 4th of January, 1642. William Lenthall was in the Chair, and Charles I.'s interview with the Speaker was not so satisfactory that His Majesty showed desire to revisit the scene. The Cross Bench in the Lords will never again be occupied by the illustrious person who is now King of Great Britain and Emperor of India. But Edward VII. is not likely to cut himself entirely adrift from the scenes and associations which for a quarter of a century drew him to Westminster as with a magnet. It is probable that for many Sessions to come the barren ceremony of opening Parliament by Royal Commission will give place to the transformation wrought by the living presence of the King.

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From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

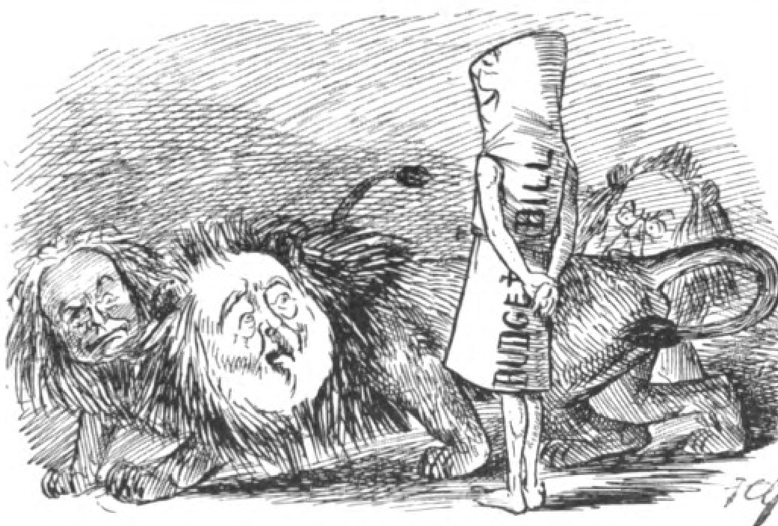
LXIV.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

LORDS AND COMMONS.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN is not an emotionable man. It is consequently difficult to determine whether in criticising the Queen's Speech in the December Session he was more moved by omission of the prayer with which such document customarily closes, or by the absence of direct address to the House of Commons when mention was made of intention to ask for further moneys to carry on the war. The Queen's Speech usually opens with address to "My Lords and Gentlemen" of both Houses. Midway comes a brief paragraph specially directed to "Gentlemen of the House of Commons," in which the question of money is delicately broached. That is formal acknowledgment of the constitutional fact that the Commons are exclusive guardians of the public purse. In all ordinary legislation, Lords and Commons work on a level footing. One may alter or throw out a Bill originating in the other House. But the Budget Bill, involving national expenditure, may not be meddled with by the House of Lords.

There has grown up a curious custom illustrating this distinction and testifying to the secret desire of the peers to trespass as far as is safe upon forbidden ground. Dealing in Committee with a measure involving rating—say, an Education Bill—any peer may, if he pleases, propose an amendment to the Bill as it left the Commons. Also the House may, if the majority see fit, adopt the suggestion. But when after third reading the Bill goes back to the Commons any amendment touching money matters is printed in red ink, indicating that it is merely suggestive in character. If the Commons do not accept it, it is struck out, and there is an end of the matter.



IN THE LIONS' DEN.

In the case of ordinary Bills issuing from the Commons and amended in the Lords, they must go back to the Lords for consideration of the action of the Commons should they decline to agree to the amendments. This necessity does not exist in cases where the Lords' amendments affect the expenditure of money.

THE FOURTH PARTY AND AFTER.

The new Parliament, as far as it has gone, has not developed anything in the nature of an epoch-making party on the model of that Lord Randolph Churchill led twenty years ago. Mr. Labouchere and Sir Charles Dilke occupy the old quarters of the Fourth Party, and alternately lead Mr. McKenna. But the combination is not marked by any of that discipline and system that made the Fourth Party a power.

There was a time when the Welsh members showed a disposition to organize a Parliamentary guerilla force. They had the making of excellent leaders in Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Samuel Evans. As long as their own political friends were in power they showed themselves industrious and vigorous. They had a good deal to do with making Lord Rosebery's Government so uncomfortable that its members rather welcomed than resented dismissal on a side issue. The incentive, dear to the heart of a good Liberal, of opposing his titular leader being withdrawn, the Welsh party fell to pieces and has not been reconstituted.

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SOME ELDER SONS.

In the early days of the last Parliament an interesting little party was formed on the Unionist side. It consisted of Lord Wolmer, Mr. George Curzon, and Mr. St. John Brodrick. Their crusade was limited in its scope and object. They shared in common the calamity of being the eldest sons of peers. Looking ahead they saw the inevitableness of the time when, in the course of nature, they would be withdrawn from the House of Commons and exiled to the funereal regions of the House of Lords. They drafted a Bill designed to avert what they justly regarded as a disaster to their loved mother-land. Its object was to enable a man succeeding to a peerage to sit in the House of Commons if he preferred the place and could get a constituency to accept him.

Crisis befell whilst the Bill was still under consideration. The first Earl of Selborne died and was buried with his fathers. Lord Wolmer became the second Earl, with a seat in the House of Peers. Here was opportunity of putting the question to the test. One night the second Earl of Selborne, escorted by his fellow-sufferers, the heirs to the Barony of Scarsdale and the Viscounty of Midleton, entered the House of Commons. The newly-succeeded peer took his accustomed seat below the gangway. He was promptly challenged by the Speaker, and after brief discussion was driven forth. Keen sympathy was evoked below the gangway opposite, more than one member being generously prepared to take on himself the young heir's hard lot. That, of course, was impossible. Lord Selborne, perforce, took his seat in the House of Lords, and was speedily rewarded by appointment to office that proved a stepping-stone to the post of First Lord of the Admiralty with a seat in the Cabinet.

A PRISONER IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS—LORD SELBORNE.

A SHORT CUT TO THE FRONT.

It is instructive and enticing to note how almost invariably these circlets of independent members lead to high promotion. The Ministerial career of Sir W. Harcourt and Lord James of Hereford dates back to the Session of 1873, when they sat below the gangway on the Ministerial side and girded at Mr. Gladstone. Of the Fourth Party, two members, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Arthur Balfour, became in succession Leaders of the House of Commons. A third, Sir Henry Wolff, rose to high Ambassadorial rank. The fourth, Sir John Gorst, has filled several Ministerial offices with distinction to himself and comfort to his colleagues.

The party of three ten years ago ranking as private members, persons of no importance, have blossomed with equal brilliancy. One is Viceroy of India. The other two have seats in the Cabinet and share control of the two great spending departments of the State.

Mr. George Curzon, it must be admitted, has become a peer before his time. But note his shrewdness and his adherence to the principle at stake when he took part in the conspiracy for the contraband introduction of the Earl of Selborne to the Commons' House of Parliament. Constrained by the usages of the Vice-Royalty to accept a peerage, he selected one on the Irish roll. Thus if, on the term of his Vice-Royalty, Lord Scarsdale is happily still alive, Baron Curzon of Kedleston may, being duly elected, take his seat in the House of Commons.

