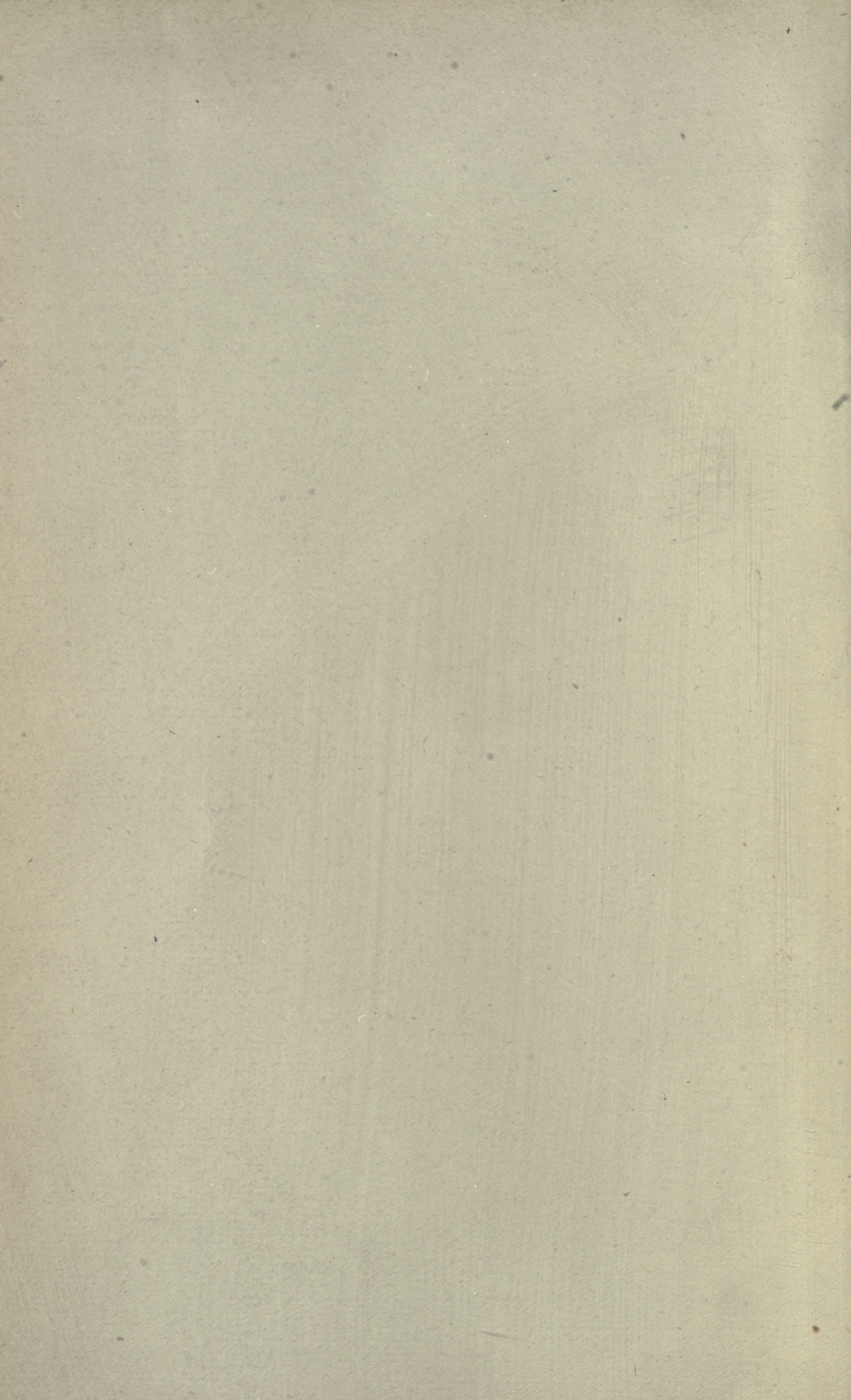






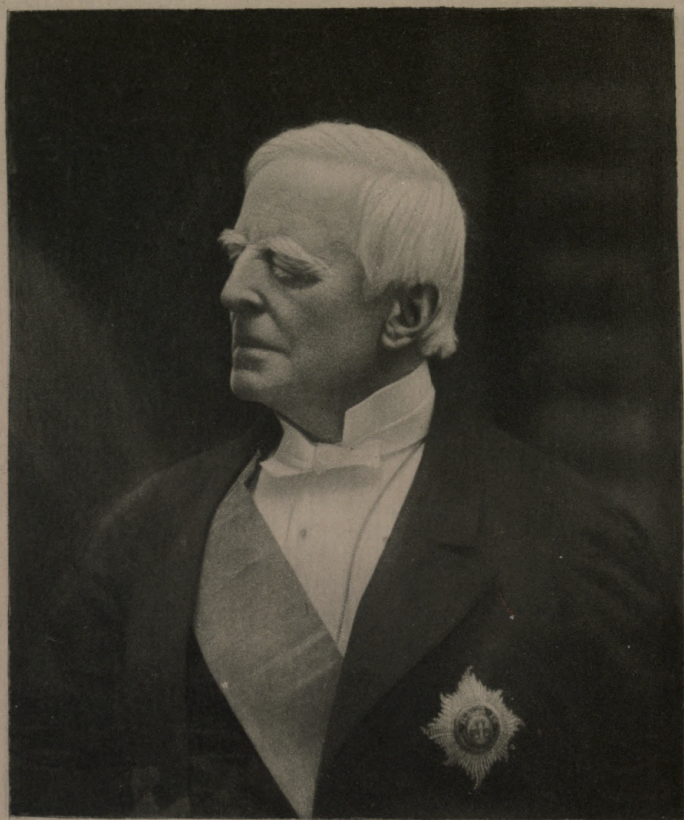
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THE RIGHT HON. ROBERT LOWE
VISCOUNT SHERBROOKE

VOL. II



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Sherbrooke
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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE ROBERT LOWE

VISCOUNT SHERBROOKE, G.C.B., D.C.L.

ETC.

WITH A MEMOIR OF SIR JOHN COAPE SHERBROOKE, G.C.B.
SOMETIME GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

BY

A. PATCHETT MARTIN

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME II.

WITH PORTRAITS

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L I F E
OF
THE RIGHT HON. ROBERT LOWE
VISCOUNT SHERBROOKE

CHAPTER I
IN LONDON AGAIN

(1850-1852)

The Northern Circuit—Speech before the Society for the Reform of Colonial Government—Elected to the Reform Club—Residence in London—Letter to Henry Sherbrooke—the Oxford University Commission

MR. AND MRS. ROBERT LOWE, with their two little charges, arrived safely in London in April or May 1850 after a voyage of some months. At first Mr. Lowe decided to practise at the English Bar, no doubt considering, from his marked success in Sydney against legal gladiators of no mean prowess, that he would be able to hold his own fairly well in England. He accordingly took chambers at 2 Paper Buildings, Temple, and joined the Northern Circuit. I am indebted to Mr. Moberly Bell, of the *Times*, for the following anecdote, which was told to him by the late Judge Wallis, at one time editor of the *Tablet*. It is, perhaps, only fair to the reader to add, that when Lord Sherbrooke handed me Mr. Moberly Bell's letter, he remarked: 'I have no recollection of this

whatever.' But it would be very possible for such an incident to have passed from the mind after forty years, especially as the victim of this would-be 'boycott' was always unable to see to the right or left of him; nor would he be likely to remember that a pleasant young stranger on one or two chance occasions had engaged him in agreeable conversation. However, these are the words in which Judge Wallis recorded the circumstance of his first meeting with Lord Sherbrooke:—

'Somewhere in the fifties, about 1850-52, I was one of the youngsters who went the Northern Circuit. Coming in one day late to dinner (as I often did), and looking for a place, I saw a white-haired man with a vacant chair each side of him. I sat down and got into conversation with my neighbour, whom I found pleasant.

'The next day the same thing occurred—the same man was seated alone, and I sat by him. We again talked; I was charmed with him, but hadn't an idea who he was.

'Next day X——, who was one of the seniors on circuit, sent for me and said:—

"Look here, Wallis, I wish to warn you as a friend that this won't do. You are a youngster and have got to make your way, and we can't stand you deliberately pitting yourself against the whole circuit."

'I assured X—— that I hadn't the least idea to what he alluded, and he replied:—

"Why, you not only sat next to that Bob Lowe, but you actually talked and drank wine with him. Now, you *must* know that the circuit won't stand this; the man comes here, and on the ground of colonial experience acts as if he were a senior, and the circuit will have nothing to do with him."

'I replied: "I didn't even know his name till now, still less all the rest you tell me, but I tell you that he is the longest-headed man at the table, and if you don't admit it now, you will some day."

'I never met "Bob Lowe" since,' added Judge Wallis, 'but he has made and unmade half the men who were then on circuit.'

Some corroboration of Lord Sherbrooke's brief activity at the English Bar is afforded by the following letter, which he received about this time from a relative of the 'Australian patriot,' William Charles Wentworth.

G. Wentworth to Robert Lowe.

Sydney : Jan. 31, 1851.

My dear Mr. Lowe,—I have written you by this mail officially—I now address you privately. Fisher has received a letter from his brother, a barrister, and also, I believe, a reporter, in which most flattering homage is rendered to you by a stranger; who says that you have electrified the Bench, Bar, and audience by your eloquence in a prosecution on the Northern Circuit; and that you will become a distinguished leader in the criminal line. This you know I predicted to yourself, and I hear since the creation of the County Courts that the criminal is the best paying branch, at least upon circuit. I most heartily rejoice and congratulate you.

In concluding, I will tell you a singular story.—George Kenyon Holden, whom you may remember to have been a very quiet and rather spooney fellow than otherwise, proposed at our last meeting to open a communication with the President and two Houses of Congress of the United States! Dr. Lang opposed it: the very discussion shows how the wind blows. The colonisation of Western America—the opening the Isthmus of Panama—will have an immense effect in developing these colonies. Meantime, California has nosed our grievance! America will aid us in abating it.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

G. WENTWORTH.

What Mr. Wentworth meant by writing 'officially,' is not at all clear. Lord Sherbrooke preserved no correspondence of that kind, either with Mr. Wentworth or any other person in Sydney. But it is more than likely, as in the case of many another home-returning colonist, that before quitting the shores of Port Jackson, Robert Lowe assured some of his political and personal friends that he would consider himself as holding 'a waiting brief' on their behalf with

regard to impending constitutional changes in the colony. Earl Grey was at this time actively engaged in framing a new Constitution for the whole of Australia; and the squatter party in New South Wales, in complete alliance, as we have seen, with the old Crown officials, were doing their utmost to make this new Constitution the servant of their own ends. It was the supremacy of this newly formed colonial oligarchy which, politically at least, was the determining cause of Robert Lowe's removal to London.

In quitting Australia he by no means dropped his active interest in colonial affairs. It was, indeed, his opinion that he could better withstand the impolitic measures of the Colonial Minister, and the misleading advice that was being tendered to him by the dominant party in Sydney, by taking up his residence in London, than by remaining a member of the Legislative Council at Sydney. We accordingly find that his first public appearance in London was at a meeting of the Society for the Reform of Colonial Government on June 1, 1850. On this occasion he delivered a remarkable address on Earl Grey's 'Australian Colonies Bill.' This address was afterwards republished as a pamphlet, bearing on the title-page the words, 'By Robert Lowe, Esq., Late Member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.'

In republishing Lowe's speech, the Society for the Reform of Colonial Government—of which Sir William Molesworth was the moving spirit—gave the following explanation of its course of action: 'The Government declared that they had been overruled by the opinion of New South Wales in the construction of their Bill; and *Mr. Lowe's speech is the latest, most explicit and authentic statement of that opinion.*'

It would thus seem that it was Robert Lowe's opportune reappearance in London which caused this particular general meeting of the Society to be called. The members were invited to be present, 'at the rooms, Charing Cross, for the purpose of hearing an address from Mr. Lowe, a member of the Legisla-

tive Council of New South Wales, in relation to the Australian Colonies Bill now before the House of Lords.'

This meeting was what the reporters invariably describe as a crowded and brilliant assemblage. There were present: Sir William Molesworth, M.P. (in the chair); Dr. Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford; Earl Talbot; Lord Monteagle; Lord Wodehouse; Lord Lyttelton; Lord Naas, M.P. (afterwards Earl of Mayo); Mr. Stafford, M.P.; Mr. Adderley, M.P.; Mr. Ker Seymour, M.P.; Mr. Campbell, M.P.; Mr. Simeon, M.P.; Mr. E. Denison, M.P.; Mr. Vernon Smith, M.P.; Mr. E. Dundas, M.P.; Mr. Adair, M.P.; General Briggs, The Hon. W. Wrottesley, Mr. Clifford, Mr. De Salis, Mr. F. A. McGeachy, Mr. C. Logan, Mr. W. Barnard, Mr. Bigge, Sir Claude Wade, Mr. J. Hutt, Mr. H. Denison, Mr. Parker (11th Regt.), and many others 'interested,' as the phrase goes, 'in colonial questions.'

It is noticeable that throughout the whole of this address Lowe spoke not merely from a colonial point of view, but as an actual colonist. He began his carefully thought out and very lucidly expressed discourse in these words:—

Before I proceed to make a statement, which I understand it is the wish of this meeting I should make, with regard to the opinions of the Australian colonies themselves upon the measure now pending before the House of Lords, I cannot as an inhabitant of, and deeply interested in, those colonies refrain from returning in their name my humble but very sincere thanks to the gentlemen I see around me, for the enlightened and noble stand they have made in this country on behalf of the great principles of colonial freedom. We are so unused in those colonies to have sympathy expressed for us—we are so little accustomed to have our opinions regarded—that such demonstrations of feeling towards us as I have found are not merely surprising—they are really overpowering to minds, like ours, long disciplined in the trammels of Colonial Office subjection.

It is very difficult for anyone who has lived only in the mother-country to understand the point from which the colonies view this question. In the mother-country any question as to changing political organisation is the question of changing the governing body. In the colonies, the governing body in its high and paramount sense

is the Colonial Office,¹ and the question of local organisation is only a question of subordinate powers. So that in the colonies public feeling is not directed so much to questions of internal polity, as it would be in a country like this, but rather to foreign control, if I may so call it—that is, to relations with the mother-country. In other words, the greatest amount of political feeling and public sympathy is enlisted in the colonies against the centralising power of the Colonial Office. The question of questions in the colonies is not the form of their internal polity, but the management of their own local affairs by their own local authorities. . . .

They feel, at present, so hampered and restricted by the system prevailing in the Colonial Office, that I do not overstate the general feeling when I say it would be more acceptable to the Australian colonies if the Governor of each colony was armed with absolute executive and legislative power, that such a government, if attended with the delegation of full authority to settle at once upon the spot all local questions, would be more acceptable than the freest system of government which the ingenuity of man could devise, clogged with the restrictions and hampered with the interventions to which the present mode of colonial administration is subject.

After this somewhat elaborate prelude, Mr. Lowe proceeded to give expression to what he termed ‘the opinion of the more enlightened and impartial colonists’ on the question of a bi-cameral legislature. It seems very singular that Earl Grey, in laying the foundations of the Australian Constitution, should have set his mind so firmly against a second or upper House : he not only did so in 1850, but, as may be seen from his correspondence with Sir Henry Parkes in 1874, he retained his objections to a bi-cameral legislature long after it had been established in all the colonies. Earl Grey’s ideal legislature for a self-governing colony was a single legislative Chamber consisting partly of elected members and partly of Crown nominees, or of a limited number of life members chosen by the House itself. Robert Lowe, as we have seen, had been both a Crown nominee and an elected or ‘popular’ member of the Legislative Council at Sydney ; and he therefore spoke to Sir William

¹ It should be remembered that these words were uttered before the establishment of responsible government in Australia.

Molesworth and his fellow reformers of colonial government as one having authority on this crucial question.

In the first place, I am enabled to state without the slightest fear of contradiction that, notwithstanding all that has been alleged to the contrary in the House of Commons, there is no feeling whatever in the Australian colonies against the existence of two Chambers *as such*.

Mr. Lowe then proceeded to criticise in his more incisive manner the system of having in a single Chamber two distinct orders of members, the nominee and the popular representative. It was this which Earl Grey thought such an admirable device for checking hasty and unwise measures ; far better, he argued, than the second or upper Chamber, because the check ' might be much more usefully applied within than without.' Those who do not care at this late day to peruse Earl Grey's laboured apology for his colonial policy will find the whole kernel of the matter put in a couple of letters which he wrote to Sir Henry Parkes in 1874.¹ They are the views of one of the ablest of political theorists ; of one who, without possessing any practical experience or personal knowledge, is prepared to solve the problem from his ' inner consciousness.'

It is refreshing to turn from Earl Grey's writings and speeches to the clear common-sense criticism of Mr. Lowe, with his years of actual colonial experience :—

If there be any one institution which tends to bring the Home Government into collision with the colony, to disturb the action of the constitutional system, to throw discredit upon public men, to introduce discord into the public Councils, and to create every disturbance which it is desirable to exclude from the deliberations of a Legislative Assembly, it is the institution of Crown nominees. I speak with some degree of certainty on this subject, because I have had the honour of filling that office myself, and of resigning it because I found it impossible, whatever I did, to fill it to the satisfaction of my own conscience and at the same time to the satisfaction of others. For instance, if I voted with the Government I was in danger of being reproached, as I have been on one or two occasions,

¹ See *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*, vol. i. pp. 315-25.

by representative members as a mere tool of the Government, and not, according to the theory of the Constitution, acting for the colony at large; and if I took the opposite course and voted with the Opposition, as I did on most questions, I was reproached by the officials as a traitor to the Government. In fact, I was in this position—if I voted with the Government, I was taunted with being a slave; and if I voted against them, I was taunted with being a traitor. . . .

The position of nominees is one full of anomalies: they represent nobody; yet they have not the slightest affinity to an aristocratic institution. They are the scapegoats of the Constitution, the target for every attack, the butt of every jest.—Ignominy and obloquy rain thick upon them; and when it is asked whether the colonies have materials for a second Chamber, the question may, I think, with more propriety be put—Can they have materials for nominees? Can they have people so paramount in talent, so independent in property, so conciliatory in manner, so combining all sorts of contradictory attributes, that they can hold this invidious office without exposing themselves to the sort of treatment to which I have alluded?

Mr. Lowe then proceeded in a very marked manner to refer to the discussion which had taken place between himself and Wentworth a year or so before in the Legislative Council.¹

Out of this miserable institution [Crown nominees] arose the dispute as to two Chambers. This question was argued between myself and Mr. Wentworth, a gentleman of great talent and influence in New South Wales. He was in favour of a single Chamber; I supported a double Chamber—neither of us on the abstract merits of the question. We never dreamt that the Home Government would sanction the principle of two elective Chambers. The only question was—Where will the nominees do least mischief? Mr. Wentworth said if the nominees were separated from the elected members and placed in another Chamber, the result necessarily must be that they would have a veto upon all the proceedings of the elected body, and that they might stop the legislation of the Lower House. I admitted that that was true: but I contended, upon the other hand, that there were compensating advantages to be derived by getting rid of the nominees out of the Lower House. I argued this question upon two principles. I contended, in the first place, that if the Lower House were exempted from the presence of nominees the check of the representatives of the people over the public purse—the public

¹ See vol. i. p. 375.

expenditure—would be infinitely more efficient. I showed, with some justice, I think, that it was the public purse which in all Governments draws after it substantially the powers of legislation. I contended, in the second place, and I still adhere to the opinion, that by the presence of a large phalanx of nominees the representatives of the people were in many cases effectually gagged against the expression of any opinion at all. . . .

Neither Mr. Wentworth nor myself ever touched, or dreamt of touching, the question of two Chambers *per se*.

This system of nominee members sitting side by side with elected representatives in a single Legislative Council was abolished when representative government was conferred on the Australian colonies. But we see a survival of it in New South Wales and New Zealand, with their nominee upper houses. Sir Henry Parkes, in his lately published work, has done good service in showing the abuses to which this system is liable, and to which, no doubt, the despatches that have passed between Lord Ripon and Lord Glasgow, the Governor of New Zealand, would furnish a suggestive commentary. Nothing, at all events, can be clearer than that Lord Sherbrooke, after his eight years of colonial experience, was opposed to nomineeism in any and every form.

‘Why,’ he writes to Sir Henry Parkes in 1853, ‘have a nominated Council? Opinion in this country is in favour of two elective Councils, the upper one to be for a longer period, of more mature age, chosen from larger districts, and going out one-third at a time, so as to have a more permanent element in it. I trust that before you receive this letter the colony will have shown that, having shaken off the interference of the Colonial Office in its affairs, it is not going to load itself with fetters of its own forging.’

Before this letter was written, however, Mr. Lowe had found more effective ways of spreading his convictions on the subject of colonial government than by delivering addresses even to so intelligent a body of reformers as that over which Sir William Molesworth so fitly presided; for he had joined

the staff of the *Times* as a leader writer, and sat in the House of Commons as member for Kidderminster.

It is perhaps advisable to linger a little longer over this first public address delivered by Mr. Lowe after his return from Australia, which displays so much insight into the political problems of colonial communities. The old difficulty, however, presents itself of how fairly to present the substance of such an address without quoting the whole of it. There has surely never been a public speaker since the advent of parliamentary government with so much matter and so little mere verbiage.

In a most pregnant passage Mr. Lowe explains the essential difference between the old American territorial colonies, which were in reality corporations, and the more recent settlements such as the Australian communities. He shows how the former possessed the power of making bye-laws upon the condition that these 'should not be repugnant to the laws of England.'

'In the slovenly manner (he continues) in which colonial affairs are managed, that term has been subsequently transferred into Acts of legislation for new colonies without defining *what* laws of England are meant.' He then proceeds to show by illustrations from his own experience in New South Wales that, owing to this confusion, various purely local enactments were vetoed by the Colonial Office, and other Acts, with which the Legislative Council had no right to meddle, as they were of an Imperial character, were allowed to pass unheeded by the authorities in Downing Street. The circumstances have, of course, so entirely changed in forty years in Australia that a considerable portion of this address has become obsolete. It would therefore be worse than idle to reproduce all the arguments so skilfully brought forward to show how, under the proposed franchise, both the higher and the lower classes of the community would be excluded; these two classes were (he explained) the pastoral tenants or squatters and the incoming

tide of free untainted immigrants. This state of things has entirely passed away; but Mr. Lowe's explanation of these anomalies must have convinced his hearers that the task of legislating for Australia was beyond the capacity of the Colonial Office. Mr. Lowe had much to say, also, as to the domination of the ex-convict or Emancipist party, which, happily, is also now a thing of the past. He next attacked Lord Grey's premature proposal to create a Federal Government of Australia. It surely says much for the Earl's political vigour and activity that he should have thought in those early days of doing for the Australian colonies that which they have not yet been able to do for themselves. It is something more than curious to peruse, after a study of the interesting but futile proceedings of the Sydney Convention of 1890, the following passage in Lord Sherbrooke's address of 1850 against Earl Grey's well-meant but premature attempt to federate the Australian colonies, so to speak, out of hand:—

One word as to the Federal Government. I have never met with any man in Australia who thought such a system practicable. It is treated there as an absurdity, an opinion in which I entirely concur. In the first place, it would be attended with immense expense. If you have an appropriation of money for the purpose, you must have officers to look after the money. You will have in fact two Governments to maintain and pay for. In the next place, the Federal Government will represent nothing. There is no intercolonial feeling at all, or hardly any. The colonies have no foreign policy. They know the mother-country, but of neighbouring countries they know nothing. They have no community of feeling, and I believe they have little community of interest.

At the time they were spoken, these words were literally true. In forty years these various colonial communities have developed, and their political and commercial interdependence is now to some extent realised; but in these short, crisp sentences, spoken so many years ago by Robert Lowe, we may find the actual reason of the tardy consummation of Australian federation.

Towards the close of the address, Mr. Lowe reiterated his arguments in favour of a legislature of two Chambers. He did not, he explained, advocate an Upper House 'upon the aristocratic ground.' There was ample material, he thought, in the colonies to furnish members of an Upper House. In all civilised communities there are persons of sound judgment and right feeling who, in one Assembly, would not think of opposing a measure proposed by a man of briskness and energy; but in another Chamber might be able to make valuable suggestions of the greatest utility. Men would choose their Chamber as a barrister chooses his Court. He did not wish to see any difference in franchise, or that the qualification for the second Chamber should be higher than for the first. There might be greater maturity of age required, or the members might sit for a longer period and go out in rotation. Then followed a remark which bespoke the possessor of that invaluable but indefinable commodity—colonial experience:—

A high pecuniary qualification is not an aristocratic institution in a colony, but quite the reverse. The qualification in New South Wales is very high, and keeps out many intelligent men, but it does not prevent the presence on the Council of two members notoriously insolvent and not possessing any land. The solution of the colonial problem is to give full powers of local government with an explicit reservation of Imperial powers.

The reason for dilating at such length on this address to the colonial reformers of 1850 is the feeling that many intelligent persons would like to know how Lord Sherbrooke regarded the political problems presented by the Australian community, when they were quite fresh in his mind just after his return to London. If further excuse were needed, it may be found in the fact that of the questions treated in so clear and masterly a way, more than one remains to this day unsolved. As Sir Henry Parkes appositely reminds us, some of the colonies are still vexed with nominee representatives; the great southern group of English-speaking states

still remain divided, and in a sense hostile communities; while the wider question of the permanency of the tie between the mother-country and the colonies is precisely in the same state as it was when Lord Grey was Colonial Minister, and Mr. Robert Lowe a newly returned colonist from the shores of Port Jackson.

We sometimes hear of the 'schoolmaster abroad;' in this instance he had come home. Of those who listened to Mr. Lowe's speech on the Australian Colonies Bill, a large number took an active and intelligent part in the debates in the two Houses of Parliament. So energetic was Mr. Lowe himself, that he petitioned to be heard at the Bar of the House of Lords. Lord Monteaule supported the petition, but the House declined to grant it. Bishop Wilberforce was particularly vigorous in dissecting the clauses of the Australian Colonies Bill; and it is noteworthy that he stoutly contended for two elective Chambers, as did his friend Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons. In the course of his reply to the eloquent Bishop, Earl Grey made a pointed attack on Mr. Lowe, clearly showing whom he regarded as his inspirer. Dr. Wilberforce also denounced the proposed Federal Council. Lord Lyttelton and Lord Wodehouse, as well as Lord Monteaule, moved or supported amendments. Later on, Lord Naas, afterwards Earl of Mayo, the brilliant but ill-fated Governor-General of India, displayed great interest on the subject of Colonial reform. All of these had been listeners to Mr. Lowe's masterly address, and it would seem that they had profited by it. In a very short time Robert Lowe was able to expound his views on this and all other public questions in person at St. Stephen's; but there can hardly be a doubt that his first public address made a strong impression among an influential and active section of English public men.

In recording the passage of Lord Grey's Australian Colonies Government Bill through the Commons, Mr. Rusden, the

Australian historian, adds: 'It attracted more attention than Australia has received since Pitt annexed it to the dominions of the Crown.' But Mr. Rusden fails to observe how much of this parliamentary 'attention' had been created out of doors by the activity of the newly-arrived ex-M.P. for Sydney.

Robert Lowe was, indeed, so far at least as Sir William Molesworth and his brilliant band of colonial reformers were concerned, the 'lion' of the London season. I am indebted to the late venerated Bishop of St. Andrews for a number of interesting communications from a layman of his diocese, Mr. Allan Macpherson, of Blairgowrie, whose pride it is to have been one of the worthy pastoral pioneers of Australia. In 1850, Mr. Macpherson was in London and attended the meeting at which Robert Lowe delivered his luminous and comprehensive lecture. Although associated with the pastoral interests of New South Wales, which Lowe had so strongly attacked, Mr. Macpherson, like many of the genuine, hard-working, cultured squatters, as distinguished from the mere financial speculators and land gamblers of that time, recalls with appreciation and even enthusiasm Lord Sherbrooke's remarkable colonial career. 'As a barrister, a man of letters, and a member of our old Legislative Council in Sydney, he was alike distinguished. Even then, he was in the truest sense a scholar, a statesman, and an orator; he had, naturally, therefore, friends, admirers, and enemies.'

Mr. Macpherson in the same letter recalls Lord Sherbrooke's early public appearances in London in connection with the Society for the Reform of Colonial Government.

'The last time (he writes) I had the honour of seeing and hearing Lord Sherbrooke was at a whitebait dinner at Greenwich in June 1850, when there were present many well-known friends of the colonies, who have nearly all passed away; amongst others the Bishop of Oxford, Lord Monteagle, Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Adderley, Sir William Molesworth, and

Mr. Joseph Hume. The speech of the evening was undoubtedly that of the then Mr. Robert Lowe.'

It would seem clear that almost from the first Lord Sherbrooke must have looked forward to a political career in England. On June 4, 1850, 'Robert Lowe, Esq., Barrister-at-law, of 6 Suffolk Street,' was nominated to the Reform Club. His proposer was Mr. Robert Biddulph, an old friend of his mother's family; and his seconder, Lord Marcus Cecil Hill, M.P. He was very promptly elected on June 20, and remained for over twenty years a member of the great Liberal Club. His residence at Suffolk Street was very temporary, for before the close of the year Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lowe had become the tenants of the house No. 6 Eaton Square.

Very early in the following year Lowe wrote a letter to his brother (then Henry Sherbrooke, the squire of Oxton) which shows still more clearly that he was closely watching the movement of public affairs, and, perhaps, already contemplating an active political career in England. Apart from its biographical interest, the letter throws light on the political complications of the time, particularly with regard to the attitude of the landed gentry on the great question of Protection, which their leaders, Lord Derby (then Lord Stanley) and Mr. Disraeli, were about to abandon. Robert Lowe's elder brother (like Mr. Gladstone's) belonged to the opposite political camp to himself; but the following singularly frank and outspoken letter, written though it be, not only from a free trade but from a broadly Liberal standpoint, discloses his deep-seated dislike of demagogueism, and his clear apprehension of the duties, as well as uses, of a landed gentry.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton (H. P. Lowe).

2 Paper Buildings : February 28, 1851.

My dear Henry,—You will see by the *Times* that your hopes are nipped in the bud. Lord John returns to power as is generally supposed free from the Greys, with a fresh Budget and a new

and much more stringent measure on Papal aggression. The second article is by a friend of yours—I hope you like the swagger and bounce of it. I condole with you on your defeat, for which I am really very sorry, and still more so to hear that you had made yourself ill by your exertions. If you country gentlemen are not heartily sick of Protection, it is time you were. It puts men of no standing, who make promises to the farmers to realise which would require a state of things little short of Communism, in the place of noblemen and gentlemen. It renders you so powerless in Parliament, that your leader, Lord Stanley—though perfectly willing to give us Protection—could not find any man of talent or character who would incur the discredit of joining him.

If you are determined always to be a cypher and never to have your case fairly examined, you have only to go on as you have begun, and when you have handed over the counties to tenant-farmers and the boroughs to ultra-democrats, you will begin to see that the Constitution requires that the landed gentry should not ostracise themselves. The Government have gone out under circumstances of the most discreditable kind. Never was a fairer opportunity, and yet Lord Stanley—by no means a timid man—has not dared to form a Ministry or to dissolve. The question is, therefore, lost, and the sooner you treat it as such, the better for you. As to North Notts, nothing would please me personally, in a selfish point of view, better than to see you returned. In my situation such an event would be very advantageous, as your position in London would give me a weight which I do not and cannot hope otherwise to possess. But, nevertheless, I must candidly say that, with your health, your habits, and your estate, I think you would be making a very great sacrifice by going into Parliament, for which you could hardly obtain any equivalent, more especially if you went there neutralized and deprived of all influence or power of political action by anticipation, by being pledged, as of course you would be, to the defunct cause of Protection. I repeat, selfishly I should be delighted, but for your own happiness, I should not venture to advise such a step. As for myself, if I had the good fortune to occupy the position or to hold the opinions which would commend me to that or any other respectable constituency, I should be delighted to enter the House and give up my time wholly to politics. But as that is not the case I must even be content with my own station, and console myself with being tolerably well off as times go.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

On the day when Lowe penned the above letter, Greville records in his invaluable and always interesting *Journal*:

‘Met Gladstone yesterday morning. From the tone of his conversation, his negotiation with Stanley must have been very short indeed. . . . Great excitement at night, and the Whigs in extraordinary glee, foreseeing the restoration of John Russell and his colleagues.’

On March 2, Greville makes this entry, after going to the House of Lords: ‘The impression on my mind was that Stanley was sick to death of his position as leader of the Protectionists, and everybody agrees that he has been in tearing spirits these last days, and especially since the announcement of his failure.’

One other point may be noted in Lowe’s letter to his brother: he had evidently become an occasional contributor to the *Times* as early as February, though he did not join the staff until April 1851.

Before actually launching himself on the stormy sea of English journalism and party politics, Mr. Lowe reverted to the subject of university reform, to which his attention was attracted by the famous Oxford University Commission of 1850-51.

In the seventh chapter of those graphic *Memoirs* of the late Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln, a most powerful picture is drawn of the condition of Oxford after the rout of the Newmanites, and the incoming of the Liberals.

It was a deliverance from the nightmare which had oppressed Oxford for fifteen years. For so long we had been given over to discussions unprofitable in themselves, and which had entirely diverted our thoughts from the true business of the place. Probably there was no period of our history during which, I do not say science and learning, but the ordinary study of the classics, was so profitless or at so low an ebb as during the period of the Tractarian controversy. . . .

We were startled when we came to reflect that the vast domain of physical science had been hitherto wholly excluded from our programme. . . .

Whereas other reactions accomplish themselves by imperceptible degrees, in 1845 the darkness was dissipated in an instant as by the

opening of the shutters in the chamber of a sick man who has slept till midday. Hence the flood of reform which broke over Oxford in the next few years following 1845, which did not spend itself till it had produced two Government commissions, until we had ourselves enlarged and remodelled all our institutions.

Despite Lord Sherbrooke's eight years at the Antipodes and his keen interest in Australian public affairs, the memory of his Oxford life, and what he considered the time-honoured abuses of the place, were still very vivid in his memory. It was an exciting time for Oxford. Notwithstanding the powerful opposition of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Selborne (then Mr. Roundell Palmer), and Sir Robert Inglis, the Tory M.P. for the University, Lord John Russell appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into and report fully on 'the State, Discipline, Studies, and Revenues' of Oxford. The head and front of this commission was Dr. Tait, then Dean of Carlisle, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; and among the members were Dr. Hinds, Bishop of Norwich; Dr. Jeune, Master of Pembroke (afterwards Bishop of Peterborough); the Rev. H. G. Liddell (late Dean of Christ Church); Mr. J. L. Dampier, and the Rev. G. H. Johnson, afterwards Dean of Wells. These names must have sounded ominously Liberal and reforming to the heads of houses; and, what was worse, the secretaries were no less persons than Arthur Penrhyn Stanley and Goldwin Smith.

When the commissioners (whose place of meeting was Lord John Russell's official residence in Downing Street), wrote to the heads of houses and others for the requisite information and data on which to found their report, they were in many cases not even favoured with a reply. Dr. Tait, however, as he sufficiently proved in after years at Lambeth, was a man of tact as well as courage. Having put his hand to the plough, he had no intention of turning back, even though the mighty 'Henry of Exeter' declared that this 'inquisition' into the affairs of the University had 'no parallel since the fatal attempt of

James the Second.' Then came—as so frequently comes at such crises—a change of Ministry, and Lord Derby stepped into the place of Lord John Russell.

The commissioners went on steadily with their work, collecting all the statistical and other information concerning Oxford, which often reached them from somewhat unexpected quarters. Among the most important of the letters sent in was the following from the former Fellow of Magdalen and late member for Sydney. It is taken from the Oxford Commission Report evidence, pages 12 and 13 in the Blue-book presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty in 1852,—‘perhaps,’ remarks Archbishop Tait’s biographers, ‘from a literary point of view, the most remarkable Blue-book of our time.’

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I

ROBERT LOWE ON OXFORD REFORM

Answers from Robert Lowe, Esq., M.A., Barrister-at-law, late Fellow of Magdalen College.

2 Paper Buildings, Temple [no date].

Sir,—I have thrown together the results of my own experience (which, you know, has been as a private tutor pretty extensive) in the form of a letter, finding it easier to explain myself so than to answer questions, and availing myself of the permission given to take that course.

My observation has been that Undergraduates seldom read but for examinations, and seldom attend to instruction except from a private tutor, whom they select and pay for themselves. I do not think that you can alter this state of things, and the next best thing to be done is to direct and modify it so as to cure the defects and increase the efficiency of the system. As long as a degree at Oxford and a place in the class list shall be looked on as an important step in life, and as long as private tuition shall be looked upon as the readiest way to attain these objects, the one will be the end to which study is directed, the other the means resorted to for its attainment. It is only when students are too poor to afford this assistance that it will be foregone, and even then I have known very great sacrifices made to obtain it, and that by persons whose college tutors were men of unquestioned attainments and ability.

I entertain the strongest objections to the present tutorial system. It is a monopoly of education given to the colleges at the expense of the efficiency of the University, and has very often been grossly abused by the appointment of incompetent persons. The tutor has no stimulus to exertion beyond his own conscience; let his success be ever so brilliant, the termination of his career is not likely to be affected by it. The expected living drops at last, and, idle or diligent, learned or ignorant, he quits his college and is heard of no more. The plan also of teaching in large lectures, while it gives but little instruction to the less advanced, is inexpressibly tedious and disgusting to the more forward student. I shall never forget the distaste with which, coming from the top of a public school, I commenced construing, chapter by chapter, the 21st book of Livy. This has a bad effect on the mind. A boy—for he is nothing more—finds the requisitions of college incomparably easier than those of school; he becomes arrogant and conceited, the tutorial system has not only taught him nothing, but has actually given him no idea of the course of study required for a high degree, and in the plenitude of ignorance and self-sufficiency he wastes at least one most valuable year in idleness, if not in dissipation. The instances in which the tutorial system has worked really well are when the tutorship of a college has fallen into the hands of some celebrated private tutor—a success which affords an indirect homage to the superior system of private tuition. I am therefore opposed to the continuance in any shape of the present college tutorial system.

Of the system of private tuition the advantages are manifest. The power of selection has great efficacy in attaching the pupil to the tutor, and I can speak from experience that the tendency is strong to overrate the abilities and industry of a private tutor, a leaning which I have never observed in the case of public tuition. The unfettered intercourse, the power of stating a difficulty without incurring ridicule, the greater equality of age and position, all tend to give the system efficiency, and whether desirable or no, I am convinced that it will be the working system of the University: the Dean of Christ Church issued an order that no man of his college should read with the tutor of another college. I do not think the order an unreasonable one, and I doubt not that Christ Church contained plenty of competent persons; but I know that all the time one-half of my pupils came from Christ Church. The system of private tuition is a necessary and unavoidable concomitant to any examination. No sooner were examinations established for the masters and mates of merchant ships, than there arose a class of men whose business was to *cram* the candidates.

The system of private tuition has, however, many defects. The persons into whose hands it principally falls are young men of unformed character, knowing little of the world, or probably of anything except the course of study by which they have gained distinction. They have, nevertheless, very great influence over their pupils, and are, from their youth, their sincerity, and their earnestness, the most dangerous missionaries of whatever opinions they take up. They are the persons who are

really forming the minds of the undergraduates before they have formed their own. The University knows nothing of them except their names in the class list; in their colleges they have no status, and it is quite optional with them whether they enter the society there or no. Everything is entrusted to them, and no caution whatever is taken for the execution of the trust. As regards the private tutors themselves, I cannot but think it bad for them that the moment they have taken their degree, they should be considered as at once elevated to the highest intellectual eminence, and spend their whole time in teaching that which they have only just barely learnt. The tendency to narrow the mind and generate habits of self-conceit is obvious. It also stands seriously in the way of their acquiring much useful knowledge, though I think this is in some degree compensated by the ardent desire to learn which the habit of teaching is almost sure to produce. Young men are often at this time pressed by college debts, or otherwise in narrow circumstances, and the temptation is irresistible to labour to any extent so as to avoid these embarrassments. I have myself taken ten successive pupils in ten successive hours term after term, a task neither fitting for the tutor nor just to the pupil.

The result of this is that I think the system of private tuition ought to obtain a recognised place in the institutions of the University of which it is the mainspring—that it ought to replace the inefficient system of public tuition—that the collegial monopoly ought to be abolished, and a free choice of a tutor left to the undergraduates individually. I think that the University ought to have some power over the tutorial class, so as to ensure, as far as possible, their moral and religious fitness for the trust which they are to execute: their intellectual fitness would have to be ascertained, as hitherto, by the unerring test of competition. I think the number of hours ought to be limited, as well as that of pupils, to be taken by those who are still *in statu pupillari*: after that I would not attempt any such limitation. Those who were unable to pay the amount required for an hour a day might easily combine so as to reduce it to a sum which they could afford. I think also the absence of pupils from lecture ought to be made known to those to whose care they are entrusted in matters of discipline. To make such a system work well, the number of examinations must be increased, so that the student should never feel himself free from this stimulus: and I cannot help thinking that with such superior provision for instruction, a little more might be required than the very moderate quantum which now forms the standard of the University.

Of the Professorial system I cannot speak from experience, as during my residence in the University it was almost totally in abeyance. I have no very great hopes that it will be of very much service as a means of University education: the only chance will be to make it subservient to the examinations, which would materially detract from its dignity and general utility. University success is in my experience rather the reward of memory than of mind, and is more likely to be secured by fixing facts and doctrines firmly in the memory than by drawing from them remote and subtle inferences, or by establishing between them refined and logical

distinctions. But the benefits of the Professorial system to those who, after having passed their examinations, are commencing the task, which every intellectual person must achieve for himself, of self-education, and for those who resort to our Universities without the purpose of taking degrees, cannot be overrated. The Professorships are the natural and appropriate reward of those who have distinguished themselves as tutors and examiners, and their multiplication and efficiency would tend above all things to raise the character and promote the efficiency of the University. There is nothing more hopeless than the career of a private tutor at present. He has nothing to look forward to from his occupation but endless labour, leading to no result, and with much more labour and higher acquirements is not so well paid as a country schoolmaster.

I have always looked upon the colleges as clogs to the efficiency of the University, whose benefits they contract within their own limited circle. Without offering any opinion upon their internal reform, I think that the most efficient reformation would be a reformation by competition from without. I am, therefore, clearly of opinion that it ought to be the privilege of every Master of Arts of good character who is so minded to open a hall in connection with the University, subject to such general rules as may be laid down for the government of such institutions by the University authorities. I would leave it to him to provide the buildings and accommodation for the students, and I would trust to competition to lower the expenses of living to the proper point. I am not in favour of allowing very young men to attend lectures, or belong to the University, without being attached to some college or hall, from an apprehension that it would be found impossible to subject them to efficient coercion. My view is, that the University ought to be thrown open as wide as is consistent with the due maintenance of academic discipline.

I regret to see that Sanskrit, for the study of which the bequest of Colonel Boden offers such liberal encouragement, has not been included among the subjects for a proficiency in which honours can be conferred. I must also, as a sincere well-wisher to the University, express my hope that the Physical Sciences will be brought much more prominently forward in the scheme of University education. I have seen in Australia, Oxford men placed in positions in which they had reason bitterly to regret that their costly education, while making them intimately acquainted with remote events and distant nations, had left them in utter ignorance of the laws of Nature, and placed them under immense disadvantages in that struggle with her which they had to maintain. With these remarks,

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT LOWE.

CHAPTER II

ON THE *TIMES*

(1851)

IN the month of April, 1851, Robert Lowe joined the staff of the *Times*, under Mr. John Walter, whose editor was that remarkable man, John Delane.

Much has been written, and still more has been said, about the unique position which Delane as editor of the *Times* occupied for over thirty years in the social and political world. There has never been anything in this country to compare with it either before or since. This was in part owing to the supreme position which the *Times* had achieved under his immediate predecessors, but it was quite as much due to the remarkable qualities of the man himself. Delane was what is called a born editor; he had the true journalistic nose for scenting out news, and the true editorial eye for discerning the worth and mental capacity of other men. Over and above that he had the feeling of profound interest and personal pride in his journal that a mitred abbot of the middle ages had in his monastery; and was equally prepared to stand up for its rights and privileges, and to fight for its power and aggrandisement against all comers. He was, of course, a terrific worker, and even when enjoying what Disraeli used to term his social honours, he never for a moment forgot that his one aim in life was to keep the *Times* at the head of the journalism of Europe.

Much was made, both by his friends and enemies, of the

fact that he had the ear of Lord Palmerston. Men whom he opposed, or whose particular fads he declined to patronise, used to declare that he was 'nobbled' by Lady Palmerston's hospitality; but this, though often repeated, even by such men as Cobden and Bright, was never believed by anyone really behind the political scenes of that time. In fact—and it is a social phenomenon in the annals of English journalism—John Delane mixed with the great political nobles of the Palmerston epoch, on terms of perfect equality, and was constantly consulted by the Ministers of State at critical moments.

Robert Lowe commenced his labour as a regular *Times* leader-writer on April 4, 1851, with an article on 'Chancery Reform.' Before taking a rapid survey of his first year's contributions to the *Times*, it may be as well to point out how splendidly endowed and admirably equipped he was for this not altogether new field of intellectual labour. He had reached the mature age of forty; had not only achieved a brilliant record at Oxford by his easy mastery of those branches of study which then led to academic distinction, but by his subsequent years of patient and painful tuition had so thoroughly and indelibly imprinted these studies on his active brain and retentive memory, that, unlike the majority of distinguished University men, he never forgot a tittle of what *Alma Mater* had taught him. In addition to this, as the testimony of his friends and college contemporaries shows, Robert Lowe had all his life pursued independent and often recondite studies; thus he not only read Hebrew with ease and pleasure, but Sanskrit, and he had not only studied German but he knew Icelandic.

On those great departments of human thought and activity, Law, Commerce, and Education, Robert Lowe was, as few newspaper writers have ever been, an authority. He was not only a brilliant practising barrister, but a profound student of law and jurisprudence; he had given much time and attention to the subjects of trade, commerce, and finance, and here his

Australian experience as a legislator and fiscal reformer was of great value; while on the subject of education his whole academic as well as his colonial career was one long training.

It was his complaint in after years, as all the world knows, that his own education had been too purely literary, and that those responsible for it had neglected the more practical achievements of modern science. He had probably first felt this deficiency when he became closely intimate with William Sharpe Macleay in Sydney; but it was not until he was brought into official relations with Sir John Simon at the Board of Health, that he fully realised his want of early scientific training. Marvellous as it seems, Sir John Simon declares that Lord Sherbrooke, in spite of his sadly deficient eyesight, took sedulously to the microscope and bent his mind to various branches of physical research and investigation.

With this one single drawback, that of an imperfect scientific education, which nearly all his contemporaries shared with him, Lowe must have been, when Delane secured his services as a leader-writer for the *Times*, the most powerful and best trained intellectual athlete who has ever in this country entered the arena of journalism.

No one puts this matter in such a clear light as the late Walter Bagehot in his brief 'Study,' written in 1871, entitled 'Mr. Lowe as Chancellor of the Exchequer.'¹

His career at Oxford was unusually long; he was not a mere student who took high honours. After that he stayed several years as a working tutor, and has described to a Royal Commission how steadily he worked for ten hours a day as a 'coach,' and how little in consequence he accepts the 'romance' of tuition. And the inevitable result has been that Mr. Lowe has become a scholar, not only as young students become such, but as men of maturer years who mean to earn money by it, become scholars. . . . After leaving Oxford, Mr. Lowe made himself not only an excellent English lawyer, but an admirable general jurist. He is acquainted not only with the technicalities of English law, but with the structure of

¹ *Biographical Studies*, by the late Walter Bagehot, edited by R. H. Hutton (Longmans).

other systems of law, and with the principles of scientific jurisprudence. He has studied what Bentham said 'law ought to be,' and what Austin said law 'must be.'

Of all Delane's great feats on behalf of the *Times*, perhaps the greatest was securing the future Chancellor of the Exchequer as a regular contributor. Lord Beaconsfield referred to himself on one occasion as a 'gentleman of the press'; but this must be taken in a Pickwickian sense. In an amateur way, he may have projected an unsuccessful journal, and occasionally contributed to, or 'inspired,' certain other newspapers. Mr. Gladstone could, perhaps, make out a stronger claim if, as generally alleged, he was one of the founders of the *Guardian*; and many another English public man has been in some way connected with the newspaper press. But Lowe, in contradistinction to the mere amateur, was for a term of years, like Mr. John Morley and Mr. Leonard Courtney, a hard-working professional journalist.

Lowe was a contributor to the *Times* from 1851 to the close of 1867, or, indeed, the beginning of 1868; though in the latter years his articles were comparatively infrequent. At first, however, he wrote with great regularity, sometimes even two leading articles on the same day. Mrs. Lowe became again a most constant and willing amanuensis. When, on the sudden receipt of important intelligence from any part of the world, Delane would despatch a special messenger to Lowndes Square after midnight, Mrs. Lowe would spring out of bed and write to his dictation, whilst the emissary waited for the rapidly filled slips. But in the articles themselves there are few signs of hasty production; they are, as a rule, models of sound common sense and lucid exposition, enriched with appropriate and telling illustrations, and with apt quotations ranging from Homer to Charles Dickens.

Lowe's first contribution to the *Times*, as already stated, was on Chancery Reform—then a burning question. He was, as he understood it, a thorough-going Liberal all his life,

but he was never a partisan; and though many advanced Radicals of the present day would off-hand dub him a Whig, he himself was never a member of the inner conclave of the great Whig families, whom he, in fact, denounced as strongly as ever he denounced the Tories, and whom he disliked almost as much as he disliked demagogues.

There was one proposal in Lord John Russell's scheme of Chancery Reform which lent itself, as if devised on purpose, to Lowe's peculiar powers of Socratic irony. This was the proposal to transfer the ecclesiastical patronage of the Lord Chancellor to the Prime Minister.

It will be a sacrifice certainly to the Premier to undertake the distribution of so many good things, but, fortified by the consideration of the relief which his own absorption of these good things must necessarily yield to the Chancellor, Lord John Russell is willing, like another Curtius, to fling himself into the gulf of Chancery patronage. We only wonder that, actuated by the same generous spirit of enthusiasm, Lord John Russell has not undertaken to relieve the Chancellor from the receipt of his salary, as well as the bestowal of his livings. To receive and spend so large a sum of money as the salary of a Lord Chancellor must be a great distraction to a mind so fully preoccupied, and the maxim *Aliena negotia curo excussus propriis* might seem to suggest that the best way to fix a man's attention on other people's affairs was to leave him none of his own to manage. We should therefore suggest, as an improvement on the Ministerial scheme, that the Lord Chancellor should be received as a parlour boarder or postulant in the house of the Prime Minister, and should be there fed, clothed, and taken care of, and that in consideration of this the said Prime Minister should be entitled to receive the Chancellor's salary.

In a more serious strain the writer then proceeded to deal with the question of Government patronage in general, and church benefices in particular. The line of argument and illustration adopted by him will surprise those persons who have always regarded him as a pure Whig. There are many who, to this day, would positively declare that Lord Sherbrooke's views on English history were merely a transcript of the views of Macaulay. Nothing could be further

from the truth. Sympathising as he doubtless did with many of Macaulay's political views, and having the highest admiration for his personal character and literary attainments, Lord Sherbrooke could never, in any sense, have been a disciple, and was probably often an impatient reader of his works. The following passage on one of the political results of the Glorious Revolution under William III. should effectually dissipate the too prevalent idea that because Lowe was a Liberal in politics, he blindly accepted the Whig version of English history :—

It is perhaps not one of the most advantageous illustrations which was introduced into the theory and practice of our Government by the Revolution of 1688, that the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown should be at the disposal of a Minister virtually owing his seat to the will of a majority of the House of Commons. The practice which treats Government patronage as a means of strengthening party influence ought clearly not in propriety to extend itself to presentations to benefices in the Church. This surely is a sacred trust which ought to be exercised with a feeling somewhat akin to that with which the sacred office itself should be performed.

This brief passage is enough to make many a pious churchman who has been content to dub Lord Sherbrooke an Erastian, pause and reconsider his judgment. In this article he maintains that of all the members in a Ministry, the Lord Chancellor, as a rule, is the best fitted to dispense ecclesiastical patronage, as he is 'least exposed to the vulgar solicitations and reckless importunity of party.'

Like the deities of Lucretius, the Chancellor dwells in a higher and purer atmosphere than that in which his political colleagues move, and endeavours—and we must admit for the most part successfully endeavours—to preserve that even and inflexible impartiality which they neither desire nor profess. Whatever be the profession of the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor must not worship the Constitution of England after that fashion which is called 'party.' Moreover, the Lord Chancellor is generally what Her Majesty's present Ministers would call a second-rate politician—that is, unconnected by birth at least with those few fortunate families to whom alone, as we are told, the art of governing mankind has been

committed by Providence—and merely raised by talent and industry from the mass of men made to be governed. In this there is a double advantage. He is less accessible to mere party influences than those who have been brought up among them, and he knows, probably, far better than his colleagues the class of men out of whom his selection is to be made. . . . [Chancellors] being something more than mere party men themselves, owing their elevation to acquirements which are measured by no party standard, they have been able to look for something more than mere party merit in others. Thus we find the Tory Lord Lyndhurst bestowing a prebend on the arch-*Edinburgh Reviewer*, Sydney Smith, and the Whig Lord Truro, a living on the son of the furious *Quarterly Reviewer*, Robert Southey.

In addition to an entire series of articles on Chancery Reform, Lord Sherbrooke wrote a great deal on law reform generally. Such subjects may not seem inviting to the ordinary lay reader, but owing to his lively and effective style these articles may be read, even under the altered circumstances of to-day, with not a little pleasure.

Robert Lowe was always a free trader, and he applied the principle to the question of law reform. Free trade, he argued, must be general. We have not discarded the monopolies of agriculture and commerce to expose men in their daily commercial affairs to expenses enhanced by laws passed for the benefit of a class. He therefore urged that the division between law and equity should be abolished.

In a series of admirable articles he dealt with the Inns of Court in connection with legal education. The Inns of Court, he said, had done little beyond keeping enormous taverns and bartering the degrees with the distribution of which they were entrusted in exchange for fees and compulsory dinners. They were 'rigid about eating, careless about learning; strict about money, negligent about knowledge; lavish to the stomach, but niggards to the mind.' Later on in the year he continued to gird at the Inns of Court, but in such a vivacious manner that the most solemn of Benchers must have smiled occasionally over the perusal of his morning paper.

If the Universities and Colleges of Oxford were abolished, and the powers of giving degrees were conferred on the landlords of the Angel, the Star, the Roebuck, and the Mitre, they could not be less fitting depositories of the trust than the four Inns of Court have shown themselves to be. The worst the innkeepers could do would be to drop the present system of examination, and confer degrees on those who most answered the innkeepers' test, that is, who spent most money in the house. . . . Let them retain their vocation as inn and lodging-house keepers, and carry on, if they can, a successful competition with their brethren in the narrow streets which lead from the Strand to the river; but let the task of directing the legal education of the country, of providing a systematic and complete course of instruction, of rewarding merit and industry, and of protecting by a searching examination the Bar of England from the intrusion of ignorant and unqualified pretenders, be reposed in other hands. We want a legal university, where lectures shall take the place of dinners, and examinations of room-rents, and whose degrees shall confer honour because they are the reward of merit.

There were many other questions besides legal reform to engross the rapid and trenchant pen of the new *Times* leader-writer in the year 1851. It was indeed a most eventful year. First, as most people at the time thought, though Robert Lowe himself deemed the matter of least importance, it was the year of the Great Exhibition. It was also the year of Louis Napoleon and the *coup d'état*; of Pius IX. and Papal aggression. It was the year, too, of the discovery of the Australian gold-fields, a subject whose social and political, rather than material, aspect especially interested the late member for Sydney. And in addition, we had on our hands a Caffre War at the Cape, which furnished him with fresh and frequent illustrations of the blundering of Downing Street.

When Lowe left Australia it was partly, as shown in the preceding chapter, because he felt that he could be of more immediate service to the cause of colonial reform in London than in Sydney. It is very currently believed in Australia, even to the present day, that, having been baffled by the alliance of the squatter party and the Crown officials, he returned to England with antagonistic feelings towards the

whole colony. There is always a not unnatural feeling of resentment in a small community—as in a club—when anyone leaves it and joins another. The very fact of his doing so seems to imply that he regards his former associates as not altogether good enough for him. If the deserter subsequently attain to eminence, he invariably leaves behind a large number of persons who, by the perpetual reiteration of the fiction that they materially assisted him in mounting the ladder of fame, at last come to believe it. To a mind like Lord Sherbrooke's such idle rumours did not even cause a passing annoyance—he was, in fact, unaware of their existence; but in the course of time these little shallow runnels converge, and form the stream of public opinion.

That after his return to London Lord Sherbrooke in some way sought to belittle the Australian community of which for some years he had himself been a member, and to retard its social and political development, seems still to be widely credited. Nothing could be more absurd. In the columns of the *Times*, not less clearly than in the columns of the *Atlas*, he continued to attack Colonial Secretaries of State and to do his utmost, by clear and convincing exposition of his views, to make the governing classes in England realise that Australia was the destined home of a great and ever-expanding branch of the English race, which must be allowed to manage on the spot its own local affairs, without the meddling and mischievous interference of Downing Street. In fact, throughout a long series of anonymous leading articles, one finds that while generous encouragement is bestowed upon Australia, severe censure is meted out to England, or at least to English officials.

When the discovery of the gold-fields was announced, he wrote in the most glowing words of Bathurst, where the precious metal was first found—the district whither he had wandered when threatened with total loss of sight in the early years of his colonial career.

‘Nothing,’ he said, ‘can be imagined more delightful than the climate of this elevated plateau.’ He contrasted California with this region of Australia in terms that could not have been stronger had he been a salaried emigration agent:—

Fever, ague, dysentery, the scorching heat of summer and the biting cold of winter, which scourge the Californian miner, are unknown to the Australian, and the unsuccessful gold-seeker will still find himself in the midst of a thoroughly English community, where a very moderate exertion will secure him the substantial comforts of life in the utmost abundance. It may be that the prizes are not so great; but there are no blanks. The labouring man who goes to Australia in pursuit of gold may not obtain the object of his search, but he will at any rate acquire the means of competence and comfort in the cheapest and most abundant country in the world.

Just as Robert Lowe was wholly without that common feeling of class prejudice which is so prevalent in England, so, as a returned colonist, he had not a trace of that contempt for the land he had left which distinguishes, or rather disgraces, many colonial-born men whose wealth tempts them to live idly in the Old World. This type of ex-colonist is so marked that it almost demands a new Thackeray, or at least an additional chapter to the *Book of Snobs*.

It is hardly possible to overrate the influence for good of his colonial articles in the *Times*, written at this critical period of the discovery of the gold-fields. It is not too much to say that they were among the chief means of inducing a number of better-class people to emigrate to Australia. Newly-married men and women, full of energy and with good intelligence, read such passages as those contrasting California and Australia, and their minds were naturally swayed by statements that carried with them the authority of the leading journal, as well as internal evidence of their essential truth.

How easily the reputation of Australia, then only obscurely known to respectable English folk as a receptacle for British crime, might have been permanently damaged may be shown

by a speech of the philanthropic Lord Shaftesbury, delivered about this time at Edinburgh. Lord Shaftesbury was actually speaking on behalf of one of Mrs. Chisholm's emigration projects when he declared that Sydney was not a fit place 'to which members of our families could be safely sent.' Coming from such a man, so highly respected and so thoroughly well-meaning, this statement, one would think, was in itself enough to defeat even Mrs. Chisholm's efforts to secure a supply of respectable and untainted emigrants, chiefly from among the poorer classes. Under the circumstances, what could have been more opportune than the article in which the *Times* took Lord Shaftesbury to task: 'We believe that the morality of the lower classes at Sydney is rather superior to that of most seaport towns—Portsmouth, for instance—and, if there are causes that tend peculiarly to degrade it, there are others, and more powerful ones, which operate in a contrary direction.'

In another article he wrote: 'Of all the movements of this country in peaceful and industrial progress, there is none of which she has greater reason to be proud than the thriving and industrious communities on the shores of the unpeopled and remote continent of Australia.'

There would be nothing remarkable in a public writer making such assertions in the year 1892; but it was distinctly so at a time when Earl Grey had decided that Sydney should remain a penal settlement, and when, as a consequence, respectable people were hesitating whether—even the existence of golden nuggets was a sufficient counter-inducement for them to entrust their lives and fortunes in such a community. Further, that such writings should have appeared in so authoritative a journal as the *Times* was an incalculable benefit to the Australian colonies at a most critical period of their existence; and it may be claimed, without fear of contradiction, that Lord Sherbrooke by this means largely influenced the stream of better-class emigration.

Of the two great questions which were then agitating the public mind of England—the action of Pope Pius IX. in establishing the Roman Catholic hierarchy in this country, and the action of Louis Napoleon in having himself proclaimed Emperor of the French by means of the *coup d'état*—Lord Sherbrooke held, and expressed, very decided opinions. In no sense an irreligious man, he was always extremely anti-clerical. He regarded the question of Papal encroachment not, to use his own phrase, as a ‘mere squabble about territorial titles,’ but as a wanton interference on the part of a foreign potentate in the domestic affairs of this country. It was here that he so widely differed from Lord John Russell and the great bulk of his Protestant supporters throughout the land. They looked to the shadow, he to the substance. To Lord Sherbrooke it seemed to matter little what titles were assumed by the higher priesthood of the Latin Church in England; but he thought it of supreme importance that neither they nor the Pope should be permitted to interfere with such acts of domestic legislation as the late Lord Derby’s national system of education in Ireland.

Those who have followed the narrative of Lord Sherbrooke’s public career in New South Wales, and particularly his policy with regard to education in that community of ‘mixed creeds and races,’ will not fail to realise the true cause of his indignation against the Papal authorities who were so sedulously aiming to subvert Lord Derby’s system. He thought then, as he did to his dying day, that the only hope for the future stability and civilisation of such a country as Ireland was the system of national unsectarian schools and colleges. He saw in the constitution of the Queen’s Colleges, as well as in the national primary schools, a master-stroke of Imperial policy. The attempt of the advisers of Pius IX. to undo this good work seemed to him pernicious in the extreme. He therefore denounced their action in no measured words. He saw in the Pope’s policy, or rather in the way it had been promulgated,

an insidious attack on the very framework of our ancient laws and free institutions.

In a subsequent attack, directed mainly against Cardinal Cullen, he delivered the following eulogium on Lord Derby's Irish educational legislation, which will sound rather strange in ears familiar with the revelations of the Parnell Commission: 'If the later years of O'Connell were scant of that success which waited on his unrivalled powers of popular delusion, if the maniac ravings of Smith O'Brien and his companions found no response from the Irish nation, we are convinced that we mainly owe these results to the schools founded on Lord Stanley's system.' Before rejecting this theory, on the ground that down to our own day there has been no lack of followers of men like O'Connell and Smith O'Brien in Ireland, it is necessary to ascertain to what extent the Pope's emissaries from 1851 have succeeded in destroying or perverting the educational policy of the Earl of Derby and of the two Irish archbishops, who, though of different communions, so loyally and ably co-operated with him.

With regard to Napoleon III. and the *coup d'état*, the present generation can have no notion of the great stir produced in England by the public movements in France in 1851. But early in 1852 Lowe contributed to the *Times* an article dealing with the oft-threatened invasion of England, in which he put the case of her comparatively defenceless state in a remarkably vivid light; the analogy between the condition of England at the accession of Harold, and her condition during the early years of the reign of Queen Victoria, is very striking. The article also shows that the writer, though an economist and a free-trader, was in no sense a follower of Cobden and Bright on the subject of our international policy and relations:—

At the accession of Harold to the Crown the English had enjoyed a peace of nearly fifty years, purchased by the final expulsion and destruction of their Danish invaders; they were becoming more and more enamoured of the arts of peace, and had made consider-

able progress in such civilisation as the times allowed. Agriculture was pursued with great assiduity and success, and the national mind began to appreciate the benefits to be derived from foreign trade and commerce. The military spirit which had animated the descendants of Hengist and Horsa was gradually dying out, and the nation, united under one head, looked back with disgust and contempt on the obscure and bloody civil wars of the Heptarchy. The fortifications of the towns were allowed to fall into decay, and the equipment and discipline of the troops were almost entirely neglected. Dwelling in peace and security under their free elective institutions, the English looked with gradually increasing disfavour on the profession of arms. While the male chivalry of Normandy were carrying their banners even to the islands and peninsulas of the Mediterranean, the Saxon was content to fight on foot, and to protect himself from the blows of a steel-clad man-at-arms by the imperfect defence of a surcoat of hide. His offensive arms were as imperfect as his defensive: he relied almost exclusively on the ponderous battle-axe, which, requiring both hands to wield it, necessarily left the person of the soldier exposed to the lance or the arrow.

Yet with all this the nation was possessed by a spirit of the most overweening confidence and self-satisfied security. Proud of the exploits of their ancestors, believing in the perpetuity of the long peace they had enjoyed, satisfied with their republican institutions, and mistaking internal freedom for external strength, they looked with inert tranquillity on the gradual increase and organisation of the power which was to overwhelm them; and when at last the blow fell, the nation at once confident in its valour and impatient of military fatigue and privations, flung away its hopes in a single unequal conflict, rather than endure the slow and desultory tactics which must have worn out the strength of the invader. The English met the enemy with one-third of their number, believing as devoutly as the pothouse heroes of our own time that one Englishman to three Frenchmen was a perfectly equal match, and that the total absence of cavalry and artillery on their side would be easily compensated by superior personal bravery. The nation was, at any rate, perfectly content to abide the trial, thinking that, even if this army miscarried, it would be easy to overwhelm the invaders by a general rising. . . . We also have been in the enjoyment of a long and profound peace, and have learnt to consider a war as something almost impossible. We also have entirely outlived the military spirit of the earlier years of this century, and in the pursuit of wealth and in the development of civilisation have half-learnt to believe in the preachers of the Millennium. . . . We mistake the internal balance and equipoise of our polity for the power of resisting external force.

. . . We talk of our old victories by land and by sea, and forget that they were gained by men whose arms and training placed them on an equality with their antagonists. We rely on our insular position, which protected us so efficiently against Napoleon the Great, and insist upon the impregnable trench that surrounds us, although science has effectually bridged it over for Napoleon the Little. We forget the existence of the new power of steam, and the means of organising combined and unlooked-for movements afforded by the electric telegraph. We believe that if the storm with which France is now pregnant does burst, it will be upon the great military Powers of the Continent who sympathise with the proceedings of her Government, who possess enormous military resources, and who offer but a poor prize to the victor, instead of upon us, whose free institutions are a daily reproach to the tyranny and slavery which disgrace France, whose military resources are such as we have described, and whose rich shores have not seen the footprint of a foreign army since the time of King John.

Such good common-sense prose as this, aided subsequently by the stirring verses of the late Laureate, led to the establishment of our Volunteer army; but if Lord Wolseley were to peruse this extract from Lord Sherbrooke's old *Times* leader, he would in all probability declare that it is not wholly inapplicable to the state of this country at the present time.

In a subsequent article Lowe directly attacked Cobden by name for the attitude which he had assumed with regard to the question of our national defences. In the year 1848 Cobden delivered a speech at Manchester in which he went so far as to take the Duke of Wellington severely to task for proposing to put our armaments into a state of thorough efficiency for all defensive purposes. It is needless to say that the Duke in this controversy stands out as the great patriot-statesman, single-minded, and quite above all considerations of party; while Cobden, well-meaning and excellent as he always was, displayed the most complete ignorance of our past history and of our actual position, surrounded by the huge armaments of jealous and contending States.

It was, I think, the poet Clough who said that everything

in England bore traces of the 'pew.' Thus to the pious and excellent persons who belong to the same pew as John Henry Newman, it seems almost wicked that one should venture to complain of his theological bias or his lack of philosophic insight. So with the Cobdenites; it rests with none but the foolish to deny that Richard Cobden played a great part in remodelling the social and political life of England. But we are surely not on that account debarred from freely criticising his limitations as a statesman. It is, perhaps, hazardous to do so, after the popular biography of so skilful a panegyrist as Mr. John Morley, who seems to regard Cobden not only as the great apostle of free trade, but also as a kind of inspired Foreign Minister. Such a conception could only have taken place after Cobden's death, nor could it be generally accepted by the English people unless they were what their great enemy declared them to be, a nation of shopkeepers. It is instructive to turn from the pages of Mr. Morley's *Life of Richard Cobden*—admirable as it is—to the comments and criticism made on that remarkable man during his lifetime. For instance, Cobden published a reply to a clergyman who had sent him a memorial sermon on the Duke of Wellington; therein, as on other occasions, he showed his own littleness by trying to belittle one who was so infinitely greater than himself. The *Spectator*¹—never a partisan or extreme journal—was so indignant with Cobden's effusion that it published a severe and excellent article, headed 'The Great Un-Englishman.'

It is refreshing to find that Lord Sherbrooke, though essentially a Liberal, and a strenuous advocate of all reforms which he thought tended to the progress of the nation, on this subject of our national defences, naval and military, expressed himself as entirely opposed to the teachings of Richard Cobden, with whom on most economic questions he was completely in accord.

¹ January 29, 1853.

The articles here alluded to are but a mere fraction of those which Lowe contributed to the *Times* during the first year of his connection with that journal. He wrote on almost every question of public interest, social as well as political. Among his lighter contributions was a criticism of Charles Dickens's pet project—the Guild of Literature and Art—which, no doubt, greatly disgusted the popular novelist at the time. The Guild was inaugurated by the famous amateur theatrical performance of Bulwer Lytton's comedy, *Not so Bad as We Seem*, at Devonshire House, in the presence of the Queen and the Prince Consort; and, in addition to Dickens and Lytton, there were a number of other well-known artists and men of letters connected with the enterprise.

The scheme looked very well on paper; nothing could be more admirable than to encourage life assurance and provident habits, and to render timely assistance that should not compromise the independence of needy authors and artists. But, as the *Times* article acutely pointed out, this scheme could only assist persons whom the public would have not the slightest anxiety to relieve. 'The Guild would not redeem Sheridan's blanket from the bailiff, or succour the pinching poverty of a Goldsmith or a Burns. These were constitutionally improvident men, who never dreamt of insuring their lives, or of anything else except their own daily subsistence, the delight of their readers, the deathless renown of their works, and the glory of their country and their language.'

The writer proceeds to give other familiar illustrations of improvident men of genius whom he declares the Guild would never have assisted. He then points out the class whom it would in all probability succour. 'The drudge of the bookseller, whose labour is little more intellectual than that of the printer and binder who contribute with him to the construction of a volume, and mediocrities of all kinds, whether in the department of review or compilation.' For the declared object of Charles Dickens's scheme was, he wrote, 'not to reward

talent and public service, but prudence, and prudence of that particular kind which commences its proceedings in life with the view and ambition of terminating it in an almshouse. The men whom the Guild delights to honour are those who work at literature as a trade, and being conscious of their inability to make it pay, look forward to eleemosynary support in their old age. Such a prospect would afford the same stimulus to literary exertion and the same reward of merit as the plan of the French Socialist, to pay all labourers alike whether they work well or ill.'

No doubt this mode of treating their favourite scheme greatly annoyed such men as Charles Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, and Douglas Jerrold; but though clever men of letters, they were none of them social philosophers, and the day came when they must have perceived that their critic understood literary human nature much better than they did themselves.

Robert Lowe was never an admirer of Louis Napoleon, and was not slow to attempt to rouse the English people to a sense of the risk they ran at the hands of so dangerous a neighbour, who, with the best feelings and intentions, might at any moment have been drawn into a war with England as he was, twenty years afterwards, with Germany, merely for the purpose of maintaining his own position and *prestige*. But Lowe never wrote anything of Napoleon III. more pointedly severe than the sentence in which he dismissed one of the public manifestoes of the Emperor's arch-detractor, Thiers: 'Every sentence is a complete answer to its neighbour, with this peculiar felicity, that M. Thiers contrives to lay down contrary propositions on the same subject, both of which are false!'

Lord John Russell as a reformer is thus hit off: 'Where good might be done by change, he is a prostrate worshipper of antiquity; where change must be productive of evil, a daring and wanton innovator.'

Of Earl Grey as a Colonial Minister it is remarked: 'He

governs a colony as Captain Cuttle manages his watch : puts it forward a quarter of an hour in the morning, and back half an hour in the evening.'

An admirable illustration of his incisive manner of expressing common-sense opinion is furnished by an article on the Canterbury settlement, in New Zealand. After paying a high tribute to the noble ideal of the cultured founders of this province, Lord Sherbrooke gave this timely warning to the Canterbury pilgrims : ' If money is to be made at Canterbury, a mixed multitude of men of the most heterogeneous beliefs will infallibly rush in and elbow their orthodox predecessors from their stools. Nor do we see how this deluge of heresy and miscreancy is to be dammed out unless the Custom House officers are doctors of divinity, and the theological tenets of every new arrival be submitted to the same inquisitorial scrutiny as his sea-chest and his portmanteau.'

By joining the staff of the *Times*, Robert Lowe became more or less intimate with a number of its leading contributors. Among the most distinguished of these was the late Mr. Knox, afterwards the well-known police magistrate at Marlborough Street. Mr. Knox was then one of the principal leader-writers, and was not only a most able and accomplished journalist, but a man much given to thought and speculation, with whom Lord Sherbrooke always found it a pleasure to converse. The late Montagu Williams—an infallible authority on such a point—declared that Knox was the best story-teller he had ever known.

Another still more celebrated writer on the *Times* was the Rev. Thomas Mozley, whose *Reminiscences of Oriel* ranks among the best books of its class in the language. Mr. Mozley, as is well known, is the brother-in-law of the late Cardinal Newman, and brother of the famous Regius Professor of Divinity, J. B. Mozley, and of Miss Anne Mozley, the able writer and essayist. Of this brilliant family group, the only

survivor is the Rev. Thomas Mozley, formerly of the *Times*. With him it would appear that Lord Sherbrooke was never on very intimate terms.

With Sir George Dasent, the eminent Icelandic scholar, who was assistant-editor under Delane, Lord Sherbrooke was for many years on terms of great intimacy. He always regarded him as one of the best scholars and most accomplished and able writers in England. Sir George, who married a daughter of John Delane, is happily still living.

Bernal Osborne relates that he himself, Robert Lowe, Thackeray, Higgins (Jacob Omnium), Wingrove Cooke, Lawrence Oliphant, and Dr. W. H. Russell the war-correspondent, were wont to meet round the dinner-table at Delane's room in Serjeants' Inn. One can but regret that there should have been no Boswell present at these *Symposia*.

NOTE.—*Law Reforms* (pp. 26-30). It is interesting to note that the chapters dealing with Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce in *Bleak House* were issued just after the appearance of Lord Sherbrooke's *Times* leaders on 'Chancery Reform.'

With regard to the Inns of Court, shortly after the satirical articles quoted in this chapter appeared, five readers—in Roman Law and Jurisprudence, in Real Property, in Equity, in Common Law, and in Constitutional Law—were appointed. The authorities clearly meant to wipe out the reproach of being 'rigid about eating, careless about learning.' Sir Henry Maine was one of the lecturers, and the world was subsequently the richer for these discourses, which formed the basis of his great work on *Ancient Law*.

CHAPTER III

MEMBER FOR KIDDERMINSTER

EARLY in the year 1852 Robert Lowe casually met an old and intimate Oxford friend, the Rev. David Melville, now Canon of Worcester, near his own residence in Eaton Square. After a cordial greeting his friend asked him what he was doing. 'Writing for the *Times*,' he replied. 'But you ought to be in Parliament,' remarked the other. 'That's very easily said, but how am I to get there?' was the rejoinder. 'I will come and see you to-morrow, and perhaps remove your difficulty'; and so they parted.

It so happened that Lowe's friend was staying with the then Lord Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley, at Dudley House. Not merely from his territorial position in Worcestershire, but mainly from his wise and generous assistance in promoting the staple industry of Kidderminster, Lord Ward's political influence was then paramount in that borough. This was before the days of joint-stock enterprises and limited liability companies; and it is well-nigh impossible for us to realise what the support of a great nobleman's wealth and influence meant to the struggling industry of a country town. By supplying funds, which none of the Kidderminster manufacturers could then command, Lord Ward rescued the carpet trade of the town from entire annihilation. Steam had already elsewhere superseded the handloom, and it was only through this nobleman's timely subsidy that Kidderminster was enabled to acquire, before it was too late, the services of this all-powerful agency.

When Robert Lowe called on the following day at Dudley House, he was introduced to its owner, and the question of the vacant seat at Kidderminster was broached then and there. Lord Ward quickly perceived that his visitor was a man of no common attainments, and without more ado he stated that he was quite favourable to the proposal of introducing him to the borough. They proceeded to Witley Court—the seat of the Dudleys in the county of Worcester—and Robert Lowe, under these most favourable auspices, straightway entered on his canvass for Kidderminster.

The election took place on July 10, 1852, when Lowe was opposed by a Conservative candidate in the person of a Mr. Best, a local lawyer. Though a complete stranger, but owing of course to the influence of Lord Ward, Lowe was returned by a majority of 94, the polling being—

Lowe	246
Best	152

At the large public dinner given to celebrate Lowe's return, his friend, Canon Melville, in proposing his health, said that, 'though he knew prophecy was rash, he ventured to predict that the man whom they had honoured by their choice that day, would go straight into office, and he could not predict when he would come out again.' This proved truer than most predictions, especially those made at political banquets; for in Lord Aberdeen's Government, Lowe became Secretary to the Board of Control, and with the exception of two brief periods was in office—whenever his party were—to the close of his House of Commons career.

It was an especially exciting and troublous time when Robert Lowe first took his seat in Parliament. The late Earl of Derby was Prime Minister, with Benjamin Disraeli as his Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader in the House of Commons. The great battle of the Corn Laws had been fought and lost; Sir Robert Peel had died unexpectedly owing to a fall from his horse; and Lord George Bentinck had passed

away prematurely two years before the man whom he and Disraeli so bitterly assailed. Shortly after Parliament assembled the Duke of Wellington was buried, 'with an Empire's lamentation,' in the crypt of St. Paul's. Thus the political stage was, as they say of the mimic one, 'waiting.' The nation, which in this case formed the spectators of the drama, were not kept long in suspense.

After the general election which landed Mr. Lowe in the House of Commons as member for Kidderminster, it was soon apparent to the dullest of mortals, that in addition to the three recognised parliamentary chieftains—Lord Palmerston, Lord Derby, and Lord John Russell—there were now two gladiators in the arena whose achievements and prowess would shortly arrest all eyes. These, of course, were Benjamin Disraeli, the most romantic and unaccountable figure in English parliamentary history, and William Ewart Gladstone, who was then member for the University of Oxford and the foremost personality among the little band of Peelites who, small as they were in numbers, held the balance of power in their hands.

Greville penned a particularly pessimistic account of the General Election of 1852. In his opinion the unsolicited return of Macaulay for Edinburgh was the only creditable incident in the campaign. 'Nowhere else,' he remarked, 'have character and ability prevailed against political prejudices and animosities. Distinguished men have been rejected for mediocrities, by whom it is discreditable for any great constituency to be represented. The most conspicuous examples of this incongruity have been Lewis in Herefordshire, Sir George Grey in Northumberland, and Cardwell in Liverpool. Pusey was obliged to retire from Berks, and Buxton was beaten in Essex, victims of Protectionist ill-humour and revenge.'

This seems somewhat too sweeping, although Greville by no means exhausts the list of notable parliamentarians who

were defeated at the polls. There were also Lord Mahon, Sir George Clerk, and Mr. Horsman.

But Mr. Gladstone was returned for Oxford by an increased majority, and his great rival easily held his own in the county of Bucks. Milner Gibson, Bright, and Cobden still sat on the Radical benches; and as we have seen, Robert Lowe, who soon proved himself more than the equal in parliamentary skill and acumen of any of the rejected candidates, now found his way into the House of Commons.

It may be noted in passing that with regard to the triumphant return of Macaulay for Edinburgh, Lowe took a far more accurate measure of its importance than did the shrewd and rarely too enthusiastic Greville. Contrasting the election addresses at Manchester and Edinburgh in a remarkable article in the *Times*, Lowe pointed out how the former looked to the future, while the latter was only a splendid literary echo of the past. He even found fault with Macaulay's famous speech in returning thanks from the hustings—'able and elegant as it is, we seek in vain for any deeper insight, any more comprehensive generalisation than would be afforded by the Whig creed of Lord Grey and Lord Althorp in 1832. . . . The orator does not seem to have realised the fact that the days of a purely Whig administration are gone by, and that whatever form the deluge which is to succeed Lord Derby is to leave behind it, there is none so improbable as a restoration of the family system of government.'

Parliament assembled on November 4, and seven days afterwards it was formally opened by Her Majesty in person. The Speech from the Throne, as might be imagined after such an election, fought for the most part on Protectionist issues, dealt largely with the great agricultural problem—'how to enable the country to meet successfully that unrestricted competition to which Parliament in its wisdom has decided that it should be subjected.' The hand of Disraeli, who saw that the large towns and the growing tide of Radicalism would prove too

strong for the landed proprietors and the farmers, may be very plainly traced throughout this Royal document. That most astute and tactful of men showed still more clearly that he considered Protection a lost cause and that 'the game was up,' when shortly afterwards he introduced his famous but ill-fated Budget.

The fact is, as must always be the case while human nature continues a constant factor, the history of England at this time was largely shaped by the personal rivalry of the two distinguished men who were by nature, training, and temperament so utterly opposed that they could never in the free play of such a Constitution as ours work together for the common good. Much has been said as to what might have happened had Mr. Gladstone remained in the Conservative ranks to which his early associations and predilections seemed to point as his rightful and permanent place. Had he joined Lord Derby and been in Disraeli's position as Chancellor of the Exchequer, there can hardly be a doubt that the history of the succeeding forty years would have run on quite different lines—

Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere.

Yet we have it on the testimony of Greville and others that serious attempts were made by Lord Derby, as late as 1858, to induce these two remarkable men to run in double harness; while in 1862 Disraeli himself wrote to Mr. Gladstone's friend, Bishop Wilberforce:—

'I wish you could have induced Gladstone to have joined Lord Derby's Government, when Lord Ellenborough resigned in 1858. It was not my fault that he did not: I almost went on my knees to him.'

Mr. Gladstone's latest biographer, Mr. George Russell, becomes very satirical over this imploring attitude of Disraeli; but an impartial study of that strange and powerful character reveals the fact that he was not wanting in magnanimity. However that may be, the House of Commons for the next thirty years was destined to be the arena of one long desperate

duel between these two unrivalled political swordsmen. It has doubtless been magnificent, but whether it is statesmanship only the future can declare.

When Robert Lowe took his seat in the House of Commons it was to find himself ranged with the motley group of Whigs, Peelites, Radicals, and Irish who formed the Opposition to the Derby-Disraeli Government of 1852. Disraeli saw that the only chance of his party retaining office was to abandon Protection, and detach as many of the Peelites as possible from the Opposition. In this, as we know, in spite of all his skill and daring, he was doomed to failure.

Before the great debate on the Budget, that sealed the fate of the Ministry, took place, Lowe had already addressed the House, on two occasions, with marked ability. On November 29th, 1852, he made his maiden speech on the Courts of Common Law (Ireland) Bill, in which he began by frankly stating as one who had given a great deal of time and trouble to the subject of Law Reform, that the Bill was a highly creditable one. He spoke throughout in a very complimentary way of the eloquence and ability of the Irish Solicitor-General, Whiteside, whose measure, he said, was far in advance of that introduced in the previous session for the amendment of the law in England. Altogether the speech, though on a technical subject, was, for a first effort, very well received; and quite adequately reported in the press. It was recognised as a good beginning for a distinguished parliamentary career; and it impressed the leading lawyers and trained officials in the House with the knowledge and general ability of the new member.

In fairness, however, it should not be judged as a maiden effort. Though new to St. Stephen's, Lowe was by no means a novice with regard to the rules and conventions of parliamentary debate; and the fact that from the very first he was able to catch the ear of the House of Commons was mainly

due to his practice and experience in the Legislative Council of New South Wales.

On December 7th Mr. Lowe delivered himself on a question—that of Limited Liability—on which he was afterwards able to leave his name in indelible letters on the Statute Book. It is quite clear from a perusal of this speech, that as early as 1852 he was fully alive to the beneficent revolution which might be effected in the trade and commerce of the country by legalising the principle of limited liability. The debate had arisen on a petition of the North American shipping trade against the granting of a charter to a competing company. Lowe spoke with his unfailing point and directness; and, in a manner clear enough for even a heterogeneous assembly like the House of Commons to follow and appreciate, he showed how the law, as it then stood—the law of unlimited liability—was a harmful restraint on competition, and a needless restriction on commercial enterprise.

As, when he assumed office at the Board of Trade, he made this subject so entirely his own, it is perhaps as well to show how clearly his views were defined on the question years before he was in a position to give them legislative validity.

It had been the law of England for sixty years that if any person entered into competition in any branch of trade he must do so under the very highest penalty, and that if he were unsuccessful he must lose his last shilling and his last acre. This was the law which encouraged the competition of capital, which told the capitalist that whatever he did with his capital he must do under the very highest penalty—under the penalty of *præmunire*—a total loss of his goods—and all this to deter him from embarking his capital in trade! . . . The President of the Board of Trade was empowered by Act of Parliament, so often as he should see that a case was made out, to break down the present fettering law and give the capitalist power to compete with other capitalists, taking care that he should do so without the penalty which the law of unlimited liability attached to such a course. This power was now attacked. It was said it was opposed to Free Trade. But what had been its results? What was it that had covered our land with railroads and our seas with steamships and mercantile fleets, except the power of suspending

and annihilating the law of unlimited liability? It was said that such a state of things was injurious to credit. That was the concern of those who entered into it. If anyone should think upon consideration that the credit which unlimited liability gave was better worth having than the credit which limited liability offered, he was at liberty to make his election. But, on the other hand, if he preferred the credit which limited liability offered he had a right to do so. It was for the public to decide how much credit they would give in either case. It was no part of our laws to settle people's private affairs.

Mr. Lowe went on to say that he trusted the day was not far distant when Parliament would relieve the Board of Trade from the invidious and annoying duty which had been cast upon it, not by taking away the power which had been so beneficial, of permitting large associations with limited liability, but 'by leaving it to every set of persons who wished to associate their capital for a common enterprise to do so without having occasion to go to the Government at all, or spend one shilling in fees or stamps, merely (as in America) by making known to the public the amount of capital they put into the concern, so that the public might be aware with what they dealt.'

There is an admirable Spanish proverb to the effect that 'a stone which is good enough for the wall will not long be allowed to remain in the road;' and even the House of Commons, or at least its leaders, have never been slow to recognise what may be called marketable parliamentary ability. When towards the close of his speech Robert Lowe thought fit to crave pardon for having trespassed upon the time of the House, adding that 'he could not sit silent when he heard an attempt made to fetter the freedom of competition under the name of unrestricted competition itself,' loud and general applause greeted him as he resumed his seat.

He had distinctly made a hit as a Parliamentary debater, and chiefly because, in his first two speeches in the House, he had discussed important if technical questions which he had taken the trouble thoroughly to understand and master.

There is no doubt this speech materially conduced to his being made Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and so gave him the opportunity which he promptly seized of placing the law concerning limited liability on a firm legislative basis.

On December 3rd, Disraeli brought in his famous second Budget in a brilliant speech of many hours which enchained the attention of the House. So completely had the Chancellor of the Exchequer thrown over Protection that Cobden wrote to a friend on the day after the Budget speech, to say that the Anti-Corn Law League might be forthwith dissolved. Disraeli thought by this bold move that the Peelites, and even some of the Radicals, might be detached from the Whig party; but in this, as we know, he altogether miscalculated. He was not wholly unmindful of those who had supported Lord Derby and himself at the polls. To keep the agricultural interest in heart, he proposed a reduction of the malt tax; and to meet the consequent deficit the inhabited house duty was doubled.

Even in these days of printed records, there is very little agreement to be found in the pages of contemporary historians. Thus Mr. John Morley, in his *Life of Cobden*, declares that 'in a few hours after Mr. Disraeli had stated his plans, it seemed as if they were a success.' Mr. George Russell, on the other hand, in his biographical memoir of Mr. Gladstone, avers that 'the voices of criticism—"angry, loud, discordant voices"—were heard simultaneously on every side.' However that may be, it is at least true that when Disraeli sat down after speaking for over five hours, Mr. Gladstone at once rose, though the hour was late, and vehemently attacked his rival's fiscal proposals, and afterwards—to use Mr. Russell's appropriate verb—'rebuked' his language and demeanour. Mr. Russell goes on to say that Mr. Gladstone tore Disraeli's 'financial scheme to ribbons;' but this must be taken as a figure of speech rather than as a statement of fact, as may be seen from the more careful language of Mr. Morley.

No one will venture to accuse the present Irish Chief Secretary of any bias against Mr. Gladstone or in favour of Mr. Disraeli, but it is clear from Mr. Morley's account of this memorable Budget debate, that it was not till a week after Disraeli's fiscal proposals were made that the various discordant elements which composed the House of Commons of 1852 absolutely ranged themselves in a compact Opposition to the Government. 'When the discussion on the Ministerial proposals opened a week later (writes Mr. Morley), it was at once seen that the first favourable impression had been a mistake and that they could not stand the heavy fire which was now opened upon them by all the ablest and most experienced men in the House.'

Mr. Lowe rose to deliver his views on Dec. 13, and his criticism of the Budget—his third speech in the House—was the longest and most elaborate which he had so far addressed to its members and to the country. It is couched in a more moderate tone than perhaps the speech of any other opponent of the Government during this heated and very personal debate.

Lowe contemplated Disraeli's airy and rapid conversion to Free Trade in a more tolerant spirit than did either the Peelites or the Whigs; the only fault he found was that, like most converts, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was too sanguine and enthusiastic. 'True, it is to all appearance a time of unexampled prosperity; but the lot of man is one of ceaseless mutation, and it behoves us not to act like unto the fool in the parable, who said "To-morrow shall be as to day, only much more abundant."'

The earlier half of Mr. Lowe's speech was devoted to a consideration of the effect likely to be produced by the mighty exodus which the discovery of gold in Australia had occasioned.

This emigration was in no sense a wholesale flight from impending ruin and poverty in this country; but was rather the departure in shoals of able-bodied and more or less well-to-do persons in the prime of life, who would have remained

in England but for the irresistible allurements of the gold-fields. The thoroughly exceptional nature of this great exodus from our shores had not been overlooked by Disraeli himself, as Lowe admitted; but surely, therefore, this was of all times the most ill-chosen for the imposition of new taxes on people's dwelling-places. Such a tax could only suggest that there were other lands in the world where there were 'no house tax, no income tax, no assessment taxes, and no excise duties.' As the speaker truly declared, he dealt with this phase of the subject from experience. If people were not able to find employment and were in a state of destitution, emigration would be a great relief to the country; but as soon as they went beyond that, they were sucking away its very life-blood. Although it was not within the power or duty of the English Government to stop the tide of emigration which depended on the development of the resources of the colonies themselves, still it was unwise by any shifting of the burdens of taxation to accelerate that tide which had already set in with such tremendous force.

After these preliminary remarks Lowe proceeded to attack the 'keystone of the arch' in Disraeli's elaborate financial structure, viz. the reduction in the malt tax. He never thought twice about attacking what are called vested interests if he considered them antagonistic to the general welfare. From a purely parliamentary, or rather party, point of view, this was one of his characteristic defects. Lord Palmerston once shrewdly remarked to Cobden, who had urged the claims of Bright to a seat in the Cabinet, and had pointed out that in recent speeches the Tribune had avoided personalities. 'It is not personalities,' said the old Prime Minister, 'that are complained of; a public man is right in attacking persons; but it is his attacks on *classes* that have given offence to powerful bodies who can make their resentment felt.'

This was a lesson that Robert Lowe, with all his intellectual acuteness, never learnt; it would perhaps be more correct to

say that he never chose to learn it. His motto was that classes—that is to say, numbers of interested persons banded together—were much more capable of inflicting injury on the body politic than were individual members of the community.

However that may be, Lowe did not hesitate to attack the mighty brewing interest ; and after a most convincing fashion. He admitted at once that the malt tax, being a duty on the raw material, was objectionable ; as it prohibited the importation of foreign malt, it was opposed to the doctrine of free trade. But the proposed reduction of the malt tax would neither benefit the farmer nor the consumer, but, owing to the legislative restrictions surrounding the beer trade, it would merely enhance the huge profits of the brewer. He then continued:—

I say it without meaning offence, that there is not in the country any monopoly so close, so complete, and so circumscribed as that of the brewers. It is daily getting into fewer hands, daily becoming a system better organised. The capital is becoming larger and the monopoly more strict ; and if the House thinks that by taking off sixteen-pence per bushel of malt they will lower the price of malt liquors to the consumer and not increase the profits of this monopoly, they are deceiving themselves most grossly. Just let them look to the past. Malt is much cheaper now than before the corn laws were repealed ; but had the consumer or the poor man derived the slightest benefit from the reduction ? Everyone knows that he has not, but that the whole amount goes into the pockets of the brewer ; the brewers possess themselves of all the public houses in the metropolis and all over the country and let them to a body of tenants on their own terms and stipulations. This, in the case of liquors supplied in bulk, directly leads to adulteration. There is a different class of brewers who manufacture another kind of beer, which is sold in bottles ; what is the result of that ? Why, that the quart bottle is daily becoming less a quart, and the pint bottle becoming less a pint, and if the reduction went on at the present rate, the quarts would soon become pints, and the pints become medicine bottles. [Laughter, and an ironical cry of ‘hear, hear’ from Mr. Bass, the tone of which increased the merriment of hon. members.]

There is only one way by which any reduction of the malt duty could be of advantage to the consumer, and that is by breaking-up the brewers’ monopoly. That is a difficult thing for the House to

do, because that monopoly rests on private property and on capital which they could not touch. But supposing they were anxious to do away with it—let the House give up the system of licensing and let anyone sell beer, and the monopoly would be broken up.

This very drastic remedy is hardly likely to commend itself to the Bishop of Chester and Mr. Chamberlain, who are, indeed, all for fresh regulation and new restrictions in the liquor trade. But it can hardly be questioned that the brewers, rather than the general public, would have profited by Disraeli's famous proposal to reduce the duty on malt.

Lowe subjected the whole of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's fiscal scheme to a most searching criticism. Disraeli had estimated that his Government would gain on the decreased expenditure in the Caffre war a sum of £250,000. Lowe thought this a decidedly sanguine way of making up one's balance sheet. The war, he said, would terminate whenever it was the pleasure of General Cathcart to say the Caffre war had ceased ; but the ruinous and miserable consequences would not then terminate. Peace and war were mere names when dealing with barbarous enemies, and we should never be free from the expenditure on Caffre wars until we withdrew our troops and handed over the country to our colonists, with free Constitutions and the full management of their own affairs. This was always Lowe's view with regard to what are called our little colonial wars. He always held that as soon as a colonial community was sufficiently numerous and developed to have the right of self-government conferred upon it, together with the ownership of the territory, it should assume the responsibility of its own defence. It was in pursuance of this policy, which he advocated on all occasions in Parliament and in the press, that British redcoats were withdrawn from the self-governing colonies. We can all remember how fiercely this withdrawal of Imperial troops was opposed by influential sections both in England and in the Colonies. Yet it can hardly be disputed that the duty of self-

defence follows as a direct consequence of the right of self-government.

Following Mr. Gladstone, Lowe strongly criticised the policy of the Exchequer loans. He dealt with this intricate question by means of a familiar illustration. Supposing, he said, that a gentleman with a large landed estate, a large family, and no ready money (no impossible conjecture) had an opportunity of putting a son to great advantage into business; and in order to raise the necessary sum, mortgaged a part of his estate for 500,000*l.*, and that the son, becoming prosperous, sent regular instalments to his father of the money that he had borrowed. Would the Chancellor say that the owner of the land was acting as the father of a family or as a man of common sense if he took those instalments and spent them as he received them, as part of his income, instead of doing his duty and carrying them to the current account against the mortgage on his land?

‘Well,’ added Mr. Lowe, ‘that is the case of the Exchequer Loan Commission, and when the right hon. gentleman shall get up to answer the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Gladstone), I hope he will not think it beneath him to answer so insignificant a person as myself.’