THE HARD CASE OF MR. GIBSON BOWLES.

A later circlet within the ring of the Conservative Party has not proved as successful as the average in leading its constituent parts on to fortune. The nearest resemblance to the Fourth Party established since its dissolution was that formed in the Parliament of 1892–5 by Mr. Gibson Bowles, Mr. Hanbury, and Mr. Bartley. They followed closely the tactics of their prototype. Ever hanging on the flanks of the enemy, ready to take advantage of any opening of attack, they invested their procedure with attractive variety by sometimes flaunting their pastors and masters on the

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THE RAIDERS—MESSRS. BOWLES, HANBURY, AND BARTLEY.

Front Opposition Bench. They appreciably contributed to the patriotic design of making office untenable by a Liberal Ministry. When that object was secured, they had a right to expect to share the spoils of victory. A bone was thrown to them. Mr. Hanbury was made Financial Secretary to the Treasury. But Mr. Bowles, the most brilliant of the trio, whose business training would have been useful in any Under-Secretaryship, was, in company with Mr. Bartley, left out in the cold.

Contrast with the good fortune of some men, whom extreme modesty could not prevent them from recognising as inferior in capacity, made the disappointment more bitter. When, last autumn, the Ministry was reconstructed after the General Election opportunity offered for redressing this wrong. Lord Salisbury neglected to seize it. It is true that Mr. Hanbury, admitted within the Ministerial circle, was advanced to Cabinet rank, having committed to his charge the only department of State of whose business he knew nothing. Mr. Bartley was offered a knighthood and a salaried post acceptance of which would have necessitated his withdrawal from the Parliamentary scene, and was, therefore, declined. If any overtures were made to Mr. Bowles he, amid a flux of confidence on the topic, preserved rare reticence.

A story current at the Carlton Club, probably wholly imaginative, alleges addition of insult to injury. When a vacancy in the Secretaryship of the Admiralty was created by the supersession of Mr. Macartney, Mr. Bowles (so the story runs) wrote to the Prime Minister pointing out the necessity in the national interests of appointing to the office a man who had practical knowledge of seafaring matters and well-defined ideas on the subject of Navy reform. In due course he received the following reply:—

"Dear Mr. Bowles,—I agree entirely with what you say as to the qualifications of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, and I have appointed Arnold Forster to the post."

TREES ON THE TERRACE.

Last year I ventured to suggest that the Terrace of the House of Commons might through the summer months contribute a desirable flash of colour to the river-side by having its long length varied by tubs or pots of flowering shrubs, after the fashion common enough on the terraces of country houses. The idea rather took on in the House of Commons. But Sir W. Thistleton-Dyer, Director of Kew Gardens, being privately consulted, was rather deterrent. He tells me, what most others have forgotten, that many years ago attempt was made to decorate the Terrace with bays in tubs. After the first Session the trees went to Hyde Park and the tubs to Kew Gardens and never returned. The place was found to be too exposed and wind-swept. But Sir William admits that tubs of flowering shrubs might be set out temporarily, though—and here is where his difficulty comes in—he surmises that they would have to be carried through the building.

That is a misapprehension. There is direct approach to the Terrace from Palace Yard. Nothing would be easier than to convey the shrubs to the Terrace, removing them at the end of the Session. The Bailiff of the Parks, who looks after the flower-beds in Parliament Square, could, on receiving the necessary authority, speedily effect the desirable transformation scene.

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A PENNILESS PREMIER.

For those not personally concerned there is something pleasing in contemplation of the fact that the First Minister of the Crown, the principal agent in the Government of the richest Empire in the world, draws a salary of only £2,000 a year, less Income-tax severely deducted from quarterly payments. This is a fee the manager of a minor railway company would scorn. It is allotted to secretaries of prosperous commercial companies. It is frequently made in a day by operators on the Stock Exchange. Lord Salisbury accepts it with the measure of gratitude dictated by the fact that it is secured to him only by happy accident. As Prime Minister no salary is provided. Lord Cross, having obligingly retired from the office of Lord Privy Seal, the Premier succeeds him.

Some years ago, it being noted that the Lord Privy Seal had absolutely no work to do, the salary was, by rare application of logical principle, abolished. This was a matter of no practical importance to Lord Cross. Nearly a generation back that eminent statesman, finding it possible, to the surprise of some of his friends, to make the statutory declaration that his private means did not enable him to maintain the position proper for an ex-Cabinet Minister, obtained a pension of £2,000 a year. These pensions lapse on reappointment to office. Had Lord Cross drawn the £2,000 a year that pertained to the office of Lord Privy Seal he must needs have dropped the identical sum drawn from the national exchequer by way of pension. He simplified matters by holding on to his pension, and the pay of the Lord Privy Seal lapsed. It has now been revived in favour of the Prime Minister, otherwise unprovided for.

GOT NO WORK TO DO—VISCOUNT CROSS.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT'S SACRIFICE.

This arrangement brings into sharp light the fact of the inadequacy of the payment of Ministers of the Crown compared with the market value of some of them. Had Mr. Gladstone turned his great capacity into any other field than politics, he would have died a far richer man than he was shown to be by the modest disclosure of his will. The case of Sir William Harcourt affords exceptionally precise data for considering the question. When he entered Parliamentary life he deliberately sacrificed an income at the Parliamentary Bar three times greater than the highest salary he received in a year as a Minister of the Crown. His professional income was, of course, regular in its annual accretion; whereas as Home Secretary or Chancellor of the Exchequer he drew his £5,000 only in such years or periods of a year as found him in office. In Opposition he had to live on his private means.

A POORLY PAID PROFESSION.

Lord Hardwicke, challenged last Session with retaining his connection with a stockbroking firm whilst he acted as Under-Secretary for India, frankly explained the reason why. He could not afford permanently to abandon his position in the City for the price of being a few years in office as one of Her Majesty's Ministers.

That is a bluff, businesslike view of the situation. Regarded merely as a means of livelihood the profession of a Minister of the Crown is the most poorly paid open to men of capacity. Mr. Chamberlain is, perhaps, the most striking example of rapid advancement to Ministerial position. He became President of the Board of Trade within four years of taking his seat in the House of Commons. He has during his twenty-four years of Parliamentary life held office for an aggregate of something over ten years. During that time he has drawn about £37,000 in the form of salary, a sum which, had he devoted himself to commercial pursuits, he might have made in twelve months. Probably before he retired from business he achieved that record.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach is bracketed with Mr. Chamberlain in the matter of brief apprenticeship before attaining the full honour of Ministerial position. He, too, sat on the Treasury Bench four years after he entered the House. Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. Ritchie each waited eleven years for promotion. Mr. Gerald Balfour was ten years a private member, and Mr. Hanbury sat on a back bench through twenty-three years. Parents considering "what they shall do with Charles" will do well, if their main

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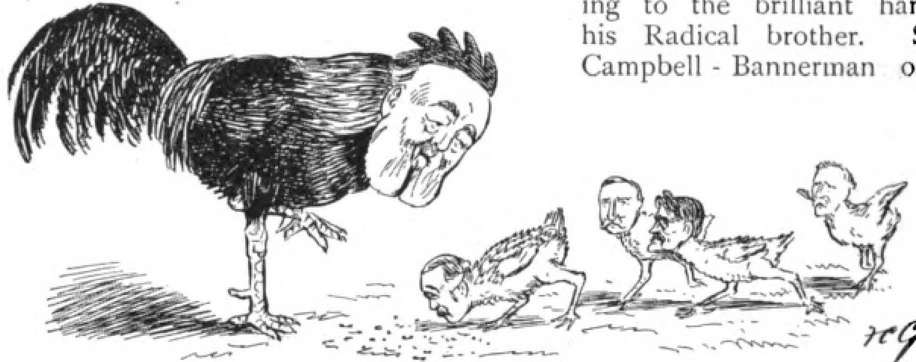
desire be to have his merits adequately recognised in the way of pecuniary remuneration, to think twice before they devote him to a political career.

FAMILY CIRCLES IN THE COMMONS.

Lord Salisbury, among other distinctions, has the largest family circle in the House of Commons. They muster five all told. It is a quiet reproach to much murmuring at the General Election that at least two do not hold Ministerial office. These are his younger son, Lord Hugh Cecil, and his nephew, Mr. Evelyn Cecil.



A FAMILY GROUP.

The nearest approach to this preponderance was reached in the last Parliament by Sir Joseph Pease, who with stern impartiality gave a son to the Liberals and one to the Unionist Party. These balancing each other on a division, Sir Joseph, if he happened to be present at a division (not a matter of course), added one to the strength of the Opposition. Lord Salisbury's family, of course, vote in the same lobby.

Another curious instance of the votes of two constituencies being nullified by distribution of their representation in a single family is supplied by the case of Reading and Salisbury. Mr. G. W. Palmer, the Liberal member for Reading, effaces on a division the vote of his brother, Mr. W. H. Palmer, the Conservative member for Salisbury. The peculiarity of this case is increased by the fact that at the General Election each brother secured his seat by precisely the same majority—239.

Some years ago Sir William Harcourt had a brother on the Conservative side of the House of Commons. It was pretty to watch him, with stolid face, listening to the brilliant harangues of his Radical brother. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman occupies at this day a position identical in this respect with that of his predecessor in the Leadership of the Opposition. On big divisions his vote is nullified by that of his brother, the Conservative member for Glasgow University. Sir James Ferguson has a brother in the House, the relationship being sometimes unsuspected, since his name is Sir Charles Dalrymple. These two vote in the same lobby as do the brothers Balfour, Lord Cranborne and Lord Hugh Cecil, Sir Howard Vincent and Sir Edgar, Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett and Mr. Burdett-Coutts, and the *frères* Redmond. Mr. Tim Healy is left to lament severance from brother Maurice, bereavement accomplished by the General Election.

THE BROTHERS BALFOUR.

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From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

LXVI.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

THE KING AND PARLIAMENT.

IT is pretty certain that when, next year, the King opens Parliament in person, the scene will be moved to Westminster Hall. Members of the House of Commons who took part in the football scrimmage on Valentine's Day this year are not likely to invite further experience of the same kind. When the proposal of Westminster Hall as an alternative stage for the ceremony was suggested, Mr. Balfour, the charges of the war pressing gruesomely upon him, demurred on the ground of cost. Gentlemen of the House of Commons who vote public money will not grudge anything reasonable if it deliver them from the mingled indignity and damage attendant upon their share in the pageant of the new King opening his first Parliament in an infant century.

His Majesty, who, like his Imperial nephew, has a keen eye for scenic effect, instantly approved the suggestion about Westminster Hall. It is certainly worth a modest expenditure to secure such effect as is here possible. Our forefathers, to the remotest verge of recorded history, used the stately building as the scene of historic gatherings. It is true they largely took the form of trials, ending in sentence of death. But that was part of the manners of the day.

"TO SEE THE KING IN HIS GOLDEN CROWN."

The last great trial in this peerless vestibule to the Houses of Parliament was that of Warren Hastings in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Two hundred and forty years earlier Charles I. here sat through his trial, disdainfully conscious of the Royal colours taken at the Battle of Naseby flaunting over his head. Others who have been tried and condemned to death in Westminster Hall were William Wallace, the Duke of Buckingham, Sir Thomas More, and Strafford. Through the eighteen days this last trial occupied Charles I., concealed behind the tapestry of a cabinet, looked on and listened, not realizing that in consenting to the execution of Strafford he was preparing for signature his own death-warrant.

The Hall seems as if it had been specially built with a view to such a ceremony as the opening of Parliament. At the far end the floor is raised by several steps, forming a unique stage on which the King and Queen, being seated, command full view of the multitude in the body of the Hall, themselves conveniently seen from every corner of its vast area. The stage will be approached by the broad corridor and stairway leading from the Royal robing-rooms in the House of Lords.

THE CORONATION BANQUET.

King Edward is not likely to lose sight of opportunity of another revival of historic spectacles that may be added to London's too scanty list. Since the time of George IV. the Coronation Banquet following on the ceremony in the Abbey was always held in Westminster Hall. In the archives of the ancient Port of Hythe there is to this day a musty document giving a lively account of the personal experiences of two barons of the Cinque Port who, in exercise of their privilege, were present at this last banquet.

The series goes back beyond the reign of Richard II. He introduced a picturesque adjunct. Whilst the King and his guests sat at meat in the spacious Hall with which William Rufus dowered the country, the door was suddenly flung open. Amid a blare of trumpets the Royal Champion rode in, clad in armour from head to heel. Flinging his gauntlet on the floor he defied to single combat any who dared dispute the rights of his Sovereign. Thrice the trumpets brayed. Thrice the champion, advancing up the Hall, delivered his challenge. The King pledged him in a silver cup, which he afterwards sent to the champion with gracious command for its acceptance.

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We have still with us Dymokes of Schrivelsby, direct descendants of the Plantagenet Kings' champions. I wonder whether in their Lincolnshire home there is preserved one of these kingly cups?

The Champion, his blusterous entrance, his champing steed, his steel gauntlet ringing on the floor of Westminster Hall, rode away into obscurity long before the prosaic era of the Georges. He is not likely to be revived in the twentieth century. But there is no reason why the Coronation Banquet should not again be spread. To sit at the head of his table, under the very roof of cobwebless beams of Irish oak that were arched over the head of Richard II. on his Coronation day, is an opportunity that will appeal strongly to the imagination of Edward VII.

THE MACE ACCOMPANIED THE SPEAKER.

THE MACE.

In some of the pictures published in the illustrated papers descriptive of the scene in the House of Lords when the King opened Parliament in person the Serjeant-at-Arms is shown standing at the Bar near the Speaker with the Mace on his shoulder. This is an error, which recalls an ancient and interesting piece of etiquette. The Mace was not on view in the House of Lords on February 14th, for the sufficient reason that it was not carried within the portals. It is true the Deputy Serjeant - at - Arms escorting the Speaker (Mr. Erskine, in another honorary capacity, was in personal attendance on the King) bore it on his shoulder in advance of the surging mass of Commoners struggling to obey the command of the King to hear the Royal Speech read. Arrived at the door of the House of Lords the Mace was there deposited, and there remained till the returning procession re-formed.