For a new speaker Lowe had occupied the time of the House at considerable length. But by his previous and briefer efforts he had already secured the good opinion of members on both sides, who evidently listened attentively, and even with pleasure, to his elaborate financial speech. As he had opposed the reduction in the malt tax, it may be naturally inferred that he deprecated the proposed increase in the inhabited house tax, which he declared would be the cause of much disfranchisement in his own borough. But he said little enough on this head.

Disraeli chiefly replied to the hostile criticisms of Sir James Graham, Sir Charles Wood, and Mr. Gladstone. It was on this occasion that he rather allowed his temper to get the better of his judgment in his personal remarks on Graham, for

which afterwards he felt it to be both politic and well-mannered to tender an apology. Nor did Disraeli, who was never so effective as when fighting single-handed against a host, overlook the new member for Kidderminster.

Mr. Lowe, he declared, had taken no account of the 'reserve of producing power,' a phrase which he proceeded to explain in a truly characteristic fashion.

The reserve of producing power we possess may be inferred from the fact that now, in a south-eastern county, the Census shows that, to 100 married women of from twenty to forty-five years of age, there are seventy women of the same ages unmarried, and of whom only seven bear children notwithstanding. I have confidence in this reserve of producing power which the hon. and learned member with his colonial experience has not given this country full credit for.

This was Disraeli's mode of brushing away the weighty arguments against his new taxes at the time when the manhood of the country was being so powerfully attracted to the gold-fields of Australia. He also dealt *more suo* with the question of the brewer and the consumer in regard to the repeal of the malt tax. It reminded him, he said, of the arguments used by those opposed to the repeal of the corn laws. They declared that the bakers and millers would profit and not the consumer, and (he gravely added) 'such was the prejudice raised against the bakers throughout the country, that I should not have been surprised if they had been all hanged in one day, as the bakers had once been in Constantinople.'

Despite his jaunty air, Disraeli fully recognised that he was about to be beaten. In his best manner he exclaimed, in one of those memorable phrases which have passed into political proverbs—'I know what I have to face. I have to face a coalition: a coalition has before this been successful. But coalitions, although successful, have always found this, that their triumph has been very brief. This I know—that England has not loved coalitions.'

The division was taken at four in the morning of December 17th, when the Government was defeated by 305 to 286. In the evening Lord Derby handed his resignation to the Queen at Osborne.

The coalition between the Peelites and the Whigs and Radicals, which Disraeli so much disliked, but of which he would certainly not have disapproved had they crossed over and joined himself and Lord Derby, was now formed. Lord Aberdeen came into office as Prime Minister, though he was little more than the nominal head of this remarkable but ill-fated Ministry, which included, as is well known, Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Gladstone. In this extraordinary combination the office of joint secretary of the old Board of Control for India was held by Robert Lowe.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOARD OF CONTROL—INDIA AND SIR JAMES OUTRAM

HISTORIANS of all parties and opinions have commented on the strange and unaccountable allotment of offices in Lord Aberdeen's Ministry of all the Talents. Certainly, it must have been startling to thoughtful observers to find Lord Palmerston, whose sole delight and study was in foreign affairs, at the Home Office; and Lord John Russell, who was never happy unless engaged in some project of domestic reform, figuring as Foreign Secretary. In a minor way, the office allotted to the ex-member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales would seem at first blush almost as absurdly anomalous. Nothing could have been more calculated to unfit a man for the office of Secretary of the India Board than Robert Lowe's eight years of active public life in Sydney. The fact that, under the late Lord Halifax, then Sir Charles Wood, he managed as a humble member of this ill-fated Aberdeen Government to do some really good work for India and the Empire is a signal proof of his political adaptability and insight.

The Government of India at this time, as is well known, was of a dual character, consisting of the Board of Control, representing the Government and people of England; and the Chairman and Court of Directors, representing the shareholders of the East India Company. It is an interesting fact that during the years in which Robert Lowe held the office of Secretary to the Board of Control, that most delightful of men of letters, Thomas Love Peacock, was Chief Examiner at the India House, having under him no less a personage than John

Stuart Mill. So far as I have been able to ascertain, these official duties led to no friendship, or even acquaintance, between Lowe and Peacock, a circumstance which all lovers of good things will deplore. Nor did Lowe and Mill apparently get to know each other at all intimately until afterwards, when both were members of the Political Economy Club and the House of Commons. They were never, in the real sense, intimate, as they were not particularly sympathetic; and, strange as it may seem, I have a feeling that Lord Sherbrooke would have preferred the author of *Crotchet Castle*—who, though he ridiculed everybody and everything, including both poets and political economists, was a real flesh-and-blood individual—to his more famous philosophic successor at the India House, who gave us the *Elements of Logic* and *Principles of Political Economy*.

On June 3rd, 1853, Lowe's official chief, Sir Charles Wood, introduced the Government of India Bill 'in a speech,' writes Greville, 'of unexampled prolixity and dulness.' There is no doubt that it is both prolix and dull, but those who have had to wade through several years of *Hansard* will be chary as to the use of the word 'unexampled.' It has always been said that the Queen took a very lively interest in this measure, as, indeed, she has ever done in matters affecting her Indian Empire. The Bill—which, as far as the work of getting together the data on which its provisions were based, and of defending it in Parliament, was as much Lowe's as Sir Charles Wood's—eventually passed both Houses with triumphant majorities. It was necessarily of the nature of a compromise; but as any step in the direction of increasing the Imperial control lessened the patronage of the East India Company, it was not favourably received by the Chairman and Directors in Leadenhall Street. Lowe himself, from the day that he assumed the office of Secretary, took infinite pains, not only in connection with Sir Charles Wood's Bill, but—as was his wont—with the subject of India generally.

The Government of India Bill was, as already stated, a compromise ; and while it left the East India Company still in control of the appointments to the Indian Army, it substituted the system of competition in lieu of nomination for the Civil Service. It also reduced the Court of Directors from thirty members to eighteen, six of whom were to be nominated by the Crown. Lowe himself, subsequently, on the hustings, frankly stated that the measure was far from a complete or ideal one, but that it afforded the necessary stepping-stone to the abolition of the India House, and the direct government of that vast and magnificent dependency by the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain. In the House of Commons he supported the measure of his chief with marked ability. The present Earl of Derby, then Lord Stanley, the most competent parliamentary critic of the century, brought himself into deserved prominence in this Indian debate. He delivered not what is admiringly termed a slashing attack on the Government proposals, but submitted them to searching analysis in a calm, unimpassioned speech marked by unusual knowledge of the subject. He was then a young man of about six-and-twenty, and it was doubtless this speech that impelled Lord Palmerston to tempt him with the seals of the Colonial Office on the death of Sir William Molesworth in 1855, and which led to his becoming the first Secretary of State for India in his father's second Cabinet, three years later.

Lowe replied to Lord Stanley on the night of June 23rd, and it is evident from the tone and tenor of the speech that he fully recognised the ability displayed by the sagacious and critical young nobleman. Lord Stanley had pleaded for delay on the ground that there was a lack of knowledge in England on Indian affairs which made legislation hazardous. To this Lowe replied :—

The noble lord, who had displayed an acquaintance with the subject which itself was an answer to the argument that there was no information in England with reference to Indian matters, had

stated that there was no danger of an insurrection taking place. Still, it was desirable now, as it had ever been, that we should have a strong Government in India. From one end to the other the whole Eastern world was in commotion. Looking to the west, we found that there was a quarrel between Russia and Turkey. Going a little farther south, the whole of Asia was in a most critical state. Going to the north, Bokhara was in revolt. Eastward, again, the Emperor of China had awakened from a sleep of ages, and entered upon active enterprise. And going further south, we found ourselves in a state of possibly interminable war with the Burmese. Though everything might be tranquil then in India, we were yet surrounded by commotions and difficulties, and were bound to make our Government there as strong as we possibly could.

This, he argued, was the fatal objection to a policy of delay. He then defended the compromise with the East India Company on the subject of patronage. Lord Stanley had asked, 'If you take away some, why do you not take away all?' Lowe said that their plan of competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service was an experiment. It was, therefore, better to proceed cautiously, and not to interfere with the Military Service. Some of the most distinguished of soldiers might not have shone in examinations; but he thought that some intellectual test was necessary for the Civil Service. He spoke at considerable length on this part of the subject, and it must be admitted with a full sense of the important and responsible duties entrusted to the small band of English officials placed in positions of authority over the teeming millions of India.

It is probable that Lowe, like most able men of his generation (including Lord Stanley himself), thought too highly of the literary and scholastic training which we loosely call education. Mr. Kipling, in his remarkable series of Indian tales, has shown us in the most dramatic manner that the qualities which enable us to rule in the East are moral and physical rather than mere intellectual qualities; and that we require in our heads of districts and other official representatives in India, courage, grit, resource, physical strength

and endurance, rather than capacity to pass examinations or solve scholastic problems. This, on the face of it, is true enough. But surely, other things being equal, the educated man should be the superior of the uneducated. In justice to Lord Sherbrooke, too, it should be remembered that he was never a blind adherent of any special university curriculum. He was a firm believer in the advantages of mental discipline and training, but he had never any bigoted belief in set formulæ. However, as he is rarely more amusing or characteristic than when descanting on education in general, and Oxford in particular, a further extract from his reply to Lord Stanley may not unfitly be given :—

I heard a noble lord in another place a short time ago, with infinite knowledge, eloquence, and ingenuity, plead the cause of ignorance, and so persuasively that, were I ignorant, I would only wish to listen to such a teacher. The noble lord said that it would be a great calamity to admit these persons to a public examination ; that we should get nothing but blockheads ; that there is nothing so bad as an over-educated man ; that the Government would secure the services of none but pedants and schoolmasters. That is not the experience of this House or of the country. Who takes the lead in this country ? Upon whose lips do deliberative assemblies hang ? On whom does the fate of the nation depend ? Those who in early life have shone in such contests and examinations. It is very well to talk of the system of cramming. There is, no doubt, a great deal too much of it in the universities ; but the cause of it is that the examinations fall into the hands of the same men who prepare the candidates, and thus arise traditions as to what different men taught to their pupils, which form the staple of the examinations of Oxford and Cambridge. At Oxford there were curious points in Aristotle handed down from time to time, and at Cambridge problems connected with the names of the authors who invented them, not to be found in books, and forming a sort of *disciplinæ arcana*. I am happy to think that many dodges of my own invention are still taught at Oxford under my name. But that system is totally unnecessary. It is the fault of the examiners, and because the examinations are conducted on a narrow, illiberal, and pedantic scale, instead of being substantial, and being made the test not only of memory, but of mind, intellect, and acumen.

On the following evening Macaulay, in support of the India

Bill, spoke for the last time in the House of Commons. The most striking portion of his speech was that devoted to the proposed admission to the Indian Civil Service by open competition, in lieu of favour and influence. Macaulay maintained as resolutely as Lowe himself that the men who were first in the competition of the schools have, as a rule, been first in the competition of life. 'The greatest man,' he said, 'who ever governed India was Warren Hastings, and he had been in the front rank at Westminster.' Sir Charles Metcalfe, the ablest Indian Civil Servant he himself had ever known, was of the first standing at Eton. Lord Wellesley, the most distinguished aristocrat who had ruled over India, was likewise a man of Oxford reputation. It is not necessary to refer at any length to this famous speech. To this day, in their struggles against the encroachments of rivals favoured by birth and influence, and especially against military competitors, the Indian civilians always take their stand (to use their own words) 'on what Macaulay and Lowe meant by the provisions of the India Act of 1853.'

In its Committee stage Lowe defended the India Bill with great skill and amazing knowledge against many influential members, whose attacks had evidently been inspired by the Court of Directors. In one of these speeches he explained in remarkably clear language the circumstances which made his own appointment to the India Board so strange an anomaly—namely, the diametrically opposite social and political conditions of India and the Colonies. The point arose in connection with the proposal that the Crown should nominate six of the Directors of the East India Company.

Upon this question of nominees a great deal has been said about India and the Colonies, and I have myself been taunted with inconsistency, inasmuch as, not being friendly to nominees in the Colonies, I stand up for them in respect to the present measure. Now, I apprehend that there is no easier way of confusing a plain matter than by any attempt to compare India and the Colonies. The circumstances are not merely dissimilar, but diametrically

contrary. The essence of a Colonial Government is a representative Government resident on the spot ; but the principle of the Government of India is a quasi-representative principle resident in a remote country. The essence of colonial government is responsibility to the people on the spot ; that of the Indian Government, responsibility to people in England. In a colony the governor is looked on as the image of Her Majesty, and as discharging a limited duty, whereas in India the endeavour is to put the Governor-General forward as a person combining in himself great powers, and to place in the background all that machinery by which his power is controlled.

It would be difficult to state the case more clearly, and it shows, I think, considering that Robert Lowe had only been in office a matter of two or three months, that the ex-member for Sydney displayed at this time no little acumen and flexibility of mind. He went on to draw a yet more vital distinction between the Colonies and India, in the fact that whereas out of the former great nations might arise, English in race, laws, language, and traditions, and equal to the mother-country in might and power, India could only remain a garrison, and could never become a home for men and women of our blood.

The India Bill passed triumphantly ; but after the Mutiny it was felt that the delays and disadvantages of the 'dual control' must be abolished, and, as John Stuart Mill laments, the old East India House became a thing of the past. Apart from its great and romantic history, the literary associations of Leadenhall Street are many and attractive ; for almost up to the last there were among its chiefs the two Mills and Peacock, and among its clerks the author of *Elia*. Those who wish to see how very human a philosopher can be when his own prerogatives are interfered with, should turn to the indignant pages in Mill's *Autobiography* in which he denounced the policy that converted the administration of India 'into a thing to be scrambled for by the second and third class of English parliamentary politicians.'

It is strange that the philosophic author of *Considerations on Representative Government* should not have recognised that his remarks on this head imply an attack on all our free institutions. We have placed, not only India, but, what is of much more importance to us, our own country, its fate and fortune, as a thing to be scrambled for in the House of Commons by the handful of men who, for the time being, can command a majority. These considerations, however, are taking us rather far afield.

The Government of India Bill was passed on July 28. In Greville's *Journal* there is a curious entry: 'Lowe is very much dissatisfied with Charles Wood and with the intentions of Government, and even talks of resigning; and the *Times* is going into furious opposition on the Indian Question, and is already attacking the Government for their supposed intentions.'

This was jotted down a month or so before the passing of the measure, but, judging by the hearty manner in which Lowe worked for the Bill, this statement had probably no foundation.

At the close of the following year, when our unfortunate army was before Sebastopol, and the people of England could give little thought to mere legislation, whether for England or India, the Commissioners appointed under the India Act of 1853 in reference to the admission of candidates to writer-ships in the East India Company brought in their Report. Among these commissioners were Macaulay and the Rev. Benjamin Jowett; and it is from this time and circumstance that the intimate and enduring friendship between Lord Sherbrooke and the Master of Balliol dates.

I have dwelt thus at length on the part Robert Lowe played in assisting to frame and pass the India Act of the Aberdeen Ministry, not merely because it is one of the very few successes achieved by that unfortunate coalition, but rather because it marks the date of that deep interest which

from this hour he continued to display in Indian affairs. It has not been generally admitted, but it may be proved, that only a very few men who have ever sat in the House of Commons—and those, for the most part, ex-Indian officials like Macaulay—could compare with Lord Sherbrooke in his thorough and intimate knowledge of the social and political problems of our vast Asiatic empire.

By a strange stroke of fate Robert Lowe's connection with the Board of Control brought him into close personal relations with the 'Bayard of the Indian Empire,' Sir James Outram. The circumstances have never before been related, but they are so eminently characteristic, and reflect so much credit on Outram as well as on himself, that it is a pleasure to be able to record them in this work. Sir Thomas Farrer, who first brought the matter under my notice, and who, it is hardly necessary to say, had for years the most ample means of forming a judgment on Lord Sherbrooke's personal character, writes: 'Lowe was an intense hater of oppression and iniquity, and would take any trouble when he thought a man was wronged. His correspondence with and action on behalf of Outram at the India Office was an instance; and I remember others at the Board of Trade.'

The case of Outram was with reference to certain unfounded charges which had led to his removal from the office of Resident at the Court of the Guicowar of Baroda. The fine old Scottish soldier, who was a man of frank and simple nature, seems to have been involved for the time in a series of accusations of corruption levelled at certain members of the Bombay Government. The matter was brought before the House of Commons, and an enormous amount of newspaper-writing and pamphleteering followed, in which a Mr. Lestock Robert Reid, a prominent Indian functionary, in endeavouring to extricate himself, seems to have done his best, or worst, to besmirch Outram.

The case was full of involved and contradictory imputations. It was a kind of warfare in which the blunt soldier was no match for the wily civilian. The pen in this case was mightier than the sword. The newspapers began to get word of portions of the story, and to give publicity to the affair. The *Daily News* published Mr. Reid's elaborated charges. Colonel Outram was at his wits' end to know what to do. It was then that Robert Lowe came to the rescue of the harassed soldier. He saw at a glance that Outram was not only an honest, but a sensitively honourable man, who had involved himself mainly through pure simplicity and guilelessness in his present toils. Accordingly, he volunteered to look through the papers which Outram had been trying to compile in his defence in the Record Room of the India House, and saw in a moment that he had stated his case in such an inexpert manner that its publication would simply have damaged him irretrievably with the Court of Directors. Without an hour's delay, and in the midst of his own official duties and other labours, Lowe went step by step through the whole of the Baroda business, mastered it thoroughly, and then made out a complete and lucid refutation of all the accusations which were weighing like a nightmare on the mind of their victim. By means of this prompt, enthusiastic, and gratuitous aid, Outram succeeded in clearing his reputation with his employers, the East India Company, and the groundless charges dissolved and were forgotten.

The following letter, evidently written in reply to one from Outram, speaks for itself.

Robert Lowe to Colonel Outram.

Board of Control : Nov. 16, 1853.

My dear Colonel Outram,—It gives me the most sincere pleasure to hear that you are to return to Baroda, and to find the Governor-General has expressed so just an estimate of your great merit and brilliant services. For once, at any rate, honesty has turned out, if not the best policy, at any rate not the worst, as it is too apt to be. It will be a great pleasure to me to reflect that,

thwarted as I have been in almost every object I had at heart, I have, at any rate, contributed a little to redress one gross iniquity. I am happy to think that you were mistaken in supposing that Lord Dalhousie was indisposed towards you. He has done you noble justice in his despatch, and by sending you back to the very scene of your disgrace. I hope, however, that it is not for long, and that we may look forward to see you placed in a larger and more active sphere, though I will be no party to helping you to fight the Battle of Armageddon in Turkey.¹

I shall be delighted to have a little Baroda politics from you when you have time. Meanwhile, believe me, with kind regards to Mrs. Outram,

Very sincerely yours,
R. LOWE.

Thus Sir James Outram was enabled to bear that noble and chivalrous part during the Indian Mutiny which forms one of the great traditions of our military history. His statue stands in the heart of London, amid his peers, with Napier and Havelock and General Gordon. But it is just possible that but for the friendly offices of Robert Lowe, some three years before the Mutiny broke out, we should have been deprived of the strong arm of the conqueror of Oudh.

Outram printed merely a few copies of the defence which Lowe had so practically assisted him to draw up, as it was thought irregular, and therefore unwise, for a military officer of the East India Company to rush into the public prints. This pamphlet was sent only to those whom Outram calls 'my honourable Masters'—the Chairman and Directors of the East India Company. But it was so straightforward, able, and convincing a statement that it effectually cleared his character of every aspersion. Mrs. Outram presented a copy to her husband's friend and benefactor, with the simple inscription, 'To Robert Lowe, Esq., with Lieut.-Col. Outram's respectful compliments.'

The gift was acknowledged by the following letter—brief as it is, a literary monument to Outram's memory.

¹ Allusion to the impending war in the Crimea.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Outram.

India Board : April 6, 1854.

My dear Mrs. Outram,—I am very much obliged to you for Colonel Outram's book, which I shall value much as the record of a most agreeable episode in my official life, which brought me in contact with the only man I ever saw who realised my idea of one of Plutarch's heroes. You must have been extremely gratified at the high appreciation of Colonel Outram by the Governor-General and the society of Calcutta ; and I thought of you when I read the report in the *Hurkaru*.

With kind regards, in which my wife begs to join, believe me,

My dear Mrs. Outram,

Very sincerely yours,

R. LOWE.

Sir Thomas Farrer adds a quaint touch, which it is difficult to read without a smile. 'Outram,' he says, 'was infinitely grateful, and constantly wrote to Lowe, choosing the queerest topics, amongst others, the Book of Ezekiel, to Lowe's infinite amusement.' Well might his friend Lord Cardwell say, as he did on one occasion : 'Give Lowe a bit of injustice to ferret out, and no man will do it more eagerly.'

CHAPTER V

OUT OF OFFICE—WAR IN THE CRIMEA

(1855)

It is by no means an easy matter, and yet it seems imperative, to record the personal opinions and sentiments of Lord Sherbrooke on the terrible war which England and France entered upon against Russia for the defence of Turkey towards the close of March, 1854. At this time he still held the subordinate post of Secretary of the Board of Control, but had, of course, little, if any, more influence on the foreign policy of the Aberdeen Government than a head clerk in one of the public offices. But whether consulted or not by those in authority, Robert Lowe was not the man to hold colourless opinions, or to be utterly indifferent at such a crisis in his country's affairs. His personal relations, both to that ill-fated Cabinet which declared, or rather drifted into, war, and to the reconstructed 'Coalition' under Palmerston which brought it to a close, were somewhat peculiar, and have never been strictly defined. This is not a matter for wonder, inasmuch as Lowe's post in the Aberdeen Ministry gave him no voice whatever in the management of affairs, domestic or foreign, although, according to the ethics of our Parliamentary system, it threw upon him the onus of supporting the policy of the Cabinet in the House and in the country. In order to explain his actual position and action at the time, it will be necessary to take a rapid survey of the condition of public affairs.

Before the Russian war broke out, the Aberdeen Cabinet was at war with itself. While everything was gathering for the great storm in the south-east of Europe, Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell were squabbling over a Reform Bill and for the party leadership. It is notorious that on the question of Parliamentary Reform, which Lord Russell always commenced to agitate when he fancied the Whigs were losing ground in the country, Lowe invariably sided with Palmerston. But it is not known that when Palmerston suddenly resigned, in December 1853, on account of Lord John's ill-timed persistency with his Reform measure, Lowe strongly disapproved of what he bluntly called Palmerston's unpatriotic and factious conduct. Hardly had Palmerston delivered his blow against Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell, than the news reached England of the destruction of the Turkish squadron by the Russian fleet in the harbour of Sinope. War was then inevitable. Lord John Russell quietly put his Reform Bill into the first convenient pigeon-hole, and Palmerston returned to the Cabinet as though nothing whatever had occurred.

The English and French forces landed in the Crimea on September 14, 1854, and the news of the victories of the Alma and Balaclava at once raised the warlike feeling of the nation to fever-heat. But when fuller accounts reached England, and the hopeless muddle and confusion were revealed, and it began to be realised what a fearful undertaking lay before us in the siege of Sebastopol during that long and terrible winter, then broke forth the universal outcry against Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle which sealed the fate of the coalition Government. Not that there was any reaction against the war itself: from Windsor Castle to the humblest cot in the land the one thought was how to prosecute the siege with renewed vigour; how, at all risks of blood and treasure, most thoroughly to humble the might of Russia. Men like Bright and Cobden, who spoke of peace,

were as voices crying in the wilderness. It was felt, indeed, that it was the strong pacific bias of Lord Aberdeen and an influential section of his Cabinet which had emboldened the Czar to carry out his designs against Turkey and the peace of Europe.

When Parliament reassembled (January 23rd, 1855) John Arthur Roebuck—the Joseph Cowen of his day—gave notice of his hostile motion with regard to the condition of the British forces in the Crimea and the conduct of the war by the Government; whereupon Lord John Russell, not in the most chivalrous manner, promptly sent in his resignation, and left his colleagues in the lurch. ‘The general opinion,’ writes Lord Malmesbury, ‘about Lord John is that he resigned in the hopes of being called upon to form a new Government, but he has lost himself by this move. The accounts from the Crimea are dreadful: only 18,000 effective men; 14,000 are dead, and 22,000 sick. The same neglect which has hitherto prevailed continues, and is shown in everything.’ Greville, who was a strong Whig partisan, speaks in even more uncompromising language than the Tory Foreign Minister of the conduct of Lord John Russell: ‘It has been vacillating, ungenerous, and cowardly . . . and it would have been far better to stand up manfully and abide the result of the battle in Parliament, than to shirk the fight and leave his colleagues to deal with the difficulty as best they may.’ Even Mr. Gladstone attacked him bitterly in the House.

Roebuck’s motion for a committee of inquiry came on, and was carried by the enormous majority of 157; and the Earl of Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle were as effectually obliterated from public affairs as if they had both that night been stricken dead on the ministerial benches. Then began afresh the intrigues of party leaders. Lord John Russell (whose fault was not modesty) tried to form a coalition of his own party and the Peelites; but, to the credit of Sir James Graham, Sidney Herbert, and Mr. Gladstone, he failed

signally. Then came the one great chance offered to Lord Derby of making himself a popular and powerful Minister in this country—a chance which, to the deep disgust of Disraeli, he failed to grasp. It is not the purpose of this book to attempt to explain what can never be made clear until the world is able to read the private correspondence of Disraeli, Lord Derby, and Mr. Gladstone, at this period. Enough, however, seems to be known from Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs and other sources to make us realise that this fatal blunder and apparent want of all political prescience on the part of Lord Derby must be traced to two causes—the one physical, the other moral and intellectual. In the first place, though he still deserved to be called the 'Rupert of Debate,' repeated and agonising attacks of his inherited enemy, the gout, had shaken his nerve and made him to a great extent unequal to the intense labour and anxiety of supreme office. Few persons realise what a very able constructive statesman, as well as brilliant parliamentary debater, Lord Derby was in the earlier half of his career; but he was always wayward and intractable, and while these faults had been intensified by physical suffering and advancing age, his capacity for continuous official labour, and even his marvellous quickness of apprehension and readiness of resource, were sadly impaired. The other reason which made Lord Derby hesitate and finally decline to form a Ministry which would have been his lasting glory, was his determination not to accept responsibility unless with the sanction and support of the Peelites, and especially of Mr. Gladstone. It is plain that for years Lord Derby sought the co-operation of the present Prime Minister of England. He did so in season and out of season, and at the risk of alienating his own immediate followers, who simply detested the Peelites. But Mr. Gladstone was still a member of the Carlton Club, and there was then no actual bar to his joining Lord Derby. They were both in their very different ways what is called typical Oxford men, and on

the great subject of the Church, to which they both attached supreme importance, Mr. Gladstone was much more in agreement with Lord Derby than ever he was with Lord Palmerston or Lord John Russell. This perpetual angling for Mr. Gladstone on the part of Lord Derby was not very complimentary to Disraeli or to the rest of his thick-and-thin supporters, and they very naturally resented it. No less than eighty of his followers intimated to him that they would desert his banners if he became a party to this Peelite coalition. As we know, it never came to anything; but between these two stools—the gout and Mr. Gladstone—Lord Derby missed his golden opportunity.

The only course left was for Lord Palmerston to come back at the head of the reconstructed coalition Government. That great and cheerful optimist overcame all difficulties, insuperable as they at first appeared, and jauntily stepped into power at the head of the 'old lot,' as they were irreverently styled—*minus* Lord Aberdeen, the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord John Russell, the latter of whom, however, quickly reappeared as Colonial Secretary *vice* Mr. Sidney Herbert.

There was, however, another defection from the Palmerston Ministry which, albeit universally ignored, concerns us more nearly. Robert Lowe, though offered his former post, decided to decline it. It is generally set forth by careless compilers that he passed from the India Office to the Board of Trade without any break in his official life; but this is an error. He was out of office and entirely 'unattached' for six months, during which time he used his freedom from official trammels to explain his personal opinions on the great questions of the day—the war in the Crimea, and the entire collapse of our administrative system. He by no means assumed a hostile attitude towards Lord Palmerston's Government; still less did he attempt the *rôle* of 'the candid friend.' He had indeed a sincere admiration and liking for the pluck and resource of Palmerston, and was of opinion at this time that any course

of action which tended to diminish the Prime Minister's popularity in the country might lead to national disaster. But he knew that the utterances of subordinate officials carry little weight or conviction, and for this reason chiefly he decided not to return to the Board of Control.

Lowe's decision evidently excited some astonishment in the borough of Kidderminster. It would appear from the tone of the following article that the friendly editor of the local paper in the year 1855 must have promptly, as we now say, 'interviewed' the member for the borough with the purpose of giving the electors some authentic intelligence on the topic of the hour.

MR. ROBERT LOWE, M.P.

Besides the fox who was caught in his own trap, with the loss of a scarcely due proportion of *tail*, and the two statesmen whom public opinion required as victims to 'war alarms,' one other member of the late Government will not resettle into his place, as he might, and almost all have. The Secretary to the Board of Control, Mr. Robert Lowe, M.P. for Kidderminster, is by his own act and deed out of office, to the regret of those who knew how he did his work, and to the astonishment of more. The act of a subordinate will be held, of course, comparatively unimportant; it is not on that account likely to be rightly understood, nay, perhaps more likely to be misunderstood and misrepresented, as it may appear to be at variance with the ordinary rule of tenacity by which subordinates are especially presumed to be guided. As we have naturally some interest in our local representatives, particularly in one of such promise, we should like to read and represent this matter truly.

Now, it can hardly arise from sympathy with or attachment to Lord John Russell. Had Mr. Lowe even considered him a real statesman, which he never did, or adopted him as a chief, his late hasty and unscrupulous bid for supremacy must have dissevered them. Nor is Mr. Lowe, we presume, actuated by any unpractical sentiment for the ill-understood character of Lord Aberdeen, or the scarcely recognised zeal of the Duke of Newcastle. It is inconsistent with a man of Mr. Lowe's intellectual grasp and true active perceptions to attach himself as the mere shadow of the scheming or the unfortunate. Mr. Lowe's time of life, experience, settled and clear views, and power of conveying them, may well explain why the

work of a subordinate in an office was scarcely worth his retention. As a man new to Parliament, and regarded, however unfairly, as a somewhat irregular and unpractical politician, it *was* worth his while to prove his power to execute details under orders; but having done so, it need not be worth his while to fix himself in such a sphere of mute observance.

It seems that whilst the excellent way in which, by the testimony of all, his work has been done both in and out of Parliament, silences those who were ready to decry him as a wild impracticable theorist, his relinquishment of place stops the mouth of those who, jealous of a success they could not command, pointed at him as a mere greedy adventurer. We can well understand that he feels within him a nobler purpose and a larger use than the trammels of subordinate place permit; and considering his mental capacity, his singular gift of speaking—whether in deliberate question or sudden debate,—his vast and varied information, together with his mature time of life and independent circumstances, we can not only understand, but applaud, the step which gives these qualifications a fuller and freer opportunity.

We expect, too, that the Government will rather gain than lose by having such an ally unattached. We can imagine many occasions of attack, open or insidious, from benches, it may be just behind or just below the Treasury seats, when such a 'free lance' may be the more useful for being free. His relinquishment of place need not imply any wish to embarrass, much less to oppose, those he has left; nor do we understand it as a reflection, however just such reflection would be, on the greater aptitude shown by Government at buying up foes than binding friends faster. It will be a better day for the House of Commons when men shall hold the mere advantage of place and pay as secondary to the honest and enlightened application of those faculties with which God may have blessed them.

On February 20th, 1855, Robert Lowe went down to Kidderminster and addressed the inhabitants at the Public Rooms, in what the local reporter of the day described as a brilliant oration occupying about an hour and a half. Among those on the platform were Lord Ward, Mr. F. W. Knight M.P., the Rev. D. Melville, and the Rev. J. G. Sheppard, a local school-master who, in the same town a few years later, was the means of saving Lord Sherbrooke's life from the attack of an infuriated mob. On the present occasion, however, the inhabitants

of the borough, high and low, were only eager to behold him and drink in his lightest utterances. 'The momentous circumstances of the times' (again to quote the local journal), 'and the interest always taken in what is said by Mr. Lowe at Kidderminster, had the effect of bringing a crowded audience to the hall.'

The speech was an important one, and was reported at considerable length in the *Times*. In it he gave a full account of his stewardship, and spoke of his late chief, Sir Charles Wood, with respect, if not with enthusiasm. He said:—

I believe the administration of Sir Charles Wood, in which I took a humble share, not only originated more useful reforms and swept away more abuses than any previous administration, but also laid the foundation for reforms of the greatest importance, both to India and this country. We had not only that large and difficult question to grapple with—whether we should renew the India Charter Act; but to consider the question how far it was possible the public interests should be reconciled with the exclusive powers of the East India Company. I cannot say that the Bill on that subject came up to my wishes and desires, but it was a great advance towards that which is most desirable for India, that its Government should be responsible to Parliament, and not be placed in the hands of a Company to whom it should be farmed out in leases of twenty years. I will not weary you with details of Indian administration; but one change, however, was introduced with my most cordial support, which was important to England as well as to India. The India Company possesses certain appointments called writerships, consisting of all the higher offices, judicial and executive, in that country. These have hitherto been given merely by favour and patronage; but the India Bill of 1853 establishes a principle which I trust may be fruitful in further legislation, and by which these offices will be no longer given by favour and patronage, but be thrown open to public competition, so that any man, however poor and however devoid of interest, but able to vanquish by the force of his abilities, may get possession of an appointment, the lowest salary being 400*l.* a year, the other salaries rising by gradation to 5,000*l.* a year, and one class 10,000*l.* a year.

The speaker went on to say that he looked back upon this change with the greatest pride and satisfaction; and it may be said without fear of contradiction, that this part of the

measure was due much more to his initiative than to that of Sir Charles Wood. It was only natural that Lowe should lay particular stress on these Indian reforms at that time, as the question of administrative reform in England was then very much in men's minds and thoughts. The 'family system'—the system of appointment and promotion by rank and influence—had received a severe shock; and it became a grave question whether Cabinets were to remain family coteries, and whether our army and great departments of State were to be officered and regulated on the lines of Burke and Debrett rather than on those of merit and common sense.

Having explained to his constituents briefly the nature of the India Act of 1853—his chief work during his first tenure of office—Lowe frankly placed before them his reason for not resuming the Secretaryship of the Board of Control as Palmerston had wished him to do. He said plainly that he was not disposed longer to surrender his privilege of free speech, especially as he saw that there was nothing but mere routine work to be done at his old post. 'I trust' (he added) 'that as constituencies are often indulgent to members when they show a great willingness to accept office, you will not be less indulgent to me when, voluntarily and of my own accord, in order to return to the position of an independent member of the House of Commons, I lay office down.'

He reminded the men of Kidderminster that it is necessary for a member of a Government at times to sacrifice his own personal opinions and to support measures which, as a private individual, he would oppose. There were two cases, however, he said, in which, from an implied understanding on his acceptance of office, he considered himself free from this party obligation.

I understood I was safe not to be asked to vote, or to abstain from voting, on any motion where the interests of Dissenters were at stake—questions such as Church' rates and the admission of Dissenters to the Universities; but when those questions arose I

found they were not dealt with in the spirit I could have wished, and we were called upon during the year 1854, in one case to vote against the admission of Dissenters to the Universities, those seats of learning and knowledge—a question on which there was the strongest conviction present to my mind that they ought to be open to all—and also to resist the Bill for the abolition of Church rates brought in by Sir William Clay, which I consider to be a wise, right, and beneficial measure. The course I took after mature consideration was this : I did not think it consistent with my duty to my constituents, or with my personal honour, to vote in the manner the Government wished ; nor did I conceive it to be my duty as a member of the Government to vote against the Ministers ; nor did I think it would be right to pick a quarrel with them on this matter, which was not of vital importance, for the sake of parading my independence. The course I took, then, whether it was right or wrong—though I am prepared to sustain it was right, and I trust it will so be considered by you—was to abstain from voting on those subjects.

Having thus endeavoured to make his position with regard to his stewardship perfectly plain and above-board, he launched out into a criticism of the war with Russia. It is usual for writers of the present day to regard Lord Sherbrooke as a typical Liberal of the Benthamite school, having an undue reverence for the doctrines of economic science and a consequent bias against all forms of warfare except the purely defensive. This is a grave error. Lord Sherbrooke had not read history to so little effect as not to have seen that the conflict of tribes and nations has always formed, and, so far as we can judge, will continue to form, a decisive factor in the evolution of the human race. He at once declared that he cordially approved of the war with Russia. It was not wise that England should wait until Russia had acquired the Turkish Empire, until she had spread her armies all round the Black Sea and commanded the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. But when he came to the conduct of the war, he found much to condemn, though it is rather noticeable that, unlike his official superiors, Lowe spoke with consideration of Lord Raglan. It would be harsh, he said, to charge too much upon

the Commander-in-Chief, who was known to be a gallant soldier, had served in the Peninsula, had lost an arm at Waterloo, and had been engaged in the public service ever since. They could hardly expect to take a man from the desk (Lord Raglan had been Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief at the Horse Guards) at sixty-four or sixty-five years of age and make him the successful leader of an army in an extremely active and severe campaign.¹

Lowe then contrasted, in forcible language, the campaign of Wellington in the Peninsula with this of the allies in the Crimea. But the only moral to be drawn from such a comparison is that Wellingtons are exceedingly rare. He, however, insisted that all our blundering and misfortune arose from the abuse of patronage; or, to use his own powerful words—‘from the postponement of public to private objects; from the existence of personal favour and affection; from consideration paid to rank and position: all these things which tell in private society, but which ought not to tell in the stern affairs of war and the earnest business of life.’

¹ This may seem very qualified praise; but it should be borne in mind that Lowe had been a member of a Ministry which tried to throw all the blame of our misfortunes in the Crimea on Raglan. Lord Malmesbury writes (*Memoirs of an ex-Minister*): ‘Lord Hardinge told me that Lord Panmure, soon after he took office as War Minister, wrote the most rude and abusive letter to Lord Raglan. He showed a copy of it to the Cabinet and to Lord Hardinge, who told him he had never seen such a letter written to an officer of Lord Raglan’s rank; indeed, that it was quite unfit to be sent to any officer in Her Majesty’s Service. Lord Panmure wanted him to keep a copy at the Horse Guards, but Lord Hardinge refused, and added that he would not even have it said that he had ever put such a letter in his pocket. The Duke of Newcastle also sent him a very sharp reprimand; and when the Duke left office and was preparing to go to the Crimea, he wrote Lord Raglan an apology, saying he hoped he would forgive the letter which he had previously written, as it had not been dictated by any hostile feeling, but entirely from a sense of the duties of his position. Lord Raglan returned no answer, but it is well known that he felt deeply the way he was treated by the Government and the Press, and nothing but the highest possible sense of duty could have induced him to submit to all these insults and injuries, remain in command of the army, share their sufferings, and finally die at his post without a word of complaint or a murmur ever having escaped his lips.’

England, which six months ago stood at the head of the nations, was compelled to learn the art of war and of maintaining an army from a semi-barbarous enemy. No man would appoint an overseer in his establishment simply because he was a relation or the son of a great friend, without reference to his qualifications; the whole concern would go to ruin if such a system were adopted, and until a like system were adopted in the management of our public affairs, it would be of no use attempting to compete even with so barbarous a power as Russia. The Emperor of Russia employed the best man he could procure, and if he were found to be negligent or incapable, instantly recalled him, and if he had betrayed his trust, punished him without mercy. The people of England in one sense occupied the same position as the Emperor of Russia. The statesmen were only their servants. The evil was that these servants, in executing the patronage that was delegated to them, dispensed it so as to serve their own friends and forward their own parliamentary interests rather than the interests of the people at large.

After criticising with much point the then existing system of purchase in the army and of promotion by favour or seniority, Lowe wound up by telling the electors of Kidderminster a very unpalatable truth, namely, that the cause, as well as the remedy, of official corruption lay with themselves. In a free country like England, he said, men must be content that their representatives in Parliament should refrain from distributing the loaves and fishes of office amongst themselves. 'Members must cease to sell themselves to Government for the sake of this patronage, and Ministers must give up this system also; because, until merit is the only avenue to public offices, we are fighting with a leaden sword against a man who uses a steel one.'

So long as the speaker had been dealing in generalities, or pointing to cases of aristocratic nepotism, the applause had been loud and frequent; but it is not recorded that this last sentiment, which really went to the very root of the matter, was received with any special enthusiasm. Doubtless among those who had cheered loudest when their member had been denouncing the 'family system,' whereby the untried or in-

competent relatives of men in power were loaded with high and lucrative appointments, there were some who had sons of their own to 'place.' It was, indeed, on this question of patronage, more than on any other, that Lord Sherbrooke maintained so uncompromising and, one regrets to add, so unpopular a stand. As a witty man of the world who knew him well once declared—'Lowe was not a good lord to follow to the field, for even when the battle was won he distributed so little of the spoils.'

Two or three days after this address to his constituents, Lowe, as an independent member, delivered an important speech on Roebuck's motion with reference to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol. He opposed the motion, because they could not make such a parliamentary investigation without a rupture with France, and also because they could not justly inquire into the conduct of the English generals and officers in the absence of the accused. On the same night (February 23, 1855), Sir James Graham, Mr. Sidney Herbert, and Mr. Gladstone explained that their withdrawal from Lord Palmerston's Ministry was owing to this committee of inquiry; and on this evening also John Bright delivered the famous 'Angel of Death' speech. The two best chroniclers of our century—men who were all their lives behind these strange political scenes—make the following entries in their diaries:—

Graham, Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert have resigned, greatly to the disgust and indignation of their colleagues, to the surprise of the world at large, and the uproarious delight of the Whigs and Brooks's Club, to whom the Peelites have always been odious.

(GREVILLE.)

The three Peelite ex-ministers, Gladstone, Graham, and Herbert, have made their explanation in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston slept through Gladstone's speech, and nearly broke down in his own. He appears to be failing under the fatigue and difficulty of his position.

(MALMESBURY.)

It will be noticed that both Lowe and his future chief, Mr. Gladstone, objected to this Select Committee; but here they altogether parted company with regard to the Russian War.

Although, in very different stations and capacities, they had both been members of the Coalition Government of Lord Aberdeen, they were not then bound by a common allegiance or even by the slightest party tie. Mr. Gladstone was what might be called an independent Conservative, and Robert Lowe an unattached Liberal; the former retired from Palmerston's Government with evident feelings of hostility, especially towards its war policy; while Lowe, though he had declined to return to the Board of Control, was an avowed and hearty supporter of the Government.

No sooner had Sir George Cornewall Lewis stepped into Mr. Gladstone's vacated post as Chancellor of the Exchequer, than the latter began to denounce the iniquity of continuing the strife. Then the Minister who had assisted to conduct the war to the gates of Sebastopol suddenly assumed the new guise of a Russophil, demanding that England should lay down her arms. Robert Lowe was always a plain and direct person; he could understand the attitude of men like Milner Gibson, Cobden, and Bright—the peace party, who had denounced the war consistently throughout. He thought they were wrong and short-sighted in many respects, and ranged himself on the other side; but he could quite appreciate their aim and policy. But Mr. Gladstone had been a leading member of the Aberdeen Cabinet, which declared war, and had even joined Lord Palmerston, whose avowed aim was to prosecute the war more vigorously. Now this same Minister was denouncing England and belauding her enemy. On this subject the *Times* had a stirring leading article, which produced a profound impression at the time on the public mind:—

In this country we tolerate much license and forgive many excesses in the political debater. A year hence, perhaps earlier, it

will be forgotten that Mr. Disraeli availed himself of the question of peace and war to lampoon the diplomatic career of Lord John Russell. But we doubt whether the singular line Mr. Gladstone has selected will be so easily forgotten, or regarded as anything else than an unmitigated scandal. In the face of all Europe, with the knowledge that in a few hours his words would be reported to every hostile or wavering Court, and that the more precious grains would be picked out from the alluvial deposit of his harangue, he deliberately reversed all the characters of the quarrel. He assigned to Russia the pacific and conciliatory part. He pronounced the proper objects of the war attained, and our present prosecution of it unjust, wanton, aggressive, vainglorious, immoral, inhuman, anti-Christian, alike guilty and unwise, tempting the justice of the Almighty and provoking the wrath of Heaven.

The indignant writer wished to know how came it that 'Russia stands at the right hand of heavenly justice, we at the left.' Lowe was now thoroughly roused, and went even beyond Palmerston himself in his desire to humble the aggressive might of Russia. On May 25, 1855, he addressed the House with the utmost vehemence in support of the policy of continuing the war. Sir Francis Baring had proposed a motion expressing regret that the conferences at Vienna had not led to a termination of hostilities; to which Lowe proposed as an amendment, 'That the refusal of Russia to restrict the strength of her navy in the Black Sea had exhausted the means of suspending hostilities by negotiation.' This led to several animated debates in Parliament, in which Bulwer Lytton, Milner Gibson, Palmerston, and Disraeli took prominent parts. The latter said that Baring's motion was a *felo-de-se*, while that of Lowe, which professed to be an amendment, was in itself a complete and perfect proposition and one of the most important ever made in that House; for it called upon us to declare that unless Russia consented to reduce her fleet upon the Black Sea, negotiations should not be sanctioned. The history of Europe, remarked Disraeli sententiously, was the history of attempts to check the preponderance of strong over weak nations. But he must oppose

Lowe's proposition as being altogether too humiliating to Russia. The reader, remembering the more recent *imbroglio* between England and Russia, may well rub his eyes to find Benjamin Disraeli rebuking Robert Lowe for 'jingoism'; but the student of *Hansard* learns to be astonished at nothing. Lowe's aggressive motion as to Russia and the Black Sea was withdrawn, but the fact that he brought it forward and defended it with great spirit was one of the most significant incidents in the Russian debates of 1855.

The treaty of peace was signed in Paris on March 30th, 1856; but there was yet another memorable war debate on April 28th following, when Mr. Whiteside moved a vote of censure on the Palmerston Government in connection with the downfall of Kars. It was after hearing Whiteside on this occasion, that Lord Malmesbury declared him a greater orator than Disraeli. Robert Lowe had also a very high opinion of the eloquence of this great Irish lawyer, though he thought it was marred on many occasions by its excessive floridness and want of restraint. Despite Whiteside's eloquence, the Kars debate, which lasted three nights, ended in an overwhelming victory for the Government. Lowe had by this time again become a member of the Ministry, but it will be remarked that, whether out of office or in, he gave Palmerston, during the whole trying period of the Russian war, the most loyal, unflinching, and even enthusiastic support.

It was during this time of public anxiety and excitement that Robert Lowe republished anonymously in the columns of the *Times* his spirited translation from Béranger, which was considered singularly apposite:—

THE COSSACK TO HIS STEED

FROM BÉRANGER

The northern trumpet sounds the charge, my steed is true Cossaque,
 He never flagged upon the way nor wheeled from foeman back.
 The warrior's noble friend is he, that spares not blood nor breath;
 The steed that bears my lance to-day shall lend new wings to death.

No gold adorns my saddle-bow, no jewels deck my rein ;
 But gold and gems enrich the foe, and those we soon shall gain.
 Then proudly neigh, my warrior steed, beneath thy thundering tread
 The kingly crown shall soon go down and nations quake in dread.
 But stamp thy desolating hoof, and peace shall smile no more,
 Old Europe's ramparts topple down, her altars smoke with gore.
 Besieged as in some mighty fort, by subjects oft betrayed,
 The king, the noble, and the priest, all cry to me for aid :
 ' Oh, save us from our people's hand, and leave us tyrants still,
 And we will be thy slaves, Cossaque, to do thy lordly will.'
 I come ! I come ! ye tyrant slaves—prepare devoted France ;
 The cross shall bend, the sceptre bow, before my quivering lance.

I saw before our bivouac a giant's shadowy form ;
 Beneath his gaze the watch-fire paled, his accents hushed the storm.
 ' My reign begins anew ! ' he cried ; and o'er his nodding crest
 He waved his battle-axe on high and pointed to the west.
 Oh, well I knew that royal form, that chief of boundless sway,
 Thy son, oh Attila, am I, thy mandate I obey.
 Then proudly neigh, my warrior steed, beneath thy thundering tread
 The kingly crown shall soon go down and nations quake in dread.

Let vaunting annals proudly boast of Europe's martial feats ;
 Let helpless Learning stretch her arms to shield her favourite seats.
 The cloud of dust that from thy hoofs around our ranks is cast,
 Shall swallow in one common doom the future and the past ;
 O'erthrow the shrines where nations knelt, the thrones where kings
 have sat ;
 Laws, records, memory, all efface, and leave them desolate.
 Then proudly neigh, my warrior steed, beneath thy thundering tread
 The kingly crown shall soon go down and nations quake in dread.

Lowe constantly urged in the *Times* the need of thorough administrative reform in the English army. This subject naturally suggested to his mind India, with the condition and government of which he had become thoroughly conversant. In one of his finest articles, contrasting the management of the Marquis of Dalhousie in India with that of the Imperial authorities in the Crimea, he pronounced a splendid eulogium on that great Governor-General. In a few plain sentences he showed the magnitude and the success of Dalhousie in the conduct of the Sikh and the Burmese wars ; the difficulties of commissariat and transport, the climate, the nature of the foe,

and how all these had been overcome by the strong will and the clear head of a born ruler of men. Had either of these wars, he declared, been conducted on our wretched system, the army would have perished to a man before it reached the scene of operations, or else arrived as a mere remnant of famished scarecrows. The cry had indeed arisen in England for the 'Company's' generals—for men like Outram and Herbert Edwardes; for the men who, as Lord Metcalfe said of himself, 'never laid down their heads without thinking British India might be gone before morning.' Robert Lowe, however, had grave doubt as to whether the sending of even the best of these to a subordinate command in the Crimea would be of any use. The following letter, written at this time to Sir James Outram at Lucknow, may fitly close this chapter.

Robert Lowe to Colonel (Sir James) Outram.

34 Lowndes Square : June 15, 1855.

My dear Colonel Outram,—It gives me great pleasure to see your handwriting again and to know that you are, at least for the present, occupying a situation in which you are so eminently calculated to do good service to the public. I am very sorry to have been so remiss in answering the kind letter you were so good as to write me from Aden. The truth is, that just at the moment I scarcely felt justified in offering any opinion on the matter till I knew what would be decided by my master; and my resignation of office following shortly after, put the matter out of my head. I hope you will excuse my negligence. I read your paper on Aden with very great pleasure, and entirely agree with the views which it expresses, and which, indeed, I hope are adopted and will be acted upon by the Indian and Home Governments. [See Appendix.]

With regard to your duties at Lucknow, I never doubted the conclusion you would arrive at when you passed in review before you the abomination of that most detestable Government for which nobody but poor Mr. Sullivan had ever any good to say; but I do not feel altogether so certain as you do that the Indian Government, in case they adopt your recommendations, will feel it necessary to replace you by any other person. You have given too many proofs of great administrative talent to render it at all probable that such a conclusion will be arrived at. The Fates seem to have decreed that, with every desire to take part in the active operations of this

war, you will not be allowed to do so. I confess I should have regretted had you given up the Residency of Oude in order to take a command at Kars. You would have been encompassed by many difficulties, and would not, I think, have been likely to reap that fame which would have been the just reward of your labour. Nothing thrives under the detestable corruption of the Turkish Government, and I think our occupation of the Sea of Azoff and the evacuation of Anapa are likely to paralyse all efforts of Russia in that direction. The same cause will probably supersede the necessity of any expedition to the Persian Gulf. Were I able to dispose of you, I would send you with a small force into Mingrelia or Imeritia in order to raise, organise, and arm the inhabitants, to whose native energies I would trust far more than to the bastard civilisation of the Turks; and I believe if such a course were taken we should be in Tiflis before the end of the present campaign. But I have no power to help you in the matter, having broken off my connection with the Government, and holding a position which, though not hostile, is exactly one which requires me to be peculiarly abstinent from their concerns. Let me advise you to be content for the present with the very eminent position you now hold, and to wait patiently till the time comes when a man of action is really required by the Indian Government, when I feel convinced that your indisputable claims must ensure you the first offer of employment. I wish it were in my power to pay you a visit at Lucknow, but see very little reason to suppose that such a pleasure is in reserve for me. Give my kind regards to Mrs. Outram, in which my wife begs to join, and believe me,

My dear Colonel Outram,
Very truly yours,
R. LOWE.

APPENDIX

Sir James Outram and the Arab Chiefs

THE following extracts from the letter written to Lord Sherbrooke by Sir James Outram on his return voyage to India, have been kindly forwarded by his son Sir F. B. Outram, Bart. :—

Aden : August 20, 1854.

. . . I gave expression to the feelings of humiliation with which I could not but be impressed by such a record of bullying, blustering, vacillating and impotent diplomacy—if diplomacy it could be called—as our utterly futile negotiations with the Arab chieftains have displayed from first to last.

I could not have believed it possible that the Indian Government could have submitted to such insolent defiance, or patiently borne with such palpable discomfiture as it has here experienced; and the only way I can now account for it is by the supposition that it had become aware, when too late, that its demands on the chiefs, though perfectly just and indispensable in themselves, had been made in such a manner as precluded the possibility of their being complied with; for such I find to be the case, whether the Government had or had not become aware of the fact.

The Government had not, at any rate, been fully informed of the precise nature of late communications with the chiefs, and consequently of the real state of our present relations with them. It was my duty, therefore, to inform them on the subject, and, at the same time, in soliciting instructions for my guidance in the event of certain contingencies arising, to place before them a review of our past proceedings here, which contains revelations that must startle them, and will, I think, even surprise *you*, who are so little disposed to look for much that is praiseworthy from Indian officials.

It appears to be my fate to bring to the notice of my superiors what is most disagreeable to them, wherever they place me. But I cannot swerve from my duty even to preserve them from the unwelcome knowledge of my unpalatable truths. It is to solicit your early attention to that Report that I now address you, fearing that otherwise you may be deterred by the repulsive appearance of so voluminous a document. . . . I am afraid my letter to Sir Charles Wood may have led him to apprehend that I contemplated a departure from the pacific policy heretofore maintained. My Report will more clearly show my views, and under what circumstances alone—should they hereafter occur—would I pursue a less pacific course, and the extent to which I would limit hostile measures should they become necessary, and that under no circumstances would I advocate other than purely defensive operations, and those only within easy communication with our vessels, and such as would not embroil us with the tribes in the interior.

I remain, &c.,

J. OUTRAM.

Right Hon. R. Lowe.

CHAPTER VI

AN AUSTRALIAN RETROSPECT

JUST before the outbreak of the war in the Crimea, Robert Lowe removed from Eaton Square to the house, 34 Lowndes Square, which remained his town residence till his death. It was on March 25, 1853, that he completed the purchase of the lease, and very shortly afterwards he entered into possession with his household gods. In later years the house in Lowndes Square became the centre of much that was brightest and best in English society. It was in that drawing-room that Lord Sherbrooke frequently exchanged ideas on government with Sir George Cornwall Lewis, and on Greek with the Master of Balliol, and where he greatly enjoyed the social intercourse with clever women, with whom he was always a prime favourite, from the Hon. Mrs. Norton of a past generation, to the Duchess of St. Albans and the Countess of Airlie of the present day.

But when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lowe first installed themselves in their house in Lowndes Square, their Australian life was, so to speak, much nearer to them. Time and new faces had not then intervened between them and their former far distant home on the Pacific. Until the very last there was much in Lord Sherbrooke's London house that made even a stranger give a passing thought to the Antipodes. Around the walls hung the beautiful water-colour sketches by Mrs. Lowe of their former home at Nelson Bay ; in one of the rooms swung in his cage the parrot that had been given to Mrs. Lowe by an hospitable squatter when they were wandering about the

bush in enforced idleness. But to the lord and master of the house there were many other things during those early years in which he first settled himself permanently in London, which must vividly have recalled his life in Sydney. In his library, among many handsome tomes, were the works of his favourite, Sir Walter, the political writings of Edmund Burke, the dearly loved, though afterwards much abused, classics—these had all travelled round the world with him. Also in these first years he received much Australian intelligence from the pen of his trusted and intimate friend in Sydney, the late William Macleay. At parting they had made a kind of loose compact that they would regularly exchange the experiences and impressions of their widely-sundered lives ; and this was done as far as possible until Macleay's death in 1865. Of this correspondence but a very small portion has been preserved, and of that, only a mere fraction in any way concerns this narrative.

Like all men of that highly refined and cultured type, Macleay was of a reserved nature, as well as of very studious habits, and admitted few to the inner sanctuary of his feelings. But he had an affection, surpassing that of a brother, for Robert Lowe, and he felt also a great liking and admiration for the courage and wifely devotion of Mrs. Lowe. His beloved Elizabeth Bay was never to him altogether the same after the departure of the young English barrister and his wife who had so strangely dropped into the orbit of his retired existence. But Macleay was not perhaps the best correspondent to keep an active public man in England posted on colonial matters. That he should furnish regular budgets of political news, in which the aims and machinations of the various rival groups and pushing tricksters in the little Sydney legislature should be clearly set forth, was indeed an impossibility. He could never bring his mind to take sufficient interest in the sayings and doings of such persons—at least not after Lowe had gone out from amongst them. One may imagine the kind of letters which Mr. Herbert Spencer would indite on the party

movements and personal manœuvres of even so august a body as the House of Commons. However, William Macleay, whenever he thought the Sydney legislators were doing anything either noteworthy or reprehensible, promptly posted marked copies of the local journals to Lowndes Square and sometimes added a few pungent comments of his own.

It was an interesting time in Australia, and even the scholarly recluse of Elizabeth Bay often sent what an alert journalist would call a first-class item. The gold-fields of Victoria were then in full swing. At that early period there was a romance about the new El Dorado which sent men from the uttermost parts of the earth to the colony of Victoria. This state of things was by no means relished in Sydney, an old and settled city, which suddenly found itself depleted of its working population, every man who could manage it being off to the diggings in the erstwhile despised Port Phillip district. In April 1852, Macleay writes to Lowe :—

We thought that we should be inundated with emigrants, instead of which we are worse off for labour every day. Our own diggings do not absorb much of the labouring class, but at Mount Alexander and the Loddon there are more than 70,000 diggers at work from all parts of the world except Europe. Captain Bunbury, the post-master, who has just come up from Melbourne, tells us that every person there carries fire-arms with him when he leaves his house, and no wonder, when Sir William Denison¹ is constantly pouring out shoals of Lord Grey's pets upon the Victorian shores. The other night a gang of twenty armed villains took a ship anchored close to Melbourne on the eve of sailing for London, and carried off 8,000 ounces of gold (about 30,000*l.*) when almost within hail of the Melbourne Police Office. This has had such an effect that the insurance offices will not now insure vessels in harbour, nor until they are outside Port Phillip. As all our *mauvais sujets* are off to Melbourne, I never knew this place so quiet ; a robbery in Sydney is never heard of.

The writer then proceeds to dilate on the doings of Bishop Broughton. 'Since *you* left (he writes), the Bishop has

¹ Then Governor of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

broken his tether and become quite rampant and unmanageable. He has quarrelled with the Chief Justice, Captain King, and even with Charlie Cowper, and in fact has turned them all out neck and crop from that conclave of his elect, the Diocesan Committee.' Macleay was, if anything, more anti-clerical than Lowe himself; many of the attacks in the *Atlas* on Bishop Broughton were from his pen, though the public and the bishop attributed them to Lowe. Cowper, on the other hand, who also wrote regularly from Sydney to Lowndes Square, was a strange mixture of pious predilections and mundane practices. He was Lowe's foremost follower as a Sydney politician, and he had many excellent qualities as a public man. With the possible exception of the present Sir Henry Parkes, Cowper proved himself in after years the most successful Prime Minister of New South Wales. Lowe thought more highly of him on the whole than of almost any other politician in Australia; but his attachment to Bishop Broughton and the 'Laymen's League' provoked Lowe on one occasion to declare that 'if Cowper saw the Gates of Heaven thrown open, he would not *walk through straight*, but would *wriggle* in.' This is one of those pungent sayings which are remembered and thrown in the teeth of a public man by opponents too stupid to invent an epigram. When Sir Charles Cowper had become the foremost public man in the Colony, Lord Sherbrooke's swift and momentary retort was quoted *ad nauseam*, usually without the slightest appositeness, by envious rivals.

Years after the wit who first uttered it had quite forgotten the circumstance, it was used again and again to show the light estimation in which he must have held the person so severely satirised. But such a deduction would be equally unfair, both to Lord Sherbrooke and Sir Charles Cowper. In fact, it is only another illustration of the misleading nature of most anecdotes and sharp sayings of celebrated men; they are told, as a rule, with a complete oblivion of the context

and the circumstances that evoked them—deprived, so to say, of their ‘atmosphere.’ Such an anecdote as this, told in the common way as a kind of isolated ‘Joe Miller,’ would leave the impression that Lord Sherbrooke thought very meanly of Cowper, whereas he distinctly regarded him as the best man of business and the ablest politician, except Wentworth and Windeyer, whom he had met in Australia.

Cowper was, in fact, the only active politician in Sydney with whom Lowe kept up any regular correspondence after he came to London. His letters fully made up for Macleay’s deficiencies in the matter of political intelligence. Cowper had assumed the leadership of what, for want of a better term, must be called the Liberal party in Sydney after Lowe relinquished it. He kept a most vigilant eye on Wentworth and Deas Thomson, and duly reported their various manœuvres to head-quarters at Lowndes Square. His letters, like those of other ‘pious’ persons, teem with gossip and scandal—but there is no need to resuscitate such at this late day.

Sydney just then was in the very throes of political agitation. The English Government, despairing of sending out a ready-made Constitution that should satisfy the colonies, had handed over the task to the local Legislative Council. This was certainly a not very heroic proceeding on the part of the Duke of Newcastle, then Colonial Secretary, and, like most easy-going, temporising acts, it led to confusion and unsettlement. The Legislative Council of Sydney, after Lowe’s departure, was easily dominated by Wentworth and the old Crown officials, of whom Deas Thomson was the head. These gentlemen, with a sublime disregard of public opinion, framed a Constitution which comprised an Upper House of Crown nominees, who were then and there to become members of a brand-new colonial peerage. The scheme was ridiculed to death by Parkes, Lang, Deniehy, and other popular Sydney orators of the day; and though Wentworth and Deas Thomson came to London officially with a view of expediting the passing

of their Constitution Bill through the Imperial Parliament, this proposal came to naught.

Wentworth was very much in earnest on the subject, and even Mr. Rusden, the Australian historian, seems to think that a House of Colonial Peers, constructed out of the somewhat dubious elements then to be found in Sydney, would have been a breakwater against democracy. For my part, I think that Robert Lowe, who knew his Sydney well, hit the nail very truly on the head when he thus condemned the scheme in the leading columns of the *Times* :—

The plutocracy of the South is much mistaken if it supposes that mere wealth would be considered here any cause for the establishment of, or any title of admission to, hereditary rank. Mere money is sufficiently attractive without embodying its idolatry in an Act of Parliament conferring titles on a large number of men solely because they are rich. These are not times for unnecessarily degrading whatever of the aristocratic principle is left in our Constitution ; and if we are to preserve an hereditary peerage in England, we must not establish a ridiculous counterpart amid the reminiscences of a penal settlement.

To the ears of many Australians of to-day, who would be equally opposed to such a ridiculous proposal as this colonial House of Peers, it may appear that Lord Sherbrooke in penning these sentences forgot his customary good feeling and courtesy towards the Australian colonies. But it must be remembered that he was writing in 1853, and that the effect of Wentworth's proposal would have been to raise a number of the wealthy 'emancipist' class into a quasi-aristocratic caste, to the infinite disgust of the less wealthy but more respectable inhabitants, and to the permanent degradation of the colony.

That this was the prevailing feeling in the colony at the time is shown by a letter of Cowper's, dated 25th February, 1854 : 'Thomson and Wentworth are desperately uncomfortable at the *Times* article of 31st of October. It was a splendid article, every tittle of it true, and I hope the subject will be discussed throughout in the same slashing style. The colony

is delighted with it. Wentworth will go in the *Bombay*. Edward Hamilton is trying to sell off and quit, and he will, I dare say, get away within a year. Martin¹ & Co. are getting up a grand dinner for Wentworth before he goes. Write to me how the Constitution Bill is likely to be dealt with at home.'

How it was dealt with has been briefly indicated in the preceding paragraph.

These few extracts will show what a keen interest was being taken in the little world of Sydney on their future form of government, while the Colonial Minister, Lord John Russell, was in the midst of his Vienna Conferences. The fact is that, but for the influence of Robert Lowe, in Parliament and on the *Times*, Wentworth and the little knot of Crown officials in Sydney had the whole matter in their hands. As far as one can see, they could have made themselves peers, voted themselves retiring pensions at the rate of their full salaries, or have done anything else without let or hindrance, and in defiance of public opinion in the colony. With the Crimean war on our hands, and afterwards the Indian Mutiny, we had little time to bestow on the squabblings of some three dozen members of a provincial Legislative Council. It was a golden opportunity for the local place-hunter, and with an easy-going epicurean like Sir Charles Fitzroy as Governor, Wentworth and the Crown officials would have done precisely what they liked but for the vigilant watchman of Lowndes Square. It is little wonder that Lowe was hated by the official class in New South Wales. In one of his letters Cowper throws a bright ray of daylight on some of these dark doings. After explaining certain of the provisions in the Constitution Bill which Wentworth and Deas Thomson were to bring home and, if possible, induce the House of Commons to pass, he adds: 'The Judges and Plunkett and Manning are very much annoyed at the clause which was so shamefully smuggled into the Bill, to provide specially for Roger Therry to get a retiring

¹ The late Sir James Martin, Chief Justice of New South Wales.

pension. It is contrary to all precedent, and it alone ought to settle the Bill. I think I told you — jobbed it for friend Roger.'

There can be no doubt that these hints and warnings from a practised parliamentary hand like Cowper, were much more useful to Lowe in keeping him *au fait* with Sydney matters than the more friendly and intimate epistles of William Macleay. Lowe knew all these individuals thoroughly well; he knew that Plunkett and Manning and the Judges were all men of character and that most of the politicians were simply jobbers. He saw, too, with a prescient eye, that owing to the paralysis of our own affairs, these Sydney politicians would more and more get everything into their own hands. There was no help for it. He could only do his best by thwarting some of the more glaring proposals, as they came up for the inattentive consideration of an almost deserted House of Commons. But he did not despair; and by means of his unrivalled knowledge of the social and political condition of early New South Wales he was able to place certain colonial facts so clearly before the readers of the *Times*, that without doubt he made his influence felt even more in London than he could have done had he remained in Sydney.

It seems that about this time Earl Grey expressed in a postscript to a work on the Colonies his dissatisfaction with the intention of the Aberdeen Government to discontinue transportation to the Australian colonies. Lord Grey would not, as he intimated, have been astonished at any eccentric line taken on this question by a Government presided over by Lord Derby; but that his pet policy should be reversed by an Administration containing so many of his old colleagues seemed to call for a public protest. Lord Campbell, it would appear, went to the assistance of the Whig Colonial Minister, and stated, on the strength of his own judicial experience, that awe was struck, not only into the breast of the prisoner, but into that of the bystanders, at the mere threat of transportation. This

was certainly a maladroit observation, considering that the inmates of the English gaols and hulks then desired, above all things, to receive sentences that should remove them to the vicinity of the Australian gold-fields.

But Lowe very properly recognised that to argue seriously with a hard-headed Scotch lawyer like Campbell, who had already made up his mind, was even a more hopeless task than to reason with the great Whig peer, who was nothing if not a *doctrinaire*. He therefore suggested to Lord Campbell that his sentences should in future take the following form : — ‘Forasmuch as you have broken the laws of your country, and that country is anxious to get rid of you, you are ostensibly sent to slavery and misery—that is to say, you are going to a land where you may earn as many pounds as you could ever here do shillings ; where spirits, of which you are no doubt fond, are deliciously cheap, and labour, which you no doubt dislike, delightfully dear ; where the sun will save you the expense of fuel, and almost of clothes ; where you will have no rent, and hardly any taxes ; where you will enjoy the society of those great men in your own line of business who have gone before you ; and where any defects in your criminal education will be effectively rectified. Go, my son, and be a warning to others, lest a like punishment fall upon them.’

This was an effective way of showing that transportation to Australia had become a reward rather than a punishment for crime. As Lowe expressed it more seriously on another occasion, it was the discovery of the gold-fields which arrested criminal transportation more ‘effectively than the eloquence of Sir William Molesworth or the efforts of the Colonial League.’ ‘Gold, which has been the corruption of so many communities, will for once perform the duty of the purifier.’

In the columns of the *Times*, Lowe was a most able and earnest advocate of regular steam communication between England and the Australian colonies. His articles on this subject are full of practical good sense ; and his advocacy

doubtless influenced the development of the far-famed Peninsular and Oriental Company, which has for so many years been a household word in Australia, as well as in India and the East. He more than once went out of his way to befriend Mrs. Chisholm, by the aid of his powerful pen, while she was endeavouring in this country to arouse the interest of the wealthy and philanthropic in the lot of the poor emigrant.

It may be as well here to complete the narrative of Lowe's political activities with regard to the mission of Wentworth and Deas Thomson on behalf of the Constitution Bill, which the Legislative Council of New South Wales, under their leadership, had passed. Briefly, he told the two Australian delegates that their proposals, if not actually corrupt, were impracticable; for they proposed to the Colonial Minister and the English Parliament a plan by which Wentworth and his followers should become members of an Upper House of Colonial Peers, and Deas Thomson and his fellow Crown officials of the old *régime* should receive pensions equivalent to their full salaries, which had been augmented owing to the gold discoveries. Lord John Russell was then for a while Colonial Minister; but he had gone off to the Vienna Conference, and so absorbed was the public mind in the war with Russia, that even the pitched battle between Lowe and the two distinguished delegates attracted little or no public attention.

In fact, Lowe began his elaborate criticism of the Victorian Government Bill (Victoria was now a separate colony, and, like New South Wales, was trying to fit itself with a Constitution) by saying that he was reminded by the small number of members in the House of the wisdom of abstaining from legislating in England upon any matter on which the Colonies themselves were competent to legislate. In a very slipshod manner these colonial Constitutions were tinkered and finally passed by apathetic Ministers and languid Committees. Lowe's speeches were infinitely more thorough than those of any Minister or any other member—a fact which

must greatly have offended the 'governing families' on his side of the House, and effectually prevented him from ever filling the office of Colonial Secretary, for which he was so pre-eminently fitted.

Robert Lowe's special fitness for the post of Colonial Minister was recognised at the time in Australia by thoughtful men outside the little ring of interested officials and squatters whose avarice and venality he had exposed to the public gaze. Lord John Russell merely held the seals of the Colonial Office from May to July 1855, when Sir William Molesworth succeeded. This appointment was one which no one could cavil at, for he was a man of very superior character and aims, who had given earnest attention to colonial matters. But it was naturally thought in well-informed circles, both in England and in Australia, that when Sir William Molesworth passed away prematurely before his first year of office was completed, Palmerston would inevitably offer the post and a seat in the Cabinet to Robert Lowe. In the midst of the many laudatory articles that appeared in the Australian papers on Sir William Molesworth when the news of his untimely death reached the colonies, was the following in the Melbourne *Herald*, then a leading morning paper:—

The death of Sir William Molesworth has caused very great regret and sorrow in all these colonies. He was a statesman at whose hands we have received many benefits. He contributed greatly to the overthrow of transportation, and he did all he could to improve the hybrid constitution given to us by Earl Grey in 1850. His most fitting successor would be Robert Lowe, and some day or other he will force his way into that department, unless indeed its obvious inutility under a system of local self-government should cause its abolition before his time comes. At present it is to be feared that Mr. Lowe's recognised and paramount knowledge of the colonies is a ground for exclusion under the peculiar system by which our colonies have been ruled. If Ministers had not been afraid of too much knowledge, Sir W. Molesworth would have been at the Colonial Office instead of at the Woods and Forests, and Mr. Lowe's first appointment would have been in the place of Mr. Frederick Peel.

But the question of who is and who is not to be Colonial Minister will become every day of less importance.¹

Not only did Lowe hear regularly from his friend, William Macleay, and his political follower and personal acquaintance, Charles Cowper, but other of his quondam associates sent him their views and opinions on Australian affairs. In the recently published work by Sir Henry Parkes, entitled *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*, there will be found an excellent letter from Lowe, which directly corroborates all that has been said in these volumes on the subject of his colonial policy. It was written in reply to a letter from Mr. Parkes, which must have been received just after the Lowes had removed to Lowndes Square.

Robert Lowe to Henry Parkes, Esq.

34 Lowndes Square, London :

April 6, 1853.

My dear Sir,—I am very grateful to you for your kind congratulations, and hope my future career may justify them. Of one thing you may be sure, that I never have lost, and never will lose, my interest in Australia, and that I am happy to have been the means of serving her, if not prominently, at least effectually. I very much disapprove of the provision in the proposed Constitution which appoints an Upper Chamber for life out of the existing members of Council. Such a proposal lowers the colony very much in the opinion of people here. Your present public men are not as a body worthy of so marked a distinction, or rather so close a monopoly; and I am quite sure that, if they are appointed for life, in a few years you will be heartily ashamed of them, and find that you have anticipated your resources by putting worse men in a place which might have been occupied by better.

The scheme appears to me to be designed to retain power in the hands of the present public men, and to exclude, or at an rate to render helpless for your good, the talent and respectability which every ship is carrying to you. A nation ought no more to squander its moral and intellectual than its physical resources. You are about to re-create in Australia the family compact which for so many years oppressed Canada. If you must have a nominated Council, at any

¹ *Notices of the late Sir William Molesworth Bart., M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.* [Printed for private circulation.] London: 1857.

rate throw it open to everyone, and limit the term of office to a few years, so that any evil you do may not be without remedy. But why have a nominated Council? Opinion in this country is in favour of two elective Councils, the upper one to be for a longer period, of more mature age, chosen from larger districts, and going out one-third at a time, so as to have a more permanent element in it. I trust that before you receive this letter the colony will have shown that, having shaken off the interference of the Colonial Office in its affairs, it is not going to load itself with fetters of its own forging. If you wish to be hampered with a nominated Council, it is no part of my duty as a Member of Parliament to contravene you; but I will not, if I can help it, allow the present generation to sacrifice the hopes of their children by fixing them with a Council *for life* chosen exclusively from your present public men.

If you think the making these views known would do good, you are quite at liberty to do so.

I ought to mention that, in giving me the office I now hold, Government intimated to me that it was partly in consideration of my public services in Australia—a fact which I trust will prove that an independent course is not always impolitic.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

R. LOWE.

It will be seen from the foregoing what a keen interest Robert Lowe continued to take in Australia. In the chapter entitled 'Mr. Gladstone's Proposed Penal Colony,'¹ will be found a reference to Mr. Billyard, who had been appointed Chairman of Quarter Sessions under that ill-fated scheme. When by Lord Grey's orders the projected settlement at Port Curtis was abandoned, Mr. Billyard, having returned to Sydney, decided to make it his permanent home. He was an English solicitor of good standing and character, and speedily established a business in Sydney, where he and his wife became friendly with the Lowes and also with William Macleay. When Robert Lowe decided to return to England he appointed Mr. Billyard his agent and business representative in Australia.

In later years, after the death of his friend Macleay, Lord Sherbrooke made a compact with Mrs. Billyard that she

¹ Vol. i. p. 317.

should send him any intelligence of interest from Sydney, which he would endeavour to repay by keeping her cognisant of what was passing in the great world of London. To this we owe the letters to be found in later pages of this volume ; but it is merely alluded to here in order to show the pains taken by Lord Sherbrooke to keep himself thoroughly well informed concerning the progress of Australian affairs.

It is necessary to emphasise the fact that the Australian colonies passed at a bound out of the bondage of the old colonial *régime* into a number of practically independent self-governing democracies. In Lowe's judgment this was a rash and perilous experiment. The artisans and working men of Sydney, to whom he had appealed in 1848 against the petty oligarchy of the place, were householders and men of substance. But he foresaw that the only effect of the overreaching selfishness of the squatters and Crown officials in Australia, aided by the inattentive supineness of the Imperial Government, would be to launch these colonies as pure democracies.

Whilst these pages were passing through the press, it was distressing to find that several influential English journals had been grossly misled as to the style and nature of Lowe's speeches delivered in Sydney. The *Saturday Review* was so far deceived as to credit the statement that he had actually advocated universal suffrage in Australia. Nothing could be further from the truth ; the very words quoted were those of the present Sir Henry Parkes, as will be seen by reference to the files of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. At the same time it is quite useless to consult those files with the notion of obtaining anything like an accurate or verbatim report of Lord Sherbrooke's colonial speeches. In some few cases he thought fit to correct the gross inaccuracies of their rendering, and thus it has been possible to attempt, in the first volume, to present a few fragmentary speeches in his own words. He was admittedly the most difficult speaker in England for even

the most skilled stenographer to follow ; so one may imagine the kind of report which a half-educated and wholly untrained reporter—such as the only daily newspaper in this small Australian settlement could then secure—would be likely to produce. Occasionally in two columns there are barely half a dozen sentences as he uttered them ; so that it is no wonder the English critics can find few traces in these early colonial speeches of Lord Sherbrooke's severely classical style.

It is little short of an outrage on Lord Sherbrooke's memory to put forth these garbled and unrevised colonial speeches—delivered and reported nearly fifty years ago—as his actual utterances and sentiments. They are sometimes useful for purposes of reference, but absolutely misleading as specimens of style or even records of fact ; though it is surprising, with the difficulties to contend against in a remote penal settlement, that there should have been a daily newspaper in existence at all, and sufficiently enterprising to attempt to report at any length the proceedings of its local Council.

There can be no doubt that the careful study which Lowe continued to bestow on Australian affairs tended to deepen and intensify his dislike of democratic institutions. He may have been altogether mistaken ; and it is quite true that his views ran counter to the prevailing current of popular feeling both in England and the colonies. But it is worth bearing in mind that his opinions had not been lightly formed : they were, indeed, more than opinions ; they were convictions based on the experience of life and the patient study of political affairs. To a man of Robert Lowe's mental calibre it was worse than idle to talk at large and in mere generalities of the enormous progress of the Australian colonies under democratic institutions. He would patiently listen to all that could be urged on behalf of these communities, and would then remark quietly that he saw nothing phenomenal in men of the Anglo-Saxon race building cities and constructing railways on a continent that had been

bestowed upon them, and with millions that had been lent on the security of the territory which had already been given. It was like handing over an estate to a man, and then lending him the money to build a house and plant his grounds.

On the other hand, he had an awkward habit of pointing to such facts as that cited by Dr. Lang, who had declared that the early semi-representative Legislative Council of Sydney, consisting of some thirty-six members all told, contained more able men than any of the subsequent full-blown democratic parliaments of Australia. Had the moral and intellectual development of the country kept pace even with its increased population, Lord Sherbrooke thought that this would not have been the case. The Universities, founded for the most part on broad unsectarian lines, had, so far as he could see, little or no influence on Australian public affairs; even socially they were rather held at a discount, and had no more effect than a number of genteel suburban seminaries. With all that could be said against Oxford or Cambridge, their degrees were still a hall-mark even in the House of Commons (though this, he predicted, would not last long); but no one ever thought of inquiring whether a colonial legislator had been educated at Sydney or Melbourne University, and probably out of the many democratic ministries in the various colonies, only a few of the men holding the highest offices had received even an average education. It was the same in America: if a man were sharp and knew how to nobble votes, there was no need for him to possess either refinement or culture. Little as he revered the traditional training of the English Universities, he still thought what he called the democratic condition of things a distinct falling off.

Turning directly to Australia, Lord Sherbrooke would point out that its democratic institutions were on their trial. It was ludicrous, he thought, for men like Bright or even John Stuart Mill, who knew nothing whatever of the colonies, to quote them as shining examples for an old historical

country like England blindly to follow; the light, in his opinion, might be that of a beacon warning us from a dangerous coast. His chief indictment against the colonial democracy was that it furnished the rising generation with no high ideal in social or political life. Its public men lived, as it were, from hand to mouth. He did not say they were personally corrupt in the vulgar sense of the word; but, under the all-pervading State socialism, by which every interest that could command votes had been bought off by public subsidies, jobbery and corruption often escaped notice, simply because they were not personal but national and universal.

Notwithstanding these views on democracy, which were strangely at variance with the theories of his friends the Philosophical Radicals, Robert Lowe was on very intimate terms with many of the disciples of Bentham. He had the highest opinion of Grote the historian, whose unassuming character, as much as his profound learning, had greatly impressed him; and he acted as one of the pall-bearers at his funeral in Westminster Abbey. But the more he saw of Mill, especially after he entered the House of Commons, the less he thought of his political sagacity, and the more he distrusted what he considered his all-pervading sentimentality. The question on which Lowe most widely differed from the Philosophical Radicals was on this subject of American and colonial democracy. They all thought—until, like Charles Austin, they became old and conservative—that if a number of men and women would agree to form a new community on a purely democratic pattern, by means of universal suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts—some very noble national achievement would result. Lowe, from the plenitude of his Australian experience, did not hesitate to tell them that they were indulging in the vainest of impossible dreams. Still, the great anti-democrat could enjoy the society of these English reformers and Radicals so long as they were prepared to

discuss political and economical problems in a scientific spirit.

As early as 1853 he was elected a member of the Political Economy Club, which comprised a number of the leading public men of the day; he retained his membership to the last, having been by the rules of the club elected an honorary member, on becoming a Cabinet Minister, in 1869.

The Political Economy Club was founded in 1821, among its original members being Grote, James Mill, Ricardo, Malthus, Zachary Macaulay, and Sir Henry Parnell. Two years after its foundation Lord Althorp and Nassau Senior became members. In after years, in addition to Lowe, many leading statesmen were members, including Sir G. C. Lewis, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Villiers, Lord Granville, Lord Dufferin, Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Rowland Hill, Lord Bramwell, Sir John Lubbock, and Mr. Forster. The list of members also included men of letters and independent economic thinkers such as Walter Bagehot, Thomas Hare, W. R. Greg, John Stuart Mill, and Professor Fawcett.

CHAPTER VII

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE

(1856)

WHEN the Peelites so suddenly deserted Lord Palmerston he had to reconstruct his Cabinet as best he could. In place of Mr. Gladstone, Sir George Cornwall Lewis became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir Charles Wood replaced Sir James Graham at the Admiralty; Lord Stanley of Alderley took over the Board of Trade from Mr. Cardwell, and the ubiquitous Lord John Russell became Colonial Secretary in lieu of Mr. Sidney Herbert.

With regard to this reconstruction of the Palmerston Cabinet, there is a remarkable entry in the Greville Memoirs:—

They are very wisely going to take in Laing,¹ but very unwisely will not give a place to Lowe, who, if left out, will contrive to do them some damage. Granville has moved heaven and earth to get Lowe in office, but Palmerston and others set their faces against him. Lansdowne has most unreasonably and unwisely insisted on Vernon Smith being taken in, and it is at present intended to make him President of the Board of Control. He is very unpopular and totally useless, and just the man they ought not to take in; while Lowe is just the man they ought, to meet the prevailing sentiment about old connections and new men.

Bearing in mind that at this period Greville knew little or nothing of Lowe personally, and that from his backstairs view of public men he was always inclined to set them all

¹ Mr. Samuel Laing declined the office of Vice-President of the Board of Trade, which was accepted by Mr. Bouverie.

down as placemen and tricksters, this entry is worth consideration. In the first place, it shows Lowe had already made himself such a prominent public man that, in the judgment of so cool and practised a hand at the political game, it was prudent to propitiate him with office. In the second place, it reveals the fact that while the late Lord Granville, who was, to the last, Lord Sherbrooke's most intimate friend among the Whig aristocracy, was even at this early date alive to his merits, Lord Palmerston, who has generally been considered his special patron, was not at first willing to give him office. The fact is, that so long as Palmerston held the seals of the Foreign Office and could 'dish' the Radicals and other innovators in the House of Commons, he cared not a straw what manner of men formed his ministries. Who can forget his characteristic exclamation on finding that he had put all his square men into round holes, and had therefore to 'reconstruct' afresh: 'Ha! ha!' said he, 'a Comedy of Errors!'

It is, of course, incredible that so astute a man as Lord Palmerston should not have been struck with the debating power and intellectual grasp of the member for Kidderminster. But Robert Lowe's genius and ability were not of the order which appealed strongly to Palmerston. Lowe was essentially a scholar; Palmerston was pre-eminently a man of the world. Lowe, although he objected to what is generally called Reform, was nothing if not an administrative reformer—one who could never see an abuse without ardently desiring to rectify it, and who thought that merit and industry, not favour or family, should be the road to power in the State and to promotion in its service. On all these points, which Lord Sherbrooke throughout life held to be the soul and essence of Liberalism, Palmerston was the veriest Gallio.

There was yet another consideration which doubtless influenced Lord Palmerston, and most certainly swayed the Whig nobles whom he would consult as to the reconstruction

of his Cabinet; and that was the fact that the member for Kidderminster was entirely outside what may be called the 'official ring.' It is only consonant with what we know of human nature that Lord Granville,¹ who was a thorough aristocrat, and not a mere mushroom peer and professional borough-monger, should have been the first of the official Whigs to recognise and urge Lowe's claim to be admitted into a Liberal administration.

However, Robert Lowe had not long to wait; nor had he to condescend to any of the paltry arts of parliamentary *finesse* to compel Palmerston to make him the offer of a highly important office in his strangely constructed Ministry. Mr. George Pleydell Bouverie, a second son of the third Earl of Radnor, had been appointed (probably to strengthen the cast of the 'Comedy of Errors') Vice-President of the Board of Trade. Lord John Russell (doubtless to get him out of the way, for it is difficult to see how it expedited the work of the Colonial Office), had been sent as our Plenipotentiary to Vienna. His achievement as a diplomatist gave Disraeli a splendid opportunity of 'lamprooning' him, as Lowe said. It also furnished Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who was then fast rising into note as a Conservative politician, with an effective opening to submit his memorable motion: 'That the conduct of the Minister charged with the negotiations at Vienna, and his continuance in office as a responsible adviser of the Crown, have shaken the confidence which the country should place in those to whom the administration of public affairs is entrusted.'

Lord John, as before, to get out of the difficulty promptly resigned; and Sir William Molesworth, of philosophical renown, who had really devoted time and study to colonial problems, was—*mirabile dictu!*—appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies. It somehow leaked out that Lord John

¹ Lord Granville was, in fact, a kinsman of Lord Sherbrooke; though, doubtless, neither of them knew it. (*See Pedigrees.*)

Russell, whose resignation was universally condemned, had taken the step on the advice of the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. This brought upon Mr. Bouverie's head the wrath of the *Times* and the scathing sarcasm of Disraeli. Palmerston, therefore, thought it prudent to move him out of the way, and he was duly transformed into Paymaster-General and President of the Poor Law Board. Then it was that Lord Palmerston tardily offered the vacant post to Robert Lowe, who became Vice-President of the Board of Trade in August 1855.

Lowe's seat at Kidderminster had not been contested when he had previously accepted the post of Secretary of the Board of Control; but on his being made Vice-President of the Board of Trade, the 'public-house interest' proceeded to make arrangements for a contest. Lowe had already given offence to this powerful trade organisation by positively refusing to be their mouthpiece on the subject of some obscure Beer Bill. This was the beginning of his troubles with the baser class of electors, as well as with the thirsty and riotous non-electors, of Kidderminster. On standing for re-election, he was assailed from this quarter with abuse and personal scurrility, which he met with unflinching dignity. A local solicitor, with the now historic name of Boycott, consented to be the candidate of the disaffected. There was much excitement in the borough, but, though nominated, Mr. Boycott would not face the poll; and on August 11, 1855, Robert Lowe was again returned, practically unopposed, for Kidderminster.

In his new and, on the whole, most congenial office, it fell to the lot of Robert Lowe to effect what has been truly called a revolution in the commercial history and social condition of this country. He was the Minister who carried successfully through Parliament the Joint Stock Companies Acts of 1856 and 1857, and the Joint Stock Banking Com-

panies Act of 1857.¹ In these important and far-reaching measures, he gave legislative validity to the principle of limited liability. It was, on the whole, perhaps his greatest achievement; and, coupled with his subsequent legislation on behalf of public education and the public health, places him in the ranks of the one or two statesmen of our time, whose measures have profoundly affected the social well being of the nation and ameliorated the lot of countless generations of their race.

It will be remembered, that in the second speech delivered by Lowe in the House of Commons,² he explained his views on the question of limited liability with the utmost force and clearness. And once again, before his official position enabled him to bring in his famous Bills, he seized the opportunity of a debate (June 29, 1855) to clear the minds of timid reasoners like Mr. Cardwell, and correct official blunderers like his predecessor, Mr. Bouverie. In the course of this discussion he crossed swords with Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Collier, and proved himself more than a match, even on mere points of law, for that astute and successful lawyer. It was, however, on February 1, 1856, in introducing his own measure, that he delivered his great speech on the Law of Partnership and Joint Stock Companies. In the obituary article on Lord Sherbrooke, the *Times* (July 28, 1892), referring to this speech, remarked, 'Never, probably, was a clearer or more cogent argument for reform presented to Parliament.'

¹ In the confidential memorandum on the limited liability of joint stock banks which Mr. Lowe issued on May 28, 1857, appeared the following paragraph:—

'The shares are to continue to be 100*l.* each, and, what many persons, without communication with each other, have proposed to me, is to enact that, in case of winding up, each contributory shall be liable for 100*l.* more on every share, so that, whatever capital the company has subscribed, its creditors have the security of as much more. This would be easily understood, and has already been practised in colonial banks—the Bank of Australasia for instance; and I know from my own experience that such banks enjoy in the colonies a credit equal to that of banks of unlimited liability.'

² See chapter iii. p. 49.

Under our parliamentary system of government, it is the invariable rule to give the entire credit of any special acts of legislation to the Minister or member who succeeds in carrying them through the House. Great as is my admiration for Lord Sherbrooke's career and achievements, I venture to think that he, like all other Parliamentarians, should share his legislative honours with the experts and officials who assisted him to shape his policy and frame his enactments. Much as he had thought on this question, and rare as were his powers of exposition and debate, it is doubtful if he, or any man, could have delivered so convincing a speech on so complex and technical a matter without having previously, day by day, gone over every point and discussed every difficulty with trained specialists. In saying this, I do not feel that I detract in the slightest degree from Lord Sherbrooke's fame as an administrative reformer; for he is certainly as much entitled to go down to posterity as the founder of our joint stock and limited liability legislation as Pitt is of the Union, or as Mr. Gladstone may be of Home Rule.

According to every account, Lord Sherbrooke, who was then five-and-forty years of age, was in the full ripeness of his intellectual vigour. I am again indebted to Sir Thomas Farrer, than whom no one can speak on the subject with such complete authority, for the following notes and particulars.

Sir Thomas (then Mr.) Farrer, as Secretary of the Local Government Board, was thrown into daily contact with the Vice-President; and, as with all the chief permanent officials who served under Lord Sherbrooke (a strange commentary on his outside unpopularity), he became an intimate and lifelong friend. It is true that they had been together at Oxford, and Sir Thomas is wont to relate how, when he went up for the Balliol scholarship in 1836-7, he was a spectator of more than one of the brilliant battles between Lowe and the redoubtable Trevor. But they had seen little of each other at Oxford, though no doubt such reminiscences served to cement their

later friendship, which dates from 1855, at the Board of Trade.

Now, Sir Thomas Farrer declares that Lord Sherbrooke, Lord Thring, and Baron Bramwell were, more than any other persons, the real authors of limited liability. He writes: 'The discussions we (i.e. Lowe, Thring, Bramwell and I) had at the Board of Trade over this subject were some of the most interesting and certainly the most amusing I ever had on any business. It was possible to sit later and longer with Lowe than with any other man I have served, because every point was illustrated by some apt quotation, some good story, some flash of wit. Lord Overstone, whom he used to call the "Common Vouchee," and Cardwell, who was also opposed to limited liability, got unmercifully chaffed. I remember Lowe consulting Lord Campbell, whose reply was, "If you give notice it is all right; if not, it is a d—d swindle." Hence the obligation to use the word *Limited* in the title.'

Under our system of popular and party government, the next thing to be done after certain wise men such as these have knocked a measure into shape, is for the responsible Minister to go down to St. Stephen's and explain the matter to a large number of more or less indifferent and ill-informed members of Parliament, whose ranks are sprinkled with a few men of acute intelligence, for the most part aiming to defeat the Bill and embarrass the Government. Stated in this way, the principle of parliamentary government seems rather absurd; but there is doubtless a good side to it. Earnest thinkers of the type of Carlyle and Mr. Froude would say, in a case like this of limited liability: Why not let the matter be settled out of hand by the men who are wisest and know most of the subject—by Lord Sherbrooke, Lord Thring, Baron Bramwell, and Sir Thomas Farrer? The only answer can be that this is not the English way of law-making. We,

as a nation, insist on having a voice in the framing of the laws by which we are governed. Accordingly, Lord Sherbrooke had to take his Bills and submit them to the more or less untrained intelligences comprising the House of Commons.

In explaining the scope and principles of his proposed legislation to the House, Lowe succeeded to admiration. On such occasions he was always clear and explicit, and frequently brilliant and witty; but in introducing these two Bills—one to amend the law of partnership, and the other for the incorporation and regulation of joint stock companies—he exhibited an amount of tact and a degree of kindly consideration for minds less ready and capable than his own, that much facilitated their passage through the Commons. His backward glance at the history of joint stock enterprises is very interesting, and has the literary charm of a popular chapter in Macaulay or Green.

The state of the law relating to joint stock companies is something peculiar. It seems to have been the misfortune of these bodies to be always legislated for by persons in a state of great excitement. The first law of this kind, called the Bubble Act, was passed during the first paroxysm produced by the bursting of the memorable South Sea Bubble in the reign of George I. Shakespeare says:—

The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them!

And so our legislators set to work to explode them, and for one hundred years the law of this country rendered the formation of joint stock companies illegal and a punishable offence. This I mention, not because it is immediately relevant, but because the light which it throws on this matter should act as a caution to us against being led away blindly by precedent. Here is a remarkable instance of a thing being proscribed which is now generally recognised as having proved very beneficial to most communities—viz., the right of association among capitalists; and this prohibition remained in force till the year 1825, when it was first repealed. The Government at that date still continued to look very jealously on these companies; and although it was then seen that they partook very largely of the nature of corporations, yet it was only by very slow degrees that it could be induced to regard them in

that light ; for in the first year of the reign of her present Majesty it was enacted, not that joint stock companies should be allowed to sue under a corporate name (that was thought to be too high a privilege for bodies which had so lately lain under the ban of the Legislature), but that they should be allowed to sue and be sued under the name of their public officer—a most inconvenient and circuitous form of proceeding, and one which showed the absurd and even ridiculous distrust with which these associations were regarded. Then we come to the law of 1844, the present Joint Stock Companies Act. That measure was the result of the report of a Select Committee, which appears to have conducted its deliberations in a state of mental perturbation scarcely less violent than that which prevailed in the days of George I. For when I look at their Report, I find the headings of the different sections of what one would generally expect to be a very demure and quiet sort of document, running thus : ‘ Form and Destination of the Plunder ’ ; ‘ Circumstances of the Victims ’ ; ‘ Impunity of the Offenders,’ and the like ; so that a hurried glance at the contents might make one really fancy he was reading a novel instead of a dry, heavy blue-book !

The speaker then tersely, but comprehensively, laid bare the defects of the Act of 1844, which he was about to uproot. He pointed out that, in his own attempt at legislation, he was actuated by a principle diametrically opposed to that which instigated all prior enactments on this subject. Hitherto, legislation had been based on the supposition that it was the duty of Government to supersede the vigilance of individuals, and to cure commercial fraud by anticipatory legislation. His own principle was that it was wrong to embarrass a hundred sound *bonâ fide* concerns in the futile effort to correct the hundred and first, which may be roguish. This was the principle on which civilised society is based ; for unless we deal with each other in some spirit of mutual confidence—unless we assume that a man is honest until he is proved to be a rogue—the disruption of human society must necessarily follow.

In his exposition of his views, it is worth noticing how continually Lowe kept before his mind the advantages which he thought might accrue to very small capitalists, and even to working men, if Parliament could abolish the old legislative

restraints on commercial co-operation. He said that he had received letters from those who were anxious to establish cotton mills by means of a company with 1*l*. shares; and he thought it an impolitic state of the law which admitted associations to be formed by the rich but denied them to the poor. His remarks on this head may be quoted as another instance of how greatly he has been misrepresented to the mass of his fellow-countrymen as a man who, if not eager to grind the faces of the poor, was yet without sympathy or consideration for their lot.