This procedure is in accordance with the regulation that the Mace is never carried into the presence of the Sovereign. At the Diamond Jubilee, when the Speaker and the House of Commons proceeded to Buckingham Palace to offer their congratulations to Her Majesty the late Queen, the Mace accompanied the Speaker in his carriage. But it was left there when the right hon. gentleman entered the Palace to make obeisance to Her Majesty.

THE LETTER TO THE QUEEN.

In a recent number of THE STRAND, talking about the letter to the late Queen nightly written from the House of Commons by the Leader, I quoted its formula of address as follows: "Mr. Balfour presents his humble duty to the Queen and informs Her Majesty——" A correspondent writes from Sussex: "In reading the lives of Prime Ministers I have often been struck with the singular departure from customary forms shown in the Ministers writing in the third person and putting the Sovereign in the second. For instance, Lord Palmerston, 11th June, 1859: 'Viscount Palmerston presents his humble duty to your Majesty and has the honour of assuring your Majesty,' etc. Again, Lord Russell, 9th June, 1866: 'Lord Russell presents his humble duty to your Majesty. He is,' etc. To take an earlier date, Earl Grey, 8th February, 1831: 'Earl Grey with his humble duty to your Majesty has in the first place again to entreat your Majesty,' etc. I have taken these instances quite at random from the first books I have put my hands on, but there are scores of others down to the end of Lord Russell's correspondence. It would be interesting to know if this rather odd formula had at last been altered."

The formula I cited as pertaining to Mr. Arthur Balfour's letter to the Queen was communicated to me as having been the usage of Mr. Gladstone, and I assumed it was common to all such letter-writers. It will be noted in the interesting compilation of my correspondent that the quaint phrase, "presents his humble duty," is used with whatever variety of the personal pronoun.

UNDER WHICH KING?

The opening of the first Session of the premier Parliament of a new century was fraught with much mental tribulation to Mr. Caldwell. To begin with, there was the title of the King. Edward VII. he called himself, amid the acclaim of the people who had feared the apparition of Albert I. But Scotland, to-day an integral part of Great

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Britain, knew no preceding King Edward, much less six. Whatever His Majesty might be south of the Tweed, he was Edward I. in Scotland. Mr. Caldwell had compunctions about taking the Oath of Allegiance. He yielded with mental reservation he is prepared to set forth in detail at any time the House of Commons may have a couple of hours to spare.

A NICE POINT OF LAW.

Another scarcely less serious difficulty almost simultaneously presented itself. Were Scotch and Irish members secure in their seats in the Parliament elected last October; or must they, within the limit of six months, again go to their constituents? On this point the law seemed lamentably clear. The Reform Act which Dizzy carried through the House of Commons in 1867 provided that thereafter the dissolution of Parliament should not be made peremptory by the demise of the Crown. In the days of the Stuarts the death of the King (unless his head were cut off, when it didn't matter) automatically dissolved Parliament. The inconvenience of this doubly-disturbing event being recognised, an Act was passed in the reign of William III. declaring that an interval of six months should follow between the death of the Sovereign and the dissolution of Parliament. A clause of the Act specifically enjoined that it should not extend to Scotland or Ireland.

AN AMENDMENT BY MR. CALDWELL.

Mr. Caldwell, concentrating his powerful mind on the Act of 1867, was driven to the conclusion that the Act of William III. remains operative in cases of Scotland and Ireland, and that before July Scotch and Irish members must seek re-election.

The ingenuity of the Law Officers of the Crown, one himself a Scotch member, avoided catastrophe. Concurrently with the Reform Act of 1867 separate Bills were passed regulating the Scotch and Irish Franchise. The draughtsman of the main measure, having this exclusively in mind, added the clause limiting the Reform Act to England and Wales. The combined wisdom of the two Houses of Parliament—Mr. Caldwell had not at the time a seat in the House of Commons — overlooking this blunder, it was embodied in a Statute. The Law Officers ruled it was no bar to the existence of the full House elected in October, 1900. But Mr. Caldwell is not wholly content.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED.

Parliament had escape from another dilemma more real and less widely observed. Whilst the law controlling the existence of Parliament sitting at the time of the demise of the Crown is more or less clearly dealt with by Statute, no provision is made to meet the quite possible case of the Sovereign dying during the process of a General Election. It is no secret that the state of the Queen's health in the autumn of last year gave rise to the gravest anxiety in high places. It is not a matter that can be openly stated by a Minister. But the fact is it had much to do with the decision which Mr. Asquith denounced as "hustling the country into a General Election." The strong constitution of Queen Victoria enabled her to rally from the prostration in which the approach to winter plunged her. Had the end come in October whilst the elections were going forward it would have been necessary forthwith to summon the old Parliament, just as, at less than twenty-four hours' notice, Parliament was summoned in January immediately on the death of the Queen.

There was, as usual, appreciable delay in the completion of the election for Shetland and Orkney. Had the Sovereign died in that interval the 669 elections already completed would have been invalid. The old Parliament called together again would have been got rid of as soon as possible, fresh writs issued, and the General Election taken over again. Which shows afresh, with startling novelty, how in the midst of life we are in death.

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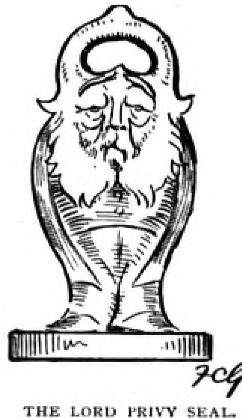
THE LORD PRIVY SEAL.

When, early in the Session, the salary of Lord Privy Seal came to be voted, objection was taken in the House of Commons to Lord Salisbury's selection of that office with conjunction of the Premiership. It was urged in some quarters that he would have done better to prefer the title of First Lord of the Treasury. To Mr. Arthur Balfour, present holder of the office, to whom the criticism was offered, this seemed to partake of the courteous communication made to a Chinese mandarin when his Sovereign desires that he should commit suicide. Ignoring that personal aspect of the question, Mr. Balfour dwelt on the objection that, whereas Lord Privy Seal is highly placed in the Table of Precedence, the First Lord of the Treasury is unknown to that august edict. With the Prime Minister merely First Lord of the Treasury — though, as in the case of the present incumbency, he were Leader of the House of Commons—he must yield precedence to the Master of the Horse or to an Irish Bishop.



THE LORD PRIVY SEAL.

To *nous autres*, unless we are in a hurry to catch a train or exceedingly hungry, it is a matter of small importance whether we leave a dining-room last or enter it first. Amongst our betters it is a question of the highest, keenest interest. Mr. Gladstone, with the weight of the Empire on his shoulders, was never oblivious to it. I remember, at a time when he was Prime Minister, seeing him halt at the door after leaving a dinner-table, waiting for a comparatively unimportant member of his Cabinet to pass out first. The noble lord demurred.

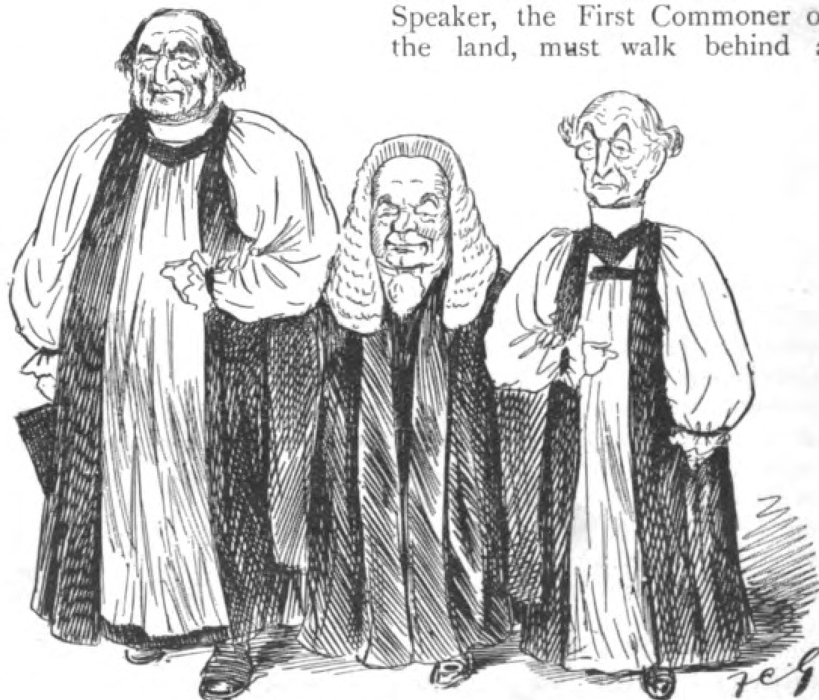
"Yes," said Mr. Gladstone, smilingly, "we are both in the Cabinet, but you are of the baronial rank."

And so the First Minister of the Crown, one of the greatest statesmen of his age, gave the *pas* to the blushing Baron.

SOME CURIOSITIES OF PRECEDENCE.

The order of the Table of Precedence passeth ordinary understanding. Whilst the existence of the Prime Minister is ignored, the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom he has created, comes next to the Royal Circle, the outer rims of which are marked in succession by the Sovereign's younger sons, his grandsons, his uncles, and his nephews. Next to the Archbishop of Canterbury stands the Lord High Chancellor, comforted on the other side by the Archbishop of York. The Lord Chancellor of Ireland, not a correspondingly important person in the Administration, comes third in precedence among Ministers. The Lord President of the Council and the Lord Privy Seal, both minor Ministerial offices, stand third and fourth. The Treasurer of the Household, the Comptroller, and the Vice-Chamberlain, Ministerial posts filled by young gentlemen of good family, to whom a thousand a year is a comfort, take precedence of Secretaries of State under baronial rank.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer sits below the salt. As for the Secretary for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the President of the Board of Trade, and even the Colonial Secretary, the Table of Precedence knoweth them not. The Speaker, the First Commoner of the land, must walk behind a



THE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE.

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marquis's younger son, must even give the *pas* to an Irish Bishop if, on going down to dinner, his lordship can show that he was consecrated prior to the Irish Church Act of 1869.

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY EPHRAIMITE.

The House of Commons, watching with friendly interest the appearance on the Parliamentary scene of the son and heir of Lord Randolph Churchill, observes a curious mannerism in his speech. It is more than hinted at in the following translation of the warrant for the arrest of Mr. Winston Churchill issued after his escape from Boer clutches: "Englishman, twenty-five years old, about 5ft. 8in. high — indifferent build — walks a little with a bend forward — pale appearance — red brownish hair — small moustache hardly perceptible — talks through the nose, and cannot pronounce the letter S properly."

It will be remembered that a similar peculiarity marked another body of fugitives of war. When the Gileadites, under command of Jepthah, took the passes of Jordan, the defeated Ephraimites attempted to cross the river. "And it was so that when these Ephraimites which were escaped said 'Let me go over' that the men of Gilead said unto him, 'Art thou an Ephraimite?' If he said nay, then said they unto him, 'Say now shibboleth,' and he said 'sibboleth,' for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan."

It is certain that had Mr. Winston Churchill fought against Jepthah instead of Mr. Kruger his body would centuries ago have been swept away by the River Jordan.

WILLIAM IV.'S CIVIL LIST.

An examination of the Household accounts of William IV., the system inherited from the Georges, discloses the existence of a number of official personages whose style smacks of the *dramatis personæ* in some of Mr. Gilbert's plays. There was a Gentleman of the Pantry drawing £200 a year; a Groom at £60, and a Porter at £50. Officials of the same rank, drawing something like the same salary, presided in the Wine Cellar, the Ewry, the Spicery, the Wood Yard, the Silver Scullery, the Pewter Scullery, in the composing of Confectionery and in the product of Pastry.

There was a Deliverer of Greens who drew £85 per annum from the taxpayer. There was a Clerk Comptroller of the Kitchen, who ranked as Esquire, and pocketed £300 a year. There was a First Master Cook rated at £237 per annum, and a Second Master Cook who took £20 less. There was a Yeoman of the Mouth, cheap at £138. He was not, as some might think, connected with dentistry, that being a profession apart. There were Master Scourers and Assistant Scourers, and eke a Keeper of the Butter and Egg Office at £60 a year. There were Purveyors of bacon, butter, and cheese, of milk and cream, and of "oisters." There was a Glassman, a Teaman, a Trunk Maker, and a Cork Cutter. Nothing was lacking to the majesty of the Household.

The reforming hand, just beginning to be felt in high places, swept away many of these ancient servitors. Some still remain, preserving the old style, and will be drawing modest salaries in King Edward VII.'s newly-settled Civil List.

A RACE TO THE ALTAR.

To recall the fact that Prince Albert, coming to this country on his bridal errand, drove from Dover to London by road, sharply illustrates the profound changes in daily life brought about within the reign of Queen Victoria. The bridegroom-elect crossed the Channel on January 6th, 1840, and was rudely buffeted by the sea. He was so upset that, in spite of the urgency of his errand, he lay all night at Dover. Setting forth at midday he reached Canterbury at two o'clock next day, halting there long enough to receive an address from the Mayor and Corporation and to attend service in the Cathedral. At half-past nine he resumed his journey, rattling through Chatham and Rochester, where the Mayors and Corpora-

CUPID AS POSTBOY.

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tions stood by the roadside looking for opportunity to present addresses.

Once on the wing the bridegroom travelled swiftly. At New Cross an escort of the 14th Dragoons was in waiting, with orders to conduct His Serene Highness with due state across the Metropolis. The Prince fled from them as if they also had addresses to present, arriving at Buckingham Palace an hour ahead of them. The journey was concluded at 4.30 in the afternoon, the road from Canterbury having been covered in just seven hours.

AN OLDER RECORD.