When we allow those who are possessed of capital to establish companies for their mutual benefit, and when contests take place between capital and wages, shall we not allow the workmen to enter upon the formation of companies for themselves, because we think it right to fix as the amount of shares a sum larger than they can possibly raise? Let them try the experiment, or they will never be satisfied; and be assured that there can be no more flagrant specimen of law than that which gives facilities to the rich and excludes the poor from combining in any matter of trade or for any legitimate object that they may demand. Take, as another example, the Truck system. What can be a more natural remedy for people who find that, at the only shop to which they can have access, they are cheated by having to pay a price far beyond what is fair and just, that they should join together their small earnings in order to save themselves from the overcharge and the adulteration, and all the oppressions to which they are subjected? I shall deeply regret if it is not the policy of this House to support the measure which we are prepared to lay before it on this matter—a measure which I believe to be cast in a spirit of comprehensive liberality; or if any difficulty should be expressed as to giving facilities to poor persons in the conduct of affairs of which they themselves may be expected to be the best judges. The only argument which I have heard against these small share companies is, that they will lead to gambling. It is not impossible that this may, to some extent, be so; but if we were to refrain from legislation on all matters that might possibly lead to gambling, the consequences would be more comprehensive than at first sight might be imagined. On this principle we should begin by burning haystacks lest people should draw straws out of them.

These doctrines may seem elementary and axiomatic to us; but that they are so, is largely owing to Lord Sherbrooke's

speeches and enactments of 1856-7. It could, I suspect, be found that, not only Mr. Cardwell, but many other leading lights in the Liberal party of that day, were very much alarmed by this thoroughgoing advocacy of joint stock companies on the principle of limited liability, and at the express desire to facilitate such enterprises among the poor as well as among the rich.

Lord Sherbrooke's success was complete. The Joint Stock Companies Act of 1856 was passed, into which he himself introduced, in 1857, a provision with regard to the winding-up of companies, which was further amended in 1858. In 1857 he also passed the Joint Stock Banking Companies Act; and in the following year 'An Act to enable Joint Stock Banking Companies to be formed on the principle of Limited Liability.'

In the excellent biographical sketch of Lord Sherbrooke which appeared in the *Times* the morning after his death, it is stated that—'Though it did not fall to him to give full effect to the principle of limited liability, he was the parent of measures which were the forerunners of the Act of 1862.' This, I think, is calculated to give a somewhat erroneous view of Lord Sherbrooke's achievement in this field. As the author of the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1856, he may rightly claim to be the legislative parent of limited liability. As Lord Thring, the highest living authority, specially states in reference to the Act of 1856, 'All the subsequent legislation on the subject is merely an extension of its principles;'¹ and this, of course, includes Lowe's own subsequent enactments, as well as the Companies Act of 1862 and those of succeeding years.

Sir Thomas Farrer remarks, as characteristic of Lowe, that in his discussions of limited liability, the only thing which he thought necessary was to reverse the decision in the case of *Waugh v. Carver*. Sir Thomas has also taken the trouble

¹ Thring's *Law and Practice of Joint Stock and other Companies*. Fifth edition, p. 12.

to give the correct version of a well-known story which has long been current among the recorded *obiter dicta* of Lord Sherbrooke. Like all sayers of good things, he has had many silly and pointless jokes fathered on him; and, as with other wits and sharp-tongued persons, his sayings have been either habitually distorted or else related without any allusion to the circumstances which elicited them. The story generally runs thus: 'Let us begin by assuming we are all d—d fools, and now to business,' was his abrupt opening of proceedings on a committee of which X., a fussy bore, vacant and captious, was a member.'

'The real history of the saying,' writes Sir Thomas Farrer, 'is as follows: Thring, whom Lowe respected extremely, used to come to discuss the Limited Liability Bill in the evening, about five o'clock. One day Lowe had sent him in the morning a trio of suggestions. Thring came in about five o'clock with these suggestions in his hand, exclaiming—*more suo*—that they were d—d nonsense; whereupon Lowe replied: "Let us begin by assuming,"' etc.

It will be seen at a glance that this puts an entirely new complexion on the story; and when it is known that the oft-quoted remark was made to the great parliamentary draughtsman, whose intellect, needless to say, is one of the clearest in England, it may be charitably hoped that we shall hear no more of that imaginary bore whom, as the tale generally runs, Lowe merely insulted in the grossest manner.

There is ever occupation for the *advocatus diaboli*, especially in regard to the results of human legislation. As Mr. Herbert Spencer reminds us, the unseen consequences are often so much more important than those which have been foreseen. It has sometimes been urged by the opponents of limited liability, that it has unfortunately led to the increase of reckless speculation and mere commercial gambling. An eminent banking authority in Melbourne has recently traced

the terrible financial collapse that has taken place in Australia to the facilities given for land-jobbery, mining, and other speculation by joint stock and limited liability companies. At the same time it should be remembered that young communities would find it a matter of insuperable difficulty to raise the capital for legitimate commercial enterprises in any other way. The Lord Dudleys who could, at their own risk and from their own resources, keep alive the industry on which a whole town depends, are not to be found in young colonies. To form an estimate of the effects of such far-reaching legislation as that of Lord Sherbrooke when at the Board of Trade, it behoves us to reflect on what would have been the slow progress of even an old and wealthy country such as this, if men in every town and village had not been able to enter into commercial co-operation without each individual having to run the risk of losing his entire fortune should the enterprise prove unsuccessful.

Upon this subject a story is told by Sir Thomas Farrer which is quite to the point. That gentleman visited his old chief at Caterham shortly after the death of the first Viscountess Sherbrooke, and found him, as might be imagined, in a very low and depressed state. To cheer him, Sir Thomas began to talk of the classics, and of his garden and grounds at Sherbrooke, the two things that had always been his pride and solace.

‘Classics! yes; you read them like a gentleman: I read them as a coach. What’s the use of opening Æschylus when I know to a letter what’s to come on the next page? As for my garden, I only saw it through *her* eyes!’

There was a long pause; when Sir Thomas, desirous of changing the subject, remarked that, in his opinion, Lord Sherbrooke’s Limited Liability Acts had had a greater and more beneficial effect on the community than almost any measure known to him in his long official experience. They had promoted enterprise and encouraged thrift. They had

democratised Capital by providing the means of employing small savings. Only then (adds Sir Thomas) did he brighten up and appear pleased with the thought of what he had contributed to the common good.

Three nights after delivering his great speech on the law of partnership and joint stock companies, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade tackled another thorny question, in such a manner that his name rang through the land and caused one universal shudder, not only in official and municipal circles, but among the landed proprietors of Great Britain and Ireland. There had been in the Queen's Speech what was no doubt thought a harmless passage in reference to the burdens on the mercantile marine. On February 4, 1856, the House having resolved itself into Committee, Mr. Lowe delivered his remarkable, or, as it was thought, revolutionary speech, in introducing his Bill on the local dues upon shipping. The subject had been first brought forward in 1852 by Disraeli with marked ability but with no effect. It then passed into the eminently cautious hands of Mr. Cardwell. A Royal Commission was appointed by the Aberdeen Government, which, in 1854, reported against all dues levied by corporations and others on ships and cargoes which were not applied for the benefit of shipping. This was a question into which a born administrative reformer like Lowe plunged with all the zeal and enthusiasm of his ardent nature. He took up the case warmly, and worked at it day and night until he had prepared an admirable Bill, which (observes Sir Thomas Farrer) he introduced by 'one of the ablest and most injudicious speeches ever made in Parliament.'

The effect was prodigious. Not only did his searching and exhaustive remarks perturb every seaport town, but in the course of his argument he used that famous phrase, 'musty parchments,' which made every squire in the kingdom tremble for his title-deeds. The whole question of the rights

of property, of classes, of corporate bodies, of individuals, was discussed in this remarkable speech, which, as Sir Thomas Farrer remarks, 'called down on him as much wrath at the time as has ever been directed against "socialist plunderers."' In fact, to this very day, almost forty years after its delivery, should one join a group of grey-haired members of Parliament or superannuated officials, and utter the phrase, 'musty parchments,' the effect is little short of electrical. That phase of alarm and fear for their title-deeds felt by the landed classes in 1856 has now, of course, quite passed away, but the recollection of Lowe's remark, which drove Lord Galway almost frantic, is still, in a manner, fresh in the minds of many representative men of his class, to whom the phrase, 'musty parchments,' seems to recur like a favourite line in an old comedy. Such is the mellowing effect of time: for, when the speech was delivered, this and such-like touches evoked a storm of indignation and Lowe had to withdraw his Bill. It is suggestive to reflect that he failed to carry the measure solely on account of his superabundant mental activity and power of generalisation, and that where he failed, in all probability, many a dull man would have succeeded.

The Corporation of Liverpool, the body chiefly interested in maintaining the shipping dues, employed Sir Frederick Thesiger, afterwards Lord Chelmsford, to withstand this terribly upsetting Vice-President of the Board of Trade. That able counsel, as may be imagined, urged every possible reason in favour of vested interests and the rights of property. He declared, amidst the applause of frightened capitalists on both sides of the House, that Lowe's measure was a measure of confiscation. This led to a pretty passage of arms. In the course of his rejoinder Lowe said:—

The hon. and learned member claims for the people of Liverpool a right to tax for the benefit of the town of Liverpool the dress of every woman in England, from the Queen upon the throne to the maid-of-all-work who scrubs the steps—to tax them for the

present and all future time, not only to its present amount, but, if it should rise to double its present amount with the rising commerce of the country. He claims on the part of the people of Liverpool, not only the power to levy this tax, but to be exempt from the tax which they levy on others; while Manchester has to raise 80,000*l.* by means of a borough fund, Liverpool will be exempt, unless the Bill should pass, from any borough fund at all, and the ratepayers will be exonerated from those local burdens which it is the business of self-government to levy for local purposes. This is a claim of taxation without representation, and without giving a voice in the imposition and distribution of the burden. These are the claims which are preferred, and which the hon. and learned gentleman has not blushed to use all along as convertible with property. Property! This may be property, but it is M. Proudhon's property—*le vol. . . .*

The hon. and learned gentleman says that about two hundred years ago this property and the right of taxing their fellow-subjects were purchased by the Corporation of Liverpool from Lord Molyneux's family. What was the nature of this purchase? The hon. and learned gentleman was too dexterous an advocate to tell the House. The purchase money was about 700*l.* and the taxes were then about 14*l.* a year. That was the nature of this right upon which this enormous superstructure has been raised, and upon which the Corporation of Liverpool claim to levy this princely revenue. [The shipping dues of Liverpool then amounted to 125,000*l.* a year.] We are told that to meddle with this is not only to endanger the tenure of all corporate property, but the tenure of all private property itself. Sir, the hon. and learned gentleman sneers at the notion of a distinction between the property of a corporation and the property of an individual. That distinction is not one of my drawing, but it is one deeply engraved in the laws of the country and in the reason of things. Corporations exist neither by themselves nor for themselves. They are the creatures of public utility, and when they cease to subserve the public utility, they may and ought to be abolished. If the Legislature has the right to abolish these corporations, it has also the power to abolish rights which are inconsistent with the end and aim of their being. So long as they answered those ends, the Legislature ought to support them—when they cease to accomplish those aims, you will only set up anarchy and confusion if you continue them, and it becomes the wisdom and the duty of the sovereign Legislature to take away their power if they cease to fulfil their objects.

In tracing the origin of the shipping dues and other sources of revenue, the speaker did not spare the corporations, and his words were quoted with horror by Bumbledom in every part of the country. 'They ate,' he said, 'they drank, they bought, they sold, they feasted, they jobbed, until the day of reckoning was at hand.' His speech overflowed with irritating epigrams. In their anxiety, he declared, to preserve inviolate the privileges of particular corporations, 'they disregard the interest of the greatest corporation of all—the community at large.' As to giving the corporations a lump sum in compensation for their right to levy these dues (as Disraeli had proposed), the thing was preposterous. The case did not admit of compensation. The shipowners were subject to an unjust tax; to withdraw from the corporations the right of exercising this iniquity, and at the same time to compensate them, was to enlarge the area of injustice. 'It has been said,' he remarked in his telling peroration, 'that these dues are very light, and the injury they inflict is but small; that to the increase of trade, and not to the high rates levied, is attributable the large amount the aggregate dues have now reached. I agree with Bentham, who thinks there is no injury so slight, or trickery so small, but that its multiplication must inevitably lead to dangerous consequences. If I rob a man farthing by farthing, in time I shall find the bottom of his pocket; pour water drop by drop on his head, and in time you will kill him. *Gutta cavat lapidem.*'

When the Bill was withdrawn, his opponent, Sir Frederick Thesiger, wittily observed: 'Yes; Lowe and I have thrown it out!'

It ended in a Select Committee on the Liverpool case, in which Lowe displayed wonderful industry and acumen. But one strongly suspects that Lord Palmerston, who hated the probing of matters to their root, must have gravely shaken his head over the whole business. Yet it is deserving of recognition that all the reforms advocated by Lowe in what

was deemed this most revolutionary speech on the shipping dues, have since been carried, ending with the abolition of the London coal duty, which, however (to quote the words of Sir Thomas Farrer), 'was an *octroi* duty and not a robbery.'

CHAPTER VIII

A TRIP THROUGH THE STATES AND CANADA

(AUGUST—OCTOBER 1856)

It has always been known in the inner circle of Lord Sherbrooke's old and intimate friends, that some five and thirty years ago he paid a flying visit to America; but among his papers and memoranda there was no record of this journey. He does not seem to have corresponded with anyone during the two months of his absence, which is hardly to be wondered at, considering the enormous distances he travelled in this brief space of time. Fortunately, he had a fellow-traveller, Sir Douglas (then Captain) Galton, who has very kindly furnished some particulars of their journeyings, together with a collection of letters written by himself at the time from America to his wife.

They left England in the s.s. *Canada*, of the Cunard Company, for Boston, *via* Halifax, on August 2, 1856. On board was Mr. James Russell Lowell, who had just published his famous *Biglow Papers*. In after years, when Mr. Lowell came to this country as American Minister, he was a friend and near neighbour of Lord Sherbrooke in Lowndes Square, but they met for the first time on this voyage. Sir Douglas Galton, writing at sea after they had been about a week from port, remarks: 'Mr. Lowell, the author of the *Biglow Papers*, to whom Clough gave me an introduction, is most agreeable and gentlemanlike; one might take him for an Englishman.' There was also among the passengers on board the *Canada* the

Bishop of Alabama, who seems to have been a stout upholder of the institution of slavery, while Lowell was, of course, a thorough abolitionist. 'Mr. Lowe says' (writes Sir Douglas) 'that the Bishop has a weakness for nigger-drivers, and that he said he was born at Russell in the county Bedford, and that he considered it a most remarkable circumstance that, when he was in the House of Commons a short time ago, he heard Lord John speak.' The Bishop seems to have been very communicative, especially with regard to the constitution of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

Lowe, who was a capital sailor (which Captain Galton was not), was always up on deck prepared to chat with Lowell or the Bishop, or, in fact, with anybody who had anything to communicate with regard to America. He filled in his time by studying De Tocqueville. Sir Douglas Galton found him a most charming fellow-traveller; bright, lively, always uncomplaining, and full of interesting subjects of conversation.

They were at first somewhat puzzled in the matter of making out their itinerary. Sir Douglas wanted to see as much as he could of the working of the American and Canadian railways, while Mr. Lowe was anxious to get a glimpse of the working of the political institutions of these countries and to see some of the more remote Western settlements, as well as the notable features of the scenery, such as Niagara. But they soon settled their plans and contrived to carry them out with remarkable thoroughness, considering the short time at their disposal. Lowell, though in a rather depressed state from the recent death of his first wife, occasionally enlivened the voyage with a characteristic Yankee anecdote. He appears to have given his two English companions a dreadful account of the steamers on the Mississippi. On one occasion, he said, the boiler exploded, and the captain was thrown to a considerable distance and fell through the roof of a house some way off, alighting in a cobbler's workshop. The cobbler immediately said he expected him to pay for the

injured roof, which the captain allowed was reasonable and asked how much. The cobbler replied, 'Ten dollars for the damage including the fright.' But the captain pulled out a five-dollar note, and handed it to him, declaring that he '*never paid more on such occasions.*'

They reached Halifax in the afternoon of August 12th, but only remained a very short time, during which they drove round to see the general lie of the town and citadel. They thought the view from the citadel particularly fine. They were impressed with the harbour, with its splendid interior basin, capable of floating a whole navy; but the town itself struck them as mean and the inhabitants as unenterprising. Some Nova Scotians, hearing of their distinguished visitors, went on board the *Canada* and began to 'blow,' as the Australians say, about the rich, fertile land, the valuable coal and iron mines, the superb pastures, and the unapproachable climate. It is to be feared that the only inference which Lord Sherbrooke and Sir Douglas Galton drew was that, if the country were so wonderfully favoured by Nature, then the inhabitants must have been endowed with a very leaden and lymphatic temperament. One cannot help wondering whether the sight of a regiment encamped in tents, and the battery close to the town and the redoubt on an island in the harbour, made Lord Sherbrooke think of his uncle, the stout old Governor of Nova Scotia.

From Halifax they went on to Boston, where they found that everyone to whom they had letters had left for the holidays. The English Consul, however, Mr. Grattan, entertained them at his club and showed them Bunker's Hill. The sight of Boston, which, of course, in 1856, was a much smaller and altogether different city to the Boston of to-day, seems to have revived in Robert Lowe the memories of his Australian life. Sir Douglas says that from the moment they were in the States he was continually comparing the social and

political condition of America with that of Australia. As Boston was so empty, they only remained a couple of days and then went on to Niagara. Lowe, through Lowell's introduction, saw Emerson once at Boston, and he also met a son of Adams, the American Minister. *En route* to Niagara, the travellers stopped at Trenton Falls, of which they had heard great things. Lowe was much disappointed, and described them as rapids rather than falls; but when he reached Niagara, he appears to have been fully recompensed. 'He could not' (writes his fellow-traveller) 'sufficiently satiate himself with looking at it.' In a letter dated from Clifton House, Niagara Falls (Sunday morning, August 17), Sir Douglas writes: 'We are now in a room opposite the Falls. Last night, when we arrived, it was full moon and a most lovely night. We walked some distance to get a better view; the effect by moonlight is very beautiful and mystical. The adjuncts of the scenery are all so fine, such a grand, deep, broad gorge through which the water flows after leaving the Falls. It is all on so vast a scale, like the continent upon which it is situated. The railway suspension bridge is two miles below the Falls; we passed over it *very slowly*. Of the two Falls the English fall is the finest. Mr. Lowe says that they are emblematic of the respective nations—the American broad, prominent, glittering, and without much depth of water; the English retiring, massive, and grand.'

The two travellers seem very carefully to have noted the ways and customs of the people among whom they were thrown. Many traits struck them, and there is doubtless foundation in fact for Mr. Goldwin Smith's notion that it was this American tour which deepened Lord Sherbrooke's dislike and distrust of democratic institutions. He was particularly struck with the great anxiety displayed by the Americans whom he met, in the railroad cars or in the hotel parlours, to obtain the opinion of the *majority*. Thus, one day in a train by which the two Englishmen were travelling, a man actually

went round asking who each passenger desired should be President. It must be remembered that at this time there was very strong feeling on the subject, both in the Northern and Southern States—the country was, indeed, on the eve of civil war. The Northern States were for Fremont, and the Southern for Buchanan or Filmore. Feeling ran very high, and it struck Lowe as an extraordinary thing that the Southern States, who were in a minority, should assume a dominant tone which the Northerners at that time did not appear to resent.

At dinner at the Fremont House, Boston, they noticed a man with his little boy not more than seven years old ; the child wanted something, and begged his father to ask for it for him ; but the father said, ‘ Ask yourself ; you must learn to take care of yourself.’ The little fellow could only attract the attention of a waiter by watching till one went past, and then he seized him by the coat tail. This kind of training naturally leads to self-reliance, perhaps to self-assertion. ‘ We are all up and dressed in this country, sir,’ was the explanation of such incidents. Lord Sherbrooke seemed to think that the Americans whom he came across were very much like provincial English. There were certain superficial differences ; they were more free and easy in manner, though with every intention to be civil and obliging. But he thought there was an utter absence of distinction, and what an Englishman would call breeding, and he attributed this provincial tone to the want of a capital, and of a leisured and cultured class.

After spending the whole of another morning gazing at the Falls, they went by railway to Niagara Town, where they embarked on board a steamer for Toronto. It was Lowe’s intention to stay with his old Oxford friend, Sir Edmund Head, but as the Governor-General was not there at the time, they proceeded by another steamer to Montreal, passing the Lake of a Thousand Islands and the rapids of St. Lawrence.

At Montreal he stayed with a legal friend, Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Rose, who was Minister of Public Works in Canada before he settled in London, where he became a prominent social and political figure. While Sir Douglas examined the Grand Trunk Railway, Lowe and his host went to Lake George and Lake Champlain. Considering his defective eyesight, it is remarkable how keenly alive Lord Sherbrooke was to the beauties of natural scenery; he also exercised an independent judgment on the subject, and by no means always agreed with the verdict of guide-books and professional tourists. Sir Douglas declares that he at once pronounced the Lake of a Thousand Islands a *do* and the rapids *ditto*. By the time they reached Montreal they found, by a copy of the *New York Daily Times* lying on the hotel table, that the Yankee journalist had awoke and was on the track of the distinguished traveller. An article appeared in that paper from which it was quite clear that the editor thought much more of Mr. Lowe, the *Times* leader-writer, than of the Right Honourable Robert Lowe, Vice-President of the Board of Trade. The Montreal papers, taking their news as usual from New York, immediately inserted paragraphs in which he figured as one of the proprietors of the *Times*. As Delane was then on his way to America, these things afforded Lowe and his companion some little amusement. Neither of them appears to have relished the hotel life either of Canada or the States. Since that time English people have learned to live in public, and the sight of husbands and wives walking up and down in the most affectionate manner before dozens of strange people, 'playing on the piano, &c., just as if they were in a private house,' is no longer matter for comment. Sir Douglas records a couple of amusing hotel reminiscences: 'We were standing (he says) under the verandah, and two waiters were conversing. One of them asked the other why he was hanging about. He said, "I am waiting for the trays out of the rooms; but I don't like it—it ain't democratic."' . . . 'This

morning at breakfast a maid went to fetch Mr. Lowe some coffee, and meanwhile he asked a waiter for butter. The man said, "The *lady* has gone for your breakfast."

They then went on to Quebec and were both enchanted with its magnificent site; they drove in pouring rain to the Falls of Montmorenci, went into the Citadel and on to the Heights of Abraham, which naturally set them thinking of General Wolfe. Like all Englishmen who are worth anything, Lord Sherbrooke became more patriotic the further he travelled. Sir Douglas writes: 'We had much discussion as to the use of the proposed International Railway, which had been surveyed. Wherever we went on railways, my letters secured us the companionship of railway officials (and generally free passes), so that Mr. Lowe always had a companion with whom to discuss the condition of the country. The Maine Liquor Law was then a great topic, and we heard much of the impossibility of getting spirits or alcoholic beverages. But as water only was served at dinner, and all drinking was done subsequently at the bar, we did not suffer. We spent a Sunday at a kind of summer resort in the White Mountains (Gorham), going to a meeting-house to gather the sort of religious address made. Thence we got back to Portland and Boston, Mr. Lowe going straight to New York.'

When Sir Douglas reached Albany, he found that the stationers were selling 'Fremont note-paper,' and presumed that in the south 'Filmore' or 'Buchanan' paper would be the rage. At New York they stayed at the St. Nicholas Hotel, described as the largest in the world and always full. Here Lord Sherbrooke met Mr. Cooper, father-in-law of Cyrus Field, who was then trying to get up a company to lay the Atlantic cable. He also met Colonel Fremont, the Northern candidate in the contest for the Presidency, and McClellan, who was then an Engineer officer.

Having heard from Sir Edmund Head, who was extremely anxious to meet Lowe, they started again North and feasted

their eyes once more on Niagara. I notice that Sir Douglas Galton, whose authority will not be disputed, referring to this journey, states that the Erie Railway was managed on a system infinitely superior to any in England or in any part of the world. 'The manager is a Scotchman,' he says significantly.

When they reached Toronto they were most hospitably welcomed by Sir Edmund Head, who had innumerable subjects to talk over and discuss with his guest. They plunged into the subject of the educational system of Canada, and one may be sure that Lowe had much to say on his attempts to legislate on this question for the people of New South Wales. The question, however, that involved the most discussion was that of the capital of Canada, on which the Queen was consulting the Governor-General. The jealousies existing between Lower and Upper Canada, and between Montreal and Toronto; the consideration of the advisability of placing the seat of capital away from the frontier for fear of a raid from the United States, led both Lord Sherbrooke and Sir Edmund Head to select Ottawa.

That class of persons who specially resented Lowe's well-known attacks on the system of classical education because he was himself a first-class classic, will be amused to learn that he was rendered quite unhappy during his American journey by not meeting with anyone who could appreciate an apt verse or phrase from his favourite Greek or Latin writers. 'It was refreshing' (says Sir Douglas) 'to Mr. Lowe to meet a scholar like Sir Edmund Head, who could relish his classical allusions and quotations.' Icelandic and the Sagas was another topic of perennial interest to the Governor-General and his guest.

In a letter written by Sir Douglas Galton to a friend in England (September 2, 1856), there is a remarkable passage on the social and political condition of the United States at that time, which he states embodies the views Lord Sherbrooke had also formed. Sir Douglas, indeed, puts the matter

more modestly than this; for in sending his letters he remarked that ‘*any opinions on the general condition of the country were gathered from Mr. Lowe.*’

The passage runs as follows:—

‘North and South are arrayed against each other upon the slavery question, and the existing Government, by supporting the slavery party in their attempted aggression on Kansas, have caused what to us looks very like a civil war. The North have in Congress taken the only course open to them in a country where the Executive is not responsible to the Legislature, viz., refused the supplies—i.e. the Army Appropriation Bill—and although it is most probable that that question has been settled by this time, it has raised the spirit of the North. If Buchanan is elected, and if he should be so foolish as to continue the policy of Pierce, and if they are left at peace externally, I think a civil war must ensue. Mr. Beecher, a clergyman, brother of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, preached a sermon lately in favour of subscriptions towards Kansas, and the congregation subscribed in rifles—Mr. Beecher heading the list with several rifles himself. I suppose they come under the liturgical denomination of *oblations*.

‘But the most hopeless feature of America is the venality of the political men. Everybody one meets in the Eastern States says their Legislatures are to be bought to a man; and in their municipal arrangements there is a degree of corruption and jobbery which seems irremovable. Mr. Lowe attributes it to the *universal suffrage*. In the Western States, which are just established, where the population is small, hard-working, and agricultural—and where the people have had recently to think upon the subject of choosing a Constitution—the political principle and honesty are much higher.’

During the progress of this work Mr. Goldwin Smith—who, as all the world knows, resides in Canada—very kindly made special inquiries on the spot concerning Lord Sherbrooke’s

American tour. It shows how swiftly the generations of men pass away, that he was unable to meet with anyone who retained the slightest recollection of the event. But he himself remembered a visit he had paid to Lord Sherbrooke in Surrey, shortly after his return from America. On that occasion Lord Sherbrooke (who did not even allude to Canada) dwelt much on what he considered the defects and dangers of democracy in the United States. There can be no doubt, as previously remarked, that this American tour gave him an absolute horror of anything like universal suffrage; but it was not the *fons et origo* of his detestation of democracy. He had always held that it was a most rash and dangerous policy to give supreme power, and entrust the complex machinery of the State, to mere numbers. America simply furnished him with familiar illustrations of the truth of his political theory.

From another interesting letter of Mr. Goldwin Smith, which deals with this particular point, he would appear to rest under the misapprehension that Lord Sherbrooke merely visited the great cities of America, where the evils of democratic government most prominently appear. He did not, Mr. Goldwin Smith apprehends, see anything of the back country, which is the seat of the conservative and remedial forces. That eminent political writer will, however, find from this narrative, that Lowe did not by any means restrict himself to the American cities, but contrived to see something both of Canada and of the Far West; and that he formed much the same opinions as Mr. Goldwin Smith himself.

We will again take up Sir Douglas Galton's account of the tour. From Toronto they passed through Canada to Detroit, accompanied by Mr. Brydges, superintendent of the Great Western (of Canada) Railway. At Detroit they went over the works of the Michigan Central Railways, and were there very much struck by the perfect arrangements for

shipping corn to Detroit and thence on to New York. They seemed to have lost no time, for they examined all these elaborate appliances and machinery before eight o'clock in the morning, and were then off to Chicago. As that city is one of the modern marvels of the world, and is just now the cynosure of all eyes, Sir Douglas Galton's account of it, as it appeared to himself and his fellow traveller on September 8th, 1856, is well worth quoting :—

Chicago is certainly the most wonderful place in America. Fifteen years ago there was only a fort erected against the Indians; it had in 1854, 80,000 inhabitants, and has now at least 100,000. It lies close to a sandy and swampy plain at the head of Lake Michigan, but is itself on a rich alluvial soil. It is a very few feet above the level of the lake, and in order to obtain drainage all the streets are now being raised five feet; that leaves the footpaths and doors of the houses in a hole. Everybody is in a hurry—money is made at an enormous rate—capital is the great want of the West and therefore commands astonishing rates of interest. People inform me that upon the *very best* security, the mortgage of houses and lands to half their values, 2 per cent per month can be had, and the process of foreclosing is the simplest possible. The railways centring in Chicago, which have been carried out into the prairie, where there was not an inhabitant when they were first established, are paying 22 per cent.—after having *watered* their capital stock most liberally—the watering being generally to pay \$50 on each \$100 share, and then to rank it as a share on which \$100 has been paid, the object being that the nominal dividends should be kept down for fear an outcry should be made against the company and that they should be compelled to reduce their fares. This prairie land is most wonderful. It can be cropped continually without manure or rotation of crops. It consists of about two feet of rich black soil, which lies either upon gravel or fine clay, and below about four feet is a bed of limestone. The view of a prairie is like that of an ocean—bounded only by the horizon—sometimes perfectly level, sometimes undulating. The grass is rich and much prized by cattle. The railways are carried through the prairies in a perfectly straight line, the process of making them being to turn up the soil from a ditch on each side, which forms drainage, and upon this the sleepers are laid; fencing and ballasting are completed afterwards. Upon these lines about two passenger trains are run each way daily, and freight trains as required. At each station a few houses spring up; sometimes a town of 20,000

inhabitants is the result of four or five years. The railroad is the only means by which this wonderful country could be developed.

They were both greatly impressed with Chicago, and spent every minute of their time in studying the place and conversing with the chief inhabitants. From Chicago, accompanied by Mr. Osborn, President of the Illinois Central Railroad, they travelled to Dunleith on the Mississippi, intending to go on to St. Paul's and the Falls of the Minnehaha ('which Mr. Longfellow had just written about'); but there was no water in the river, and some six or eight steamers had stuck in the mud. They, however, were resolved to see everything they could, and so proceeded South; Colonel Mason, the engineer of the line, having joined the party. They devoted Sunday to driving into Iowa, some fourteen miles through most beautiful country, till they came out into the rolling prairie, which extends almost to the Rocky Mountains.

'It was a grand feeling' (writes Sir Douglas), 'to stand in the Far West;' and this feeling his comrade fully shared, and thought that only then were they seeing the real America. On the Sunday evening they embarked on the railway on Mr. Osborn's car, 'containing berths like a ship.' They went straight down the Illinois Central to *Saint Louis* ('as the Americans call it') *via Sandoval*. St. Louis they considered the most substantially built town they had seen after Boston. Like many other English travellers, they only fully realised when at St. Louis how enormous was the territory once owned in America by the French, out of which we had driven them—'All this back part up the Mississippi to St. Louis—Dubuque, opposite Dunleith, St. Paul and round into Canada.' But St. Louis they did not think by any means presented the marvellous signs of enterprise and success so conspicuous in Chicago. 'To see America, one must see the Far West—*there lie its energies, its honesty, and its future.*'

From St. Louis they went by steamer to Alton, passing the junction of the Missouri and the Mississippi. Somewhere

en route they got snagged and their rudder was broken, causing a couple of hours' delay, so that they only reached Alton in time for the train *en route* Indianapolis to Cincinnati. Here they made a dash at the Observatory and had a long account from Professor Mitchell of the wonderfully simple method he had introduced for the observation of stars. As is well known, nothing was more entrancing to the late Lord Sherbrooke than the discoveries of modern science.

They left Cincinnati at six in the morning for Wheeling, passing through rich coal and iron districts; thence, by the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, to Cumberland, Maryland. The course of the line following the windings of the rivers to reach the tops of the Alleghany Mountains, by what is known as a zig-zag, much struck the travellers. The spectacle of the engine alternately in front and behind the train, was a startling novelty to them. To cheer their spirits, they were shown the remains of two freight trains which had collided on the previous day, owing, as their informant remarked, 'to a difference in the conductors' watches.' Sir Douglas Galton, notwithstanding, thought it only justice to the Americans to say that they were much more careful in the management of their trains than was generally alleged; 'but I understand that this is due to the juries having given such heavy damages.'

They were now in a Slave State; at the hotel they were waited on by 'niggers,' who lived in a row of dirty-looking cabins at the end of the hotel yard. From the first, Lord Sherbrooke conceived a great horror of the 'institution'; he thought from the way the sexes were herded together that the whites, no doubt to a great extent unconsciously, regarded their slaves simply as animals.

Sir Douglas Galton writes: 'Kansas is becoming very serious; indeed, it is impossible to see the state of things and feeling in the Union without fancying that some change is at hand. The North is now arrayed against the South for the first time. It is probable, however, that even if

Buchanan is elected, he will have to abide by Fremont's programme.'

From Cumberland they proceeded to Harper's Ferry and thence to Baltimore, where they met Colonel Carroll of Carrollstown, who was some connexion of Lord Sherbrooke, and who showed them over his slave estate in all its particulars. Colonel Carroll is described as a descendant of an Irish family, and a Roman Catholic, one of the few aristocratic people in the country, whose estate of 13,000 acres had passed unbroken through seven generations. They found, as a matter of course, that the Colonel had a great deal of that ancestral feeling which is so signally wanting in countries like America or Australia. He told them that in Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky, slave labour was much more expensive than free labour, and that slaves can only be made to pay in these States by breeding them and selling them to planters in the south, where the cotton and sugar crops cannot be raised without black labour on account of the climate. He took them all round the farm, but the sight of things disgusted rather than impressed the two Englishmen. Robert Lowe was nothing if not an advocate of human freedom. This was what he meant by Liberalism, and he believed in it as in a religion.

Lowe and his companion noticed that, although this part of the country had been settled for generations and worked by plentiful cheap labour, there were huge stumps sticking up in many of the fields and a snake fence. 'You cannot take away the look of the new country which every part of this continent has; nor can the inhabitants throw off their provincial manners. They are wonderfully like the shopkeeper class in England; the only men with the manners of gentlemen are the officers. It is no doubt a wonderful country, and, provided it can weather the present rancour between North and South, may go on till the West is peopled; but at best the nation is only in a state of transition. It is impossible for universal suffrage to continue where there are so many

poor who will want to divide or destroy property.'—Lord Sherbrooke apparently thought Mrs. Beecher Stowe a suitable author to beguile one's leisure in these parts: he read *Dred*, and pronounced it superior to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Colonel Carroll, who seems to have possessed a true Celtic imagination, unfolded a wonderful scheme to his two visitors. He owned an island in Chesapeake Bay, where fish abound. Cat-skins were at a high premium in the market as fur, so he was going to fill the island with cats, and had got an ocelot from Persia to improve the breed. He intended to kill about 10,000 cats annually, and to have pigs in the island to eat the bodies of the cats after they were skinned. Then he intended to feed the cats upon the pigs in the winter, when the fish could not be procured. This topic of conversation suggested to the minds of the travellers another valuable American 'institution'—the *Wild Cat Bank*. The future Chancellor of the Exchequer learnt how a person of small capital might issue notes payable at some out-of-the-way place in the Far West; and as very few people could find their way there to get them cashed, the ingenious financier would realise a considerable sum in a community where, as at Chicago, 24 per cent. was readily obtained.

Business took Captain Galton to Washington, but Lowe remained at Baltimore to watch the progress of organising the great Whig Convention. This famed Convention had, of course, reference to the approaching presidential election, and Lord Sherbrooke seems to have been so amazed at the whole business that he attended the meetings for two or three days. Sir Douglas, having returned from Washington, which he found empty, they went together to the Convention, and listened to the most preposterous high-falutin about East and West, and North and South, the Star-spangled Banner, the Glorious Union, and Bunker's Hill. At the mass-meeting in the evening there was the most fiery Southern oratory. One orator, with arm outstretched, proclaimed that a slave

was as much a man's property as a horse; whereupon an excited listener rushed up to him in front of the platform, and, shaking him by both hands, exclaimed: 'In the name of the South, I thank you for that noble sentiment!'

So disgusted was Lord Sherbrooke with the institution of slavery as he saw it at Baltimore and Carrollstown, that he positively declined to go on to Richmond, and the travellers accordingly changed their original plans and proceeded to Philadelphia. Here they paid a visit to the Reformatory and to the Girard College, and Lord Sherbrooke evidently went very minutely into the working of these institutions. The splendid white marble of the Girard College seems to have struck him as rather a waste of money, and he thought that the boys were brought up on such a luxurious plan that when bound apprentices in after life they were both ill-qualified and discontented. The following comments are characteristic: 'These institutions are in the hands of the corporation, which is elected annually by universal suffrage; and the appointments are therefore purely political. This electing for all offices by universal suffrage is a peculiar feature of the country, and one which has great disadvantages in causing such frequent changes, as each party always puts its own friends in without much regard to merit. The judges are elected by universal suffrage, in some places for one year, in others for three. They say, however, that the judges are selected with most care, as each elector has a chance of coming before them.'

Philadelphia struck the travellers (1856) as, on the whole, quite unworthy of its position at the confluence of the Delaware and Shuylkill—streets mean-looking, &c. Washington they also thought a melancholy sort of place, with the depressing, half-finished appearance that pretentious cities often present in new countries: here and there grand buildings, with the intervals filled up by straggling cottages and mean houses. The newspapers again began to glorify

Mr. Lowe as the proprietor of the *Times*. From Philadelphia they returned to New York, where they met Delane, who had just arrived from London; here they attended one or two political banquets of no moment and not much to their taste, and sailed on the 1st of October for England. On the voyage home Sir Douglas read aloud to his companion Kane's *Expedition to the Arctic Region in Search of Sir John Franklin*. They landed safe and sound at Liverpool on Monday, October 13, 1856.

In recalling the incidents of this journey, Sir Douglas Galton states that it was one of the most enjoyable and instructive that any man could possibly have experienced. He thought then, and still thinks, that Lord Sherbrooke was the most delightful of travelling companions. In one of his letters to his wife towards the close of the tour, he writes: 'Much of the interest has been due to my being accompanied by Mr. Lowe, whose mind is a mine of useful information and clear views upon all subjects, and mainly *colonial* and *new country* subjects.'

It may be as well to add, by way of a postscript to this brief narrative of Lord Sherbrooke's tour, a few words in reference to his subsequent opinions on American affairs. There can be no doubt, as already stated, that the tour increased his distrust of democratic institutions by confirming his opinion that any approach to universal suffrage implied the selection of the most corrupt and the least fit for all offices of public authority and trust.

When asked by his moneyed friends on his return from Canada and the United States as to American securities, he always spoke in the highest terms of the vast and boundless capacity of the country, but declared that its industrial and commercial enterprises would be much more safe and profitable as investments if entirely free from political influences. The country was magnificent; and the people, especially in

the States, active, energetic, resourceful and, like the rest of mankind, indifferent honest. But the political system, instead of being stable and elevating, as John Bright thought, had a tendency to demoralise and corrupt that large class whose natural character is neither good nor evil—perhaps the majority in all communities. In fact, many who were strictly honest in their private dealings had quite lost their sense of the sacredness of public trusts.

As the narrative shows, the two English travellers saw clearly enough that civil war was inevitable. It has often been declared that Lord Sherbrooke sympathised with the pro-slavery party of the South, as did many leading Englishmen of the time, whom it might now be considered invidious to mention. This, however, is not the case. He profoundly disliked the system of negro slavery in the Southern States, and thought it more harmful for the whites than for the blacks. But this did not make him in any sense a partisan of the North. He always declared that outside the question of slavery, which was the unfortunate inheritance of the South, there was more enlightened patriotism and less jobbery and corruption amongst the Southern planters than was to be found among the much-vaunted descendants of the New England Puritans, who had become a mixed and heterogeneous race, worshipping the almighty dollar, and content to entrust their national affairs to men whom individually they did not even pretend to respect.

On this question of the political morality of democratic communities, Robert Lowe took his friend, Goldwin Smith, very sharply to task in a pungent article, entitled 'Reform Essays,' in the *Quarterly Review* for July 1867. At this period Mr. Goldwin Smith had contributed an able essay on the 'Experience of the American Commonwealth' as one of a series intended to reassure Englishmen who were in some alarm over the 'leap in the dark' which Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli had compelled them to take. It would be interesting

to know what Mr. Smith now thinks of this controversy; there are one or two points in it which certainly deserve his special attention. By way of excuse or explanation of the political corruption in the American democracy, Mr. Goldwin Smith pointed to the wholesale Irish emigration which had a most disturbing effect on the working of free institutions—the Irish being, according to him, in a state of political barbarism. Lowe, with his unfailing quickness, retorted that this argument was absolutely fatal to the cause of democracy in England; for, he said, ‘we in England have the whole Irish nation on our hands without the wild land to settle them on.’ ‘Democracy,’ wrote Mr. Goldwin Smith, ‘has nothing to do with the payment of members.’ ‘Only,’ retorted Mr. Lowe, ‘they generally go together.’ ‘Protectionism is the vice, not of democracy, but of ignorance,’ wrote Mr. Goldwin Smith. ‘But ignorance,’ replied Mr. Lowe, ‘is itself the vice of a democracy.’ And then follows a passage comparing the North and South, which probably gave rise to the widespread belief that Lord Sherbrooke was a man of pro-slavery convictions. In a somewhat optimistic vein Mr. Goldwin Smith had predicted that in ten years—that is, in 1877—England would still have the commercial treaty with France, and ‘with America, free-trade.’ ‘It may be so,’ replied Lowe, ‘but the treaty was passed in defiance of democracy; and America was much nearer free-trade ten years ago than now. The advocates of free-trade were those very Southerners over whose fall Mr. Smith is never weary of rejoicing; the Western States have exactly the same interest, but, being democratic, they are protectionists. The slave-holding oligarchy could see a truth that escapes the dull eye of democracy. No one doubts democracy has the will and power to seek its true interests, the misfortune is that, when those interests turn on considerations in the least abstract or refined, democracy does not know what its interest is.’

In this article, too, which it will be seen was in his most

downright manner, there is an incidental reference to the alleged barrenness of democracy in great men. Lord Sherbrooke's observation on this point is very characteristic. 'We admit,' he writes, 'that Mr. Stanton and his colleagues have done great things on a great scale, but they lack the stamp of individual greatness. If that is to be found anywhere in America, it is under the modest roof of General Lee, the champion of a losing cause, whom prosperity never intoxicated nor adversity depressed, and who exceeded his democratic opponents as much in real nobility and greatness of character as he did in military skill and daring.' It will always be open to the advocates of popular government to point to Abraham Lincoln as a man with the stamp of individual greatness; and Lord Sherbrooke, though more attracted by the personality of Lee, did not fail to recognise some of the finer traits in his rough and homely, but essentially fine and noble, character. In later years (Glasgow, 1872) he paid a high tribute to the clemency of the North after the war. 'No statutes glean the refuse of the sword—no executioner was called in to finish the work that the soldier had left undone.'

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII

LORD SHERBROOKE AND SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

ALTHOUGH this visit to America merely increased, and did not create, Lord Sherbrooke's dislike of democracy, it destroyed, in my opinion, his former leaning towards the system of federal government. His speeches quoted in Vol. I. are those of an Imperial Federationist; but after carefully examining the condition of the United States in 1856, he seems to have come to the conclusion that, while Federalism was too loose a bond for complete national unity, it might become galling enough to lead to civil war. In the *Letters of the Right Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Bart., to various Friends*, edited by his brother, the Rev. Sir Gilbert Frankland Lewis, Canon of Worcester (Longmans 1870), appear the following significant references to the subject:—

Extracts from Letters to Sir Edmund Head.

Kent House: Jan. 27, 1857.

I have not seen Lowe since his return from America, but I shall shortly see him almost nightly, and I will then enquire his views about Canada.

Kent House: Jan. 20, 1859.

I have been, while I was in the country, preparing an essay on the Characteristics of Federal, National, Provincial, and Municipal Government, and I have attempted to treat the question of federal government, as a security against war, with reference to the ideas circulated by the Peace Society. The more I consider the federal system the more I am impressed with its defects. If I were an American, I greatly doubt whether I should wish to perpetuate the existing Union, and I do not see that the good of mankind would be promoted by attempts to introduce or extend the federal system in Europe.

I asked Lowe to put on paper for me what he considered to be the principal motives which induced the Americans to uphold their federal system, and he gave me the following list:—

(1) They are afraid of each other. If separate, they must maintain armies.

(2) They find in federation some slight counterpoise to democracy.

(3) They have the advantage of a Zollverein.

(4) They can gratify their aggressive spirit by remaining one country as against foreign states.

(5) The South, separate from the North, would be in danger of extermination by a servile war.

(6) The North would lose a market for its manufactures.

(7) The long rivers of America render separation difficult. The Mississippi runs through ten States.

Pray tell me at your leisure whether you assent to this statement of reasons, and whether there are any other motives of importance to be added.

CHAPTER IX

BACK AT THE BOARD OF TRADE—THE KIDDERMINSTER RIOTS

(1857)

It can only be hoped that the Vice-President of the Board of Trade found himself invigorated and refreshed by his American trip; for, when Parliament reassembled (February 3, 1857), there was plenty for him to do. He had stirred up a veritable hornets' nest on the question of the shipping dues. Not content with this, he brought in a Bill, on February 6th, for the abolition of passing tolls, which affected four seaport towns whose harbours were regarded as harbours of refuge, viz.: Dover, Whitby, Ramsgate, and Bridlington. His proposals were, on this occasion, generally well received; but of course the members for those seaports, and others representing 'vested interests,' grew purple in the face in their denunciations. It was on this occasion that Viscount Galway warned his fellow-members to beware of the reforming zeal of a Minister who could speak of their title-deeds as 'musty parchments.' At this time the greatest hostility and rivalry existed between the shipping interests and the railway companies, and, as Mr. Lowe regarded his office at the Board of Trade as a judicial one, constituted purely in the interests of the general public, he offended both. Accordingly, a combined attack was made, not on the Minister personally, but on the Board of Trade itself. The speech which Lowe delivered on June 4, in reply to these attacks, would be invaluable to an historian desirous of writing an account of the origin and development of that particular

department of the State. Mr. Lowe's chief opponent, the then member for Liverpool, had, in a blundering sort of way, given the House a history of its origin; but the obnoxious Minister had one of those encyclopædic minds which make their possessors so offensive to inexact or semi-informed people. The member for Liverpool had ventured on some historical reference derogatory of the Board of Trade in the time of Edmund Burke; whereupon Mr. Lowe had to inform him that that institution had nothing in common with the existing department of the State. The present Board of Trade, he pointed out, was not a board at all, but a public department, consisting of a President and Vice-President with their staff of trained officials. The Board of Trade in Mr. Burke's day, he said, consisted of eight members of Parliament (among whom was Mr. Gibbon), who received 1000*l.* per annum for doing nothing. No doubt the member for Liverpool and the other seaports must have thought that this was a very much more desirable state of things than to have a Minister who was always prying into abuses and upsetting monopolies.

In the course of his very thorough defence of his department, Lowe claimed for it, that it had been the grave of protection in 1840, when 'there went forth from it that invaluable evidence before the committee on the import trade, given by Mr. John Deacon Hume.' It was said that a peer and a lawyer were unfit to preside over the trade of the country. Lord Stanley of Alderley and himself did not pretend to do so; they were rather in the position of arbiters, and when a conflict arose between a powerful interest and a long-suffering public, they saw that justice was done. He instanced the subject of maritime insurance, quite in the spirit of Mr. Plimsoll; and very startling his remarks must have appeared, coming from the Treasury bench in those days. Who did not know, he asked, that maritime insurance engendered at least carelessness in the owners as to the manner in which ships were sent to sea? It very often happened that they were purposely

cast on shore when insured beyond their value; and it was for inquiring into these matters that the department came under the censure of ship-owning M.P.'s. The Board of Trade could also intervene in the public interest against trading companies and even against corporations. The Corporation of London had the power of taxing sea-borne, but not land-borne, coal. The Corporation opposed every Bill for a railway with a terminus in London, and only withdrew its opposition upon the directors submitting to pay the same duty on coal brought by their line as was payable on sea-borne coal. This was effected by a series of private Acts of Parliament of which the public knew nothing, but by which the public interests were sacrificed. The Board of Trade then presented reports on private Bills, and of course those on whose toes they trod resented it. Thus he continued to give illustration after illustration. Briefly, the moral of his admirable speech being that the public might know that the Board of Trade was doing its duty when the monopolists began to cry out. On the whole it was considered that the Vice-President had made a very effective defence for his department.

As Sir Thomas Farrer declares, Lord Sherbrooke was then in the full vigour of his remarkable powers of intellect. I have already quoted his testimony as to the pleasure he felt in working under him at this time, owing to his keenness of mind and quickness of grasp. Sir Thomas, in a further analysis of his former chief's mental powers and idiosyncrasies, remarks that it was both a strength and a defect in his character to look at things, when he had made up his mind, as if there was only one side, and as if, having once established a principle, it was needless to go back to facts. But Sir Thomas admits that, while at the Board of Trade, Lowe took infinite trouble with the facts before he formulated his general principle. No one could well have been more painstaking over the merest detail. In those days, says Sir Thomas, 'he left no opposing topic in the dark.'

It was as a member of this reconstructed Palmerston Government, that Robert Lowe formed his friendship with Sir George Cornwall Lewis, who had succeeded Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer at that very anxious time when our army was besieging Sebastopol. Although Sir George Lewis was a man of very different temperament and characteristics, he had much in common with Lord Sherbrooke, and there grew up between them a strong, mutual, life-long regard, based on their scholarly tastes and intellectual sympathies. One might, indeed, aver that Lord Sherbrooke had a greater liking and esteem for Sir George Cornwall Lewis than for any other public man with whom he was brought into intimate relations. This was very natural. They were both men of scholarly tastes; in fact, one would not be wrong in saying that they were in all probability the best-educated men in the House of Commons. Not only were they scholars in the classical sense of the term, but each took a profound and philosophic interest in human affairs—in the origin and progress of civilisation, in the rise and fall of nations, in short, in that widest field of speculation which may be termed theoretical politics. Although their range of thought and reading was so wide, they alike detested the intellectual Jack-of-all-trades, of whom Lord Brougham is perhaps the most conspicuous instance in our history. They were men of very diverse temperaments; Sir George Lewis was of a much more placid mind and of a less emotional nature. As he himself once said to a friend who was urging him on to some energetic course of action, 'No, I can't do it. The fact is, Wilson, you are an animal and I am a vegetable.' Lord Sherbrooke, with all his erudite scholarship and love of intellectual speculation, was, indeed, much more the man of action; he had much more *driving power*. The feeling that Australia was being made a permanent prison drove him on to the top of the vehicle in the pelting rain on the Circular Quay; his deep resentment against wrong and injustice made him sit up night after night to master the

case of Sir James Outram. One cannot imagine Sir George Lewis doing these things, at least not from the same overpowering feeling. Lowe's character was much less impassive, his whole life much more of a struggle, and there ran in his veins more of the true Berserker blood. But there was something in the cool, impartial judgment, and in the absence of all intellectual pretension, which attached him warmly to Sir George Cornwall Lewis. In a world where it is so difficult to arrive at the truth in any matter, where nine people out of ten are either dull and stupid, or biassed and bigoted, he felt it a great pleasure and solace to meet a man who discussed all subjects with such a fair and impartial mind, whose instincts were so uniformly good and kindly, whose knowledge was so thorough, and whose tastes and habits were so simple and so elevating. Lord Sherbrooke, in his brief autobiography, records with evident satisfaction that his 'dear and lamented friend, Sir George Lewis, used to say that if he were to be cast away on a desert island I was the associate whom he would choose.'

The Palmerston Government in which Sir George Cornwall Lewis was a much more conspicuous member than his friend, was now tottering to its fall. This catastrophe can in no way be attributed to its Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is hardly possible to imagine a Finance Minister with a more difficult task than that which Mr. Gladstone handed over to Sir George Lewis. He had to raise the money somehow for the Crimean war, 'the heaviest drain on the resources of the exchequer since Waterloo,' writes Walter Bagehot. That eminent financial authority states that Sir George Cornwall Lewis managed to borrow without undue charge to the State, 'and with that immediate success which sustains the credit of the State and secures a prestige in the money-market.'

Hardly were we at peace in the Crimea than we drifted into hostilities with China, which proved the temporary downfall

of the Government. On this subject Lowe made a very stirring speech on behalf of his party (February 27) ; but the Government were beaten a few days afterwards on Cobden's motion by a majority of 16, and Parliament was dissolved. It was a remarkable general election, and proved, if nothing else, the wonderful popularity of Lord Palmerston with all classes of his countrymen. In the eyes of all Englishmen he appeared as the one national patriotic statesman who could uphold our honour abroad, and who loved England (as indeed he did) with every fibre of his being. Probably no public man has ever been so popular in this country as Lord Palmerston was at this time and down to his death. We all know how the great radical constituencies turned round upon their favourite representatives for voting against the Government. Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, and others hardly less prominent, were cast out with indignity. All this is a matter of general history, but this election of 1857 was also in its way an epoch, and a most unpleasant one, in the public life of Lord Sherbrooke. He again presented himself for re-election at Kidderminster, and was again opposed by the same local candidate, Mr. Boycott. His address to his constituents at the Music Hall on March 10 was the first ministerial utterance on Lord Palmerston's appeal to the country after the recent adverse vote in the Commons. Like his speech in Parliament it was, in our slang, decidedly jingoistic ; Lowe thoroughly believed in Palmerston's Chinese policy, and had not the slightest regard for the Radicals and Peelites who, by their defection, had enabled the Tories to outvote the Government in the House. There can be no doubt that Kidderminster, like other popular constituencies, was altogether in favour of Lord Palmerston's policy ; in fact, the polling showed this clearly enough. But before Lowe's advent the borough had been greatly demoralised by a long and systematic course of bribery. From the first he had set his face firmly against all such corruption, and the mob resented it. As Canon Melville, who

narrowly watched these Kidderminster contests, epigrammatically expresses it: 'Lowe appealed to rectitude and reason; the mob desired the bribe and the beer-barrel.' When the poll was declared—Lowe 234, Boycott 147—the fury of the angry crowd and its leaders broke forth; stone-throwing was freely indulged in by large numbers of more or less drunken rowdies who were not electors, and some of whom, it was said, had been imported for this express purpose from outside. Robert Lowe during most of the day was at Blakebrook, the principal polling-booth, and towards the close of the poll he and his friends were savagely attacked by some three or four thousand roughs, who directed a volley of stones and brickbats at the booth. The mayor was repeatedly requested to read the Riot Act, but as he had only a small body of local police and a few special constables who had been sworn in on the previous day, he hesitated to do so. Every moment things looked more serious; several persons were severely wounded, the few police were brutally assaulted, and the mob prepared to rush the booth. Lowe and his friends, seeing that matters had reached a desperate pass, made a rush for it and attempted to get back to the town, having special constables on each side of them. The road by which they passed ran between raised banks, from which the mob were pelting them; the women, more savage than the men, having stones in their aprons and in the corners of their shawls. Many electors and respectable inhabitants were hit and felled to the ground. As the procession neared the residence of the Rev. J. G. Sheppard, of the Grammar School, Lowe was violently struck on the head by a brickbat. In the face of this howling and now murderous mob, Mr. Sheppard, with great courage, threw open his side gate, and managed to drag Mr. Lowe, who was literally streaming with blood, into his garden, which was surrounded by a high wall; others of the party who were also badly wounded contriving to follow. They had a hard struggle to close and fasten the gate, but at last succeeded, and Lowe was taken

inside the house, and as soon as possible a surgeon was sent for.

An eyewitness gives a truly appalling account of the scene. The stones, he says, rattled off the hats and shoulders of Mr. Lowe and his party, after they emerged from the booth, like hailstones from a roof. They ran the gauntlet for some 250 yards, losing one of their number at every stride; those who fell were savagely kicked, and several of the policemen were disabled in rescuing them. Although Mr. Lowe was bleeding, his white hair dabbled in blood, they kept pelting him with cowardly ferocity and the most horrible imprecations. 'Of the nine of us who got into Mr. Sheppard's house, seven were bleeding badly, and those of our friends who were in the road were maltreated, followed into the houses where they took refuge, and kicked, and the windows smashed where they were thought to be.'

These degrading scenes took place on the Saturday afternoon, but Lowe was not able to be removed from Kidderminster for some days; the local surgeon discovered that he had sustained a fracture of the right parietal bone of the skull in addition to a lacerated scalp wound, and two severe contusions on the side of the head; and he was for the time quite prostrated by loss of blood. Meantime the insensate crowd kept up their rioting, some yelling round Mr. Sheppard's house, others going to the Albert Inn, whither they thought he had made his escape, and there they smashed every window in front of the building. Later the mayor telegraphed to Birmingham for a troop of hussars, and as soon as they arrived the Riot Act was read, and the streets cleared. A number of the rioters were apprehended, but came off with trivial fines. Whether because of the skilful defence of Mr. (afterwards Baron) Huddleston, or because they were felt to be merely a small handful out of a large number equally concerned in the rioting, it is hard to say. One of the newspapers (April 3, 1857), published a long letter signed, 'An Old

Reformer'—adding, 'A surviving member of the Society of the Friends of the People'—in which the writer not only commented in a most straightforward manner on this election riot, but furnished a very singular history of the parliamentary representation of Kidderminster. It would appear that from 1832 to the advent of Robert Lowe, twenty years afterwards, treating and wholesale bribery were looked on as the prime essentials in every election contest. Thus, he says in 1841, Mr. Sampson Ricardo polled 200 votes, for which he spent in the borough within a week the sum of 4,000*l.*, while his successful rival, who polled 212 votes, was even more lavish. He then gives an account of Lowe's successful contests, and states that to his knowledge they were won without treating, bribery, or any form of corruption. But this reformation was naturally resented by the eighty-four publicans and the sixty-six beer-shop keepers, to say nothing of their thirsty clients. Further, it may be remembered Lowe had opposed some Beer Bill in the House, while his pointed remarks on the malt tax and the brewing interest were not likely to be forgotten at election time in a borough blessed with such a superfluity of pothouses.

The writer concludes: 'I have no personal knowledge of Mr. Lowe. I only respect him as a rising and remarkable public man, of distinguished talents and accomplishments. I freely admit that Kidderminster has electorally redeemed its political character by the election of such a man; but I have simply recorded facts, as illustrative of the social condition of the non-electors and as startling proofs that the upper and middle classes of Kidderminster, and all our manufacturing and rural districts, must combine to raise the moral and intellectual principles and the habits of the people—to enhance their physical comforts and enjoyments—and to teach them to know and to value their own better interests. No stone ought to be left unturned to detect the instigators. If impunity is to follow such lawless and barbarous acts, the

repetition of them is certain. Your contemporary, the *Examiner*, remarking on the magisterial laches in fines of some of the convicted rioters of one shilling each, well observes: "If these be specimens of Kidderminster justice, let us not be astonished at Kidderminster outrages." Mr. Lowe may have his head broken again on the popular idea that he has brains to spare.'

This Kidderminster riot was the only serious disturbance that occurred at the general election of 1857. It was an outbreak of mere brutal rowdyism, and had no political significance whatever. The distinguished man, a rising and trusted Minister of the Crown, whom these deluded and probably drunken wretches had tried to kill, was then altogether on the popular side; it had, indeed, fallen to his lot to be the first member of the Palmerston Government to expound and uphold the policy of his chief, which the country at this election so emphatically endorsed. Naturally, therefore, these riots and this murderous assault on Mr. Lowe and his friends were regarded by every decent inhabitant as a disgrace to Kidderminster. An address was drawn up and subscribed by the respectable townsfolk, Liberal and Conservative, expressing their profound indignation at the conduct of the mob, and their sympathy for the sufferings of their respected representative. To this address Robert Lowe sent the following reply.

*To Mr. J. Kiteley, Mayor of Kidderminster, and 314 other
Gentlemen signing an Address to me.*

Gentlemen,—I thank you cordially for the genuine expression of your sentiments and sympathy which you have placed in my hands, the more valuable because based on your conviction that nothing has emanated from me calculated to provoke the slightest ill-will or to irritate or excite the humblest individual. I should indeed have been inexcusable had it been otherwise, for, with the certainty of success, it was my interest, as well as my duty, to avoid all occasion of offence to opponents whom I might one day not unreasonably hope

to number among my supporters. In looking over this address, I am pained to recognise the names of many persons who have received severe injuries in the attempt to protect me, and of some others whose property has suffered considerable damage. I am happy to take this occasion of returning my sincere thanks for services so invaluable rendered at so heavy a sacrifice, and to express a hope that those who rendered them may never again be called upon to suffer anything on my account. I know not the motive of the attack upon me, but one effect I beg to assure you it will not have, so long as I retain the confidence hitherto extended to me by my constituents, no menaces of physical violence will deter me from again soliciting their suffrages or induce me to change my resolution to stand by them so long as they are willing to support me. Very fortunate should I esteem myself if, as I have already in some degree united moderate men of all parties in political concord, so I could also be, if not the cause, at least the occasion of a similar union for the purpose of carrying instruction and civilisation among those classes in the borough which recent events have shown to be so deplorably in need of both. Once more thanking you for your kindness,

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient and faithful servant,

ROBERT LOWE.

It has been said that it was the stones that rattled on Lord Sherbrooke's head at Kidderminster which made him ever afterwards so determined an opponent of the extension of the franchise. We have only to turn to the preceding chapter, and to note his deep distrust of the system of universal suffrage in America to realise that this is another popular delusion. To be sure, the experience of having one's head cut open, and being yelled and cursed at by a mob of three or four thousand men and women, was not calculated to remove any preconceived bias against democracy. But Robert Lowe was, as Professor Bryce recognises, at bottom a philosopher; he was an earnest student of cause and effect, and therefore his convictions and opinions were never based merely on the personal accidents that befell him in life. The Kidderminster riots, like the low standard of morality in public men which struck him in America, no doubt increased his dread of mob

rule ; but they in no wise caused it, and had, indeed, no effect in shaping his political creed.

Mrs. Chaworth Musters, Lord Sherbrooke's favourite niece, whose opinion on the subject is of value, being based on intimate personal knowledge, thinks that her uncle's rooted dislike of mobocracy arose from a scene of which he was a witness in his early manhood. It must have occurred about the same time as that very similar incident in which Tennyson bore a part, as he tells us in one of his later poems.

For lowly minds were maddened to the height
By tonguester tricks,
And once—I well remember that red night
When thirty ricks,

All flaming, made an English homestead Hell—
These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well
Along the line.

Mrs. Chaworth Musters thinks that the scene of the sacking of Colwick Hall at the time of the Reform Riots of 1831 by the Nottinghamshire mob made an indelible impression upon her uncle. She writes : ' My predecessor, Mrs. Musters (Byron's Mary), a dearly loved neighbour of the Lowes, was at Colwick at the time in very bad health, and was carried out into the wet shrubbery while the house was set on fire. My father and uncle walked over the next day, and I have no doubt the whole scene helped to strengthen my uncle's horror of mobocracy. The poor lady died three months afterwards at her house near Bingham, where I now live.'

It is not to be disputed that such an event brought so immediately under his notice must have profoundly affected Robert Lowe, then a young man of twenty. But it is also quite clear that it did not mould the anti-democratic convictions of his later life. The sacking of Colwick Hall was in 1831 ; but there was no more ardent supporter of Lord Grey's Reform Bill of 1832 than the younger of the two brothers who had witnessed that scene of destruction. No ! we must

go deeper, to the very constitution of his mind and roots of his being, to understand the profound dislike and distrust of democracy which the late Lord Sherbrooke so prominently displayed.

Just after his death, one of the oldest of his official friends specially directed my attention to the article which appeared in the *Standard* (July 28, 1892). He underlined two sentences, and remarked that whoever wrote them was a clever man who had fathomed Lowe's character and had given the key to his political career. The passage ran thus: 'In an age in which even the wisest and the noblest apparently deemed it their duty to burn incense on the altar of Democracy, Robert Lowe held fast to the old gods, the old creed, the old ritual. He was an aristocrat to the core, in no class signification, but in the solid and substantial sense that he believed in Government by the best, and utterly disbelieved in the sagacity or superior wisdom of the crowd.'

This is no doubt profoundly true; but I would like to add one further remark. Much as Lord Sherbrooke detested the perpetual tinkering of our Constitution in a democratic direction, and purely to suit the exigencies of contending factions, he was probably less influenced by class feeling and social prejudice than any English statesman of the time; while, as a Minister, he was the most active of reformers in every department of the State over which he was called to preside. In his eyes character and merit should be the sole passport to power and promotion, and with never a thought of tickling the ears of the groundlings, he urged with rare force and eloquence, and on more than one occasion, that our army could never be in a sound state until the private carried in his knapsack the field-marshal's baton. He was, as the *Standard* points out, a believer in the government of the *best*; an unpopular doctrine, but one in which he is upheld by most of the great and notable Englishmen of the age outside the mere parliamentary arena—by such men as Carlyle and Tennyson, Froude and Arnold.

But in his effort to promote and reward character and merit altogether apart from favour and family, Robert Lowe was more thorough and consistent than any of these distinguished men of letters, and distinctly in advance of any English statesman of his time.

CHAPTER X

IN AND OUT OF OFFICE

(1858—1859)

Sir James Outram and the Mutiny—The East India Company—Defeat of Palmerston—Gladstone's Mission to the Ionian Islands—The Kidderminster Addresses—Retirement from Kidderminster—Lord Stanley's Offer—Friendship of Lord Lansdowne—Elected for Calne—Macaulay and Seward

AFTER the unpleasant ordeal at Kidderminster, Robert Lowe resumed his place at the Board of Trade. So overwhelming was Palmerston's victory at the polls, that he and his colleagues might well have been justified in thinking they would remain in power for some years; but it is always the unexpected that happens. As a matter of fact, they were out of office in less than a year, blown to pieces, as it were, by the explosion of Orsini's bomb in Paris. Before Lord Palmerston's untimely defeat, however, on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill (February 19, 1858), the Government had to face its gravest responsibilities in the suppression of the Mutiny and the re-conquest of India. After Lucknow, Sir James Outram could never again be at the mercy of jealous officials and ill-conditioned scribes. Robert Lowe had read the man aright—his deeds, and still more his character, would have inspired the pen of Plutarch. Unfortunately, the correspondence that is known to have passed between Lowe and Outram during the Mutiny cannot be found. One large box containing Sir James Outram's letters of this period was lost and has never been recovered; among them were a number of Lord Sherbrooke's.

The Indian Mutiny expedited, if it did not actually cause, the extinction of the East India Company. As John Stuart Mill, the chief defender of the Company as well as its chief official, emphatically declared, this was the will and act of Lord Palmerston, although he was thrown out of office before he could carry his India Bill. India was a subject on which Lowe, from his former connection with the Board of Control, could on all occasions address the House with weight and authority. Accordingly, on the second night of the debate (February 15, 1858), he rose and delivered a long and able speech, in which he demonstrated how cumbrous and inefficient the existing system had become. His speech was a thoroughgoing defence of Palmerston's policy for the abolition of the East India Company, which so cool and temperate a critic as Lord Malmesbury deliberately termed an act of spoliation. Lord Malmesbury's own leaders, however, were subsequently the instruments of its consummation. The night after Lowe spoke, the House divided upon the question that leave be given to bring in the India Bill, when Lord Palmerston had a majority of no less than 145. In exactly a week's time he was thrown out of office by a coalition of Conservatives, Liberals, Peelites, and peace-at-any-price men, for bringing in a measure to prevent assassins and dynamitards from abusing the hospitality of this country. It is a singular fact that such a powerful and popular Minister should have been overthrown in so just a cause; but since then we have ourselves undergone certain transatlantic experiences and are no longer inclined to regard the murder of foreign potentates as a fine art.

On February 25th, 1858, Lord Palmerston resigned, and the Queen sent for the Earl of Derby. Robert Lowe then took his farewell of the Board of Trade, where for the past three years he had laboured in the public interest with much zeal and, on the whole, with eminent success. As soon as the new Ministry was formed, intrigue, as Greville says, went

on apace. In the Opposition, Palmerston and Lord John Russell were brought into alliance, if not amity, while Lord Derby began to angle afresh for the Peelites. Sir James Graham was offered a place, as were Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Newcastle. Eventually, as is well known, Mr. Gladstone accepted the post of Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, which a short time afterwards slipped away altogether from our control. The following extract from a letter to a facetious and once famous Member of Parliament refers to this matter, and also to Mr. Gladstone's activity in obstructing¹ the passage of the Divorce Bill previously passed by the Palmerston Government.

Robert Lowe to Bernal Osborne.

Caterham, Reigate : Nov. 14, 1858.

Gladstone goes to the Ionian Islands to raise them, as he says, in the social scale, his view being that they are an oppressed and injured nationality. He went by the advice of that sage, the Duke of Newcastle, to prove that he was not unwilling to take a part in public affairs, which, after his twenty-nine speeches in one day on the Divorce Bill, nobody had any reason to doubt. Of course he is to advise the cession of five of the islands, to our Cabinet, which seems to want as much advising as the Crown of which it is the adviser.

Early in December, 1858, Mr. Lowe went down to Kidderminster for the purpose of explaining his views on the political situation. The scene was in strange contrast to that of the election riots. The mayor took the chair, a large number of working men filled the body of the hall, and the speaker was received with enthusiasm. The opening portion of the speech was mainly concerned with India, and Lowe was not sparing in his criticism of Lord Ellenborough, Mr. Disraeli, and Lord Derby, for what he considered their

¹ Mr. Robert Wilson, the author of *The Life and Times of Queen Victoria* (Cassell), writes: 'This was the first of the recorded cases of "obstruction" in the modern sense of the word. Mr. Parnell used at one time to justify his tactics by citing as a precedent Mr. Gladstone's opposition to the Divorce Bill,' p. 712 n.

factionous conduct in regard to Lord Canning's famous proclamation to the talookdars of Oudh. Lord Ellenborough, it will be remembered, had been compelled to resign on this business, and Lord Stanley went from the Colonial Office to the Board of Control and afterwards became first Secretary of State for India. After declaring that on India and all other questions the Derby Ministry were simply carrying into law Lord Palmerston's measures, or doing nothing at all, he made a passing reference to Mr. Gladstone's mission to the Ionian Islands :—

These committees and commissions are virtually irresponsible bodies, and they are mere shields and cloaks behind which the Government seek to protect themselves from the duty of governing. There is a great deal of discontent in the Ionian Islands. It is the duty of the Government, if they believe that discontent to be of a nature which they can remove, to make inquiries into the cause, and when they have done so to administer, by their own authority, or to recommend to Parliament, if its authority be needed, a suitable remedy. Instead of that, what do they do? They seek out a gentleman of the highest talent who is not politically connected with them, but who is the first orator in the House of Commons, and they send him to inquire and to tell them what to do. What do they pay a Colonial Secretary for but to inquire into such cases? Why is he to get a dry nurse at the expense of the country? They send out a gentleman who is to come back committed to a scheme, so that if the Colonial Secretary at some moment should venture to propose it, he may have the support of the first orator of the age. My notions of government are different to these. 'Who rules free men should himself be free,' at least from those terrors which frighten weak men and to which if men be subject, though they may be amiable citizens, good subjects, and exemplary fathers, they are utterly unfit for high office in a great empire like ours.

From this, as well as from his allusion to the speeches of Mr. Gladstone at the Oxford Union, it will be seen that Lord Sherbrooke ranked him as the foremost of parliamentary orators; but he considered John Bright's more moving and impressive, if less cultured and varied, efforts far more effective outside the walls of the House of Commons. It was in this speech to the electors of Kidderminster that Lowe first

explained, in all their fulness, his views on the question of parliamentary reform. His friend, Sir John Simon, who, as certain pages of this work will show, is a political philosopher as well as a man of science, and who is, moreover, a careful student of Edmund Burke, has often declared that these Kidderminster addresses are on the same plane of high reasoning as Burke's addresses to the electors of Bristol.

What I imagine Sir John Simon means by instituting a comparison between the political addresses of Edmund Burke and those of Robert Lowe, is that in both we find politics dealt with, not as a mere question of partisan intrigue, but as a subject of philosophic research and inquiry, and that both of these remarkable men invariably paid their constituents the high compliment of speaking to them as a man does to an intellectual friend on an earnest and important matter—that is, with perfect frankness and with no tinge of flattery or vulgar adulation.

It was quite in this spirit that Lowe submitted his opinions on parliamentary reform, laying his whole mind, so to speak, open to the electors; not in any way toning down or attempting to soften his objections to the various democratic measures which were fast rising into popularity all over the country. He began by confessing his own youthful enthusiasm for the Reform Bill of Lord Grey, and stated that he still thought it an absolutely necessary, as well as a beneficial, measure. But he maintained that there had been another and still 'more important Reform Bill,' which in his opinion rendered all further radical change in our Constitution needless, and in all likelihood evil.

I allude to the introduction into this country of railways and electric telegraphs, of which it is not too much to say that they have made England its own metropolis, and have brought every constituency into close contact with its members whenever it chooses. Instead of a long interval and a tedious journey, any constituency may now, in a few hours, communicate with its members and make such representations as it may think proper. By this means the influence

of constituencies over their members has been much increased, and a great amount of public opinion has been brought to bear upon the House of Commons. If we have achieved that, is it not something that we have been able to do it in this old England of ours without parting company with the past? Is it not something that we have been able to establish a Government which, to a great extent, reflects the popular will and opinion, without any serious convulsion and without breaking down those principles and landmarks of the Constitution which we have inherited from our forefathers? I hold it to be no trifling advantage that we have been able to secure an essentially popular Government—a Government in accordance with the will and intelligence of the great mass of the country—without breaking down the institution of the House of Lords [‘Hear, hear,’ and some dissent from a small knot of Chartists who held possession of one corner of the room]. I have had some experience in the forming of Constitutions in the Colonies, and I must say that the man who needlessly attacks the House of Lords, appeals to one of the very least noble and least exalted passions of the human heart—the passion of envy—by trying to raise up a feeling against those who, in the matter of rank or riches, may be our superiors, as if their happiness or good fortune was our misery, or as if we should be any better if we succeeded in dragging them down to our level. Now, I tell you that if we were to-morrow to abolish the House of Peers altogether, the best thing that we could do the day after to-morrow would be set to work to reconstruct it. The great difficulty which we have had in framing Colonial Governments has always been with respect to a House of Peers. We can’t import into a new colony those elements connected with the honour and glory of the country of which the House of Peers is a sort of hereditary depositary. We have only this alternative. Either the Governor must appoint colonists to play the part, and they, having no support in public opinion, and being no more distinguished than their brother-colonists, are often looked down upon and despised; or—for it is impossible to conduct legislation without two chambers—they must have a second elective chamber. The result of this is that one chamber takes one view, and the other another, and a deadlock ensues. Now, in the House of Peers we have a body highly ornamental and also remarkably useful; because it gives to us time to deliberate over the measures we propose, and because it does not pretend, and is not competent to offer, any serious opposition to us; so that the people have the advantage of having their own way when they know their own minds, and yet are saved from the dangers of precipitation while they preserve that which is almost essential to the existence of a monarchy—a peerage to surround and ornament the Throne.

With regard to the political philosophy of this passage much may be urged, especially in support of Lowe's views on the 'great democratic passion'—that of envy. As to the necessity we should be under of reconstructing the House of Peers on the morrow, were we at any time wantonly to destroy it, our only guide is the experience of Oliver Cromwell, whose conduct coincided with Lord Sherbrooke's theory. The remarks on colonial Upper Houses are very interesting and undeniably correct; they have been the stumbling-block of colonial Constitutions, and yet the only alternative, a unicameral legislature, is a political experiment which colonists are chary of trying.

In declaring that he was resolutely opposed to any radical change in the Constitution, such as manhood suffrage or Mr. Bright's principle of equal electoral districts, Lowe said that, as a matter of course, he was prepared to disfranchise boroughs that had sunk into Old Sarums¹ and to give representation to those that had risen into wealth and importance. He also thought that Lord Grey's Reform Bill was mischievous in regard to the representation of the counties. It divided many counties into two, and thus converted a constituency which, when acting together, was one great and independent body, into two close districts in the power of one or two great landowners. 'I go further' (he added), 'and say that the county franchise appears to me to be eminently unfair, for it excludes from a voice in the representation of the country a vast deal of its property and intelligence. I hold it to be absurd that persons who do not live in a house worth 50*l.* a year in a county should be excluded from the franchise, and therefore I supported Mr. Locke King's measure for reducing the county franchise to 10*l.*' But while advocating all such reasonable changes and modifications, he (having been in America) took a very different view of American institutions to those propounded by Mr. Bright. He was a member, he said, of a

¹ In the *Times*, more than once, he advocated the disfranchisement of Calne, though it furnished him with a seat in the House of Commons.

Ministry which lost the confidence of the House of Commons about one o'clock in the morning, and by one o'clock next day was forced to make up its mind to relinquish office. Far different was the position of Congress, which could in no wise put an end to the life of a Ministry. Why had the popular chamber in old and monarchical England so much more power than the American Congress? The fact was that, if Congress were entrusted with that supreme authority, as soon as all the places in the Government were filled up, a combination of the disappointed would be raised, and the United States would have the felicity of having a new Ministry about once a fortnight. It was surely a triumph for England that she could entrust the House of Commons with the absolute power of making and unmaking governments.

His address, which was well received, considering that it must have been unpalatable to the Chartists and many of the working men present, closed with a fine peroration.

I confess that it is with very great impatience I constantly hear this country referred to foreign nations for an example. Mr. Burke said of this country that slavery could be had anywhere, but freedom was that pearl of great price of which England had the monopoly. But times seemed to have changed, for now

Each pert adept disowns a Briton's part,
And plucks the name of England from his heart ;
A steady patriot of the world alone,
The friend of every country but his own.

We are told, forsooth, that we are to take an example from Sardinia, or from our colonies, which are not two years old in self-government ; we, who have had a House of Commons for 600 years, are to learn from the mushroom States of America ; we are to learn from everywhere except from that rich repository of knowledge and wisdom, the history of our own country. . . . Let me entreat you to beware not to be led away by plausible or ambiguous expressions to assent to a measure which, if carried out, would have the effect of swamping the property and intelligence of the country by giving the power of representation to mere numbers. Remember that such a proposition would have been ridiculed by the immortal Shakespeare ; that it would have been repudiated by Hampden, by Pym, by Cromwell, by Milton, by Russell and by Sidney—the founders of our liberty ;

that it would have gained no acceptance in the vigorous mind of Chatham; that it would have been repudiated as absurd by the philosophic mind of Burke and by all the bright intellects of history, by Fox and Pitt down to Peel, to Canning and Macaulay. I have been one of the first to say publicly that which we all say to ourselves. I know the hostility that I thereby provoke, and I am prepared to meet the consequences, for those are principles that I cannot and dare not trifle with.

Now, like him who uttered these words, large numbers of Englishmen have visited America or lived in the colonies, and it is no longer a fashionable doctrine that we should turn to these new communities on all occasions for political instruction. It was quite otherwise when Robert Lowe expressed his convictions to the electors of Kidderminster. Then, not only vulgar demagogues, but respected popular leaders such as Bright and Cobden, could not sit down to a banquet in company with an American tourist without assuring him that his country was infinitely superior to their own. In America there was no House of Peers, no State Church, no other dreadful social anomaly. The Transatlantic guest must have often been quite at a loss to respond to these compliments on his nationality; but if, in return for them, he ventured to belaud the institutions of England, he would be sure to offend the reforming zeal of some of his English entertainers. We have changed all that. Charles Dickens, who had no political theories (and whose impressions were therefore the more valuable), crossed the Atlantic and beheld Mr. Scadder and Mr. Pogram, and on his return drew their portraits for us. The novel of *Martin Chuzzlewit* effectually destroyed that pro-American adulation formerly indulged in by all classes of English reformers whenever they wished to attack any of their country's institutions of which they disapproved. But Robert Lowe was the only English statesman a quarter of a century ago who, from his own experience as an Australian colonist, and his personal observations in Canada and the United States, could warn his countrymen that to uproot is not always the way

to reform ; that if we wantonly destroy every old institution we irrevocably break with our historic past, whilst we do not lighten the burden of life for a single man or woman, and the England of history and tradition will have ceased to exist.

Robert Lowe had from the first been returned for Kidderminster by receiving a certain measure of Conservative support ; this, with the solid Liberal vote, made his position so secure that no amount of money spent on behalf of a rival candidate could in any way affect it. It seems strange, after such an address—a Conservative address in the truest sense of the term—that it was the Tories who deserted his banner. But so it was ; and on April 8, 1859, after a canvass of the borough, he issued an address, stating that though he still enjoyed the support of the whole Liberal party, he found himself abandoned by the Conservatives, and had no alternative but to resort to corruption or to be defeated in the election. Overtures had already been made to him from more important constituencies. During the last contest he gave a candid explanation of one which had been much misrepresented by his opponents, and made a ground of disaffection towards him. He was charged with having canvassed for Manchester while standing for Kidderminster. This was his frank reply on the nomination day : ‘I never gave either directly or indirectly authority to anyone to canvass for me, or nominate me, or in any way to associate my name with Manchester. A deputation, however, waited upon me from Manchester, and presented a petition signed by 4,000 electors, and stated that 16,000*l.* had been subscribed to ensure my election free of expense if I would consent to be nominated. I replied to the deputation that I was pledged to Kidderminster, for it was to it I owed my first introduction to public life, and I could not forget the kindness of my first friends. I afterwards received a telegraphic despatch asking if I would serve as their member provided I was elected without my taking any steps in the matter. I replied in the negative.’

It is hardly to be wondered at that Lowe should have felt somewhat disgusted with the borough, and especially with the Conservative voters, who had hitherto supported him, for their intention to revert to the state of things when both parties bribed the electors and, as a rule, when the candidate, whether Liberal or Conservative, who spent most money was returned. It is just possible that the Tory wire-pullers in London felt that they could secure the representation of Kidderminster for the party by the judicious expenditure of bribes and beer money. The local leaders were probably anxious to break the compact which virtually handed over the seat to Mr. Lowe and again to enjoy all the fierce excitement of an uncertain and hotly contested fight, during which some thousands of pounds would be spent in their midst. It seems clear that some of Lowe's friends must have remonstrated with him about his retirement. His chief supporters called a meeting and drew up an address expressive of their regret at the course he had taken. This address went fully as far as Mr. Lowe's own in the assertion that before his advent in Kidderminster the borough was notoriously corrupt. It further stated that, owing to the defection of the Conservatives, who had hitherto joined with them in the interests of purity of election, Mr. Lowe would inevitably be beaten unless he resorted to the same tactics as his opponents. On the same day that this meeting of his Liberal supporters was held, Robert Lowe wrote a brief letter to his old Oxford friend, Canon Melville, who had first introduced him to the electors. The letter is even more explicit and outspoken than his printed address.

Robert Lowe to Canon Melville.

April 11, 1859.

My dear Melville,—I never for a moment doubted Lord Ward's goodwill nor Chadwick's, only, unfortunately, his power is not equal to it. I have truly explained the cause of my defeat in my parting address. I have not forgotten how much I owe you for seven years' possession, and only hope I may be able to prove it in something stronger than words. Let them talk. Even to the Tories and the

parsons (excuse me) it can be no source of permanent gratification to see the town fall back into the slough in which it had been for so many years wallowing when we pulled it out. I have, at any rate, baulked them of the saturnalia which they had promised themselves, and I hope exonerated Mr. Huddleston from the payment of the eighty-four bribes which I am told he had promised. Don't believe that I gave up too soon. It is the interest of those to say so who hope to get up a new contest, but I know better. Don't let such a thing take place if you can help it. It would only give them a triumph and enter the people anew in the taste of corruption. *Si Pergama dextrá.*

Very sincerely yours,
R. LOWE.

Notwithstanding Lord Sherbrooke's wish to relieve the future Baron Huddleston of the trouble and expense of a contest for Kidderminster, the townsfolk were not to be baulked of what he called their saturnalia. Huddleston was not only opposed by a local Liberal, but beaten. On the face of it this might seem to justify Lowe's friends, who thought that he should not have withdrawn from the contest; but this is a matter that can only be determined by knowing what were the election expenses of Baron Huddleston and his successful rival.

A few days after his retirement from Kidderminster Lowe received a remarkable offer from the present Earl of Derby, then Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India. Considering that their relation in the House had from the first been that of political opponents, and that on the very subject of India, they had taken opposite sides, and that even in his last Kidderminster speech Lowe had attacked the Tory Government unsparingly, the following letter redounds highly to the honour of both writer and recipient.

Lord Stanley to the Right Hon. R. Lowe.

23 St. James's Square: April 17, 1859.

Dear Mr. Lowe,—I have a proposition to make to you which I sincerely hope you may find it compatible with your duty and private interest to accept. You are aware that by Mr. Peacock's acceptance of the Chief Justiceship there is a vacant seat in the

Council at Calcutta—that of the fourth, or legislative member, as he has always been called. It has often been debated whether this office was necessary to be retained or not. Lord Canning has expressed a strong opinion that it is necessary for him to have in the Council, besides the Judges, a colleague versed in matters of law and legislation. The reasons which he assigns, and which I need not here repeat, are to my mind convincing. At the same time, it is important, in the actual state of India, that the new member of Council should not be merely, or principally a lawyer, but should understand thoroughly financial and general business. Practical ability and varied experience are the requisites for the office in question. It has become my duty to endeavour to find someone to fill it who is at once unconnected with the Indian services and yet not unacquainted with Indian affairs, who has legal knowledge and training without being exclusively a lawyer, who is a law reformer and to whom questions of trade, finance, and general administration will be tolerably familiar. If to these qualifications be added an intimate knowledge of public and Parliamentary feeling in cases where it will bear upon Indian legislation, the desired combination is complete. You will excuse me if I say that I know of no one person in whom these conditions are so fully satisfied as in yourself. The Bar and the India Board, the Board of Trade, Parliament, the Law Commission, have each contributed to give you the requisite information, and the feeling would be general, both in India and here, that your acceptance of the post now vacant would materially strengthen the local government. It is in that belief that (acting with the entire approval of Lord Derby and of Mr. Disraeli) I obtained the Queen's sanction to make you the offer of it; and that offer, for the sake of India, I earnestly hope you will accept.

It is needless to refer to our relative positions in English politics. India must always be neutral ground, even if the differences of English parties were not more factitious and personal than real and deep-seated. I am certain that no considerations of this kind will weigh with you. They have not prevented Sir Henry Rawlinson from accepting the Persian Mission, nor Sir Charles Trevelyan from undertaking Madras. I do not wish to press you for a decision, but at least you will, I am sure, not reject the offer I make without full consideration.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

STANLEY.

Lowe promptly declined Lord Stanley's proposal, but there can be no doubt that he greatly valued the personal

tribute it implied, coming from one of whose sagacity and judgment he ever entertained the highest opinion. Although he did not see his way to accept this appointment, he devoted much time and labour to the subject of Indian law reform, and was a member of the Commission of 1861; his colleagues being Sir John Romilly, Chief Justice Erle, Sir E. Ryan, Mr. Justice Willes, and Mr. J. M. Macleod. 'These gentlemen,' wrote Sir Henry Maine, 'have devoted much of a leisure which they could ill spare to the preparation of a code which, to judge from this first instalment, while it possesses all that is best worth keeping, and of most general application in English law, combines with it a simplicity of form and an intelligibility of statement which a French codifier might envy.'

While Lord Stanley was urging Lowe to go to India, Lord Lansdowne wrote to offer him his powerful support if he cared to represent Calne; and he also received an offer to stand for Birmingham. He conveyed all this exciting news as well as his decision in a letter of exemplary brevity to Canon Melville.

Robert Lowe to Canon Melville.

April 19, 1859.

My dear Melville,—You will be pleased to hear that in the same 24 hours I was invited to stand for Birmingham (expenses paid) against John Bright; to go out to India as Legislative Counsellor £8,000 a year; and to sit for Calne by Lord Lansdowne. I chose the last. So that Fortune has not wholly forgotten me. In haste.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT LOWE.

Sir W. Fenwick Williams, of Kars, had represented Calne in the last Parliament, but he retired at this time on accepting the post of Commander of the Forces in Canada. Lord Lansdowne at once proffered his influence to Mr. Lowe, should he care to stand in the Liberal interest for that small but ancient and historic borough. By accepting Lord Lansdowne's offer, Lowe subjected himself to the taunt of Bright that he

was merely the nominee of an influential nobleman, who could, had he chosen, have sent instead of an intellectual gladiator, his butler or groom into Parliament. In the heat of debate, Mr. Bright perhaps forgot that Mr. Gladstone, his own leader, owed his entry into the House of Commons entirely to the good offices of the Duke of Newcastle. Not only so, but in a memorable debate in 1859—the very year that Lowe was returned for Calne—Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech in which he pointed out that a number of the greatest parliamentary leaders, including Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Canning, and Peel, had all entered Parliament through these ‘pocket’ boroughs. For my part, I think that Lord Sherbrooke in all probability would have preferred to stand for Manchester or Birmingham rather than Calne, but for the unfortunate condition of his eyesight. As he himself explains, he felt his deficiency most in dealing with groups of men and strangers; in his own social circle, or even in the House itself, he could manage very well. It is true that the late Mr. Fawcett, who was totally blind after his twenty-fourth year, not only represented Brighton, but also Hackney, a populous London suburb; but then Mr. Fawcett was carried into Parliament on the crest of the Reform wave.

Had Robert Lowe in 1859 elected to contest either Manchester or Birmingham, he could only have hoped to succeed by a resolute and persistent canvass, and by coming into personal relations with as many of the electors as possible. This, I take it, he felt to be a task altogether beyond his powers. There were only two alternatives if he desired to continue his public career. The one was to find a comparatively small borough in which the majority of moderate men of both parties should unite to elect him, as was the case at Kidderminster for seven years; the other was to accept the support of an influential nobleman like the Marquis of Lansdowne, between whom and himself there was sufficient political agreement and personal esteem for the one to be able

to make the offer freely, and the other to be able to accept it without compromising his independence. These were absolutely the conditions under which Lowe consented to sit for the borough of Calne. It was inevitable that such pocket boroughs should be abolished; but, as Mr. Gladstone reminded the House of Commons in 1859, Chatham had sat for Old Sarum, Mr. Pitt for Appleby, and Mr. Canning for Newport; and, he might have said, himself for Newark. To this by no means ignoble band may be added Robert Lowe for Calne.

The Conservative party in the borough of Calne (of which the Rev. W. B. Jacob and Mr. T. L. Henley were prominent members) brought forward Captain Marshall, who made a canvass of the electors, but finding there was no chance of success, withdrew his candidature. The nomination took place in the Town Hall under the presidency of the mayor; Mr. Lowe having been duly proposed and seconded. A clergyman rose to put a question as to Mr. Lowe's view on marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The mayor, however, ruled that as there was but one candidate, such or any question must follow election. On that the reverend questioner proposed Mr. Henley, and the Rev. Mr. Fletcher seconded the nomination. This was done simply to secure the question about the deceased wife's sister being put before the election took place. On the Mayor inquiring of Mr. Henley whether he accepted the position, he replied that though very ignorant of parliamentary matters, yet if elected he would do his best. A large number of girls from Mr. Henley's flax factory were present, and on a show of hands taking place these held up both hands, which secured their employer a majority. A poll was demanded for Mr. Lowe, when this result was signally reversed, not more than twenty-six or twenty-seven votes being recorded for Mr. Henley.

As member for Calne, Lowe was naturally brought into more intimate relations with the Marquis of Lansdowne—

the eminent statesman, as Greville calls him—for whom he grew to have an ever-increasing regard. They were in absolute accord on the subject of parliamentary reform, as Lord Lansdowne always distrusted the tactics of Lord John Russell. Lord Lansdowne was not personally ambitious, or he might have been Prime Minister, but he was a man of statesmanlike mind, of generous instincts, and of princely hospitality. Among the late Lord Sherbrooke's papers was an undated entry in regard to a dinner at Lansdowne House, which may interest men of letters.

‘I dined at Lansdowne House with Macaulay and Seward. Seward, with questionable taste, talked of the dearness of English books, and said he could buy Macaulay's *History* for two dollars in New York, instead of fifty shillings in England. Macaulay said: “A Greenwich schoolmaster wrote to me to complain of the bad grammar and spelling of English Classics, among whom he was good enough to include me. I asked him for instances. He gave a list of fourteen very gross ones. I verified the references and wrote to him that I found no such errors in my book. He replied that he was very sorry, and that the only way he could account for his error was that he used an American edition.”’

Lord Lansdowne died in 1863, and was succeeded by his eldest son, with whom Lowe was on equally good terms until his death, in 1866.

Robert Lowe used also to meet Macaulay at Holland House, and enjoyed listening to that wonderful, uninterrupted flow of talk which, as Sydney Smith said, only needed the relief of occasional ‘brilliant flashes of silence.’ It is always interesting to know what one great talker thinks of another, though it must be admitted they are not always the best judges. No two men could have differed more widely as conversationalists than Lowe and Macaulay; the one was a wit, who could almost at will silence an opponent and set the table in a roar with an epigram. The other was essentially a

holder-forth, one who could talk admirably and at length on any subject under the sun. But Lowe, unlike most wits, could, when he chose, be the most patient of listeners; the habit of attention had grown upon him, as through life he had learnt what was going on in the world more from his ears than his eyes. Having a very great personal regard for Macaulay, and the highest opinion of his attainments, it was always a pleasure to Robert Lowe to meet him in society; though he was fond of repeating the saying that 'his memory had swamped his mind.'

CHAPTER XI

MINISTER OF HEALTH

WITH AN ESTIMATE OF LORD SHERBROOKE AS A SANITARY REFORMER,
BY SIR JOHN SIMON, K.C.B.

WHEN Lord Palmerston returned to office in June, 1859, after the general election and the defeat of Lord Derby, the newly elected member for Calne became Vice-President of the Council of Education, the Lord President being that affable Whig nobleman, the late Earl Granville. By virtue of this office, Robert Lowe became President of the Board of Health. It has been thought advisable to precede the narrative of Lord Sherbrooke's career and activity as Vice-President of the Council of Education, by Sir John Simon's account of his work at the Board of Health, and by a passing picture of his contemporary social life. The necessity for such an arrangement will be obvious to all who bear in mind that it was in connection with the Education Department *per se* that Lord Sherbrooke became involved in a momentous conflict with the House of Commons, and although he emerged from it with triumph, it led to his resignation as a member of Lord Palmerston's Government.

I count it among the most fortunate circumstances attendant on my present labours, to have been brought into personal relations with Sir John Simon, who was Medical Officer under the Privy Council from 1858 to 1876. The opinions of a mere layman as to the work achieved by Lord Sherbrooke, as practically our first Minister of Public Health, could have

little value ; but I venture to think that the clear and concise statement which Sir John Simon, at a time of much illness and depression, has been kind enough to write for the purposes of this book, will rank among the permanent memorials to the Chief under whom this distinguished man of science found such personal satisfaction in serving. I will only ask the reader's indulgence for a brief while in order to introduce Sir John's statement by a few general remarks bearing on the merely political aspects of this portion of Lord Sherbrooke's official career.