Among the letters and despatches stored at Hatfield dating back to the spacious times of Elizabeth there are many which still preserve on the envelopes, in faded ink, the record of their homeward journey. One despatch from Sir Robert Cross, "on board Her Majesty's ship the *Vanguard*," is interesting by way of comparison with Prince Albert's historic ride. It is addressed to Sir Robert Cecil, and dated 29th January, 1597. It is indorsed by the writer: "Haste, Haste. Post Haste. Haste. Robt. Crosse." Underneath is the postboy's record, running thus: "At Dover, at seven o'clock at night; Canterbury, past ten o'clock at night; at Sittingbourne, at one o'clock in the morning; Rochester, 30th of Jan., at three o'clock in the morning; Dartford, the 30th day, at half-hour past six in the morning; London, the 30th day, at ten o'clock in the morning."

It will be seen Prince Albert, following the precise route of the sixteenth-century postboy, beat him between Canterbury and London by five hours.

"WHERE IS DAT BARTY NOW?"

Five years ago, at the opening of the first working Session of the Parliament that placed Lord Salisbury in power, a notable document was circulated among the Liberal Opposition. It was signed by a score of members prominent in the Radical wing. Confronted by the accomplished defeat of the Liberal Party at the poll in 1895 they set themselves the task of studying its causes, with a view to regaining lost ground. They came to the conclusion that it pointed to "the necessity of such reorganization of Liberal forces as will evoke and focus on one great question all its fighting energy both in Parliament and in the country."

Having thus admitted that unity was the only hope of salvation to the Liberal Party, the signators proceeded to elaborate a scheme for the creation of a new faction in the Opposition camp. "It has been resolved," so the document ran, "to form a distinctive advanced Radical section in Parliament, and to appeal to the Radical element in the Liberal Party and in the constituencies to carry on an active and energetic campaign in support of the principle herein laid down."

The first principle was that "an advanced Radical section be and is hereby constituted of those members of Parliament who agree to co-operate in independent Parliamentary action for the promotion of Radical principles in legislation and in public opinion." This was a cheering prospect for Sir William Harcourt, who had just undertaken the thankless task of leading in the House of Commons a discredited, disheartened, and, even if united, hopelessly small Opposition.

The new Party did not succeed in establishing any influence in the direction of curbing the autocracy of a bloated Ministry. The intimacy of the Committee Room, where at the outset meetings were regularly held, revealed the painful fact that the Treasury Bench had not a monopoly of wrong-headedness. The new Party gradually dissolved, leaving not a wrack behind, unless we cluster under that word Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. McKenna, who at least continued to sit together on the front bench below the gangway.

A SURVIVAL.

Looking along the benches it is curious to note what a large proportion of those who signed this manifesto in May, 1896, have disappeared from the scene, as it opens with the century on the new Parliament. Among them are Dr. Clark, Mr. W. Allen, Mr. Maden, Mr. Pickard, Mr. Philip Stanhope, and Sir W. Wedderburn. In addition to Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Atherley Jones, and Mr. McKenna, there are still with us Mr. W. Allan, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Samuel Evans, Mr. William Jones, Mr. Lloyd George, and Captain Norton. But there has been no sign yet of resuscitation of "the Radical Party."

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From Behind the Speaker's Chair.

LXVII.

(VIEWED BY HENRY W. LUCY.)

PREMIER AND PRIMATE.

IT is a curious trait in the complex character of Lord Salisbury, one that must give acute pain to his fifth son, that a bishop is never safe in his company. Like Lord Hugh Cecil in the House of Commons, the Premier is a devout man, a strict church-goer, one brought up to reverence the cloth. But he never can resist the temptation to have a shy at a bishop or to trip up a Primate. The passion becomes irresistible when occasion arises in connection with the Liquor Question.

In the last Session of the final Parliament of the century there was a scene in the House of Lords, the pain of which will never fade from the memory of those who witnessed it. A question of amending the Licensing Laws in the direction of discouraging the sale of drink was before the House. The bishops, stirred by desire to improve the social condition of the people, flocked to their quarters below the Gangway, as in wintry weather at sea the gulls gleam about the river bridges. Lord Salisbury had spoken against a motion which stood in the name of the Archbishop of Canterbury. As a rule, his word in the House of Lords is law. On this occasion there were signs of dangerous revolt. The Whips, counting heads, were by no means certain the Government would not suffer defeat. The Primate was visibly touched.

"Although I proposed the amendment," he said, turning beseechingly towards the surly Premier, "I have not at all lost my confidence in the Government."

"The most reverend prelate may say what he likes," angrily retorted the Premier; "what I care for is what he does."

"A SHY AT A BISHOP."

THE BONÂ-FIDE TRAVELLER.

Early this Session there was another difficulty with the bishops, arising out of this same vexed question of the Liquor Laws. The Bishop of Winchester moved the second reading of a Bill putting six miles between the thirsty *bonâ-fide* traveller and his loving cup. At present the law decrees that he may not drink unless he has travelled three miles from his home. Lord Salisbury would have nothing to do with the Bill. With pleased recollections of his prowess on the bicycle when speeding round the quiet glades of Buckingham Palace Gardens, he laughed to scorn the idea that an extra three miles would be a deterrent to the thirsty bicyclist.

"If you have a bicycle," he said, looking at the Lord Chancellor, who has hitherto withstood the fascination of that method of locomotion, "six miles will, especially if you are thirsty, count as little as three."

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"HE WAS SNAPPISH TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK."

He was snappish to the Archbishop of York, who supported the Bill. He was withering in his wrath against the Bishop of Winchester, who had brought it in.

"The object you are seeking to attain," he said, turning upon the Bishop, "is trivial in the extreme. You are proposing to introduce the maximum of disturbance with a minimum of result."

There was a pretty full House, nearly a hundred being present. On ordinary questions such a muster means on a division a Ministerial majority of five, perhaps six, to one. Again, as last year, the Whips brought ominous prognostications of defeat. This was so nearly realized that the Government escaped with a majority of six. If this kind of thing is frequently repeated Lord Salisbury may have to reconsider his position on the question of Disestablishment.

LORDS AND COMMONS.

On this occasion, as on all others when he joins the debate, the Premier justified his reputation as personally the most interesting individual in political life. In the main the House of Lords is a deadly dull place. The dumping-ground of the political world, it contains a considerable stratum of men who have either proved failures in the more active arena of the Commons or, after a more or less useful career, have reached a period of life when labour is but sorrow. They must be provided for, and as there is no room for them in a new or reconstructed Ministry, nor any suitable Colonial Governorship available, they have a coronet clapped on their heads and are sent to the House of Lords.

Beyond this constant stream from backwaters outside the House of Lords has to contend with the fundamental principle of heredity, which does not of necessity imply special ability. Of course, there are exceptions alike in cases of hereditary succession and the introduction of new blood. When, half-a-dozen times in the life of a Parliament, a question of Imperial importance comes on in the Lords the debate, strictly pruned of excrescences, rises to a level higher than that habitually attained in the Commons. But on ordinary nights, in pursuance of average business, it is impossible to conceive a duller assembly than that sparsely gathered in what, from the point of view of acoustics, is probably the most faulty chamber in the world.

A SUPREME MAN.

Over this conglomeration of the commonplace Lord Salisbury's personality coruscates. When he rises all ears are strained to catch his slightest word. A prominent charm in his speeches (the delight of which is not fully shared by his colleagues) is that nobody, certainly not excepting the Premier, knows what he will have said before he resumes his seat. If the vision of the housemaid crosses his mind he must needs follow it up, even though she lead him to throw out a Bill introduced in the other House by a faithful follower, and carried with the assistance of his own Lord Advocate. In the case referred to as happening early in the Session, having risen with no other intention than to flout the Bishop of Winchester and sneer at the Archbishop of York, before he sat down he had committed himself to the principle of local option.

This and other blazing indiscretions are due simply to Lord Salisbury's contempt for his fellow-man. Honestly and unaffectedly

CORUSCATING AND BLAZING.

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he does not know why at least one-half of them exist. Sometimes his withering regard is fastened upon an individual, as was the case with Mr. Disraeli when, fifty years ago, he sat with him in the House of Commons, little dreaming that before the century had entered on its last quarter he would journey home with him arm-in-arm from Berlin. More often it is a class of men that excites his ire. It indicates the breadth of his mind that upon occasion he views with equal ire extreme Radicals and the Bench of Bishops.

AFTER TWENTY YEARS.

Amongst much interesting matter in the "Life and Correspondence of Mr. Childers," recently published by Mr. Murray, there is startling proof of fatal neglect of lessons learned in the Transvaal twenty years ago. In a letter dated 16th February, 1881, Sir George Colley, making the best of the repulse at Laing's Nek, writes: "The want of good mounted troops told very heavily against us, and our soldiers are not as trained skirmishers and shots as the majority of these Boers, who from their childhood have lived in the country to a great extent by their guns, and are used to stalking and shooting deer. Our artillery does not at all compensate for our want of mounted troops. The Boers keep cover too well, and when exposed move too rapidly and in too loose order to give artillery much chance."

It will be seen that this passage might have been written by Sir George White to Lord Lansdowne before he shut himself up in Ladysmith. Possibly a future biographer will be able to find an analogous passage in that correspondence.

Another fact illustrative of the French saying, the more things change the more they resemble each other, appears in this same letter. "The anxiety of the Boers to conceal their own losses is," Sir George wrote, "almost comical." We have not forgotten the Boer bulletins in the early stages of the latest war, wherein, after desperate fights at Magersfontein, Spion Kop, and the like, the British were slain by hundreds, whilst at the most three or five Boers bit the dust.

THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

Ministers who in forgetfulness of Colley's clamour for mounted troops warned off the Colonies with haughty "No mounted men, please," can scarcely be expected to have taken note of another lesson coming down from Majuba days. According to their spoken testimony nothing amazed Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain more than the circumstance of the Orange Free State throwing in its lot with the Transvaal. Sir George Colley knew better.

"I am afraid," he wrote, "there is no doubt the Boers are receiving large assistance from the Free State despite the efforts of President Brand and his Government. It is remarkable how they always cling to the Free State border as a secure retreat in case of reverse."

Thus history repeats itself, and thus are its lessons forgotten.

QUEEN VICTORIA.

In the memoirs published at the time of the Queen's death general testimony was borne by many authorities to Her Majesty's personal share in the daily task of administering the affairs of the Empire. The most striking testimony was borne by Mr. Balfour in his speech in the House of Commons when moving the Vote of Condolence. He told a hushed House how, going down to Osborne on the eve of the Queen's death, he was struck by the vast mass of untouched documents awaiting the coming of Her Majesty. Short as was the interval between her signing the last document and her lying down for her long rest, it was, he said, sufficient to clog the wheels of State administration.

In his official correspondence Mr. Childers preserves many striking proofs of this habit. Queen Victoria was alert on every question of the day, from the dispatch of an army on foreign service to the clothing of the men who composed it, from the selection of a Commander-in-Chief to the distinguishing mark of an Army nurse. On these and all other matters the Queen not only had strong views, but expected them to prevail.

Writing from Windsor Castle on 10th July, 1882, Her Majesty said: "As the last telegrams from Egypt lead the Queen to fear that hostilities may break out at any moment, she wishes to learn from Mr. Childers what force it is intended to send to the East in such an event, and whom he contemplates recommending for the chief command. . . . It must, of course, be conferred on one of the tried officers, assisted by others who have recently been in active service. The Queen wishes to know whom Mr. Childers has thought of, so that she may have time for consideration before being asked for her final decision. Is the transport in an effective state, and have we sufficient horses for performing the duties that will be expected of this branch if an expedition starts? The Queen wishes to be fully informed of each step as matters proceed, and to learn con-

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fidentially the object and nature of any movement towards the East."

If Her Majesty had been *de facto* head of the Army, as she was *de jure*, she could not have been more pertinent or peremptory in her inquiries. The tone of the letter recalls her correspondence with Lord John Russell, which resulted in the dismissal from the Foreign Office of Lord Palmerston, who had in certain despatches presumed to act as if the young Queen were a mere figure-head. It was understood at the time that the historic letter which squelched Pam was dictated by the Prince Consort. If he was her tutor in the matter the letters from the Queen written nearly thirty years later show he had an apt pupil.

THE DISMISSAL OF PAM.

Twelve days later Her Majesty writes from Osborne: "The Queen concludes the Guards will go to Malta in the first instance? She trusts transports, supplies, and a large Hospital Corps with all that is required for the nursing and comfort of sick and wounded will be thought of and provided for. Much as the Queen rejoices to see the rapidity with which the expedition is to be sent she would strongly warn (*sic*) sending them out before all that is required is ready."

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.

In 1880 Sir Garnet Wolseley, primed with lessons dealing with the war in South Africa, was appointed Quartermaster-General. With his assistance Mr. Childers preceded Mr. St. John Brodrick on the path of Army Reform, coincidence between the two epochs being further carried by the fact that the present Secretary of State for War's chief helpmate is fresh home from South Africa, the gleaner of costly experience. Queen Victoria entered with great zest into the War Office proposals, studying each one in detail, writing lengthy letters, acutely criticising and offering practical suggestions.

When the war in Egypt in 1882 was over and Arabi *chassé*, Her Majesty wrote a weighty letter from her holiday home in Scotland. "The Queen is especially anxious that no troops should move in a hurry, as she feels convinced no reliance can be placed yet on the Egyptians, who would, if they had a chance of success, again rise. . . The whole state of Egypt and its future are full of grave difficulties, and we must take great care that short of annexation our position is firmly established there, and that we shall not have to spend precious blood and expend much money for nothing."

If Her Majesty were still alive this letter, with omission of reservation about annexation, might, and probably would, have been addressed to Mr. St. John Brodrick with reference to affairs in South Africa.

THE QUEEN'S RANGE OF VISION.

It was Queen Victoria who thought of establishing a decoration for nurses employed on active Army service. She remembered how, after the Crimean War, Miss Nightingale and a few of the nurses associated with her received a badge, but that was for a special occasion and was very expensive. "The badge or cross," wrote her practical Majesty, "need not be of an expensive nature, and might be worn with a ribbon on the shoulder."