Sir John Simon, it will be observed, has pointed out that in the obituary notices of Lord Sherbrooke, little if any mention was made of his invaluable work as Minister of Health. The reason he assigns, doubtless the true one, is that the official title of the office then held by Robert Lowe was simply Vice-President of the Council of Education. But it may be remembered, especially by some of the older members of the London University, how sharply their then member rated Disraeli for talking in his airy fashion about *sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*,¹ as if it were a kind of Tory watchword. Lowe observed that he could not help thinking that instead of *sanitas*, Disraeli must have meant *vanitas*. Had Lowe cared to do so, he might have gone on to claim that our modern sanitary official system, and the whole recognition and endowment of the medical science by the State, was purely his own work, achieved in the face of the hostility of Disraeli and his party, and notwithstanding the indifference, or at best lukewarm support, of the Palmerston Government. The facts as related without the slightest political bias in Sir John Simon's well-known work, *English Sanitary Institutions*, are of the highest political significance merely as an illustration of the strange chances and perturbations of our

¹ No public man ever realised more clearly the value of watchwords and phrases. In a partisan biography of Lord Beaconsfield, by Francis Hitchman, this Disraelian phrase is quoted as though it really constituted in itself a great national policy of sanitation.

party system. The question of the initiation of a central medical officership had been bandied about a good deal by the two parties, until at last a Public Health Act was passed, which was practically of no use, as it contained a rider that its chief provisions should last only for a year.

The principal opponent at this time in the House of Commons to any measure of sanitary reform was that not altogether reputable aristocratic Radical, Mr. Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, then member for Finsbury. There can be hardly any doubt that this erratic politician had a genius for electioneering, which made him feared by Ministers and persons in authority. In a footnote of Sir John Simon's great work, there is a graphic sketch of Duncombe, which is only one of a number of admirable political portraits. 'While Mr. Duncombe was not a man to be taken too seriously in the House, and while, indeed, his just-named contemporary [Charles Greville] regarded him as the greatest "political comedy going," he was often an especial torment to the occupants of the Treasury bench, whose weak cases he would assail, when it suited him, with the warmest indignation of independent membership. At the later times to which my text refers, he was of broken health, and only able to attend the House during the earlier of its hours of business; but he could still attack with vivacity and assurance, had a quick perception of easy openings for attack—especially of such as Finsbury would like him to perceive, and was listened to as a speaker who amused. Throughout the years 1856–9, he would always, if possible, come to the front to oppose anything *medical* which Government happened to have in hand, and on such occasions he perhaps carried a certain additional prestige as the most notable invalid in the House.'

Slingsby, or 'Tom' Duncombe, as his intimates called him, seemed to have been altogether too much for any zeal in the direction of sanitary reform which Lord Derby or Mr. Disraeli may have possessed. It was not a question on which Ministers

could stir up any party feeling, and they grew tired of being badgered by the aristocratic Radical of Finsbury, and decided practically to let the question drop. Just before they went out of office, however, the Conservatives again veered round, and it may be worth while quoting the few significant words in which Sir John Simon conveys his opinion on this *volte-face*. 'I at that time had reason to believe, and at this distance of thirty years I may gratefully express my belief, that the sudden change of resolution was due to a conversation which in the interval my political chief had had with the late Prince Consort; whose highly informed statesman's mind, always bent on objects of public good, had long been interested in the cause of sanitary progress; and whose opinion expressed on such a point as this in question was likely to be conclusive.'

At this point, however, Lord Palmerston resumed the reins of office, and Robert Lowe became practically the Minister of Public Health. He very soon showed that he had made up his mind that Mr. Duncombe of Finsbury should no longer control the situation. Nothing can be more amusing than the accounts which Sir John Simon gives of Lowe's early ardour as a sanitary reformer; how he devoured Blue Books as one of Mr. Mudie's subscribers would rush through the latest novel, and straightway proceeded to examine and cross-examine every scientific expert who came in his way. He saw at a glance that the Public Health Act of 1858 was made valueless by the provision attached to it, which meant for the department an annual struggle for existence. On July 19, 1859, he moved the third reading of his Bill to give permanence to the provisions of 1858—and by so doing he passed the measure that really established a permanent Department of Public Health in this country. Now comes the comedy of our party system! Not only did Lowe find himself opposed by the irreconcilable Duncombe, but the whole of the Tory party, who in the previous year had brought forward the same measure, now turned round, and by voting with their old

antagonist of Finsbury, all but threw out the measure. Against these combined forces, Lowe just managed to squeeze the Bill through by 101 to 95 votes; and what is more, this triumph, if such it may be called, was the veriest accident. 'For,' writes Sir John Simon, 'just after the division a member who had taken part in it (a former president of the late Board) told me that when the division bell rang, he, being at the time outside, had carried in with him to the Government lobby six members who would otherwise have been absent and whose votes made the majority for the Bill.'

Surely our fortuitous and happy-go-lucky methods of legislating have never been more strikingly exemplified. The six gentlemen in the lobby, who probably cared very little which way the division went, practically established a new Department of State, and that department the one which Disraeli so amusingly claimed as one of the Tory prerogatives, in happy forgetfulness that he and his party, by their purely factious vote, did their best to strangle it in its birth.

From this period dates the close official relationship and intimate personal friendship between Lord Sherbrooke and Sir John Simon. It would make one almost believe against the theologians that the world is not utterly corrupt to listen to the never-failing tribute of affection and respect which the latter on all occasions pays to his former Chief. There is no mere vulgar flattery in this, for, as Hamlet says, 'Why should the poor be flattered?' And what man can be poorer than a dead Minister of State? If the reader will turn to Sir John Simon's *English Sanitary Institutions*, he will find the whole subject of the public health discussed in detail and in the most comprehensive spirit. What was the precise nature of Robert Lowe's achievement as Health Minister he now records in these words:—

MR. LOWE AT THE BOARD OF HEALTH

By SIR JOHN SIMON, K.C.B.

‘At the period of Lord Sherbrooke’s death, and while the newspapers were saying their say about him, I was under such pressure of illness as made me utterly unable to take part in any public discussion. Had not this been the case, I should have sought to appear as a witness in the court where Lord Sherbrooke’s merits were being discussed; and I deeply regretted that I could not do so. Whatever else I might have had to submit, I should at least have had special evidence to offer with regard to one particular portion of Lord Sherbrooke’s political career; a portion, which so far as I could see, had been curiously forgotten or ignored by the writers who were furnishing obituary memoirs of him. I should have wished to supplement their record by submitting that Lord Sherbrooke, to my knowledge, had at critical times contributed most effectively to develop for this country the branch of political administration which relates to the protection of the Public Health; and that benefits, originally due to his action or influence in that branch of politics, are still constituting important features in the sanitary system of the country.

‘As my tribute of gratitude to Lord Sherbrooke’s memory in respect of what he did for the interests of sanitary progress could not be among the passing obituary notices which followed immediately on his death, it has ever since been a debt I have wished to pay; and accordingly now, when I am invited to contribute that testimony to the purpose of a less ephemeral record of his life and public services, I shall endeavour to set forth the facts in such detail as I hope may best subserve the biographer’s intention.¹

‘It has to be remembered that, throughout some of the

¹ Fuller information as to the circumstances under which the particular services were rendered may for the most part be found under corresponding titles, at the close of chapter xii., and at various parts of chapter xiii., of my printed volume on *English Sanitary Institutions*.

earlier periods of modern English legislation regarding the Public Health, the function of responsibility to Parliament in that branch of government had been joined by statute to the function of responsibility for Public Education. The Act of 1857, which gave a further year's continuance to the then temporarily existing General Board of Health, had provided that the Vice-President of the Education Committee of the Privy Council should *ex-officio* be the President of the Board ; and the Public Health Act of 1858, which transferred to the Privy Council the medical responsibilities of the Board of Health, had provided that, of the Lords of the Council administering the Act, the Education Vice-President must always be one. In the sorts of Council Office business for which the vice-presidency had been provided (just as in all the other sorts) the Lord President of the Council was of course the supreme authority, and the Vice-President could never be formally regarded as exercising independent command ; but during the years now particularly to be spoken of, when Earl Granville and Mr. Lowe were in the respective offices, it seemed to have been understood between them that Mr. Lowe should take the initiative in all business where he had vice-presidential duties, and that, subject to Lord Granville's agreement with him in matters of real political question, he should be the acting authority for all such business. In that almost unqualified sense—for I am not aware of Lord Granville's having ever differed from his vice-president—Mr. Lowe, during the years 1859–64, was Minister for the purposes of the Public Health Act of the period, distinctively the Minister who had to plead in the House of Commons for the health-interests of the public ; and the forgetfulness which has been shown towards the important work done by him for our sanitary system during those years may no doubt be explained by the fact that in title he was merely Minister for Education.

‘ In accordance with the general rule of our English system

of government, the political administrators of the Public Health Act were in command of a specialist adviser, and it was I who (as Medical Officer of the Privy Council) had the honour of standing in that relation to them. The Medical Officer of the Privy Council was autonomic in his function of reporting; it was his duty to report, as he saw fit, "on any matter concerning the public health, or any matter referred to him for the purpose," and all his reports were to be laid before Parliament; but except in this quasi-judicial freedom of speech, he had no independent function; and, in conformity with the common rule of our public service, departmental action could only be taken or authorised by the Minister who would answer for it to Parliament. My years of service under Mr. Lowe made me grateful to that rule in our system of government; for, as specialist officer, I felt it to be political education for myself, while of course it was security for the public good, that whatever I would initiate should have to explain and justify itself to the keen intelligence and highly educated statesmanship of one who so admirably represented the sense and the intentions of Parliament.

'It was through Mr. Lowe that the Profession of Medicine first came to be permanently recognised in the civil government of the country. Granted, no doubt, that, for four years before his vice-presidency, half promises of recognition had been held out by successive Acts of Parliament which enabled the Central Government to have its Medical Officer year by year; but in 1858, when the last of those Acts had authorised for a year the medical officership of the Privy Council, Parliament had clearly shown itself undecided as to the permanence of the appointment; and in 1859, just before Mr. Lowe's accession to office, there was doubt whether the Government of the day would propose continuance of the office, even on the precarious footing of yearly tenure. At this juncture—just when the central medical officership, after four years of humiliating suspense, was in imminent danger of

extinction, Mr. Lowe became Education Vice-President, and his first action in health matters was to lead Parliament to make the medical officership a permanent appointment in the public service. It was manifest to him—just as now, at the distance of a third part of a century, it must be manifest to all who consider the question, that the office would be valueless for public interests unless it were to be exercised in a far more judicial spirit than could be expected to combine with precarious and dependent tenure of appointment; and Mr. Lowe achieved a very great success for the sanitary cause when he prevailed on Parliament to accept his principle. The victory was gained in the face of real difficulties; for (as I have described in detail in my printed volume) there was a strong, though strangely organised, resistance to Mr. Lowe's proposal; but the victory, once gained, was final; and through this legislation Mr. Lowe made it for the first time possible to the Medical Officer of the Privy Council to enter upon a continuous system of departmental work. Thenceforth, subject to departmental estimates annually before the House of Commons, the Medical Officer was enabled to organise those systematic studies of the Distribution of Disease in England, which for many following years gave chief interest to his annual reports laid before Parliament, and formed the main basis for subsequent extensions and amendments of English sanitary law.

‘As soon as Mr. Lowe had secured the stability of the office which was to work under him, he proceeded to deal with such exterior problems of reform as were at that early date appearing to be urgent. The evil which first claimed his attention was the then extremely unsatisfactory state of our system of public vaccination; an unsatisfactoriness not to have been expected in the country which had taught vaccination to the world, and all the more to be regretted in this country because, in connection with the requirements of the Compulsory Vaccination Act of 1853, it inflicted grave injustice on

the public. Under the Public Health Acts of 1858-9, the Privy Council had been invested with authority to deal with the roots of that scandal; on the one hand, namely, to direct the application of moneys voted by Parliament for maintaining the supply of vaccine lymph, and, on the other hand, to issue regulations (enforceable by the Poor-law Board) for securing the due qualification of persons to be contracted with as public vaccinators, and for securing the efficient performance of all vaccinations under contract. It was a prompt administrative outcome of Mr. Lowe's vice-presidency that, before the end of 1859, the Privy Council, acting to the limit of its powers for the purposes in question, and treating all those purposes as parts of one system, had issued such regulations and recommendations, and had established such collateral machinery, as covered with coherent reforms the entire ground in which reforms were needed, and thus initiated what from then till now has proved a most successful new era in the history of vaccination in England.

'A second pressing need of the early time was that Parliament should amend the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Acts of 1855 (Sir B. Hall's) in respect of certain failures and insufficiencies which had already become manifest in their working; and for that object Mr. Lowe, in 1860, introduced a Bill which became law. This Act (the main provisions of which are still operative through subsequent consolidating statutes) made such additions as the Parliament of 1860 was prepared to concede to the sanitary powers of local authorities; and it provided therewith, as essential improvements on the legislation of 1855, first, that the powers of magistrates under the Nuisances Act should be exercisable on the basis of individual complaints as well as on complaints by the local authorities; and, secondly, that in rural districts (where hitherto the Nuisances Act of 1855 had been little more than a dead letter) the administrative authority in future should be the Board of Guardians.

‘It was under Mr. Lowe’s sanction throughout his tenure of office, and with the cheer of his warm personal sympathy, that the Medical Department, from 1859 onward, prosecuted largely and systematically those exact studies of the Distribution of Disease in England, to which I have before adverted, and which at the time were necessary preliminaries to further practical progress ; studies which we believed would prove to be of most important concern to the welfare of the masses of the people ; and which soon justified that belief by their bearing on the great strides of sanitary legislation which signalised the years 1864–8. In connection with that work, and *à propos* of the census of 1861, Mr. Lowe, with the consent of the then Registrar-General, moved in the House of Commons for the production of certain specialised Mortuary Statistics for the decennial period 1851–61 ; information which was essential for enabling exact sanitary comparison to be drawn between different parts of the country ; statistics, namely (tabulated to plan) of the average annual proportions of deaths from all causes and from certain specified causes, and with certain specifications of age and sex, in England generally, and in each registration division and registration district of England, as well as in certain standard areas, during the decennium in question. The parliamentary return of 1864, which the General Register Office still knows as “Lowe’s Return,” and which furnished facilities, such as the public had never before possessed, for estimating the comparative amount of mortal injury suffered in each district of England from each chief sort of morbid influence, was meant to be, and in effect has been, a precedent for successive decennial compendia of like sort ; enabling exact comparison to be drawn between different parts of the country and different periods of time, with regard to the respective proportions of deadly diseases prevailing in them.

‘When Mr. Lowe, in 1864, under circumstances memorable in his career, retired from office as Vice-President of the

Education Committee, his official relations with the Medical Department were *ipso facto* closed ; but the interest he had learnt to take in its objects continued to animate him as an unofficial member of Parliament, and made him on several occasions an invaluable ally to his official successors. Thus, for instance, in 1866, when he had readily consented to serve on Mr. Bruce's Select Committee on the Vaccination Bill of that year, he there proposed and carried a clause (afterwards § 5 of the Act of 1867) which powerfully supplemented the conditions already provided in the Privy Council Order of 1859 for securing a high standard of quality in public vaccination : the enactment now added by him being, that a special parliamentary grant, to be awarded on the school-code principle of "payment for results," should be applied by the Privy Council to the object of providing for meritorious public vaccinators a better remuneration than they had yet received. At the same time, too, Mr. Lowe was serving as a member (in fact, a very influential member) of the Cattle Plague Commission, and in that capacity was contributing importantly to secure right applications of medical knowledge in a sphere of very large popular interest.

'Mr. Lowe's particular steps of advance on behalf of the Medical Department during the years of Lord Palmerston's administration were but a part of what we owed him in those years. At the early date when he presided over us, not only was the cause of sanitary reform counting for little more than a fad in the political world, but also it had been mismanaged into extreme disrepute among the comparatively few politicians who had heard of it ; and it was a striking phenomenon in party politics under those circumstances, that a Minister of Mr. Lowe's power and promise should be ready to identify himself with our cause. We could not but derive encouragement from the spirit which Mr. Lowe displayed in his command over us. To him, with our technical information before him, and with his own intellectual gifts and habits, it of

course was no difficult matter to understand (though, indeed, it was far ahead of anything his average political contemporaries had yet learnt) what vast magnitudes of human suffering can be caused, and what great national interests can be wronged, through the want of proper sanitary law and administration ; and while in such respects he almost intuitively grasped the case of our department, so too, as he advanced in it, generous indignation on behalf of the " masses " for which we chiefly had to strive, and most of all on behalf of the poor and weak and ignorant who could not strive for themselves, became a new guiding light to him in his political career, as well as a close bond of union with the pioneering department which was his staff.

‘ Participating in the work of the Medical Department, and brought by it into constant observation of the practice of Preventive Medicine, Mr. Lowe rapidly arrived at a vivid perception, such as he never before had had, of the vast extent to which the welfare of mankind can be promoted by the physical and physiological sciences ; and this perception was of lasting influence with him. I have often thought that its growing strength in his mind contributed greatly to explain the new tone (so mysterious to many contemporaries) in which he thenceforth often spoke of his old familiar friends, the classics of Greek and Roman literature. It was not that he ever for a moment forgot the fascination of those fountain-heads of wisdom and wit and pathos, or depreciated the discipline and delight and adornment which individual minds could derive from access to them ; and of course he did not deny that grammar and literary style have their proportionate place as fitting studies for the young ; but he had become deeply aware, and he felt it his duty to admit and even to emphasize, that since the days of his own youth new values had come to show themselves in the world of study ; that, in these changed times, prowess in Greek and Latin could no longer count for as much as in the day when they yielded him his

Oxford laurels; that studies merely linguistic and literary could give no immediate help to the pressing wants of the masses of mankind; that science, such as he had only of late known to exist, was henceforth to be the chief helper of man.

‘In later years the Medical Department derived much advantage from Mr. Lowe’s intimate knowledge of its history, and from his sympathy with the spirit of its work. Early in his Chancellorship of the Exchequer, when we had become aware that circumstances were rapidly tending to make large demand on us for an extension and systematisation of our inspectorial service, he at once recognised that provision ought to be made for a considerable increase of the departmental staff; and the necessary measures for moving Parliament to grant that provision were cordially and effectually promoted by him. Through him, too, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Medical Department obtained, in 1870, the inestimable privilege of a settled organisation for Laboratory Researches in aid of its practical work; for, under his auspices, Parliament then approved “auxiliary scientific investigations” as a separate item in our departmental estimates, and thenceforth adopted the practice of granting for them annually a subsidy of 2,000*l.* This grant, comparable in principle to those which the Admiralty had long administered for the promotion of astronomical and meteorological science, was very greatly to be valued; not merely in relation to the immediate uses of the department which received it, but as representing also a British contribution to world-wide scientific interests.

‘At that time the Local Government Board which now exists had not yet come into being. From the date of Mr. Lowe’s initiative, twelve years previously, the Medical Department had been advancing consistently on the lines of development then laid down for it; and it had now attained such ripeness of organisation that only slight addition to its inspectorial staff was wanting to complete its ideal of adequacy for the functions it expected to fulfil. The object had been to fill

a previously ascertained important void in the machinery of the central civil service, by the creation of a reporting and administrative department which should have State-Medicine as its specialty, and should be distinctively connected with the Medical Profession by having a member of that profession as its chief officer. Provision for the autonomy of the new department, and for its exercise of new functions in the civil service, had had to be made in a spirit both circumspect and comprehensive. The conception to be realised was that of a Department which, with scientific equipment fully up to the standards of the time, and with freedom from bias as absolute as that which governs the administration of justice in courts of law, should diligently study all matters of concern to the Public Health; should keep itself accurately informed of all material facts regarding disease and causes of disease prevalent in the country, or threatening invasion of the country from abroad; should take direct administrative action in matters of a medical kind wherein Parliament had appointed it to administer; should afford to other departments of the civil service such assistance as they might need in relation to medical questions in their respective spheres of responsibility; and should at appointed times report to Parliament the proceedings it had taken, the information it had gathered, and the recommendations it would offer, on the matters which Parliament had entrusted to its care. Mr. Lowe was the statesman to whom, almost uniquely, we were indebted for entertaining that conception of a Central Medical Department in the public service, and for enabling it to be for the most part realised. That in later times leading features of the conception have been sacrificed is the outcome of other intentions than Mr. Lowe's. The Local Government Board Act of 1871, promoted by Mr. Stansfeld, and under which he became first President of the new Board, enabled him to initiate an administrative policy under which, in 1876, the Medical Department of the Privy Council came to an end; leaving

only some of its duties to be fulfilled, more or less dependently, by medical functionaries under the Local Government Board. On grounds which I trust I have set in clear light in my printed volume,¹ I am strongly of opinion that the objects for which the public service requires a central medical department are not attained, and are not likely to be attained, under those official conditions which dependence on the Local Government Board has involved, and that the politicians of 1871-6 did ill for this branch of administration when they abandoned the principles on which Mr. Lowe had acted.'

¹ *Op. cit.* ch. xv.

CHAPTER XII

AT SHERBROOKE. WARLINGHAM

In the year 1856, Robert Lowe purchased a cottage in the Surrey Hills, with some few acres of land, in a good position overlooking the Caterham valley, at a point opposite to the pleasant little village of Warlingham. Here, adding to the original cottage, he developed an unpretentious but comfortable and most friendly country house; and he and Mrs. Lowe indulged their fancy in laying out the grounds and planting the *Wellingtonia gigantea* and other trees. This little estate he called Sherbrooke, from the family name; and here he spent all his available time when his political duties did not necessitate his residence in London. In course of time his intimate friends came to look upon this pleasant home in the Surrey Hills with even greater liking than Lowndes Square. For here, even when holding arduous office, the distinguished statesman would unbend and entertain his friends and associates. The house was often full of interesting people; the great Whig ladies, as Mr. Edmund Yates once set forth in the *World*, had an unbounded admiration for Mr. Lowe, who was, in fact, always a prime favourite with clever and brilliant women of any or no shade of political opinion. When one hears in some ill-informed quarter of Lord Sherbrooke's want of manners or roughness of demeanour, it is quite amusing to turn to the letters of refined and high-born gentlewomen who knew him intimately and found him as kindly and considerate on all occasions as he was ever brilliant

and charming in conversation. No one could have been brought into personal relations with him without being struck with amazement at the caricatures of his personal appearance which still pass current among ill-informed persons. Despite the absence of expression from his half-closed eyelids, he had a strikingly handsome face, and a noble head worthy of the chisel of an antique sculptor. It is not often that men, particularly of the scholarly type, indulge in admiration of masculine beauty, but I have heard one of Lord Sherbrooke's old Oxford pupils, who is still living, declare that it was simply a pleasure to him to gaze at his tutor, for 'he had the face and head of a Greek god.' This may, perhaps, sound somewhat hyperbolic, but no one could meet Lord Sherbrooke without being struck by the dignity of his bearing and his intellectual countenance. One can only wonder at the portraits which, as Sir John Simon says, have not even the merit of caricature.

Mr. Justin McCarthy, the Irish leader, is perhaps the most prominent sinner in this respect; for one would imagine that from his former coign of vantage in the 'gallery,' he possessed distinct advantages for sketching a faithful likeness. Of course, from his extreme shortness of sight, Robert Lowe was at great disadvantage in manipulating papers or deciphering notes; but, so far from being awkward, his skill in certain sports bore remarkable evidence to his activity. Few people of his age, even possessing good eyesight, would have cared to cycle with him among the Surrey Hills. Mr. McCarthy's attempt at a portrait errs in every particular: he refers to Lowe's voice as harsh and rasping; as a matter of fact it was clear and penetrating, and at times thrilling, when he was under the sway of some strong emotion. In ordinary conversation it was singularly pleasant, with that perfection of utterance in which every vowel and consonant is fully sounded, yet without affectation or a trace of effort. Mr. McCarthy writes that Lowe's memory was not good; it was, on the contrary, during almost the whole of his public life marvellously tena-

cious and accurate. Neither Mr. Lowe nor any other human being could have held in his memory the vast array of figures needful for the financial statement of a Chancellor of the Exchequer ; and here he was at a distinct disadvantage when he had to refer to columns of figures which he could decipher only with great difficulty. But it would be the testimony of all the trained officials who worked under him at the Treasury, that he had a thorough mastery over the intricacies of our national finance. It would not be worth while thus picking to pieces the misstatements of one of Lord Sherbrooke's caricaturists, did not Mr. McCarthy claim to rank as an historian of our own times. His portraits of his distinguished contemporaries have been widely accepted, but certainly his sketch of Lowe almost shakes one's faith in history itself.

Let us turn to the testimony of one or two intimate friends, who still regard the hours passed at Sherbrooke as among the most pleasant of their reminiscences. Blanche, Countess of Airlie thus records her impressions of Lord Sherbrooke : ' What a personality his was ! My father always loved to meet him ; the cleverer the man, the more enchanted he was with his ready wit, his inexhaustible memory, and his power of argument ; his benevolent nature always took away any sting which a somewhat caustic tongue might inflict. He loved society and conversation, and said it inspired him—women's society and women's talk above all. If he had not been so indulgent, how would one have dared to measure oneself with him, and just say all that was in one's mind ? '

It is ever the same story from those who knew him as he was ; nor would the matter be worth consideration, but that people still have an unreasoning belief in mere print, as if in these days it were not almost as easy to print lies as to utter them.

Among the brilliant women of this century who knew Robert Lowe well, was the Hon. Mrs. Norton, who has left on

record her impressions of him in these words: 'I read Lowe's speech with interest and admiration as I do all he says or writes. His opinions on education are the real root of all progress and all reform in its best theoretical and *only* practical sense. I always have thought him the pleasantest *giver-out* of knowledge among the many intellectual men I have consorted with—without effort, not making you feel that *he* knows so much, as that *you* know something more every time you talk to him. It is as good for the mind to be with him, as they say it is for the lungs to walk among the pines—a sort of vague improvement in one's general condition of thought without having to be dosed with hard teachings and obvious correction of one's deficiencies.' It would be difficult to improve on this picture.

Some little time after the American tour with Sir Douglas Galton, that eminent writer, Mr. Goldwin Smith, was staying with the Lowes at Sherbrooke. Mr. Goldwin Smith, who knew Robert Lowe very well indeed, is hardly to be outdone, even by Mrs. Norton, in his appreciation. He writes from Toronto: 'Little remains save the general recollection of a most powerful and brilliant mind richly stored, of caustic wit, and great conversational gifts. As a public man I suppose he would be allowed by all fair judges to have been as honest as he was able and eloquent. There was not a touch about him of the demagogue . . . the country has reason to wish that such a man were in the House of Commons now.'

Mr. Goldwin Smith, in a subsequent communication, records an Irish tour which he made in company with Mr. and Mrs. Lowe, and in the course of his narrative he furnishes the correct version of a famous story which, as generally related, exhibits Lord Sherbrooke's wit at the expense of his good feeling. 'One anecdote' (writes Mr. Smith) 'I see going the round which I can give you in an authentic form and free from a disagreeable innuendo. Mr. and Mrs. Lowe and I

were staying with Lord Cardwell—Mr. Cardwell as he then was—in the Chief Secretary's Lodge at Dublin. The English marriage service was the subject of conversation. Lowe said in his dashing way that it was full of nonsense. "Why" (he exclaimed, turning to his wife), "it made me say to you, 'with all my worldly goods I thee endow,' when I had no worldly goods wherewith to endow you." "Ah, Robert" (she replied), "but then there were your brains!" "Well" (he said), "all the world knows that I did not endow you with them."

'The current version of the anecdote' (continues Mr. Goldwin Smith) 'is such as to imply that Lowe spoke contemptuously of his wife. Nothing of the kind; it was a mere joke, at which she laughed as heartily as the rest of us.'

This Irish tour seems to have been a very merry holiday; for Mrs. Lowe, as long as she retained her health, was always full of fun. One little incident during their visit to Ireland lives in Mr. Goldwin Smith's memory; it is very characteristic and speaks volumes. One morning he started off early from the Lodge into Dublin, leaving Lowe and his wife playing croquet—a game which had then just come into vogue. When he returned late in the afternoon he found them still playing, and Mrs. Lowe said they had only stopped for a short time for lunch.

Like most of Lowe's visitors in Surrey, Mr. Goldwin Smith had to submit to be driven at a rattling pace by his host down the steep lanes by Warlingham and Caterham, and through the narrow, crowded streets of Croydon. It was miraculous how Lord Sherbrooke contrived to see, but it was mainly a question of courage and perfect nerve. Mrs. Lowe was a tremendous partisan whenever her husband was in any way concerned. On one occasion John Bright, who at times lacked *savoir vivre*, quite lost his temper under her pungent thrusts. Disraeli had, of course, much more of the ways of the man of the world, but after the Reform Bill of 1867 he and the Lowes

made no pretence to any mutual liking. At a dinner at Lady Waldegrave's the guests had all paired off till only Disraeli and Mrs. Lowe were left; with his inscrutable smile, and complete appreciation of the humour of the situation, Disraeli bowed and extended his arm: 'I suppose there's no help for it, Mrs. Lowe,' when both burst into hearty laughter.

It is a rather curious circumstance that both Mr. and Mrs. Lowe took a profound interest in Darwin. In his brief autobiography, Lord Sherbrooke has recorded his feelings on first seeing that great man. One would not at the first blush expect to find such a deep feeling of veneration for Charles Darwin on the part of a statesman and man of affairs. But there was in Robert Lowe that love of truth for its own sake, which throughout life made him always turn to the achievements of science with the greatest respect. This was the tie that bound him to William Sharpe Macleay of Sydney, and in later life to Sir John Simon, and other patient investigators and students of nature. For no one had he a more sincere regard than for the late Professor Sharpey, the patriarch of English physiology, whom he described as 'after the old Greek type.'

Sir John Simon traces that feeling of antagonism which Lord Sherbrooke displayed in later life towards a classical and literary education, to the conviction forced upon him that all real progress and civilisation must come from scientific research. Looked at in this way, there was something almost pathetic in these denunciations of Greek and Latin which so disgusted the dons and alarmed the schoolmasters in this country. Lowe was a man to whom classical allusions and the literary expression of the antique world were as household words; there was no more affectation in his quoting a Latin or Greek verse than in an ordinary well-read Englishman quoting a line of Shakespeare or Byron. The old classical words and phrases rose naturally to his tongue—he loved them, and almost to his dying day, after he had become

quite blind, had them read to him. But he felt that, beautiful as these things are, his almost unrivalled education and mental training had in a measure proceeded on wrong lines. It was altogether too literary, and those who had been responsible for it had too much neglected the vast and ever-growing realm of science. With that characteristic honesty and straightforwardness which marked his every action, Lord Sherbrooke, as soon as he was convinced of the truth of this, proclaimed it to the world.

When Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, in 1859, both Lowe and his wife were completely fascinated by it. With regard to science in all its branches, Lowe was always the humblest of learners; not only was he without mental arrogance or even ordinary assurance, but he went about asking guidance of those friends who had devoted their lives to scientific research. 'He was always' (writes Sir John Simon) 'so teachable;' a strange and suggestive word to be applied to one who, in the political arena, was never wanting in self-confidence. Mrs. Lowe seems not to have been a whit behind him in her interest concerning *The Origin of Species*, the far-reaching nature of whose cosmic speculations might well have perturbed and excited her mind. The world has now settled down to some kind of hazy acceptance of the doctrine of evolution; but when Charles Darwin published his great work, many persons besides Mrs. Lowe must have felt that the old teleological conception of life and nature would no longer stand the test of scientific investigation. In her anxiety on the subject, she promptly consulted the two persons whose judgment and ability she and her husband held in the highest esteem. Forthwith she posted *The Origin of Species* to Sir George Cornwall Lewis, and wrote to Mr. William Macleay in Sydney, requesting each of them to give her his opinion of the work. At a distance of thirty years, men of much commoner mind have advanced perhaps to a clearer perception of Darwin's aim and teaching; but these hitherto unpublished

criticisms of the one epoch-making book of this century may still be read with interest, and are certainly among the curiosities of Darwinian literature.

DARWIN'S 'ORIGIN OF SPECIES'

Sir George Cornwall Lewis to Mrs. Lowe.

Kent House: February 27, 1860.

Dear Mrs. Lowe,—I return with many thanks the book which you had the kindness to lend me. I have read the whole of it with much interest, but the author has entirely failed in convincing me of the truth of his opinions, so far as they are new and intelligible. I regard the subject of his enquiry, the *origin* of species, as unphilosophical and impenetrable. He writes about species, but never determines what a species is; he objects to the received definition, but substitutes none of his own. He uses the phrase 'Natural Selection' in half a dozen different senses. Sometimes he applies it to a case when the animals themselves make a selection; sometimes to cases where they are passive, or even reluctant, and are operated on by external causes. Whatever value the book has is confined to the light which it sheds upon the causes which limit animal population. But this light is shed incidentally, for the author impairs the value of his own remarks by confounding the causes which kill individuals with those which exterminate an entire species. A species may be kept constantly within the limits indicated by its potential capacity of multiplication, without being in danger of extinction:—Because birds eat worms, it does not follow that worms will be annihilated. In my opinion he has entirely failed in showing that the various causes which he calls 'Natural Selection' have operated upon the animal kingdom, or determines the number of species within the period over which the exact knowledge of man extends. The writer is a man of talent and ingenuity, with a turn for bold speculation and a great command of facts. He is, however, deficient in clearness and soundness; he may suggest to others, but he cannot discover and prove. His mind is of the German type, speculative, laborious, and unsound.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

G. C. LEWIS.

In the case of William Macleay, it would seem that Lowe himself must have written to him on political affairs, dwelling

on the rapid advance of democracy. Mrs. Lowe, however, evidently devoted her communication mainly to Darwin, as will be seen from the elaborate nature of Macleay's reply.

DEMOCRACY AND DARWINISM

W. S. Macleay to Robert Lowe.

Elizabeth Bay : May 1860.

My dear Lowe,—I have received by the last mail your letter of 17th of July, and Mrs. Lowe's of 10th Feb. I am grieved at the political prospects which both present. The tendency of the present generation of politicians to surrender everything to the many-headed monster appears to me to be nearly as rife in England as it is in the Colonies. Well, I thank Heaven for having lived neither to feel the heel of the military despot nor the brutality of the mob.

I have enjoyed the best part of that circle which it appears fated that mankind must go round. There is nothing here to interest you now, for almost all those friends whom I used to meet round your hospitable table at Nelson Bay are either gone to Europe or to their graves. It is lucky for me, therefore, that both you and Mrs. Lowe have given me the subject of this letter in asking me for my opinion of Darwin's book. To me, now on the verge of the tomb, I must confess the subject of it is more interesting than either the extension of British commerce or even the progress of national education. This question is no less than 'What am I?' 'What is man?' a created being under the direct government of his Creator, or only an accidental sprout of some primordial type that was the common progenitor of both animals and vegetables. The theologian has no doubt answered those questions, but leaving the Mosaic account of the Creation to Doctors of Divinity, the naturalist finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. For, either from the facts he observes, he must believe in a special creation of organised species, which creation has been progressive and is in now in full operation, or he must adopt some such view as that of Darwin, viz. that the primordial material cell of life has been constantly sprouting forth of itself by 'natural selection' into all the various forms of animals and vegetables. Darwin, indeed, for no reason that I can perceive, except his fear of alarming the clergy, speaks of a *Creator* of the original material cell.

But there appears to be very little necessity for His existence, if it be true, as Darwin says, that this material cell can go on by itself

eternally sprouting into all the animals and vegetables that have existed or will exist.

Again, if this primordial cell had a Creator, as Darwin seems to admit, I do not see what we gain by denying the Creator, as Darwin does, all management of it after its creation. Lamarck was more logical in supposing it to have existed of itself from all eternity—indeed this is the principal difference that I see between this theory of Darwin's and that of Lamarck, who propounded everything essential in the former theory, in a work now rather rare—his *Philosophie zoologique*.

But you may see an abridgment of it in so common a book as his *Histoire Nat. des animaux vertébrés*, vol. i., pp. 188, *et seq.*—Edit. 1818, where the examples given of natural selection are the gasteropod molluscs. It is the system also, with some small alterations, of the *Vestiges of Creation*, a work which I recollect telling you at the time is *more* incorrect as to facts and therefore valueless, however attractive it may be in style. Darwin, on the other hand, like his predecessor Lamarck, is a most able naturalist; and though I agree with what Mrs. Lowe tells me is the opinion of Sir R. Murchison, viz. that his facts are not always sound; still, quite enough of them are so far unexceptionable as to entitle his lucubrations—however preposterous—to our respect, if not to our assent. It remains, therefore, for those who are conversant with natural history to determine: first, whether he has drawn his facts fairly, and, second, whether he has not cushioned many facts which make against his theory. For my part, I think that his facts may be interpreted another way, and that he has not stated many things that bear on his subject. Above all, I dislike his favourite form of question, 'Why should the Deity have interfered in such and such a case?' Or 'Why did He not?' Moreover, I care little for his sneers at the only answer which we short-sighted mortals can give to such questions—viz. that 'It was because Providence so pleased.' Of his three kinds of selection by which he says the world is managed without special interference on the part of a Creator, I only believe in the variation of species by 'human selection,'—i.e. human selection operating within certain limits assigned by the Creator. As for his two other kinds of 'selection' by which he accounts for all the species of animals and vegetables—viz. sexual selection and natural selection, I find them quite impossible to digest. Natural selection (sometimes called 'struggles' by Darwin) is identical with the '*Besoins des choses*' of Lamarck, who, by means of his hypothesis, for instance, assigns the constant stretching of the neck to reach the acacia leaves as the cause of the extreme length of it in the giraffe; much in the same way the black bear, according to Darwin, became a whale, which I believe as little as his other assertion that our

progenitors anciently had gills—only they had dropped off by want of use in the course of myriads of generations. As for his sexual selection, it is the only original invention of the three. It is truly Darwin's own, and if anyone can believe, that the sexes of every animal were originally alike: that the cock, for instance, owes his comb, wattle, and other distinguishing marks to the taste of the hens who have constantly sought such a type to breed from—why, all I can say is that such a believer must have a very wide swallow.

I can only assume from the favour which this book has received from the English public, that either they do not understand the tenour of it, or that what is termed Revealed Religion, and particularly the Mosaic account of the Creation, sits somewhat uneasily on the minds of a great many thinking persons. The theory is almost a materialist one—nay, even so far atheistic that, if it allows of a deity at all, He has been ever since the institution of the primordial type of life fast asleep. This living cell of matter, on the other hand, has been constantly and actively sprouting forth by natural selection into all the forms of animals and vegetables that ever have existed or will hereafter exist. All special interference of a Creator with it Darwin repeatedly denies. I am myself so far a Pantheist that I see God in everything: but then I believe in His special Providence, and that He is the constant and active sole Creator and all-wise Administrator of the Universe. Darwin seems at times to have been led to his most wild conclusions by his anxiety to avoid the constant and special interference of a Creator. He parodies your legal axiom, and says, *De minimis non curat Deus*. But there can be nothing great or small in respect to the absolute. The microscope shows infinity on one side as the telescope does on the other. In comparison to the infinite absolute, the wart on my hand, each hair on my head, the sparrow on the housetop, must be as important as Jupiter or the sun. And it is an absurd notion which Cudworth had to combat that God is too great to meddle with trifles, or, to use Darwin's instance, to be the cause of the colour on a pigeon's wing.

My notion of omnipotence is that it interferes with everything to the most minute atom of dust, and I see no difficulty in believing its constant and special management of all things and all events. May I take one of Darwin's stumbling-blocks; for instance, I see no difficulty in believing that the original of all mammals were created with navels, or, if you please, without them. For I daily witness monstrosities and malformations which I attribute to the direct will of the Creator, and not to the accidental, abortive, or depraved sprouting of the material cell. In fact, I am no believer in the doctrine of Chance, but think that everything is provided, even to the black tuft of hair on the breast of the turkey-cock. Moreover, I believe it to

have been provided by God, and not, as Darwin says, produced by the taste of turkey-hens continued through many generations. By the way, how did these same turkey-hens come by this unvarying taste for the black tufts of hair on the breast of their mates? At questions of this kind we shall always arrive, even if we adopt Darwin's theory of sexual and natural selection. And the answer to such questions will, I suspect, invariably amount to the admission of an external and special interference. To conclude: It is far easier for me to believe in the direct and constant government of the Creation by God, than that He should have created the world and then left it to manage itself, which is Darwin's theory in a few words. Nevertheless, Charles Darwin is an old friend of mine and I feel grateful to him for his work. I hope it will make people attend to such matters, and to be no longer prevented by the first chapter of Genesis from asking for themselves what the Book of Nature says on the subject of the Creation.

I have now complied with your and Mrs. Lowe's requests. I could say much more if I entered into the examination of Darwin's facts, or rather the facts on which he founds his theory, but I must have already tired you—I only wish I had your gift of writing tersely—*sed non cuivis*. This letter is for Mrs. Lowe as well as you, so pray tell her, with my affectionate regards, that I trust she will tell me whether she agrees with Darwin's notions or with mine, i.e. saving intact her own saving faith in the Bible story of six days and the concluding apple.

Ever, my dear Lowe,
Affectionately your friend,
W. S. MACLEAY.

But lighter matters than either democracy or Darwinism would often beguile the leisure of the active-minded statesman in his pleasant country house. Robert Lowe had a turn for versification, and if asked for a poem by any of his friends, he would comply with the request. The Duchess of St. Albans has been good enough to copy the following lines from the album of her mother, the late Mrs. Bernal Osborne.

*Lines on Australia. Written in Mrs. Bernal Osborne's
Autograph-book.*

They told me of a glorious land
Beyond the heaving main,
And they who touched its happy strand
Should never want again.

They told me that its skies were bright,
 Its stream flung back an azure light,
 And that the seasons of the year
 Each into each so softly blended,
 You could not tell when Summer's near
 Or when the snowless winter ended.
 I went that glorious land to view,
 I saw it—and the tale was true.

ROBERT LOWE.

August 10th, 1860.

Robert Lowe about this time wrote to Mrs. Bernal Osborne to announce the death of a favourite sister, and curiously diverged into a criticism of Hood's poems, which is not without interest as a piece of self-revelation.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Bernal Osborne.

Caterham : September 13, 1860.

My dear Mrs. Osborne,—I have just had a very heavy loss to bear, in the death of a sister who was very dear to me, and between whom and me there was this additional bond of an exact similarity in physical peculiarities. She died without pain, of a decay of nature.

Many thanks for your present of photographs. I think they are admirable and shall hang them up in my drawing-room here, as very agreeable objects of contemplation. But you must know that there is another, which I should value much more, and which I hope I may not have very long to wait for. Pray do not withhold it from me.

By the law of England, the Queen is entitled to all treasure-trove, so that Lewis's offer to pay for it is a mitigation, not an aggravation, of the present state of things; I can give you no other explanation, and can only hope that this may assuage your wrath; otherwise, I abandon him to your vengeance.

I do not think the review of Hood a good one; the ideas about wit and bulls were not clearly worked out, and were quite irrelevant and not worth bringing in head and shoulders. The criticism on the 'Bridge' and the 'Shirt' I did not like either.

The fault of the 'Shirt' is not that it is a homely description of homely misery, but that it is false in sentiment and tendency. The 'Shirt' seems to suppose that if people gave up wearing them, like the Irishman who was caught by the Sultan of Scindib, the women

who make them would be better off; that is, that to diminish employment is a remedy for poverty, and that the rich ought somehow to take care that the employers of the poor seamstresses paid them more. Such sentiments do not even rise to the level of Socialism, they are downright fatuity.

It seems to me absurd to say the 'Bridge' is not pathetic. What other merit does it pretend to? If it is to found Hood's reputation on an ill-chosen metre and an absence of pathos, that reputation will not stand long. But it is pathetic, and the proof is that every reader feels the pathos. A false taste may mistake bombast for sublimity, or trifling for refinement, but pathos is within everyone's comprehension, and can only be judged by its effects, not on critics, but on ordinary readers. Did you ever read Hood's 'Irish Schoolmaster'?

I know of no earthquakes but moral ones, which abound greatly. I have been sounded as to my willingness to take the Government of Madras, but have declined—thirty millions of subjects! and 8,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* a year, I forget which. Poor Wilson¹ has not long enjoyed his place. I have not read the story you mention. Give my love to the two originals, a term which I use in no depreciating sense,

And believe me always,

Affectionately yours,

ROBERT LOWE.

The sister whose death he lamented was Elizabeth Agnes Pyndar Lowe, who was two years his senior, and, like himself, an albino. In his brief autobiography there is a touching allusion to her and to the affliction common to both. 'She was,' he wrote, 'I think, the gentlest and best person I ever knew, but was very keenly alive to this misfortune. Had I felt my peculiarities as she did, anything like public or even active life would have been to me an impossibility.'

¹ The Right Hon. James Wilson, founder of the *Economist*, and father-in-law of its most famous editor, Walter Bagehot. Like Lord Sherbrooke, Wilson had been Secretary of the Board of Control, and was afterwards Financial Secretary of the Treasury. He went to India as Financial Member of the Council in 1859, but died in less than a year, to the deep regret of Lord Canning and all British India.

CHAPTER XIII

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

(1859—1864)

FROM 1859 to 1864 Robert Lowe held the office of Vice-President of the Council of Education (in which capacity, as already stated, he was also President of the Board of Health) in the last Palmerston Government. Before accepting this office he had not only held with great distinction the equally onerous post of Vice-President of the Board of Trade, but in and out of office he had rendered the old Liberal Prime Minister most arduous and faithful service. It is hardly to be wondered at that his friends should have thought the time had arrived when he should have been admitted into the Cabinet. There is nothing, however, to show that Lowe himself took any steps to press his claims upon Palmerston until the elevation of Lord Russell to the House of Lords and the death of Lord Herbert of Lea in 1861 necessitated a reconstruction of the Government. Lowe, like all men who are diffident about pushing their own claims, was again overlooked. His friends strongly urged him to make a stand, and it would appear that he must have had some confidential talk with Lord Granville, who was not only his official superior as Lord President of the Council, but also his friend in the Cabinet.

Lord Granville occupied quite a unique position in the inner circle of official Liberalism. On the fall of the Derby Ministry in 1859 the Queen had sent for him, and he would

have formed a Government but for the refusal of Lord John Russell to serve under him. For all that, Lord Granville never bore the least malice to Lord John Russell, and was, indeed, his truest friend and wisest panegyrist up to the end. In the same spirit he heartily consented to fill a mere ornamental post under Palmerston. Such a man must always be very influential; for, being to a great extent unselfish, and having the rare faculty of seeing the best side of those more fiercely contending for the prize, he is naturally consulted at all times of crisis and in every difficulty. Some earnest conversation passed between Granville and Lowe, when the latter repeated what his friends were always urging—that if he acquiesced in Palmerston's neglect, and in his continued exclusion from the Cabinet, it would come to be looked upon as a matter of course that he should remain permanently in a subordinate position. Lord Granville, who was pre-eminently a man of the world, would be sure to feel the force of this reasoning. He had a strong admiration for Lowe's great ability and marvellous capacity for work, and had he been able himself to form a Government, there can be little doubt that Lowe would have been in the Cabinet from the outset. However, he was skilled in the art of pouring oil on the troubled waters, and succeeded in making his friend feel that Palmerston's neglect arose from the circumstances of his position and the importunity of men who, if they possessed less worth and ability, had greater parliamentary influence. Robert Lowe, as he always said himself, was the reverse of an ambitious man, and returned to his duties in the Education Department without giving the matter another thought. The following letter from the Marquis of Lansdowne clearly shows that this was the case.

Lord Lansdowne to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

Bowood: April 24, 1863.

Dear Mr. Lowe,—I am much obliged to you for recollecting the interest which I take in all that concerns you, and for informing

me of what passed in connection with the recent changes in the Government. I had certainly expected that those changes would have produced some combination of such a kind as to give you a seat in the Cabinet; and I felt sure that what *has* taken place would be a disappointment to you. No one who has the pleasure of knowing you, or who is in a position to appreciate your abilities as well as your great services, can do otherwise than participate in that disappointment. I feel convinced that it must have been a source of regret to Lord Palmerston and others, that the circumstances of the case should have been such as to have necessitated, in his opinion, the adoption of the course which was decided upon; but they must feel themselves deeply indebted to you for putting aside your personal feelings so completely in favour of the public interest.

Lady Lansdowne desires to be kindly remembered to you. She is equally interested with myself in your 'London gossip.'

Yours sincerely,

LANSDOWNE.

Alas! Gratitude is but a lively sense of favours to come! When in the following year Robert Lowe had to meet a vote of censure in the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston, it must be confessed, did not show that he was conscious of any deep indebtedness—at least, not until Lowe took the matter into his own hands and by boldly resigning his office against the counsel and protestations of his colleagues brought about what is called a Ministerial crisis.

The world has recently been informed that Robert Lowe sprang into sudden fame by certain anti-Reform speeches delivered in the House of Commons in 1866, and that before this time he was a mere nonentity, and that afterwards he again sank into obscurity. But if we study the actual *events* of our own time, or the parliamentary records of the last forty years, we shall find that Robert Lowe, previous to his anti-Reform speeches, had proved himself to be the best Minister of Trade, the best Minister of Health, and (with the possible exception of Mr. Forster) the greatest Minister of Education of our time. There are exceptions even among contemporary chroniclers; but, as a rule, the only persons

living who are competent to pass a judgment upon Lord Sherbrooke as a constructive statesman are the one or two experts and trained officials who co-operated with him in his work. Unfortunately, the events connected with his *régime* at the Education Department are of such comparatively recent date, and the issues still affect so many living persons, that a biographer desirous simply of recording the actual history of that time is compelled to rely upon his own discernment in dealing with the conflicting testimonies and embittered controversies that surround the subject.

It should be borne in mind that so far as the Government was concerned, the whole question resolved itself into the amount and distribution of the grant voted for educational purposes. There was no centralised bureau of education supported out of the rates, but the existing voluntary schools received a capitation grant from the State; and thence arose infinite strugglings between the Church and Nonconformity (both Roman and Protestant), disputes between certificated and non-certificated schoolmasters, and dissension concerning the system, or want of system, in the matter of school inspection.

The Duke of Newcastle's Commission had been appointed, and their labours, whatever we may think of them in these days of rate-supported Board Schools, were very thorough, and their Report, which was presented to Parliament in 1861 in six bulky volumes, is probably the most complete history of State education that the world is ever likely to see. This fact alone will show how puerile it is to imagine that the question of public education in this country arose with the Nonconformists or with that able man, Mr. W. E. Forster, whose chief work it was to disabuse his early Nonconformist friends of their gross and misleading errors.

In 1856 Lord Granville brought in a Bill for the appointment of a Vice-President of the Council of Education, who should be the Minister responsible for the distribution of the

public grant to the existing schools in the kingdom. It was on the discussions thereupon arising that Lord John Russell, who, with many deficiencies as a statesman, was yet a man of boundless activity, first took up his position as an advanced educational reformer. The question was very hotly debated in Parliament, and men of opposite parties were hopelessly mixed in their votes and views. Thus, Sir John Pakington, an old-fashioned Tory, supported Lord John Russell as an educational reformer, while three such absolutely diverse statesmen as Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, and the present Marquis of Salisbury, were found in the same division lobby. In 1859, as already stated, Robert Lowe became Vice-President of the Council, and one may well imagine what the appointment of such a man meant as the virtual head of a department having the distribution of a vast public grant of money, for which there was such severe contention among the expectant recipients, while on the very subject of education there was such divergence of views among leading public men. In a work entitled the *History of the Elementary School Contest in England*, the author, Mr. Francis Adams, observes:—

The appointment of Mr. Lowe as Vice-President of the Council in 1859, as a member of the Ministry over which Lord Palmerston presided until his death, and the acceptance of an inspectorship by Mr. Fraser,¹ the present Bishop of Manchester, were guarantees, at any rate, for an intelligent investigation of the existing system. Their accession to office, marks, not so much a new era in national education as a revolution in the Government methods of management. In the many fierce conflicts which have raged round this question, there have been none more bitter than those which are associated with the name of Mr. Lowe. Of all our Ministers of Education he has left the deepest impress of individuality upon the system, in its official character, and provoked a hostility more unmeasured than any other politician. For four years he was the object of the most implacable and envenomed attacks from all persons who had the smallest interest in the details of the Government administration; including those who were anxious to extend and

¹ Dr. James Fraser, the late Bishop of Manchester, was Assistant Commissioner on Education, 1858-60.

reform the powers of the Department, and those who wished to abolish it altogether.

Mr. Adams, who has a remarkable knowledge of his subject, seems to deplore the fact that Lord Sherbrooke, whom he ranks altogether higher than any other Minister of Education, did not undertake the larger achievement of laying down the lines of a complete system. To begin with, this was no part of his business as Vice-President of the Council, and furthermore, Mr. Adams should see that, as a subordinate Minister (not even a member of the Cabinet), he had nothing whatever to do with the educational *policy* of the Government. His work was simply to make the system as he found it as thoroughgoing and efficient as possible. He had further to face the difficulty of an uncertain and fluctuating public grant, with a Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Gladstone, whose one aim was to cut down expenses and who was really hostile to any development of the educational policy on broad national lines. In making this assertion concerning Mr. Gladstone, it is only just to observe that Lowe himself, until Disraeli and Lord Derby made household suffrage the law of the land, was in no sense an advocate of a complete bureaucratic system of national education in an old country like England, where the Church and voluntary institutions did so much excellent work. On this question of public education he was much more statesmanlike than either his friends or his foes could be brought to see. Writing in the *Quarterly Review* (July 1867) after the passing of the Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill, Lowe himself made this pregnant observation: 'If we are to have, as we assuredly shall have, universal and compulsory education, the first effect of the change will be the destruction in great measure of our present system. The invaluable superintendence of the gentry and the clergy, the zeal of religious conviction, the harmony with the present state of society, the standard already reached, and which is in daily course of improvement, must all be sacrificed in

order to place the instruction of the poor in the hands of indifferent and incompetent local bodies, or of a central department which shall henceforth take charge of what used to be the work of free and spontaneous growth, the formation of English character and habits of thought.'

There is little enough, one would think, in these sentiments to alarm such robust natures as the late Lord Derby and the present Marquis of Salisbury ; but at the time that their author became Minister of Education there was a kind of vague fear that the Church and Constitution were about to be undermined. It was like a duel in the dark, or a game of blind-man's buff ; those who should have been partners set to work to belabour one another without remorse.

Probably no Minister ever worked harder than Robert Lowe over this educational problem. After six months' constant labour and thought he produced a scheme, the foundation of which was what is called the 'Revised Code' and the system of 'payment by results.' He stated to Parliament that there was no desire to interfere with the religious basis and the denominational character of the educational system ; but, inasmuch as he was responsible for the distribution of vast public subsidies on behalf of these denominational schools, he had decided that the capitation grant should be based on 'results.' As it was a matter of public *elementary* education, he instituted the famous test of the three R's. This historic notification has led to much elevated newspaper criticism, which repeats itself even to the present hour. Such able persons as Mr. Joseph Cowen of Newcastle and the Editor of the *St. James's Gazette* have recently referred to the narrowing and materialistic tendency of Lord Sherbrooke's educational policy. They seem altogether to forget that he in no sense promulgated an educational policy at all ; but simply devised a system whereby grants of public money could be distributed to the *elementary* schools of the kingdom on a just and equitable basis. One would think, to read an eloquent address

delivered the other day in Newcastle-on-Tyne by Mr. Cowen, that Lord Sherbrooke, who was one of the great scholars of England, considered reading, writing, and arithmetic to be the sum total of education.

So recently as 1882, Lord Sherbrooke, who had been gravely reconsidering the whole question of public education, wrote a remarkable letter in review of his past plan to Lord Lingen, who, as Secretary of the Education Department, had borne with him the heat and burden of the day, in which he puts the matter in the clearest light.

Lord Sherbrooke to Lord Lingen.

March, 17, 1882.

My dear Lingen,—Many thanks for your letter, in order to understand which I have read a speech of ninety pages which I made, and which was enough to swamp any question from its mere length.¹

As I understand the case, you and I viewed the three R's not only or primarily as the exact amount of instruction which ought to be given, but as an amount of knowledge which could be ascertained thoroughly by examination, and upon which we could safely base the Parliamentary grant. It was more a financial than a literary preference. Had there been any other branch of useful knowledge, the possession of which could have been ascertained with equal precision, there was nothing to prevent its admission. But there was not. The mistake was, I think, that these people content themselves with saying that other knowledge is useful without adverting to the fact that it is not so useful, and does not admit, like the three R's, of precise and accurate ascertainment.

One great merit of the plan, as it seems to me, was that it fixed a clear and definite limit; the mischief is that that limit is transgressed, and no other can supply its place.

In one sense the three R's stand alone as something which can be tested as foundation for a grant. Leave out that quality and they are undistinguishable from any other branch of useful or elegant knowledge.

¹ Speech of the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, M.P., on the 'Revised Code of the Regulations of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in the House of Commons.' February 13, 1862. (James Ridgway, 1862.)

I shall have to write or speak to Lord Spencer about the matter. . . . It seems to me to be the fallacy *de dicto quid ad dictum simpliciter*.

Very truly yours,
SHERBROOKE.

Lord Sherbrooke, who was rather careless in the matter of preserving copies of his own letters, possessed the foregoing, as Lord Lingen had returned him a copy, saying he did so in case one had not been kept, because it was impossible to 'ensure master-touches more than once.' It may therefore be taken as an authoritative explanation of the famous scheme which some thirty years ago convulsed the politicians, clergy, and schoolmasters of England.

The great grievance at the time was that the Revised Code substituted *examination* for what was called *inspection*. This charge, which was the more dangerous because it was so extremely vague and ill-defined, had no foundation whatever in fact. The Education Department under Robert Lowe instituted a system by which examination (in the three R's) was super-added to the old plan of inspection, which, indeed, could only be made effective by the test of examination. All the fine writing about materialism and mercenary or mechanical aims is beside the question, if we consider that the object was to devise a plan for testing the education in the established elementary schools of the kingdom with a view to distributing the public grant on an equitable basis. Lowe, therefore, it would seem as by a stroke of genius, hit upon the three R's. If any educational reformer of the present day can suggest a more certain, useful, and palpable test, he, and he alone, is entitled to criticise the Revised Code and payment by results of 1861.

Moreover, it is quite clear that Lowe did not, even by implication, make public education synonymous with the three R's; but he left other and 'special' subjects as they were called, to general inspection as distinguished from mere examination. The great point was this, that as the public

grants of money were intended to subsidise *elementary* education, these grants were restricted to the test of efficiency by examination in the three R's. Here, briefly, we have the Revised Code and payment by results.

Nothing could exceed the dismay and perturbation which the promulgation of the Ministerial scheme evoked in Parliament and throughout the country. Mr. Froude in his brilliant way declares that the anathemas which have pursued Henry VIII. arose in the first instance from his defiance of the 'vocal' class among his subjects—the clergy. Impartial history would seem to point out that the self-willed king gave these talking and scribbling members of the community a great deal to urge against his private life and public policy. Mr. Lowe, though an absolutely blameless potentate, desiring only to distribute the money of the nation to the best advantage, likewise gave great offence to his 'vocal' subjects. He set against himself and his policy the country clergy, the official inspectors of schools, and the uncertificated schoolmasters. Here, they exclaimed with one voice, is a dreadful person; a man who actually demands to know for what reason he hands over to us the money of the nation. The vested interests which had been gradually entrenching themselves for a quarter of a century took alarm, and raised the cry of invasion and confiscation.

Deputations became the order of the day. They trooped in from all parts of the country to see Lord Granville, who was Lord President of the Council. Lord Granville had a keen sense of humour, and at times found it hard to preserve the proper official dignity and deportment of a Lord President. One day he had just seated himself with one or two of his officials in solemn preparation for a coming onslaught in the form of a deputation with an educational grievance, when Lowe suddenly put his white head in at the door, exclaiming: '*Here they come, in number about five thousand!*'

Despite all stories to the contrary, Lowe himself, in dealing

with these deputations, was invariably courteous. If he gave offence, it was simply from his quickness in detecting the fallacies of a pretentious spokesman—some strutting authority or village Sir Oracle quite unaccustomed to contradiction. On one occasion a deputation very improperly pressed him after he had plainly informed them that he could not assist them or uphold their claim in the House. ‘All I can say is, gentlemen (he observed), you will be very *hotly* attacked in Parliament and very *coldly* defended.’ Lowe’s unrivalled mental alertness and readiness of repartee were a perpetual delight to Lord Granville, who was himself in a lighter vein a man of no little wit. He had a still greater admiration and respect for Lowe’s untiring capacity for work; and altogether, though the energetic Vice-President brought down upon this agreeable nobleman a great many fussy deputations, and a good deal of extra trouble, Lord Granville was very sincere in his appreciation of the years they worked together as the Parliamentary heads of the Council of Education. The late Richard Redgrave, R.A., so well known in connection with the founding of the South Kensington Museum, made several pleasant entries in his diary concerning Robert Lowe and Lord Granville.

August 5, 1859.—Our new masters—Lord Granville and Mr. Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke)—this day passed a minute authorising payments on results in science, corresponding to those in art. . . . Mr. Lowe differs greatly from our late sub-chief, Mr. Adderley. Mr. Lowe is very shrewd, sees the real point at once, and decides on principle, not on details.¹

Before Lowe had hit on his plan of an elementary educational test (the three R’s), the inspectors, working harmoniously with the managers and schoolmasters, had dealt in fine general phraseology, and so long as the Government were willing to pay the piper all went smoothly and well; but they strongly objected to a definite test. It has been said that the

¹ *Richard Redgrave, C.B., R.A. A Memoir.* By F. M. Redgrave, p. 218.

whole Department over which Mr. Lowe and Mr. Lingen presided was in a state of revolt, 'from the office boy to Mr. Matthew Arnold,' who was then an inspector of schools. The dissatisfied officials were able to button-hole members of Parliament, and inspire articles in the magazines and high-class journals. One does not like specially to single out Mr. Matthew Arnold, as many of the other paid servants of the Department were equally insubordinate; but from his literary genius, he was the most conspicuous. We should remember, however, that there were two Matthew Arnolds—the poet whom Lord Sherbrooke preferred to Tennyson, and the pedagogue, whom he thought much less of.

The trouble at last reached a crisis in reference to the reports of the inspectors, which it was said were 'edited' in the most ruthless fashion by the Department. It was upon this question that the present Marquis of Salisbury, then Lord Robert Cecil, moved (April 12th, 1864) his resolution: 'That, in the opinion of this House, the mutilation of the reports of her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, and the exclusion from them of statements and opinions adverse to the educational views entertained by the Committee of Council, while matter favourable to them is admitted, are variations of the understanding under which the appointment of the Inspectors was originally sanctioned by Parliament, and tend entirely to destroy the value of their reports.'

This was seconded by Mr. John Walter, proprietor of the *Times*, and supported by Mr. William Edward Forster, then the newly-elected member for Bradford, and afterwards famous as the author of the Education Act of 1870. It will thus be seen that it was not in the strict sense a party attack, though it was, of course, mainly supported by Disraeli and the Conservatives. Mr. Francis Adams, whose work is a storehouse of information on the political aspects of the education question, thus comments on the fact that this resolution of Lord Robert Cecil was carried by a small majority in a thin

House: 'The disappointed and angry faction of Tories and Denominationalists combined to make a personal attack on Mr. Lowe, in which they were joined by some professed Liberals. The subordinates of the Education Office were induced, in violation of discipline and trust, to communicate some official matters to the leaders of the Opposition. Mr. Lowe was weakly defended by his colleagues, and the Tories were allowed to snatch a division in which the resolution was carried by a majority of eight.'

This explanation, true enough in substance, is perhaps somewhat tinged by partisan bias. It is quite clear that we cannot throw the entire blame on the Tories—if blame there be—when the resolution, the passing of which led to Mr. Lowe's resignation, was seconded by his friend Mr. Walter, and supported by a rising young Radical, as Mr. W. E. Forster then was. There can be hardly any doubt that the aim of this resolution was not so much directed against Mr. Lowe as against the permanent head of the Education Department, Mr. Lingen. It was he, in fact, whom those outraged inspectors and terrified schoolmasters wished to attack; and it probably did not even occur to Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Walter that if their resolution were passed by the House of Commons, Robert Lowe would resign and demand a committee of inquiry.

It will generally be admitted that the *Saturday Review*, at this most brilliant period of its existence, was often able to speak on such subjects with more than ordinary journalistic authority. On this very question there is a remarkable article in that journal, under date April 16, 1864, in which the writer explicitly disclaims any intention on the part of the mover and supporters of the resolution of bringing about the Vice-President's resignation. On the point, he observes, of ministerial responsibility, Lord Granville was the culprit rather than Mr. Lowe, though no one would think of fastening any responsibility of the kind on that affable peer. But it is not

even upon Mr. Lowe, it is on the Department and its permanent head that the blame should rest. 'If rumour does not much belie him' (continues the *Saturday Reviewer*), 'Mr. Lingen is quite as powerful and a good deal more offensive. It is from Mr. Lingen that all the sharp, snubbing replies proceed, which have imprinted upon half the rural parishes in the country a deep conviction that the Education Department is their natural enemy, whom it is their first duty to elude, baffle, and disprove to the utmost of their power.'

If we may take this as in any sense the authoritative expression of the opponents of the Education Department, they were themselves clearly baffled by Robert Lowe's prompt action. He at once took upon himself the entire responsibility, resigned his office, and demanded a select committee. What, it may be asked, was the nature of these charges as to mutilating the reports of these inspectors, of which either he or Mr. Lingen was declared guilty, in the first instance by a majority of the House of Commons? So far as can be ascertained, there was one definite charge of harshness on the part of the Department, the summary dismissal of an inspector owing to some irregularity in the matter of his reports. This case was heard before Lord Granville as well as Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Morell's conduct was thought to be indefensible, whereupon Mr. Lingen wrote him a letter of dismissal which led to much subsequent comment. Inspectors of schools and Government officials must be made in some way amenable to discipline, and, if they receive the Queen's shilling, they must be content to perform the stipulated service. Mr. Lingen may have been a strict disciplinarian, but, if so, it was certainly a fault on the right side. Here was an office in a more or less chaotic condition, into which a Minister and his chief permanent official were working their hardest to infuse an orderly system. The Minister had devised a scheme—that of payment by results—which he expected the Department would faithfully carry out. Many of these independent gentlemen

disapproved of this scheme, and forthwith, instead of resigning their posts, set to work to thwart the Minister and defy the secretary by interviewing M.P.'s and writing newspaper articles. Any keen-sighted reader of the press of this period may detect the somewhat supercilious outpourings of Mr. Matthew Arnold, who, it will be remembered, was a brother-in-law of Mr. W. E. Forster, the young Liberal member for Bradford, who supported Lord Robert Cecil.

Whether the Revised Code and payment by results were a wise policy or not, it is at least plain that this state of insubordination in the Education Department was perfectly indefensible. At this distance of time, the question whether Mr. Lingen wisely curtailed or ruthlessly mutilated the reports of the inspectors is a matter of comparatively little moment. There can be little doubt that the voluminous reports of these officials were very severely 'edited.' The *Spectator*, which was by no means favourable to the Education Department, put this matter of 'tampering' with the inspectors' reports, in a nutshell. 'To exempt inspectors from condensation is simply to invest two or three dozen gentlemen who are not responsible to Parliament, who are as jealous as poets, and as fond of writing as Indian officials, with power to publish any number of essays at the expense of the State, and to indulge in controversies as bitter and as endless as those of theologians.' This is in no sense an exaggeration. One inspector sent in an elaborate thesis on the superior chastity secured by the confessional in elementary schools, and felt himself injured because it was not printed at the public cost. But suppose Mr. Lingen had printed it among the departmental papers. Imagine the heart-burning if a dozen of the other inspectors had been debarred from publishing replies proving the immorality of the confessional. Despite this instance, which is quoted as typical of the kind of extraneous literature which certain of these refractory officials sent in under the misnomer 'reports,' there was quite the

reverse of any bias against the Roman Catholic schools in the Department itself. This was specially pointed out when 'The Pope's brass band,' as the Irish members were then called, voted for Lord Robert Cecil's resolution. In 1860, in consequence of a report having been printed containing remarks on the comparative morality of Roman Catholic and Protestant countries, the attention of Mr. Lowe, who had been appointed Vice-President in the previous year, was called to the subject. The instructions by which the Inspectors' reports were regulated were then thoroughly reviewed.¹

The one aim of the Minister of the Department in framing these instructions was to keep the inspectors strictly to their business, which was to report on the schools brought under their inspection. Whenever these officials thenceforward wandered into theological or moral disquisitions intended to aggravate their credal opponents, instead of such essays being printed at the public cost, they were returned by the Department to their authors with the request that the extraneous and unnecessary matter should be expunged. If they declined to curtail their own disquisitions, the Department straightway did it for them.

The following letter, addressed to his eldest brother, shows how vigorously Lowe had set to work to put the educational machinery of the country into working order.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

Privy Council Office : April 9, 1863.

My dear Henry,—My Estimates are down for next Monday and were only printed on Tuesday, so I was obliged to stay at home to read them and get them up. It was rather a pity, as I had settled to go to Paris, and was engaged to dine with Thiers on Tuesday, Duchatel on Wednesday, Lord Cowley, Friday, and so on. —, you will easily believe, is a very bumptious though an active and honest inspector, and requires to be kept in order. It must be excruciating torture to a man of his conceit to be made to act the censor

¹ See Report of the Select Committee.

on his own productions, under the pain of having them suppressed altogether.

There is no explanation of my uniform except that it is the 2nd class Court Dress and cost 78*l*. Isn't that enough? Your Dividends are rather musty.

Always yours affectionately,
R. LOWE.

The *Times*, in an article published shortly after the select committee had entirely exonerated Lowe, dealt with this special grievance of the inspectors in a very clear, straightforward fashion.

What has been termed mutilation of inspectors' reports signifies only the course officially taken under Mr. Lowe's direction for the purpose of keeping the series of reports strictly to their object, and preventing them from becoming a channel for circulating, at the public cost, irrelevant, offensive, or mischievous dissertations. It seems peculiarly hard that a combination of Roman Catholics and Tories should have visited the performance of this important duty as a crime on the part of the late Vice-President, seeing that it was in the first instance undertaken by him as a means of protecting the Catholic population against being insulted by the publications of Episcopal propagandists.

It is, of course, quite impossible to say whether in every instance the curtailments and excisions in these reports were judicious or desirable. That is a matter on which persons in the relative positions of contributor and editor invariably differ. Lord Robert Cecil induced the House of Commons by eight votes to pronounce the 'mutilation' of these inspectors' reports to be unwarrantable. The select committee which Robert Lowe insisted on, and which investigated the whole matter with the most painstaking thoroughness, exonerated him as well as the Department from all blame. That select committee consisted of Lord Hotham, Sir Philip Egerton, the present Lord Monk-Bretton, and Messrs. Howard and Howes; while Lord Robert Cecil, the principal accuser, and the Lord Advocate, the late Lord Justice Clerk (Moncrief), also sat on the committee and examined witnesses, but without the power

of voting. As a natural consequence, after this decision of the select committee, there was no other course open to the House but to rescind its former vote, which was done without a division on July 26, 1864. But it could not undo the evil of its first hasty action, which drove from office the most zealous and capable Minister of Education the country had yet known.

At this important crisis in Lord Sherbrooke's life, he was treated to a great deal of gratuitous advice and to some sincere and friendly counsel. He had, however, made up his mind as soon as the House of Commons passed the vote of censure, to resign without delay; and having resigned, then to demand the select committee of inquiry. It was by far the boldest course, and, as often happens, it proved the safest. A weaker man would have shuffled off his responsibility on Lord Granville; a cowardly man would have thrown it all on Mr. Lingen and the Department; a timid, cautious man would have carefully consulted Lord Palmerston and his colleagues and been led by their advice to remain in misery on the Ministerial benches. It is not to be for a moment imagined that because Lowe, without any hesitation and in opposition to the advice of almost all his intimate political friends, took the bolder course, that he was callous or indifferent to his painful position. One who knew him well, and who had opportunities of seeing how the matter affected him, declares that he suffered torture until it was cleared up and he was completely exonerated by the tribunal that had condemned him.

The following letters, which came pouring in from all quarters, will show exactly what was thought of the matter at the time by his colleagues and personal friends.

Lord Granville to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

16 Bruton Street : April 17, 1864.

My dear Lowe,—I am still of opinion that logically you should have awaited the decision of the committee, but I appreciate the

scrupulous delicacy with which you regard a point affecting your personal honour. You refer in very kind words to our relations during the last five years. Those personal relations are now for a time broken. I shall miss every day the support I have received from your remarkable powers of mind, and the confidence I have reposed in your unswerving zeal for the advantage of the public service. I shall miss still more the opportunity of daily intercourse with one for whom feelings of regard have gradually been strengthened into those of strong attachment. I am sure you will join with me in preventing such intercourse being sensibly diminished. I will call on you between twelve and one to-morrow in Lowndes Square if I do not hear from you to the contrary.

Yours sincerely,
GRANVILLE.

There is no mistaking the ring of true friendship in these words. The following letter, from a very different man, has a pathos of its own when one reflects how short a time intervened before he met with his own irretrievable downfall.

Lord Westbury to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

Sunday morning.

My dear Lowe,—I must earnestly entreat you to listen to the advice of the Cabinet, and the anxious remonstrances of all your personal friends who join in deprecating the step you stated yesterday your resolution of taking.

You ought not to advise yourself in such a matter. You ought to be guided by those who are attached to you, and whose judgment you are bound, in common reason, to respect.

I *do not at all think* that the resolution or conduct of the House of Commons has involved that imputation on you which you suppose. It is a *morbid interpretation* of the matter to infer that it has. But if it be so, your conduct in resigning office will stamp upon you this stigma (in the mind of your enemies) indelibly.

If the House of Commons has cast this imputation on you, and you, by your conduct, say, 'I am, therefore, unfit for my office,' you are, by this submission, equally unfit for your seat in the House, and there can be no end to the consequences of your thus submitting to such a grossly unfounded imputation.

In such circumstances, no human being would induce me to do anything but most loudly and perseveringly demand that the falsehood of the imputation, whatever it be, should be removed by the same body that made it.

But I would not suggest, or endure to have it suggested, that there was any such imputation.

Your enemy said, 'I will give the proof if challenged.' If you run away and do not challenge him to this proof, because the House of Commons accepted the accusation without proof, the consequence is inevitable. The record will be, he was charged with want of veracity, and, without disproving the accusation, he resigned his office, and the Government and he both admitted the charge, the one by making and the other by accepting the resignation. You could not remain in the House of Commons.

But consider that it is your duty to your Department to remain until it is vindicated.

You cannot resign without injury to the office. There must be inquiry for the office' sake, and if that inquiry will afford, as it must, full room for your vindication, will anybody believe that you would have resigned with the inquiry open to you if you could have vindicated yourself from the reproach?

I write in a hurry what occurs to me and the arguments may not be the best, but I am sure of this, *that it is your duty to be guided by the Cabinet and your personal friends*, and that the course you advise yourself to take is simply suicidal.

I have entreated Palmerston, and Granville, and Delane, and Cardwell to press upon you their advice and persuasion to-day, but I could not rest without sending you my own urgent entreaty.

Yours sincerely,
WESTBURY.

Lord Palmerston did not wait for any entreaty on the part of his Lord Chancellor, for he had already despatched the following brief note:—

93 Piccadilly : 16 April, 1864.

My dear Lowe,—I should like much to have some conversation with you to-morrow (Sunday). Could you come to me here about 2 o'clock?

Yours sincerely,
PALMERSTON.

The interview duly took place, but nothing could shake Lowe's resolution to resign forthwith, and then demand from the House of Commons a committee of inquiry.

Lord Westbury had, indeed, been as good as his word in urging upon Lowe's immediate friends, in and out of the

Cabinet, to write and support his own elaborate arguments against the resignation.

J. T. Delane to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

Reform Club : Sunday morning.

My dear Lowe,—As soon as I got up the stairs at Cambridge House last night, I was collared by Bethell, Cardwell, Villiers, &c., who dragged me into a small room where they attacked me about you. I could not make so good a defence as I might have done, for their point of view was the same that had moved me when I last wrote to you, that you gave the enemy an advantage by resigning, that you were bound by your duty to your Department and your colleagues as well as to yourself to repel the charge, and refuse to yield your place before a committee was appointed. Of course, such reply as can be made is obvious and I offered it; but you will have this attack to undergo to-day. A totally distinct movement is being made from an opposite quarter. Kinglake has been to Osborne, asking his assistance in reversing the resolution, and Osborne has promised to second such a proposal if Kinglake will move it. In fact, the plot thickens, and you were never so important as now. Palmerston afterwards spoke to me in the same sense, and Lady Palmerston said she had asked you to come; they say that your honour is concerned not in resigning, but in awaiting the result of the committee, and then you can resign or not, as you please. I can't see this, but I leave it for your opinion. I have never seen such eagerness about a matter before, but such as my opinion is, and nobody can think less of it than I do, it is not shaken. Can you manage to see Osborne? He will be at this place all day to-morrow, and is worth hearing. He declares that he will take no place under this Government.

Yours truly,

J. T. DELANE.

Fortescue has resigned his Under-secretaryship.

Mr. (afterwards Lord) Cardwell to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

Thursday morning.

My dear Lowe,—I don't think I can add anything to the arguments I urged yesterday; but, before it is too late, let me once more say how strongly I feel that the step will be very injurious to you.

In the persuasions of so many members of the Government and in the warm expressions of personal kindness and of political good will which the prospect of separation has elicited, I sincerely hope you may find sufficient reason to justify you in rescinding your resolution.

I own I feel the strongest personal anxiety on the subject ; but I think I see it in a clear light as for your own good, and it is on this ground alone I now desire to press it on you.

Most truly yours,
EDWARD CARDWELL.

J. T. Delane to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

Wednesday.

My dear Lowe,—There can be no discredit in yielding to such importunity as has been brought to bear upon you, and the letters of Wood and Granville are so many material guarantees that you shall not be neglected hereafter. The point is always the same, though varied according to the ingenuity of the advocate. . . . Wood's letter I look on as a wonderful production *from him*; and remember that he and Granville and Gladstone will probably be the makers of the new Liberal Cabinet.

I have one other opinion to add. At Rothschild's I met Osborne who took me aside at once and entreated me to use any influence I might have with you against a step which he said would certainly be misrepresented and could never be retrieved.

I then yielded, and I hope you will do the same, content with having elicited an amount of good feeling from among your colleagues which I believe no other man could, and much of which you would forfeit by resigning.

I don't think you *need* do anything. Palmerston said he 'hoped not to hear from you': but as a matter of taste I should think it better to call and say that you had taken the advice of your friends and yielded to their importunity.

And now I have a better chance of a good sleep than I have had since Monday.

Ever yours,
JOHN T. DELANE.

Not even this earnest appeal could move Robert Lowe from his fixed resolve. The following letter from his former chief at the Board of Control is not without political significance.

Sir Charles Wood (Lord Halifax) to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

India Office : Monday morning.

Dear Lowe,—I am indeed very sorry to hear what I heard last night—that you had finally resigned.

I do not think, as I think you would have seen was the general opinion of the Cabinet, that it was necessary for you to do so.

We are not strong in the House of Commons on educational matters. We could not rescind the vote—except, perhaps, after inquiry. But if the committee is appointed, it practically suspends it; for it is an admission on the part of the House that it doubts whether the alleged grounds on which it voted are true. That they were not so, will, I take it for granted, appear in the committee. Surely, then, you ought to have done nothing before the committee reported! Of course, in this line of reasoning, I *assume* that they voted deliberately and honestly, but that is most undoubtedly only an assumption. But you cannot expect such a body as the House of Commons to eat its words except upon cause shown, and cause could only be shown in a committee.

I am therefore very sorry, for we lose a valuable and pleasant colleague, unnecessarily, as I think. It was right for Stansfeld to go, not for you. I am very sorry indeed to lose you for a dozen good reasons; but for none more than that you were run at for having accomplished a good work and valuable reform.

I am afraid of that body of inspectors and schoolmasters getting the upper hand of the Government, and it requires a firm hand to keep them in their proper place.

It is not easy to find a man, with knowledge and firmness combined, who can do this.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

C. Wood.

It is suggestive to contrast with these letters of political colleagues and men in the thick of the conflict, the following from the Marquis of Lansdowne and Grote the historian, who far more accurately gauged the situation, and had a much truer sense of what Robert Lowe felt was due to his own personal honour.

Lord Lansdowne to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe.

Bowood: April 20, 1864.

Dear Lowe,—I am very glad to have heard from you *directly* on the subject of your late campaign, and to know from yourself what your feelings were—though I think I should have guessed pretty accurately. If it is any satisfaction to you to know it, I think that you have pursued a wise and dignified course, and one which places you in a more satisfactory position than any other would have done.

No one who *knows* you would think that you would cling to office, but there are many who do not (in the sense in which I use the

word), and I look upon it as an advantage to a public man to have the fact made patent.

Therefore I see nothing to regret beyond the loss of your services to the public, a loss which I am sure will be materially felt.

Yours sincerely,

LANSDOWNE.

Lady L. desires to be most kindly remembered to you, and wishes me to tell you that she thinks you were quite right.

George Grote to the Right Hon. R. Lowe.

Savile Row: Tuesday afternoon.

Dear Mr. Lowe,—I am mortified to the last degree to have missed you this morning by my duties at the British Museum.

Mrs. Grote has told me what you said to her to-day, and I rejoice to learn that your own feelings were satisfied with that which took place in the House last night. I myself read the description in the *Times* with the strongest interest, and with emotions as well of sympathy for you as of indignation against others, not merely opponents but also lukewarm supporters. I thought your statement of the case was as good as could be; and in a tone of full dignity, without wrath or invective. The more I think upon it, the more I am of opinion that the event, in spite of accompanying mortification, has terminated favourably for your political prospects.

The leading article in the *Times* to-day must have been written, I presume, under the inspiration of Walter!

With esteem and friendship unabated, and with sympathy much intensified by the recent injustice,

I remain,

Dear Mr. Lowe,

Yours very faithfully,

GEORGE GROTE.

Do not trouble yourself to answer this. If I had known when and where to find you, I should have called in person to give a warmer expression of sympathy *vivâ voce*.

Nothing can well be more characteristic than the letter which Robert Lowe wrote to his brother announcing that the select committee had exonerated him from all blame. He had, indeed, fought a lone hand, but the result completely justified him in the independent course he had adopted. The letter is as follows.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

34 Lowndes Square: April 20, 1864.

My dear Henry,—They have run into me at last, but upon the whole I have no great reason to be unhappy. *Relictis impedimentis salvo honore* is my present motto.

I made a success with my explanation in the House and melted the hearts even of the Tories. It was an ugly business though and one which rarely happens. A man seldom gets into a scrape without having done what he is charged with or something else very like it. But in this case, after the most careful review of my conduct, I seem to have been absolutely blameless. I have not had too much support from the Government, but part on perfectly good terms with them. When the thing first came upon me I said, 'Out of this nettle danger we pluck the flower safety'—and so I hope it has proved.

Give my love to Louisa, and believe me,

Your affectionate,

R. LOWE.

There was one far-off friend at the Antipodes who had watched the issues of the battle with grave anxiety. By the first mail boat that could have brought it, Robert Lowe received the following letter—also eminently characteristic of its writer—from William Sharpe Macleay, who was then fast nearing the grave.

W. S. Macleay to the Right Hon. R. Lowe, M.P.

Elizabeth Bay: 21 September, 1864.

My dear Lowe,—I congratulate you and Mrs. Lowe from the very bottom of my heart on the very satisfactory way in which the affair in the House of Commons has terminated. It is not every day that a vote of this kind is rescinded, and if we consider the usual tenacity of that assembly, and that the rescission of this vote is the result of deliberate inquiry, it is far more honourable to you than if this vote, now rescinded, had never been passed.

I trust that Mrs. Lowe is now quite satisfied. I am only sorry to learn that on account of her health she and you were obliged to go to Germany—a residence in which country, however temporary, being according to accounts just received anything but agreeable for English people. . . . As to my health, it remains *in statu quo*; although I think that I am getting on the whole weaker. At times I am quite prostrated, and at times I am again more lively.

April 20 / 64
34 Dowdes Square

My dear Henry

They have run into
me at last but upon the
whole I have no great
Reason to be unhappy -
Relictis impedimentis
sabvo honore is my present
Motto - I made a success with
my explanation in the House
and melted the hearts even of
the Doves - It was an

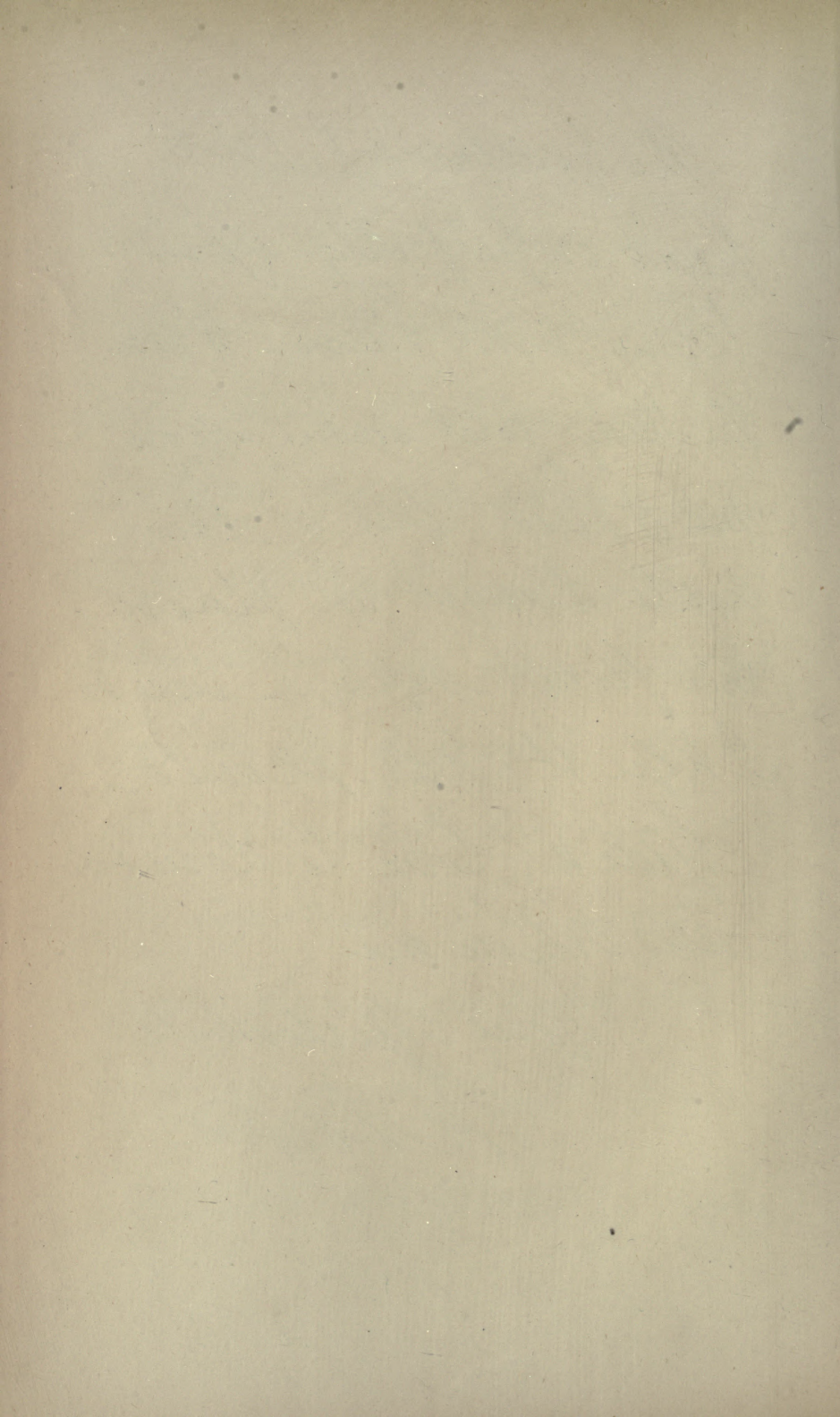
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and one which rarely
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without having done what
he is charged with or
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my conduct I am to
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The Government but
part on perfectly good
terms with them. When
the thing first came upon
me I said "Out of this
little danger we pluck
this flower safety" - and so
I hope it has proved.

Give my love to Louisa
and believe me

Your affectionate

M. Louisa



I never was what you would call a decided beauty ; but if you were to see me now, you would not know the ugly, lanky, thin, scraggy, toothless individual who is now writing to assure you that the immaterial part of him remains still the same, and that it has no friends on earth to which it is more attached than to you and your sensible, kind lady. So I subscribe myself ever

Your most affectionate friend,

W. S. MACLEAY.

Although Robert Lowe had vindicated himself against misrepresentation by reversing the vote of the House of Commons, he did not resume the post of Vice-President of the Council of Education. He was succeeded by his friend, Mr. Bruce, now Lord Aberdare ; but by his bold and resolute action he had saved the Department, and Mr. Lingen, despite everything, remained at its head.

It is hardly necessary to add that Lord Sherbrooke never bore any ill-will towards those who, by their support of Lord Robert Cecil's resolution, might have marred his career. A few years later we find him fighting side by side with Lord Cranborne against the Radical Reform Bill of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli. With regard to William Edward Forster, when in the course of time that serious-minded statesman had himself to solve, under other conditions, the perplexing problem of national education, he had not to look in vain for support and sympathy to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CLOSE OF AN EPOCH

Death of Palmerston—William Macleay's Death—Correspondence with Sydney
 —Defence of Canada—Lowe's Estimate of Palmerston—The Cattle Plague
 —Mill and Bright—The Landed Gentry and the Urban Democracy.

IN 1865 occurred two events which, although hardly unexpected, were in their different ways and degrees a source of sorrow to Robert Lowe. These were the death of his much valued Australian friend, William Sharpe Macleay, and that of his great political chief, Lord Palmerston.¹ Lowe had kept up an intermittent correspondence with Macleay ever since he left Sydney, but latterly it had become painfully evident to him that the quaint old philosopher of Elizabeth Bay was fast declining. He had, indeed, received warning from others that the death of his old friend was impending, and with that apprehension distinctly on his mind, he inaugurated the correspondence with Mrs. Billyard of Sydney, to which reference has been made in a previous chapter.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : January 23, 1865.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—I have received by this mail a letter from William Macleay in which he promises to write to me again, whatever happens ; but I much doubt from his letter, as well as from information from Salting, whether he will be able to keep his word. I must, I fear, make up my mind to the loss of our dear old friend.

¹ Sir George Cornwall Lewis died in office as War Secretary, April 13, 1863, aged 57 ; his loss was deeply felt by Lord Sherbrooke. Richard Cobden died April 2, 1865, aged 60. Sir James Graham and Sidney Herbert had passed away in 1861.

I had hoped that with his strong constitution and the longevity of his family, he might yet have lasted many years, but this I fear is not to be. I cannot, however, resign myself, at least without an effort, to break off all communication with a country in which I have spent some of the best years of my life, and to which I owe, at any rate, a good start here. I can hardly expect Billyard, busy as he is, to be at the trouble of supplying this want; and to say truth, anyone who wants such information will do more wisely to apply for it to a lady than a gentleman. Will you then, for old friendship's sake, undertake the task of being my correspondent, and keeping me *au fait* of such things in Australia as an old colonist may reasonably wish to know? I will endeavour to repay you in kind. Pray grant my request and confer a great obligation on

Your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOWE.

William Sharpe Macleay died in Tasmania on January 26, three days after this letter was written.

Released from office, Robert Lowe took a very active part in the great debates of the year 1865; his most memorable speech—that on Mr. Baines's Reform Bill—will be alluded to in a subsequent chapter. But on the subject of the defence of Canada, raised by Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald on March 13, 1865, on the report of Colonel (afterwards Sir William) Jervois, Lowe made admittedly one of the weightiest and most influential speeches of the Session. The Civil War in America was still furiously raging, and an ill feeling towards England was rapidly growing in the Northern States, which it was thought portended evil for Canada. Rising after Disraeli, who also spoke with most admirable effect from his own standpoint, Lowe plainly showed the House and the country that he had not gone to America with Captain Galton and learnt nothing. His chief argument was that a small British force such as we were able to keep in Canada was an incentive rather than a deterrent to an American invasion. 'In my opinion' (he said), 'nothing would be so strong an incentive in America to war with this country as the notion that they could catch a small English army and lead it away in triumph.'

Never mind if they were thirty to one ; it would be all the same. The popularity which such a capture would confer upon the successful general or the President of the period would be irresistible.' There is no doubt that this forcible argument had no little effect on the mind of Lord Palmerston, who knew perfectly well that in the case of a serious war even the small force which we kept in Canada might have to be recalled. The speech had the further distinction, rare indeed, as far as Lowe's were concerned, of arousing the warm admiration of John Bright. The following friendly letter to Bernal Osborne lightly touches on the American question and the Westbury *esclandre* :—

Robert Lowe to Bernal Osborne.

34 Lowndes Square : April 5, 1865.

My dear Osborne,—I am very much obliged for your kind invitation to Ireland, which I should have been very glad to accept had I not already laid out my time ; to wit, next week in Paris, and the week after to Dangstein, where you had better join us, I think. You don't say anything about two things of which I should like to know something. The first is your health, of which I heard but a poor account, gout and erysipelas being the ingredients specified, the other as to your seat. They say that you don't try Liskeard again, and are going in for Waterford County. We have had rather a lively time since we met in the way of dinners and parties. The season, so far as London residents are concerned, began in February and has been kept up with much spirit. Parliament, as you say, has been very dull. I have done what little I could to keep them alive, but, as you truly say, the 'Who's afraid?' and 'Come on' policy triumphed. Pam avowed in private the other day that all this tall talk was to keep the Yankees quiet. It is really intolerable to think that we may have Denmark over again in Canada. I think Bethell will have to go. He says people now spell embezzlement, embethelment.

Always yours,
R. LOWE.

In July 1865 came the general election in England, which resulted in an overwhelming majority for Lord Palmerston. Here and there seats were won and lost on reform or radical

grounds ; thus, Mill was returned for Westminster at the head of the poll, and Mr. Gladstone, whose Conservatism was now a thing of the past, was driven from Oxford to South Lancashire. But, in the main, the victory at the polls was purely Palmerstonian, and, so far as it had any bearing on domestic legislation, it implied that the subject of Parliamentary Reform should be shelved altogether.

Still, before and during the election there was a great deal of agitation on behalf of Parliamentary Reform. On this question Lowe had already taken his stand in the House, particularly in the great debate on Mr. Baines's Borough Franchise Bill. Just before the general election, in a short letter to the Rev. Canon Melville, he explained his position with remarkable conciseness.

Robert Lowe to Canon Melville.

34 Lowndes Square: May 27, 1865.

My dear Melville,—It is of no use putting my hand to the plough and looking back. I have adopted the inductive method for what seemed to me good reasons. The first principle is to start unprejudiced, and abandon yourself wholly to the teaching of experience. The end being good government (in which, of course, I include stable government), before I give my assent to the admission of fresh classes I must be satisfied (not on *à priori*, but on experimental, grounds) that their admission will make the government better or more stable. I am not at present convinced of this, and till I am, I shall not say a word in favour of it. The truth is, this change is desired, not for any good it will do, but to help people to get out of their pledges—see they to that!

Always yours very truly,

R. LOWE.

For some years the position of Lord Palmerston had been almost as truly national as that of Pitt. By the ascendancy of his personal popularity he had practically dissolved our party system. We now know that from 1860 to 1865 Lord Derby, the leader of the Conservatives, simply assisted Palmerston to uphold our honour abroad regardless of differences as

to domestic legislation. In those frank communications with which Lord Derby used to favour Lord Malmesbury, in which sport and politics so oddly commingle, there is a passage which all later chroniclers have seized upon as the key to these last five years of the Palmerston *régime*.

I think (he writes) that in your communications with Palmerston you cannot be too explicit. He is a gentleman, and will know that you and I are dealing with him *de bonne foi*, and will not suspect a 'dodge' if we make any exception to our promise of support. I should, however, be quite ready to assure him that, though we might in debate object to some of the 'sayings and doings' of the Foreign Office (and chiefly the *sayings* or rather *writings*), we would not countenance any movement on the subject of foreign policy calculated to defeat the Government, unless it were on the impossible supposition that they should desire us to take an active part in an attack by Sardinia and France on Venetia. I cannot believe that the Government would be so mad as to sanction such a policy; but an exception made in such a case from our promise of support will rather serve to strengthen than to shake a belief in the sincerity of our general profession.

This passage occurred in the letter dated December 26, 1860; and from that date until his death it may be said that Lord Palmerston's political enemies were chiefly those of his own household.