One more quotation will show how quick was the Queen's glance, how wide her sympathies. Early in 1884 it became known that the Duke of Marlborough wished to sell his pictures. At this time Mr. Childers, moving from the War Office, had become Chancellor of the Exchequer. There promptly reached him the following note from Osborne:—

"The Queen understands that the Duke of Marlborough is going to sell his pictures

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and hopes that some of the most important may be bought by the nation."

The hapless Chancellor of the Exchequer, faced by a falling revenue, the charges of two wars, and the certainty of a deficit, did not enthusiastically respond. But the Queen, as usual, had her way.

"INTELLIGENT INTEREST" IN SUPPLY.

On the eve of the Easter recess Mr. Arthur Balfour, standing at the table, lifted his hands in eloquent gesture of despair at the prospect before him. There remained only four days for discussion of the Supplementary Estimates, staved off from day to day by what he delicately described as the "intelligent interest" taken in the Votes by the Irish members. A simple calculation pointed to the conclusion that in further development of that "intelligent interest" fifty-seven divisions might be taken before Supply was voted and the Appropriation Bill brought in in anticipation of the close of the financial year. As a division takes on the average a quarter of an hour for its completion, it followed that fourteen hours and a quarter, perilously approaching the limit of two ordinary sittings, would be occupied simply in walking round the lobbies.

AN ELOQUENT GESTURE OF DESPAIR.

LEGISLATION BY PEREGRINATION.

On the face of it this appears to reduce legislation to absurdity. Its effects spread over a Session is naturally more startling than the limited view taken in this particular instance by the Leader of the House. The last Session of the old Parliament was exceptionally dull. The Irish members, not yet reorganized on the financial basis introduced in the palmy days of Mr. Parnell, were not in spirits sufficiently high to take an occasional spurt in divisions. The total for the Session footed up to 290, a number that will be far exceeded before the close of the present Session.

That means that of the last Session of the last Parliament of the nineteenth century our legislators spent seventy-two hours, just eight Parliamentary days, in walking round and round the Division Lobbies. Regarded as exercise varying sedentary occupation, the performance has its recommendation. It is not calculated to increase the respect of plain business men for the High Court of Parliament.

THE CLOSURE.

The introduction of the closure, an essential condition to doing any work at all in the House of Commons, is itself responsible for increasing the number of divisions. Occasionally a Government proposal, though obnoxious to a section of the House, may get through without a division. The closure is always divided upon. There are some members who boast that they have religiously fulfilled a vow, registered when the closure was carried, that they would always divide upon it, however desirable might be the object it had in view. Thus it comes to pass that, whereas in dealing with an amendment in Committee of Supply one division formerly sufficed, two must now be taken.

It comes about in this way. After much talk the Minister moves "that the question be now put." It rests with the Speaker to decide whether he shall submit the closure. If he agrees there can be no discussion, the House straightway dividing. When members come back from the Division Lobby, the closure being carried, the question under debate at the time it was moved is submitted and a second division takes place. I have said that two are inevitable. If the question before the House be an amendment the divisions may run to three. After the closure has been carried and the amendment negatived, the Speaker puts the main question—that is to say, a particular vote in the Estimates. Whereupon, appetite growing by what it feeds upon, members trudge out for a third lap in the Division Lobbies.

"AFTER DINNER WALK A MILE."

I think I mentioned some years ago how the exercise of passing through the lobbies was systematized by an esteemed member. Mr. Isaac Holden, who by taking thought lived long past fourscore, had among his many rules of life one compelling him to walk a mile immediately before retiring to bed. If he left the House, say at midnight, after a quiet sitting he took his measured mile by circuitous route to his hotel near St. James's Park. If the House of Commons chanced on any night to be

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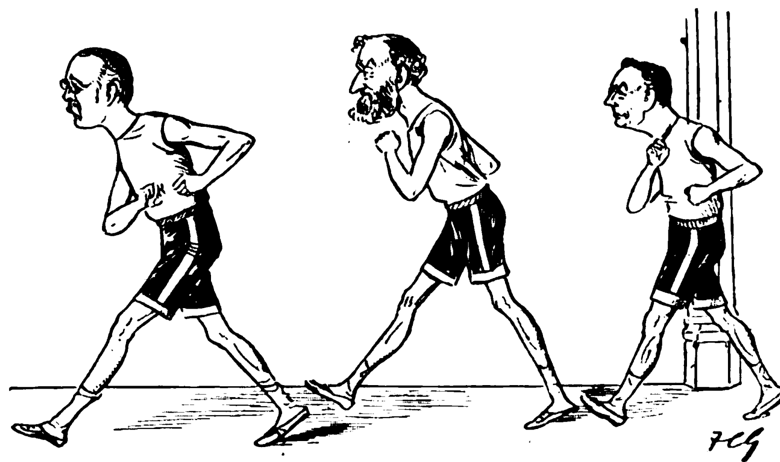
attacked with a fit of divisions, Mr. Holden, being economical of time as he was of all other good things, took his mile, or a portion of it, walking round the lobbies. He stepped their full length, found out how many turns went to a mile, and ordered his way home accordingly.



LOBBY-SPRINTING—WHAT IT MAY COME TO.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS.

Readers of the country papers, who through the Parliamentary Session open their favourite broad-sheet to find a whole page of speeches delivered in the House on the previous night, cannot realize the situation in this respect as it existed when the Post Office took over the telegraphs. Thirty years ago news, general and Parliamentary, was purveyed by the Electric Telegraph Company. That corporation was the Press Association, the Central News, and all the rest of them combined. To-day these agencies have large staffs working on a perfected system, insuring accuracy, fulness, and speed of reporting.

Thirty years ago what was pompously, if not sarcastically, known as The Intelligence Department of the Electric Telegraph Company was composed of four personages. At the head of them was the redoubtable Charles Vincent Boys, who, when the transfer took place, drove with the Post Office a hard bargain from which the Telegraph Department suffers at this day. Incidentally C. V. B. secured for himself a pension on which he snugly lived, dying a year ago in the neighbourhood of his beloved Fleet Street, full of years and honour and good dinners.

The Electric Telegraph Company in his day enjoyed a monopoly. They charged what they pleased, and the rate was so stiff that the wealthiest provincial papers were satisfied with a daily column or two. Whether the world was any the worse off by comparison with the present redundancy of Parliamentary report is an interesting question. To-day, whilst the tendency among the majority of the London papers is to summarize the reports, the country papers let themselves go over a full page report of important debates. Several habitually exceed the length of Parliamentary report supplied by the London morning papers, excepting the *Times*, which in this matter has a special tradition to keep up.

Whatever may be the effect on the intelligence of the public wrought by the cheapening of telegraph rates, there is no doubt it has served appreciably to lengthen Parliamentary proceedings. Most of the wealthy provincial daily papers have their special wire, over which are transmitted full reports of speeches delivered by local members. Formerly these gentlemen, being dismissed with curt paragraphs of the reports in the London papers, and having no special provision made for them by the local journals, did not find it worth while to insist on contributing weighty speeches to current debates. It is different now, and the altered circumstances are responsible for much loquacity in the dinner-hour at Westminster.

The good old times, with C. V. Boys working the Intelligence Department, aided by three assistants, one a stripling of seventy-three, had its compensations.

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