Without going into the general history of the period more than is absolutely necessary, it may be pointed out that Lord Derby had at this time not only absolute sway over his own party, which was essential to the carrying out of such an unauthorised undertaking with his political opponents, but by his own magnanimous and truly princely conduct in a non-political sphere—that of the cotton-famine in Lancashire—had secured for himself a position only second to Palmerston's own in public esteem. In the admirable monograph by Mr. George Saintsbury, a section is devoted (and very properly) to Lord Derby's action in regard to this national calamity, which should be read by those who may marvel at his achievement of 'governing England *en société anonyme* with Lord Palmer-

ston.'¹ It is against all our knowledge of political human nature to suppose that the placemen, or even the rank and file, of the Conservative party approved of this policy of effacing themselves for the sake of Lord Palmerston and the good of their country; but Lord Derby had only to threaten to resign his leadership and all murmuring and disquietude at once ceased. It was, indeed, from a party point of view, as the general election of 1865 showed, a policy of Conservative self-effacement; but, for this very reason, the great Liberal majority of 1865 was in reality a Palmerstonian and not a mere party triumph.

This unacknowledged alliance was merely between the leaders; the two parties might at any moment renew the conflict, and would inevitably do so on the death of Palmerston. The following letter, written by Robert Lowe to his Tory brother, the Squire of Oxton, refers to this general election, and has some characteristic touches:

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

Sherbrooke: July 26, 1865.

My dear Henry,—You are very Delphic in your revelations. Why can't you tell me who is to succeed Barrow? If you can do anything as regards my reversionary views on the Northern Division I hope you will. Denison is sure, I think, of being elected by the new Parliament.² I am much pleased with the elections; indeed, well I may be, for they are quite in my sense. The party gain has been to the Liberals. It could hardly have been otherwise after Lord Derby's escapade in the House of Lords on the Oaths Bill; besides, he has run from his own position just as the country had come round to it. What I said six years ago has exactly come to pass. The Liberals have so managed matters that the country is Conservative, and the Tories have so managed matters that the country, although Conservative, would rather be governed by Whigs than by Tories. If I come to you at all it will be the end of August, but my movements are so uncertain on account of my wife's health that I can settle nothing beforehand. You had better come and see me. I don't think Derby will come in, and if he does he won't go

¹ *The Earl of Derby.* George Saintsbury (Sampson Low).

² As Speaker.

at the Church. Charles Wood is very ill. If you Tories had stuck to your principles, what a grand position you would have been in now. It is the Nemesis that always follows rogues.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

Lord Palmerston had long passed the Psalmist's allotted span, and hardly were the elections over when he expired at Brockett Hall, October 18, 1865.

His death marks the close of the aristocratic epoch in English parliamentary history and the birth of the new democratic era.

In a letter to Mrs. Billyard, written the day before the old Prime Minister passed away, Robert Lowe observed:— 'Lord Palmerston is very ill,—indeed, dangerously so; last Monday night he was not expected to live. So that we are on the eve of stirring events. There is some news to tell the Governor¹ the next ride you take with him; I am glad he has laid my speech to heart, he and I used to be very good friends.'

After his retirement from the Education Department, Lowe did not again serve under his old chief; but their personal relations to the end were increasingly cordial and appreciative. Writing again to Mrs. Billyard a year after Palmerston's death, he spoke of his party being 'like an arch with the key-stone taken out of it.' In the same letter, he gave his correspondent a brief account of the funeral at Westminster Abbey, and, in a sentence or two, summed up Lord Palmerston as a statesman in a manner which will, at this lapse of time, be recognised as historically true.

'I was at Lord Palmerston's funeral. It was rather tedious till the end, when there came a very heavy storm, which darkened all the Abbey and had a most solemn effect.

'I think he was more admired by the middle and lower

¹ Sir John Young, afterwards Lord Lisgar, whom Sir Henry Parkes (*Fifty Years of Australian History*) describes as 'one of the very best governors who ever appeared in Australia.'

classes than by the upper classes, and that he will leave behind him a renown by no means equal to his reputation during life. He has outlived the foreign policy which made his fame, and has left his party without tradition, chart or compass, to drift on a stormy sea on which their only landmark was his personal popularity. We may anticipate stormy times, and I confess I am glad of it; poor Macleay used to say I was always fond of hot water, and lately it has not only been cold, but stagnant.'

This was Lord Sherbrooke's opinion of Palmerston the statesman; what he thought of Palmerston the man must also be given in his own words. Speaking at Romsey on July 22, 1876, Lord Sherbrooke paid this tribute to the great personal qualities of his former chief:—

Greatly as we all admired Lord Palmerston's intellectual power, there was one thing in him that I admired even more—his inexhaustible and indomitable industry and perseverance in the discharge of his duties. At eighty years of age Lord Palmerston was by far the most regular attendant in the House of Commons of any of his Ministry. He came at 4 P.M., and for four nights of every week he stayed, if necessary, till 2, never stirring from his place except, perhaps, for the purpose of taking a cup of tea. There he was, always accessible to everybody, always courteous to everybody, friend or opponent; no reverse, no taunt, none of those accidents to which public life is subject, not the weight of years, not the laborious exertions which he felt called upon to make, ever ruffled his temper or disturbed his good humour, nor did he even seem to think it wonderful that at his age he should be able to undergo these labours. I say, then, that he was not only a great political leader, but a great Englishman. When he undertook a duty, he did it thoroughly, he never spared himself. He, who had the best society in Europe at his command, left it all when work was to be done.

These two portraits are in no sense contradictory, but are complementary of each other. Lord Sherbrooke, as he says, did not consider Palmerston a great statesman in the sense of a man whose political work would endure to future time, and mould or change the history of his country to wise and beneficent ends; but, on the other hand, he regarded him, as

he said, not only as 'a great political leader, but as a great Englishman.'

Before passing on to the stormy political scenes which ushered in the democratic era after Palmerston's death, it may be as well to glance at the activity shown by Lowe as a member of the Cattle Plague Commission (October 1865). The rinderpest, at this time, had assumed the proportions of a fast-spreading plague, which threatened to cripple the agricultural interest and seriously affect the comfort and well-being of the general public. Meetings had been held even in London for the establishment of a National Society for the Prevention of the Cattle Plague. But though English folk apparently think otherwise, there is no particular virtue at such a crisis in public meetings. The Government, however, promptly appointed a Royal Commission, consisting of the following prominent public men and eminent specialists: Earl Spencer (Chairman); Viscount Cranborne; the Right Hon. Robert Lowe; Dr. Lyon Playfair; Dr. Richard Quain; Dr. Bence Jones; Dr. E. A. Parkes; Mr. Clare Sewell Read; Mr. J. R. M'Clean; Mr. Thomas Wormald; Mr. Robert Ceely, and Professor Spooner. The Secretary was Mr. Mountague Bernard, a most distinguished Oxford scholar, and a jurist of European reputation.

The question of the cattle plague was one in which Lowe's two most regular correspondents of this period, his brother and Mrs. Billyard, both took a keen interest; the one as an English landowner, and the other as a resident of a pastoral country. His brother would seem to have been bestirring himself on the subject of limited liability.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

2 Victoria Street: 16 October, 1865.

My dear Henry,—You need not be unhappy about the payment for a joint-stock company. It is not more than 5*l.*, little enough for the privilege of limited liability—which, before my Act, could only be obtained by a private Act or a Royal Charter. I can't help thinking

that people have not given these insurance companies all the consideration they deserve. The losses, according to the evidence before us, will be enormous, and I don't know what data they have for their calculations. My opinion is that the disease, unless very energetic measures be taken, will go everywhere and destroy much more than half the cattle of the country; besides, such societies have a tendency to kill diligence and encourage what the agricultural mind is already so prone to—a foolish and apathetic security. I don't understand what good my coming to the infirmary will do. I am very much occupied and must not leave unless there be a good reason for it. As far as the county is concerned, I fancy that it is quite hopeless, as I think your son-in-law has a view on it himself. If there is any real good to be done, I will come. It is impossible that mutual assurance societies can be allowed to exist except in compliance with the existing law—even for their own sakes. It would lead to endless trouble and litigation. You should talk to your lawyer about it, and I am sure he will tell you the same thing. I think the end of it will be that Parliament will have to be called together. Write to me at High Clere.

Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

His next letter to Mrs. Billyard was written on the following day, and shows how profoundly her correspondence had revived the recollections of his Australian life.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

attle Plague Commission, 2 Victoria Street :
October 17, 1865.

Dear Mrs. Billyard,—Your letters produce an indescribable effect upon me. My reminiscences of Australia are something like those of the Prince in the Fairy Tale who dipped his head into the bucket, and seemed to have lived seven years before he took it out again. It is as if I had lived seven years of my life in Sirius, the Dog Star, or somewhere equally remote, and had, after fifteen years' silence, opened a communication with some native of that remote locality. I am much interested in your account of poor old Nelson Bay. You do not tell me anything of the house, though, if matters are not wholly changed, you could not reach the shore without passing it. I wonder what the valley is like, and whether it has recovered the great flood of fourteen years ago. I cannot help a sort of longing to go back, though I know how absurd it is. I am very busy investigating the Rinderpest. I think the result will be that Parliament will have to be called together next month, for the case is a

very bad one, and we are likely, if no efficient remedies are taken, to lose many millions of cattle by this dreadful scourge. It is a case that must go home to every true Australian heart.

On October 31 the Commissioners made their report. This subject of the rinderpest was one in which Lord Sherbrooke, with his newly awakened zeal for sanitary reform, took the most lively interest. The following paragraph in the report, from its thoroughgoing nature, attracted universal attention at the time :—

Against a disease which is highly contagious, undiscoverable at a certain stage, and too widely diffused for an army of inspectors to cope with it, there is clearly but one remedy which would be certainly and absolutely effectual. The remedy is to prohibit everywhere for a limited time, any movement of cattle from one place to another. Enforce this, and within a time, which cannot be very long, the disease is at an end. It must stand still, and it must starve for want of nutriment. This great sacrifice would certainly eradicate the evil ; we cannot say so of any sacrifice less than this.

Writing on the subject to his Sydney correspondent, Lowe remarked : ‘I have been very busy about this cattle plague, which has established itself here, and which puts me in mind of our old debates about catarrh in sheep, and other disorders with less innocent names. I am, as usual, greatly abused for prescribing a remedy which nobody will take, and whose only recommendation is that it is efficient.’

In the following letter to his brother he deals also with what he regarded as a plague that had broken out in the body politic, and which he thought as direful to human society as the rinderpest was to the cattle. Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone had stepped into Lord Palmerston’s place, and by means of the huge majority obtained by the personal popularity of the latter, were intent on carrying their Reform Bill. It is needless to say that Lowe had not been asked to join the Russell-Gladstone Government, and still more needless to add that he would have refused even a seat in the Cabinet, had

it been offered to him on the understanding that he would support what he called the degradation of the suffrage.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : November 20, 1865.

My dear Henry,—Many thanks for your game. I have to thank you for the princely gift of a hare, eight partridges, four grouse, and a snipe. I am glad you like the Report, with which I had, as you may see, a good deal to do. I never supposed it would be acted on at once—indeed, the unanimity with which it has been condemned by the Press, without waiting to see the evidence and without the least knowledge of the case, is a proof how little public opinion is ripe for a really efficient treatment. Perhaps after a few months people will begin to change their minds. I think you must see from the Report that insurance societies will not do. If the disease does not come at all, the money will be thrown away; if it does, the insurance company will be ruined. There are no data that you can put into the hands of an actuary on which to calculate the loss. I strongly advise you to have nothing to do with such a society. The only thing to be done is to reduce rent in case of heavy loss, and that if the thing is to have its own way, you may fairly calculate upon, and should promise accordingly. Our present idea is to go into Notts immediately after Christmas. Shall you be at home at that time? We are going on 27th to see Sheridan at Frampton, Dorset. The Government is in a very poor way. If it had leaders in whom anybody had confidence, it might be strengthened, but no new elements can give people confidence in John or Gladstone. They are going with their eyes open straight over the precipice, without the excuse of a broken rope. They seem inclined to put new men in the subordinate offices, but that won't help them a bit, for Cicero would be of no use if he were not allowed to speak. They are embarrassed by their own success in the elections, for it naturally seems impossible to let a party go out with a clear majority. They must dispose of that first, and that, I think, they will find no difficulty in doing.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

This allusion to the unanimous condemnation of the press is not without suggestiveness; as after a short time two of the most influential journals pronounced a decidedly favourable verdict on the labours of the Commissioners. Lord Sherbrooke had always an instinctive respect for the opinion

of scientific experts ; and one of the reasons why he made so valuable a member of a select committee or a royal commission, was that his mind was ever open to fresh sources of information and attentive to the verdict of specialists. He always declared that Sir Richard Quain rendered the greatest public service by his work as one of the Cattle Plague Commissioners in 1865. Sir Richard's connection with the Commission was purely fortuitous. As he was starting off for a much-needed holiday, he met his great friend Delane, who casually mentioned the outbreak of the rinderpest, predicting that if the Government did not take immediate steps to stamp it out, there would not be a sound head of cattle left in England. Dr. Quain was so much impressed that he at once decided to forego his holiday, and devote the time to the cattle plague. His surprise was therefore great when the *Times* led the press chorus of denunciation with which the labours of the Commission were at first assailed. Naturally, he found fault with Delane for robbing him of his holiday and then making light of the pestilence which, in the first instance, he had declared would be fatal.

Delane explained that in his absence the *Times* had committed itself to a non-alarmist policy in this regard, and though he himself still considered it a most serious visitation, it was difficult to make a great newspaper contradict itself. Robert Lowe, as a prominent member of the Commission, thoroughly in agreement with the views of Sir Richard Quain and the other medical experts, was equally disconcerted by the attitude of the *Times*. Delane, who was a man of infinite resource, suggested that a letter should be written, addressed to the Editor, in which the actual facts of the case should be fairly placed before the public. This letter was written, and appeared in the *Times*, over the well-known signature 'Q,' on December 1, 1865 ; and it threw a great deal of light not only on the ravages of the cattle plague, but also on the opposition of the great railway companies and the cattle jobbing interests to the

drastic remedies of the Commissioners. 'Q's' letter turned the tide.

At this time the *Saturday Review* had, in the person of John Douglas Cook, an editor whose native shrewdness almost rivalled that of Delane himself. His journal, also, had joined in censuring the report, and in ridiculing the fads of fashionable physicians and others; but as soon as his quick eye lighted on the letter in the *Times*, he detected the writer, and without loss of a moment was off to the residence of Sir Richard Quain. 'I want' (he said) 'a series of articles *at once* on this cattle plague.' It was in vain the busy physician protested that he had no time, and was not 'up to the slashing style of the *Saturday*.' Cook would take no refusal. The result being that Sir Richard Quain contributed a series of eight articles, which gave the public the fullest information in the most readable form, and which remain to this day the best commentary on the labours of the Royal Commission of 1865.

Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, on January 12, 1866, introduced the Cattle Plague Bill, one of the provisions of which was the compensation of farmers and landlords who were compelled by the Government to kill their beasts. The ravages of the disease were appalling: out of 120,000 cases of disease nearly 74,000 had died, and some 17,000 had been killed, only a trifle over 14,000 having recovered, and the remainder, at the time of the report, being under treatment. The rinderpest was, indeed, nothing short of a national disaster; and the Bishop of London appointed a Day of Humiliation on account of it.

The new democratic era had, however, set in. John Bright vigorously opposed the compensation clause. It would be a public grievance, he urged, if the money of the taxpayer were applied to the compensation of wealthy landowners. Lowe replied, pointing out that it was not proposed to compensate people for what they had lost, *but for what they had lost*

through the direct agency of the Government by the enforced destruction of their property for the public good. John Stuart Mill, the newly elected member for Westminster, then rose to make his maiden speech in the House of Commons, in which he supported Bright's contention. His speech, he tells us in his *Autobiography*, 'was thought at the time to have helped to get rid of a provision in the Government measure which would have given to landholders a second indemnity, after they had already been once indemnified for the loss of some of their cattle by the increased selling price of the remainder.'

On a subsequent evening Lowe challenged this argument: 'Has not the English cattle-producer (he said) to meet powerful competition, and will not enhanced prices increase an importation of 10,000 head of cattle to 20,000? That which is to be the indemnification of the English landholder, according to Mr. Mill, will have to be divided with all Europe and America.'

Mill replied that the effect of a scarcity in any commodity was a rise in price out of all proportion to that scarcity.

In this contention it is not to be doubted that Mill argued the matter on economic grounds and in perfect good faith, though it always seemed to Lord Sherbrooke with a democratic bias unworthy of his great reputation as a philosopher. Bright and his followers, he thought, were entirely swayed by a blind hatred of the landed gentry; and he augured from the debate that injustice and wrong would always find eloquent tongues to uphold them in proportion as the orators owed their public positions to the votes of vast heterogeneous and discontented masses of men. Nor was Robert Lowe alone in contrasting the conduct of John Bright and the urban democracy towards the farmers and landholders, heavily smitten by this terrible calamity, with the magnificent liberality of the landlords of England, headed by Lord Derby, towards the factory hands of Lancashire during the hard times of the cotton famine produced by the American Civil War.

The following letter to his brother doubtless gives a faithful reflex of his feelings and thoughts on the subject at this time.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : Dec. 6, 1865.

My dear Henry,—If it will suit you, we will come to you on Tuesday, 26th. I suppose the best train is 11.30, Midland. If anything better is to be done, perhaps you will let me know. I am astonished at two things : first, the fatuity of the public who allow the country to be overrun with the Rinderpest when a certain remedy is in their hands ; the second, the folly of the Government, who are actually going to bring in a Reform Bill, making their game on Bright & Co. and disgusting two-thirds of their best supporters. I begin to think that either I or the rest of the world is going mad, and am rather afraid, according to the old joke, that they will outvote me.

I hope you will escape the cattle plague ; but if you do not, remember, for your comfort, that there is no treatment, no remedy, no prophylactic that is of the least use ; and don't throw good money after bad in whisky, sherry, or anything else. Kill those that are seized as soon as the disease declares itself, and separate the rest as well as you can. Meanwhile, I will try to turn out the Government.

Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE WITH DEMOCRACY

(i.) *The Inductive Argument*

It is commonly, but erroneously, supposed that Robert Lowe's strenuous conflict with the rising democratic forces in this country commenced with his anti-Reform philippics, delivered in the House of Commons in 1866, against the Representation of the People Bill of the Russell-Gladstone Administration. The preceding chapters of this volume prove beyond the possibility of denial that he had long been possessed with an ever-increasing conviction that democracy was a parasite which, if allowed to grow on the British Constitution, would eventually kill the parent tree. For years he had been writing in the leading columns of the *Times*, against what is called Parliamentary Reform, a series of articles which would of themselves form an exhaustive treatise on the subject; and which impartially condemn both the great political parties whom he had long suspected of secretly conspiring to overreach each other as to who should be first in the attempt to gain the broad road leading to universal suffrage.

His sentiments were fully set forth in the remarkable speech on the second reading of the late Sir Edward Baines's Borough Franchise Extension Bill, delivered in the House of Commons on May 23, 1865. This speech, republished in 1867,¹ passed through several editions—a mere glance at

¹ *Speeches and Letters on Reform, with a Preface.* By the Right Hon. R. Lowe, M.P. (Bush, 1867.)

which would have saved contemporary compilers from falling into error. It will thus be seen that when, after the death of Lord Palmerston, the Liberal Ministry was reconstructed under Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone, who had decided to make Reform their trump card, Robert Lowe was very naturally not invited to join them, for the simple reason that his antagonism to that policy was only too well known. He, of course, did not expect to be invited; but this is quite a different reading of our parliamentary annals to that which assumes that he opposed the Russell-Gladstone Bill *because* his claims to a seat in the Cabinet had been overlooked.

The speech on the Borough Franchise Bill of 1865 well deserves thoughtful attention, for it exactly defines Lowe's attitude, not only towards the extension of the franchise, but also with regard to the wider questions of the basis of law and the authority of government. A brief extract in reply to some arguments made use of by J. S. Mill and Mr. Gladstone will exactly show what is meant. Those eminent authorities had been urging on the House the pre-existing 'rights' of all classes to a share in the government of the country. Mr. Lowe replied:—

Now, this kind of argument is the easiest in the world, and is widely different from that style of reasoning which the House is in the habit of demanding from its members. Hon. gentlemen will, I believe, concur with me in thinking that the true view of the science of government is that it is not an exact science, that it is not capable of *a priori* demonstration, that it rests upon experiment, and that its conclusions ought to be carefully scanned, modified, and altered so as to be adapted to different states of society, or to the same state of society at different times. If so, nothing can be more difficult than to meet such concise and sweeping arguments as those to which I have referred, because a man who is careful to weigh what he has to say on a subject like this cannot put the results of an intricate and exhaustive process in a single sentence. And to what do the arguments of those who, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Mr. Gladstone], advocate the right of the working classes to be admitted to the exercise of the franchise amount? To that assumption of the *a priori* rights of man which formed the

terror and ridicule of that grotesque tragedy, the French Revolution.

When the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the *onus probandi* lay with his adversary in this instance, he must have meant that anterior to the existence of society there was vested in every man some personal *à priori* right which nobody had authority to touch. When Mr. Mill, in like manner, speaks of every citizen of a State having a perfect right to a share in its government, he appeals to some *à priori* considerations, in accordance with which every man would be entitled, not only to be well governed, but to take part in governing himself. But where are those *à priori* rights to be found? The answer to that question would lead me into a metaphysical inquiry which I shall not now pursue, contenting myself with saying that I see no proof of their existence, and that the use of the term arises from a bungling metaphor, by which a term appropriate to the rights arising under civil society is transferred to moral considerations antecedent to it. Can those alleged rights form a ground on which a practical deliberative assembly like the House of Commons can arrive at a practical conclusion? If they do in reality exist, they are as much the property of the Australian savage and the Hottentot of the Cape as of the educated and refined Englishman. Those who uphold this doctrine must apply it to the lowest as well as to the highest grades of civilisation, claiming for it the same universal, absolute, and unbending force as an axiom of pure mathematics. A man, according to the theory of which I am speaking, derives a right of this kind from God, and if society infringe it, he is entitled to resist that infraction. He is judge without appeal in a cause over which no human tribunal has jurisdiction; he is executioner as well as judge, and so this seemingly harmless dream puts the dagger into the hand of the assassin. Those abstract rights are constantly invoked for the destruction of society and the overthrow of government, but they never can be successfully invoked as a foundation on which society and government may securely rest.

Having thus clearly laid down the principle on which his own reasonings were based, Lowe proceeded with inexorable logic to demolish the two classes of politicians who, he said, were opposed to them—the sentimental democrats and the fatalistic.

‘You must have it out,’ the hon. gentleman says, felicitously comparing the Constitution of this country to an unsound tooth; ‘sooner or later you will have to give way,’—using a line of argu-

ment which is at once the foundation and the blemish of the great work of De Tocqueville. M. de Tocqueville assumed that democracy was inevitable, and that the question to be considered was, not whether it was good or evil in itself, but how we could best adapt ourselves to it. This is, *ignava ratio*, the coward's argument, by which I hope this House will not be influenced. If this democracy be a good thing, let us clasp it to our bosoms; if not, there is, I am sure, spirit and feeling enough in this country to prevent us from allowing ourselves to be overawed by any vague presage of this kind in the belief that the matter has been already decided upon by the Fates and Destinies in some dark tribunal in which they sit together to regulate the future of nations. The destiny of every Englishman is in his own heart; the destiny of England is in the great heart of England; and to that, and not to dreams and omens, I look as the arbiter of her fate.

It may be presumed that Lowe regarded Mill as typical of the 'sentimental' advocates of democracy, while Mr. Gladstone represented those who had been driven to its side by the 'fatalistic' argument. There was yet a third class represented by John Bright, who urged upon the House of Commons the 'argument of necessity.' He exclaimed that the working classes were thundering at the gates, and that it were wise, ere it was too late, to accede to their demands.

'If driven to it' (rejoined Lowe), 'we must, of course, submit, and it may perhaps be better to do so than to give rise to a great internal commotion or civil war; but it will take a very severe compulsion to induce me to counsel suicide. The advice to yield at once lest a worse thing befall us, reminds me of the lines—

'He thought with a smile upon England the while,
And the trick that her statesmen had taught her,
Of saving herself from the storm above
By putting her head under water.'

Robert Lowe thus went forth to battle against democracy as a triple-headed host. From the outset he was under no delusion either as to the strength of the adversary or the weakness of his own forces. Nothing would be done, he knew, in Palmerston's lifetime, but afterwards—the deluge, or

'shooting Niagara,' as Carlyle called it. Lowe's apprehensions with regard to these mere tentative Reform Bills may seem to us exaggerated; but he was above all things a logician. Unlike Mr. Gladstone or even John Bright (who, when the time came, was full of alarm about giving the 'residuum' a share in governing the country), Robert Lowe saw that the only possible outcome of these Reform Bills was universal suffrage, one man one vote, abolition of a privileged upper House, and all the other items of what it is the fashion to call an advanced programme. For this reason, and this reason alone, he opposed with all his might and main every one of the Reform Bills, Liberal and Conservative, which were based on the *à priori* rights of the inhabitants of a country to a share in its government. This, the essence and basis of democracy, he held to be the high road, if not to anarchy, at least to bad and corrupt government. The extracts given from this great speech of 1865 show clearly enough how a man of his logical intellect would confront the proposals both of the Russell-Gladstone Bill of 1866 and of the Derby-Disraeli Bill of 1867. In him there was at least no inconsistency, no variation from his fixed ideal of the essentials of wise and stable government; and he opposed friend and foe alike who, in what he considered the mad race for power and popularity, were prepared so rashly to turn an old and historic country into a modern democratic State.

In his single-handed fight Robert Lowe greatly lamented the loss of his old friend, Sir George Cornewall Lewis; and he deplored the lack of like-minded men in the House of Commons who, even had they possessed far less ability than that wise scholar and temperate patriot, might yet have rallied in sufficient numbers to his banners to give the country, as he said, time for reflection. As it was, his battle with democracy was almost another case of *Athanasius contra mundum*.

A further extract may be given from his 1865 speech, as

illustrating what he regarded as the sovereign merits of the 'inductive method' in the dark and uncertain region of politics :—

To use the words of one whose name ought never to be mentioned in this House without respect, if not with a warmer feeling—the late Sir G. Lewis—I might say that what we have to do is to find out any practical evil in the working of our institutions, and then to suggest a remedy for it. We ought always to be ready to listen. The inductive method abhors dogmatism, and therefore excludes finality. Its ears are always open to new facts; it recognises knowledge as perpetually advancing; it rejects no new light; it leaves overweening confidence to *à priori* reasoners, sentimentalists and fatalists; it is a safe, because a modest, guide. . . . Mr. Holyoake, speaking on behalf of the working classes, tells us that the Frenchman who has voted away his own liberty is far superior to the Englishman who possesses his liberty but does not possess the franchise. I think we have a right to ask for even a more tangible grievance from the working classes than the absence of the power to ruin themselves.

In reply to this reasoning some may contend that the working classes, instead of ruining themselves or the country, have improved their position by means of the franchise, and that England shows no signs as yet of national decay. But it was ever Lord Sherbrooke's answer that, in dealing with the life and vitality of nations, we must take into account a much more extended span of time than a few fluctuating years. An individual, he would say with a smile, may go on living and to all outward appearance be quite healthy, though all the while carrying within him the seeds of his dissolution. At other times he would declare that England, though placed at an enormous disadvantage in comparison with America and Australia for democratic experiments, had yet certain compensating advantages. It was difficult to shatter at a single stroke an old and established Constitution; there were feelings and traditions, customs, and habits of thought which still lent it support even after the axe had been laid to the roots.

In view of the contemptuous criticism bestowed on Cassandra warnings, whose fulfilment is delayed, let us remember

that the democratic era has hardly yet been inaugurated. There is a remarkable passage in this speech which appeals with equal force to both Tory and Socialist in this year of grace 1893:—

In 1842 the late Mr. Duncombe presented a petition to this House signed by 3,000,000 persons. This petition may, therefore, I think, be looked upon as containing a fair expression of the views of the working classes, and in it they say:—

‘Your petitioners complain that they are enormously taxed to pay the interest on what is called the National Debt, a debt amounting at present to 800,000,000*l.*, being only a portion of the enormous amount expended in cruel and expensive wars for the suppression of all liberty by men not authorised by the people, and who, consequently, had no right to tax posterity for the outrages committed by them upon mankind.’

There goes the National Debt!

‘Your petitioners deeply deplore the existence of any kind of monopoly in this nation; and while they unequivocally condemn the levying of any tax upon the necessaries of life and upon those articles principally required by the labouring classes, they are also sensible that the abolition of any one monopoly will never unshackle labour from its misery until the people possess that power under which all oppression and monopoly must cease. And your petitioners respectfully mention the existing monopolies of the suffrage’—pointing, of course, to universal suffrage—‘of paper money’—looking naturally to unlimited issues and greenbacks—‘of machinery’—meaning property, because machinery is only one kind of property—‘of land’—of course there can be no question about that—‘of the public press’—such portion of it as was opposed to their views—‘of religion, of the means of travelling and transit, and a host of other evils too numerous to mention, all arising from class legislation.’ That was the working men’s programme of the steps which Parliament ought to take for the regeneration of the country and the advancement of the class to which they belonged.

Still pursuing the inductive method, Lowe proceeded to show that even such a very moderate measure as Mr. Baines’s Borough Franchise Bill was intended to benefit one section of the working classes only—the improvident. ‘For,’ he said (speaking, it will be remembered, in 1865), ‘the provident are not only in possession of the franchise—they have soared far

above it and have got into the region of freeholders.' Turning to Mr. Gladstone, whose metaphysical mind has ever been averse to such homely illustrations, Lowe thus continued:—

Now to take an extreme case. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that 600 quarts of beer is a fair average consumption for every adult male in the course of the year, and taking beer at 4*d.* a pot, the consumption of 240 quarts represents an annual outlay of 4*l.* If, therefore, persons who live in 8*l.* houses would only forego 120 quarts annually, they might at once occupy a 10*l.* house and acquire the franchise. That is the exact measure of the sacrifice which is required on their part to obtain this much-coveted right, to raise themselves from the position of slaves, to wipe off from their characters the mark of degradation, and all the other horrors that have been so feelingly depicted. That is by no means all. I have no wish to demand from the working man any great amount of rigid self-denial. I am neither an ascetic in theory or practice. But I would point out that there is a certain amount of accommodation, especially of sleeping accommodation, which is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the commonest decency and morality, for the avoidance of the most frightful impurities and even crimes. The amount which it is necessary to expend in rent for these purposes, and the preservation of the health of the poor man and his family, will, with a very slight addition, infallibly obtain for him the franchise. And the question for you now to determine is, whether you ought to bring down the franchise to the level of those persons who have no such sense of decency or morality, and of what is due to the health of themselves and their children—whether you will degrade the franchise into the dirt and imperil your institutions—or whether you will make this franchise a vast instrument of good, a lever by which you may hope to elevate the working classes, not in the manner which a mawkish sentimentality contemplates, but by fixing the franchise at a reasonable level, requiring a little, and only a little, effort and self-denial on their part, a little security that they are able to conduct their own affairs before we entrust them with those of the nation?

To understand Robert Lowe's unbending opposition to what he termed the degradation of the franchise, it is essential to bear in mind that he fully recognised that the House of Commons had more and more become the dominant power in the realm. Little as he approved of universal suffrage in foreign countries, in France or in America, even in our own

colonies, he thought that system might be productive there of infinitely less evil than in England. Congress, compared to the House of Commons, was an insignificant and unimportant body; in France there was always some kind of despotic authority behind the votes of the multitude, and colonial governments were more or less municipalities so long as the mother country protected these communities from foreign aggression. He was no admirer of democracy in these lands, but any step in England in the direction of universal suffrage he regarded with much graver disapproval and far deeper dislike. From the peculiar nature of our Constitution, under which all authority and ultimate power rested in the popular elective chamber, he foresaw that if the working classes, by their numerical majority, succeeded in outvoting all the other classes in the community, it meant mismanagement, instability, and probably disaster, to the nation and the empire.

It was a marvellous thing, he thought—the wonder of the world—that this wide-spread and complex British Empire should be controlled by an elective assembly like the House of Commons. There was nothing like it in all history; but he felt sure, by his process of inductive reasoning, that to widen the franchise so as to make the mere heterogeneous masses arbiters of the situation, was a political experiment fraught with peril. As for the great bulk of the working classes for whose real welfare he had laboured as Minister of Education, Trade, and Health, he frankly told them that in his opinion they were unfit to control the complex machinery of our ancient and artificial system of government. This was met by loud denial from the three classes into which he divided the democratic forces against whom he was contending. But yet it is noticeable that each of these classes, typified by Mr. Mill, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Bright, in their own different ways, dreaded and distrusted the absolute sway of the masses as much as Mr. Lowe himself. What else was the meaning of Mill's persistent advocacy of the representation of minorities;

of Mr. Gladstone's denial that his tentative reform measures meant in their logical outcome universal suffrage, and of John Bright's diatribe against the residuum and his expressed dislike of working-men M.P.'s?

But Robert Lowe came in for all the abuse because he eschewed flattery and frankly told the working classes that unless by skill, frugality, and self-denial, they could raise themselves to the level of 10*l.* householders, it were better they should have no voice in the creation and control of that sovereign body, the House of Commons. Above all things Lowe dreaded combination and co-operation amongst the working classes—which he thought meant the Conspiracy of the Unfit—whereby in a democratic State, intelligence, culture, toleration, and even patriotism, might be swamped and obliterated. He used very plain and unmistakable words, which may perhaps be even less palatable now than when he uttered them; yet, as a profound and still living observer has said, such words 'read more like history than prophecy—so exact is the fulfilment.'

I am sure the House will agree with me that it is an observation, true of human nature as of other things, that aggregation and crystallisation are strong just in proportion as the molecules are minute. It is the consciousness of individual weakness that makes persons aggregate together, and nowhere is that impulse so strong as in the lowest classes of society.¹ Nothing is so remarkable among the working classes of England as their intense tendency to associate and organise themselves. They have done so for the purpose of establishing benefit clubs, and to make provision for sickness and old age. These associations, once existing for praiseworthy objects, one might suppose that they would end there. But no. Once having established the principle of association, this has been used for very different purposes. The working classes select leaders—by no means the best or wisest among them—and to those men they submit with a docility which would be admirable were it not enforced by the reign of terror kept up among and by them-

¹ We have here the explanation of the existence of the 'Irish vote' in all English-speaking countries.

selves.¹ I shall not refer to the subject of strikes, but it is, I contend, impossible to believe that the same machinery which is at present brought into play in connection with strikes would not be applied by the working classes to political purposes. Once give the men votes, and the machinery is ready to launch those votes in one compact mass upon the institutions and property of this country. It is so in America. The wire-pullers and log-rollers there correspond exactly to the leaders whom the working classes follow in the matter of strikes at home. These leaders may be, probably are, men little known; apparently very retiring and insignificant, but nevertheless they wield the masses with the greatest ease. The elector, perhaps, does not know the name of the candidate for whom his vote is to be recorded. Papers for the election of everyone, from a governor down to a constable, and up again to a member of the Congress, are handed to him in a bundle tied round with a dirty piece of string, and the elector votes in the sense required—because his Mr. Potter or his Mr. Odger desires him to do so.

He then referred to the 'safeguards' proposed by Mr. Mill and Lord Grey against the increase of democratic power. 'I can fancy,' he said, 'no employment more worthy of the philosopher and statesman than the invention of safeguards against democracy, but I can fancy no employment less worthy of either statesman or philosopher than counselling us to give a loose rein to democracy in order that we may see whether we cannot get back what we have given in another way.'

This speech of 1865 was brought to a close by more than one memorable passage.

The only practical mode of dealing with this question, in a manner worthy at once the dignity of this House and the character of the English people, is to guide our course by the light of experience, gained by what has been done in former times—above all, in our own country, the great nurse of freedom and of the happiness of the whole human family. . . .

Are we prepared to do away with a system of such tried and tested efficacy as no other country was ever happy enough to possess since the world was a world, to substitute for it a form of government of extreme simplicity, whose tendencies and peculiarities have been as carefully noted and recorded as those of any animal or

¹ The country was then ringing with the Sheffield trade outrages, which culminated in the Broadhead disclosures.

vegetable with whose real nature we have no excuse for not being well acquainted—pure democracy?

I am no proscriber of democracy. In America it answers its purpose very well; in States like those of Greece it may have been desirable; but for England in its present state of development and civilisation, to make a step in the direction of democracy appears to me the strangest and wildest proposition that was ever broached by man. The good government which America enjoys under her democracy—whatever estimate hon. gentlemen may be disposed to form of it—is absolutely unattainable by England under a democracy, and for this reason: America in her boundless and fertile lands has a resource which removes and carries off all the peccant political humors of the body politic. . . . The wealth which America possesses is of a kind which her people did not make and which they cannot destroy; it is due to the boundless beneficence of the Giver, beside whose works those undertaken and executed by the human race sink into insignificance. The valleys even of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates, seem ridiculously small when compared with the valley of the Mississippi, which it has been calculated would afford residence to 240,000,000 of people without overcrowding. No tumult, no sedition can ever destroy these natural advantages. But what is our prosperity here? It is the fabric of the labour of generations, raised slowly and with infinite toil, and to continue it is indispensable that it should rest on secure foundations.

I have been a Liberal all my life. I was a Liberal at a time and in places when it was not so easy to make professions of Liberalism as in the present day; I suffered for my Liberal principles, but did so gladly because I had confidence in them, and because I never had occasion to recall a single conviction which I had deliberately arrived at. I have had the great happiness to see almost everything done by the decisions of this House, that I thought should be carried into effect, and I have full confidence in the progress of society to a degree incalculable to us; my mind is so constituted as to rely much on abstract principles, and I believe that by their application the happiness and prosperity of mankind may be enormously augmented. But for the very reason that I look forward to and hope for this amelioration—because I am a Liberal and know that by pure and clear intelligence alone can the cause of true progress be promoted, I regard as one of the greatest dangers with which the country can be threatened a proposal to subvert the existing order of things, and to transfer power from the hands of property and intelligence, and to place it in the hands

of men whose whole life is necessarily occupied in daily struggle for existence.

I earnestly hope—and it is the object I have in view—that I may have done something to make men think on this question, to pick it out of the slough of despond in which it has wallowed. Sir, I have been weary and sickened at the way in which this question has been dealt with. The way in which the two parties have tossed this question from one to the other reminds me of nothing so much as a young lady and young gentleman playing at battledore and shuttlecock. After tossing the shuttlecock from one to the other a few times they let it drop, and begin to flirt. The great Liberal party may well be presumed to know its own business better than I do. I venture, however, to make this prediction, that if they do unite their fortunes with the fortunes of democracy, as it is proposed they should do in the case of this measure, they will not miss one of two things: if they fail in carrying this measure they will ruin their party, and if they succeed in carrying this measure they will ruin their country.

In this debate Disraeli, speaking on the same side, made an almost equally striking speech, which afterwards supplied the distinguished author of 'The Conservative Surrender'—that most notable of *Quarterly Review* articles—with almost all his telling points and effective sarcasm. It is noticeable that in his elaborate arguments against democracy in England, Disraeli used illustrations almost identical with those of Lowe in regard to the contrast between this country and America. France and America could even revive after civil war and revolution; 'but,' exclaimed the co-author of the Reform Bill of 1867, 'England, the England we know, the England we live in, the England of which we are proud, could not begin again . . . I hope the House will, when the question before us is one of impeaching the character of our Constitution, sanction no step that has a preference for democracy.'

Robert Lowe's speech created no little stir, especially among Liberals in the House and throughout the country; and its effect might have been decisive against the reform movement, had not the leaders of the Liberal party shrewdly suspected

that if they shelved the question, Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli would promptly monopolise it. Lord Lansdowne wrote to Lowe, as soon as he had read the speech, as follows:—

The Marquis of Lansdowne to the Right Hon. R. Lowe.

Paris: May 10, 1865.

My dear Lowe,—I must write you a few lines about your speech. I read it under the influence of a fit of gout which produces occasionally a sort of desire to quarrel with everybody all round, and renders the patient a most pugnacious critic. But *the* columns of the *Times* completely subdued me, and left me with no other feeling than that of admiration for you. I know that you have a sufficient regard for me to make you not indifferent to the mite of my suffrage (although, from what I hear, this is a case of unobjectionable universal suffrage, including even opponents who may not agree in the arguments, but who must admit the lucidity and eloquence with which they were presented to the House). I need not say I agree in every word, as we have often talked upon this question. Lady Lansdowne desires to join in all I say.

Yours sincerely,
LANSDOWNE.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE WITH DEMOCRACY

(ii.) *Against Gladstone, Bright, and Mill*

(1866)

PARLIAMENT was opened by the Queen in person February 6, 1866. In the Royal Speech, special references were made to the close of the American civil war, to the outbreak under Governor Eyre in Jamaica, to the cattle plague in England, to the Fenian disturbances in Ireland, and Parliamentary Reform. On the latter subject the following words were spoken by the Lord Chancellor in the name of Her Majesty :—

I have directed that information should be procured in reference to the right of voting in the election of members to serve in Parliament for counties, cities, and boroughs. When that information is complete, the attention of Parliament will be called to the result thus obtained, with a view to such improvements in the laws which regulate the right of voting in the election of Members of the House of Commons, as may tend to strengthen our free institutions and conduce to the public welfare.

The battle was now about to begin. Robert Lowe, in donning his armour, like many a true warrior, took too sanguine a view of his chances of success. The signs of the times were indeed ominous ; the close of the American civil war had let loose on Ireland a number of soldiers of fortune—for the most part mere braggarts and Bobadils—but yet dangerous enough to be regarded as birds of ill-omen as they flocked into that distracted country. ‘ There are ’ (wrote the Lord Lieutenant) ‘ 340 such men known to the police in the provinces

and about 160 in Dublin. There are several hundred men who have come over from England and Scotland who receive 1s. 6d. a day and are waiting for the time of action.' As he also found that under the guidance of these worthies, bullets, cartridges, and pikes were being secretly manufactured in Dublin, and that the Irish soldiers in the Queen's army were being tampered with, he urged the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Meantime Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright devoted their energies to the Reform Bill.

Robert Lowe always thought his countrymen overrated the importance of the Fenian movement of 1866, but at the same time he considered it a strange moment to introduce a Reform Bill that would enormously increase the Irish vote in the House of Commons. At first Lowe and his friends thought the Government would do nothing in the way of parliamentary reform. This opinion arose from the feeling in the inner political circles that they were not in earnest on the question.

John Delane wrote as follows to Bernal Osborne :—¹

February 1, 1866.

Nobody in the whole Cabinet, except Lord Russell and Gladstone, have the least hope or desire of carrying a Reform Bill. They say the subject was disinterred only to meet the personal exigencies of Lord John, and he may carry it, if he can. In the meantime, the Tories admit that they are not ready, and so, though much against my ordinary opinions, I think there is a chance for a Third Party which includes the unattached—such as Stanley, Lowe, Horsman, &c. Lowe has hitherto done exceedingly well this Session, and has enormously improved his position. His spar with Bright on Wednesday, and with Mill last night, were much to his advantage. Little as Lord John likes him, he might have had the India Office the other day, and might have the Home Office when Lord Grey retires.

Considering that John Delane was so thoroughly behind the political scenes, this last sentence is worthy of notice ; it only remains to add that it was not based on mere hearsay,

¹ *Life of Bernal Osborne.* (Printed for private circulation.)

and shows that Lowe played a very honourable and disinterested part in opposing the Russell-Gladstone Government.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

34 Lowndes Square : February 20, 1866.

My dear Henry,—I am sorry to say I have no suggestion worth having about carrying out the Act.¹ I hope you will remember for future use that it is mainly to me the farmers owe it that the rate is not put on them instead of on the country. I think I have put a spoke in Bright's wheel. I believe the Government to be *in extremis*, the returns proving exactly the contrary of what they ought to prove. Nothing resolved on, and time pressing. Gladstone's failure as a leader becomes more manifest every day ; but they have taken a good while to discover it.

Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

From a Letter of Robert Lowe to Bernal Osborne.

34 Lowndes Square : February 26, 1866.

The Government is in a wretched plight. Everybody seems to hate everybody, and all agree in hating John more than anyone else. I do not think they have any chance of carrying that great benefit to the human race—a Reform Bill—unless you or some vigorous man will come to their aid.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard, of Sydney.

February 25, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—I am, of course, quite full of Politics, and believe myself on the eve of success, only I have been so often disappointed that I no longer feel confidence even in the most carefully considered opinions on a subject so liable to constant change from the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. I, in common with everyone else, not excepting the Government themselves, anticipate their speedy downfall. The Reform movement is a complete failure, the sense of the constituencies, the House, and the educated mind of the country is dead against it, and I am in the enviable position of being considered by everyone as the cause of this great and salutary change in public opinion. It is a distinction much more valuable than any mere official rank. I may very likely take office, in the next Government that is formed, but as long as I possess my present income I am quite independent of office, and by no means very keen about it.

¹ Cattle Plague Act.

I like very much to hear anything you have to say on Australian politics, which interest me for auld lang syne. I am very sorry for your law troubles, and doubt not that your distrust of the Court is very well founded; but those who live by the Law must suffer by the Law, even as those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. You must console yourselves as consumers for what you lose as producers.

Most sincerely yours,
R. LOWE.

On March 12, Mr. Gladstone introduced the Government Reform Bill in a long and elaborate speech, in which he made the celebrated allusion to the Trojan horse, which gave his watchful antagonist his first decided advantage in the encounter. Mr. Gladstone had remarked: 'We cannot consent to look upon this large addition, considerable although it may be, to the political power of the working classes of this country as if it were an addition fraught with nothing but danger. We cannot look upon it as the Trojan horse approaching the walls of the sacred city, and filled with armed men, bent upon ruin, plunder, and confiscation. We cannot join in comparing it with that "monstrum infelix"—we cannot say,—

Scandit fatalis machina muros,
Fœta armis: mediæque minans illabitur urbi.

On the following evening, in an overcrowded House, Robert Lowe sprang to his feet, and in his reply to Mr. Gladstone made the well-known felicitous allusions to the Trojan horse.

'Well, Sir, the right honourable gentleman, who had not time to give us a reason for introducing the Bill, found time to give us a quotation; and it was a quotation of a very curious kind, because, not finding in his large classical *répertoire* any quotation that would exactly describe the state of perfect bliss to which his Bill would introduce us, he was induced to take the exact contrary, and make a quotation to show us what his Bill was not.

Scandit fatalis machina muros,
Fœta armis.

he exclaimed, "and that," he added, "is not my Bill." Well, that was not a very apt quotation; but there was a curious felicity about it which he little dreamt of. The House remembers that, among other proofs of the degree in which public opinion is enlisted in the cause of Reform is this—that this is now the fifth Reform Bill that has been brought in since 1851. Now, just attend to the sequel of the passage quoted by the right hon. gentleman. I am no believer in *sortes Virgilianæ*, and the house will see why, in a moment—

O Divum domus Ilium, et inclyta bello
Mœnia Dardanidûm! Quater ipso in limine portæ
Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.

But that is not all—

Instamus tamen immemores, cœcique furore,
Et monstrum infelix sacratâ sistimus arce.'

There were more serious things in Lowe's speech than this witty Virgilian banter, which, however, greatly amused those members on both sides of the House who still cherished the parliamentary traditions of the classic era of Canning. One principal actor in the great fray sat, we are told, glum and unresponsive during this fence of scholarship and wit—John Bright,¹ whose importance as a determining factor in the struggle, was only secondary in the House to that of Gladstone, Disraeli and Lowe, while in the country it was far greater than any of them.

Disraeli—the most discerning watcher of signs and omens—had already perceived that even before the death of Palmerston, John Bright was growing stronger and stronger as a political leader. It was, indeed, owing to Bright and the

¹ In a speech at Birmingham, delivered on August 27, 1866, and almost wholly devoted to the vilification of Robert Lowe, the great Tribune incidentally remarked: 'He (Lowe) goes on—passing a sentence which was a classical illustration which amused the House, but which it is not necessary to quote here.' No one knew a popular audience better than Bright, and he was doubtless quite right not to bore them with classical quotations which in all probability only vexed and irritated himself.

energetic action of the Trades Societies and Unions in the great provincial cities, that Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone were now engaged in the attempt to pass their Reform Bill. By the mere gift of his sympathetic oratory, backed up by many fine and stalwart qualities, Bright, though of an essentially *bourgeois* character, with no genius of political insight and no talent for administrative statesmanship, was at this crisis, amongst the working classes, perhaps the most influential man in England. His power lay rather in the country than in the House, and more in the provincial towns than in the metropolis. Having by his impassioned oratory and restless agitation, brought this question of parliamentary reform to the front, his influence in the House was at its highest point, while in the country itself it was paramount.

In these great parliamentary debates, while Lowe and Mr. Gladstone generally fenced with the foils, Bright, particularly on the hustings, used the naked rapier. Even in the House the real fighting was mainly between himself and Lowe. They formed in many respects a splendid contrast, though with certain points of resemblance: born in the same year, both, according to their lights, earnest Liberals, and both possessing those sturdy and straightforward characteristics of which the English as a race are not a little proud. But there were differences and contrasts in their characters and surroundings which were quite as marked. The one sprung from the Church and the landed gentry, with the training of a scholar and a gentleman, and with a fervent love of knowledge and culture which nothing could quench; the other, a dissenter of dissenters, who had seen his people's goods seized to pay a Church-rate, born into trade and commerce, that inconsistent phenomenon a fighting Quaker, full of a wide and eloquent sympathy with the masses, but with a fierce hatred—and what was worse, a narrow envy—of all whose social surroundings and cultured lives were, as he thought, born of privilege, and therefore a reproach rather than an example. Robert

Lowe was a Liberal from reason and conviction : John Bright from feeling and the force of class antagonism. When Lowe trenchantly attacked the system of classical education—the intellectual dividing line between gentry and commonalty—he did so as a scholar and a man of culture, and his attack was the more bitterly resented. It was as though a Chinese mandarin had denounced the wearing of long finger nails—the mark that his class know not the degradation of manual toil. Bright and Cobden always spoke slightly of all forms of culture, as opposed to mere utilitarian instruction, but from the standpoint of men altogether without the charmed circle ; and their diatribes were lightly ignored and speedily forgiven. The contrast between Robert Lowe and John Bright was, in fact, that between Timon of Athens and Apemantus—one had chosen his rugged way of life from conviction : the other was forced into it by necessity.

The keynote of Robert Lowe's great anti-Reform speeches is struck in the opening sentences of his speech of March 13, 1866, in which he met and traversed every point raised by Mr. Gladstone in his elaborate oration of the preceding evening.

Sir,—In the course of a long and illustrious career this House of Commons has gathered into its hands a very large proportion of the political power of the country. It has outlived the influence of the Crown ; it has shaken off the dictation of the aristocracy ; in finance and taxation it is supreme ; it has a very large share in legislation ; it can control and unmake, and sometimes nearly make, the executive Government. Probably, when the time shall arrive that the history of this nation shall be written as the history of that which has passed away, it may be thought that too much power and too much influence were concentrated and condensed in this great assembly, and that England put too much to hazard on the personal qualifications of those who sit within these walls. But, sir, in proportion as the powers of the House of Commons are great and paramount, so does the exploit of endeavouring to amend its Constitution become one of the highest and noblest efforts of statesmanship. To tamper

with it lightly, to deal with it with unskilled hands, is one of the most signal acts of presumption or folly.

Although these speeches have been widely read and perhaps more frequently criticised and admired than any collection even of Mr. Gladstone's or John Bright's, I venture to think that the peculiar note of pessimism in these opening sentences has been generally overlooked. Robert Lowe was the intellectual heir, as well as the kinsman, of Hampden and Pym, the men who created the House of Commons as the supreme political power of the nation. Yet it is clear from his remarks just quoted, that he approached the discussion of the question of a democratic reform in its constitution with a presentiment that our free institutions were passing into a condition of instability, if not of actual decay. The longer he lived, the more signs he saw of the decadence in the actual governing and administrative capacity of the House of Commons, which, from his standpoint, was the direct result of the advance of democracy. But that House having acquired, under quite other auspices, supreme power and sovereign rights, he saw not what was to take its place when the time came that it should become absolutely unable to control and manage the affairs of the empire.

It was in this speech that Robert Lowe used the words which, owing to Bright's distortions, caused him to be vilified, and, as he himself said, 'made a mark for the vengeance of his fellow-countrymen.'

Lowe's actual words were these:—

I shall speak very frankly on this subject, for, having lost my character by saying that the working man could get the franchise for himself, which has been proved to be true, and for saying which he and his friends will not hate me one bit the less, I shall say exactly what I think. Let any gentleman consider—I have had such unhappy experiences, and many of us have—let any gentleman consider the constituencies he has had the honour to be concerned with. If you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness and facility for being intimidated, or if, on the other

hand, you want impulsive, unreflecting, and violent people, where do you look for them in the constituencies? Do you go to the top or to the bottom?

These few plain-spoken sentences, when interpreted to the multitude by Bright's misleading oratory, made Robert Lowe, for the time being, a detested name in every workshop in Great Britain. The great Tribune of the people went down to Birmingham and delivered an impassioned harangue that was like a trumpet-call to the artisans and working men of the midlands and the North of England:—

'Let every workshop and factory be a Reform association; let there be in every one of them a correspondent or a secretary who shall enrol members and assist this great and noble cause. I would recommend that the passages I have read from that celebrated and unhappy speech should be printed upon cards, and should be hung up in every room in every factory, workshop, and clubhouse, and in every place where working men are accustomed to assemble.'

In many of the great centres of population, Bright used similar language, and at times with even a more menacing tone towards his opponent. Yet, if these sentences of this 'celebrated and unhappy speech,' are compared with his own references to the 'residuum,'¹ it is clear that his difference with Lowe was not one of principle, but merely of degree.

The many critics of these, the best-known speeches which Robert Lowe ever delivered, have naturally quoted, and dwelt upon, the eloquent perorations, which are, indeed, models of forceful expression and fine literary English. But such treatment by no means gives any adequate conception of the far-

¹ In his opposition to the Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill, Bright, speaking in the House of Commons on March 25, 1867, said: 'In all our boroughs, as many of us know, sometimes to our sorrow, there is a small class which it would be much better for themselves if they were not enfranchised, because they have no independence whatever, and it would be much better for the constituency also that they should be excluded, and there is no class so much interested in having that small class excluded as the intelligent and honest working-men. I call this class the *residuum*.'

reaching scope of his argument; some of the most valuable passages are the reverse of declamatory—merely calm, simply-expressed sentences appealing altogether to the reason of his hearers. He pointed out that the wise men, as he calls them, who founded the Constitution of the United States, realised that the English system of government was impossible on their democratic foundation, 'so they established a system under which the Executive Government and the Legislature should exist for a different period of years, and should be elected by different authorities, in order that they might have no point of contact with each other.' He even predicted that the Australian and other colonies would ultimately be driven to appoint the Executive for a fixed term of years, and to place it in a position of complete independence as regards the Legislature. Since he himself had been a member of the House of Commons, he had noticed with pain the increasing weakness of the Executive Government. 'Formerly, if a gentleman moved for papers which, in the opinion of the Government, ought not to be produced, or which it would be unwise to put the country to the expense of printing, the Ministers resisted the motion, and inconvenience, or expense, was saved to the public. But who resists such motions now? Formerly, if a committee were asked for to inquire into a subject which had been already threshed out and examined into, or one which it was not proper to investigate, the Minister of the department to which it related could get up in his place and say, "I cannot grant such a committee." What Minister can say so now? Our ancestors, when they had once settled in their own minds that a thing was right, acted according to their conviction. Now, however, if a question is important and difficult, it is delegated to a committee; if not to a committee, to a commission; or it is delegated to some local authority, or it is made an open question.'

He argued from this that if the House were placed on a more democratic basis, the English system of making the

Executive directly responsible to the Legislature would have to be abolished. He maintained without flinching that the parliament and municipal institutions of democratic America were honeycombed with jobbery and corruption to an extent undreamt of and quite impossible in England under a more restricted suffrage. 'Things which would not be tolerated for an instant in England are passed by without notice in America; for, however impetuous and impatient democratic constituencies may be of the acts of their members in matters where their prejudices are affected, they are singularly loose in their requirements in other respects.'

It is quite impossible by a few disjointed extracts to give any adequate notion of the clear reasoning, the power of sustained argument, the frank outspokenness and the skill in mere exposition of this remarkable speech. People still remember the closing words which he spoke, turning with all courtesy to Mr. Gladstone:—

It may be that we are destined to avoid this enormous danger with which we are confronted, and not, to use the language of my right honourable friend, be fated to compound with danger and misfortune. But, Sir, it may be otherwise; and all I can say is, that if my right honourable friend does succeed in carrying this measure through Parliament, when the passions and interests of the day are gone by I do not envy him his retrospect. I covet not a single leaf of the laurels that may encircle his brow. I do not envy him his triumph. His be the glory of carrying it; mine of having to the utmost of my poor ability resisted it.

It was this speech which really decided the fate of the Reform Bill of 1866. A few days after its delivery the Conservative party held a meeting at which they unanimously decided to oppose the measure; while, on the Liberal side of the House, a small but influential section, under the leadership of the present Duke of Westminster, then Earl Grosvenor, took heart of grace and promptly decided to assist Mr. Disraeli and Lord Derby in turning Mr. Gladstone and Lord Russell out of office. This was the famous Cave of Adullam, which comprised,

in addition to Robert Lowe and Lord Grosvenor, such men as Lord Elcho (now Earl of Wemyss), Lord Dunkellin, Captain Hayter, Mr. Horsman, Major Anson, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Gregory, Governor of Ceylon.

The first letter which Lowe wrote to Sydney after the delivery of this momentous speech and the formation of the Cave, shows that, even in the thick of the fray, he took an impartial and unbiassed view of the situation.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

34 Lowndes Square: March 25, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—I am so hurried and worried just now that I can hardly find time to write to you. We are approaching a most momentous political crisis in this country. The Government Bill is far wider and more dangerous than was expected, and the great majority obtained for the Liberals last session renders us too strong, I fear, for the good of the country. The result depends upon the number that will follow Lord Grosvenor, whom we have induced to move an amendment, and it is always a dangerous thing when you have on one side nothing but right and prudence, and on the other all the corrupting influence of Government brought to bear on a small number of its own party. Still, I hope for the best. Of one thing I feel sure, and that is that the measure, whether read a second time or not, will not pass this year, but there is much danger that the House will commit itself to a course from which there will be no receding, and which will ultimately lead us to a termination which you, who know England as well as Australia, can picture for yourself.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

34 Lowndes Square: April 8, 1866.

My dear Henry,—I can't come and see you, having, as you will see, my hands pretty full just now. I went to Paris, but was brought back sooner than I intended by the insurrection among my constituents. It is of no consequence, I believe, as regards my seat. I have also had a little brush with Gladstone, who seems, this morning, fairly to have thrown off the mask and to have committed himself to universal suffrage—at least all his arguments prove that, if anything. I am very grateful to him for giving me a new thesis, which I sadly wanted. I shall do now for the second reading.

In haste.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

House of Commons: April 13, 1866.

My dear Henry,—Take good advice before you go to Vichy. I don't know much about such things, but I have a great idea that Carlsbad would be more likely to do you good. I am sorry you are so uncomfortable. My experience is, that the best thing to be done with one's liver is to give it occasionally three-quarters of a grain of Calomel—not blue pill; this I do about twice a year, and so exist.

You will see that Government intend to continue the Act till May 10. I spoke to Sir George Grey last night, and he told me that they would continue it longer, if necessary. North Notts would now be a charming seat, but what would it be with a 14*l.* or even a 20*l.* franchise? Would it not become a sort of great borough?—only more expensive, because more scattered. I am of opinion, and I have good grounds for it, that the Bill will not pass the second reading—that for yourself, I don't say so in public. The calculation is that 625 members will vote, and if so, and no more, we must win. Don't mention this at all to anyone—my dear constituents did me out of part of my holiday in Paris—I am like Cæsar in one respect, at least I receive warnings to take care of my life, and not to walk about alone, and always to go to the House in a cab. I am, I am happy to say, constitutionally indifferent to such things, and really think that perhaps the best use I could put my head to, would be to have it broken in so good a cause. As President Johnson says, the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.

Give my love to Louisa.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

Mr. Gladstone at this time introduced another new departure into the discussion and settlement of grave constitutional questions. It was one thing for Mr. Bright, who was in no sense officially responsible for the government of the country, to address monster meetings in Great Britain and Ireland; but though we are now accustomed to the spectacle, it was felt to be a veritable sign of the democratic era when Mr. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, went down to Liverpool, with other Cabinet Ministers (March 6, 1866) and harangued an enormous

popular assemblage at the Philharmonic Hall in that city.¹ Six days afterwards, in the House of Commons, Lowe found it necessary to defend himself against the attacks that were being made upon him for his alleged slandering of the working classes. 'No man,' he said, 'in the world has been subjected to more abuse than I have during the last month, and that abuse has been procured by the deliberate misrepresentation of my language.' This was literally true.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

34 Lowndes Square : April 24, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—You will see by the date of this letter, if you compare it with the English papers, that I am just in the agony of being about to make another important speech, and that we are on the eve of a change of Government to which I shall have contributed as much as anyone. The last month has been spent principally in abusing me, which has been done with a *verve* which puts me in mind of old times in Sydney ; only the difference is that I have a party to back me, and have, therefore, no fear of being eaten up as I might have been among you.

Two days after writing this letter, on April 26 (the seventh evening of the Reform debate), Robert Lowe delivered his famous speech on the second reading of the Representation of the People Bill. In this speech he steadily kept in view his three typical opponents—the sentimental democrat (Mill),²

¹ 'The right honourable gentleman and other members of the Government between the first and second reading, and before the course which Parliament would adopt with reference to the Bill was known, set on foot a sort of Ministerial agitation. It is absurd to pretend that the influence of agitation was not resorted to, and it is not the fault of some of those who took part in that agitation, that it did not develop into an influence of terrorism. Well, after these things were over, the Chancellor of the Exchequer came back to the House and favoured us with a languid *réchauffé* of the arguments he had already employed at Liverpool, and thus the baked meats of the Philharmonic Hall did coldly furnish forth the tables of the House of Commons.' (Lowe's speech on the second reading, April 26, 1866.)

² Lord Sherbrooke's view of Mill as a political sentimentalist will only seem absurd to those who fail to see that John Stuart Mill, as shown by his *Autobiography*, became a wholly changed man under the influence of Mrs. Taylor

the fatalistic democrat (Gladstone), and the aggressive or compulsory democrat (Bright). Before dealing with these redoubtable foes, he turned for a moment to that strange, exotic band of *philosophes*, the English Comtists, of whom Mr. Frederic Harrison is the best known representative—the ‘inspired apostles of a new Religion of Humanity.’ These persons, he said, had ‘mistaken the means for the end, and inferred, because we all believe, from our long experience of it, that the elective franchise is a good thing for the purpose of obtaining the end of good government, therefore it is necessarily a good thing in itself. They have this great advantage, in common with all enthusiasts and all persons believing in immediate intuition, over those who are not so fortunate, that they emancipate themselves from the necessity of looking at consequences. They are free from those complicated, embarrassing, and troublesome considerations of the collateral and future effects of measures which perplex ordinary mortals.’

In contradistinction to this principle, Lowe boldly declared that ‘the franchise is a means to an end, and that though it ought not necessarily to be given to everyone fit for it, should never be given to anyone who is unfit.’¹

It was in this speech that Robert Lowe made rather short work of Mr. Gladstone’s new plea for his Reform Bill, that the classes he proposed to enfranchise were fellow-Christians, fathers of families, and of our own flesh and blood. It was to this line of argument that Lowe alluded when he spoke of

the lady whom he subsequently married. It is, indeed, difficult to realise that the *Elements of Logic* was written by the same pen as that which indited the emotionally extravagant estimate of his wife’s mental power and moral supremacy. Mill, at this period, was sixty, but prematurely aged. He represented Westminster from 1865–8.

¹ ‘So far from wishing to give votes to women, I would fain take them away from most men,’ wrote Mr. Ruskin to a correspondent in 1870. (*Arrows of the Chace*.)

This was Lowe’s doctrine in an exaggerated shape,—the doctrine, namely, that the franchise is not an *a priori* right.

Mr. Gladstone having 'thrown off the mask'; for, as he pointed out, such a plea, whether the speaker were aware of it or not, simply meant universal suffrage, and not a seven pound franchise.

It appeared to Lowe that by far the best speech delivered from the Government side of the House in favour of the Reform Bill was that of John Stuart Mill, whose arguments were mainly directed towards refuting those of Lord Stanley (then member for King's Lynn) and his own. Mill, like Lowe himself, had the highest opinion of the present Earl of Derby's supreme critical faculty and clear intellect—'impartial,' remarked Mill, 'because clear.' Nearly the whole of this speech—probably Mill's best effort in the House of Commons—was devoted to maintaining that nothing was to be feared from any increase in the working class vote, as experience showed that working men usually voted for great employers of labour. 'Even if the franchise were so much enlarged that working men, by polling their whole strength, could return by small majorities 200 of the 658 members of this House, there would not be fifty of that number who would represent the distinctive feelings and opinions of working men, or would be, in any class sense, 'their representatives.' This was a direct challenge to Lowe who, in a well-remembered passage in his speech of 1865,¹ had remarked:—

'It is said that the working classes will not act together. Assertions are very cheap on such subjects, but look at the probabilities. If you have a large infusion of voters from the working classes, they will speedily become the most numerous class in every constituency. They, therefore, have in their hands the power, if they only know how to use it, of becoming masters of the situation, all the other classes being of necessity powerless in their hands. Is it possible to suppose that in the present state of society, with the widely conducted operations

¹ See Chapter XV. 'The Inductive Argument.'

of the press and public discussions on every subject, the working classes can long remain in ignorance of their power? You cannot treat them like pigs or cattle, or like Curran's fleas, "which, if they had been unanimous, would have pulled him out of bed."'¹

When directly challenged by the leader of the Philosophic Radicals, Lowe was not without a prompt reply:—

My honourable friend, the member for Westminster, has come out in a new character. I do not refer to the excellent speech which he has made, because, having known him for many years, I was quite sure that when he took the trouble to give us his best thoughts, instead of dealing in impromptus, those great abilities which are acknowledged to be his would be apparent. But my honourable friend has taken a new stand. He has taken many positions with regard to this subject, as those who are acquainted with his works well know; but he has now come forward in the capacity of the advocate of the doctrine of class representation. . . . Now, Sir, I would refer my honourable friend and the House to the preface of the third edition of his work on 'Political Economy.' It was published in 1852, so that my honourable friend has had time to change his mind since, and he is entitled to do it. This is what he said—I am very glad that I didn't:—

'The only objection to which any great importance will be found to be attached in the present edition, is the unprepared state of mankind in general, and of the labouring classes in particular; their extreme unfitness at present for any order of things which would make any considerable demand on either their intellect or their virtue.'

That was in 1852; but we have the opinion of my honourable friend in 1861. In his work on 'Representative Government' he says:—

'I regard it as wholly inadmissible that any person should participate in the suffrage without being able to read, write, and, I will add, perform the commonest operations of arithmetic. Universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement. No one but those in whom an *à priori* theory has silenced common sense will maintain that power over others, over the whole community, should be given to people who have not acquired the commonest and most essential requisites for taking care of themselves.'

¹ This humorous sally was often misrepresented as though the speaker himself regarded the working classes as pigs or cattle, which was the absolute reverse of what he intended to convey.

These awkward citations led to some sharp fencing between the philosopher and the statesman, in which the former was by no means a match for his antagonist. Mr. Mill, in defence of his new ultra-democratic position, had said that working men should be found in an assembly like the House of Commons. Mr. Lowe replied that no one could have any objection if the constituencies wished to send them. 'They can do so now if they like, and therefore we need not take up time in arguing the point, because I am sure that whenever the constituencies may think proper to send working men here, we shall receive those representatives properly, and listen to them with respect.' But Mr. Mill urged that a new infusion of this class in Parliament might change the subjects of debate to such questions as the 'rights of labour,' which would educate the working man. 'I protest against this!' exclaimed Lowe. 'We are here to legislate for this country, and if we look after the Executive Government pretty sharply—if we take care of our Finance, and if we watch the Foreign Office, we shall be doing better than we should do by converting this House into an academy or a gymnasium for the instruction of the *élite* of the working classes.'

Mr. Mill had ventured to assert that if working men were in the House of Commons they would soon establish schools in every parish in the kingdom. 'Well,' replied Lowe, 'that is a subject on which I ought to know something, and I may say that the main object I had in view in the changes which I proposed on the part of the Government in the Education system, was to benefit the working classes. . . . The object of the Revised Code was to ensure that education should be given to the poor just as much as to the rich; so that the object was one mainly—indeed entirely—for the working classes. But in that object I never received the slightest assistance in any way from the working classes. The opposition to it was very much from the members for the large towns in which the working classes form a considerable portion of the

constituencies ; but the working classes themselves never interfered in the matter. They did not care about it. The schoolmasters interfered and got members of Parliament to oppose the Code ; but the working classes never entered into the matter at all.' This noticeable passage reveals Robert Lowe's weakness as well as strength as a modern politician. His Sydney career shows clearly enough that he had the gift of appealing to the outside public ; and had he, on his overthrow by the schoolmasters and inspectors, gone before some large typical working-class constituency, with a powerful dissenter element, and told in a rhetorical fashion the story of how his attempt to spread the light of knowledge among the children of the poor had been defeated by the rural clergy and Lord Robert Cecil, he would have been at once a popular hero. His growing dislike for the methods of democracy kept him silent.

Lowe then dealt with what he always regarded as the most serious aspect of the franchise question—the power of combination on the part of the vast armies of workmen for purposes of class legislation, by means of the machinery already in existence for strikes and trades unions. Here he turned from his most intellectual opponent, Mr. Mill, to his far more popular and redoubtable foe, John Bright. Lowe at this time gave great attention to the subject of trades unions and strikes.¹ To his mind they revealed an extraordinary state of tyranny and oppression on the part of workmen, not only towards employers but towards one another. In this speech he quotes many particulars of strikes in various trades and of the means used by the unions to coerce and intimidate non-union workmen. There is no need to repeat any of his illustrations, for England, America, and the Colonies simply teem with them ; and what was regarded as somewhat exceptional in 1866 had become ordinary and habitual in 1893. But Robert Lowe interpreted these facts and drew his political inferences

¹ See *Quarterly Review* article, 'Trades Unions,' October 1867.

from them with undeviating clearness. 'The object,' he said, 'is to enclose as many men as can be got into these societies and then to apply to them the strictest democratic principle, and that is, to make war against all superiority, to keep down skill, industry, and capacity, and make them the slaves of clumsiness, idleness, and ignorance.'

Then, reverting to Mr. Gladstone's speech at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, he replied to his strange remark as to the magnificent spectacle of strength put forth by democracy in the American civil war,¹ in words that have often been quoted, and as often misunderstood.

I never doubted that democracy was a terrible, warlike power. It is not the educated and reflective who are influenced by ideas, but the half-educated and the unreflective; and if you show to the ignorant, and poor, and half-educated, wrong, injustice, and wickedness, anywhere, their generous instincts rise within them, and nothing is easier than to get up a cry for the redress of these grievances. We feel the injustice, too; but we look not merely at the injustice itself, we look before and after, we look at the collateral circumstances, at what must happen to trade, revenue, and our own position in the world, and we look also at what must happen to those very poor persons themselves before we commit ourselves to a decided course. Persons also who have something to lose are less anxious to lose it than those who have little at stake, even though these last may by the loss be reduced to absolute poverty.

On this question of democracy and our foreign policy, Robert Lowe, in his article entitled 'Reform Essays' in the *Quarterly Review* for July 1867, thus encountered Mr. Frederic Harrison:—

In 1848, the people yearned to support the heroic struggles of Italy and the yet more desperate struggles of Hungary. Mr. Harrison thinks the people were right; that is, that in 1848 we ought to have gone to war with Austria, and in 1849 with Russia. In 1859 'the mass of our people were heartily Italian.' A second war with Austria. 'The Polish war came, and again a splendid opportunity occurred.' A second war with Russia. Then followed

¹ Strange, because Mr. Gladstone had notoriously sided with the South in the American Civil War.

the Danish war. France would not help us, but we ought to have waged a third war with Austria, and a first war (no very light matter as events have shown) with Prussia. In all these cases the governing classes who wanted to keep the peace were wrong, and the people who wanted to go to war were right. . . . Think of the pinnacle of glory on which we should have stood at the end of the sixth war, with our debt doubled, and nothing to compensate us for it except the reflection that we had done all this in order to elevate France, the only power in Europe that is really formidable to us, and to depress all those nations who might be our allies in the event of such a conflict.

Lowe's speech in the House of Commons was more concerned with the outcome of democracy as applied to domestic legislation, to the maintenance or destruction of our institutions. He quoted Mr. Bright's provincial harangues, which he thought far more frank and outspoken than his measured utterances in Parliament, to show that the House of Peers, the Church, and the judiciary, would probably be destroyed or tampered with. In proof of this he dwelt on the examples of America, and, to a lesser extent, the Colonies. Then followed the tribute to Palmerston, the disavowal of Lord Russell, and the famous passage on demagogues.

Sir, it appears to me we have more and more reason every day we live to regret the loss of Lord Palmerston. The remaining members of his Government would seem, by way of a mortuary contribution, to have buried in his grave all their prudence, statesmanship, and moderation. He was scarcely withdrawn from the scene before they set to work to contravene and contradict his policy. That policy, acted upon by a statesman who perfectly understood the wants of the English people, had been crowned with unexampled success, and they, I suppose, must have thought that the best way to secure a continuance of that success was to aim at doing that which he above all other things disapproved.

The noble lord at the head of the Government, and the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have performed a great feat. They have taken the great mass of their supporters, who are, I believe, men of moderate views and moderate opinions, and laid them at the feet of the honourable member for Birmingham. . . . We are told that we are bound by every tie that ought to bind mankind to act in accordance with the policy of Earl

Russell ; but I, for one, Sir, dispute the justice of that proposition. I have never served under that noble lord. I have served under two prime ministers for a period—I am sorry to say—of little less than ten years. The one was Lord Aberdeen, the other Lord Palmerston. Earl Russell joined the Government of each of those Ministers ; both Governments he abandoned, both he assisted to destroy. I owe the noble lord no allegiance. I am not afraid of the people of this country. They have displayed a good sense, which is remarkable indeed when contrasted with the harangues which have been addressed to them. But, if I am not afraid of the people, neither do I agree with the right honourable gentleman the member for Huntingdon,¹ in fearing those by whom they are led. Demagogues are the commonplace of history. They are to be found wherever popular commotion has prevailed, and they all bear to one another a strong family likeness. Their names float lightly on the stream of time ; they are in some way handed down to us, but then they are as little regarded as is the foam which rides on the crest of the stormy wave and bespatters the rock which it cannot shake. Such men, Sir, I do not fear. But I have, I confess, some misgivings when I see a number of gentlemen of rank, of character, of property and intelligence carried away, without being convinced or even over-persuaded, in the support of a policy which many of them in their inmost hearts detest and abhor. Monarchies exist by loyalty, aristocracies by honour, popular assemblies by political virtue and patriotism, and it is in the loss of those things, and not in comets and eclipses, that we are to look for the portents that herald the fall of States.

Robert Lowe closed his speech with that fine peroration which still lives in the memories of men :—

‘ Surely the heroic work of so many centuries, the matchless achievements of so many wise heads and strong hands, deserve a nobler consummation than to be sacrificed at the shrine of revolutionary passion or the maudlin enthusiasm of humanity ? But if we do fall, we shall fall deservedly. Uncoerced by any external force ; not borne down by any internal calamity, but in the full plethora of our wealth and the surfeit of our too exuberant prosperity, with our own rash and inconsiderate hands we are about to pluck down on our own heads the venerable temple of our liberty and our glory. History may

¹ Lord Robert Montagu.

tell of other acts as signally disastrous, but of none more wanton, none more disgraceful.'

The following letter from the present Earl of Derby to Mrs. Lowe shows the writer's high appreciation of the speech, which, it is believed, he still considers one of the greatest intellectual efforts made in his experience in the House of Commons.

Lord Stanley to Mrs. Lowe.

23 St. James's Square: March 15, 1866.

Dear Mrs. Lowe,—You will have heard so many expressions of opinion in the last two days that one more or less can make no difference, and it is therefore chiefly for the satisfaction of my own feelings that I write.

Mr. Lowe's speech on Tuesday has done more to influence affairs than any that has been delivered in Parliament within my recollection; and never was such assistance to the constitutional cause more needed.

The Conservative party are to meet to-morrow and discuss the best mode of opposing the Bill. I cannot conceive that on our side the House there will be any difference or any slackness, but we are a minority, and all turns on the strength of the Whig contingent.

Believe me, very truly yours,

STANLEY.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BATTLE WITH DEMOCRACY

(iii.) *Fall of the Russell-Gladstone Government*

(1866)

ROBERT LOWE'S speech raised him to the pinnacle of parliamentary renown as an orator and debater. *The Spectator* (July 7, 1866), reviewing the Session, thus referred to him: 'Mr. Lowe is the great reputation of the Session in the House of Commons. No stranger now goes there without first looking for the white gleam, or rather flash, of his striking head, or listening anxiously for the cold, sardonic ring of his lucid voice, which vibrates like a glass ball through the House, penetrating it with a shiver of half-mocking intelligence.'

Such fame is apt to be evanescent, and certainly Lowe, who rarely glanced at the report of his own speeches, and kept few records of the impression they had created, was the last person to overrate the value of his achievement. But he realised that this speech had, to use his own expression, done its work—it had settled the fate of the Government.

The effect upon all who heard it was extraordinary, and Mr. Gladstone was by no means alone in thinking that his doughty antagonist was 'at the top of the tree.'

The Speaker to Mrs. Lowe.

House of Commons: April 27, 1866.

Dear Mrs. Lowe,—I offer you my compliments and congratulations on Mr. Lowe's speech last night, one of the greatest and ablest

which have been delivered within my memory. It was the more remarkable from following a most able speech on the same subject last year. There is (and can be) but one opinion of its surpassing ability and eloquence.

Yours faithfully,
J. G. DENISON.

Sir John Walsh to the Right Hon. R. Lowe.

28 Berkeley Square: April 27, 1866.

Dear Mr. Lowe,—Mahomet's coffin, they say, was suspended between heaven and earth, and I know no other resemblance between Mahomet's coffin and this note than that it is written between your speech and the division which may consign us, not to earth, but to that region popularly supposed to be situated below the earth, to which Mr. Mill's Reform in what he calls a vertical direction would inevitably lead us. Is it presumption in me not to compliment you, but to express the genuine impression which your speech made upon my mind? I came into Parliament in July 1830, and I have heard, I believe, all the great speeches since that period. Others may have been more eloquent, more brilliant. I cannot decide, for it is difficult to carry a comparison over five-and-thirty years, but I am sure that yours was the greatest and the noblest. You owe something to the position in which you stand, fighting the battle of the English Constitution of mixed elements against the encroachments of insatiable democracy. But it is your highest praise that you have risen to that great issue, that you have not wasted your mighty powers upon the comparatively small and collateral issue of the objections to the Ministerial mode of dealing by two Bills with the question, although you have incidentally disposed of that argument, but that you have confronted the main question—Is England to continue a monarchy in which the aristocratic and democratic elements of the nation have ever harmoniously blended? Or is it, in spite of all experience, to adopt the lower form of civilisation? You have placed before the people of England that great issue as no man has hitherto placed it with equal force and distinctness. May they decide rightly!

Yours very faithfully,
JOHN WALSH.

These two letters, from the Speaker and an 'old Parliamentary hand,' written while the speech was, so to speak, ringing in their ears, may be taken as typical of many others. The magnificent praise of one who devoted all the manifold gifts

and moving eloquence of a great parliamentary statesman to the cause of the very classes whom Robert Lowe was supposed to have slandered and insulted, was naturally gratifying to him.

From the Diary of the Earl of Shaftesbury.

April 30, 1866.

Lowe's speech was a masterpiece of sustained and consecutive logic, and of well-chosen and adapted eloquence: well-chosen both in character and in place. His facts were singularly illustrative and stated with a brevity and precision of singular effect.

I doubt whether a speech better adapted to place, persons, and circumstances was ever delivered in any country or in any age.¹

Almost any laudation after this would sound like an anti-climax; but there was an article headed 'Mr. Lowe's Speech,' in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then a newly founded Conservative journal under the editorship of Mr. Frederick Greenwood, which pleased Lowe himself, more by its descriptive skill and critical discrimination than by its mere personal appreciation. This article, the only one preserved out of a host which were equally laudatory, opened with these words:—

One orator, however, contrived thoroughly to revive the interest and excitement which had so long been flagging, and to command the almost rapt attention of the House for upwards of two hours. Mr. Lowe's was not only the speech of the night, but will probably turn out to be the speech of the debate. His style and matter are essentially *sui generis*. We never heard any speaker who at all resembled him. He is familiar and easy, without being colloquial; his language, always true and vivid, sometimes noble, sometimes peculiarly vernacular and nearly slang, is, though admirably well chosen, obviously quite extempore; and his best things are not only apparently impromptus, but have the air of dropping from him accidentally and almost unconsciously; so that it is not till the House has taken them and appreciated them that the orator himself awakens to the perception of having made a palpable hit, and shares with a natural laugh of boyish delight in the enjoyment of his audience. His argument, too, though full, is singularly close,

¹ *Life and Letters of the Earl of Shaftesbury.* Edwin Hodder. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

cogent, and sustained ; he gives the impression of being always in earnest and sometimes angry, and he uses far fewer words in proportion to his matter than any living man of distinction in Parliament.

And ended thus :—

As, therefore, the Government measure drew no line, pointed out no stopping-place, provided no safeguard against the ultimate admission of overwhelming numbers, but was manifestly based on and supported by arguments which, if good at all, were good for admitting those overwhelming numbers, Mr. Lowe felt himself fully justified in regarding the measure as a democratic one, and in controverting it by a demonstration of what democracy was, what it did, and whither it led ; and the remainder of his speech was a masterly and nearly exhaustive exposition of his well-known views on this subject. On the whole, it was one of the most magnificent intellectual efforts ever witnessed within the walls of Parliament, and produced a marked and deep impression both against the Government and in favour of the speaker.

The division took place on April 27, 1866, immediately after Disraeli's attack and Mr. Gladstone's reply—one of the very finest speeches the latter ever delivered in the House of Commons, if one may judge by its perusal. The result was much more than a virtual defeat for the Government (who had only a majority of five in a House of 658), if we consider what the Liberal preponderance had been after the general election. The scene has been described by a graphic pen :—

The Adullamites on the Ministerial benches, carried away by the delirium of the moment, waved their hats in sympathy with the Opposition, and cheered as loud as any. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech, had politely performed the operation of 'holding a candle to'—Lucifer ; and he, the prince of the revolt, the leader, the instigator and prime mover of the conspiracy, stood up in the excitement of the moment, flushed, triumphant, and avenged. His hair, brighter than silver, shone and glistened in the brilliant light. His complexion had deepened into something like a bishop's purple. His small, regular, and almost woman-like features, always instinct with intelligence, now mantled with liveliest pleasure. He took off his hat, waved it in wide and triumphant circles over the heads of the very men who had just gone into the lobby against

him. 'Who would have thought there was so much in Bob Lowe?' said one member to another; 'why, he was one of the cleverest men in Lord Palmerston's Government.' . . .

Anyhow, there he stood, that usually cold, undemonstrative, intellectual, white-headed, red-faced, venerable-looking arch-conspirator, shouting himself hoarse like the ringleader of schoolboys at a successful barring-out, and amply repaid at that moment for all Skye-terrier witticisms, and any amount of popular obloquy.¹

After the division it was clear to both sides of the House that the Reform Bill, if not the Russell-Gladstone Government, was doomed; though it was seen that the struggle might yet be severe.

Sir John Walsh to the Right Hon. R. Lowe.

28 Berkeley Square: May 1, 1866.

Dear Mr. Lowe,—I thank you very cordially for your note. You have interpreted very correctly my feelings with regard to your noble speeches, except that approbation is a term far too cold to express the admiration with which I regard them. They, particularly the last, rise above the level of mere Parliamentary debate, and, like the great orations of Burke, embody the principles of high statesmanship and political philosophy. I most earnestly hope that in the protracted form which this struggle is assuming, your efforts and ours may avert the incalculable evils with which we are menaced.

Yours very sincerely,
JOHN WALSH.

On May 7, Mr. Gladstone brought in the Redistribution of Seats Bill. It was opposed by Disraeli on its second reading a week afterwards in an effective speech, in which he told Mr. Gladstone that he 'must recross the Rubicon.' The following letters touch more or less on the great question then agitating the House and the country.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

34 Lowndes Square: May 7, 1866.

My dear Henry,—My speech is being published by Mr. Bush, 32 Whitehall, and will be out in a day or two. . . . I don't think

¹ *Annals of our Time*, 1837-71, p. 737. Joseph Irving. (Macmillan.)

the Bill will pass the Commons. I want the country to have another year to consider it. Any settlement (so-called) which is founded on a rank reduction of the borough franchise would be no settlement at all. It would not be a compromise, but a capitulation. How many times was the French Revolution declared to have reached its term, and the ground began to sink again next day! I am sorry I am not to see you on your way through, and sorry you have to go to Vichy. I hope you are well advised; I should have thought Carlsbad more likely to suit you. Give my love to my sisters and Louisa.

Believe me,
Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

34 Lowndes Square: May 24, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—We have just fitted another arrow to the bow, the result is to be next Monday. We have a fair chance of success this time, but I find people just as mean and just as hard to keep up to the mark here as in Australia, and as they are of course richer and more independent, their meanness is all the more disgraceful.¹ I have reached a position I never expected in my wildest dreams to attain. . . . You know I never was very ambitious and always cared more for the fight than for the prize. You will see in my speech several things which will not much please my friends in Australia. I have another speech to make on Monday, not prepared yet; things are so important here that I cannot trust to the inspiration of the moment as I used to do in Sydney.

Always most sincerely yours,
R. LOWE.

The arrow to the bow here referred to, meant either Sir Rainald Knightley's motion or the resolution of Captain Hayter, which ran as follows:—

That this House, although desirous that the subject of franchise and the redistribution of seats should be considered together, is of opinion that the system of grouping proposed in the present Bill for the redistribution of seats is neither convenient nor equitable, and that the scheme is otherwise not sufficiently matured to form the basis of a satisfactory measure.

¹ 'May 16, 1866. General Peel, whom I met to-day, is confident that the House of Commons will throw out the Reform Bill; but Mr. Lowe says that he has no material to work with, as people are so full of crotchets.' *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*

On the adjourned debate on Captain Hayter's resolution, May 31, 1866, Robert Lowe delivered the third of his philippics against the Russell-Gladstone Reform Bill. Many of his friends considered that this speech was on the whole his finest effort. He began in a very measured way by stating that Mr. Gladstone proceeded with the Redistribution of Seats Bill on no fixed principle. It put him in mind of the lady who wrote to a friend to ask how she was to receive a particular lover, and the answer was: 'As you receive all your other lovers.' As Mr. Gladstone declined to explain the principle of his measure, Lowe said that he must try to puzzle it out for himself. He then discussed the principle of equal electoral districts, which he thought must make us the slave of numbers—'very good servants but very bad masters.' He himself would advocate making fresh constituencies, with the view of giving more variety and life to the representation of the country, and thus making the House what the country is—'a collection of infinite variety of all sorts of pursuits and habits.' The path of danger lay in uniformity and monotony of representation—the inevitable outcome of the domination of mere numbers. Then something should be done to moderate the expenses of elections. He instanced a few large boroughs—Stafford cost 5,400*l.*; Stoke-on-Trent, 6,200*l.*; Sunderland, 5,000*l.*; and Westminster 12,000*l.* These figures represented the aggregate expenses of all the candidates. Lowe thus continued:—

I wish to call particular attention to the case of Westminster, not for the purpose of saying anything disagreeable to my honourable friend (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), for we know he was elected in a burst—I will say a well-directed burst—of popular enthusiasm. That was honourable to him and honourable to them, and I have no doubt that in the course of the election all that could be done by industry and enthusiasm was accomplished gratuitously: and I am sure that my honourable friend did not contribute in any way to swell any unreasonable election expenses. His election ought to have been gratuitous; but mark what it cost—2,302*l.* I believe it did not cost him 6*d.* He refused to contribute anything, and it was very much to the honour of his constituents that they brought him

in gratuitously. But look to the state of our election practices when such an outburst of popular feeling could not be given effect to without that enormous sacrifice of money.¹

He then glanced at the Counties: the northern division of Durham cost 14,620*l.*; South Lancashire, 17,000*l.*; the North Riding of Yorkshire, 27,000*l.*—‘all legitimate expenses, but by no means the whole expense.’

This state of things, he said, was not favourable to a genuine aristocracy, but it was favourable ‘to a plutocracy, working upon a democracy.’ Such frightful expenses excluded many of the best men in the community from taking any part in its government. To devise some scheme of redistribution that would tend to diminish the expense of elections would be in the nature of true constitutional reform. He then went on to quote from a work of Lord Russell’s, which contained a number of statements wholly at variance with the policy of his Reform Bill. This was one extract: ‘Dr. Temple says in a letter to the *Daily News*, “I know that when Emerson was in England, he regretted to me that all the more cultivated classes in America abstained *from politics because they felt themselves hopelessly swamped.*”’

He brought out strongly the inconsistencies of Mr. Gladstone and Earl Russell with regard to the pocket boroughs. As we know, he was not particularly keen about the disfranchisement of Calne, but in a kind of parody of Mr. Gladstone’s own defence of such small boroughs, he made use of an illustration which should have appealed to the essentially theological mind of his opponent: ‘If you are to be influenced by respect for traditions and by veneration for antiquity, perhaps Calne should have some claim, because it was there that the memorable encounter is said to have taken place between St. Dunstan and his enemies, which terminated in

¹ Compare Lowe’s own election expenses, when he was returned by a ‘burst of popular enthusiasm’ for Sydney. Vol. i. p. 363*n.*

the combatants all tumbling through the floor with the exception of the Saint himself.

‘And I may remind you that, in our own times, Calne was represented by Dunning, by Lord Henry Petty, by Mr. Abercromby (for some time Speaker of this House), and by Lord Macaulay.’

Lowe said in his blunt fashion that the main object of this Reform Bill was to render it impossible for any other than a Liberal Government to exist in this country for the future. Who can doubt that the chief reason for introducing it, as well as the subsequent Derby-Disraeli Bill, was to ‘dish’ the opposite party? He closed with the well-known eloquent peroration:—

To our hands at this moment is entrusted the noble and sacred future of free and self-determined government all over the world. We are about to surrender certain good for more than doubtful change; we are about to barter maxims and traditions that have never failed for theories and doctrines that never have succeeded. Democracy you may have at any time. Night and day the gate is open that leads to that bare and level plain, where every ant’s nest is a mountain, and every thistle a forest tree. But a Government such as England has, a Government the work of no human hand, but which has grown up the imperceptible aggregation of centuries—this is a thing which we only can enjoy, which we cannot impart to others, and which, once lost, we cannot recover for ourselves. Because you have contrived to be at once dilatory and hasty heretofore, that is no reason for pressing forward rashly and improvidently now. We are not agreed upon details, we have not come to any accord upon principles. To precipitate a decision in the case of a single human life would be cruel. It is more than cruel—it is parricide in the case of the Constitution, which is the life and soul of this great nation. If it is to perish, as all human things must perish, give it at any rate time to gather its robe about it, and to fall with decency and deliberation.

‘To-morrow!

Oh! that’s sudden spare it! spare it!

It ought not so to die.’

In consequence of Lord Grosvenor’s declaration, that owing to the state of foreign affairs he should not vote against

the Government, Captain Hayter's resolution was withdrawn on June 4.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

British Museum: June 9, 1866.

My dear Henry,—Many thanks for your letter, which I ought to have answered before; but I have been so busy. A great country like this cannot well be ruined without a great deal of time wasted in attack and defence. It seems, however, pretty well decided now. The cowards and waverers seem all to have gone to the side of the Government, and last Thursday shows that we have no other tactics left us but those of delay. It is to me one of the bitterest disappointments I ever had in my life, though I have two consolations—(1) that I have done my best to prevent it; (2) that personally I have gained much fame and respect. They say that I am the only person who has come out of it quite creditably. I hope you have received my last speech, for most people say (much to my surprise) that it is much the best of the four. I am glad you like the Irish one. *Tua res agitur*. The plan of Government is to bribe the Irish, who support them, with the spoils of the Irish landlords and the destruction of the present plan of Irish education. It is all of a piece.

I am very glad that Vichy seems likely to do you good. If it suits the family constitution, I will try it myself the first time I feel ill—which I suppose I shall some day. Pray go and see Auvergne, Cantal, and Le Puy. There is no country that I ever saw that took my fancy more. The road from Clermont to Lyons is wonderfully rich and beautiful, especially just when the corn is getting ripe. My wife is very poorly.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

On June 18, Lord Dunkellin's amendment, 'That the proposed 7l. borough franchise be a rating qualification,' was carried against the Government by a majority of eleven. On June 25, Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone announced that they had tendered their resignation to the Queen. Between those two dates Lowe wrote the following letter to Sydney.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

June 21, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—I have made another speech since I wrote to you, which people say is the best of the four. Since then

we have been squabbling in committee over the Bill, and as far as we can see at present, we have at last succeeded in turning out the Government, and their Bill—everything is just now uncertain. The Queen is at Balmoral, and we have adjourned to give time for her and the Government to settle matters. But what I flatter myself will interest you most in this very critical moment is that people say that but for me the Bill would have passed, and that I, without a party to back me, and with nothing but a good cause and myself to rely on, have arrested the Government and its democratic allies in full career. I have no idea of joining the Tories, but hope for a coalition. I will do all I can to stem the tide of democracy except forfeit my character. Edward Hamilton, who is sitting next me, says the joke is that I won't join the Tories because I do not approve their religious views. One of my old Whig friends met me the other day and asked me when I should come back to them; I said, when you come back to yourselves, which I think was a fair retort.

Always yours most sincerely,

R. LOWE.

When the Russell-Gladstone Government resigned, the Tories were, without their Liberal allies, in a decided minority. It is quite clear that, had Lord Stanley been a very ambitious man, or, perhaps one should say, born with the gift of ruling, he might at this crisis have commanded the situation, and changed the entire later history of this country. Lord Bath personally urged Lord Derby to retire in favour of his son; whereupon General Peel, one of the most trusted of the Tory leaders, said: 'A council of war is said never to fight; I hope that won't be the case with this council. I hope we shall fight under our old commander; but, for my part, if he gives it up, I am ready to fight under my young friend here [Stanley] or anyone else, against Gladstone and the democratic party.'¹

Who can doubt if General Peel could have foreseen that in a year's time his 'old commander' and Disraeli would introduce a far more democratic measure of parliamentary reform than Mr. Gladstone or even Mr. Bright had ever

¹ *Sir Stafford Northcote, First Earl of Iddesleigh.* By Andrew Lang. Vol. i. p. 260 (Blackwood).

contemplated, that he would then and there have insisted on Lord Stanley being the leader of the party ?

This, as we know, was not to be. Naturally, Lord Derby did not care to depose himself, while Disraeli, who had a reversionary interest in the leadership, could hardly be expected to be enthusiastic about such a change. He declared at the meeting that he was prepared to 'make the greatest sacrifices ;' but when he and his immediate followers, such as Sir Stafford Northcote, came to discuss the matter in cooler moments, they saw many practical objections to a fusion that meant the leadership of Lord Stanley, and the handing over of more than one important office to his Liberal friends. No doubt, Disraeli saw from the outset that if he and Lord Derby returned to office in a minority, the only thing to be done was to 'dish' the Whigs by bringing in a more popular Reform Bill than their own. As he said to Sir Stafford, 'perhaps we may be the men to settle the question.'

It is evident from the diary of Lord Iddesleigh that on his part, as well as on that of Disraeli, there was no real anxiety to make terms with Stanley and Lowe.

Sir Stafford Northcote was in many respects a typical English country gentleman—moderate in opinion, blameless in private life, well-meaning in public intention—but he was, after all, human. Such an entry as this in his diary (March 25, 1866) shows how difficult it must always be to make a fusion of political parties :—

Walked with X. in Kensington Gardens. He was very full of speculations, and rather disturbed with doubts as to the possibility of finding room for everybody in a fusionist Cabinet. I told him I should myself decline any subordinate office under a Government such as was likely to be formed, and should prefer to take my seat on the back bench with Henley and Heathcote, and watch the turn of events. He said he, too, had quite made up his mind not to take a subordinate office under any Government.

When even the most amiable of politicians can speak thus,

it is not difficult for them to believe any dreadful story of their allies, who they fear are about to push them from their stools. There is a truly amusing entry in Lord Iddesleigh's diary at this period, which cannot be ignored. X., who seems to have interviewed Lowe on more than one occasion at Sir Stafford's instigation, for the benefit of Disraeli, reports as follows: 'Lowe always has the worst opinions of everybody's motives, and never gives anyone credit for acting from high principle. This looks as if he acted from interested motives himself.'

Sir Stafford gravely entered this in his diary; and, no doubt, it helped him to feel that an alliance with such a person was, after all, not desirable in the public interest. The fact is that Robert Lowe detested platitudes and goody-goodyisms, and sometimes took rather a wicked pleasure in shocking people by epigrams and maxims after the manner of Rochefoucauld. But only a very superficial observer would take this habit of mind as a sign of a bad heart. In all probability, when X. called upon him, Lowe made some pungent observations on the elastic consciences of public men which were too true to be pleasant. He rather liked to shock and startle solemn persons, and thought nothing of parodying the best of copy-book mottoes. One much fears that X. and Sir Stafford took these *obiter dicta* far too seriously. Once, when a very intimate friend of Lord Sherbrooke's was asked why he always frightened off well-meaning but goody-goody persons, the reply was, '*Why does a watchdog bark when he sees the sheep?*'

When Lord Derby was sent for to form a new Ministry he conferred with Lord Grosvenor as the nominal leader of the Adullamites. The question really turned on whether Robert Lowe would accept office in a Derby-Disraeli Government; and, after consideration, he and his party decided that they would give the Conservatives a fair support, but that they

would not actually join them. There is no doubt that had his party been stronger, so that he could have dictated terms, Lowe would have made an alliance on the distinct understanding that Lord Stanley should be the head. But he had grave doubts both of Lord Derby and of Mr. Disraeli on the question of parliamentary reform; and events soon showed that his suspicions were well founded.

Robert Lowe to Canon Melville.

July 2, 1866.

My dear Melville,—Many thanks for your kind letter. Things are, as you say, not ripe for the Administration that I wish for, but they are tending towards it. The fear is, that they may go too slow, and the mischief may be done before the remedy arrives. I have refused to have anything to do with Lord Derby very much on the ground stated in the first article in the *Times* to-day. But I will give Derby all the unofficial support I can, that is, if they leave the Education Department alone. I don't care about office; so long as I have Calne, I can do very well. I wonder what kind of Government they will make—I expect a very poor one.

Very truly yours,
R. LOWE.

The following letter from a Tory of Tories—the great Lord Ellenborough—shows how Lowe's refusal to join Lord Derby was regarded by one of the foremost men of the party, whose letter is also interesting from the view it takes of the political situation.

Lord Ellenborough to the Right Hon. R. Lowe.

16 Eaton Place: July 4, 1866.

Dear Mr. Lowe,—I cannot say how sorry I am not to see your name amongst the members of the new Government, which mainly owes its existence to you. I can understand that you could not take office alone; but I had hoped that many of the Whigs would have taken this opportunity of relieving themselves from the disparaging fashion in which they have for some time stood in subordinate co-operation with Radicals.

I hoped to see a strong Conservative Whig Government. I am afraid such a change as has now taken place does not tend in that

direction, and that next year we may see a worse measure of Reform carried than would have been borne now. I don't see a good gleam of daylight anywhere. However, the memory of your services in a great cause will remain, and with no one more than with me.

Yours very faithfully,
ELLENBOROUGH.

Note.

LORD DERBY AND A COALITION.

THE one insuperable objection to a coalition is Lord Derby himself. Admirably qualified for the leader of a homogeneous party, possessing high station, indisputable ability, incomparable eloquence, and vast experience, Lord Derby may well command and receive the unhesitating support of his own side. . . . But all these gifts and advantages are so many disqualifications for the task of bringing into the same Cabinet men who have hitherto been in opposite camps. . . . There are very few things that he cannot do; but the uniting of two discordant sections of politicians is exactly one of them.—*Times*, July 2, 1866.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BATTLE WITH DEMOCRACY

(iv.) *Shooting Niagara*

(1866-67)

MR. FROUDE, in his brief monograph on Lord Beaconsfield, begins by mentioning that Carlyle's disposition to take a more kindly view of Disraeli's character was entirely shattered by the Reform Bill of 1867, which he 'regarded as the suicide of the English nation.' With that peculiar bent of mind which often makes Mr. Froude put forth the worst that can be urged against one of his favourite historical characters—for so I take it he has now come to regard Lord Beaconsfield—he quotes at the very opening of his book that terrible passage from Carlyle's *Shooting Niagara—and After* :—

Traitorous politicians grasping at votes, even votes from the rabble, have brought it on. One cannot but consider them traitorous; and for one's own poor share, would rather have been shot than have been concerned in it. . . . Nay, have I not a kind of secret satisfaction of the malicious, or even of the judiciary, kind (*Schadenfreude*, 'mischief-joy,' the Germans call it, but really it is 'justice-joy' withal), that he they call Dizzy is to do it; that other jugglers of an unconscious and deeper type, having sold their poor mother's body for a mess of official pottage, this clever conscious juggler steps in? 'Soft, you my honourable friends: I will weigh out the corpse of your mother—mother of mine she never was, but only stepmother and milch cow—and you shan't have the pottage—not yours, you observe, but mine.'

It is a strange reflection that he of whom these severe words were written should have lived to become in the eyes of millions of Englishmen, not only a great national

figure, but the most far-seeing and patriotic statesman of the century. There is nothing in Mr. Froude's pages to lead us to suppose that Carlyle, although he took, as the years passed by, a softer view of Disraeli, ever thought differently of his Reform Bill of 1867. To use Mr. Froude's happy phrase, Carlyle, after the precipitation over the cataract, held that a 'juggler' of some kind must be at the head of our affairs, and he 'retained his preference for the conscious over the unconscious.'

The Reform Bill of 1867, however, was quite as much the handiwork of Lord Derby as of his chief henchman. If we may accept Mr. George Saintsbury's view, Lord Derby was, indeed, its real author; and every student of our parliamentary annals from 1832 must realise that there is much to be said on this side. Mr. Saintsbury is, on the whole, a discriminating admirer of Lord Derby, and he is, moreover, one of the most consistent and thoroughgoing Tory publicists of our day. His words, though they be not so striking and bizarre as Carlyle's, are well worth considering:—

Though Mr. Disraeli may have had no particular objections to a lower franchise than any which had recently been proposed, he was not the author or chief supporter of the actual measure, and the initial, as well as the final, responsibility rests with Lord Derby. . . . There was to the last a great deal of boyishness in Lord Derby: and this boyishness took, among other forms, the form of being ready to act in a sort of 'here goes' and 'in for a penny in for a pound' spirit. . . . His practical shrewdness—a quality with which he is, I think, as a rule insufficiently credited—probably told him that the five years' respite he had procured by his compact with Palmerston was not a thing that could be repeated; and I do not know that it would be discreditable to his memory if we believed that in addition to a general wish to get the question done with and out of the way, a little of the *après moi le déluge* feeling entered into his motives. . . . We may therefore, I think, take it that the Household Suffrage Reform Bill was mainly his doing, and we may allow that he had divers reasons and excuses for his action: but was that action defensible in itself? I own that I do not think it was.

It is difficult to see how any person of Conservative views

can think differently. Disraeli's bitterest taunt to Sir Robert Peel was when he declared that if England were to have free-trade, it should be brought in by Cobden, 'rather than by one who, by skilful party manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and a great party.' Now, if we substitute for Cobden the name of his friend Bright, this taunt precisely applies to Disraeli himself with regard to the question of parliamentary reform.

The Derby-Disraeli Government came into office in June 1866, and immediately Reform demonstrations took place in London and all over the country. The following letters to Mrs. Billyard, though dated some few months afterwards, refer to the events immediately preceding and following the fall of the Russell-Gladstone Government. This is accounted for by the fact that, by the time the questions of his Sydney correspondent reached Lowe, the events referred to were already some two or three months old.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

Pencarrow, Bodmin : Sept. 16, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—I hope you will be a little tolerant with me if, in the midst of a life-and-death struggle, I could not find time to write to you. You know now that I had another speech to make on May 31, which was more admired than its predecessors, and you may easily believe how absorbing was the attention required to produce one after another so many speeches on the same subject to a highly critical assembly, and in face of the greatest orators in England. They are holding meetings in the manufacturing districts, but as they are all for manhood suffrage, they will not do much to help a 7l. franchise. It is the same fallacy as Gladstone fell into, the flesh and blood and fathers of families principle. . . . I found when I left London that I was on the point of being ill, having, I suppose, a little overtaxed my energies.

Everybody says that I was the main cause of the change of Government, so I am content, as I considered the bringing in of a Bill under the circumstances as a direct challenge to me to do my worst. My wife heard all my speeches, though it was very difficult for her to come upstairs. Let me by all means have Lily's Fairy Tale. I have been trying to see something of the beauties of these

Western Counties, but have been completely defeated by a deluge of rain. We went yesterday to Tintagel, where King Arthur very likely would have lived if he had ever existed.

Very sincerely yours,

R. LOWE.

The next letter, it will be seen, refers to the rumours that had evidently reached Sydney as to the probability of his being called to high office on the downfall of the Russell-Gladstone Government.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : November 14, 1866.

My dear Mrs. Billyard,—You are quite mistaken if you think I am going to be Prime Minister or any Minister at all. The stand I have made is far too decided, and far too ill-supported by the cowardly people who agree with me, to make it possible for me to hold any office while the Reform question is pending. Nobody can say how long this will be. My opinion is that it will never really be settled again; that a compromise, as it is called, will be made, which will strengthen the already over-powerful democratic element and lead to new changes in a downward democratic direction. If this be so, I have nothing before me but a life of hopeless opposition and constant vexation. At any rate dismiss from your mind the idea of my being Prime Minister or even leading the House of Commons. I could not do it if I would, and would not if I could. It would ruin my eyes, and I, not being ambitious, know of nothing this world has to give that would compensate me for sitting ten hours a night from 4 P.M. to 2 A.M. listening to all sorts of nonsense and perpetually making speeches about what I don't understand.

The terrific work of the last session and the continued illness of Mrs. Lowe had begun to tell on him, and he decided to leave her at Luchon or Carlsbad for the waters while he took a hurried tour in Scotland and Ireland, winding up at Pencarrow, Lady Molesworth's place in Cornwall. Writing to his brother before starting, he makes some amusing allusions to the results of the Reform agitation which John Bright and Mr. Beales were actively engaged upon. The letter, it will be seen, contains rather a wicked citation from one of Mr. Gladstone's

speeches, which Lowe proposed should be placarded after the fashion that Bright had suggested with regard to one of his own.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

34 Lowndes Square : July 25, 1866.

. . . You see the pregustration of the perfect happiness we are to enjoy under the Gladstone-Bright régime. They have broken Elcho's windows and Dizzy's, but by some inexplicable fatality have spared mine—the maligner of the working classes ! But I dare say they will mend their hand before they have done with me. I want to stick up a placard :—

EXTRACT FROM A SPEECH OF W. E. GLADSTONE,
SEPTEMBER 15, 1865.

‘So that anyone looking out on the broad surface of society might thank his God and say—Behold how good and joyful a thing it is to dwell together in unity.’

It is evident that his suspicions of the new Government were already fully aroused. He writes : ‘They have been making some abominable appointments in Ireland ; yet I see not but that they may endure for a while if they will keep quite clear of Reform. *It is very provoking that Derby would be Premier, otherwise we might have made something that would stand.*’

This plainly shows how he deplored the failure to form what Delane called a Third Party under Lord Stanley, in whose judgment and good sense the anti-Radical Liberals, of whom Robert Lowe was the leader, had at this time every confidence.

His letters to his brother at this period are full of allusions to holiday trips. There was one most enjoyable tour in Greece, when Mrs. Lowe made sketches of the Acropolis, and a drawing of a rainbow arch crossing the sea to the Plains of Marathon, the beauty of which Lord Sherbrooke never forgot, often alluding in later years to the glorious and interest-

ing sight. He and Mrs. Lowe delighted in planning these holiday excursions, in which he would sometimes like his brother to participate. He wishes to know if the squire of Oxton would 'go to Rome this winter,' adding, as a special inducement, that he could 'hunt in the Campagna.' In the same letter he says, 'I went to Oxford on Monday and had a sort of ovation at Magdalen.'

Mrs. Lowe's health, however, was so seriously affected that he was obliged to forego most of these plans; but he paid his promised visit to Lady Molesworth at Pencarrow. His friends in Cornwall found him as bright and cheerful as ever, and perfectly willing to write a verse in a lady's album when requested.

The following letter to his brother is evidently in reply to a suggestion as to a public dinner to be given in his honour (presumably by the Conservatives of his native county).

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

Sherbrooke: October 16, 1866.

My dear Henry,—I return you the letter and papers. If the dinner is for the purpose of giving me an opportunity for explaining myself, I should not desire it. In truth, I have nothing to explain. Now that Bright has given up garbling and misquoting what I said, I have no complaint to make. My language is quite intelligible, it is true, and it is as yet unanswered. I have nothing to explain or retract, and I see no good in repeating. I don't think that when the working classes claim to be the *only* ruling class in the country, they or their friends have any right to take offence at fair, open criticism. If the dinner were meant as a political demonstration of agreement in opinion with me, and were supported by the leading people in the county—were, in fact, calculated to make a strong impression on the public mind at this critical period, I should not feel the same objection, but then I don't think that it comes forward in that shape. I can only answer, as it is put to me, that I have nothing to explain or answer, and that I hold Bright and his mob in such sovereign contempt that I require no external support to fortify me against their abuse. What I am afraid of is your friends the Tories, and, above all, Dizzy, who, I verily believe, is concocting a very sweeping Bill.

We mean to go to Mentone to stay with Lady Ashburton the end of the first week in November. I suppose my wife will remain till the beginning of February. I mean to return much sooner to look after political affairs. I have got a bad cold, and am, I fear, very stupid. What I mean about the dinner is that I occupy just now fortunately, or unfortunately, so very large a space in the public eye that nothing short of a great political demonstration would be worth making at all—would, indeed, escape ridicule for its inadequacy.

Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

Parliament was prorogued on August 10, and did not re-assemble till February 5, 1867. The interval was actively employed by the reformers in an almost ceaseless round of agitation. All this time the intention of the Government with regard to Parliamentary Reform was unknown; probably even to themselves. The following letter would seem to show that Lowe did not wholly despair of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

December 16, 1866.

I am not very well from the effects of what might have been a bad accident. I went down to Oxford a few days ago and had a very bad fall from the railway platform at Didcot, which is dark and narrow. I fell on a bag of books which I had in my hand, and nearly stove in my ribs. Nothing was broken, however, and I am getting better, though much bruised and shaken, and unfit for much writing from the pain it gives me to stoop with a tight bandage pressing on the place. There is nothing new politically. I have been trying to persuade the Tories not to bring in a Reform Bill, and have, I think, succeeded. I want to give the country another year to reflect.

On January 1, 1867, Robert Lowe had a sharp controversy with the Reform League. Mr. Joseph Guedalla wrote to him suggesting that he should retract his so-called accusations against the working classes. To this Lowe replied in a letter that has always been admired for its singular directness.

Robert Lowe to Joseph Guedalla, Esq.

34 Lowndes Square: January 2, 1867.

Sir,—For many months the Reform League has, by resolutions, handbills, and speeches, accused me of charging the entire working class of this country with venality, drunkenness, and other misconduct. The passage in my speech of March 13, 1866, on which this accusation professes to be grounded, only states that such things do unhappily exist in the constituencies, and that where they do exist, they are to be found among the poorer rather than the richer voters. The comparison of these two statements will show: first, that I was speaking of the constituencies and not the working class at large; and next, that I only pointed out where such venality and other misconduct as does exist is most likely to be found.

The Reform League having thus fastened upon me assertions which I have not made, has loaded me with the most virulent abuse, and has striven to make me an object of the hatred, perhaps a mark for the vengeance, of my fellow-countrymen.

With such a body and its leaders, of whom you appear to be one, I have no courtesies to interchange. When I think proper to give an opinion on the recent popular demonstration, it is not to the Reform League that I shall offer it.

You call on me to retract, not what I have said, but your misrepresentation of what I have said. You can hardly be serious in making such a request. I decline to accede to it, and leave the case to the judgment of the country. I shall send this correspondence to the newspapers.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT LOWE.

Lowe regarded speeches as Newman regarded sermons, in the light of discourses intended for a particular audience, and therefore unsuited for general publication. But such was the universal perturbation and excitement over the question of reform, that, in response to many suggestions, chiefly from strangers, he decided to publish in a volume a selection of his speeches on Parliamentary Reform.

One of the most striking of the letters he received from strangers was a communication from Mr. Edward J. Chinnock, of Haverstock Hill, who remarked: 'Your speeches on reform were so eloquent and philosophical that your fellow-citizens

would not willingly allow them to die out of memory. If the volume were small and cheap, would it not prevent your speeches being so garbled and yourself so greatly misrepresented? I cannot express the admiration I feel for your parliamentary discourses, and, though I have never seen you, the respect I feel for you as a statesman and a man.'

In response to such appeals as this, Robert Lowe published the four Reform Speeches dealt with in this volume, to which he prefixed a most able and philosophic preface as well as his correspondence with the Liberal electors of Calne, and with Mr. Guedalla of the Reform League. The Preface to *Speeches and Letters on Reform* would alone make the book a valuable possession.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

January 12, 1867.

I do not know at all who will be Sir John Young's successor. If I have a chance I will speak a good word for the colony. You will see by the papers that I have had rather a brisk controversy with the Reform League; in which, I believe, I am generally admitted not to have come off second best. There are, I think, many symptoms against extreme men and measures. I am just come from Drayton, Sir Robert Peel's place, a very interesting house to me, full of the pictures and busts of the eminent men of this century. I have also been spending a few days in the same house with Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, and heard all about the Nile.

Parliament was opened by the Queen in person on February 5, 1867, but it was not till the 25th of the month that Disraeli tabled the series of abortive resolutions by which he proposed, in the first instance, to deal with the question of reform. Public feeling all this time was at fever heat; all sorts and conditions of men wrote to Robert Lowe with regard to the stand he had taken in the previous session of Parliament on the extension of the franchise. An elector of Greenwich, in a letter of considerable length, observed, 'You may rest assured, notwithstanding the calumny that has been heaped upon you on account of an unfortunate but perfectly just

remark in one of your speeches, you have fairly won for yourself the reputation of being the first man in the House of Commons.'

Many of these letters were from struggling professional and commercial men in the provinces, and were often typical of middle-class opinion, which, as our later political annals show, is so much more difficult to gauge than that of either the upper or the lower classes.

A commercial man writing from Leeds, after highly eulogising Lowe's Reform speeches, proceeds to relate his own experiences in the fierce war of labour and capital. Since the rise of the Trades Unions, he says, the word 'master' might as well be expunged from Johnson or Walker.

These Unions are doing incalculable injury to trade, and there is hardly a man among them who ever received as much out during a strike as he had paid in. The poor fellows are the willing dupes of a few idle demagogues. I will give you one instance that occurred last week. A joiner had a son from school whom he wished should learn his trade, and so bound him an apprentice; but because this lad would not join the Union, the men struck, and are out now.

A Yorkshire surgeon began by saying that, though an old man in years and experience, he did not himself yet possess the parliamentary franchise, but trusted 'ere long to do so, and without the association of the bottom strata.'

I never knew nor do yet see what there was in your remarks last session in the House of Commons to require either regret, retraction, or even modification. As a consistent and, I trust, not illiterate Conservative, I claim some little weight for opinions, however humble, founded upon *personal* experience. I know more than one butcher who last year sold weekly from three to seven legs of first-rate mutton to the iron-workers to feed prize dogs, and during the late strike in the same town, one personally known to me was getting two, or sometimes three, legs weekly for the same purpose. I may add that scores of the best and most intelligent of these men earn from 160*l.* to 600*l.* per annum, and neither pay income tax nor doctors' bills for their families nor for themselves, beyond a sad trifle to the club. Surely I may express surprise that

such men are to be put in possession of a responsible privilege affecting the whole community, whilst men like myself are without a vote.

The following letter from a working man, which Robert Lowe received in January 1867, gave him a gleam of hope that there was, after all, a certain saving common-sense and moderation in the English character which might preserve the nation in spite of its political factions.

Edwin Lunn (Huddersfield) to the Right Hon. R. Lowe, M.P.

I am a working man, fifty-one years old, in good health and strength. I live in a £6 10s. house. It is a clean, comfortable, and well-furnished cottage. I never received above twenty-two shillings per week in my life. I have brought up five children, and they can all read and write well, and I have a careful and economical wife, which is the greatest treasure a working man can possess and worth more than 100 votes. I have not a vote: I have not political power, but I have *liberty*. I can say what I like, I can go where I like, and I can do what I like, if I do not injure anybody else. I am lightly taxed. I pay no more taxes to the general Government than what I receive a full equivalent for in the protection to life and property which it accords to me. There are no obstacles to my rise in life if I possess abilities and moral qualities essential to success. Thus am I practically free, but what I fear is, that if the majority of my class (and I know something about them in my town and neighbourhood) had political power, the liberties and privileges I now enjoy would be in great jeopardy; and I am content to be without a vote until the majority of my class are better fitted to exercise it.

I have read Tocqueville on Democracy in America, and Alison's History of Europe, and I hate and detest democracy as much as any man can do. I respect and admire you for your bold and powerful opposition to it, and though demagogues, democrats, and the unthinking multitudes whose passions and prejudices they can arouse, may vilify and abuse you, take consolation, Sir, in the knowledge that the thinking and reflecting portion of all classes of Englishmen respect, esteem, and admire you. Continue in your labours, and may the blessing of God attend you.

I am yours truly,

EDWIN LUNN.

P.S.—If you condescend to acknowledge the receipt of this, I shall consider it the greatest honour ever yet conferred upon me. I

had the honour, along with a few more working men, of presenting an address from the non-electors of Huddersfield to Mr. E. Ackroyd, now member for Halifax, when he was defeated at Huddersfield in 1859, and we were kindly entertained at his own house. Colonel Crosland, the member for Huddersfield, will also, I dare say, remember me.

You may rely upon the accuracy of my statements, and are at liberty to make what use you like of my letter.

After the meeting at Lord Derby's official residence (February 21) when he declared that he intended to deal with Reform for the last time (adding that nothing would induce him ever again to become Prime Minister), Mr. Disraeli brought forward the thirteen resolutions upon which he and his colleagues proposed a Reform Bill should be based. Just a week before this Robert Lowe, in a brief letter to his Sydney correspondent, shows that he had rightly gauged the political situation.

'I am very anxious' he wrote, 'about public affairs and have very little hope of a successful termination to my efforts. The reign of reason seems over. Everybody is determined to settle the question of reform, and they hardly seem to care how. At this rate it will soon come back upon us, but I can do no more though I will persevere to the end. I see no use in supporting the miserable Government which is betraying us on every side, and mean to make a regular attack on Monday next upon them, the result of which you will see in the newspapers.'

Robert Lowe was as good as his word. When Disraeli tabled his resolutions, which was merely a way of trying to settle the question without assuming any Ministerial responsibility, Lowe made an effective attack on the proposal.

'The resolutions of the Government,' he said, 'have no more to do with the plan of the Government than Squire Thornhill's three famous postulates had to do with the argument with Moses Primrose, when, in order to controvert the right of the clergy to tithes, he laid down the principles

that the whole is greater than its part ; that whatever is, is ; and that three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.'

There soon followed another meeting at Lord Derby's house, when the scheme of the first Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill was propounded. This was called the Ten Minutes Bill and was equally abortive. But it led to momentous consequences—to the resignation of three of the most respected members of the Cabinet—the Earl of Carnarvon, General Peel, and Lord Cranborne, now Marquis of Salisbury.

On February 5 Lord Stanley, the present Earl of Derby, who was then Foreign Secretary in his father's Government, made what is a most significant speech if read by the light of the negotiations that had passed between him and Lowe.

Right hon. gentlemen have spoken as if it were the intention of those who sat upon these benches to go in a more democratic direction than even gentlemen opposite would be inclined to take, and to bring in a Bill which would reduce the franchise to an excessive extent. I say plainly and frankly that I can conceive no circumstances which would render the adoption of such a course by us in our position either expedient or honourable, even were any who sit on these benches prepared to follow it. I say this distinctly, because I wish to save some hon. members on this side of the House disappointment. If the member for Calne, or any of those who sit near him, believe seriously that it is the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill which shall be in accordance with the view which has always been so ably and so consistently advocated by the member for Birmingham, they are greatly mistaken.

Nothing could well be more clear than this declaration ; and knowing as we do what followed, we can but wonder that Lord Stanley did not promptly imitate the example of his three eminent colleagues, and resign. Had he done so, it is difficult to see how even the gay recklessness of the Earl of Derby and the brilliant adroitness of Disraeli could have carried the Reform Bill of 1867.

On March 18 Disraeli asked leave to introduce the Bill.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

March 23, 1867.

Your account of the terrestrial paradise of Hobart Town sounds very pleasant to us here, where we have been undergoing all the horrors of a second winter. I never remember such a March ; it is like the one in which the Battle of Towton was fought, of which the French historian, Martin, says *Le temps était affreux, comme toujours en Angleterre*. Politics look very bad indeed, and we are in a fair way to be accommodated with something like household suffrage unless a gleam of good sense again shine to enlighten our darkness. I made a speech last Monday, but it is nothing but a dry argument on a not very attractive subject.

Disraeli had, however, thoroughly outmanœuvred the official Liberals. Both Mr. Gladstone and John Bright wished to oppose the second reading, but they could not carry their own party with them. The Radicals, in fact, having committed Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli to reform, were determined to shape the measure according to their desires in committee. Robert Lowe was now fighting with strange allies, of whom the present Marquis of Salisbury was one of the most thoroughgoing and consistent. These two leaders were at least unbound and unpledged to any scheme of Parliamentary Reform. It was far otherwise with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, who were also bitterly antagonistic to the Derby-Disraeli Bill, but whose opposition to any measure that implied an extension of the franchise necessarily appeared factious. Disraeli might have stolen their clothes, but there was something ludicrous in the real owners denouncing the cut and make of the garments. Disraeli was, probably, never more effective than in his conduct of this Reform Bill, and never before or since was Mr. Gladstone at such signal disadvantage.

On May 16 Lowe made one of the most effective of his speeches against the measure. The debate arose with regard to the abolition of the compound householder, and showed, as did each fresh discussion, that the Government were prepared to give way, and to surrender all the so-called securities of their Bill, in proportion as they were vigorously pressed by

the Opposition. It was on this occasion that he addressed that eloquent appeal to the gentry of England, 'with their long line of ancestry behind them, and their posterity before them.'

'I was told the other night' (he said) 'by the hon. member for the Elgin boroughs,¹ that the fates and destinies had been too strong for me. I have no fear of them, sir; what has been too strong for me is the shabbiness, the littleness, and the meanness that have met together.'

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

May 17, 1867.

I have little to tell except that everything is going from bad to worse in politics, and last night we had an intimation that every householder is to have a vote, except those who are excused paying rates on the ground of poverty. If you have, as I hope, received the copy of my speeches which I sent you, you will be in a condition to judge how such news affects me. It is very mortifying, after so much success as I had last year, to find everything betrayed and lost, and the country placed in hands which, considering the highly artificial state of society here, can only consign it to ruin. We cannot afford to play the tricks that new countries can, and what is only disgraceful and injurious to them is positive and absolute destruction to us.

On May 20 Lowe spoke again in committee with great effect, saying: 'We have inaugurated a new era in English politics this session, and, depend upon it, the new fashion will henceforth be the rule and not the exception. This session we have not had what we before possessed—a party of attack, and a party of resistance. We have, instead, two parties of competition who, like Cleon and the sausage-seller in Aristophanes, are both bidding for the support of Demos.' The author of the historic article in the *Quarterly Review* entitled 'The Conservative Surrender' (October 1867), writes thus on our party system: 'The tactics of parliamentary parties are often hardly to be distinguished from faction; the agencies by which they operate upon the wavering or the wayward are far from exalted; the temptation to purchase allies by concessions of

¹ Mr. (now Sir) Mountstuart Grant Duff, subsequently Governor of Madras.

principle is enormous. The one ennobling element, the palliation, if not the atonement, for all shortcomings, is that all the members of a party are enlisted in common to serve one great, unselfish cause, and that it is in that service that their zeal, even when least scrupulous, is working. *Take this great end away, and parties become nothing but joint-stock companies for the attainment and preservation of place.*'

Lowe had no very profound belief in the various palliatives to democracy pure and simple which the Philosophic Radicals were fond of propounding; but on July 5 he moved an amendment in favour of cumulative voting which was supported by Mill and his disciple, the late Professor Fawcett, then the newly elected member for Brighton. It was, however, rejected by a large majority, though Lowe introduced it in a speech altogether free from the hair-splitting niceties which generally mark the efforts of the advocates of all forms of minority representation. His speech, which is referred to and in part quoted in Sir John Lubbock's admirable tractate on 'Representation,' possesses a personal and biographical interest; for it marks the period when Lowe clearly recognised that, do what he might, the democratic era had arrived.

'All our other arrows have been shot,' he pertinently observed in introducing his proposal for the cumulative vote. The existing electoral system, he argued, strengthened the majority and weakened the minority in an altogether arbitrary fashion. Let each elector have as many votes as there were vacancies, with the right to dispose of them as he pleased—to give all to one candidate or to distribute them among all. 'There was nothing,' he said, 'more worthy of the attention of statesmen in the new position of affairs than that which would tend to prevent the violent oscillation which they now witnessed. What happened in the United States? The minority might as well not exist at all. It is absolutely ignored. Was England in like manner to be formed into two hostile camps?

Or were they to have that shading off of opinion, that modulation of extremes, and mellowing and ripening of right principles, which are among the surest characteristics of a free country, the true secrets of political dynamics, and the true preservatives of a great nation ?'

Though this amendment in favour of the cumulative vote utterly failed, the fact that Lowe thought it worth while to bring it forward in a careful and elaborate speech, shows the importance he attached to any anti-democratic breakwater.

It was a somewhat dramatic scene on July 15, when the Reform Bill was read a third time, and when the two chief speakers against it were Lord Cranborne and Mr. Lowe. The speech of the former, one of the most biting ever delivered in the House of Commons, afterwards found fuller expression in 'The Conservative Surrender.' Strangely enough, the same number of the *Quarterly Review* contained a most trenchant article on Trades' Unions, by Robert Lowe. 'If you borrow your political ethics,' said the present Marquis of Salisbury, 'from the ethics of the political adventurer, you may depend upon it the whole of your representative institutions will crumble beneath your feet.' Robert Lowe followed his erstwhile opponent in this memorable debate. In his speech, which was quite as able and unsparing as Lord Cranborne's, he made unmistakable reference to the former honourable alliance between himself and the Conservatives. 'How,' he asked, 'was it possible that I, who was daily in communication with the right hon. gentlemen opposite when they held widely different opinions, could ever have believed that, after their declarations last year, and after their condescending to accept from us help they could not have done without, they would have done what they have done?' 'Was it to be conceived,' he added, pointing to the Tory benches, 'that right honourable gentlemen who had given no indications of the extreme facility of changing their opinions and lending themselves to

the arts of treachery, would, for the sake of keeping a few of them in office for a short time, and giving some small patronage to half-a-dozen lawyers, have been prepared to sacrifice all the principles, all the convictions, and all the traditions of their lives, while others were prepared to turn round on their order, and on the institutions of the country, merely for the purpose of sitting behind those right hon. gentlemen, and hearing, with the knowledge that it is all true, language such as that the noble lord [Viscount Cranborne] has used to-night ?'

The distinguished author of 'The Conservative Surrender' makes this noticeable comment on the policy of Tory opportunism, which, as he says, the Earl of Derby embraced with a frank disavowal of any pretence to political principle¹ :—

There was no doubt at all as to the nature of the resistance offered by the Conservative leaders in 1866 to Mr. Gladstone's Bill ; there was no doubt of the nature of the support they received in doing so. The division which carried them to power was won by the votes of half-a-dozen men. Numbers of those who voted with them on that occasion would have supported any leader and have accepted almost any Bill rather than have promoted a measure of household suffrage. The Conservative leaders knew this perfectly well. They were not ignorant of the motives which inspired the enthusiasm with which the eloquence of Mr. Lowe was received, or of the sentiments which animated the majority of the speeches delivered from their own side of the House. Both in public and in private they were stimulating those feelings to the utmost of their power. Not a single hint escaped from any of them which could damp the ardour of their anti-democratic supporters and allies. By every means at their command they not only allowed, but encouraged and sanctioned, the belief that they were resisting as excessive the admission of the lower classes to the franchise, proposed in Mr.

¹ 'I have upon two previous occasions attempted to carry on government with a minority in the House of Commons, and upon both occasions I have failed. . . . I did not intend for a third time to be made a mere stop-gap until it should suit the convenience of the Liberal party to forget their dissensions and bring forward a measure which should oust us from office and replace them there ; and I determined that I would take such a course as would convert, if possible, an existing majority into a practical minority.'—Lord Derby's *Speech on Second Reading of Reform Bill*.

Gladstone's Bill. Their supporters were fully hoodwinked. They voted in blind reliance on the assurances they had received. In order to defeat a proposal which they feared might ultimately result in universal suffrage, they ousted Mr. Gladstone from power; and when they greeted that victory with tumultuous applause, no presentiment crossed a single mind of the utter ruin of their hopes and their cause, which by that very victory they had accomplished.

Whatever one's own political views may be, there can hardly be any doubt that Lord Carnarvon, Lord Cranborne, General Peel, and Mr. Beresford Hope—all high-minded and typical Tory gentlemen—were perfectly right in deploring the measure of household suffrage, engineered so skilfully by Disraeli through the Commons. Both the measure itself and the manner in which it was passed (by the Radical wing of Mr. Gladstone's party), constitute not only a Conservative surrender, but a dereliction of public duty, infinitely more outrageous than Sir Robert Peel's desertion of his party in favour of Cobdenism in 1846; for Sir Robert Peel was able to declare that he had become a convinced free-trader, whereas neither Lord Derby nor even Mr. Disraeli could honestly assert that they had become, in their hearts, Radical reformers. Robert Lowe's opinion of this surrender never changed; he thought then, and to his dying day, that it was disgraceful as well as indefensible.

Sir Stafford Northcote, whose quiet ability and high character were of material assistance to Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli in the 'education of their party' in the democratic direction, kept a diary of the events of 1866 which is not without political interest. But everyone must share in the regret of his biographer, Mr. Andrew Lang, that this diary was not continued through the year 1867. It would have been interesting, and perhaps instructive, to read his entries concerning such nights in the Commons as that on which Lord Cranborne, to whose vacated post he had been promoted, gave such vigorous expression to his opinions on that 'policy of legerdemain,' which, he declared, 'had no parallel in our

parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all mutual confidence, which is the very soul of our party government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained.'

When the Tory Reform Bill emerged, in all the naked simplicity of its unadulterated Radicalism, Robert Lowe could not help bantering John Bright, the moving spirit of the Reform agitation, who would have helped Mr. Gladstone to defeat it but that the party would not follow them.

He had been agitating the country for household suffrage—not meaning, as we see by his conduct this session, to get household suffrage. He has got it now, and I ask, Is he of opinion that it is easy to stop when you like in the path of concession? The hon. member issomething like Don Giovanni—which, by the way, is Italian for John. The Don asked the Commendatore to supper because he thought he could not come; but the Commendatore did come. He said: 'Don Giovanni, you have invited me, and I am here!' This is very much the position of the hon. member for Birmingham. He invited household suffrage and it has come; you can never stop when once you set the ball rolling. . . . *I believe it will be absolutely necessary to compel our future masters to learn their letters.*

After the usual pottering between the two Houses, the Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill became the law of the land; Lord Derby, with his usual outspoken indiscretion, remarking at its final stage in the House of Lords that it was 'a leap in the dark.'

The fact was, the measure had been so entirely remodelled in a Radical direction that Lord Derby might have been forgiven had he failed to recognise it.¹

The following letter to Canon Melville refers to the debate of July 4, on the amendment in favour of the representation of minorities by means of the cumulative vote. It is interesting

¹ It was wittily said that the only word of the original measure left was 'Whereas.' There will be found an admirable abstract of the Representation of the People Act of 1867, side by side with the original Reform Bill as introduced by Disraeli in March 1867, in the Appendix to *The History of the ReformBills of 1866 and 1867*, by Homersham Cox, M.A., Barrister-at-Law.

to note that this question was discussed in both Houses altogether independently of party considerations ; for not only was Lowe supported by Mill and Professor Fawcett, but also by Lord Cairns and Lord Russell, while his principal opponents were Disraeli, Bright, and Mr. Gladstone.

Robert Lowe to Canon Melville.

34 Lowndes Square : August 12, 1867.

My dear Melville,—I am going to day to Carlsbad for my wife's health, so have not much time to write. I am not in Cairns's councils, but I suppose he took the plan because Lord Russell was pledged to it. It is bad, because it gives apparently more than really, relying on the difficulty of managing the split votes of the majority. I don't think anyone in either House understood it. I wrote a letter signed 'M.P.' to explain it. Gladstone and Bright spoke very ill, with much vehemence, and no argument,¹ and they were very easy to show up. The House also seemed pleased with the process.

Always very truly yours,
R. LOWE.

The autumn of 1867 certainly found Robert Lowe in evil case: Mrs. Lowe was seriously ill, her once fine constitution and strong vitality apparently giving way, while the condition of the country after the passage of the Reform Bill filled him with gloomy apprehensions.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxtou.

Carlsbad : September 3, 1867.

My dear Henry,—It is your birthday, and though to you and me these things have long ceased to be matters of congratulation, I dare say you will not object that I should remember it. I have just drunk your health and many happy returns of the day in a fearful compound called Melnöker, which is made somewhere in these parts and sold for wine. I am here for my wife's health, which I suspect will not be much benefited, for though the waters may do her good, the long hot journeys, the lowering effect of the potation, and

¹ This must be taken as applying only to this particular debate; for Lord Sherbrooke was clearly alluding to Bright and Gladstone, when, in a previously quoted letter to his Sydney correspondent, he spoke of the labour of addressing a highly critical assembly in face of the greatest orators in England.

a not very generous dietary will, I fear, turn the scale the other way. I have been taking the waters for conformity, as the lawyers say; that is, to prevent some disease which I have not got, but which the doctors think I may have some day; I don't so much care for them, however, as for the heat and, above all things, the glare. However, the longest lane will have a turning, and somewhere towards the middle or end of next week I hope to turn my steps homewards, and trust it may not be very long before I see you at Oxton.

I know no news, but have been employing myself in writing an article for the *Quarterly* on Trades' Unions, in which I flatter myself I have shown some daylight through those august institutions. I have not written to you since the end of our parliamentary campaign. I am very down-hearted about the future of the country; but it is of no use making oneself unhappy—so you have my free leave to say, as many people do, that it is not of the slightest consequence, and does not make the least difference. I don't feel quite sure about my seat at Calne. The pig-sticking interest has all gone against me, owing to a quarrel between them and the parson, which has ended in a secession from the Church, and an adoption by the seceders of the politics of Beales and Bright. So if the University of London don't take pity on me, I am very likely to go by the board. The immensely increased expense of elections seems to make almost any other constituency impossible. Calne has increased by 600 voters, everyone of whom is venal.

My love to Louisa and Mousie.

Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

The battle with democracy had been fought and lost, but Robert Lowe, though defeated, was in no wise disgraced. With a handful of supporters he had withstood the two greatest masters of the House of Commons of our time. One government he had overthrown; the other had been able to succeed only by tactics which were denounced in no measured terms by some of the chief men on its own side, one of whom subsequently became Prime Minister of England, and is now the honoured leader of the Conservative party. It is difficult in the whole of our parliamentary annals to point to a more striking achievement.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVIII

THE BATTLE WITH DEMOCRACY

I. *A Working Man's Tribute*

WHILE the passions of the mob were being inflamed by artful demagogues against the man whose crime it was that he had dared to speak the truth, it is abundantly evident that the better class of working men were quietly forming their own conclusions.

From the correspondence of Mr. Barker, who, starting as a news-boy, attributed his rise in the world to the impression made up on him by Mr. Lowe's speeches, I have extracted the following:—

Writing to Lord Sherbrooke on June 29, 1890, he says: 'The phrase "We must educate our masters" was to the better class of working men worth a whole column of flattery. It was a challenge they have taken up. It may suit some working men to hear a man say "And I, too, my friends, am one of you; I am a working man." But having lived on ancient and modern history at a time when I had not a farthing in my pocket, and did not know where to get one, I object altogether to the exaltation of one class, be it royal, patrician, or plebeian. It is a danger-signal to any community.'

On another occasion he uses the following words:—'When the masses of this country are, in regard to their intellect, fully developed, they will speak well of you, and not without reason. Your speeches were, among other things, a challenge to the Government to educate the people, and a premium on Individualism. They were the latter for the reason that there runs through them a frank recognition of, and a wise sympathy with, those who had themselves made their way in the world. As to your being abused for speaking of corruption and venal practices, that was absurdly stupid; for had there been no corruption, no venal practices, why, eighteen years after you spoke, was a most stringent Act against corrupt practices necessary, and why, before 1865-7, if there were no corruption, did we so often hear of members being unseated for corrupt practices?'

Mr. Barker has proved himself in word and deed a stout advocate of the working classes. He is not, however, on that account afraid to denounce the prevailing cant as to the 'working-man member,' and his dishonest appeals to the self-love of his audience. He relates that when employed in a newspaper office, orders were given to print the following sentence: 'The finest and most intelligent body of men before whom I have ever been privileged to stand;' 'and,' continued the manager, 'make two level lines of the words and keep them standing, for they will come in handy whenever the gentleman speaks.'

'It was not until the summer of 1890 that I came into contact with Lord Sherbrooke,' adds Mr. Barker. 'I somehow feared to approach him

but I soon learnt that there was no cause for my hesitation. I found him genial and courteous, and spent a most agreeable hour in conversation with him. As I left, I said I was going to the death-bed of a fellow-clerk, whose last hours were saddened by the prospect of a parish funeral. Lord Sherbrooke at once volunteered his assistance, and that same evening I was enabled to dispel the forebodings of my dying friend.'

II. 'Punch's' Tribute.

There once was a fistie performer
Of note in the early P.R.
Than whom none e'er won plaudits warmer
In gladiatorial war.

He was specially valued for bottom,
And for holding his own against odds ;
And his foes, once in chancery he got 'em,
Soon measured their length on the sods.

From the Robert, his full-length cognomen,
And the lily-white thatch of his nob,
His friends of the fancy and foemen
Entitled him white-headed Bob.

If of mauleys you wanted the strongest,
The best sparring skill to be had,
Pluck and wind alike safe to last longest,
Then white-headed Bob was the lad.

They may talk of Westminster's old glories
When all Europe around made a ring,
Of Pitt, Fox, and Burke, tell their stories,
Chatham's reach, Barré's stop, Windham's swing.

But for clean sparring, straight shoulder hitting,
Quick parry, sharp counter, clean throw,
Against all of long standing or sitting,
At long odds, I'll stand on Bob Lowe.

Who's forgotten his mills with Bill Gladstone,
The heaviest weight in the field ?
When Bob cheeked him, Bill chaffed the lad's tone,
And no backers he had when he peeled ;

But he found his own stakes, his own second,
In his own colours came to the scratch,
And in more rounds than Bill would like reckoned,
Proved himself at the least Billy's match.

And when Bill was walloped by Benjy,
 The artful Caucasian chicken ;
 And he could not get his revenge, he
 We know, never could take a licking ;

Up came Bob smiling, game as a pebble,
 And knocked Benjy all round the ring,
 Till his backers looked black as the Debbil,
 And the sponge up were ready to fling.

In these days of crossings and dodgings,
 When one never knows who's on the square ;
 When folks change their sides like their lodgings,
 And there's all kinds of fighting but fair,

'Tis a comfort to have honest gripping,
 Hits straight from the shoulder that go ;
 No squaring the fight or down-slipping :
 ' Win or lose, let's fight fair,' says Bob Lowe.

Cads and costers may bully and bluster,
 And call him bad names round the ring ;
 A fig for the dirty-faced cluster,
 His rule's to let snobs have their swing.

But John Bull prefers things on the square,
 Pluck and bottom he never will ban ;
 And when all's done he'll reckon Bob fair,
 And an out-and-out game fighting man.

And if 'Varsity graduates of London
 Are looking about them to find
 How to get all their brain-work and fun done
 By a tongue that can utter their mind,

They may look a long time ere they hit
 On one who such muscle can show,
 One for truth's sturdy champion so fit,
 As much-abused, honest Bob Lowe.

Punch : June 13, 1867.

CHAPTER XIX

AFTER NIAGARA—THE TWO PROBLEMS

Primary and Classical Education.—An Address delivered before the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, Friday, November 1, 1867, by the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, M.P.

Middle Class and Primary Education.—Two Speeches by the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, M.P., delivered at the Annual Dinner of the Liverpool Philomathic Society, and at the Conference on Education at the Town Hall, on January 22 and 23, 1868.

Middle Class Education. Endowment or Free Trade.—By the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, M.P. 1868.

What shall we do for Ireland?—*The Quarterly Review*, No. 247. January 1868.

THE great conflict with democracy seems to have cemented a lasting regard and friendship between Robert Lowe and the Earl of Shaftesbury, whose characters and ideals were in some respects diametrically opposed.

Robert Lowe to Lord Shaftesbury.

34 Lowndes Square : November 12, 1867.

My dear Lord Shaftesbury,—I am much obliged to you for your noble speech, which delighted me not more from the commanding ability it displayed, than from the honesty and courage which led you to tell the exact truth about classes to whom you have devoted your life, and whom everyone but you has combined to flatter with a fulsome hypocrisy. Cairns borrowed his hobgoblin argument from Gibson, who took it from Cobden, who took it from Bentham—a nice Tory pedigree! At any rate, he is not afraid of hobgoblins, for the ghosts of his two speeches must have confronted him and cried: ‘Hold! Hold!’

Believe me, always

Yours most truly,

ROBERT LOWE.

On October 6 of the preceding month, Robert Lowe and Benjamin Disraeli were made LL.D.'s of Edinburgh University.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

November 17, 1867.

I was on the wing all October in Westmoreland and Scotland, from which I have only just returned. I made a very satisfactory campaign in Edinburgh, where they made me an LL.D. the same day as Disraeli. I was better received than he, which must have annoyed him very much, as he went down there in the full blaze of his ill-earned success to receive the homage of Tories and Radicals united. My speech was one of the most successful I ever made. It has indeed created a perfect furore, and is regarded with the utmost horror by schoolmasters and all persons who make their living by Latin and Greek.

Robert Jamieson has just come home—a most unwelcome apparition; he served in the Colonial Force in New Zealand, during the war, then for a year in the British artillery. He was discharged, and has now come back to me apparently unfit for anything. What evil that I have done has ever been visited upon me like this one good action?

I.—THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION.

Mr. R. A. Macfie of Dreghorn,¹ an old and valued parliamentary friend of Lord Sherbrooke, who, I am proud to think, has taken a keen personal interest in this work, writes (within three weeks of his eighty-second year): 'I regard Lord Sherbrooke's words: "We must educate our masters" as among the finest (uninspired) words ever uttered.'

En passant, it may be noted that Robert Lowe's words were 'to compel our future masters to learn their letters;'

¹ As these pages were passing through the press, the news arrived of Mr. Macfie's death (February 17, 1893). 'Mr. R. A. Macfie, of Dreghorn, Colinton, near Edinburgh, died yesterday at the age of 82. He was a son of Mr. John Macfie, Provost of Leith, who welcomed George IV. when he landed at that port on his visit to Scotland in 1822. He was for a number of years head of the firm of Messrs. Macfie and Sons, sugar refiners, Liverpool, but retired from business in 1871. He represented the Leith Burghs in Parliament in the Liberal interest from 1868 to 1874. Sir Thomas M'Clure, who died recently at Colinton, was a son-in-law of Mr. Macfie.'—*Times*.

but the phrase as Mr. Macfie gives it, 'educate our masters,' has become proverbial, and comes more trippingly from the tongue. In fact, Disraeli's 'I had to educate our party,' and Lowe's 'We must educate our masters,' are perhaps two of the most oft-quoted parliamentary phrases of our time. The meaning was, of course, that Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli had handed over the governing power in the State to vast masses of men who were destitute of even the most elementary education, and that some immediate steps, on a large national scale, would have to be taken to bring the new voters at least within the pale of the non-illiterate.

But when Robert Lowe opened what I may call his educational campaign at the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, he had made up his mind that there should be reform at the top as well as at the bottom. In fact, his addresses at Edinburgh and Liverpool comprise a remodelled scheme of education for all classes of English society—upper, middle, and lower—compelled after 1867 to live under a democracy. The fact that he considered the education of the upper and middle classes would need remodelling, if those classes were to continue to have any political influence or even be enabled to maintain their social position, has been largely overlooked. It was this, as well as his increasing love of science, which induced him to take so decided a stand against the classics. He believed that after the road to manhood suffrage had been definitively taken, it was suicidal for any class in the community to devote the best years of the life of its young men to the study of two dead languages and to analytical mathematics.

It was not that he did not value and even love these pursuits, just as he loved the state of society of which they were the outcome and the ornament. But he thought that with the democratisation of our institutions must come the democratisation of our education. Numbers had now won the day, and, armed with political power, the wage-earning millions

would demand of the men of his own class, sons of the landed gentry educated at vast expense at the public schools and universities, 'Wherein consists your superiority?' Everything and everybody would be brought to the test of absolute *utility*. Napoleon, he reminded his Scottish hearers, had made Laplace, the greatest of mathematicians, one of his ministers, and had afterwards declared that the geometer's only idea of transacting the business of his department was with reference to the differential and integral calculus.

Lowe then passed on to Latin and Greek, and, as we know, declared that it were wiser for us to thoroughly master our own and the French language, paying at the same time a splendid tribute to modern French prose, which, as a form of speech and expression, and as an instrument of thought, might well take the place even of Greek. In a sternly utilitarian fashion he discussed, one by one, all the branches of education bestowed on men of his own class. Much of it was useless and obsolete, while the whole ground plan and scheme was adapted to an aristocratic, not a democratic, society. Unless they wished to abrogate their position, it was necessary they should be taught something about the Lords of the Treasury in London, as well as the Archons of Athens; they must devote their school-days to modern rather than to ancient geography. It was rare to find a person who knew where the various colonies of Australia are situated. Lord Castlereagh was said to have given Java to the Dutch because he could not find it in the map and was ashamed to confess his ignorance. He himself heard an eminent member of the House of Commons make a speech in which it was manifest that he thought Upper Canada was nearest the mouth of the St. Lawrence and Lower Canada higher up the river. With the keen touch of humour which was one of his characteristics, he greatly amused his Edinburgh audience by an allusion to the prevailing Biblical ignorance of his educated friends. 'You will remember that Mr. Bright, in last session of Parliament,

denominated certain gentlemen by a name derived from a cave. Well, I assure you, gentlemen, there was not one person in twenty whom I met who knew anything about the Cave of Adullam, and I was under the melancholy and cruel necessity of explaining it to them, and of pointing the arrow that was aimed against my own breast.'

He then proceeded to give the 'catalogue of things,' of which the average highly-educated Oxford man was completely ignorant, but all of which were more or less essential in a democratic community. Mr. David Douglas, the well-known Edinburgh publisher, who had been introduced to Lord Sherbrooke after this lecture, as a friend of Lord Acton, met him in 1890 at one of Lady Pender's receptions at Arlington Street, and reminded him of his strictures on the ignorance of the educated classes, and how he had expressed a doubt if half-a-dozen people in the room could tell him the name of the county in which the borough he represented was situated. Lord Sherbrooke, says Mr. Douglas, laughed and said, 'Ah, I dare say I was very impertinent in those days.'

'I am most anxious to educate the lower classes of this country,' said Lowe in conclusion, 'in order to qualify them for the power that has passed, and perhaps will pass in a still greater degree, into their hands. I am also anxious to educate, in a manner very different from the present, the higher classes of this country, and also for a political reason.'

'I confess, for myself, that, whenever I talk with an intelligent workman, so far from being able to assert any superiority, I am always tormented with the conception, "what a fool the man must think me when he finds me, upon whose education thousands of pounds have been spent, utterly ignorant of the matters which experience teaches him, and which, he naturally thinks, every educated man ought to know."'

At Liverpool he took up the parable of middle-class educa-

tion. It is manifest from his opening remarks that Lowe was greatly disappointed and depressed by the absence of public spirit, or even of enlightened self-interest, in the great trading and shopkeeping classes of this country. He, a man of another class, trained and educated from boyhood as a younger son of good family, had unselfishly fought the battle of the middle class against both the political parties. 'I was one of those,' he said—'they were very few indeed—who lifted their voices in favour of the middle class, not so much for their sake as for the sake of the country. . . . I never met with the slightest encouragement or support from those whose cause I was pleading. There was no meeting, and no demonstration, no sympathy of movement on their part.'

In his own mind, doubtless, he could not but contrast this treatment with that accorded to John Bright, a typical middle-class man, in his appeals to the working classes. Probably at this time, just after his defeat in the House of Commons, while feeling keenly the injustice of the unpopularity he had earned by his adherence to principle, Robert Lowe was somewhat too pessimistic; or, rather, the political shortcomings of the *bourgeoisie* completely overshadowed, in his mind, their negative merits as a class and their individual virtues.¹

Lowe attributed their want of public spirit, their negligence and apathy towards the national needs, to their imperfect education and want of that true culture which should raise men's minds 'above the business of everyday cares.' He pointed out that, in the matter of education, they were either content with the narrow teaching of so-called 'commercial academies,' which comprised reading, writing, ciphering, and book-keeping by single and double entry, or they aped the gentry and went in for a smattering of the dead languages.

¹ Lord Beaconsfield described Cobden as the greatest political character the pure middle class of this country has yet produced. Since then we have seen in the late Mr. W. H. Smith, the wise and prudent leader of the Conservative party in a time of grave national peril, a man of a most restrained but noble type of character, whose example and patriotism will yet receive their due recognition.

He told them that the latter to men in their position was worse than a waste of time, and briefly reviewed the *curriculum* of his own schooling, advising them to avoid it. He did not (he said) wish to disparage these things, 'for all knowledge, except heraldry, has some use.'

Then followed a memorable passage, not without biographical interest :—

First, I recommend to your notice a subject generally overlooked in our public schools, and that is—what do you think?—the English language; the language of Bacon and of Shakespeare; the language of Pitt and Charles Fox; the language of Byron and of Shelley—a language richer, probably, and containing more varied treasures than the treasures contained in any other language—which began to be formed and fashioned sooner than any other in Europe, except the Italian, which it surpasses in everything, except mere sound, that constitutes the beauty of a language. Is it not time that we who speak that language, read that language, so much of whose success in life depends on how we can mould that language; we who make our bargains in that language, who make love in it, should know something about it; that our care should not be limited to the reading of penny, threepenny, or even sixpenny newspapers; but that we should, at least in our boyhood, be called on to remember what sort of writers England produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; that we should know our own tongue theoretically as well as practically? I can only speak from my own experience. During the last two years that I was at school I was, if not actually idle, at least not wholly devoted to Latin and Greek, and I had some qualms of conscience on the subject. But there was a certain bookcase in the corner of the study which was full of standard and sterling English books; I spent my time in reading those English books, and I felt like a truant and ashamed of myself when I did so, because I was stealing those hours from the study of Latin and Greek. I can only say that I owe my success in life to those stolen hours—that the power of being able to write and speak my native language with some precision and force has been more valuable to me than all the rest I have learned. No man can imagine till he has tried how great is the improvement he can effect in style of speaking and writing English by the study of our ancient authors, full as they are of obsolete words and idioms. I do not say that one should be a pedant, and use them in writing or conversation, but they will give him an insight into the tongue and a power of using it which would be quite hidden from him unless he made the

experiment. Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron were two of our greatest poets and two of our best prose writers, at least of the present century. Both had club feet, and these two boys were confined for several years to their rooms on account of these club feet, and the ill-advised measures which were taken to prevent the deformity. They spent their time in devouring all the English books that they could get hold of. They read through the circulating libraries, they borrowed from their friends everything they could get, and the consequence was that both turned out very bad Latin scholars, and no Greek scholars at all, but they became the two best writers of the English language of the century.

Lowe urged the trading classes, as strongly as he had urged the gentry and professional classes, to acquire a thorough knowledge of the French and German languages; the latter 'the language of a people already great and destined to become greater.' In learning these languages the youth should have, instead of dry and stupid books, those that will interest and amuse him. 'If you want to teach French take an amusing French novel; something that will draw him on and be a pleasure and delight to him, instead of giving him some insipid moralist or weary tragedian.'

But he laid the greatest stress on the teaching of the physical sciences, 'not by rote as a matter of memory, but as a study, exercising the highest faculties of the mind.'—'To have the great poetic heart,' says Tennyson, 'is more than all poetic fame.' To acquire 'the scientific habit of mind,' remarked Lord Sherbrooke, 'is the one invaluable thing in life.' His contrast between science and the classics was long remembered. 'A scrap of Tacitus, a page of Licinianus, a mutilated essay of Cicero on the glory for which he lived or the republic for which he died, have become inestimable treasures. The Mahometans of the East and the Crusaders of the West have put an effectual limit on classical studies; but nature is boundless and inexhaustible. Her treasures the wickedness of man cannot waste nor his wantonness dissipate.'¹

¹ In a still-remembered speech, delivered in May 1866 at the Civil Engineers' banquet, when he described the classical studies as 'A minute analysis of the

Robert Lowe's views on endowment or free-trade in education are well known. Endowment, he said, was 'the opium that puts all exertion to sleep.' Endowed institutions were, as Turgot had declared, 'hospitals in which there are more physicians than patients.'

But Lowe's own epigrams are more telling even than Turgot's. By means of endowments, he had said at Edinburgh, *The English Universities had loaded the dice in favour of the dead languages.* '*Endowed schools are the eldest sons of education.* There are very few men who would not rather have the enjoyment of ease and leisure, though with the perfect consciousness that the abilities they possess will rust and the reputation they might have made will be gained by others less fortunate in worldly possessions, than descend into the arena and compete successfully with all comers.'

Though, like the poor, the middle classes had been largely defrauded of educational endowments, they were better without them so long as they possessed self-reliance and manly enterprise. These were his closing words:—

I am not here to flatter anybody. They [the middle classes] want culture, they want refinement, compared with the same classes in other countries. They want elevation of mind, and they want to be told that money is not the be-all and the end-all of life. They want to have their morals raised, and their sense of honour developed. I allude to no particular case; but it is not merely a question of honour, but a question of the narrowest pecuniary interest, that the character of English commerce should remain unstained and unsullied.

In his paper on *Endowment and Free Trade*, Robert Lowe perhaps carried his antipathy to educational endowments too far; if so, he made amends by his generous inconsistency in devising 1,000*l.* to the London University for the advancement

forms of expression and the modes of thought which were used by people many thousand years ago, and concerning which there was much controversy and no certainty would be arrived at.' Even Lowe's intimate friends, such as Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Goschen, and the Master of Balliol, disliked this renewed attack on the classics.

of scientific studies. It is interesting to note that the Sherbrooke Prize for 1895 will be given for the best original essay on the results of 'An Original Research in any Department of the Science of Public Health.'

With regard to primary education, Lowe proclaimed that a national system should be forthwith established. It was imperative that we should educate our future masters. He referred, not without commendation, to the Bill that had then been recently introduced in the Victorian Legislative Assembly by the Attorney-General,¹ whom he justly described as 'a gentleman of great influence.' Such a measure was essential in that colony, for they had universal suffrage; it would be equally essential here. But he repeated in the clearest terms that in England he would have preferred private enterprise and the voluntary schools to a general system of State Education but for the recent political changes introduced by a so-called Conservative Government.

II.—THE PROBLEM OF IRELAND.

The other problem which engrossed the mind of Robert Lowe after the country had been compelled to 'shoot Niagara,' was the relations of Great Britain and Ireland.

The average intelligent Englishman would probably declare that Lowe was one of the foremost of that band of Liberal Ministers who thought that by disestablishing the Irish Church we should settle the Irish question. It is true that he supported that measure; but, as will be seen, he was under no delusion as to its being a panacea for Irish grievances. I am indebted to the courtesy of Sir William Smith, the learned and distinguished editor of the *Quarterly Review*, for calling my attention to the remarkable article contributed by Robert Lowe to that periodical for January 1868, entitled 'What shall we

¹ Mr. George Higinbotham, the late Chief Justice of Victoria.

do for Ireland?' While he was writing it, the Fenian organisation was very active. Lowe always held the Fenians in supreme contempt,¹ and in previous sessions of Parliament he had spoken his mind very freely on Irish matters. About this time the artist Redgrave records in his diary that he met his 'old chief' among the visitors at Hatfield House, where the subject of Fenianism was evidently discussed.

January 18th, 1868.—Returned from a two or three days' visit to Hatfield, where I found a large party, pleasant conversation, and the usual kindly hospitality of the host and hostess. There were many visitors, among them my old chief, Mr. Lowe, Count Strzelecki, etc. Mr. Lowe told many excellent stories and flavoured his conversation with clever antithetical quotations and remarks.

He said that shortly before he left home his servant announced two visitors, and, following the man through the door, two persons entered the room, one carrying the other in his arms. The one who was the porter seated his burden in a chair, carefully wrapped its lower limbs in a spotted railway wrapper, and then stood aside, when the other, who was the spokesman, began to explain to Mr. Lowe that they were about to hold a public meeting to repudiate Fenianism; that they expected the Duke of Northumberland to take the chair, and that they hoped Mr. Lowe would be present at the meeting. 'I shall do no such thing,' said he; 'I have yet to learn that it is necessary for Englishmen to *repudiate* any complicity with arson, fire-raising, or murder. Besides, does it not occur to you that, pending the trial of these men, such meetings are likely to support their declaration that, with such public demonstrations, they are not likely to have a fair trial?' The spokesman replied that it really

¹ Lord Beaconsfield, according to Lord Ronald Gower (*My Reminiscences*, p. 548), took a much more serious, not to say melodramatic view of the Fenian rising in Ireland: 'Only three men,' he said, 'succeeded in stopping it; those three men were, Mayo, Hardy, and I.' Of the history of how that movement was stopped—partly, it seems, by paying well some informers in Ireland—no one will ever, Lord Beaconsfield said, know the truth; for 'Mayo is dead. Lord Cranbrook never writes about anything, and I have not kept a single note or even a memorandum of that most strange and curious time. Cluseret,' he said (afterwards the Communist general), 'we had watched in his London lodgings, and as he was on the point of starting for Ireland to take the command of the rebellion, he was neatly stopped.' 'How Dizzy,' adds Lord Ronald, 'must have enjoyed all the mystery, and the almost halo of romance, that shrouded that mysterious history of what was very nearly being as serious a rising in Ireland as that of 1798!'

had not occurred to him in that light, and being bundled up in the arms of his importer, he left without further argument.¹

The day before this conversation took place, Lowe wrote as follows to Sydney :—

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

Hatfield : January 17, 1868.

There is little stirring here. The winter has been more than usually gloomy, and all mankind have abandoned themselves to a foolish terror of these wretched Fenians, whom I regard with great contempt. My wife is not yet out of bed ; after nine weeks the gout is only just subsiding. I shall not, I think, stand for Calne again. I believe I shall come in for the London University, a very good seat, and one which, once got, I am likely to hold. I saved them, I think, last year, from compulsory union with Durham, so that virtue is likely to be rewarded by them somewhat in the same way as it was by the good people of Sydney twenty years ago.

The article 'What shall we do for Ireland?' was ostensibly a review, or, rather, a lengthy commentary, on three publications—Lord Dufferin's *Contributions to an Inquiry into the State of Ireland*; *The Irish in America*, by J. F. Macguire, M.P.; and *A few Words on the relation of Landlord and Tenant*, by the Earl of Ross. But the real value of the article is that it contains Lowe's own contribution to this never-ending Irish discussion. Moreover, he was impelled to the consideration of the question, not by the wide-spread alarm of Fenianism, but by his clear prevision that the Reform Bill of 1867 would inevitably increase our difficulties with regard to the government of Ireland. It may be surmised that this view of the question had been brought home to him by his friend and political follower the late Sir William Gregory, who was then member for Galway, and who went into the Cave of Adullam because he realised that any wide extension of the franchise meant the 'swamping' of the loyal and cultured minority of Ireland.

Isaac Butt, on taking up Home Rule, had said that a democratic franchise would give him eighty followers, and

¹ *Richard Redgrave : a Memoir*, p. 227.

with these at his back any man could paralyse the English Parliament if it refused to grant the practical independence of Ireland. This Mr. Parnell afterwards proved to demonstration. Robert Lowe also perceived the danger; and thus it was the Reform Bill, and not the outbreak of Fenianism, which caused him to propound the query, 'What shall we do for Ireland?'

The question is so all-important that, to avoid any misunderstanding or wrong interpretation, it has seemed well to make the following extracts; merely supplying a heading to each.

Ireland and the Colonies.

Ireland is the problem of problems to the English statesman. In its future, the future of our empire, of our race, of our civilisation is wrapped up. It is to be feared that we do not sufficiently estimate the enormous interval between our relations to Ireland and those towards the dearest and most favoured dependency of the British Crown. Much as we may talk of our colonies, they are, after all, justly called by our law the foreign dominions of her Majesty. They are subject, indeed, to the control of Parliament, but that control is rapidly becoming merely nominal. If the matter is closely examined the benefits we derive from them are far less than the benefits they receive from us. . . . If we once taxed them, they now heavily tax us. The United Kingdom is the Cinderella who does all the work of the Imperial household. The fairy tale is reversed and the younger sisters have enslaved the elder. . . . It cannot be too earnestly impressed on the mind of England that Ireland is not a colony; never can be treated as a colony; never can be for weal or for woe anything else than an integral and vital part of the British empire, whose union and amalgamation with Great Britain, so far from being like the union or independence of a colony, a matter of small account, is a matter which we cannot permit for a single moment to be called in question. This difference between Ireland and all the rest of the empire depends on its proximity to us. If Cato could work upon the fears and passions of the Roman Senate by exhibiting to them the figs which he had gathered with his own hands at Carthage, only three days sail from the Tiber, what should be the feelings of an English parliament when the distance is measured by three hours instead of three days? Were Ireland a country capable of maintaining itself in independence, the case might be likened to that of the dominions of the Plantagenets in France; but we know only too well from the violent factions which divide

the country, from its poverty and the large portion of it that lies, and probably always must lie, useless, that its strength is in no proportion to its size; and that if it ceased to be the partner, on perfectly equal terms, of the empire of Great Britain, Ireland would infallibly fall into the hands of some power who would use it as a post from which to direct attacks upon our coast and our commerce.

An Irish Parliament.

An Irish Parliament in College Green must inevitably make shipwreck on one of two dangers. If confined within safe limits, that is, to matters purely local, it would be worthless for the purposes of government, and only useful for the ends of agitation and treason.

If it had full powers, the separation of the two islands would be its inevitable result. The first effect of a Repeal of the Union would be to withdraw from Ireland the very substantial power she possesses over the administration of public affairs, and to offer instead an illusory power of disposing of her own. We say an illusory power, for though in Parliament all Irish questions are treated as if they were merely questions between England and Ireland, in Ireland everybody knows that these questions are really nothing of the kind, but subjects of daily and bitter contention between Irishmen themselves. Instead of being the antagonist or oppressor of Ireland, the mission of England mainly consists in preventing Irishmen from fighting out in pitched battles and with deadly weapons the question which it is proposed, as a panacea for Irish ills, to leave to the decision of the Irish people. . . . When Ireland enjoyed the blessing of a domestic Legislature, the Protestants put a price on their support of the English connection such as no party ought to have asked, and no just nation ought to have conceded. In return for their services in preserving Ireland to us they claimed absolute political and social supremacy, a reign of privilege for the one faith, of proscription and degradation for the other. Those days are gone, never to return. The danger now is, just the contrary: not that we should trample on the Catholic, but that we should alienate the Protestant.

The Meaning of Separation.

The problem which Ireland presents is not one of abstract justice but of political expediency; not what may be claimed as a right by those who deny us any right at all, but what is necessary if we would maintain the integrity of the British Empire, and its present position among the Powers of the World. The fundamental

principle is that under no conceivable circumstances would England be justified in entertaining for a single moment the idea of the dismemberment of the Empire as would be involved in the political separation of Ireland from Great Britain. . . . We do not treat Ireland as a dependency, we do not exercise domination over her. We give the Irish an influence over the government of Great Britain, reference being had to the size, population, and wealth of the two countries, fully equivalent to that which we exercise over her. No Irishman labours, as such, under any disability. Dives has taken Lazarus into partnership, but Lazarus will have none of it; he demands, under threat of the direst vengeance, to be left in the solitary possession of his rags and his dunghill; he wants no improvement; his sole desire is separation. It is all an affair of sympathies, antipathies, and genealogies. Good is not good if it is English good; evil is not evil if it is Irish evil.

Lowe passed in review the various remedies proposed by English reformers for Irish grievances—not one of which did he think in any way touched the disease. The agrarian reforms of Mill and Bright (since carried into law by Mr. Gladstone, Lord Ashbourne and others) meant the wresting of the land from its present owners, often men of enlightenment as well as of wealth, and, by means of State subsidies or loans, transferring it to a number of poor, ignorant, and grasping Celts. On this point he quoted with warm approval the words of Mr. Goldwin Smith. As to the abolition of the Irish Church, that might be a measure of abstract justice gratifying to the moral sense of English reformers, but it would not have the slightest effect in removing Irish disaffection.

Robert Lowe then formulated his own scheme. Briefly, it was to uphold at all hazards and with unflinching determination the union between Great Britain and Ireland which we owe to the commanding genius of William Pitt; ¹ the only thing to be

¹ It is a very suggestive sign of the times, to find two such able and essentially Liberal statesmen as Lord Rosebery and the Duke of Argyll vying with one another in their eulogies of Pitt. Lord Rosebery's brief but admirable biography is hardly more convincing than the few pregnant passages in the remarkable introduction to the Duke of Argyll's just published *Unseen Foundations of Society*.

done was to complete his policy by subsidising the Irish priesthood. This last measure, Lowe pointed out, together with the emancipation of the Roman Catholic laity, comprised the conditions on which Pitt received the support of the Irish Bishops to the Union; we had as yet only tardily redeemed half our pledge. Lowe quoted the historic letter addressed by Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, to Sir Robert Peel:—

Mr. Pitt, contemplating the inherent distractions of Ireland and well knowing the impossibility of remedying them through a mere domestic parliament, devised the noble expedient of elevating the smaller country by a comprehensive identification with England, including the total abolition of all civil and political disabilities founded on religious grounds. That such were his purposes I can testify; they were communicated to me most unreservedly by Lord Cornwallis. I hold in my hands a confidential letter from Lord Castlereagh, dated June 22, 1802, recognising the pledges given at the Union to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, for which they gave valuable consideration in their support of that measure (without which it could not have been carried), and further instructing me to endeavour to reconcile the heads of their hierarchy to a delay in performance of the engagement made to them by Mr. Pitt's Ministry for the endowment of their Church. Dr. Moylan, a justly venerated prelate, had then recently intimated to Lord Cornwallis the cheerful acquiescence of the Roman Catholic bishops in the endowment of their Church.

No man of the slightest political knowledge can doubt that, but for the King's illness and his necessary withdrawal from power, Mr. Pitt could immediately after the Union have carried through Parliament with an overwhelming majority of both Houses his measures for the complete political relief of the Roman Catholics and the endowment of their Church.

Robert Lowe further quoted from the speech of Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons (May 20, 1810) to prove that a distinct understanding had been arrived at to the effect that after, and as a consequence of, the Union we were pledged, first to the political emancipation of the Roman Catholic laity in Ireland, and secondly to a State provision for the clergy.

The non-fulfilment of this latter pledge was, he declared, the only Irish grievance that he could for a moment recognise. He admitted that owing to the delay the subject was hedged round with increasing difficulties. The Irish priesthood might now refuse endowment from the Imperial Parliament, knowing that, in the event of a Repeal of the Union, they could exact what terms they liked from their instruments in College Green. This did not affect the question. If they and their flocks saw that we meant resolutely to uphold Pitt's policy and to fulfil his pledges, they would in time come round and be of a more loyal and reasonable mind.

As to Fenianism, he commented on it with splendid contempt. It was simply a plague that must be stamped out.

Suppose these reckless adventurers to gain their ends; suppose the mediating and pacifying power of England suddenly withdrawn, what future would be open for Ireland? A total wreck of all property and credit; a desperate civil war which would soon show the world how entirely the mission of England had been one of peace and conciliation; and ultimate subjection to some foreign power whose rule would teach Ireland the real meaning of the complaints made in her name against us with so much levity and so much injustice. The difference between the state of peace and order in which, contrary to the desire of so many of her people, we maintain her, and the anarchy, bloodshed, and ruin we have described, is the measure of the obligations of Ireland to this country.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIX

LORD SHERBROOKE AND SIR WILLIAM SMITH

SIR WILLIAM SMITH'S account of his relations with Lord Sherbrooke is not without literary interest, and it tells the same unvarying story of the kindness and consideration of the latter for others:—

'I made the acquaintance of Mr. Robert Lowe in 1855. I frequently stayed with him at the country house of our common friends, Mr. and Mrs. Grote, at Barrow Green, which was only five miles from his house at Caterham, where I also often visited him. Our acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy, and accordingly, when Mr. Murray offered me the Editorship of the *Quarterly Review* in 1867, Mr. Lowe was the first person

whom I consulted whether I should accept it. From the memoranda I made at the time I find that Mr. Lowe said, "Mr. Murray could not have made a better choice." The only difficulty which he saw in my accepting Mr. Murray's proposal was that, in consequence of the multiplication of new periodicals, the *Quarterly* could not be expected to maintain its former circulation, and that a decrease in its sale might be attributed to me. On the whole, however, he recommended me to accept the Editorship, and promised to assist me in writing articles for the *Review*. He was at that time in opposition to the Liberal Government, having been chiefly instrumental in forming the "Cave" which turned out Lord Russell's Government on the Reform Bill. His first article in the *Review* appeared in July 1867, and was entitled "Reform Essays." His second was in October of the same year, on Trades Unions. His third was in January 1868, entitled "What shall we do for Ireland?"—in which he advocated the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Shortly after this he accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister, and from this time his connection with the *Conservative Review* naturally ceased.

'In all my transactions with him in connection with the *Review*, I found him most reasonable, and ready to adopt any suggestion which I might make. On one occasion he wrote an article which I did not think suitable for the *Review*; and instead of complaining, as men of less ability have frequently done, he at once acquiesced in my decision, saying—"You are the best judge of what is suitable for the *Review*," and this produced no breach in our friendship.'

CHAPTER XX

MEMBER FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

(1868)

THE Nemesis which, as Robert Lowe humorously reminded his elder brother, follows those politicians who play fast and loose with their principles (he put it in a more homely way), swiftly overtook Lord Derby. His Toryism was in reality comprised in his chivalrous admiration and love for the Church, buttressed by some not unnatural sympathy for his order; otherwise he was by training and habit of mind a pure Whig. Early in his political career he had severed himself from the Whigs simply because he considered Lord John Russell had 'upset the coach' by the attempt to reduce and secularise the revenues of the Irish Church—or, as he himself characteristically expressed it, by the 'thimble-rig' over the Tithes Bill. After that eventful time it had been one long race between him and Lord John as to who should 'dish' the other by making the most political capital out of Reform. Lord Derby, with the matchless assistance of Disraeli, had contrived to win; and then came—Nemesis.

Lord Derby resigned the Premiership on February 24, 1868, nominating Benjamin Disraeli as his successor—one of the most striking and remarkable facts in English Parliamentary history. Disraeli, having removed Lord Chelmsford in favour of that much more powerful politician, Lord Cairns, was no doubt prepared to conduct the affairs of the country—now that Reform had been disposed of—on the most approved

Tory lines. But here he had to reckon with Mr. Gladstone, and, it may be added, with Robert Lowe, who always felt that after sacrificing his own political prospects on the Reform question, thereby being the means of placing Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli in power, he had been not so much outmanœuvred as shamefully tricked. Mr. Gladstone, whose quickness in taking advantage of a novel political situation often rivalled even that of Disraeli himself, here saw his advantage, and how he could at one stroke reunite the scattered forces of Liberalism and utilise the new democratic electorate which his rivals had so foolishly created for him. In a word, he determined to demolish the Irish Church; and those who condemn the author of *The Church in its relation to the State*, for taking this course—a real master-stroke of parliamentary strategy—must, in strict fairness, condemn, in far stronger terms, the Reform Bill of 1867, which was the parent as well as the fore-runner of Irish disestablishment.¹

On March 23, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his famous Irish disestablishment resolutions, and on the 30th he moved them in a speech of great rhetorical power. On the third night of the debate, Robert Lowe, on the same side, made his great attack on this ill-fated institution, asking, ‘Why cumbereth it the ground?’

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

34 Lowndes Square : April 5, 1868.

I have been so busy since I received your letter that I have had no time to answer it. However, at three o'clock this morning we inflicted a defeat on the Government which must, I think, lead to its dissolution and my being delivered from the trouble of concocting speeches, and remitted to my Easter holidays; the first use I make of my time is to write my letters. Since I began this letter we have

¹ That admirably fair and able Tory writer, Mr. Saintsbury, in his *Lord Derby*, puts the whole matter in the clearest light; though, I venture to think, he hardly does full justice to Lord Sherbrooke's position, evidently owing to insufficient data (see pp. 165–188). His concluding words, however, are unanswerable. ‘No advantage accrued to Tory interests, and much disadvantage to Tory honour, from the Reform Bill of 1867.’ It was, in fact, the ‘Conservative Surrender’ to Opportunism.

succeeded in inflicting upon Dizzy and Co. a very severe defeat, and the result will probably be that before very long I find myself again in office. I can't say I look forward to this with any very peculiar pleasure; four years of ease have been a sort of Capua to me, and I think I am growing old and lazy, and in spite of my speeches, fonder than ever of reading Latin and Greek. . . . We seem likely to turn the Government out on the question of the Irish Church, which has always been one of what Dizzy calls my spontaneous aversions.

The adverse vote came on April 30, and after many protracted debates, and some bitter personal passages, notably between Disraeli and Bright, 'the last Parliament elected under the Reform Bill of 1832' came to an end. In prospect of this event, negotiations had for some time been passing between Lowe and certain influential members of the London University.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

June and July 1868.

We hear I am pretty safe for the London University. One of my opponents, Sir John Lubbock, has given up to-day, and the other, Mr. Bagehot, the Editor of the *Economist*, has, I am glad to say, also. . . . The House has just been counted out, and I am sitting in the gallery in the most profound silence. I have not done much in the way of speeches this Session, only two on Ireland, and a little one on the property of married women, which has been thought good.¹

I have worn out my poor old horse that I have ridden for fifteen years, and got a new one only four years old, which seems to have some views as to breaking my neck, but I don't think he will be able to manage it. I have a rather gay life, being asked out a great deal. The Queen is going to give a garden-party at Buckingham Palace on Monday.

Disraeli had boasted in his well-known gibe, that by giving a member to the London University by the Reform Bill of 1867, he had provided his opponent with a seat that he could not otherwise have found in England; but, as Sir John Simon points out elsewhere, Disraeli could not well have said

¹ It was, indeed, a most clear and admirable speech, delivered in the debate on the second reading of the Married Women's Property Bill, June 10, 1868.

anything more severely condemnatory of his own legislation. Allowing that Lowe had from time to time spoken some very plain and unpalatable truths, his character and ability were so high, his position in the House of Commons so marked, and his actual work, mainly on behalf of the great bulk of the people, especially with regard to education and the public health, was of so enduring and statesmanlike a kind, that if the new electors would have pelted him from the hustings, the disgrace would have been theirs and not his. It is also a mistake to suppose that the seat for London University was in the first instance a free gift to Mr. Lowe. He was certainly the most conspicuous public man who responded to the invitation to represent the new academic constituency; but there were a number of other gentlemen with very special qualifications who were not at all averse to accepting so desirable a seat. This, the first election for the University of London, has a certain interest of its own, apart from the fact that Robert Lowe eventually, to the honour alike of the University and himself, was elected without any actual opposition, and continued its representative until he was elevated to the House of Lords.

The London University, as the favourite offspring of the academic Liberals, naturally, when the honour of a Parliamentary representative was conferred upon it, looked almost exclusively among the Liberals for its member. At the same time, as must inevitably occur with all such bodies, there was a growing Conservative element; in fact, a distinct and active Conservative party, which was not without influence in the final selection. As early as June, 1867, certain influential members of the University, among whom were Dr. George Buchanan, Mr. J. F. Rotton, and Sir Richard Quain, initiated a movement for the nomination and return of Robert Lowe, should he consent to stand. But when the time arrived in the following year, there was found to be a plethora rather than a lack of candidates. Mr. R. H. Hutton, the well-known editor of the *Spectator*, set a movement on foot on behalf of the candida-

ture of his friend, Mr. Walter Bagehot, who, as well as being a distinguished man of letters and editor of the *Economist*, was a graduate of the University. Sir John Lubbock, the present admirable representative, was also brought forward in 1868, chiefly by a number of his scientific admirers, of whom, it may be mentioned, Lord Sherbrooke's worthy old friend Professor Sharpey was one, as was also the present Archdeacon Farrar, then of Harrow.

Another excellent candidate was the late Dr. Wood, who had a strong measure of legal and Nonconformist support.¹ What was called the Liberal-Conservative section were anxious to bring forward Dr. William Allen Miller, treasurer and vice-president of the Royal Society, and one of the medical members of the University Senate. Dr. Miller's candidature was supported by Sir William Gull, Sir Robert Fowler, and other influential men.

Yet another candidate was proposed in the person of Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Richard Quain, Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench, a most distinguished graduate of University College, who was supported by the present Lord Herschell. Sir Richard^{*} Quain, though a cousin of this candidate, gave his steadfast support to Robert Lowe, who owed not a little to the unflinching tact and geniality of his favourite physician and friend.

The retirement of Dr. Wood in favour of Mr. Lowe practically decided the issue. The contest was then between him and Walter Bagehot, who was very warmly and influentially supported. He appears, however, to have had one grave defect, inherent in the literary character, of allowing his pen

¹ Frederic John Wood, LL.D., was a distinguished son of the University of London, who, after the death of Dr. Storrar, was Chairman of Convocation. He was a devout and learned member of the Congregationalist body, but was much respected and well-known beyond the circle of his own sect. Dr. Wood and his wife died within three days of each other (1892), and the event revived the story of his withdrawal from the election contest in favour of Lord Sherbrooke in 1868.

to run away with him. At all events, in an electioneering manifesto addressed to Mr. Hutton, he used a phrase which the Conservatives construed into a charge of personal corruption against Disraeli, whereupon, on the principle of choosing the lesser of two evils, they expressed their determination of supporting Mr. Lowe. Mr. Bagehot wrote: 'Mr. Disraeli, indeed, believes that by influence and corruption the mass of the voters may be made to aid him. But I do not believe that a Government based on influence and corruption is possible in England.'¹

Eventually, Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Bagehot both retired, and Robert Lowe who was proposed by Sir Julian Goldsmid and seconded by Sir Richard Quain, was declared by Mr. George Grote, Vice-chancellor (and returning officer), the first duly elected representative of the University of London. (November 17, 1868.)

After his election, Lowe made a long and interesting speech, in which he dealt with the most pressing political problems of the time, notably with that of education. It will be observed by anyone carefully reading this speech that the newly-elected member for the University of London frankly acknowledged that democracy was an established fact in England. At the same time, replying to a remark of Mr. Bright, as to his being in a state of repentance, Lowe declared that he was 'no ascetic, and that sackcloth and ashes were not to his taste.' In the battle against democracy he had acted honestly and sincerely, and had said nothing which he wished to retract. Time alone could be the final arbiter; but it was the duty of public men to realise the meaning of the change in the Constitution.

¹ This is quoted merely as an instance of the indiscretions which men of the study so frequently commit when they aim at becoming performers on the public stage. Mr. Bagehot was essentially a man of letters; and it may be added that his brief essay, entitled 'Mr. Disraeli as a member of the House of Commons,' is quite worthy to rank with his 'Mr. Lowe as Chancellor of the Exchequer,' and his other admirable portraiture of English statesmen. *Biographical Studies*, by Walter Bagehot. (Longmans.)

Lowe declared that under the new condition of things we might look to America, not as a warning, but as an example. The Senate, he pointed out, has co-ordinate power with Congress, and he was of opinion that the House of Lords should be strengthened somewhat on the lines of the Roman Senate, by the regular admission to its ranks of men who had filled great public offices, corresponding to the Consuls, Ediles, and Questors. At the same time, he expressed his disapproval of the system of life peers. This apparent inconsistency arose, it is plain, from his dread of nomineeism, the evils of which he had noted in New South Wales. He thought that if life peers were introduced, instead of strengthening the House of Lords, this would lead to its being swamped at the will of an arbitrary minister with a docile majority in the House of Commons. Under the circumstances, he thought that only an inferior class of men would consent to become life peers; and with a lively recollection of the language of a penal settlement, he straightway dubbed them 'Lifers.' At the same time, both in this speech and in his election address, Lowe clearly stated that the strengthening of the House of Lords was a matter which every wise statesman who wished to give stability to our institutions, would do his best to promote.

The following letter to his Sydney correspondent not only explains the political situation in England, but contains a reference to Wentworth, and a tribute to Sir Henry Parkes, which show how keenly the writer continued to watch the movement of affairs at the antipodes.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : August 17, 1868.

I have every reason personally to be pleased with the state of affairs here. The London University has determined to elect me, as it seems, without a contest; so, while everybody else is wallowing in the mire of an election which is to last months, I have the pleasure of sitting on the shore and seeing my friends struggling in

the water. When I took my decided stand on Reform, I was told that I should not get a seat, and I said I did not care, that the stake was worth risking much more important things than that on, and that I would play the game out regardless of consequences. Nothing, to my mind, is more certain than that we shall come in at the end of the year with a very large majority, that the Government will be very strong, and that I shall hold a high office in it. This is very fine, but after all it does not console me for the ruin which will assuredly overtake us from this degraded suffrage.

My wife is better, mainly owing to the extraordinarily hot weather we have had, the least change seems to throw her back at once. She is going next week to Wiesbaden. I shall take her there and then come back to look after my seat, and a company for laying a second cable across the Atlantic, of which I am chairman in England. You will see by this letter that there seems less chance than ever of my going to Australia. The time will come (if ever it does) when I take a disgust to Parliament altogether because it has become too much like your own.

This place is becoming very pretty. The trees are growing up, and everything is filling into the picture as I could wish. A Captain Mayne (I suppose the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Liverpool Plains) wanted to take it, and said, as reported to me, that it was nearly as pretty in its way as my place near Sydney.

Think of Wentworth emerging after ten years' seclusion and taking the chair at a public dinner! Mr. Parkes has sent me an account of education in Australia. I am sadly afraid I shall not be able to persuade the people here to do anything half so sensible. We are in a fair way to ruin, for we give all the power to the ignorant and refuse to teach them.

Sir Richard Quain tells a rather good story of Lord Sherbrooke's election for the University of London. *A propos* of a recent boast of one of the Irish members that his election expenses had amounted to fourteen shillings, which was the cheapest on record: 'No,' said Sir Richard, 'that's a gross exaggeration, for Mr. Lowe assured me that when we returned him it cost him literally not a penny; as we had been good enough even to enclose a stamped envelope for his reply to the request that he should allow himself to be nominated.' In fact, it is the proud boast of the Senate and graduates that they return Sir John Lubbock as they did Lord Sherbrooke,

absolutely free of expense. In addition to Sir Richard Quain and Sir Julian Goldsmid, Sir Colman O'Loughlen, Sir Henry Thompson, Dr. Henry Maudsley, and most of the leading medical men, were among the 250 leading graduates who took an active interest in Lord Sherbrooke's election. In retiring from the contest, Mr. Walter Bagehot, writing to Mr. R. H. Hutton, said a true and generous thing concerning his successful antagonist, which deserves to be recorded.

'In an age when the fear to offend and the wish to be thought safe tend to cloak the thoughts of public men in a uniform coating of commonplace phrases, Mr. Lowe always expresses marked thoughts in characteristic words; at every conjuncture he is at least *himself*, and in this age that is a rare merit.'

Just before becoming a member for the University of London, Robert Lowe definitively severed his connection with the *Times* (April 29, 1868). He had long felt the labour of writing leading articles rather a severe strain, and had for some time been anxious to relinquish the work, but there is always a delicacy about the severance of such ties. The *Times* had been his good friend when he had not many to spare. But it is probably true that his connection with the leading journal had become not only irksome, but even detrimental to him as a public man. As with all anonymous writing, many articles with which he had had nothing to do were attributed to him; and there was, besides, the feeling, in and out of the House of Commons, that, as Lord Overstone said, it was hardly fair to have an antagonist who could smite you at night and hit you again before you were quite ready for him in the morning.

The late Lord Houghton, in friendly advice to Mr. John Morley, on the subject of a politician being also a professional journalist, specially referred to the tact with which Lord Sherbrooke had overcome the difficulties of the dual position.

But Mr. Morley, it would appear, found that a public man of Cabinet rank could hardly continue to be connected with journalism.

It was not, however, so much tact (a quality in which Lord Sherbrooke's critics considered him wanting) as his sterling qualities of head and heart which enabled him for so many years to be at the same time a prominent politician and an active journalist. He was, indeed, a man of strong views, with the gift of expressing them forcibly; nor did he spare favoured individuals if he thought their conduct detrimental to the public welfare. But, as the Master of Balliol observes, Lord Sherbrooke was 'a great gentleman'; and he never made use of his position for mere personal ends. His anonymous articles, like his spoken words, were frank, fearless, clever, and often mordant, but there lurked in them no meanness or malice; he never wrote a line with a view of advancing himself or of injuring a possible rival.

On July 23, 1868, Robert Lowe went down to Broadlands, to the inauguration of the statue to Lord Palmerston. 'It went off well,' writes Lord Shaftesbury, 'both at the mansion and in the market-place. Granville did his work admirably, and so did Lowe. The Bishop had a difficult task in the sermon.'

In connection with Lord Shaftesbury, the following letter may here find a place.

Robert Lowe to Lord Shaftesbury.

November 1868.

My dear Lord Shaftesbury,—I am very much obliged to you for your kind congratulations. What is happening around us shows only too clearly how easy it would have been to resist the Reform movement in 1866. One half the energy now wasted on a lost cause would have done it. The men for fear of whom the Constitution was basely abandoned cannot find seats in the most Radical places, and the losses of the towns are, as clearly as possible, traceable to the changes made in the borough franchise and representation by their own Bill. I draw no comfort from these elections. Money

has, as I predicted, been omnipotent. But we are gradually awaking the sleeping tiger, and the transfer of power to the numerical majority is only a question of time, and not very long time.

The following letter to Mrs. Billyard is in much the same strain, and may fitly close this chapter.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

34 Lowndes Square: December 3, 1868.

This morning it is announced that the Tories have resigned, not unwisely, I think, for they had no chance, and the step saves them from committing themselves to a future policy. It is very possible I may be in the next Government—my sins in 1866 notwithstanding. I have been returned for the London University (simply the best seat in England) in a manner very creditable to them and agreeable to me. I think it is a seat I have a good chance of retaining, and it is as cheap as Sydney itself. In the late elections, as I foretold, money was everything, the new voters were too ignorant and stupid to be anything more than 'venal'; the violent and impulsive will come in its own good time.

An equally gloomy view of the first general election after the Reform Bill of 1867 was taken by Professor Fawcett and other public men, who were much more in touch with the democratic movement than was Robert Lowe.

CHAPTER XXI

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

(1868—1873)

ON December 5, 1868, the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer in Mr. Gladstone's first administration was offered to Robert Lowe and accepted by him. He announced the fact to his elder brother in a note, whose brevity so highly amused Canon Reynolds Hole, the present humorous and popular Dean of Rochester, that Henry Sherbrooke, with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship, made him a present of it. It was to this effect :—

Dear Henry,—I am Chancellor of the Exchequer with everything to learn.

Yours affectionately,
ROBERT LOWE.

He also wrote to Sydney as follows :—

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

December 5, 1868.

I have this day accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer in Gladstone's Government. I am almost angry with myself for not being more pleased. One gets these things, but gets them too late. Ten years ago I should have been very differently affected; however, it is something to have done what I said I would. We start with a very large majority, but I have seen so many goodly ships wrecked that I cannot give way to confidence, much less exultation. At any rate, it gives me great pleasure to think it will please you all in Sydney.

This letter recalls the well-known lines entitled 'Success,' which show that even in verse-making Lord Sherbrooke gave expression to some genuine sentiment.

Success.

Success has come, the thing that men admire,
The pomp of office and the care of State;
Ambition has naught left her to desire;
Success has come, but ah! has come too late.

Where is the bounding pulse of other days,
That would have flashed enchantment through my frame,
The lips that would have loved to speak my praise,
The eyes that would have brightened at my name?

O vanity of vanities! For Truth
And Time dry up the spring where joy was rife;
Teach us we are but shadows of our youth,
And mock us with the emptiness of life.

1869.

When Mr. Gladstone made Robert Lowe his Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was regarded by many astute observers of our political affairs as a somewhat sensational appointment. To use a common phrase, it was the talk of the town. Lowe had had no special financial training, but questions of the currency and what might be called theoretical finance had always possessed a fascination for him. One of his earliest speeches in the House was on decimal coinage, a subject which he discussed with great cleverness at one of the meetings of the Political Economy Club. He was a profound student of the writings of Adam Smith and Ricardo, which in itself constitutes an education in finance. Knowing his great mental powers and his devotion to economic science, more than one eminent man proclaimed Robert Lowe's appointment to be a stroke of genius on the part of the Prime Minister.

But, as he himself points out in his Autobiography, his eyesight was an almost fatal defect. That acute critic, Mr. Walter Bagehot, thinks that in addition to dim eyesight Robert Lowe had another disqualification for Cabinet office under our

parliamentary system—a mind that was too bright! In his admirable little essay entitled ‘Mr. Lowe as Chancellor of the Exchequer,’ Mr. Bagehot draws a contrast between Lowe and his old schoolfellow, Edward Cardwell: the latter, he said, was a thorough master of ‘the two secrets’ which enable a man of mediocre ability to achieve success as a Cabinet Minister:—

‘The first is always to content yourself with the minimum of general maxims which will suit your purpose and prove what you want. By so doing you offend as few people as possible, you startle as few people as possible, and you expose yourself to as few retorts as possible. And the second secret is to make the whole discussion very uninteresting—to leave an impression that the subject is very dry, that it is very difficult, that the department had attended to the dreary detail of it, and that on the whole it is safer to leave it to the department, and a dangerous responsibility to interfere with the department. The faculty of disheartening adversaries by diffusing on occasion an oppressive atmosphere of businesslike dulness is invaluable to a parliamentary statesman.’

But these arts Mr. Lowe does not possess. He cannot help being brilliant. The quality of his mind is to put everything in the most lively, most exciting, and most startling form. He cannot talk that monotonous humdrum which men scarcely listen to, which lulls them to sleep, but which seems to them the ‘sort of thing you would expect,’ which they suppose is ‘all right.’ And Mr. Lowe’s mode of using general principles not only is not that which a parliamentary tactician would recommend, but is the very reverse of what he would advise. Mr. Lowe always ascends to the widest generalities. The *axiomata media*, as logicians have called them—the middle principles, in which most minds feel most reality, and on which they find it most easy to rest—have no charms for him. He likes to go back to the bone, to the abstract, to the attenuated, and if he left these remote principles in their remote unintelligibility, he would not suffer so much. But he makes the dry bones live. He wraps them in illustrations which Macaulay might envy. And he is all the more effective, because he uses our vernacular tongue. The phrase that ‘the money-market must take care of itself,’ and that

‘it was not the business of the Treasury to cocker up the Bank of England,’ will long be remembered, and will longer impair his influence with grave, quiet, and influential persons. Mr. Lowe startles those who do not like to be startled, and does not compose those who wish to be composed—those who need a little commonplace to assure them that they are acting on safe principles—that they are not, according to the saying, ‘lighting the streets with fireworks.’

But whatever were Lowe’s qualifications or defects as a Finance Minister, there can be no doubt that he resolved from the first to work his hardest and to spare no pains or trouble to serve the country. There were special reasons why he should thus have decided to attend rigorously to the work of his own department; the chief of which was that he had no very enthusiastic belief in the final outcome of Mr. Gladstone’s Irish policy. This remark may, perhaps, need a few words of explanation. From the hour that Mr. Gladstone made Lowe the offer of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, the latter, recognising that he could never regard certain public questions in the same light as his new chief, realised that by accepting the office he subjected Mr. Gladstone to unpleasant attacks from various quarters. So vigilant an opponent as Disraeli would be sure to attack the new Government at its most vulnerable point, which would be the antagonism that existed between large bodies of the working classes and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Viewed in this light, Lowe thought there was a certain magnanimity and high-minded friendship in Mr. Gladstone’s action. It would have been contrary to his nature not fully to recognise the obligation. From this time he never permitted himself to say a harsh or unkind word of Mr. Gladstone personally, though, as plainly shown by their famous discussions on the subject of manhood suffrage in the *Fortnightly* and *Nineteenth Century* Reviews in 1877 and 1878, their political differences continued to exist—and were, indeed, from their very nature, irreconcilable.

Lowe had found himself able to fall into line again with

the Liberals on the question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church; but though he regarded that policy as one of abstract justice, he was under no misapprehension as to its being in any sense a means of reconciliation between England and Ireland. Still less did he see in the Irish land policy of Mr. Gladstone any solution of this terrific problem. He had, indeed, become that most unhappy of beings, a politician without illusions.

It may well be asked under these circumstances, why he should have joined Mr. Gladstone's Government. The only answer that can be given is that after the Conservative surrender of 1867 he had an absolute horror of seeing a Tory Government in office which should have Disraeli as its head and a minority at its back. That, he thought, was the direct road to crude and unadulterated Radicalism. Better that Mr. Gladstone, with a large Liberal majority, should bring in his measures, which would inevitably be modified in a Conservative direction in Committee and in the House of Lords, than that Disraeli, dependent on his opponents for his tenure of office, should again be entrusted with the safety of the realm. Besides, on all questions except those of the extension of the franchise, the ballot and the Irish land legislation, Lowe was essentially a Liberal, altogether in advance of Mr. Gladstone himself. He was an earnest supporter of a national system of elementary education, of the abolition of purchase in the army, and religious tests in the Universities, and an upholder of economy in the public services.

It seems a hard fate that after his four years of strenuous labour at the Treasury, Robert Lowe should be popularly known only as the Minister who attempted to carry an abortive match-tax, and who strove unsuccessfully to work out the principle of a succession and legacy duty. There is no fighting against fate; and, perhaps, to the end of the chapter Lord Sherbrooke will chiefly be remembered as Chancellor of the Exchequer by

the couplet in *Punch*, which, with Pellegrini's statuette on a match-box, afforded him amusement to the last :—

Ex luce lucellum, we all of us know,
But if Lucy can't sell 'em, what then, Mr. Lowe ?

The relish with which he would always quote these lines and exhibit the quaint little caricature was remarkable ; for the failure of the Budget of 1871—so absurdly due to this trivial tax—was one of his bitterest disappointments. No Finance Minister could have worked harder than Lowe from the hour he entered upon his duties.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard.

11 Downing Street, Whitehall : April 11, 1869.

I have worked very hard for the last four months, and I think conquered the difficulties of my rather arduous office. You will see by the papers that I have just made the greatest success I ever made, or ever shall make, in the way of a budget. I had made everyone suppose that I was in a very bad way indeed, as truly I was, for I was in a deficit with a falling revenue and a very large sum to pay off over and above what was expected for the Abyssinian war ; and I contrived to work it all round into a surplus to the inexpressible astonishment and delight of my audience. It is not done yet, but public opinion is so strong in my favour that I have no doubt as to the result. *Me voilà donc lancé dans la carrière de finance*—in which many of my kind friends confidently predicted that I should break down. My office is not 'the most important under the Crown,' but is quite as high as I have ever wished to climb, and I am what seldom happens to anyone, content. Summer has begun all of a sudden.

This apparently roseate view of his position was quite justified by the reception accorded to his first budget in the House of Commons. The greatest satisfaction was expressed at the surplus which he was able to declare, his incidence of taxation was generally approved, and the only criticism offered was with regard to his scheme of collecting the income tax and inhabited-house tax in a single payment, at the beginning of each year. It is true he showed clearly enough that a saving of 100,000*l.* would be effected by collecting the income tax only

once in the year as in Scotland; but he did not choose to consider that the enormous 'hand-to-mouth class' in the English cities would cry out against this proposal, as would also the little army of surveyors and clerks employed in collecting the tax.

He took a penny off the income tax and abolished the shilling duty on corn. This latter remission is merely mentioned because more than one recent authority has maintained that the registration fee of one shilling per quarter on imported grain was a tax hardly if at all felt by the consumer, whilst it yielded a sum of something like 900,000*l.* to the revenue. Lowe himself, however, described it as a tax that 'contained in itself all possible objections to a tax, and prevented the country becoming the great entrepôt of corn.'¹ In this view he was strongly supported by the eminent political economist, Professor Stanley Jevons. Lowe also abolished the duty on fire insurance, which he described as 'a tax upon prudence.'

On this subject the following letter, received by the biographer during the progress of this work, is very much to the point.

Holly Lodge, Upper Parkfields, Putney, S.W. :

September 5, 1892

Dear Sir,—In treating the life and character of the late Lord Sherbrooke, it may be of some interest to show that he was not so insensible to the claims of the industrial classes as he was represented to be. In 1869 I addressed him—after I had vainly laboured with preceding Chancellors of the Exchequer—on the subject of the stamp duty on insurance policies of small amount. The minimum stamp duty was then threepence, although the average sum assured was only about 7*l.* or so. He perceived the inequality and the hardship; for the very poorest in the community were thus being disproportionately taxed in their efforts at providence. I was arranging a deputation to wait upon him, when—on May 5, 1869—he wrote to me by his secretary, Mr. C. Rivers Wilson, to say that a

¹ See *History of Taxation and Taxes in England*, vol. iv. p. 13 (Longmans). By Stephen Dowell. In his later years Lord Sherbrooke is said to have held a less positive opinion as to the evil of this particular tax.

deputation was unnecessary, as he had 'directed that in the Act consolidating the stamp duties, provision should be made for reducing the duty on policies of 10*l.* and under, to one penny.'

This has proved an immense boon to poor people—as is evidenced by the vast progress of the industrial life insurance companies.

So many have got into the habit of thinking that Lord Sherbrooke had nothing but scornful contempt for working men, that this instance of practical sympathy—which also shows his financial equity and sagacity—may be of especial interest.

I am, yours faithfully,

L. C. ALEXANDER.

'Mr. Lowe's plan' (writes Mr. Robert Wilson, in his *Life and Times of Queen Victoria*) 'for replenishing reduced balance and meeting unexpected liabilities whilst still remitting taxes, was at once original and ingenious. Long credit is given for taxes in England. By abolishing this credit and exacting the full tax within the financial year—that is to say, by collecting in 1869–70 the half of the tax that in ordinary circumstances stood over to 1870–71, Mr. Lowe estimated that he would have what he called "windfalls" of 600,000*l.* on assessed taxes, 950,000*l.* on the land and house tax, and 1,800,000*l.* on income tax.'

But the extra charge on account of the Abyssinian war (the 'little expedition' cost on the whole 9,000,000*l.*) to which he refers in his letter to Sydney, would have swallowed up any surplus but for his ingenious device of collecting the income tax and the land and inhabited house taxes once a year. As already remarked, the enormous class of hand-to-mouth people much disliked having to pay all their taxes in the lump, instead of as formerly in instalments. Other persons in a more exalted sphere of life seem to have been equally perplexed, if not alarmed, as the following somewhat amusing letter to the squire of Oxton sufficiently shows.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton.

11 Downing Street, Whitehall: April 23, 1869.

My dear Henry,—The halcyon state you are now enjoying consists in this, that you are not incurring any new assessed taxes.

You are paying the taxes already due for 1868-9, but you will never be assessed for the period between the present April and December, both inclusive.

At present the income tax runs for the year from April 1869 to April 1870. It is now collected one half in October 1869, one quarter in January 1870, one quarter in April 1870. I shall collect the last quarter for 1868-9 in this present April, nothing in October, and the whole year in January, February, and March, the last quarter, instead of one half in the second, one quarter in the third, and one quarter in the fourth quarter. The financial year remains unaltered, and the result is that I forbear the collection of one half for three months, and accelerate the collection of one quarter for three months, so that one quarter more is forborne than accelerated; that is, you gain the interest of one quarter for three months, losing nothing at all, and being put to less inconvenience.

I hope that is clear, and will discharge your immense mind that I take the tax in advance.

I should like very much to see you at Whitsuntide, but can say nothing yet.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

His second Budget was introduced on April 11, 1870, and fully bore out all his prognostications of the previous year; his new mode of collecting the taxes had brought in an increase of 1,000,000*l.* to the revenue, and the total revenue exceeded that of 1869-70 by 2,742,000*l.* He had the same fair story to tell with regard to the substitution of licence duties for assessed taxes, while the income tax had exceeded his estimate by nearly three-quarters of a million.

He announced that he found himself with a surplus of 7,870,000*l.* Out of this surplus he all but paid off the liabilities on the Abyssinian war and expended 1,000,000*l.* in paying off Exchequer Bonds.

In this financial statement he carefully explained the operations he had entered into, which enabled him practically to pay off the several telegraph companies whose lines had been taken over by the Government. He showed that, notwithstanding the paying off of 9,000,000*l.* on the expedition to Abyssinia, of nearly 6,000,000*l.* on fortifications,

and 7,000,000*l.* for the purchase of the telegraphs, there had been a reduction since the close of the Russian war of 38,000,000*l.* on the National Debt; in all, nearly 60,000,000*l.* applied to debt beyond the ordinary expenditure, met out of revenue in those thirteen years.

He remitted another penny of the income tax, halved the duty on sugar and molasses, and also remitted a number of minor duties, including that on the passenger receipts of railway companies, and hawkers' licences, as well as reducing the postage on newspapers and printed matter, which he described as 'the last relic of the old taxes on knowledge.'

In the most graphic manner he dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of direct and indirect taxation, and answered those who urged him to sweep away at once the income tax and resist the tea duty, by saying, 'Everybody should contribute, however small his contribution, to the revenue. We must look to taxation, not as with reference to this moment, but to the future. At present we are prosperous and at peace; but the indiscretion of a subordinate official; half a dozen glasses of wine too much, drunk by somebody in a responsible situation,—the merest accident may involve us in trouble from which there is no refuge except in enormous outlay.'

So far, Robert Lowe's career as Chancellor of the Exchequer had been one of almost uniform success. If he had not displayed the unrivalled mastery over the details of our national accounts, and the vast departmental knowledge of Mr. Gladstone and his master Sir Robert Peel, he had done quite as well as Mr. Disraeli or any other Finance Minister, as Mr. Bagehot very pertinently reminded the latter. But

The painful warrior famousèd for fight,
After a thousand victories, once foiled,
Is from the book of honour razèd quite
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled.

Robert Lowe's third Budget was introduced April 20, 1871, and it showed a deficit of nearly 2,000,000*l.*, mainly caused by

the increased expenditure on the army, due in great measure to the abolition of purchase. To meet this deficit, he proposed his ill-fated match tax, an increase in the probate and succession duties, and an increase of a $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ in the income tax. The one thing that the general public seized upon and remember to this day was the match tax, which proved to be singularly impolitic, as it was the cause of bringing a very doleful gathering of girls and others engaged in this industry in the East End of London to the precincts of St. Stephen's, which, of course, effectually discounted any arguments that might have been used in favour of the tax. In Mr. Tollemache's *Reminiscences of Lord Sherbrooke* at the close of this volume will be found a reference to the match tax by Lord Aberdare, who was then a member of the Gladstone Cabinet. He not only states that the Cabinet were unanimous in thinking the tax an excellent one (which is quite in accord with Lord Sherbrooke's own assertion), but he states that the famous procession of match-makers had little or nothing to do with its abandonment. However that may be, it was abandoned, and to that extent damaged the reputation of Robert Lowe as a Finance Minister.¹ After its abandonment, the late Mr. Stanley Jevons published a most interesting pamphlet entitled *The Match Tax: a Problem in Finance*, in which he maintained that it was free from any fundamental objection and was well fitted to draw a small contribution to the revenue from that large portion of the population exempted from direct taxation.

It was in the budget of this year that Mr. Lowe, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed the match tax, which was received with such an indignant outcry by the press and the people that it was

¹ Lowe's quickness of repartee did not desert him on the public platform. On one occasion he was enumerating the list of beneficial measures passed by the Liberal Government. 'Ah, yes! the Match Tax!' shouted a voice from the crowd. 'No,' retorted Lowe, without a moment's hesitation, 'there my friend is mistaken; he is in the wrong. The Match Tax is one of those measures which we did *not* pass.'

abandoned. In time Mr. Jevons published a pamphlet—*The Match Tax: a Problem in Finance*—in which he calmly considered the most important objections raised to the tax, pointing out how many of them had been unreasonable, and proving that even to the very poor the match tax would have been less than one-third the burden which the shilling corn duty repealed in 1869 had been.¹

Unfortunately Robert Lowe, in his attempt to cope with a coming deficit, had laid himself open to attack from both the masses and the classes: the match tax enraged the one, and the probate and succession duty disconcerted the other. Disraeli, therefore, as became an astute leader of the Opposition (whose function it is to oppose), denounced both. Lowe's proposal with regard to the legacy and succession duties was to raise the scale on the nearest of kin; thus it was to rise from one to two per cent. for lineals, and from three to three and a half per cent. for brothers, and from three and a half per cent. to five per cent. for first cousins or descendants of the same grandfather. Of course the wealthy Liberals sitting behind Mr. Lowe cheered Disraeli's attack on this scheme with great heartiness, the result being that it had to be withdrawn. Yet it was an admirable proposal, inasmuch as it was a tax in no way disturbing to trade, and in no wise affecting the thrift or industry of the people. Lowe had, indeed, given much thought and time to this Budget, and the opposition that it met with was not the least of his disappointments. The consequence was that the match tax (though it had in the first instance been agreed to by the House) and the legacy and succession duties were abandoned; following which, in the rough and ready way of our homespun legislation, the income tax was raised from $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ to $2d.$, and a carefully prepared and well-thought-out Budget practically destroyed.

Robert Lowe's fourth and last Budget was introduced on April 25, 1872, and was a pronounced success, showing as it

¹ *Letters and Journal of W. Stanley Jevons.* Edited by his Wife. (Macmillan.)

did a surplus of three millions and a half, which enabled him to remove the extra 2*d.* of income tax which he had been compelled to impose in 1871. He also exempted from inhabited house tax, shops, offices and warehouses, reduced the duty on coffee and chicory about one-half, and in the matter of the income tax extended the principle of abatement in respect of incomes from 200*l.* to 300*l.* a year, and increased the amount to be deducted from the assessment from 60*l.* to 80*l.*

‘The Budget was generally thought to be simple and felicitous, showing judicious finance, a sound fiscal system, and a just regard for the interests of the people.’¹

Taking these four Budgets, it may be doubted if any Chancellor of the Exchequer ever gave a more straightforward or, on the whole, a more successful account of the finances of the kingdom. It will be seen, too, that in at least three of the years, Lowe’s management of those finances met with very general commendation ; but the man in the street—and, one regrets to say, the newspaper which he reads—remembers only the match tax.

In a speech delivered at Sheffield in defence of the Liberal Government, on September 4, 1873, Robert Lowe himself took up the challenge and met the mass of loose accusations in the press and elsewhere by declaring that the finances of the country had been managed and husbanded so as to permit of 3,600,000*l.* of special claims being paid off without borrowing a sixpence or imposing a tax. Despite a great reduction in the expenditure, the army had been increased by 14,000 men, nor, as his expenditure on the British Museum and the National Gallery showed, had he been niggardly in those matters where a great nation should be wisely lavish. None of these statements can be controverted ; and that being the case, the match tax notwithstanding, there is a hope that Robert Lowe may yet receive some measure of tardy justice for his

¹ *Annals of Our Time.* By Joseph Irving. (Macmillan.)

arduous and anxious and on the whole successful labours as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

His own amusing lines, written in 1876 after his retirement from office, are, however, the best epitaph :—

Four Years' Work of a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Twelve millions of Taxes I struck off,
 Left behind me six millions of gains ;
 Of Debt forty millions I shook off,
 And got well abused for my pains.

There is one charge persistently made against Lord Sherbrooke while at the Treasury with regard to his treatment of deputations. It has been repeatedly declared that he was unnecessarily brusque and often rude and insulting to those who called upon him for the purpose of bringing grievances under his notice, or with a view of enlisting his support and sympathy for various causes. It will be remembered that Lord Sherbrooke himself, in his Autobiography, admits that he really felt his deficient eyesight to be a very serious drawback at this time. 'He who has to refuse many things to many men,' he wrote, 'has need to exert some counteracting power to neutralise the offence which, if he does his duty, he is pretty sure to give.' At the same time he points out how extremely difficult this was to one who was practically unable to discern the faces of his fellows, and who, as a public man, was frequently compelled to hold a conversation with those whom he could not even recognise. 'I could not,' he writes, 'conciliate either my victims or my antagonists, because I could not find them.'

Most of the stories current with regard to Lord Sherbrooke's alleged *brusquerie* might well be passed over unnoticed ; they are generally the mere irrepressible chatter that gets into print, having no relevancy or foundation in fact whatever.

The truth of the matter is that Lord Sherbrooke, though one of the kindest-hearted men in the world, was born with the true Socratic bent, than which there can be nothing more irritating to the ordinary muddle-headed citizen. As Sir

John Simon remarks, it ended, in the case of Socrates, in hemlock, which was, after all, not so very terrible a thing for an old man of seventy with a good conscience. Robert Lowe's punishment for making many a pompous burgess write himself down an ass was far more severe; for his fame and reputation—the lasting part of him—were murdered by way of reprisal. From his happy disposition, and the peculiar constitution of his mind, however, the widely-circulated stories as to his overbearing manner and cross-grained nature simply amused him. Writing to his Sydney correspondent on February 1, 1869, he said: 'I can sympathise with Lady Belmore; for all the newspapers, having nothing else to abuse me about, have found out that I have "a fearful temper," and waste a good deal of pity on those who have anything to do with me. . . . A friend of mine was staying at a country house the other day with some people whom I don't know, and they pointed out a perfectly white wood-pigeon which they begged might on no account be shot, because they had named it after me! It is the first time in my life that, to my knowledge, I was ever likened unto a dove.'

I am indebted for the following particulars as to Lord Sherbrooke's behaviour towards deputations, to his then private secretary, Mr. (now Sir) Rivers Wilson. On this point it will be admitted that Sir Rivers Wilson speaks with absolute authority, as he was always present on these occasions, save during a brief illness which kept him away from the office. Sir Rivers says: 'Mr. Lowe's courtesy was unflinching, but he never forgot for a moment that he was the guardian of the public purse.¹ If he did not approve of the object sought by the deputation, he never pandered to them or dealt in meaningless generalities, but frankly explained his views and stated the reasons for his refusal. It made no

¹ 'I hold it to be the duty of the person entrusted with public money not to expend it for any other than public purposes.'—Speech at Glasgow, September 26, 1872.

difference whether the deputation consisted of political supporters or opponents, whether they were capitalists or working-men, whether composed of noblemen, professors, or shopkeepers.

‘I remember,’ continued Sir Rivers, ‘the influential deputation, introduced by Mr. Prior, on the brewers’ licenses and hop duty. Mr. Bass, who was a personal friend of Mr. Lowe, exclaimed: “The license duty is enormous! Why, this year, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have had to pay 12,000*l.*, Sir—twelve thousand pounds!”

“Delighted,” exclaimed Mr. Lowe as quick as lightning, “to hear of the great expansion of your business, Mr. Bass; the last time you were here it was only ten thousand.”

There was one famous case in which the Chancellor gave grave offence to Colonel Tomline, M.P., who insisted that Mr. Lowe, as Master of the Mint, should convert his silver bullion into coin of the realm. This he declined to do on the plain ground that he did not require any more shillings; whereupon Colonel Tomline forwarded him the following petition, signed by a number of his workmen:—

To the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, M.P., Master of the Mint

Walton, near Ipswich: November 21, 1870

Sir,—We respectfully address you as Master of the Mint, and ask you to consider our case, and relieve us from pauperism.

We are strong men, willing to work, and many of us have, for a long time, been employed by Colonel Tomline in reclaiming land from the sea. This is a national as well as a local advantage.

Colonel Tomline is anxious to continue to pay us our wages, and has sent to you standard silver sufficient for 2,000 shillings, which, without giving a reason, you have refused to coin.

The result of your refusal is that we can earn no wages. The national as well as local benefit of our work has ceased. We are forced to be idle, and pauperism increases. The increased rates to relieve this pauperism are paid exclusively by our neighbours, who therefore find their means of employing us reduced.

If, as we are told, you stand in the way of our earning 15*s.* a week by claiming a more than doubtful, and certainly a dormant Prerogative of the Queen, we respectfully submit that without her

knowledge, and, as we believe, contrary to her wishes, you make a benevolent lady responsible for the misery of many of her subjects.

We pray for a favourable and immediate answer that you will coin 2,000 shillings which we may earn.

You cannot imagine the feelings under which strong men pass their idle time, idle because the Queen's Prerogative is claimed to prevent their gaining a livelihood. We cannot describe them.

[196 signatures].

To this the Chancellor replied with an enclosure to the working-men that reads like a page out of a 'First Spelling-Book;' but the analogy of the pig, while it sent most persons into fits of laughter, made Colonel Tomline furious.

11 Downing Street, Whitehall: November 24, 1870

My dear Mr. Tomline,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of a petition from some working men lately in your employ, and to enclose an answer which I shall be much obliged to you to communicate to them. I propose to publish the correspondence.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) ROBERT LOWE.

George Tomline, Esq., M.P.

Enclosure.

To the Working Men who have signed a Petition forwarded to me by Mr. Tomline

My Friends,—It is my duty as Master of the Mint to buy silver when I want it to coin into shillings and other silver coins, but not to buy it unless I want it for that purpose, because I have no other use for it.

When Mr. Tomline sent me his silver I did not want any to make into shillings, and so I did not buy it.

But there are a great many people who want silver for different purposes, and other people who buy silver to make a profit by selling it again, and Mr. Tomline might have sold his silver to any of them, and they would have given him in exchange shillings, or perhaps gold, which he would have had no difficulty in changing into shillings.

If a man has a pig to sell and takes it to a town where there are several butchers, the first butcher may, perhaps, not want to buy a pig. But the man does not take his pig home again and say that the butcher has prevented him from selling his pig. He goes to

the other butchers until he finds one that wants a pig, and sells the pig to him.

I am very sorry that Mr. Tomline has ceased to give you employment, but as he could easily, if he chose, obtain 2,000 shillings in exchange for his silver, and, indeed, in many other ways, you must not think that my refusal to buy his silver has anything to do with your distress.

I do not claim for the Queen, in this case, any right except that which is possessed by you and me and Mr. Tomline and all her Majesty's subjects, the right to refuse to buy the things we do not want.

(Signed) ROBERT LOWE.

This ludicrous controversy was fought out in the Court of Queen's Bench in the case of *Tomline v. Lowe* (April 28, 1871), when it was decided against the plaintiff, and the judgment affirmed that while the public had a right to take gold to the Mint to be coined, they had no such right in the case of silver.

A still more famous episode was that of Earl Stanhope, who, as President of the Society of Antiquaries, applied for a public grant to make excavations of the tumuli on the plains of Troy. Lord Sherbrooke's reply, which is a masterpiece, gave great displeasure to Lord Stanhope and his colleagues, but its wit and common sense must appeal to every impartial mind.

Right Hon. Robert Lowe to Earl Stanhope

March 10, 1873

My Lord,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of a letter in which your Lordship, as President of the Society of Antiquaries, suggests the exploration of the tumuli on and around the plains of the Troad at the public expense. The object of this enterprise is stated to be the elucidation of the still very doubtful sites. More than 1800 years ago a Roman poet wrote of Troy 'Etiam periere ruinæ.' Your Lordship cites as a case in point the exploration of the Temple of Ephesus. That work was undertaken by the Trustees of the British Museum, not for the purpose of ascertaining the site or the form of the Temple—objects quite beyond the scope of the duties of the Trustees—but for the sake of such relics of ancient art as might be found buried among the ruins. The ascertainment of the site was a mere incident; the main object was the acquisition of specimens of ancient statuary and architecture. The same may

be said of the excavations at Budrum, Priene, Rhodes, and Halicarnassus. In the case of the Troad there is little or no chance of acquiring any possession for the public which would repay the search, and the case must therefore be judged on its own merits and without reference to the researches of the Trustees of the British Museum.

The question then is—are excavations undertaken for the purpose of illustrating the *Iliad*, a proper object for the expenditure of public money? I am sorry to say that, in my judgment, they are not. It is a new head of expense. It has no practical object, but aims at satisfying the curiosity of those who believe that the narrative of Homer was a true history, and not the creation of a poet's imagination.

But while I regret to be unable to accede to your Lordship's suggestion, I submit that there is a way open by which the money may be provided. It is said that the schoolboy enthusiasm of Europe liberated Greece from Turkey. Is not the literary enthusiasm of wealthy England equal to the enterprise of exploring scenes which are ever recurring to the imagination of everyone who has received a classical education? The *Daily Telegraph*, with my hearty approbation, is exploring, without any assistance from the public purse, the secrets that lie buried under the mounds of Mesopotamia. Shall it be said that a large number of wealthy English noblemen and gentlemen can find no better expedient for the gratification of a liberal curiosity than to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to employ, for its satisfaction, money wrung from the earnings of the poorest of the community?

I sincerely regret that the spirit of Herodes Atticus has not descended to modern times, and feel convinced that if one half the energy which is devoted in attempts to obtain aid from Government were given to create a spirit of private munificence, this, and many similar objects, might be attained with the utmost facility and completeness.

I remain, my Lord,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

ROBERT LOWE.

On the other hand, whenever Lord Sherbrooke was of opinion that a grant of public money could be usefully employed for public purposes, he was extremely generous. It is the old story of the man who saves being the friend in need, while the reckless spendthrift has never anything to lend. In the midst of his financial troubles over the *Alabama* claims

he managed to fit out the famous *Challenger* expedition for its voyage of scientific discovery, which lasted for three years and a half. He was equally generous in the matter of the fine arts, and spent 8,000*l.* in buying Sir Robert Peel's pictures for the nation and 50,000*l.* upon antiquities for the British Museum. In 1870, he initiated the grant of 2,000*l.* a year for laboratory researches in connection with the Medical Department under the Privy Council, a grant which Sir John Simon justly ranks with those of the Admiralty on behalf of astronomical and meteorological science.

It would appear from Mr. Leslie Stephen's *Life of Henry Fawcett* that Lord Sherbrooke gave great offence to that worthy and estimable public man by opposing him and the Commons Preservation Society on the question of Epping Forest. Mr. Cowper Temple brought forward a motion in the House to secure the preservation of the unenclosed parts of Epping Forest for the benefit of the people of the East-end of London; and Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe opposed the motion on the ground that it was Crown property. The question was warmly taken up by philanthropic men like Professor Fawcett, who wielded a great deal of popular influence. They bearded the Chancellor in his den, says Mr. Leslie Stephen, but found him obdurate, and so Fawcett and his friends quoted Mr. Gladstone, who had expressed a hope that some convenient compromise might be arrived at. 'Mr. Lowe' (adds Mr. Leslie Stephen) 'sneered at the reply as very "oracular." A member of the deputation exclaimed that Mr. Gladstone was too honourable not to keep his promise. "I don't understand" (replied Mr. Lowe) "what it means; it was evidently intended to please everyone, the lords of the manor included."'

These sarcasms were most displeasing to Fawcett and his philanthropic friends; and Mr. Stephen thinks that their 'brilliant forger' was not very prudent in giving them utterance. Probably not; but Lowe's very unpopular attitude on

the question meant no desire to insult so estimable a man as Fawcett, though Lowe had his own opinions about other persons, whose aim was to make a little cheap popularity at the public cost, by parading their sympathy with the poor of the East-end. He put the matter in his own inimitable, if injudicious way, in his speech at Glasgow upon receiving the freedom of the city.

They obtained a vote from the House of Commons that they were to obtain—obtain, I think, was the word—3,000 acres of this land, which was worth about 50*l.* an acre, for the benefit of the City of London; the only way to obtain which, that I know of, would be to take out of your pockets—out of the pockets of the taxpayers of this country—150,000*l.* to buy this ground, to make a present of it to the City of London. To my sorrow and shame be it said, the House of Commons confirmed this resolution; but we did not evince the slightest intention of giving any particular effect to it (loud laughter), and the consequence was that the City of London, much indignant at our conduct, was at last reduced to that which they might have thought of at first—they announced their intention of buying the Forest—so that the account stands thus: You are *plus* 150,000*l.*; I am *minus* a great deal of reputation that I lost then; and the people of London get the Forest after all.

He took the same unpopular stand with regard to the gardens of the Thames Embankment; his argument being that to hand over these two acres, without payment, to the City of London, was exactly the same as if he had placed 40,000*l.* on the Estimates to be taken out of the taxes, for the purpose of presenting a garden to the Londoners at the expense of all the people of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. But in thus alienating the support not only of Mr. Fawcett but of many ardent Liberals, and at the same time making himself personally very unpopular, and a butt for the shafts of journalistic sharpshooters, Robert Lowe was really acting according to his lights, on the widest public grounds, and with an absolute freedom from all personal or class bias. So far as Professor Fawcett himself was concerned, Lowe had

not a little admiration for him as an honest and fearless politician.

He was one of the foremost of those who had signed the testimonial which helped to secure for Fawcett the much-coveted Cambridge Professorship; and in the House of Commons he had that personal feeling for him that he had in after years towards a very different person, Mr. Joseph Cowen, member for Newcastle—the feeling that, however mistaken he might be in his views, he was, by independence of character, strong individuality, and freedom from faction, amongst the rarest and most valuable of public men in a levelling and democratic age.

There remain to be told one or two personal reminiscences of Lowe as Chancellor of the Exchequer, for which I am also indebted to Sir Rivers Wilson. That he was not actuated by sordid, and still less unkind, motives when he opposed various philanthropic schemes, will be shown by the story of his generous aid and friendship to Alfred Stevens, the sculptor. When Stevens was engaged on his noblest work—the national memorial to Wellington, in St. Paul's Cathedral—he was greatly harassed by the late Mr. Ayrton, who had succeeded Mr. Layard as Commissioner of Works and Public Buildings. Stevens was a slow and most fastidious worker—in other words, a true artist—and Ayrton, who, with a good deal of rough ability, was little better than a Goth, threatened to take the unfinished monument away, as the time for its completion had elapsed, and to hand it over to masons and other artisans to have it finished, whether the sculptor liked it or not. This threat well-nigh drove Stevens to despair; and as Ayrton was a man who carried out his purposes, it was not surprising. In the nick of time, Robert Lowe heard of the state of things, and Sir Rivers Wilson vividly remembers taking him to Stevens's studio at Haverstock Hill. When he beheld the distress of the sculptor, and his magnificent though unfinished work, Lowe was himself distressed beyond words.

Then and there, in the presence of Stevens, he said to Sir Rivers that the additional time and money *must* be given ; and that he intended, at all costs, to rescue the sculptor from the grasp of Ayrton—which he did.

In a similar manner he protected Sir Joseph Hooker from the clutches of the same overbearing Minister. Such facts as these are calculated to confound those who have formed their notions of Lowe and Ayrton from Mr. Gilbert's burlesque, *The Happy Land*, in which they and Mr. Gladstone figured in somewhat undignified disguises. So far from there ever having been any sympathy between them, they found it absolutely impossible to work together in the Ministry. Lowe had a grand scheme for erecting the Royal Courts of Justice and the Mint on the Embankment ; in this he was opposed and beaten by Ayrton, and London was permanently left so much the less magnificent.

Lowe was for many years a great friend of Baron Mayer de Rothschild, of Mentmore, where he frequently visited, with Delane, Bernal Osborne, Mr. Villiers, and Sir Richard Quain. The Baroness had a *protégé* in the person of a young Jew named Numa Hartog, an undersized, insignificant-looking youth, who was an intellectual marvel. He was Senior Wrangler, and had just missed being the Smith's Prizeman. He was, however, poor and a thorough bookworm, and there seemed no way of placing him in life. Through Lowe he was given a small appointment in the Record Office, and Sir Rivers Wilson remembers going there with his Chief and seeing Hartog at work. Afterwards he was placed in the office of Mr. (now Lord) Thring, but died young. Another alien youth in whom Lowe took great interest was Alamayoo, son of King Theodore of Abyssinia. This young prince was in charge of a Captain Speedy of the Indian Army ; and the Queen, in the first instance, wished that he should go to India with his guardian, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed the plan, as he considered it would be more beneficial to

the youth to be educated at Cheltenham. Alamayoo was medically examined by Sir William Jenner on behalf of the Queen, and by Sir Richard Quain on behalf of the Chancellor, which resulted in his being placed with Dr. Jex Blake at Cheltenham. But, though a lad of some promise, he died prematurely.

During the time of his Chancellorship of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe received an honour which, despite his attacks on 'clerical gerontocracies' and the classics, he regarded as one of the great rewards of his career—the D.C.L. of Oxford.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard

11 Downing Street : June 24, 1870

I had the pleasure of hearing Sir John Young make a speech in the House last night, and, oddly enough, it was against a Bill of mine for putting a tax on guns. I have just been made a D.C.L. of Oxford, and had a reception quite beyond anything I could have expected; indeed, my expectations on that subject were very moderate. Some papers have represented exactly the contrary, but the truth is, there was just enough opposition to render the applause loud and energetic; I should think it went on for a quarter of an hour, at least it seemed so to me, standing and waiting for it to stop. We have had a very hard session, and have done a great deal of good work. I don't see that we are much weaker than we were when we began. Several of my colleagues have become ill, but I have hitherto stood the racket exceedingly well. I find the great art is to eat very little, and then one does not want much sleep, which is lucky, as we certainly do not get it. The Queen gives a grand garden-party at Windsor to-day, but I have been unable to go, on account of the Education Bill, which is nearly as troublesome as it used to be in Australia. I am consoled by some heavy showers which will effectually spoil the whole thing.

Shortly afterwards he turned his steps towards his beloved Scotland, as he always strove to do when fagged and harassed; but on this occasion there was an honour awaiting him—the freedom of the city of Elgin. In the next (and last) letter to his Sydney correspondent, we get a glimpse of the terrible Franco-German war.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Billyard

11 Downing Street : August 25, 1870

I have been nearly worked to death and am going to-morrow to get rid of heat and glare in Scotland. But I cannot easily leave all my cares behind me, for the dreadful war that is now raging fills us with deep anxiety. It seems at present to portend one of the greatest catastrophes which the world has seen, and the loss of life is perfectly awful. I am told that the Prussians have in their hands, as the result of the great battles round Metz, 70,000 wounded Prussians and French. How happy you are to live away from such horrors, though, I doubt not, the time will come when the thirsty soil of Australia will drink human blood just as greedily as the fields of Alsace and Lorraine. I hope we shall keep out of it, and I think so ; but we are at the mercy of so many contingencies that it is well not to be too positive.

On September 16, 1870, Robert Lowe was enrolled among the burgesses of Elgin. Mr. Cameron, the Lord Provost, referred to him as a 'master of almost unrivalled powers of ridicule and sarcasm ;' adding 'there are few men in the House of Commons who care to break a lance with our distinguished guest.'

It was, perhaps, the emphasis thus laid on one side of Lord Sherbrooke's mental character which made his concluding words so effective. It happened that the news had just arrived of the loss of the new turret-ship *Captain*, which had gone down in the Bay of Biscay with all hands, including a son of Mr. Childers, First Lord of the Admiralty, and a son of Lord Northbrook.

'The loss of the *Captain*,' said the Chancellor, 'has come to us in the midst of our congratulations at the success of the session, in the considerable measures we passed, and the progress we believed we were making in naval matters. I think it is impossible to imagine a catastrophe more melancholy ; and yet it seems to me the price we are doomed to pay for great improvements.'

'There is in the lone, lone sea,
A spot unmarked, but holy ;
For there the gallant and the free
In their ocean bed lie lowly.

'Down, down beneath the deep
That oft in triumph bore them,
They sleep a sound and peaceful sleep,
With the wild waves washing o'er them.

'And though no stone may tell
Their name, their worth, their glory,
They rest in hearts that love them well,
And they grace Britannia's story.'

These lines, which he gave with deep feeling, were from Lyte's poem, 'The Sailor's Grave.'

Some two years later, on September 26, 1872, Robert Lowe was presented with the freedom of the City of Glasgow, and on that occasion delivered one of his most memorable addresses, to which more than one reference has been made in this work.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXI

It has been thought desirable to append the following letter and statement of Sir Reginald Welby, in regard to Lord Sherbrooke's tenure of the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

December 28, 1876

Dear Mr. Lowe,—Your correspondent, whose letter I return, says that he stated that you left a surplus of 4,000,000*l.* besides having reduced the annual expenditure and National Debt by how many millions more he could not state.

The Estimates of 1874-75 were practically the estimates of your Government, and they showed a revenue of 77,995,000*l.* against an expenditure of 72,503,000*l.*; surplus 5,492,000*l.* In your five Budgets you reduced taxation by 12,450,000*l. net*, after making allowance for the additions which you made at different times.

If you think the additions to income tax made by Mr. Hunt were in the nature of temporary additions and deduct them, so as to leave your reductions of taxation *bonâ fide* reductions of permanent taxes, you are still left with 9,500,000*l.* to your credit.

On March 31, 1869, the Debt was 805,500,000*l.*; March 31, 1874, 779,300,000*l.*; reduction, 26,200,000*l.*; but during that period you had borrowed about 12,000,000*l.* for telegraphs, fortifications, &c, which, of course, showed that you had paid off nearly 40,000,000*l.* on the whole.

In 1866-67 Army and Navy cost, before Abyssinia began, 25,300,000*l.*; in 1873-74, 24,700,000*l.*; but even this latter sum includes part of the Ashantee expenditure, so that the reduction was really greater.

Yours very truly,
R. S. WELBY.

Mr. Lowe is responsible for the Civil Service expenditure in four complete years. His immediate supervision related to the Consolidated Fund charges and the so-called Miscellaneous Services. Excluding the charge for the Revenue Departments, which naturally grows with the growth of the Revenue, the following table shows the expenditure for Civil Services and Consolidated Fund in the two years of Tory administration, and in the four years during which Mr. Lowe was at the Treasury:—

	£
1867-68	10,385,000
1868-69	10,870,000
1869-70	11,033,000
1870-71	11,962,000
1871-72	12,160,000
1872-73	11,750,000

It appears, therefore, that last year's expenditure exceeded the expenditure in the last year for which the Tory Government is responsible by 880,000*l.* But during the four years of Mr. Lowe's administration, the Civil Estimates were swelled by various new items, or by the extension of old ones. Contrasting 1872-73 with 1868-69, the expenditure of the former year was increased by the following items:—

	£
<i>Cadastral Survey</i> —Removed from War Office Estimates	120,000
<i>Education</i> —England and Ireland (New Legislation)	800,000
<i>Chancery and Bankruptcy</i> —Establishment formerly defrayed from fees	200,000
<i>Police, Great Britain</i> —Normal increase beyond Treasury Control	100,000
<i>Reformatories</i> —Normal increase beyond Treasury Control	50,000
<i>Local Government Board</i> —Medical Officers (New Legislation)	50,000

	£
Brought forward	1,320,000
<i>Pensions</i> —Increase principally caused by Chancery and Bankruptcy Compensations	140,000
Total	£1,460,000
Deduct increase, viz.	880,000
Reduction	£580,000

That is to say, had there been no new Legislation tending to increase expenditure, had the charge for Police and Reformatories been the same as in 1868, and had no transfers been made from other votes, there would have been an actual reduction, as there is an actual saving, of 580,000*l.*

NOTE A

Taxation and War

‘Owing to the nature of the machinery brought into use during the last few years . . . wars, for the future, instead of being long torments, will be short agonies. Not only will they not last for twenty-two years, as was the case in the war which we waged with Napoleon, but the Seven Weeks’ War in Germany, the other day, may resolve itself into a campaign, on an equally grand scale, of seven days. . . . I know no greater weapon of strength than the power of levying the taxes at one sweep, without the needless delay and circumlocution attending the present system of collection.’—‘Lowe’s Financial Statement, 1869.’ [See ‘Mr. Lowe’s Budget Speeches,’ p. 479.]

CHAPTER XXII

CLOSE OF OFFICIAL CAREER—HOME SECRETARY

(1873-74)

MANY and various are the explanations that have been offered of the decadence of the Gladstone Government in 1873, and its complete downfall in 1874. Mr. George Russell, with praiseworthy candour, in his interesting monograph on Mr. Gladstone,¹ seems to attribute the overthrow of the Government mainly to the Prime Minister's treatment of the rank and file of the Liberal party, and to his want of tact or lightness of touch. 'He had little of that saving gift of humour which smooths the practical working of life as much as it adds to its enjoyment.'

Although Mr. Russell, in the frank and noteworthy passage here briefly indicated, throws the entire blame on his great hero, Mr. Gladstone, it is notorious that Lowe, as well as almost all the chief Liberal Ministers, was equally the subject of attack throughout the length and breadth of the country. If an impartial historian were to attempt the task of estimating the causes of the unpopularity of the Gladstone, or any other ministry, he might be astonished to find that its merits had contributed to that end even more than its shortcomings. There can be little doubt that the principal cause of the downfall of the Liberal Government in 1874 was the organised opposition of the Nonconformists to Mr. Forster's statesman-like Education Act; and after this, the settlement of the Ala-

¹ *The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.* By George W. E. Russell (Sampson Low), p. 228.

bama claims by arbitration instead of by bloodshed. Of course, there were many minor causes, of which the care and prudence shown by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in spending the nation's money was one of the chief. Above all, the people wanted a change, and were quite sated with administrative reform and Irish experimental legislation.

It was at this crisis, too, that the internal dissensions of the Ministry were made the subject of public comment. Lowe more and more found it impossible to work, or even to preserve the semblance of amicable relations, with Ayrton. As he was never in the habit of referring to these personal matters in his conversations with friends, it is quite impossible to say how things had come to such a pass. Mr. Ward Hunt, however, asked in the House, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Commissioner of Works were on speaking terms. All that can positively be said is that, as the story of Alfred Stevens the sculptor plainly shows, Robert Lowe thoroughly disliked Ayrton's manner and methods, and consulted him on matters of public business as little as possible. Hence arose the imbroglio concerning the plans for the erection of the Law Courts and other public buildings on the Embankment, which Ayrton bitterly resented. Such dissensions were of ill omen for the life of the Ministry. There was, besides, the dispute with Mr. Baxter, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and the direct negotiations between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Scudamore of the Telegraph Department. That perhaps too energetic official seems to have been in the habit of completely ignoring his parliamentary chiefs (Lord Hartington and Mr. Monsell), a practice in which it was stated the Chancellor of the Exchequer abetted him. Lowe's chief difficulty, however, was, as already stated, with Ayrton, and this was, without doubt, one of the principal causes which led to the reconstruction of the Ministry, when Mr. Gladstone took the Treasury, Robert Lowe became Secretary of State for the Home Department, and Mr. Bruce

became Lord Aberdare. There were other important changes which need not be specified, though it should, perhaps, be added that Mr. Ayrton ceased to be Commissioner of Works, and Dr. Lyon Playfair succeeded Mr. Monsell at the Post Office.

Robert Lowe's official career was now fast drawing to its close. He, indeed, only held the office of Home Secretary for some five months, during the whole of which time Parliament was in recess.

There can be no doubt that the release from the harassments of the Treasury and the holiday from nightly worries at St. Stephen's wrought a beneficial change. The four years' close and unremitting labour as Chancellor of the Exchequer had begun to tell their tale on his powerful mind and singularly healthy bodily constitution. They had, to a great extent, divorced him from the society of his friends and the companionship of his books; worse than all, day after day, while he was receiving deputations and going over distracting lists of figures and calculations, or wrangling with the cantankerous Mr. Ayrton, he was thinking of the serious illness of his wife. This greatly worried him at nights, when he was obliged to sit through dreary debates on the Ministerial benches. Little did his antagonists all over the country suspect that the hard and unsympathetic statesman, such as they imagined him, was all the while racked with anxiety, and eagerly longing to get home to a suffering wife. He was the last man to have urged private sorrow as a plea for public shortcomings; but now that the battle is over it may, perhaps, be briefly alluded to as throwing some light on the troubled close of his official career as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

And thus it was that the removal to the Home Office, the release from Mr. Ayrton, and the respite from parliamentary attendance, restored some of his former elasticity and almost undeviating cheerfulness. The final episode in the life of the Gladstone Ministry has been depicted by many an unsparing

pen, one amongst whom thus describes the growing popularity of the new Home Secretary :—

Curiously enough, it was Mr. Lowe who was most successful in winning popularity for the Ministry during the recess. The policy [Mr. Forster's Education Act] found in him a zealous defender. The working classes heard with pleased surprise a rumour to the effect that he had drafted a Bill conceding the demand of Trades' Unionists for a reform of the labour laws. His manner of receiving deputations had suddenly become bland and suave. When, for example, the representatives of the Licensed Victuallers went to complain to him of the licensing laws, he was so sympathetic that the leader of the deputation sent a graphic account of the interview to the press. He explained how he and his colleagues had waited on the new Home Secretary in fear and trembling, but how delighted they were to find that 'the great scholar and debater cheered the meeting with many sunny glimpses of his own anti-Puritanic nature.'¹

There is a class of men in the colonies who always turn up on a goldfield after it is worked out, when their more swift and adventurous brethren are off to a fresh 'rush.' In this spirit, a gentleman who had compiled a political brochure, having, doubtless, read many attacks on Robert Lowe in the back files of the newspapers, thought fit to institute a peculiarly infelicitous comparison between him and the present Lord Cross, as Home Secretaries. Someone brought the book under Lowe's notice, who, more in amusement than in anger, despatched to the author the following epistle :—

34 Lowndes Square : March 25, 1880.

Sir,—In your recently published work, entitled *England Under Lord Beaconsfield*, p. 49, you say : 'He (Mr. Cross) has not made half the mistakes in five and a half years which Mr. Lowe made in five and a half months, and has probably done almost as much to make the Government popular as Mr. Lowe did to make the late administration disliked.'

I think I am fairly entitled to call upon you to specify to what proceedings of mine, during the brief period for which I held the office of Secretary of State for the Home Department, you allude.

¹ *Life and Times of Queen Victoria*, vol. ii. p. 458-9. (Cassell.)

I confess that, as the whole period was in the vacation, and as no particular event occurred during that time, I thought I was as little entitled to censure as to praise; and I await with some curiosity the catalogue, with which I hope you will be so good as to furnish me, of the many mistakes damaging to the Government which you say that I made during those five months and a half for which I was at the Home Office, with such fatal effect on the Ministry.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT LOWE.

CHAPTER XXIII

A STATESMAN'S RECREATION

ROBERT LOWE's release from the cares of office was by no means unwelcome to himself, while it was hailed with delight by his intimate personal friends—especially those of the fair sex—who for the past four years had been deprived of so much of his valued conversation and society. He was a man, like Dr. Johnson, who loved to unbend and to talk, sometimes epigrammatically and sometimes at random, on all the subjects that excite and interest the human mind. Of all our English public men in this terribly dull and prosaic age, he was the only one, with the exception of Disraeli, out of whose sayings a really interesting volume of table-talk could have been compiled. Without being in any way so *bizarre* as Lord Beaconsfield, he was quite as witty, and he had a range of knowledge and scholarship altogether beyond the reach of that remarkable and fascinating personage. Unfortunately, the mass of his brilliant sayings have passed into thin air; for he had this peculiarity, unique among great talkers, that he poured out what was best in him at the moment, quite irrespective of the nature of his audience. Indeed, unlike such famous wits of society as Sydney Smith, he never looked for an audience at all.

It is much to be regretted that a man with the singular conversational gifts of Lord Sherbrooke should not have had, during some portion of his career, a Boswell at his elbow. The late Richard Redgrave, the artist, who seems to have had a genuine admiration for his old chief, is one of the few

writers who have given us any genuine anecdotes about him. Unfortunately, he was not often thrown into the same society. Elsewhere an extract will be found from Redgrave's *Memoirs* concerning the visit paid by Lowe to Hatfield House in 1868; on which occasion he also relates the following story in connection with Mr. Gladstone and Cobden.

Dining some days previously with Mr. Gladstone, a lady being seated between them, Gladstone, speaking across her, said to Mr. Lowe: 'I cannot think why they call Cobden the Inspired Bagman.' 'Neither can I,' said Lowe, 'for he was neither inspired nor a bagman; in fact, it reminds me of a story told of Madame de Maintenon, when someone offered to obtain admission for her into the *Maison des Filles Repenties*. 'Nay,' said Madame, 'I am neither a *fille*, nor am I *repentie*.'

At this the lady between the two politicians burst into a laugh, but Mr. Gladstone pulled rather a long face.

In the subsequent conversation which Redgrave held with Count Strzelecki on Lowe's great abilities, the Count, who was a most accomplished man of the world, shrewdly remarked on the drawback of deficient eyesight to a public man. 'Besides,' said he, 'Lowe has a natural antipathy to a fool, and so he offends, as a matter of course, all the fools in his audience. He is quite the reverse of Lord Palmerston, who knew that fools predominate both in the House of Commons and out of it, and always addressed himself so as to conciliate the fools, and thus was very popular.'

But Count Strzelecki's criticism was only applicable to Lord Sherbrooke in his public capacity. In private circles, while generally brilliant, he was always amiable. Sir John Lubbock, who for many years was on very friendly terms with him, says: 'It was always a great pleasure when he came to us, for his conversation was most interesting, and he always tried to make things go off well.' Sir John adds: 'I was much attached to him'—a feeling which mere intellectual brilliancy can never evoke.

Mr. Goschen, who, as well as being a political colleague

for many years, was in intimate social relations with Lord Sherbrooke, remarks that his wit and epigrammatic humour would flow as freely at breakfast time, when he might only have an audience of a governess and her pupils, as they would at a gathering of distinguished men.

'Most brilliant men,' says Mr. Goschen, 'are occasionally dull; but in my long intercourse with him I never found him so, and he could even show himself up to the mark when strangers were introduced to him, and looked for some pointed phrase—an ordeal under which most clever men entirely break down. I remember once, just after the great Reform debates of '66, taking up a foreigner to him. The foreigner paid him some commonplace compliment on the brilliancy of his orations. Mr. Lowe replied: "Oh! we are not now thinking of Reform; we are thinking of the cattle plague, for the difference between the two is this, that Reform will only ruin our children, while the cattle plague will ruin ourselves."

"But," said the foreigner, "you have discovered a remedy for the cattle plague, have you not? You mix *asa-fœtida* with their food."

"Yes," he said, "our cattle are now all fed *à la Sou-bise*."

But if, instead of merely accepting or conventionally deprecating the compliment of a stranger, his alert mind would thus at once set the ball rolling, it was, by the testimony of all his friends, still more remarkable to see him with children. He was passionately fond of them for one thing, and his wise head seemed full of nonsense verses, nursery rhymes, and quaint and ludicrous stories. He never failed at once to secure their interest, and in all the houses he visited, where children were to the fore his advent was welcomed with clamorous delight. This was, of course, owing far more to what Mr. Goschen calls 'his extreme kindness of heart' than even his rare gift of wit and humour, but it was a trait in

his character which cannot be overlooked in forming an estimate of him as a man. Mr. Hamilton, of the 23rd Regiment, remembers his excitement, as a schoolboy at Caterham, on being called out from lessons to speak to Lord Sherbrooke, and finding him on horseback at the school entrance, having brought a pot of jam for him in each pocket.

This kindness of heart did not limit itself to the human family. It was a pleasant sight to see the horses in the paddock come close up to the fence when he whistled as he passed along the garden walks on his tricycle, often followed by a posse of dogs and cats, and even the peacocks, who refused to budge or get out of the way. The old horse that had taken him into town for twenty years was really a fourfooted friend; he has survived his master, but his race was commemorated in the following lines:—

The Horses' Epitaph

Soft lie the turf, on these who find their rest
Beneath our common mother's ample breast;
Unstained by meanness, avarice, or pride,
They never cheated, and they never lied;
They ne'er intrigued a rival to displace;
They ran, but never betted on the race;
Content with harmless sports and simple food,
Boundless in faith, and love, and gratitude.
Happy the man, if there be any such,
Of whom his epitaph can say as much!

These verses, like almost all the efforts of Lord Sherbrooke's muse, were written at the request of a lady; in this case, they were expressly intended for a tablet which was placed in Lady Dorothy Nevill's cemetery for pets of all kinds—horses, dogs, and cats—at Dangstein.

Nothing would have been more displeasing to the late Lord Sherbrooke than to have been placarded as 'a poet.' The history of the publication of the little book, *Poems of a Life*, has been referred to in the first volume.

After the publication of the book, Lord Sherbrooke, who was naturally much vexed at the offering he had meant for

his wife being given to the public without introduction or revision, wrote in his diary: 'In the course of my life I have written a number of poems, without any intention of publishing them. To please my wife, who was in very bad health, I allowed them to be printed, but not published. I gave a number of these poems to my friends. They were published without either my consent or knowledge.' When the publisher expressed contrition, the mistake was forgiven and forgotten.

Lord Sherbrooke, as his niece, Mrs. Chaworth Musters, relates, was, indeed, passionately fond of poetry.

More than the Prophet's sight
I prize the Poet's song.
He hardly can be right
Who hardly can be wrong.

But his own verses were strictly impromptu or occasional; and he had neither the vanity nor the abnegation of the true poet. Nevertheless, I venture to think that some of these occasional verses have real merit, apart from the interest attaching to the fact that they were the solace of a busy statesman in his rare moments of idleness, and written purely for the gratification of his friends. What could be more graceful than the following, written at the desire of Blanche, Countess of Airlie?

Lines on the Garden of Friendship
(Cortachy Castle, 1873)

Is life a good? Then, if a good it be,
Mine be a life like thine, thou steadfast tree.
The selfsame earth that gave the sapling place
Receives the mouldering trunk in soft embrace;
The selfsame comrades ever at thy side,
Who feel no envy, and who know no pride.
The winter's waste redeemed by lavish spring,
The whispering breezes that about thee sing,
The intertwining shadows at thy feet,
Make up thy life—and such a life is sweet.
What though beneath this artificial shade
No faun has wandered, and no dryad played?
Though the coy nurslings of serener skies

Shiver when Caledonia's tempests rise,
 There floats an influence o'er the rising grove
 Less stern than nature, and more pure than love.
 Yes; not unhonoured shall these spires ascend,
 For every stem was planted by a friend;
 And she at whose command its shades arise
 Is good and gracious, true and fair and wise.

Even during the heat and turmoil of the Reform agitation, if he could get away for a few days into the country his poetising faculty would reawaken. It was at Pencarrow, Lady Molesworth's place, that he wrote the following graceful lines for Mrs. Harvey, of Ickwell-Bury:—

On a Photograph

The outline of that sweet fair face
 No human artist drew,
 The Sun himself alone could trace
 A picture worthy you.

Bright impress of the solar beam,
 Fair vision! canst thou spare
 Of all thy light a single gleam
 To lighten my despair?

Ah no! Thy faultless, lifeless grace
 No solace can impart,
 The sunbeam rests upon thy face,
 The shadow on my heart.

Pencarrow: September 16, 1866.

When typewriters first came into vogue they immediately attracted Lord Sherbrooke's inquiring mind. Writing had always been an almost intolerable strain; though it is wonderful how he contrived to overcome the difficulty, with his increasingly short and painful vision. His penmanship varied a great deal, but the letter to his brother, selected for reproduction in this volume is a very fair sample. Sometimes, however, the characters were larger and more unformed; at others, he really contrived to write a small, neat, and legible hand. But he hailed the typewriter as a boon indeed, though it is to be feared that, after the novelty of the toy had worn off,

he found the art of striking the right letter quite as difficult as writing with a pen. Apart from his Autobiography, all of which he typed with his own hand, he amused himself by using his machine for making many stray entries and notes, such as the following, which were intended as material for incorporation in the fuller records which he never made.

We never saw a newspaper at Winchester. In fact, our political knowledge might be well described by some lines which I remember to have seen written up in 'Meads,' that is, the collegers' playground.

Of foreign affairs our new Minister Canning
Is said by his friends at all times to be planning,
But his ignorance of them too plainly declares
That to him they must always be '*foreign* affairs.'

It is said that Lord Sherbrooke, after the Abyssinian War and the astounding proclamation as to the 'standard of St. George being hoisted on the mountains of Rasselas,' was in the habit of quoting these lines as still more applicable to a contemporary statesman.

After the defeat of the Gladstone Government in 1874, Robert Lowe resumed his books, his table-talk, and his occasional tours with renewed zest and vigour. Not that he had entirely discontinued any of these recreations, even during his arduous four years of office; but the strain of incessant work, and the anxiety on Mrs. Lowe's account, had begun to tell. Still, as he always declared, Scotland kept him alive; it was not only to him, as a life-long worshipper of Walter Scott, the country of romance, but none so suited his sensitive eyes, which dreaded glare above all things, as the

Land of brown heath and shaggy wood.

The following letter to the squire of Oxton gives us a glimpse of one of these brief holidays in Wales and the Highlands which he managed to snatch even while at the Treasury.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton

Grasmere: September 27, 1871

My dear Henry,—I was just going to write to you to offer you a visit on my way back to London from this place, when I received a summons for a Cabinet for Saturday next, which will oblige me to go straight home to-morrow.

I could not squeeze a day to spend with Mrs. Graham at Dunclutha, for which I was sorry. I will tell you all about our yachting expedition, which was a great success. We went to Barmouth which is much the same as ever, except the bridge, a great improvement.

The Corrigedal Arms, which has been rebuilt at the railway, on the left bank of the river Bodwen, looked hideous; it still belongs to Miss Ricketts. We went to Llanbedr, Harlech, Tremadoc, the Festiniog Railway—which is worth going all the way to see—Llanberris, which is really beautiful (I rode a pony to the very top of Snowdon), and Llandudno, thence to the Penders at Minard, which we left on a Monday on a yachting tour. I took the direction, and it was on this wise: We went to Oban by the steamer, and then by the yacht to Tobermory, where we anchored for the night—a very fine one. Next morning, at daylight, we started, and steered straight for Loch Scavaig, passing close by Rum, Eig, Muick and Canna; landed, strolled up the lake—which was rather too bright and quiet—then round the western coast of Skye to Dunvegan, where we cast anchor for the night. I went to see Macleod. The coast is very fine and bold, consisting a good deal of basaltic pillars; I saw the Maidens, which are nothing but white marks on the cliff. Next day we steamed through Loch Snizort, and landed. My companions, Lord Eliot and Mr. Pender, were rather dismayed at the ascent, and still more at the descent, so I was obliged to set them a good example both ways. I should like to go there with you. The view is really one of the finest things I ever saw. Thence we went to Portree, and anchored at Isle Ramsay, near our old friend Loch Duich. Next day we went right south, back to Ardnamurchan and straight for Staffa and Iona. It was very still, and we rowed into the cave, but, like some old cathedrals, it is very much spoilt by smoke, guns, cannons, blue lights, etc.; then on to Oban, and thence by a coach, worse horsed than I could have supposed possible, to Killin and Perth. One team ran from Oban to Tannilt and back, twenty miles, every lawful day; another team ran thirty-four miles; it seems strange such things can be. I also went to Tyndrum and along Glen Dochart, where we saw the waterfalls after the rain. I also met at Criandurich a

man who said his wife was the granddaughter of Mr. Walker, and that he had just been reading my lines in the book at Glenlyon.¹

Your affectionate brother,
R. LOWE.

It was on these Welsh trips that Mr. Goschen met Lowe and drove with him past the churchyard at Barmouth. Lowe exclaimed: 'I wrote a copy of verses in that churchyard fifty years ago; I will recite them to you,' and forthwith did so.

In a Churchyard near Barmouth. (1821)

By the dark waters of the heaving sea,
Cold as its waves, and as its breezes free,
The dreamless sleepers rest; unheard by them
Old Ocean chants his ceaseless requiem;
And the bright sunbeam on his breast that glows
Illumes their couch, but breaks not their repose.

Yes, here is peace. The calm and sunny view,
Yon distant line of undulating blue,
That distant pile, those sounds that never cease,
All soothe the troubled soul and whisper peace;
Peace to the wayward sons of mouldering clay,
The peace of death, the quiet of decay.

This may be only an echo of Byron, but we must remember that he who had caught it was but a child of ten.

Mr. Goschen adds: 'We walked up Snowdon together; it

¹ Written at Glenlyon, in the hotel-book, 1831:—

Hast thou, stranger, got a distress,
Wife, or housekeeper, or mistress,
Indigestion, mortgage, dun,
Lawsuit lost, or lawsuit won?
Hie thee to this happy glen,
Here thou ne'er shalt grieve again.
Blithe the sport at morn to stray
On the wooded banks of Tay,
Luring from the oozy brake
The finny dwellers of the lake.
Blithe the meal, at eve to dine
On best of fish, and flesh, and wine;
With social chat, companions frisky,
And, best of all, ambrosial whisky.
Here's the place to live and die in!
Stranger, hasten to Glenlyon.

was marvellous to me how he managed, with all his blindness, to pick his way along rough paths. A funny incident happened at the top. There were two little shanties connected together, and thus forming one house, where whisky, &c., was sold. Lowe said: "We must take something for the good of the house." When the owner served us, I said, "This is the Chancellor of the Exchequer; he is the man to whom you have to pay your license." "Ah!" the man replied, "then I can tell him it is my great grievance that I have to pay two licenses—two counties meet here at the top of Snowdon; my house is built in two parts on the boundary, and I have to pay a license for each part." . . . Driving off from an inn in some little Welsh town a day or two later, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was recognised and cheered. This was not long after the match-tax *fiasco*. He was just a little pleased, and said: "I see we are somebody still down here. Clearly, they don't take in the *Pall Mall Gazette*."

Shortly after Lord Sherbrooke's death, Sir John Pender, writing to Lady Sherbrooke, thus referred to the trip to the Western Highlands described in the preceding letter: 'When I look back to the many years of friendly associations with Lord Sherbrooke, to the excursions we used to make in the Western Highlands, accompanied by my boys, with whom he entered into all their boyish sports, I cannot but feel that his genial and kindly nature left lasting impressions for good on the young minds.'

Lord Sherbrooke was, as all the world knows, an expert cyclist. In distributing the prizes at the autumnal meeting of the London Bicycle Club, in 1867, he made an amusing speech, in which he warmly upheld the exercise, and said he had been a wheelman from the time of the old 'dandy horse.' To the inhabitants of the neighbouring village Lord Sherbrooke was a familiar sight, riding fearlessly up and down the Surrey hills. While he was Chancellor of the Exchequer he ran up against a man, and as the story has lately been revived and

told with many inaccuracies, I have copied his own account of the accident from his diary:—

‘I was riding my bicycle very slowly up a hill not far from my house. A bread-cart stood in the middle of the road, and I passed between it and a cottage. Just then a man ran down the steps to put something into the cart. He did not see me. His action was so sudden that I had not time to stop, and he did not attend to my call to him. The wheel came in contact with him, and, taking him unawares, threw him down. The shock was so slight that it did not upset me, though, of course, it stopped me. I did not think myself the least to blame, but was, of course, sorry for the accident, and sent for a surgeon from London to examine the man, as he said he was hurt. The surgeon reported that a rib was broken. This must have been by the fall, for the wheel would touch him about 20 inches from the ground. I gave the man 10*l.* and several more sums, though I cannot remember to what amount. The man was of very intemperate habits, and from being a gentleman’s servant had gradually sunk in the world. He got well of his broken rib, and I heard no more of him.—R. L.’

It is doubtful whether many persons would regard the study of Hebrew as a recreation, but it formed at any rate a change of occupation for Lord Sherbrooke during the time that he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He actually contrived to read straight through the Hebrew Scriptures twice during this period, and perhaps the mental exercise gave him temporary relief and refreshment of mind. One winter, in the early seventies, Mr. Edward Jenkins, author of *Ginx’s Baby*, and formerly member for Dundee, had taken Sir Juland Danvers’ house at Caterham, and was, consequently a near neighbour of Lord Sherbrooke. On a cold, sleety, wintry day Mr. Jenkins reached the railway station, and found the Chancellor of the Exchequer in an Inverness cape,

leaning against the lee side of the shed reading a book intently, and moving it to and fro before the pair of punctured metal spoons which he was in the habit of using to exclude the painful light. Mr. Jenkins was curious to know what work he found so engrossing, and when the train came along the platform he stepped into the same compartment. To his surprise he found that the book was Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar, which, said Mr. Jenkins, he appeared to be reading straight through, as if it were the last new novel from Mudie's.

The Dean of Westminster relates that Lord Sherbrooke told him that when Chancellor of the Exchequer he had read through Cicero's Verrine Orations, and always kept Long's edition in his office. He also read other classical writers during this busy and harassing time, and, doubtless, found recreation in the exercise.

But when the vote in the House of Commons had released Lowe from the cares of office, he was able to give much more of his time to his friends and his books. His pleasant country residence was often full of clever people, and he could amuse and entertain them without fear of neglecting his public duties. He had the feeling, too, that his great parliamentary conflicts were over, and henceforth he regarded even his former antagonists with a kindly and charitable spirit; in some cases this softening of old asperities was quite remarkable. Thus, not only had he none but friendly words and thoughts for Mr. Gladstone, but he grew to look upon his stout old foe, John Bright, with something of liking and admiration. He had always considered Bright to be one of the greatest of orators; and now that the battle of democracy was over, and all its fierce animosities, so far as he was concerned, dead and buried, he discovered many other excellent qualities in the Tribune of the people. He even maintained that Cobden and Bright, from their democratic standpoint, were wise in withstanding all foreign intervention. England was now practically ruled by the floating opinion of

great urban masses of men and their cheap press; such a community was essentially non-military, and would inevitably go to war at the wrong time, and be at the mercy of states less swayed by the passions of the multitude. He did not advocate peace at any price, which was, he thought, the way to provoke war; but he had a great distrust of the warlike sentiments of politicians, none of whom would have dared to advocate the only measure that could put us on equal terms with the great Continental states—the conscription. That being the case, England's wisest plan, as far as Europe was concerned, was a policy of non-intervention.

Bright was, moreover, a racy and admirable talker, and though his topics were not always those which appealed most strongly to Lowe, still, he was never dull, for he had the great gift of humour, and, if the truth must be told, was not at all averse to gossip. And just as the passing years had softened Lowe himself, so, too, John Bright was no longer the eager assailant of every time-honoured institution. We, in fact, know that he lived to become a D.C.L. of Oxford, after separating himself, as did Lord Sherbrooke, from the later and more revolutionary policy of Mr. Gladstone.

In this way, advancing years, while they left Lord Sherbrooke with all his intellectual keenness, his innate love of society, and his profound interest in human affairs, made him more easy and tolerant, even of those whom he considered altogether in error. If there were any exceptions to this, it was in the case of Lord Russell and Lord Beaconsfield. Quite towards the close of Lord Russell's life, he attacked Lowe as the chief of the Adullamites; and the latter replied in a very trenchant letter, in which the old Whig reformer was not dealt lightly with. Disraeli he could never forgive for his Opportunism (Lowe called it want of principle) in 1867. It is quite possible that he failed altogether to do justice to Disraeli, who certainly exercised the charm of the magician's wand over most of those who came under his personal influence. But

Lowe was one of the hardest subjects for even the most potent of hypnotisers. The fact is that Robert Lowe and Benjamin Disraeli were so constitutionally opposed that they could never have done each other full justice. They were the two best debaters, as Gladstone and Bright were the two best orators, in the House of Commons. They were always in conflict—Disraeli referring to one of the speeches of Lowe in 1867 as the speech of an ‘inspired school-boy,’ while Lowe summed up Disraeli’s oration on the Empress of India as the ‘lispings of the nursery.’ One could fill columns with such phrases of mutual depreciation; and so vigorous and unexpected were Lowe’s attacks, that Disraeli humorously dubbed him ‘the Whitehead Torpedo.’ Yet it is absurd to suppose that two such brilliant men were blind to each other’s great powers. The explanation is that they always met as gladiators and opponents. Disraeli rather unhandsomely boasted that he had provided Lowe with a seat in Parliament; and Lowe, when he heard that Disraeli had made his private secretary a peer, said he had an imperial precedent when Caligula made his horse Consul.

But Robert Lowe (and, doubtless, Disraeli also), as the years rolled by, regarded political opponents with great good humour. Much as he bewailed the signs of democracy in the House of Commons, he grew tolerant and regarded legislative folly and dulness with an amused smile. It was in this mood that he pointed to the deaf M.P. who used to skirmish all over the House with an ear-trumpet, listening to the dreary speeches on both sides. ‘*Good Heavens!*’ said he, ‘*to think of a man so throwing away his natural advantages.*’

Some such spirit of banter moved him to say, at the recollection of an interminable Scotch drone, that, instead of Scotland having sixty members, he would prefer her to have one member with sixty votes. He was, again, seen everywhere in society, and his sayings were repeated, and as often parodied, in every club in London.

An excellent magazine article might be written on the reported sayings of wits. These might be arranged under three heads : (1) the false or imaginary ; (2) the distorted or misunderstood ; (3) those made pointless by the omission of surrounding circumstances. Under each of these heads Lord Sherbrooke has been a heavy sufferer. By the testimony of his friends and associates, he was a man worthy to rank, as a wit, with Bishop Wilberforce, and in repartee and intellectual fence he fell in no wise short of the Bishop's keenest antagonist, Lord Westbury. In fact, Lord Thring relates a story of a 'wit combat' between Lowe and Westbury, when the latter, who, as is well known, was an exceedingly vain man, suddenly threw up his hands, exclaiming, 'Lowe, you are too quick for me!' 'Whatever,' said the late Cardinal Manning, 'comes from Lord Sherbrooke, by speech or writing, is sure to be sharper than a two-edged sword.'

Lord Sherbrooke's fame as a diner-out and conversationalist was happily alluded to in one of the series of articles in the *New Review* on the 'Talk and Talkers of To-day.' The writer, describing Mr. Goschen's dinners, or, rather, the brilliant company that was wont to gather round his table at Portland Place, remarks : 'Among those were Lord Sherbrooke, of whom it may be safely said that, while few of his contemporaries have surpassed him in wealth of conversational resource, none have equalled him in dexterous repartee or apt quotation ; and the late Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn, whose "sunny face and voice of music, which lent melody to scorn and sometimes reached the depth of pathos," were gracefully commemorated by the author of *Endymion* in the portrait of Hortensius.'

Yet a very short time ago there went the round of the press a story as to Lord Sherbrooke having said, when he heard that the person who threw a lump of hard cake or bread, which hit Mr. Gladstone in the eye, at Chester, was a sympathetic Home Ruler—'That takes the *guilt* off the

gingerbread.' Lord Sherbrooke never made any such silly observation, which, indeed, is the kind of palpable pun that would commend itself to the mind of a small writer on a comic news-sheet. His sayings were of a very different order, and, like the painter's colours, were mixed with brains.

There is another equally absurd story concerning Lord Beaconsfield, who, it is said, once 'chaffed' Lowe about his white hair. 'My hair,' replied Lowe, 'will be white as long as I live; yours will be black as long as you dye.'

When one reflects that people accept a story of this kind, concerning the two most sharp-tongued men in the House of Commons, it only shows how little criticism is brought to bear on the gossip that is printed.

As with all really good talkers, manner in his case was often as much as matter. Redgrave makes entry in his diary (April 29, 1876):—

'Dined at the Royal Academy banquet. I was placed between Mr. Goschen and Mr. Lowe, the latter often very amusing. He was speaking of combats between wild beasts, and said man easily overcame such; but he himself is powerless with the insect tribe; he is entirely at their mercy, they prey upon him as they will; and then, turning to a subject which we had been discussing, he added: "So it is with vestries. What can you do with those creeping things? You cannot annihilate them; you cannot convince them by reason or by facts. If you knock over a grocer, up jumps a butcher; and if he is put down by any good chance, a shoemaker takes up the cry, so that you retreat, hopelessly beaten."'

In the Australian newspapers during the last ten or twenty years, a story has constantly cropped up to the effect that a returned colonist, meeting Lowe somewhere in London, stopped him and said: 'Don't you remember me, Mr. Lowe? I knew you well in Sydney.' 'Indeed,' was the reply, 'then I shall know you when I go back to Sydney.'

A moment's reflection will show that this widely circulated story could, in the first instance, only have received currency from Lord Sherbrooke or the man himself. Lord Sherbrooke was not known ever to have related such an incident, and the

class of man who on the slightest ground claims acquaintance with a celebrity, even when he gets snubbed, almost invariably spreads the report that Lord So-and-so asked him to dine at his club, or to look him up at the House. At the same time, Lord Sherbrooke was not exactly long-suffering or urbane to impudent persons and bores, and he would have resented nothing more than a hail-fellow-well-met style of address. The only object the inventor of such a story as this could have had, was to leave an impression that Lord Sherbrooke was contemptuous of colonists and the country where he and his wife had spent some of their happiest and most eventful years. Nothing could be further from the truth. When Sir Henry Parkes visited this country, Lord Sherbrooke was one of the first to call upon him, and specially invited him to dinner at Lowndes Square to meet Mr. Gladstone. He was, indeed, at all times extremely courteous to colonists who had the slightest claim on his time or attention, as the son of his old friend, Richard Windeyer, and many another could testify.

It may interest Sir Henry Parkes and his friends in Australia to know that Lord Sherbrooke always regarded his career with much interest, and not a little admiration. They were as wide apart on many questions as the poles, but Lord Sherbrooke particularly admired the education policy of the old Sydney Prime Minister; while he regarded his steadfast adherence to Free-Trade principles as one of the most cheering and hopeful signs for the future of the Australian communities.

To the day of his death the late Sir George Macleay, of Pendell Court, Surrey, was one of the most intimate of Lord Sherbrooke's friends. Their country houses were not too far apart to be an obstacle to frequent visits. In the library of Pendell Court stood a fine bust of William Sharpe Macleay, and in the hall there was a beautiful picture of his house and grounds at Elizabeth Bay. These were objects of unflinching attraction to Lord Sherbrooke. I remember asking Sir George Macleay, on one occasion, whether it was true that certain of

the wealthy old 'Emancipists' of Sydney had declared that they would not sail in the same vessel as the Lowes. He replied that it was very likely, for they were, as a rule, as ignorant as they were rich, and Lord Sherbrooke had spoken very plainly about them on various occasions. 'But for my part,' he added, 'had I been able then to leave Sydney, I would gladly have paid twice the passage-money for the privilege of his society.'

Lord Sherbrooke turned his leisure to account in various ways; among others he gave a sitting to the eminent painter, Mr. G. F. Watts, with whom he was on very friendly terms. Mr. Watts found his conversation in the studio full of interest, and they often met at Holland House, and rode together in the Row with the Duchess of Cleveland and other ladies. Lord Sherbrooke always preferred the society of ladies and the delights of home to any form of club life. Among his many lady friends may also be mentioned Lady Eastlake, the widow of the President of the Royal Academy. Lady Eastlake, who was, like himself, a lover of the northern lands and a *Quarterly Reviewer*, recalls his speeches and writings from as far back as 1851 with vivid pleasure.

Although Lord Sherbrooke was not specially a club man, he belonged to several. He remained a member of the Reform till 1874, although in the later years he rarely, if ever, entered its portals. He was also a member of Brooks's. For many years he was one of the trustees of the British Museum, and by a rule of the Athenæum Club thereby became elected on the footing of a special or distinguished member. He was rather fond of the Athenæum, as it contained a number of his political and literary friends, ranging from old colleagues like Lord Aberdare, to old Australian friends such as Sir George Macleay. Lord Sherbrooke, too, as a bookish man, found a pleasure in the splendid library of the Athenæum; and, like Mr. Gladstone, he was by no means an infrequent visitor at Mudie's.

As well as being a member of the Political Economy Club, Lord Sherbrooke joined the Metaphysical and Psychological Society, instituted in April 1869. Among his fellow-members were such eminent men as Tennyson, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Ruskin, Cardinal Manning, Dr. Martineau, Professor Huxley, Sir John Lubbock, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Dean Stanley, Archbishops Magee and Thomson, Duke of Argyll, Sir M. E. Grant Duff, Mark Pattison, Professor Mozley, Dr. W. G. Ward, Mr. James Knowles, and Walter Bagehot.

Lord Sherbrooke was also a fellow of the Royal Society, and of the Liverpool Philomathic.

But perhaps he appreciated Grillion's Club more than any other social institution of the kind. Of this famous dining-club, whose members are among the *élite* of English society, Lord Sherbrooke was elected an ordinary member in 1867, and an honorary member on February 15, 1890. Grillion's was founded in 1812, and from that date to the present many of the most celebrated statesmen, writers, artists, and social celebrities have met together, either to dine or to break their fast. Among the members may be singled out the late Earl of Derby, Bishop Heber, Sir James Graham, Lord Canning, Mr. Gladstone (elected in 1840), Bishop Wilberforce, Sir G. C. Lewis, Dean Stanley, Lord Selborne, Lord Beaconsfield (1865), Archbishop Tait, Marquis of Dufferin, Lord Hartington, Lord Rosebery, General Wolseley, Matthew Arnold, Mr. Goschen, Archbishop Benson, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Lecky, and Sir John Lubbock.

It was just before Lord Sherbrooke retired from office that he received from some anonymous correspondent a copy of verses which, under the heading of 'Robert Lowe's Epitaph,' have appeared in innumerable forms, in every English newspaper in the world. They were probably meant to cause him annoyance, and a more stupid or commonplace man would have put them into the fire; but he turned them into Latin and Greek, and passed them on to Mr. Gladstone and others.

The following may be taken as the authentic version of the original verses and translations as they are copied from Lord Sherbrooke's note-book, partly in his own handwriting, and partly in Mr. Gladstone's.

Sent me in a letter, February 26, 1873. I think they are not original. They have, in fact, a very cosmopolitan air:—

Here lie the bones of Robert Lowe ;
Where he's gone I do not know ;
If to the realms of peace and love,
Farewell to happiness above ;
If to a place of lower level,
I can't congratulate the Devil.¹

Compare Byron:—

That fellow still in hell breeds further ills ;
I'll have him gagged, 'twas one of his own Bills.

¹ These lines are copied *verbatim* ; but, as the translation shows, an addition was subsequently made. Mr. E. W. Hamilton, writing to the *Pall Mall Gazette* (July 30, 1892), remarks: 'It may interest your readers to know that there was an amended version of the lines, and that Mr. Lowe amused himself by turning them afresh into Latin. I had the privilege of serving him at the time (in March 1873), and I remember that he greatly preferred the second edition of the English lines as well as of his Latin rendering of them.

Here lie the bones of Robert Lowe,
A treacherous friend, a bitter foe ;
Whither his restless soul has fled
May not be thought, much less be said.
If to the realms of peace and love,
Farewell to happiness above ;
If to a place of lower level,
We can't congratulate the devil.

The Latin version given by Mr. Hamilton is practically the same as that in the text. The English lines are said by Lord Coleridge to be merely an adaptation of an epitaph on one Henry Kembill Lowe, who was buried in Northamptonshire nearly 200 years ago. Mr. E. W. Hamilton adds: 'It was, perhaps, only given to those who had the honour of being brought into close contact with Lord Sherbrooke, to know how kindly was his disposition, how great was his consideration to others, how constant was his store of humour and wit, and how loyal a friend he was to those around him.

Translation by Myself

Robertus humilis hic jacet,
 Qui nobis mortuus valde placet,
 Amicus minimè fidelis,
 Amarus hostis et crudelis.
 Conditio qualis sit futura
 Ambigitur : sit, spero, dura.
 Si cælum scandet ista pestis,
 Vale ! concordia cælestis ;
 Si apud inferos jacebit,
 Diabolum ejus pœnitebit
 Et nos Diaboli miserebit.

March 18, 1873.

Κεῖται ἀνὴρ ὃς πᾶσι μετέπρεπε τοῖς ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ,
 Τίσασθαι τ' ἐχθροὺς, ἐξαπατᾶν τε φίλους.
 Δίξω ποῦ πεπόγηται ὁ βᾶσκανος, οὐκ ἐς Ὀλυμπον,
 Καὶ γὰρ Ὀλυμπιάδων ὤλετ' ἂν εὐφροσύνη·
 Ἄλλ' οὐδ' εἰς Ἀδην, ἔπει Ἀδης πολλὰ, πάθων περ
 Τοῦτον ξεινίσσας οὐκέτ' ἀνεκτὰ πάθοι.

July 1, 1873.

R. L.

Translation of my Epitaph by Mr. Gladstone

(July 17, 1873)

Qui di Roberto Lowe giace il frale :
 L' alma non saprei dir se scenda, o sale ;
 Se vola in ciel, ne' cieli qual fracasso !
 Se in altra parte, guai a Satanasso !

Here lie the bones of Robert Lowe ;
 Where he's gone to I don't know ;
 If to the realms of peace and love,
 Farewell to happiness above ;
 If, haply, to some lower level,
 We can't congratulate the Devil.

Roberti Lowe hic corpus jacet ;
 Quà sit ipse, Musa tacet.
 Ad superna si volabit,
 Pax e cælis exulabit ;
 Sin ad inferos meabit,
 Et Diabolum vexabit.

July 18, 1873.

His verse-making propensities, which had never grown rusty, broke out in all sorts of ways, and he was sometimes particularly happy in hitting off lightly some subject of the hour, as, for instance, in the lines which originally appeared, without his name, in the *Daily News* on the change in the time of meeting in the House of Lords.

Early Hours in the Lords

As long as their lordships assembled at five,
They found they had nothing to keep them alive ;
By wasting more time they expect to do more,
So determine to meet at a quarter-past four.

This must not be taken as Lord Sherbrooke's serious view of the value and function of an Upper Chamber. His one regret, after the coming of the democracy, was that the House of Lords had not been strengthened.

Some verses addressed to him, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the introduction of the halfpenny postal card, had afforded him some amusement. They began :—

Hail ! Mr. Lowe. Welcome thy postal card,
Franked by the Queen,
To speed from mind to mind
Whate'er we think or mean.

His own lines on the subject, gallantly addressed as usual to a lady, are far more pointed.

On Sending my First Postcard

Better a note where none can peep
Than one where all things must appear ;
For though the last is very cheap,
The first may be extremely dear.

The following lines in Greek, addressed to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, are copied from Lord Sherbrooke's note-book, in which they were written by his own hand.

To Lord Stratford, on his Greek Poems

Ολβιος ωτινι μοιραι επεκλωσαντο τελειαι
 Γιγνομενη κλεινον λαμπρον υφασμα βιου·
 Και γνωμην εδοσαν τε και εργαων μητερα πειθῶ
 Και θυμον καιροις ατρομον εν φοβεροις.
 Αλλ' ουδ' ὡς σβεσσαν γηρωσ παραμυθιον αυδην
 Μουσων και γλωσσην Ελλαδος αθανατον.

1874.

This little translation from Schiller is admirably rendered.

From 'Resignation'

Hope and enjoyment woo thee, eager boy—
 Two lovely flowers—but one alone is thine ;
 Who cannot hope, must stoop to earthly joy ;
 Who soars to hope, must earthly joy resign.

'Twas thine to hope ; the debt is cancelled—go !
 Thy happiness was only to believe.
 Ask of the wise—the moments we forego
 Eternity itself cannot retrieve.

For many years the Icelandic Sagas and the Norse countries and literature seem to have possessed quite as great an attraction for him as the ancient classics. As early as 1861, he wrote for the *Edinburgh Review* a remarkable article, 'The Story of Burnt Njal.' This was a review of Sir George Dasent's rare and fascinating work, *The Story of Burnt Njal: Life in Iceland at the End of the Tenth Century. From the Icelandic of the Njal Saga.*

Few magazine articles are so interesting, for the critic is as full of his subject as the writer whom he reviews. It will be seen on reference to this article (*Edinburgh Review*, October 1861) that Robert Lowe quotes with high approval, not only several of the prose passages in Sir George Dasent's translation, but also one of the battle-odes rendered into alliterative, non-rhyming English verse.

In the *Times* of January 6, 1866, Lowe reviewed *The Story of Gisli the Outlaw*, by Dasent, and *Viga Glum's Saga*, by

Sir Edmund Head, in a very interesting article; and in the same year, in the midst of the Reform agitation, he found time to make a translation in verse from the Icelandic for his niece, Mrs. Chaworth Musters, who has kindly consented to allow its reproduction. (See Appendix.)

So great was Lord Sherbrooke's interest in Icelandic and the Sagas, that they formed quite a link between himself and three remarkable men who were, indeed, pioneers of Norse literature in England—Sir Edmund Head, Sir George Dasent, and Sir Henry Holland, father of the present Lord Knutsford. Mr. Edward Jenkins states that Sir Henry Holland, on one occasion, after remarking that Lowe's knowledge of the classics was most extensive, added: 'I invited him to dine one night, and to amuse ourselves we set to work to cap verses. In Greek and Latin and Italian I found him very good indeed; but I beat him in Icelandic.'

It is, therefore, not surprising, having such a strong bent in the direction of Norse literature, that Lord Sherbrooke should have availed himself of an opportunity of paying a visit to his niece, Mrs. Jarvis, of Doddington Hall, Lincoln, while she was staying at a fishing lodge in Norway. I am indebted to Mrs. Jarvis for the following account of this Norwegian holiday, to which the ex-Home Secretary, just released from the cares of office, always looked back with much enjoyment:—

'Uncle Robert came out from Hull to Christiansund in the *Tapo* and joined us at Harang, our fishing lodge on the Surendal River, on August 3, 1874. He went for a two days' trip to Sundal, which he was delighted with. It is a splendid valley with high mountains rising on each side, and a rushing torrent of a river in the bottom. We took him for a walk up to a saeter (or mountain farm), and his pocket-book, containing all his money for the journey, fell out on the way. He was very much struck with the honesty of the Norwegian boy who brought it back to him intact. (If the boy had

kept it, he would have had considerable difficulty in realising such a sum in such an out-of-the-world district without being found out.)

'On August 8, we left Harang and went by carriages to Thronhjim. We were much struck at Uncle Robert's appetite and digestion,¹ when he supped off *foie gras* at the place where we slept *en route*. At Thronhjim we saw the Cathedral where St. Olaf lies buried, and we rowed out to the island Munksholmen in the harbour, to watch a splendid sunset.

'After leaving Thronhjim, we went by steamer to Levanger, near which is the battlefield of Stikhstad, where St. Olaf was killed in 1030; this, Uncle Robert was much interested to see. We went on, partly by carriage and in steamers on the lakes whenever we could catch them, five days to Sundsvall, on the Baltic. This is a considerable town, but it was so full that there was not a room to be had. Finally, a commercial traveller packed up his samples and cleared a room for us; but Uncle Robert and our Norwegian servant wandered about the streets, which were like rivers from the heavy rain, till 2 A.M., when they got into the station, and lay there on some sacks till morning. This was afterwards commented upon in the Swedish papers. "The late Home Secretary of England unable to find a bed in Sundsvall!"

'We went on by steamer to Stockholm, and spent three delightful days there, making excursions to Upsala, the seat of the University, &c. I remember Uncle Robert took a Hebrew Bible to read at the station there. We went thence to Copenhagen, and from there to Roeskilde, to see the tombs of the Danish kings. We saw the arrival of the King of Denmark, who had been to Iceland to give the inhabitants a

¹ An eminent statesman and former colleague of Lord Sherbrooke writes: 'Travelling on one occasion with him from Scotland, I awoke at four o'clock in the morning, and found him eating apples, at that unearthly hour, with considerable gusto.'

Constitution, and, on his way back, had called at Leith and brought the Princess of Wales with him.

‘Then, *via* Hamburg, Bremen, Osnaburg and Wesel, on the Rhine, to Amsterdam. At Wesel we had great difficulty in getting an English sovereign changed; they did not seem to know what it was. Uncle Robert left us at the Hague and went, *via* Rotterdam, to Harwich and home.’

A few years afterwards, Lord Sherbrooke received the following letter from his friend, Lord Dufferin, with regard to an Icelandic colony in Canada.

Marquis of Dufferin to the Right Hon. R. Lowe

Winnipeg: September 17, 1877

My dear Lowe,—The enclosed address I have received from an Icelandic colony, and my reply to it may, perhaps, amuse you. Upwards of a thousand of them have alighted on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. But I have been disappointed at finding that they are not regarded with any great favour by their neighbours, who admit them, indeed, to be docile and well-conducted, but accuse them of great apathy and indolence, and fear that they will become rather a burden than an assistance to the colony. They had the ill-luck to suffer from a severe outbreak of small-pox immediately after their arrival, which was enough to have disheartened them. Moreover, the quarantine, which it became necessary to impose upon them, prevented them from going out into the colony and earning money as labourers and servants.

I do not despair, however, of their turning out better than was anticipated, and the girls will prove very useful as domestic servants, of which here, as everywhere else, there is a great dearth. I hear, however, that the Ingeborgs, Regnhilders, Thoras, and Gudrunes of the community are a little too apt to lend a favourable ear to the Saxon Philander.

Still, I am sure the love of the old race will lead you to take an interest in this little sketch I send you of the Icelandic colony.

I hope to be home next year. I need not say how glad I shall be to see you all again.

Yours sincerely,
DUFFERIN.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXIII

HELGI AND SIGRUN

KING Hogni fell in battle by the hand of King Helgi. All King Hogni's sons perished in the battle except one, called Dagr. Helgi, like the Cid in Corneille, or Alboin, King of the Lombards, married Sigrun, the daughter of the King whom he had slain. Dagr was compelled to swear peace with Helgi, but, afterwards, sacrificed to Odin for revenge. Odin lent him his own spear, with which he killed Helgi. He then went to find the sister whom he had made a widow.

Dagr

Sister, loath am I to show
 Tidings all too full of woe ;
 Playmate of my childhood's years,
 Gladly would I spare thy tears ;
 Yet this morn, and by my hand,
 Fell the lord of sea and land,
 With whose praise Valhalla rings,
 Trampler on the necks of kings.

Sigrun

Perjured traitor, thou shalt mourn,
 All thy oaths to Helgi sworn—
 Sworn by Leiptur's waters bright,
 Flashing through infernal night,
 And that cold rock, whose summit high
 Sun and wind can never dry.
 Be thy bark beneath thee still,
 Though the sails fair breezes fill ;
 May thy steed stand motionless,
 Though thy foes behind thee press ;
 May the sword, so keen and bright,
 Thou dost wield forget to bite,
 Save when swinging round thy head,
 In the hand that strikes thee dead.
 Helgi's death were well avenged
 Wert thou from mankind estranged ;
 Outlaw in the forest wild,
 Reft of joy, of wealth beguiled,
 With no food save such as springs
 From decaying loathsome things.

Dagr

Sister, thou art mad to heap
 On my head thy curses deep.
 Odin fosters kindred hate,
 Odin swayed thy Helgi's fate.
 Take thou, for thy hero's fall,
 Vandalsue and Vigadal.
 Half the world would I bestow,
 Might it only soothe thy woe.

Sigrun

Fair as may my dwelling be,
 By the mountains of the sea,
 I will never cease to grieve
 Night nor day, nor morn nor eve,
 Till I see my Helgi back,
 Shedding light along his track ;
 Riding on his war-horse bold,
 Wont to champ the bit of gold.
 So had Helgi taught to bend
 Every foe and foeman's friend,
 As the wolf in headlong race,
 Wont the mountain goat to chase,
 Helgi was as far above
 Those whom peoples fear and love,
 As the ash excels the thorn,
 Or the stag with golden horn,
 Bright as heaven's ethereal hue
 All besprink't with morning dew,
 Lords it o'er the deer that quake
 When the wild wind stirs the brake.

Maid watching near Helgi's grave

Twilight of the Gods, whose gloom
 Heralds earth's and Odin's doom,
 Comest thou, or is my sight
 Mocked by visions of affright ?
 Do I rave, or do I see
 Dead men ride and come to me,
 Striking with their spurs of gold
 Coursers not of earthly mould ?
 Or does Odin grant return
 To the monarch whom we mourn ?

Helgi's Spirit

Maiden, neither is thy sight
 Mocked by visions of affright,
 Nor is come the twilight's gloom
 Bringing earth's and Odin's doom,
 Though we strike with spurs of gold
 Coursers not of mortal mould ;
 Nor does Odin grant return
 To the monarch whom ye mourn.

Maid

Forth, Sigrun ! if yet again
 Thou wouldst see thy warrior slain ;
 Broken is the tomb in twain,
 Come is Helgi with his train ;
 Still the hero's death-wounds bleed ;
 Be ye pleased to help his need.

Sigrun

Now as fain am I to meet thee,
 Now as overjoyed to greet thee,
 As Odin's hawks, a hungry brood,
 As they scent a field of blood
 Or behold from dewy lawn
 First the day-lit brows of dawn.
 Ere his corslet off I fling,
 I will kiss my lifeless king ;
 Clotted is thy hair with rime,
 Such as falls at morning prime,
 Damp the form so well I knew
 With the battle's crimson dew,
 Cold is now thy conquering hand,
 Mighty lord of sea and land.
 Oh ! what solace can I give
 To pangs that life and death outlive.

Helgi's Spirit

Thee, to thee alone, 'tis due
 That I bathe in deadly dew.
 Cruel are the tears thou weepest
 Every night before thou sleepest ;
 Every drop thy eyelids shed
 Falls upon my heart like lead,
 Piercing, penetrating, chill ;
 Dry them, and my pangs are still.
 Though I miss my love and reign,

Sweet the cup that I shall drain ;
 Though my breast be scarred with wounds,
 Wail me not with mournful sounds.
 What though I be with the dead,
 Beauty watches o'er my bed.

Sigrun

Here I spread thy couch for thee,
 From unrest and anguish free ;
 Here I find my resting place
 In my dead lord's long embrace.

Helgi's Spirit

Having seen the things I see,
 Is there aught that may not be ?
 When my lady fair and bright
 In the grave can take delight,
 Lavishing her peerless charms
 To a corpse's mouldering arms.
 Long the road that I must ride,
 When the dawn is reddening wide,
 Far away from yonder east
 Must I stall my panting beast,
 Ere the cock that early crows
 Wakens warriors from repose.

Maid

I have watched the live-long day,
 Come he will, if come he may ;
 Hope is waning, hope is o'er,
 Helgi will return no more.

Lady, thou art desperate grown,
 Go, oh go not forth alone
 To the mansions of the dead ;
 Every fiend has greater power
 In the midnight's dreary hour.
 Lady, rest, thy hope is fled !

Sigrun was short-lived through grief and sorrow.

Translated from the Icelandic by R. L. 1866.

CHAPTER XXIV

ROBERT LOWE AND THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE—AN EPISODE

(1875)

AFTER the general election of 1874, which proved so disastrous to the Liberal party, Robert Lowe continued to sit for the University of London for six more years, as one of the leaders of the Liberal Opposition. Some of the scenes in which he bore a part during those six closing years will be glanced at in the next chapter; but it has been thought advisable to detach from the record the following narrative of his championship of the Indian Civil servants in 1875. For the facts on which this narrative is based I am indebted to Mr. Cotterell Tupp, formerly of the Bengal Civil Service, and afterwards Accountant-General of Madras, who has also been kind enough to lend me a collection of Lord Sherbrooke's letters on the subject.

From the beginning of his official career as Joint-Secretary of the Board of Control, Robert Lowe had been a foremost advocate of the selection of public servants by open competitive examination; and, as already related, it was mainly through his instrumentality that Sir Charles Wood's India Act of 1853 contained a provision by which appointments to the Indian Civil Service were thrown open to competition for all British-born subjects.¹ With regard to the general question of Civil Service reform, there were other public men, notably Sir Stafford Northcote, who were equally keen upon slaying the

¹ See vol. ii. pp. 62, 78.

hydra-headed monster of favouritism and jobbery by the self-acting expedient of open competition. It was, however, a cause which, while it gravely alarmed the 'classes,' did not appeal to the 'masses'; and even Lowe's energy and genius found the reform of the English Civil Service an insuperable task.

Apart from India, indeed, although commissions had sat and reports had been drawn up, nothing practical was attempted until 1870, when Lowe was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and an Order in Council was issued directing the principle of open competition to be applied to the appointments in the Civil Service of this country. The author of *The Life and Times of Queen Victoria* observes that Mr. Lowe 'was credited with having influenced one decision of the Ministry which was extremely popular in the country—their decision to throw the whole Civil Service, with the exception of the Foreign Office, open to competition like the Civil Service of India. This heavy blow at privilege was struck on June 4, when the Queen signed the Order in Council, which gave rich and poor alike the same passport to the service of the State, and relieved members of Parliament from the annoyance of being pestered for "nominations" by aggressive constituents.'

It is not proposed to deal here with the question of Lord Sherbrooke's attempted reform of the English Civil Service, which, from a variety of causes—the chief being his own inability to give the requisite time and attention while Chancellor of the Exchequer to so difficult a matter—proved ineffectual.¹ The question of the Indian Civil Service was on a totally different footing. In this case the law was quite clear; and the grievances of the civilians, which Mr. Cotterell Tupp brought under the notice of Lord Sherbrooke, were of so definite and undeniable a character, that the English Parlia-

¹ See Report of the Select Committee on Civil Service Expenditure. *Parliamentary Paper*, 352, 1873.

ment and Government were at once forced to acknowledge them when pressed by so doughty a champion.

Mr. Cotterell Tupp arrived in England, in May 1874, on furlough (after twelve years' residence in India), entrusted with a mission to bring to the notice of Parliament and the public the grievances under which the members of the Civil Service, particularly in Northern India, were suffering. He naturally turned to the member for the University of London, of which he himself was a graduate, knowing that Mr. Lowe was, as he expressed it, the 'chief author and steadfast supporter' of the competitive system, under which so many of the aggrieved officials, like himself, had gone out to India. The specific grievance that Mr. Tupp brought under Mr. Lowe's notice was that the Local Governments of the different provinces in India were overriding the India Act of 1853 by filling appointments with uncovenanted or military *protégés*; in writing he enclosed a letter to the editor of the *Times* on the 'Bengal Famine and the Bengal Civil Service,' asking his correspondent to use his influence to get it published. Mr. Lowe replied that he had no influence with the *Times*; and that it would be necessary to show what specific grievances existed before impartial persons could be interested, much less convinced. This Mr. Cotterell Tupp proceeded to do in a very able letter of considerable length, to which he received a brief but encouraging response.

The Right Hon. Robert Lowe to A. Cotterell Tupp, Esq.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : Dec. 14, 1874

Sir,—I think you have made out a good *primâ facie* case, and that you have a right to claim from me any assistance which I may be able to give you. Something similar is showing itself in our Civil Service.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R LOWE.

In reply to a further communication he added (December 24):

'I have no doubt that the best course open to you is to seek an interview with Lord Salisbury and to lay your case fully before him. You may, if you please, tell him that this was my advice to you. I shall be in London next month, when I shall be very happy to see you if your application has not proved successful.'

'From January 1875 to the following October,' adds Mr. Tupp, 'Mr. Lowe wrote me no less than twenty-seven letters on this subject; and this in addition to seeing me constantly, both at his own house in Lowndes Square and at the House of Commons. I used to see him always once a week; and during May and June twice and three times a week. He gave up a large portion of his time and unceasing energy and effort to our cause during the whole of the year 1875.'

Lord Sherbrooke's correspondence at the time amply discloses his disinterested zeal in this cause. Nor, though a leader of the Opposition, did he take up the matter in a partisan spirit with a view of damaging the Government. His aim throughout was to redress a grievance, not to make political capital out of it. He himself saw Lord Salisbury and explained the circumstances of Mr. Tupp's mission to him; and subsequently, in a letter to that gentleman, he expressly states that 'Lord George Hamilton seems very well disposed,' adding: 'I am in no hurry to press the matter, because we are really at the mercy of the Government of India, the people here being very well disposed. I wish we could hit upon some self-working plan, for I feel sure that anything left to the discretion of local authorities will inevitably relapse into job again.'

The following letter shows how thoroughly he had identified himself with the aggrieved Indian civilians.

The Right Hon. R. Lowe to A. Cotterell Tupp, Esq.

34 Lowndes Square: May 5, 1875

My dear Mr. Tupp,—I have spoken to Lord George Hamilton, who very frankly admits your grievance. It appears that after

your deputation, Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Northbrook, and that he is now expecting an answer. I think, therefore, that we shall do wisely to wait till we get the answer. There are yet three months more of the session, and it would be a great pity to lose the chance (not a bad one, I should think) of settling the matter amicably by pushing on a discussion in which the only answer would be that the matter is now before the Governor-General. We must always remember that, if we go a step beyond remonstrance, we are sure to be defeated by a large majority.

Very truly yours,
ROBERT LOWE.

On May 12, at the conferring of degrees of the University of London, Lowe, as the Parliamentary representative, made a speech in which he very strongly impugned the conduct of the Government of India in appointing other persons to the posts reserved by law for the Civil servants appointed by open competition. This speech, as may be seen by a glance at the contemporary London newspapers, attracted a good deal of attention, and he followed it up by a letter headed 'Competitive Appointments,' which appeared in the *Times* of May 19. On May 24, Lowe asked a question in the House of Commons as to whether the Secretary of State would take speedy and efficient measures to redress the wrongs which the Government of the North-Western Provinces had admitted to have been inflicted on the civilians of those provinces. Lord George Hamilton replied that the Government of India admitted that the civilians' contention was in the main borne out by facts, and that they proposed as a remedy that the claims of civilians should be preferentially considered whenever it was possible. Mr. Lowe then gave notice that he would call the attention of the House to this subject on going into Committee of Supply and move a resolution. On June 7 Mr. Lowe asked a second question in the House as to whether the Government had arranged with the different administrations of India, rules of procedure by which the preferential claims of civilians should be invariably considered; whether the Under Secretary

of State would lay such arrangement before the House, and whether there was any objection to have the matter referred to a select committee. Lord George Hamilton replied that these rules of procedure had not been received from India, but that the Viceroy had directed a special inquiry into the subject. Lord George added that 'It would not in the opinion of the Secretary of State be expedient to appoint a select committee, as the matter required minute and thorough local knowledge.' Mr. Lowe then placed a notice of motion on the books of the House, to be taken on going into Committee of Supply, calling attention to the position of civilians, and himself moving for a select committee.

In refusing a select committee, the Government relied on their majority, but here, in a very literal sense, they were reckoning without their host. For when, after much waiting, the motion came on on the afternoon of June 29, the Indian civilians had a regular field-day. Mr. Lowe opened the debate with a speech of great ability, showing all his old mastery over the intricate subject of the civil and military government of India. He was cleverly replied to by Lord George Hamilton on behalf of Lord Salisbury and the Government, in a speech that would have been admirable if the usual party majority had been present to endorse its official reasoning by their votes. Mr. Disraeli, who did not arrive till about four o'clock, promptly saw, as the debate went on, that Lowe's motion for a select committee was supported by some of the most prominent Conservatives in the House, and that there was quite a possibility of its being carried. Like the old tactician that he was, he let the clever Under-Secretary talk on, while he came to terms with the enemy. He sent a whip across to assure Mr. Lowe that if he would withdraw his motion at the end of the debate, the Government would take up the matter and see that the civilians got justice. Although Mr. Lowe, at the moment when Disraeli's ambassador came to him, had a clear majority in the House, he too was a sufficiently practised

parliamentary hand to know that if he did not accept the Prime Minister's terms, some Conservative drone would have been put up to talk against time until the Government could whip up a majority.

But the debate itself which had taken place had been of the greatest importance, and had practically settled the question. In addition to Mr. Lowe,—Sir George Campbell, Mr. Grant Duff, Lord Elcho, and Mr. Isaac Butt (whose two sons were in the North-Western Provinces Civil Service), had all spoken; while such prominent Conservatives as Mr. Beresford-Hope, Mr. Spencer Walpole, Sir W. Stirling Maxwell, and Mr. Gibson, now Lord Ashbourne, had promised their support. No wonder Disraeli was anxious to come to terms when, jauntily dropping in at four o'clock, he, to his astonishment, perceived this state of things, and found Lord George Hamilton, in his best official manner, upholding the cause of Indian mismanagement against such unexpected odds. Lowe himself had spoken from half-past two till a quarter to four, and his speech had been even more applauded on the Conservative than on his own side of the House. 'The civilians of the North-Western Provinces,' said a writer in the *Allahabad Pioneer*, owe him a heavy debt of gratitude. . . . He has devoted an infinity of time and energy to their cause, and has won for it a victory such as hardly any man but he could have secured.' So delighted were the Indian civilians with this speech that they proposed to him, through Mr. Tupp, to reprint it.

The Right Hon. R. Lowe to A. Cotterell Tupp, Esq.

34 Lowndes Square, S.W. : July 13, 1875

My dear Mr. Tupp,—Of all amusements in the world, that which I like least is reading my own speeches. So you need not send more to me till it is struck off.

I am very glad that you and your friends are satisfied with me. I can only say that there are very few subjects in which I feel a greater interest.

I am very glad to say that I am informed that a very strong letter was written, by the next mail, to the Government of India, and that much good is expected from it by persons competent to judge.

Believe me, very truly yours,

ROBERT LOWE.

In a very frank and characteristic letter of November 5th, Lord Sherbrooke pointed out to Mr. Tupp that, having elected to make this subject of the Indian Civil servants' grievances a public matter, he could not write privately to Lord Northbrook, who was a personal friend as well as a fellow Liberal.

'The truth is,' he wrote, 'I have in your cause attacked my own party and the Governor-General, a private friend of twenty years' standing, and I must treat the question as strictly public. I cannot, therefore, write a letter of introduction. If you will take a return ticket from Charing Cross to Warlingham station by the train which leaves London at 3.28 to-morrow, I will meet you at the station and we will talk matters over.'

Mr. Cotterell Tupp's account of his visit is so interesting that I give it in his own words :—

With his usual courtesy Mr. Lowe met me at the Warlingham station, and walked to the house with me. He took me over the grounds, and then we had tea together, and a two hours' talk, which I shall never forget. Hitherto, though he had often talked to me of politics and other matters, yet our conversations had necessarily been chiefly on business ; but on this day, when I was his guest, he treated me as an ordinary guest, and talked on all sorts of subjects in a way which left me quite fascinated at the end of the visit. To me, who had spent the last twelve years in the jungles of India, and had yet kept up my interest in politics and in English public life, nothing could be more delightful than this long talk with one who had lived for so long at the very heart of things, and who was so well able to express his impressions in those vigorous and incisive phrases which at first almost startled one, but which one grew to expect as one got to know him better.

This little episode of Lord Sherbrooke and the Indian Civil Service is here reproduced at some length for one reason : because no reference is made to it in Mr. Henry Lucy's ad-

mirable *Diary of Two Parliaments*—evidently that vigilant critic had not put in an appearance at the House of Commons on the afternoon of June 29, 1875. It is also given because it reveals Robert Lowe in his true public character—that of a great member of Parliament. Many a man of mediocre abilities, with smooth and conciliatory manners, makes a very fair Cabinet Minister; and it is not difficult to get a supply of private members, with a turn for electioneering, who will, on occasion, champion a deserving or popular cause. But, if narrowly looked into, it will generally be found that the underlying motive of their zeal is the desire to ingratiate themselves with their constituents, to injure their political opponents, or to advertise themselves. Few, very few it is feared, will ever espouse a cause purely on account of its inherent justice; and still fewer will do so without a thought of their own advancement in public life, and with absolute and fearless impartiality towards their political friends as well as foes. If to these moral attributes of disinterestedness, zeal, freedom from faction, and love of justice, be added, as in Robert Lowe's case, immense ability and assiduity, so that neither time nor trouble was spared in mastering an intricate case—we have all the ingredients of what I have called a *great member of Parliament*.

After Mr. Cotterell Tupp returned to India, he wrote to Lord Sherbrooke, thanking him in the name of the whole service for all that he had done. Later on he wrote to inform him of his appointment as Accountant-General at Madras, when he brought under his notice some fresh acts of jobbery.

The Right Hon. R. Lowe to A. Cotterell Tupp, Esq.

34 Lowndes Square, S.W.: Feb. 15, 1879

My dear Mr. Tupp,—I am very glad that you have escaped from the hands of the Philistines, and have found rest for the sole of your foot. I am afraid I cannot undertake another crusade. The jobbery you detail is very wrong and even illegal, but I fear would not be of a nature to attract any serious attention in Parliament.

I will send your letter to Mr. Stanhope, the Under Secretary of State, and that is all I can do. Our relations with the Government are much more strained than they were three years ago.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT LOWE.

The friendship and correspondence thus commenced over a grievance which had no personal interest for Lord Sherbrooke, but which he espoused on public grounds, did not terminate here. It was continued after the one had retired from India and the other had entered the House of Lords. The redress of the grievances of Indian Civil servants, which was effected by the despatch of Lord Salisbury to the Governor-General in 1876, was, as Mr. Cotterell Tupp's narrative shows, entirely the work of Lord Sherbrooke. 'The contented state and thorough success of the service at the present time,' writes Mr. Tupp, 'we owe altogether to him.' 'One of the greatest proofs,' he adds, 'of Lord Sherbrooke's ability was the wonderful way he had mastered the whole subject within a month of the time he took it up. Latterly he used to ask me questions and raise objections which, though I had been years at the subject, I could not answer at the moment. . . . I have often since said that he gave me the impression of being far and away the ablest man I have ever met; and in thirty years of administrative life in India and in England, I have met many very clever men.'

CHAPTER XXV

CLOSING SCENES IN THE COMMONS

(1874—1880)

ON February 3, 1874, Robert Lowe was for the third time re-elected member for the University of London, without opposition. Sir John Lubbock presided as Vice-Chancellor in place of Mr. Grote, but Lowe's proposer and seconder, Sir Julian Goldsmid and Sir Richard Quain, were the same distinguished members of the University who had proposed and seconded him on the first occasion; and the writ and other legal documents were read by Dr. Carpenter, who was still the Registrar of the University. In his speech in returning thanks, Lowe, as one of the leaders of the Liberal party, not only defended the policy of the Gladstone Government, chiefly against the attacks of Mr. Disraeli, but dealt with one question—that of Home Rule for Ireland—which is still of pressing interest as likely to affect the immediate future of this country. After pointing out that under any system of Irish Home Rule all British contributions towards the internal government of Ireland must cease, he thus dealt with the all-important question of the retention or non-retention of Irish members in the House of Commons:—

If we are not allowed to interfere in the domestic affairs of Ireland, the difficulty arises that has always been felt by the Colonies—are we to let Ireland interfere with the domestic affairs of England and Scotland? England and Scotland will never like to have their affairs managed by the Irish members. They might

saddle us with enormous burdens, without the least responsibility, and therefore it is quite impossible that they should have this power. They must be reserved, by some process, for Imperial questions. But what are Imperial, and what are English and Scotch questions? What are the dividing lines, and where does one line run into another? We might be perpetually dividing as to what was an Imperial and what an English or Scotch question. It is quite clear to me that this would lead of necessity to the exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament altogether. When that is done, what do the Home Rulers propose? Do they mean that their Parliament shall be subject to the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain, so that it shall have the power of stopping or altering their laws as it pleases? If they mean that, they are most unpatriotic; for it would reduce their country to a mere dependency, in a perpetual bondage to an alien legislature. On the other hand, if they say it is not that—that the Irish members should have as full and complete control as the English Parliament—that may be the most excellent thing in the world, but it is not Home Rule, it is a dissolution of the Union, a dismemberment of the Empire. There is no refuge from one horn of the dilemma or the other.

On March 5 the new Parliament was opened, when Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister with a majority of over fifty. Robert Lowe's parliamentary career was fast drawing to its close. Although, from his two remarkable speeches delivered in Sydney,¹ Robert Lowe might have claimed to be the pioneer of Imperial Federation, he was, from 1874 to 1880, strongly opposed to Disraeli's policy of Imperialism. There were many reasons which led Lowe in later life to become the advocate of a policy of non-intervention. It is true that during the Crimean and Chinese wars he had stuck resolutely to his chief, and, as already pointed out in the matter of the Russians in the Black Sea, had perhaps gone beyond Palmerston himself, certainly beyond Disraeli, in the advocacy of a plan of what might be called counter-aggression against the Czar. This apparent inconsistency between his earlier and later foreign policy he might, perhaps, have defended in the famous words of advice uttered by Polonius to his son:—

¹ Vol. i. pp. 234, 291.

Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,
Bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee.

When Robert Lowe proposed his resolution, the object of which was to compel Russia to reduce her fleet in the Black Sea, he might have urged that we were already at war with that Power, which had wantonly broken the peace of Europe. Still, his later policy was, no doubt, much more markedly in favour of what his friend, Lord Derby, called the 'greatest of British interests—peace.' He became, especially towards the close of his public career, strongly anti-Imperialistic—using that term in the sense in which Lord Beaconsfield and his followers understood it in the matter of our foreign policy. It must be borne in mind that this use of the word 'Imperial' has no bearing on the subject of the confederation of England and her colonial empire, on which Disraeli himself was hardly more of an Imperialist than John Bright. Robert Lowe, too, it must be admitted, had receded from the strong position which he had taken up as a colonist, in favour of Imperial Federation; and in later life, while regarding the existing union between England and the Colonies as (to use his own phrase) 'a fair-weather plan,' he had come to think that the only alternative, that of a federal Parliament, would prove utterly unworkable.

His difference with Lord Beaconsfield, however, was not as to Imperial Federation, or concerning our relations with our own colonies, but was entirely in regard to our foreign policy. It cannot be denied that Robert Lowe regarded any line of policy, foreign or domestic, advocated by Disraeli after 1867, with grave suspicion, perhaps one should say with a distinct bias. Independently of his distrust of Disraeli, certain public events, notably the Crimean War, followed by the Indian Mutiny, as well as our uncertain and emotional conduct during the American Civil War and the Schleswig-Holstein campaign, had undoubtedly caused his mind to take a pacific

bent. The letter which he wrote to Bernal Osborne¹ concerning Palmerston's bravado towards the Americans is very suggestive, as well as his incidental remarks on Canada and Denmark. He thought clearly, that the time had gone by when the Palmerstonian mode of conducting our foreign affairs, however flattering at the time to our own *amour propre*, could be safely employed. The narrow squeak by which Palmerston, at the last moment, extricated himself from a war with Prussia and Austria, on behalf of Denmark, was a lesson which Lowe never forgot. He always thought that, had Palmerston's vanity got the better of his judgment, the pick of our small army would have been sent over to be mowed down by the Prussian breech-loader in a quarrel into which we had rushed through pure sentimentality. The very popularity of such a war was, he thought, one of our increasing perils under the new democratic *régime*. So it appeared to him that Disraeli, eager to avoid the petty harassments of domestic legislation, for which he had no taste, might, by his so-called Imperial policy, imperil the very existence of the realm. He did not see that we were in any better position than under Palmerston to strike a really effective blow against any of the great military powers of Europe; and with his customary outspokenness, he put the matter in the most uncompromising and unpopular shape in an article entitled 'Imperialism' in the *Fortnightly Review* of October 1878.

The Crimean War has taught us, if we did not know it before, how rapidly the wear and tear of war tells upon an English army, and how easily a force, which can go anywhere and do anything, may be transformed into the body of half-trained boys who were unable to hold the Redan. It is best to look our position boldly in the face and to admit what is really undeniable, that the necessary concomitant of an imperial army, and the first condition of giving effect to our new ideas, is to adopt some form of conscription as soon as possible. As long as we were content to trust to our insular position, as long as we could count on being the attacked and not the attacking party, we were well justified in relying on an

¹ See p. 238.

army of volunteers. But the attitude which we have now assumed really leaves us no other choice, unless we are prepared to be as ridiculous as we have been presumptuous, than to place our little army in some degree on an equality with our inflated pretensions.

Such words as these, and indeed Lord Sherbrooke's whole attitude towards the Imperialism of Disraeli, were most unpopular, not only with the upper classes in England, but in all the great self-governing colonies. The better class of colonial English are full of an enthusiastic loyalty to the England of history; they care little and know less about the mere municipal politics of contending factions, but they have a feeling that the England of Elizabeth and Cromwell, which played such a mighty part in the history of the world, belongs by birthright to them as well as to their home-keeping kinsmen of England. Lord Beaconsfield's spirited foreign policy touched a sympathetic chord in the breast of Greater Britain; and statesmen like Robert Lowe or writers like Professor Freeman, who set themselves to criticise and oppose it, became proportionately unpopular. *Audi alteram partem*. As it befell, we were able to avoid any great conflict with Russia, and Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury could proclaim that they had won 'peace with honour.'

To the astonishment of the colonial English, these statesmen were promptly hurled from office, almost in the hour of their triumph; this fact had a most sobering effect, for it proclaimed our instability as a power at the very time that we were aiming to exercise a preponderating influence over great military nations not subject to the breath of popular opinion. Many a wise man felt that under a democracy England was less fit than under the Palmerstonian oligarchy to wage aggressive war. Robert Lowe's test question came home to us with added force. *Are we prepared to submit to the conscription?* If our Imperial patriotism does not extend to this, then it seemed that, after all, the policy of non-intervention was the only safe one both for England and her

colonies. None who knew him will be likely to deny that Lord Sherbrooke was a stout and patriotic Englishman, with an almost boundless love of his country and a true admiration for the great achievements of his race. But he had no high opinion of cheap or vicarious valour ; and he always strove to see the unpleasant as well as the pleasant side of things. If there was an England of Elizabeth and Cromwell, there was also an England of Harold.

Almost all competent parliamentary critics are of opinion that Lowe made a political blunder on February 21, 1876, in objecting to the commission of £100,000 paid by Disraeli to Rothschild on the purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal. Mr. Lucy, in his *Diary of Two Parliaments*, after paying a high compliment to Lowe's 'keenness of intellect and classical culture,' as well as to his power as a parliamentary debater (second only to Gladstone and Bright), instances this matter as a proof of his unfitness as a leader. Lowe not only objected to the charge of £100,000, but pointed out that he himself, by watching the exchange market, had saved £5,000 to the country in settling up the Alabama claims. He forgot, points out his critic, that the one was a transaction of which we were proud (and so did not count the extra cost), whereas the other was a matter which most Englishmen were anxious to forget. As well as offending the *amour propre* of many patriotic Britons, Lowe, it is said, greatly annoyed his friend Baron Rothschild (which we can easily credit) by his inconvenient allusion to the £100,000 commission.

In the spring of 1876, Disraeli introduced a Bill to confer on the Queen the title of Empress of India, which was not only opposed by leading Liberals in the House and throughout the country, but by a Conservative peer like Lord Shaftesbury and by a Radical with such strong Imperialist proclivities as Mr. Joseph Cowen, then the newly-elected member for Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. Cowen's speech on the third reading—his first important speech in the House—met with the unusually warm

'commendation of Lowe, who referred to it as one of 'eloquence and force, which showed that the speaker felt deeply what he was uttering,' and added, 'When they turned from the speech of the hon. member for Newcastle to that of the Prime Minister, it was like listening to the lisping of the nursery'—a somewhat severe allusion to a story of Disraeli in reference to the pleasure felt by some children in the new title!

Lowe himself also opposed the Royal Titles Bill on the ground that the title of Empress would be useless and meaningless in the Colonies as well as in England. This is in a sense quite true, for no one in any of the Colonies thinks of using to the present day any other word than that of Queen, as is the custom in England itself. Glancing over the somewhat heated debates of the period, one cannot help feeling that both sides attached an exaggerated importance to this question. It had, however, a rather unpleasant sequel for Lowe himself. On April 19, 1876, he went down to Retford, in his native county, Nottinghamshire, to support the candidature of Sir H. Bristowe. A great deal of conversation had taken place prior to the meeting with regard to the Royal Titles Bill, which so strangely aroused the hostility of all kinds of Liberals at that time. In the course of his speech Lowe made the unfortunate remark: 'I strongly suspect that this is not now brought forward for the first time. I violate no confidence, because I have received none; but I am under a conviction that at least two previous Ministers have entirely refused to have anything to do with such a change. More pliant persons have now been found, and I have no doubt the thing will be done.'

Sir H. Bristowe, foreseeing the mischief which the report of this remark might cause, specially requested the reporters not to forward it, but unfortunately that portion of the speech was already despatched. The reference to Her Majesty was certainly one of those regrettable indiscretions which clever men seem doomed to perpetrate. Your commonplace man is

always safe ; but genius has ever its weak side. It is a singular fact that Disraeli himself, whose tact was almost unfailing, had a few years before made a *faux pas* in referring to the Queen's health, which had nearly as much perturbed his friends and the reporters ; while Lord Granville, who was the essence of good breeding as well as tact, had many years previously found himself in an awkward position with regard to the Sovereign, though in his case it was from the inadvertence of a confidential friend rather than his own. Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Lewis brought the matter of Lowe's Retford speech before the House of Commons, and subsequently the Prime Minister took the matter up, and on the authority of the Queen herself categorically denied the imputation conveyed in Lowe's speech. There remained nothing for the latter, both as a loyal subject and a gentleman, but to retract and apologise, which he did in the House of Commons in the fullest and most unreserved manner ; the incident was quickly forgotten by the House and completely forgiven by the Queen, as the titles and distinctions conferred upon Lord Sherbrooke by Her Majesty, as well as the very cordial terms on which he continued to remain with all the leading members of the Royal family, amply testify.

In this session, on the Oxford University Bill, Lowe tried to save the Tories from rash experimental reform ; but, to quote the *Standard*, ' the Conservative Government then, as more recently, for fear of being thought illiberal, rushed into the opposite extreme, and overthrew an admirable working system in deference to pure theory.'

On August 18, 1876, Benjamin Disraeli became Earl of Beaconsfield. The concluding sentence of the following letter, written shortly afterwards on his type-writer by Robert Lowe to the squire of Oxton, is somewhat significant.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton

Sherbrooke : Sept. 4, 1876

My dear Henry,—Here is a specimen of the machine, of which it is only just to say I am not yet fully master. Its great charm

to me is that, the type being stationary, it gives very little pain to the eye, and I am convinced that in a very short time I shall be able to work it with my eyes shut. It has also the merit that by very simple means sixteen copies may be taken of anything that is printed. It writes much faster than the pen, and is very strong and not liable to get out of order. Its defect is that it costs 21*l.*

I had not forgotten your birthday; I doubt whether such things ever were a legitimate subject of congratulation, but they have long ceased to be so. For my part I have a great respect for the 364 days on which I was not born. I will give you two receipts for a torpid liver, either of which is infallible: first, get a 44-inch bicycle and ride him as fast as you can on your gravel walk every day. The other is, to lay down thirty yards of asphalte and get a pair of Stanhope skates, and skate thereon for one hour *per diem*—that at least is the way in which I bully my liver.

I am glad Dizzy is out of the House. It may be the means of staving off a little longer electoral districts and universal suffrage.

Your affectionate Brother,

R. LOWE.

On June 29, 1877, the present Sir George Trevelyan moved his resolution in favour of the extension of household franchise to the counties. Mr. Goschen has been kind enough to relate the following anecdote on this subject as illustrative of what he justly calls Robert Lowe's magnanimity. 'Previous to the debate in the House,' says Mr. Goschen, 'the members of the Liberal ex-Cabinet, and others, met to discuss what line they should definitely take with regard to the extension of household franchise to the counties. The whole body, except Mr. Lowe and myself, decided to support the movement. Mr. Lowe found me to be his only ally, but with singular unselfishness he thought of my position rather than of his own, and coming across to me, he said:—

"Now look here, Goschen. I have my career behind me, but you have yours still to look forward to—Don't be a fool! We cannot permanently resist this movement. Go with the rest!"

'Sir William Harcourt, who was present and heard Lowe's words, said it was a pretty sight to see Mr. Lowe thus advising

me. It was like some matron who had sown her own wild oats in her early days, warning a young married woman against the same course!' Mr. Goschen courageously opposed the resolution, which was supported by Lord Hartington and the Liberal party; but it was lost on a division by 50 votes.

On March 4, 1879, Sir George Trevelyan again moved his resolution on the county franchise. Lord Claud Hamilton had given notice of an amendment that it was inexpedient to re-open the question of reform '*at the present time*'; whereupon Lowe, amid much laughter, declared that he would move to omit the last words. It was now clear to all the world that resistance to this movement would soon be overcome; but Lowe, with his unflinching nerve, rose from his seat between Bright and Gladstone to oppose the resolution.

'In earnest tones,' writes Mr. Lucy, 'and with a persuasive manner quite foreign to his parliamentary habit, he asked the House to consider that what they had to think of was, not what would be pleasant to a section of the populace, but what was for the good of the nation throughout ages to come.' He spoke for less than half an hour, but with wonderful effect, and his speech, though he did not know it at the time, was his legacy to the House of Commons.

Robert Lowe on this evening, feeling, it may be, the hopelessness of his task, had indeed laid aside all his keen weapons of attack—his wit and sarcasm, his invective, and his unequalled gift of homely and telling illustration. His manner has been described by one who heard him as benign and almost fatherly, and his words certainly display a kindly and sympathetic tone; while his language is simplicity itself:—

This question really depends entirely upon the side from which you view it, and it is no more a wonder than it was in the dispute about the gold and silver shields that we do not come to the same conclusion.

Those who advocate this lowering of the franchise put it as a matter of personal hardship, of inequality, as a question of justice or injustice; they treat it as a matter of kindness, fairness, and good

feeling, and from that point of view, I am not surprised at the conclusion to which they have come. The question is whether that is the real point of view from which we ought to look at it; whether it is not the point of view, however much they may press it upon us, we ought to put aside, and for which we ought to substitute a much harsher, drier, less attractive, and less sentimental point of view, but one which has the merit that it is founded on truth, experience, and good sense.

It is not because I cannot feel for my fellow-countrymen, like the rest of you, that I have not been able to bring my mind to adopt these arguments, held sincerely by many gentlemen for whom I have the highest respect; it is because I believe that that point of view, however seductive and philanthropic, is not the sound and true point of view from which it behoves us, sitting here as legislators for a great country, to look at this question of the franchise. We have to look exactly at the contrary side of the question. We ought to consider, not what is agreeable to the feelings of our fellow-countrymen, to the sentiment of equality, not what is popular among them, not what they may like, not any little advantage they may derive from what is proposed—but if we are to be really worthy of the place in which we sit, and to perform the duties which we attempt to discharge, we ought to consider what will be for the interest of England in ages to come. It is because my mind is full of those ideas that I have not been able to give—perhaps I have failed very much to give—sufficient attention and sufficient expression and feeling to the case that is made on the other side. . . . It is not merely a question whether we shall gratify the aspirations of a number of people who wish for the franchise, but the question is, What effect will it have on the House of Commons? Because whatever effect it has on the House of Commons, it will have directly upon the institutions and the very existence of the empire. I say that so far from there being a complicated system of checks and balances, our Constitution has been reduced to a state of what I can only call tremendous simplicity. We have put all on a single foundation; all depends on the House of Commons, upon its ability to conduct the business of the State properly; all depends upon its being able to keep the Ministers of the Crown within bounds, and to see that they fulfil their duty to the State. We have, instead of a complicated Constitution, the most elemental Constitution in the world now. We have simply an elective Assembly, in which all the powers of the State are gathered up and centred. If that be so, and if that elective Assembly misconduct itself, the only remedy is to go back to the constituencies from which it is elected, and to refer the matter to them, and from their decision there is no appeal, however momentous it may be. . . . There is no case in history

of the durability of a purely democratic government by a single elective Assembly.

Mr. Leonard Courtney also opposed the resolution, in a speech of marked ability. At the close of the debate, after midnight, Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer, referred with quiet but impressive sincerity to 'the grave, the solemn, the statesmanlike warning' of Robert Lowe; and, on behalf of the Government, opposed Trevelyan's resolution, which had been seconded by Sir Charles Dilke. The result was that Lord Claud Hamilton's amendment as to the inexpediency of re-opening the question of parliamentary reform was carried by 291 votes against 226.

This question of the extension of the franchise was also fought out by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe in the magazines. In the *Fortnightly Review* for October 1877, Lowe wrote a remarkably able article entitled, 'A New Reform Bill,' which, in less than fifteen pages of lucid English, contains the sum and substance of his views against the democratic theory of government. Shortly after its appearance Mr. Gladstone sent him the following friendly letter.

Mr. Gladstone to Robert Lowe

Hawarden: Oct. 15, 1877

My dear Lowe,—On reading with much interest your article in the *Fortnightly* on the franchise, I have been moved (from within, be it understood) to offer a reply, which I am sending off to the *Nineteenth Century*. I hope, and even think, that, apart from the wide difference of opinion between us on and about the franchise, you may not find anything in it to which you would object. I have endeavoured to give expression to the cordial respect with which I regard your motives, however much I may presume to lament your opinions. I have not kept in the shade that upon many questions of government, and I believe upon some touching the state of our parliamentary system, and more matters too of great importance, you and I are rather specially (as I think) agreed. I am going off to Ireland to-morrow to remain there, if I can, in the dark.

Yours sincerely,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

To Mr. Gladstone's article, 'The County Franchise and Mr. Lowe thereon,' in the *Nineteenth Century*, November 1877, Lowe replied in the December number of the *Fortnightly* by an article entitled, 'Mr. Gladstone on Manhood Suffrage.' Mr. Gladstone paid more than one personal tribute to his opponent's high character and rare disinterestedness, and used a fine phrase concerning Robert Lowe's intellect: 'Mr. Lowe's penetrating, almost piercing, power of mind.' While fully reciprocating Mr. Gladstone's good feeling and personal courtesy, Lowe's rejoinder is one of the most trenchant political controversial essays in the language. There is one brief passage for the counterpart of which one would have to search the powerful pages of Jonathan Swift. Lowe is dealing with what he always conceived to be the great fallacy of Mr. Gladstone; viz. the maintenance of the abstract right of every man to a voice in the government on what he was in the habit of styling the 'fathers-of-families, flesh-and-blood, and fellow-Christian' theory:—

Here, then, are the arguments in favour of manhood suffrage as revised and corrected by the Minister who proposed a 7*l.* franchise in 1866. 1. Every man must, directly or indirectly, contribute to the revenue. The same thing may be said of every dog. A man satisfies the qualification by paying for a glass of beer. 2. Every man by his labour contributes to the public wealth. The same thing may be said of every cart horse. 3. Nine men out of ten are fathers of families. This qualification is the condition of the continuance of the species which we share with the lower animals. 4. Every man is possessed of the power of doing a great deal of mischief. So is almost every animal. We have known houses where everything that was broken was attributed to the agency of the cat. It will hardly be believed that these four arguments expounded, of course, and amplified, are the four Corinthian pillars which are destined to support the enormous fabric of universal suffrage. We shall not think it necessary to criticise them further, *but content ourselves with the remark, that we seem, somehow or other, to have slipped down from the human into the animal kingdom, and that we sigh for some reason for submitting ourselves to the will of the many, which is drawn at least from qualities peculiar to the human*

race, to which, after all, the poorest and most ignorant among us do belong.

A discussion of this kind between two minds so essentially diverse must always, so far as the combatants are concerned, prove fruitless. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe intellectually had no points of contact, and the discussion, as Bismarck said of a war between Russia and England, was like a fight between a dog and a fish. Towards the close of this article, Lowe again pointed to the difference between a *democratised* England and the United States: 'The American Constitution is a monument of the distrust which the founders of the Republic felt for the institution which necessity obliged them to adopt; because Congress, elected by universal suffrage, cannot safely be trusted with the functions which we leave to the House of Commons, they are obliged to endure for four years a head of the Executive whom they may heartily wish to get rid of, and to endure a Congress which has ceased to reflect the opinion of the country. By fixed periods of time, and by the action of a Senate, they contrive to find a *modus vivendi* with universal suffrage. But with us, manhood suffrage would succeed, without fetter or restraint, to all the powers of government. It would be decked with a venerable name and invested with a power, all the limits of which have been successfully and completely broken down, in confidence that it would be wielded by knowledge, intelligence, and wealth.'

On December 22, Mr. Gladstone wrote again from Hawarden, evidently in acknowledgment of some kindly message from Lowe:—

'I promptly and cordially thank you for your welcome letter. Somehow I felt sure than when we shook hands, as we now do, after our boxing match, it would be without any reserve; and I can entirely reciprocate as to you what you are good enough to say of me.'

It was in reference to the first of these articles, 'A New Reform Bill,' that Matthew Arnold observed, in a contri-

bution to the *Fortnightly* for 1878 on Irish Catholicism and British Liberalism : ' Mr. Lowe has in this very Review, not many months ago, admirably set forth the ideal of the Liberal party. "The ideal of the Liberal party," says Mr. Lowe, "consists in a view of things undisturbed and undistorted by the promptings of interest or prejudice, in a complete independence of all class interests, and in relying for its success on the better feelings and higher intelligence of mankind." ' Happier words (added Mr. Arnold) could not well be found : such is, indeed, the ideal of the Liberal party.'

In the *Nineteenth Century* for July 1878, there appeared 'A Modern Symposium,' in which, as well as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe, the following well-known publicists took part : Mr. W. R. Greg, Lord Arthur Russell, Mr. R. H. Hutton, Mr. Grant Duff, and Mr. Frederic Harrison. The subject, 'Is the Popular Judgment in Politics more just than that of the Higher Orders ?' was really a further discussion of the question of universal suffrage.

Robert Lowe during his closing years in the Commons had also a bout with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in the magazines. Towards the end of 1876, Mr. Chamberlain was urging the experimental adoption in England of the Gothenburg licensing system. Lowe, who strongly dissented from the proposal, at once recognised the marked ability and business-like vigour with which it was advocated. Mr. Chamberlain was clearly a man worth crossing swords with ; so he wrote the article, 'The Birmingham Plan of Public-house Reform,' which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for January 1877.

This magazine article runs to less than nine pages in all, but the energetic Bishop of Chester, if he have not yet done so, should certainly read it before starting his episcopal tavern. It would be difficult to make out a stronger case against a municipality securing a monopoly in the liquor traffic.

Mr. Chamberlain promptly replied to Lowe's attack in an

article entitled 'Municipal Public-houses,' which appeared in the February number of the *Fortnightly*. He was, in his way, as downright and uncompromising as his assailant, and his clearness and vigour of statement greatly pleased Lowe, who marked him out as a man of distinct ability, with, in all probability, some special gift of administration which had made him the leading citizen of Birmingham, and might make him one of the future political leaders in England. When Mr. Chamberlain came up to London to attend Parliament for the first time, Lowe at once asked him to dinner at Lowndes Square, and the meeting, though it may not have harmonised their differences on public-house reform, certainly laid the foundation for a feeling of mutual regard and appreciation.

Shortly before these discussions with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain, Robert Lowe delivered a memorable address on a memorable occasion at the Political Economy Club (May 31, 1876). It was a dinner to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the publication of 'The Wealth of Nations,' and Mr. Gladstone was in the chair, with M. Léon Say as the chief guest of the evening. Lowe's eulogy of Adam Smith was greatly admired by the late Professor Stanley Jevons and other economists. His literary activity and vigour were never greater. In the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1878 appeared his reply to Mr. Ingram's address to the British Association in Dublin; it was entitled 'Recent Attacks on Political Economy.' This was followed, in June, 1879, by a reply to Mr. Wallace's economic theories under the heading 'Reciprocity and Free-Trade.' Among his other contributions to that periodical at this time may be mentioned—an article on Owens College, Manchester, entitled 'Shall we create a new University?'; a trenchant paper, 'Have we abolished Imprisonment for Debt?'; an extremely anti-Imperialistic article, 'The Value to the United Kingdom of the Foreign Dominions of the Crown;'; and an essay, mainly dealing

with the silver question, entitled 'A Simple Way out of the Indian Difficulty.' In addition to these, he contributed a thoughtful paper to the *Contemporary Review* for October 1876, on Vivisection.

On March 31, 1879, Robert Lowe went down to the House of Commons prepared to support the vote of censure against the Government with regard to their South African policy and the conduct of the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere. This vote of censure had been brought forward in the House of Lords by the Marquis of Lansdowne, and it was proposed in the Commons by Sir Charles Dilke, in a long and elaborate arraignment, the clearness and force of which were specially praised by Lowe in his opening remarks. The position was peculiar: Sir Bartle Frere had made war on the Zulus without any authority from the Government, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach had severely censured him, but had expressly declined to recall him. On the second night of the debate, Lowe, who had given much attention to the subject and was altogether opposed to the proceedings of Sir Bartle Frere, rose, and, after speaking for some time with all his old command over the House, stopped abruptly, and began searching among his notes and memoranda, but, though encouraged by the cheers of the House, he after a while desisted and sat down. Mr. Goschen, who was very intimate with Lowe, gives the following account of the episode:—

'I was not present in the House, but I met Lowe the next day. I said to him: "I hear that you suddenly felt ill in the House yesterday when you were speaking." "No," he replied, there was no illness: it was only *Anno Domini*!' "But I heard," I replied, "that your notes got into confusion and that this put you out." "No," said he, "the notes were really a help to me, because I tried to disguise my breakdown by pretending confusion in my papers.'

'He told me this,' adds Mr. Goschen, 'with his usual bright

smile, and with that great pluck which sustained him in all his trials.'

Whatever may have been the cause, the effect was altogether temporary; and the collapse was, no doubt, to some extent brought about by over-excitement (for he was very much in earnest on this question), by over-preparation and the existence of ample notes, which were always a hindrance to him. That he retained his vigorous powers of expression, as well as his interest in public questions, is shown by his subsequent contributions to periodical literature; at least half a dozen of his most effective articles in the *Fortnightly* and *Nineteenth Century* Reviews having been written after the familiar signature of Robert Lowe had been transformed into 'Sherbrooke.' But though he addressed a great meeting at Grantham, he did not speak again in the House of Commons; for shortly afterwards the dissolution came which brought Mr. Gladstone back to power, and which transferred Robert Lowe to the House of Lords. Up to the very close of his career in the Commons, however, he showed the profoundest interest in the welfare and future of that historic body. As late as April 1880, he contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* a thoroughly characteristic article, entitled 'The Docility of an "Imperial" Parliament,' in which he dealt vigorously with Lord Beaconsfield's parliamentary methods, and criticised, with no light hand, a foreign policy that claimed ascendancy in Europe 'without adding a man to our army or a ship to our fleet.'

It is no secret to the friends of Lord Sherbrooke that he consented most reluctantly to accept a peerage. As more than one allusion in this work will show, he was at no time possessed by any democratic bias against the institution of the House of Lords; but personally he would have preferred to remain in the House of Commons, and his acceptance of a peerage was much more to convenience Mr. Gladstone than to

gratify himself. The following letters to his niece, Mrs. Chaworth Musters, and her father, show clearly enough what his feelings were on the subject.

Robert Lowe to Mrs. Chaworth Musters

My dear Lina,—If you mean that I should have been in a much better position had I been offered and accepted office, I quite agree with you ; but that was not the case. If you mean that I should have done better either by giving up my seat and putting the University, which had just elected me, to the expense of another election, or that I should have been content to sit behind the people whom I once led and either supported or opposed them, I think you are in error. It is in my opinion better to take a position which had been thoroughly earned and where I can still exercise some influence, than either to withdraw altogether from public life or to have become a *frondeur* or a mere follower where I once was a leader. I am sorry you do not agree with me.

ROBERT LOWE.

Robert Lowe to Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton

34 Lowndes Square : May 21, 1880

My dear Henry,—As Vespasian said when he was dying, I am beginning to be a god. That the process is proceeding you will see from the enclosed document, the amount of which I have paid, and which I advise you to keep among your muniments to cool the courage of any of your descendants who may be seized with a desire for similar honours. N.B. The Heralds are still to be paid. I am to be gazetted on Tuesday next, but there is something else, I really have forgotten what, before I can take my seat. I will write as soon as I know myself. I am very much flattered and honoured by your wish to attend the function. For myself, I feel very much as if I had got again into the company of the four neuter verbs of the Latin Grammar,—

Vapulo—I am beaten.

Venco—I am sold.

Exulo—I am banished.

Fio—I am done.

Your affectionate brother,

R. LOWE.

Viscount Sherbrooke took his seat in the House of Lords on May 28, 1880. It seems to have taken him some time to 'know himself,' as he expressed it; for, writing to Mr. Cotterell

Tupp on June 11, he began to sign as of old, and got as far as 'Robert L,' through which he ran his pen lightly and wrote 'Sherbrooke' underneath. In this letter, also, he distinctly states that he accepted a peerage with reluctance, saying, 'It was the last thing I wanted.'

Two years afterwards Mr. Gladstone offered his old colleague a first-class political pension of 2,000*l. per annum*, which was at his disposal through the death of Sir George Grey; but this Lord Sherbrooke promptly and emphatically declined. In making the offer Mr. Gladstone spoke in high and generous terms of his old friend and colleague: 'No one,' he said, 'can question that you have amply made a title so far as service done is concerned.'

CHAPTER XXVI

IN THE LORDS

(1880—1884)

As Lord Sherbrooke really entertained a strong objection to becoming a peer, and felt that by going into the House of Lords he was practically closing his public career, it may be to some a matter for regret that he did not take the advice of his niece, Mrs. Chaworth Musters, and devote the remainder of his days entirely to literary pursuits. It is quite true that, had he been so inclined, he might, after 1880, have given the world a valuable political work, containing the results of his life experience in the working of English parliamentary institutions. His was a mind much given to generalisation, and scattered throughout his *Times* articles, extending over so many years, as well as in his contributions to the reviews and magazines, one constantly comes across passages and remarks that betoken the original thinker. Moreover, after the passage of the Reform Bill, Robert Lowe in his own mind reviewed many of our time-honoured practices and methods, and found them wanting. A work that should have given us in detail his scheme for converting the House of Lords into a Senate, might have been full of important suggestions; while his hostility to the party system, which appears inseparable from our form of parliamentary government, would seem to demand that he should have suggested for our guidance some workable substitute. Moreover, as he apparently abandoned his original theory of a federal government for the British

Empire, and yet had no liking for the existing 'fair-weather plan,' or for the separation of the colonies from the mother-country, one regrets that he did not set forth what his actual views were with regard to the political future of the English-speaking people.

There is no doubt that Lord Sherbrooke, in the very interesting letter quoted by Mrs. Musters, in which he states that his 'faculties drove him in a direction requiring sight'—in other words, that he was by nature a man of action—gives the true explanation of his reluctance to enter upon any large literary undertaking. 'Macaulay,' he says, 'was not made for politics, and I was not made for literature.'

We notice in all his contributions to the periodicals, that he invariably writes with the direct and immediate aim of influencing public opinion and the course of legislation. His temperament was entirely that of the man of affairs, not the writer of books.

Mr. Lucy tells us in his *Diary of Two Parliaments*, that when Lord Sherbrooke 'first took his seat, Lord Beaconsfield was present, and frequently glanced across at his former foe, with whom, amid exultant cheers and all the inspiration of an excited throng of onlookers, he had often crossed swords in the other House.' Lord Beaconsfield passed away in less than a year after, and Lord Sherbrooke spoke only once or twice in the House of Lords.

When, however, Lord Sherbrooke had once made up his mind to take his place in the gilded chamber, he devoted all his customary keen attention to the political questions of the hour; and if he did not care to speak in that somewhat alien assembly, he continued to write very vigorously, chiefly in the *Nineteenth Century*.

Lord Sherbrooke to Mrs. Chaworth Musters

August 15, 1880

My dear Lina,—I have been waiting to see how things will turn out, and am now quite satisfied that it will be impossible for me to

get away for the next three weeks ; as I am a new recruit and live near London, I must attend the House of Lords—so that it is vain for me to make any plan for the future. I don't like the Hares and Rabbits Bill, because it takes away from people rights which they have bought and paid for, without compensation ; but there is no intention of resisting it. The Bill for compensation for accidents, is mainly my own concoction, and I must attend to it. I am very much struck, not with our rapid advance to democracy which I have long seen to be inevitable, but with the total absence of any attempt to create any sort of check or balance, such as they have even in America.

In the House itself Lord Sherbrooke chiefly interested himself in the Employers' Liability Bill, but his first article in the *Nineteenth Century* after he had become a peer shows clearly that he was mainly engrossed in watching the proceedings in the Commons. The article, which appeared in October 1880, is entitled 'Obstruction or Clôture,' and rarely have the tactics of Mr. Parnell and the Irish party met with more severe condemnation. It is written with all his old *verve* and force, in short, crisp sentences, whose meaning could not be mistaken even by the dullest. From the subject and tone of this article, it is evident how strongly he felt the evil that would overtake us through our weakness and vacillation with regard to the Irish problem.

This article he followed up in the November number by a thoughtful and candid criticism of a publication by Mr. James Tuke, the well-known Irish philanthropist, in which Lord Sherbrooke begins by remarking that 'of all the writings and speeches which this Irish question has produced, there is none which has made so deep an impression on the English mind as the pamphlet of Mr. Tuke.' In this article he maintained his former position, that any policy, however well-intentioned, which meant transferring by some legal legerdemain the land of Ireland from more or less wealthy and enlightened proprietors into the hands of an inferior and more ignorant class would intensify the misery, and retard the civilisation of that country.

‘Instead of the dream of a peasant Arcadia, where all is content and happiness, there will arise the bitterest heart-burning and jealousies. . . . People have hitherto submitted to the inequality which accompanies wealth and a higher social position, but when all are on an equality, how long will it be endured that of two men, equal in all other respects, one is, and the other is not, the possessor of land?’

The article, though an uncompromising defence of the then existing contract between landlord and tenant, is not only written in an appreciative and very kindly tone towards Mr. Tuke, but it displays no harsh or unsympathetic feeling with regard to the Celtic peasantry of Ireland. ‘Legislation for Ireland’ was, in fact, intended as a warning to English statesmen to beware of agrarian and other experiments in the midst of ‘the turgid vortex of Irish discord.’ It is an admirable article full of plain speaking, and informed throughout with sound, wholesome common-sense. Shortly after its appearance he received the following letter from his friend, Lord Shaftesbury.

The Earl of Shaftesbury to Viscount Sherbrooke

St. Giles’s House, Cranborne : November 18, 1880

Dear Lord Sherbrooke,—Your article on ‘Obstruction or Clôture’ in the *Nineteenth Century* of October last, has revived the memory of the debates and events of 1867. What you and I then foresaw is now beginning to come to pass; and I believe that the accomplishment will be both speedy and decisive.

Doubtless, the political atmosphere at that time was well charged with revolution. Whence, or how, or why, we need not now stop to inquire. But the wickedness of the Minister who then forced on us the Household Suffrage, and the madness of the Minister who soon after afflicted us with the Ballot, have greatly accelerated the operation of democratic principles.

Surely we are on the verge of wide, deep, and permanent social changes. Your remark on the deteriorated character, in every respect, of the House of Commons, and on the certainty that, unless some remedy be applied, it will become far worse, is sagacious and just. This is a specially serious consideration, for that House has monopolised the whole power of the State; and clearly it intends

to act, henceforward, without any limitation or control by any other body, except that which it may impose on itself in good humour or contempt.

A crisis will occur in the ensuing session. The Government will propose Land Bills for Ireland, which, whether the Cabinet wish it or not, must, to produce even a momentary calm, have a strong admixture of communism. Should such a Bill reach the Lords, their conduct, either in accepting or rejecting it, will bring them into real and immediate danger. If they pass it, everyone will see in it a confession of their useless existence; if they reject it, they will stir the utmost wrath of the people. The Lords are now placed in an almost ridiculous position. If they show resistance, they are denounced as opposing the will of the country, and threatened with extinction; if they show none, they are declared to be of no value whatever in the working of the Constitution.

I cannot but think that the Peers made the last great effort that they will ever make when they threw out the Disturbance Bill. They had there, on the whole, the country with them, and they might have continued to hold that position. But they immediately afterwards, with the consent and vote of Lord Beaconsfield, committed, in petty anger, the childish and despicable folly of throwing out the Registration Bill. The offence no doubt was small in itself, yet Mr. Forster's menaces, as coming from a member of the Cabinet, appeared to be formidable. The public, however, exhibited the apathy so marked in late years in everything relating to the past or the future; nay, it showed pretty clearly that it was not disposed, and that it would not be disposed, in any circumstances, to take much trouble about the honour or safety of their Lordships' House.

Whatever shall be enacted for Ireland, must be enacted for England and Scotland. The farmers of Great Britain are more moderate in their language, and more guarded in action than those of Ireland, but their thoughts and purposes are the same. The Peasantry go far beyond them, and contemplate, I am convinced, a positive seizure of the lands and cottages they occupy, not by deeds of violence, but by the convulsive agency of the ballot-box.

But Landowners, though the first, are not the only interests to be regulated and abated. The great moving parties in these realms, object as much 'on principle' to large concentrations of money in single hands, as they do to wide territorial possessions. There again the ballot-box and not violence will carry the point and give the work-people a direct and full control over the funds of the capitalists; perhaps, even, the appropriation of a very large part of them.

The fact is that we are hastening towards a Republic, and one,

too, of a singularly low, unrefined, and feeble order. I have known the people long enough to be sure that I am stating the truth; and yet the majority of them, though much changed of late years in thought and heart, desire no such results. But all revolutions, it is said, are effected by minorities; and we shall form no exception to this rule.

Forgive me for writing thus plainly to you. I remember gratefully your kind expressions of approval after I had addressed the House of Lords in this sense, in 1867; and I felt a strong desire to unburthen myself to, what is now so rare, a sympathising mind.

Yours very truly,

SHAFTESBURY.

The Viscount Sherbrooke.

This letter of Lord Shaftesbury's, which is chiefly remarkable as coming from the great philanthropic peer, who, as Lord Ashley, was the author of the Factories Act and other measures in the interests of the working classes, wanders over a much wider field than Lord Sherbrooke's two Irish articles. At this time, Lord Sherbrooke seems to have been much concerned on the subject of Ireland. Writing to his niece (Dec. 25, 1880), he remarks: 'Things have gone on very much as I expected in Ireland, and I think it is very well that the rebels and traitors who, under the pretence of predial injustice, are seeking to separate the two countries, should have an opportunity of showing themselves in their true colours. Had they been put down at once, they would have been able to say that England coerced them merely in the interests of a class, instead of, as is now quite evident, in the interests of the most fundamental principles of civil society.'

In the *Nineteenth Century* for April 1881, Lord Sherbrooke returned to the charge with an article entitled 'Business in the House of Commons;' and this he followed up, in February 1882, with 'The Clôture and the Tories.' He likewise interested himself in bimetallism, of which he was a stout opponent. His correspondent, Mr. Cotterell Tupp, who, like most Anglo-Indians, is deeply interested in the silver question, had written to him with regard to his article entitled 'A Simple

Way out of the Indian Difficulty,' which Mr. Tupp thought did not by any means solve the problem. Mr. Tupp called his attention to certain papers and lectures on Bimetallism, to which Lord Sherbrooke replied *more suo* :—

34 Lowndes Square: July 21, 1881

I have read Mr. Gibbs, so need not trouble you, and have had the advantage of a lecture from Mr. Geruschi himself. I congratulate you on your discovery of the philosopher's stone. If *saying* that one metal *shall* be equal in value to another can make it equal, you are fairly entitled to claim to have discovered the secret of boundless riches.

But why bimetallism only? Why not trimetallism, or quadrimetallism? It is as easy to *say* that copper is equal to gold as silver.

Believe me, truly yours,

SHERBROOKE.

It is needless to say that this line of reasoning did not shake Mr. Tupp's confidence in bimetallism. But a little while before this, he had met Lord Sherbrooke by appointment at the Athenæum Club, and in a long hour's talk had found him as brilliant and incisive as ever.

Lord Sherbrooke's next contribution to the *Nineteenth Century* (August 1881) was on our Bankruptcy laws, a subject in which he had ever taken a deep interest from old Sydney days. It was entitled 'What shall we do with our Bankrupts?' and was really aimed at the legislation of Mr. Chamberlain as President of the Board of Trade. The article is slight, but tersely written, enforcing with much clearness Lord Sherbrooke's well-known views as to debtor and creditor.

In 1883, Mr. T. F. Cashin issued a pamphlet entitled *The Inutility of Bankruptcy Laws: Lord Sherbrooke's Remedy*; to which Lord Sherbrooke himself contributed a 'Prefatory Dissertation on Bankruptcy.' This was a further attack on Mr. Chamberlain's proposed legislation at the Board of Trade. Briefly, Lord Sherbrooke's drastic remedy for bad debts and commercial fraud was the destruction of the Bankruptcy Court. 'If I am asked what I would put in its place, I answer without

hesitation—Nothing. We have the common law of England, purified from the barbarism of imprisonment for debt. . . . If you want to make or keep people honest, you should above all things avoid putting severe and drastic remedies in the hands of the creditor. It is quite reasonable to trust a man for his wealth, his ability, his honesty, or his industry; but every day's experience shows us that nothing is so unsafe as to trust your money to the fear of disgrace or punishment.'

To judge from the following humorous epistle to his Indian correspondent, Lord Sherbrooke continued to look back to the stormy arena of the House of Commons with a certain regretful feeling.

Viscount Sherbrooke to A. Cotterell Tupp, Esq.

Sherbrooke, Caterham : September 28, 1881

My dear Mr. Tupp,—When I was in the House of Commons and could make myself disagreeable, I could do something. Now I am nothing, and no attention would be paid to me. Now I am like Giant Despair in *Pilgrim's Progress*, who could only grin at the people whom he once could have eaten.

I am quite sure I can do you no good. I should have thought that Lang or Balfour were the proper people to apply to. In 1852, I should have been glad to take it up myself, but now I really should have no influence in such a question. Stanhope or Lord George Hamilton I could give you letters to. They are both clever fellows, and up to Indian questions.

Very truly yours,
SHERBROOKE.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for April 1882, he wrote a short paper called 'What is Money?' in reply to the bimetallic views of Mr. Cazalet and Mr. Grenfell. It opened with the following Lowian sentence, which, though true enough as an abstract proposition, by no means soothed the feelings of his opponents: 'The wisest course which can be taken with popular delusions is very often found to be to treat them like raging waves of the sea, and let them foam out their own shame.' Mr. H. R. Grenfell, who replied in the May number

by an article entitled 'What is a Standard?' seems to have been somewhat exasperated by this phrase as to foaming out his shame; and it must be admitted that, in arguing with the bimetallists, Lord Sherbrooke treated them rather too much after the controversial methods of Dr. Johnson.

Lord Sherbrooke contributed a very striking article, on 'Parliamentary Oaths,' to the same periodical for August 1882. This article, *re* the Bradlaugh imbroglio, was written to controvert certain opinions put forth in the House of Lords by the Duke of Argyll and Lord Redesdale. The latter had proposed that some general formula might be used, binding on all, which should simply imply a belief in God. This, Lord Sherbrooke boldly challenged as being 'a test that might include the rudest savage, and exclude the subtlest metaphysician.' He then took pointed objection to the ordinary form of oath, which he defined as an imprecation. To testify truthfully is binding on every citizen, without any form of oath; and he should be subject to severe punishment if he wilfully violate or evade this primal duty of citizenship in a court of law, or elsewhere when his testimony affects the well-being of society. The taking of oaths is notoriously no criterion of truth: those who are the most addicted to solemn adjuration on the slightest provocation being notoriously the greatest liars. Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay. It was in his answer to this article, in the succeeding number of the *Nineteenth Century*, that Cardinal Manning declared that Lord Sherbrooke's sayings and writings were always 'sharper than a two-edged sword.'

On November 13, 1882, Lord Sherbrooke wrote as follows to his brother: 'I am very unhappy about our proceedings in Egypt. We are, I think, making a very stupid mess of it. We ought to have tried Arabi by a court-martial of English officers for abusing the white flag and for destroying Alexandria; and if he was guilty of either, to have shot him—if not, required the Khedive to banish him. This miserable jumble of

English and Mahommedan law can lead to nothing but confusion and injustice.'

On the subject of Egypt, Lord Sherbrooke also wrote as follows to a Manchester correspondent:—

Sherbrooke, Caterham: September 26, 1882

Dear Sir,—I think the Government were quite right in putting down the military revolt in Egypt. Egypt is really more European than African, being united to the one by the sea, and separated from the other by burning deserts. We ought to keep a sufficient British force there to keep the peace. The government should be ostensibly in the Khedive, but it should be understood that nothing could be done contrary to the will of the English general, on whose support the existence of the State depends. We ought to be able to manage this better than anyone, for we have been practising in India for a hundred years. Everything will turn on his prudence and discretion. We never can allow our troops to be made the means of enforcing injustice or oppression. Above all things, I would avoid a joint occupation with a European Power. It hampers us in time of peace, and is very likely, as in a recent instance, to desert us in time of war. In the present state of Europe, I think our policy should be—Friends with all, alliance or joint enterprise with none. Our object is not to conquer or annex, but to foster and control.

Your obedient servant,
SHERBROOKE.

In the autumn of 1883, Lord Sherbrooke wrote the following letter to a correspondent who had consulted him with regard to the question of the extension of the county franchise, which, in the following year, was carried through both Houses by an amicable arrangement between the two parties. This brief letter was Lord Sherbrooke's last words in his life-long battle with democracy:—

I hold the same opinion which I have always held—that to place the supreme power of a State in the hands of the poor and ignorant is the way to destroy it. But from the time when the Tories basely sold their principles, their convictions, and their country, for a few months of ignominious office in 1866, I have felt that the completion of the work could not much longed be deferred. The crisis has now come, and no one who has watched the begin-

ning can doubt what the end will be. What the Conservatives commenced, the Liberals will complete; and numbers will rule in the place of culture and intelligence. All I can say is: Taste not, touch not, handle not; and leave the task of pulling down the Constitution to the hands of those who think such a wreck not too heavy a price to pay for a few months of dear-bought office.

When Mr. Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill, Lord Sherbrooke, with the greatest reluctance, separated from him. He took little or no part in the formation of the Liberal-Unionist party, but he advised all who consulted him to follow the Marquis of Hartington.

The health of Viscountess Sherbrooke, which had long been in a precarious and critical condition, at length finally gave way. She had been a confirmed invalid for some two years, when an attack of paralysis supervened at Caterham, in the summer of 1884, from which she partially recovered, and was able to drive up to London. But after two months she had another seizure, which proved fatal, and she died on October 3 of that year. It can easily be imagined what such a loss meant to Lord Sherbrooke in every way; his increasing blindness had made him more than ever dependent on the kindly offices of those nearest to him, and the blank in his life was all the greater from the solicitude that his wife's long illness had entailed.

Lord Sherbrooke's public career may now be considered closed; for though he continued to take a certain interest in public questions, he bore no further part in their discussion or settlement. The simple words of his old schoolfellow and much valued friend, Lord Selborne, seem to me the best commentary on his services and character as an English statesman: 'What he did in Parliament and in office is matter of public history; for me, it is sufficient to bear to it this testimony, that in acuteness and uprightness he has not been exceeded by any of his contemporaries.'

LORD SHERBROOKE AND LORD DERBY

The following letters of Lord Sherbrooke have been placed at the disposal of his biographer by the Countess of Derby, to whom they were addressed. They need little or no introduction ; but, considering that for the most part Lord Derby and Lord Sherbrooke were in opposite political camps, this correspondence of itself proves the high mutual esteem and regard in which they held each other. Lord Sherbrooke may have had older, and in a sense more intimate, personal friends among his own political colleagues, but there was no one in whose clearness of judgment, common-sense, and sagacity, he felt such confidence. The first three extracts, it will be seen, are from letters written while Lord Sherbrooke was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary, Lord Derby being then one of the Conservative leaders.

The Land Question

September 13, 1871

I agree very much with Lord Derby in his views about land ; people do not see that there has been an entire revolution on the subject. Formerly it was the only means of support for the poor. It was considered as an unskilled occupation by which a subsistence might be made. Now it is recognised as a manufacture, and one of a complicated, difficult and precarious nature. Nothing can be more foolish than to take this occupation out of the hands of capital, and to give it to labour, and to labour burdened with ownership. But, on the other hand, I also think that this change has made land a much less desirable kind of property for rich people ; and that the mania for obtaining and increasing great estates is just as imprudent as the desire of infinite subdivision is absurd. The heresy in the one case is political, in the other economical.

The Education Question

11 Downing Street : December 1871

I am glad you liked my speech. The Education question is very serious, and though I don't expect to be refuted, I have no hope that I shall be able to stop the narrow-minded and ignorant

people who have selected this of all subjects as the ground from which to assault the Church of England, quite careless if, in doing so, they sacrifice the only chance of taming the monster within whose claws they have placed us.

On Himself as first Finance Minister after the Reform Bill

Home Office : 1873

A man likes to reap what he has sown, and my administration of the finances will be found, when people come to look into it, to be a great success, and deserving a very different treatment. I am the first Finance Minister under the Reformed Parliament. It remains to be seen whether anyone else who does his duty will fare much better.

The three following letters were addressed by Lord Sherbrooke to the Countess of Derby, after Lord Derby had resigned the Foreign Secretaryship in Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet, in 1878, and joined the Liberal party. The last letters, it will be seen, were written after Lord Derby had become Colonial Minister in Mr. Gladstone's Administration.

Lord Sherbrooke's characteristic remarks on New Guinea and Australian federation will be recognised as sound even by the most fervid Australian patriots; but, unfortunately, Prince Bismarck, in resentment of Lord Derby's action in May 1876 in the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, seems to have determined to make mischief for him at the Colonial Office. There are few political articles so worthy of being carefully studied as Mr. Wemyss Reid's 'Lord Derby at the Foreign Office, 1876-8,' in *Macmillan's Magazine* for June 1879. Lord Sherbrooke would have fully endorsed the statement that it was owing to the 'attitude assumed within the Cabinet by Lord Derby that England, in the spring of 1877, did not go to war for the Turks.' But though he was strongly opposed to the pro-Turkish policy of Lord Beaconsfield, he found it difficult to follow Mr. Gladstone in the vehemence of his Russian propaganda. It was at such crises that Lord Sherbrooke considered the clear, unbiassed judgment of Lord

Derby invaluable. There was the further bond of sympathy between them, that Lord Derby brought upon himself unpopularity, if not obloquy, by acting in accordance with what he believed to be the truest interest of the country, regardless of his own position or future fame.

The letter G.

Sherbrooke : January 11, 1880

My dear Lady Derby,—I am, as usual, very much pleased with Lord Derby's speech. Glory and gunpowder are an admirable antithesis, and the letter G is peculiarly adapted to express contempt. The ambiguous word 'business' is peculiarly adapted to the same purpose. I suppose we are to have the dissolution at Easter.

Very truly, yours,

ROBERT LOWE.

Ireland. Death of Lord Airlie

Sherbrooke : October 1, 1881

My dear Lady Derby,—I must write one line to tell you how much I admire Lord Derby's article.¹ His full grasp of the subject, its moderation, its admirable style, make it quite a production *sui generis*, and separate it, by a wide interval, from anything I have seen written on the subject. The newspapers try to put aside its force, but, as it seems to me, they utterly fail to touch it. The result seems to me to be, that we shall be obliged to relieve three of the four divisions of Ireland from the duty of sending Members of Parliament, and that we shall have to suspend trial by jury in criminal and, perhaps, civil cases. I hope you are comfortably settled at Knowsley. I have been much distressed by the sudden and unexpected death of my old and kind friend, Lord Airlie. He will be a great loss to me in the House. He was so kind and ready to tell me everything and everybody. He was a really good honourable man, and could not have done anything wrong if he had tried, which I am sure he never did.

Always most truly yours,

SHERBROOKE.

New Guinea and Federation

Sherbrooke : September, 1883

My dear Lady Derby,—I am very sorry that I cannot accept your kind invitation. I am in the midst of settling, and cannot leave my

¹ 'Ireland and the Land Act.' *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1881.

wife even for so short a time. I hope I may be more fortunate another time. I hope my friends, the Australians, will be a little more reasonable than their Press. I quite approve of Lord Derby's speech, which I understand to mean that, if the Colonies choose to unite, they can have New Guinea, or anything they want in reason.

Most truly yours,

SHERBROOKE.

The Albino. Australia

Sherbrooke : November 1883

My dear Lady Derby,—I am very glad to hear of you, though I have very little to say in return. I hope you will not be obliged to stay long in the North, especially now that the weather has declared itself in all its abominations. I can now only just see to read and write at twelve o'clock. I have no letters, and I hear no news. I have been inspecting an albino who has been brought to me to see if I could prescribe for him ; he wants the element of impudence, which I always possessed in perfection, poor little fellow. They have brought him over thirty miles to consult me, and I can do him no good.

The Colonists seem to me to be very unreasonable. They like the notion of a squabble with England, a trick which I may humbly say I taught them, and of which they have bettered the instruction.

Would it not be wiser not to stick at negatives, but to state at once what Government will grant, and what it won't, making the offer as large as prudence permits. The taking New Guinea is one thing, the outcry against French convicts quite another. The first should, I think, be granted at once ; the second cannot, I think, be reasonably insisted on. At any rate, I think it would be wise to let the Colonists know what will be conceded, and what will not. Till this is done, there is always a growing tendency to demand more. Pray don't trouble yourself to write. It is better that I should trot over some day, than that you should tire your eyes, at any rate, by more than a line or two.

Most truly yours,

SHERBROOKE.

CHAPTER XXVII

LATER DAYS

THE concluding period of Lord Sherbrooke's life was passed in that leisured ease so justly earned by years of unremitting toil. His active participation in politics may be said to have closed with his fourth year in the House of Lords; he continued, however, to attend the debates, and took a keen interest in the fortunes of the Unionist Party, the appearance of this distinguished recruit at the first meeting of the Liberal-Unionists on December 7, 1886, being greeted with much enthusiasm.

In the year 1885 he married his second wife, Caroline, daughter of Thomas Sneyd, of Ashcombe Park, co. Stafford, whose family dates back to Saxon times, and has been identified with its native county for 600 years. After sharing in the vicissitudes of the country during the preceding reigns, the family suffered heavily for their loyalty to the Stuarts, the then representative, Colonel Ralph Sneyd, being killed by one of the last shots fired during the defence of the Isle of Man by the Countess of Derby, in 1649. The house of his brother Richard, who entertained Prince Rupert before the battle of Worcester, still exists in the town of Stafford, in excellent preservation, and forms an interesting relic of the period.

Lord Sherbrooke had at this time shaken off the gouty symptoms which had troubled him for some years past, and he recorded his obligations to his old friend Sir Richard

Quain by sending him a silver cup on which he playfully inscribed the Homeric legend

Ἴητρος γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων.

He now entered with renewed zest into the society of his friends, and early in the spring, after visiting his brother Mr. Sherbrooke, at Oxton, and his niece, Mrs. Chaworth Musters, he and Lady Sherbrooke went to Oxford as the guests of the Master of Balliol. These gatherings formed a renewal of old friendships and associations, and were repeated the four following years. On this occasion Professor and Mrs. Sellar were of the party. Mrs. Sellar had been searching Scott's poems in vain for the lines :—

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
To all the sensual world proclaim
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Lord Sherbrooke referred her to the headings of chapters near the end of *Old Mortality*, where she at once found the quotation. At Winchester, which was next revisited, Lord Sherbrooke took great pleasure in showing his old haunts to his wife; the head-master, Dr. Fearon, acting as cicerone to the new school buildings.

Lord Sherbrooke was always pleased to hear from his old philosophical friends who, he was in the habit of saying, had been wiser than himself in keeping out of the dust and turmoil of politics. The following letter from Professor Bain of Aberdeen revived many old memories, and the special reference to Sir George Cornwall Lewis touched an ever sympathetic chord.

Dr. Bain to Viscount Sherbrooke

Aberdeen: April 4, 1885

Dear Lord Sherbrooke,—I have the pleasure of sending you three volumes of mine recently published, in the hope that you may find something in them that will give you a little interest. If you will allow me to say so, I desire that you may accept them as a small remembrance of the interest you took in my appointment to the

Logic Chair of this University twenty-five years ago. I have never forgotten, and can never forget, the incidents of that occasion, or your share in the appointment. I have now ceased to occupy the Chair after twenty years' service; all my enemies on the occasion of the fight soon became my friends. It would have been very gratifying if Sir George Lewis had lived to see these results.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

A. BAIN.

In the month of June, Lord Sherbrooke received the following gratifying letter from Mr. Gladstone:—

Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Viscount Sherbrooke

10 Downing Street, Whitehall:

June 11, 1885

My dear Sherbrooke,—You will afford me very great pleasure if you will allow me, in recollection of your public services and distinctions, to submit your name to the Queen for a Grand Cross of the Bath. I now give you an opportunity of exhibiting, by your compliance, the kind feeling you were good enough to express to me a couple of days back.

With my best compliments to Lady Sherbrooke, I remain always
Sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

The offer was accepted with pleasure, and in July he went down to Windsor for his Investiture, in company with the veteran Lord Eversley and others. The autumn was passed in Scotland, the first visit being to Invergarry, where, as the guests of Mrs. Ellice, daughter-in-law of Lord Sherbrooke's old friend and warm political supporter, the 'Bear' Ellice of former days, they were surrounded by some of the most magnificent scenery in Scotland. It is related that when Mr. Ellice grew tired of his succession of guests at ever-hospitable Invergarry, he withdrew to his house at the head of the glen, twenty miles off, carrying Mr. Lowe away with him, to the great chagrin of the ladies of the party. The last visit was to Cortachy Castle, where Lady Airlie, and the young Earl just returned from his Soudan campaign, were

entertaining a number of his comrades of the 10th Hussars. It was during a subsequent visit to Knowsley, late in the autumn, that the first faint rumours were heard of the coming Home Rule Bill. Lord Sherbrooke, as frequently stated in this work, had a great regard for Lord Derby's opinion on public matters, and they were in complete agreement as to the Irish policy of Mr. Gladstone.

He had also a great esteem and affection for Lady Derby, who remained to the last one of his truest and most trusted of friends—admiring, like the rest of the world, his power of intellect, but knowing also how to appreciate the depths of sympathy and genuine kindness of nature which only superficial observers of his character could ignore.

Having waited for the great event of 1887—the Jubilee service in Westminster Abbey—and for the laying of the first stone of the Imperial Institute, on which occasion Lord Sherbrooke, as one of the few remaining original Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition, took part in the presentation of an Address to the Queen, Lord and Lady Sherbrooke started for Wiesbaden, to consult the celebrated oculist, Pagenstecker, as to the desirability of removing a cataract which was obscuring Lord Sherbrooke's little remaining sight. His opinion concurring with that of Mr. Nettleship, who had been previously consulted, it was decided to attempt the operation in the following spring. From Wiesbaden the travellers passed through the grand scenery of the Black Forest, by Triberg, to Schaffhausen and the Lake of Wallenstadt, where from near Wesen they saw across the water the curious rocky outline which recalled to Lord Sherbrooke's memory verses he had written fifty years ago, commencing:—

Say, do I dream, or do I trace
On yonder mountain's brow
The outlines of a human face,
Red in the sunset glow?

The remainder of the month was spent in the Engadine,

and from Pontresina the drive by the Bernina Pass, to Poschiavo and Bormio, and thence by the Stelvio to Meran, was made in beautiful weather. After a short stay with friends amongst the hills overlooking Meran, the journey was commenced homeward.

The operation for cataract was performed by Mr. Nettleship in the early part of 1888, with complete success; but inflammation unhappily supervened, and thenceforth Lord Sherbrooke gave up the hope of any improvement in his sight. Mr. Nettleship, in referring to the operation and to Lord Sherbrooke's fortitude under this infliction, says: 'Through a long period of weary waiting, he was most willing to do whatever was suggested as possibly helpful, and to avoid whatever was thought possibly harmful. But I soon came to think that his expressions of hopefulness corresponded less with what he himself expected, than with his desire to prevent anxiety in those nearest to him, and especially in his wife. I don't think he had much "true inward" faith in any restoration of sight. If I am right in this, I think the fact speaks much for a sweetness and real humility at the bottom of his nature, which, I take it, would not have been so apparent when he was in full vigour. Old age is not in all cases a sweetener, but I always felt that it seemed so with him.'

In spite, however, of increasing difficulty, he kept up his active pursuits, and was often to be seen riding in the Park. During the session he continued his attendances in the House of Lords, taking special interest in the debate on the Reform of that house, and in a speech by the Duke of Argyll on July 12, which proved so convincing to his former friends that they attempted no reply.

Lord Sherbrooke to the last took an interest in the social and political movements at the Antipodes, and was very much pleased to receive the following letter from Sir Henry Parkes, in reference to the federation of Australia, of which he was the guiding spirit and the most active promoter.

Sir Henry Parkes to Viscount Sherbrooke

Chief Secretary's Office, Sydney: May 12, 1890

Dear Lord Sherbrooke,—Presuming that you still take an interest in what we are doing in Australia, I send you some printed papers which will explain the steps already taken in the Federal movement.

It is now a long time since I became acquainted with you—in the election for Sydney, forty-two years ago. I trust that your health remains good, for the burden of years, which unfortunately cannot be shaken off. You would hardly know Sydney now, but I wish you could see it, and the vast changes that have taken place.

There is hardly one left of the men who rallied round you in 1848. I am about the last, and I am working now as hard as at any former period of my life, and I feel almost as young as at twenty-five.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY PARKES.

Lord Sherbrooke sent a very cordial reply, and Sir Henry's letter so revived old memories that he declared, had his sight been even what it once was, he would have gone out for a trip to Sydney, to judge for himself of the changes to which Sir Henry referred.

Lord Sherbrooke never forgot his old constituents of the London University, although he had ceased to require their services. He attended the Prize Days whenever it was possible, and gave them his portrait, by Miss Mortlock, and 1,000*l.*, which the Senate decided to employ in the foundation of a prize, as suggested in the following letter from the Chancellor:—

Fairhill, Tunbridge: Sept. 25, 1891

Dear Lady Sherbrooke,—I have forwarded Lord Sherbrooke's letter to the Registrar of London University. . . .

I shall be in favour of founding a prize, exhibition, or scholarship in perpetual memory of the donor. If the money is given for the general purposes of the University, such gifts are only an excuse for the Treasury lessening its annual grant. If the money is spent in books, books wear out in course of time, and their very usefulness shortens the existence and memory of the gift. But the 2½ per

Cents are durable : they neither wear out nor rust out, and it is not probable, though possible, that Socialists will break through and steal.

Very truly yours,

DERBY.

The winter of 1888–89 was passed abroad, the visit to Cannes being enlivened by the presence of Lord Acton.

It was during this visit that Lord Acton wrote as follows to Lady Sherbrooke :—

Dec. 1, 1888

Dear Lady Sherbrooke,—I was about to start for Bellevue when you came. Pray let me know if any books, light or grave, would be agreeable during your stay here, and whether I can be of any use as a guide to Cannes. He will tell you that he is one of my oldest friends ; but he cannot know that he is also one of those that I have most loved and honoured. Do not refuse me the opportunity of doing what I may to make Cannes pleasant to you.

Believe me, very truly yours,

La Madeline.

ACTON.

Sir Walter Riddell, who was one of the crew chosen for the boat-race with Cambridge in 1831, to which Lord Sherbrooke refers in his Autobiography, was also at Cannes at this time, much to his old friend's delight and gratification.

A dream of Lord Sherbrooke's life, which the pressure of work had hitherto crowded out of sight, was now at length to be realised. Shortly before Christmas the travellers reached Rome, and it was with the deepest interest that Lord Sherbrooke found himself in actual contact with scenes which had so long been familiar to his mind. A fellow-feeling for the great Roman Orator induced him to pay an early visit to the Rostra, where, on the front of the marble platform, the holes are still visible in which the iron prows of the ships captured at Antium B.C. 338 were originally inserted. Lord Dufferin was now Ambassador in Rome, and his cordial and affectionate welcome gave his old friend great pleasure.

The Embassy : January 18, 1889

Dear Lady Sherbrooke,—I hope if any occasion arises on which I can be of the slightest use to you or to Lord Sherbrooke you will

not hesitate to let me know. When Lord Sherbrooke was one of the greatest men in England he invariably showed me the utmost kindness, and nothing would give me so much pleasure as to be of service to him in any way. I do not know how far he may take an interest in Indian affairs; but if he cares for them, perhaps he may like to see the enclosed speech. The first portion is of no importance, but the latter part may be worth his glancing at.

Yours very truly,

DUFFERIN AND AVA.

Rome surpassed herself in interest this year: Pope Leo XIII. celebrated the Jubilee of his Orders as a priest by a *Te Deum* in St. Peter's, when the silver trumpets were played in the Dome for the first time since Pío Nono became 'the prisoner of the Vatican.' The ceremony was magnificent, but Lady Sherbrooke, in common with former visitors to Rome, noticed a lack of the decorum and impressiveness which characterised the ceremony of 1868. It was at this time that the gifted sculptor Ezekiel modelled in his studio amidst the ruins of Diocletian's Baths the lifelike bust of Lord Sherbrooke which was so much admired on its arrival in London. Lord Dufferin lent his friend the coat which he wore for the sittings, not having brought his own Cabinet Minister's uniform with him. The brightness of the climate of Italy and the lovely scenery, though dimly visible to Lord Sherbrooke, seemed ever present to his inner sight, and he never tired of expressing his delight.

The following years were passed at home, and though the least eventful years of individuals, as of nations, are often the happiest, they afford little food for the biographer. There are entries of attendances at Drawing-rooms, of garden-parties at Marlborough House, of visits to the Parnell Commission Court, his election as an Honorary Member of Brooks's, of the Stanley Reception by the Geographical Society, and of meeting at a Foreign Office party the King of the Belgians (who always had a kind word for Lord Sherbrooke), with mention of an occasional dinner at Grillion's Club.

The evenings of autumn and winter were cheered by books. Lord Sherbrooke's love for the Classics was too deep to be 'dissembled' now. The long years of tuition, when he used to take his pupils without book, had engraven Homer on his memory, and had enabled him to teach his wife to read Greek when he could no longer distinguish the characters, and now one of his chief enjoyments was listening to his favourite authors.

As time went on Lord Sherbrooke gave up the somewhat adventurous amusement of bicycling, and contented himself with the Olympia Tandem, on which his faithful servant, Henry, could accompany him. His immunity from disaster had been very remarkable, considering his imperfect sight, for with the one exception recorded by himself, he never met with accident or injury.

Lord Sherbrooke's interest in retrospective politics centred in the Reform fight, but though he took no optimistic view of the future, he was not of the *genus irritabile vatum*, who desire to see their reputation vindicated by the fulfilment of their sinister prophecies.

THE END

The end came suddenly, if this can be said of any life that has passed the allotted fourscore years. In the spring of 1892 a change was apparent in Lord Sherbrooke's health, accompanied by sleeplessness and loss of strength. He spent Easter at Torquay, and on his return to London his health and spirits rallied, but he never shook off the sense of lassitude. He left London with Lady Sherbrooke in July, and among the pleasant surroundings of his home in Surrey, watched with a solicitude that never wearied, and with every alleviation that the tenderest love could devise, he breathed his last on July 27, 1892.

A small gathering of relations and friends whom affection drew together accompanied him to his last resting-place; while a Memorial Service, performed by Archdeacon Farrar and the Dean of Westminster, was held at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Now the labourer's task is o'er,
Now the battle-day is past.

It was by unsparing industry seconding the high gifts of Nature that Lord Sherbrooke won his way to the first rank in politics; but it was by his fearless candour and independence that he attained his unique position. Deprived of the adventitious aids of the born orator, he had to rely on the conclusiveness of argument, supported by the wealth of illustration which his memory supplied. It was, however, the ring of honest conviction which carried away his listeners. He appealed to their reason, and not their passions; and if his opinions were at times unpalatable, they never failed to command attention. He never truckled to the great, or descended to the artifices which win the ready plaudits of the populace; and though he was keenly sensible to discriminating approval, his ultimate appeal was ever to his own conscience.

No one ever read his character more truly than his old friend 'Punch,' and no one can more deftly intertwine the threads of pathos and humour:—

Great fighter of lost causes gone at last!
Wit and worth,
Satire and sense, courage, and judgment keen,
Were thine.

In private life Lord Sherbrooke displayed an innate sweetness of disposition which conciliated affection. The simplicity of his character and his ready sympathy quickly established confidence, and many a lifelong friendship bore testimony to his sincerity. Of a rare considerateness, it was often difficult for his servants to render the assistance they desired, and to those who were as 'eyes to the blind,' and beguiled his tedious

hours by reading, he exhibited a touching gratitude. While impatient of dogma, his life was influenced by a piety far deeper than he confessed. The patience and fortitude with which he bore the thousand trials and humiliations which blindness imposes never failed, and the gaiety of his temper disguised from others what he suffered. Such triumphs are harder to win, and, weighed in some balances, perchance more honourable, than prouder laurels. His memory may be safely left to

Time, the avenger, where our judgments err
The test of all things, sole philosopher.

His voice was often drowned in the din of our party strife, but already its tones come clearer across the gulf of death. Our country has been the nurse of many a patriot who has placed her welfare before every earthly consideration, and on her roll of honour she will gratefully inscribe the name of Robert Lowe.

In Memoriam

The letters which followed the announcement of Lord Sherbrooke's death breathed the most tender reverence and affection. Every class was represented in this touching tribute; but they are not for insertion here; three only have been selected—from his lifelong friend, the present Prime Minister, from the son of his warm adherent of old Sydney days, and from one who for eight years worked under him in difficult and stormy times.

From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone

Hatchlands, Guildford: August 6, 1892

Dear Lady Sherbrooke,—It was a great pain to me that, having been confined to my bed nearly from Friday of last week till the day before yesterday, I was unable to ask of you the favour that I might be permitted to attend your husband's funeral.

Few will remain who remember him so long as I did, none who had a more lively admiration of his great gifts or his many fine

qualities. All my recollections of my relations with him record his uniform kindness. It cannot be long before I follow him. I should have rejoiced in paying him a last token of friendship and regard, and of testifying my strong sense of the devoted work which you have performed on his behalf, and which I sincerely hope has left your own health and strength unimpaired.

Most sincerely wishing for you these and all other blessings,

I remain, dear Lady Sherbrooke,

Faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

From Sir William Windeyer

Judges' Chambers, Supreme Court, Sydney :

August 15, 1892

Dear Lady Sherbrooke,—The sad intelligence of your great husband's death came upon me as a shock when I took up the paper a few mornings ago. The memory of his life in Australia is associated with some of the happiest hours of my boyhood, when, as a visitor at my father's house, I often saw him, and when, after my father's death, I often stayed at Brontë from Saturday to Monday. Because, like most able men, he did not suffer fools gladly, some who did not know his real character thought he was cold and hard. I ever found him most kind and sympathetic. After my father's death, when my mother was left very badly off, he proved himself a most generous friend, and to his kindness it was owing that my interrupted education was continued. In it he always took the warmest interest, and to this day I feel the glow of boyish satisfaction that I felt at his praise after one of the examinations in my classics through which he put me. It was he who urged me to go to the Bar as soon as I was old enough; the Act which enables Australians to go to the Bar of the colony having been passed by him.

As I told him on the occasion of one of my visits to your house, I feel that I owe my present position on the Bench very greatly to his help and kind encouragement. To see him again was one of the things I looked forward to on going to England in 1887, and in my delightful visits to your house (among the happiest recollections of our English visit, both to me and my wife) I realised the opportunity that I had long wished for, of expressing my thanks to him personally for all that he had done for me and my widowed mother. To you, whose consolation it will be to think of your watchful care of him in the evening of his life, my wife and I would still express our deep sympathy in your great sorrow, and would fain let you

know that one far off in Australia has dropped a heartfelt tear of sorrow over the memory of his boyhood's friend, his benefactor, Robert Lowe, as he will always be to

Yours most sincerely,

W. C. WINDEYER.

From Lord Lingen

13 Wetherby Gardens, London, S.W. : July 28, 1892

Dear Lady Sherbrooke,—The death of my old Chief and good friend, though not a surprise to me after the last time I saw him, yet comes, as such losses always do, a blow at last.

The memory of how much you have done for him cannot but be a great consolation to yourself, and will command the respect and admiration of his friends as long as any of them survive.

I had the honour and good fortune to serve, at different times and different offices during eight years in all, under him. Of course, in that time I had the opportunity of getting to know him well; and while it would be idle for me to attempt to confirm his universally accepted reputation for exceptional power of intellect and expression, I may speak, from somewhat special knowledge, of his deep devotion to the public interest, and of the constancy with which he brought sound general principles to bear on each particular question before him. In this latter characteristic he surpassed all public men, I might almost say all men, I have known. This is a corrective which the English character pre-eminently calls for in those who govern the country, and it is rarely forthcoming in the degree which marked his way of looking at things.

In private life, among those who knew him well, no one was kinder, and he retained the old-fashioned dignity rarer in these days than it used to be among statesmen.

Very truly yours,

LINGEN.

APPENDIX TO THE SECOND VOLUME

MR. LOWE'S BUDGET SPEECHES

Financial Statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1869 and 1870
(R. J. Bush, 1870)

THESE and Mr. Lowe's other Budget speeches were painfully read from official statistics and papers, which he deciphered with the greatest difficulty. There was necessarily no attempt in their delivery at oratorical effect; and many then fresh M.P.'s and rising journalists, who heard him for the first time, were at a loss to understand how he had made such a name as a parliamentary debater in 1866 and 1867. If we bear in mind that the young reporters and newly fledged legislators who heard Mr. Lowe in 1869-73 are now regarded as patriarchs and authorities by the new generation, it is easy to account for differences of opinion as to his oratorical powers. Mr. Lowe was never at his best, and rarely at his ease, when he had to rely on notes; their mere existence hampered him. When it came to the Budget, the marvel is how he managed to get through at all.

When Mr. Lowe measured himself in the Reform debates against the greatest orators and acutest intellects in the House of Commons, it was a wholly different affair. Then he relied mainly on himself, on his unequalled grasp of general principles, his inimitable powers of clear and forcible exposition and illustration, on his ready wit and contagious humour, and his astonishing quickness in detecting a fallacy in an opponent's argument. The late James Macdonell, an earnest and accomplished journalist on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, whose sympathies were altogether on the Radical side and, therefore, strongly against Mr. Lowe on Parliamentary Reform, puts this in unmistakable words (March 17, 1866): 'What do you think of Lowe's speech? I had the good fortune to hear a part both of it and of Gladstone's. Gladstone's was very poor; Lowe's, though not equal to his famous speech of last year, was a good effort. . . . Bright I regard as incomparably the greatest orator in the House, just as I think Lowe incomparably the greatest debater. After Mill, I hold him to be the acutest brain in the Assembly. Intellectually, he is developed till his arm has an athlete's strength; and I feel convinced that, in a fair stand-up fight between him and Gladstone, Gladstone would go down.'¹

Though Mr. Lowe's Budget speeches lost much in delivery, they read, perhaps, better than any financial statements, not excepting Mr. Gladstone's. They are so absolutely free from humdrum or mere verbiage. No Finance Minister of our time has ever attempted a greater administrative reform

¹ *James Macdonell, Journalist* (W. R. Nicoll, M.A.), pp. 135-6.

than Mr. Lowe did in the matter of the time of the collection of taxes; but one understands that such a reform would be unpopular. It was his misfortune, as a parliamentary politician, not to think whether a particular policy would be popular or unpopular, but whether it would be beneficial to the community at large. This was the secret of his strength and his weakness as an English statesman. He always showed a firm adherence to principle, whether as Finance Minister or as a mere private Member of Parliament. He could not, as he said, play the part of Mr. Facing-both-Ways in the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

These Budget speeches are by no means lacking in true Lowian touches. In the Budget speech of 1870 there was an amusing hit at his old friends, the brewers and publicans:—

‘Before the committee of which I had the honour of being a member, one publican complained that his landlord and brewer sold him beer at the price at which he was expected to retail it. I asked him, “How do you retail it?” “Why, sir,” he replied with a very solemn look, “we dash it.” I said, “What do you mean by ‘dashing it’?” He answered, “*We turns the New River into it!*”’

Mr. Lowe’s theory of the principle of taxation and the function of a Chancellor of the Exchequer is eminently his own:—

‘In Dr. Carpenter’s account of his recent researches in the Arctic Ocean he tells us that the results of dredging were to show the existence of little animals at the bottom of the ocean, under a pressure of three tons to the square inch. How do they contrive to live under such conditions? Because the pressure is equalised; and that should be the principle of taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is a man whose duties make him more or less of a taxing machine. He is entrusted with a certain amount of misery, which it is his duty to distribute as fairly as he can. Now, suppose, instead of pecuniary misery, it was physical pain which he had to distribute. How would he distribute it? According to the advocates of these different schools, he would pick out a certain number of persons, drive them raving mad with *tic-douloureux* or gout, and exempt all the rest of the community. That is not just. He should contrive to make everybody a little uneasy, so that life, if not enjoyable, should be at any rate tolerable.’

Mr. Lowe had very little sympathy with any form of personal display or vanity. His remarks on the tax on armorial bearings amused the House very much. After admitting that it was a stupid tax, which he would be glad to get rid of altogether, he suddenly looked up and said: ‘But as I cannot get rid of it, the best thing, it appears to me, which I can do is to increase it a little.’ His eyesight (and, perhaps, his great love of all living things) made him averse to sports which entail the destruction of life; and his gusto in proposing a tax on firearms was eminently characteristic. He pointed to the amazing precision attained by the mechanical improvements in these deadly weapons, and declared that there was a retrograde practice and tone of feeling with regard to the carrying of them. The Athenians were the first of the Greeks who laid aside their

weapons and went unarmed among each other. 'We are,' he said, 'reversing the process, and from having been an unarmed people are arming ourselves with weapons compared with which those of the ancients were mere children's toys.' So he proposed a firearms' licence, both as a financial expedient and a moral check.

Mr. Lowe's remarks on direct and indirect taxation show that, with all his gift of generalisation, his mind was essentially practical :—

'People argue between direct and indirect taxation until the advocates of each seem to forget the nature of taxation altogether. At the best, taxation is a great misery; but some persons become so enamoured of the particular side they take in this controversy that they argue as though what is a positive evil may become a positive good. One set of economists say all taxation should be direct. Another says all taxation should be indirect. I can agree with neither. There is good and evil in almost any tax. Direct taxation is an immense advantage, for it takes less out of the pockets of the ratepayers than indirect taxation takes; but it has a dreadful disadvantage, for it is compulsory; and although it is more economical, you force a man to pay at a time when payment may be ruin. Indirect taxation, again, is more extravagant than direct taxation, giving less money to the Exchequer in proportion to that which is taken from the tax-payer. On the other hand, it is optional, and with a little self-denial a man may, in this country, absolutely exempt himself from the payment of indirect taxes. I cannot, therefore, go with either party in this matter. It seems to me that the worst tax in the world is better than none at all when there is money which must be raised; and good sense should teach us not to be too theoretical, but try to bear with the taxes we have, rather than narrow too much the basis of taxation.'

If Mr. Lowe be judged as Finance Minister—not by a mere electioneering standard, but by the opinion of experts and by his own favourite test of 'results'—he need fear comparison with no Chancellor of the Exchequer of our time. Mr. Lowe may not have possessed either the special training or the unsurpassed departmental knowledge of Mr. Gladstone, but he had quite as lofty a conception of the duties of the office, and a firmer hold on abstract principle. If less careful and experienced in mere details, he had more mental power and originality than Sir Stafford Northcote; and if less brilliant and daring than Mr. Disraeli, he displayed far more technical knowledge, as well as a greater grasp of the problems of economic science. As the guardian of the public purse, Mr. Lowe stands without a peer in the undeviating rigour and honest regard shown by him as a trustee of other people's (i.e. the nation's) money; while his activity and ingenuity, not only as a tax-gatherer, but whenever possible, as a tax-remitter, have never been surpassed. If Mr. Lowe is to be regarded as a failure as Chancellor of the Exchequer, it may be as well to remember that the failure was caused by his steady refusal to consider the national finances as a subordinate branch of popular electioneering.

LORD SHERBROOKE: A PERSONAL MEMOIR

By THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

Dear Sir,—I am always glad to have an opportunity of writing or talking about Lord Sherbrooke, who, during more than thirty-five years, was one of my kindest friends. It was not, however, until after his return from Australia that we became well acquainted. In older days, when I was an undergraduate and he was a successful private tutor at Oxford, I knew him but slightly.

The first time that I saw him was on the evening of November 26, 1835. The date is fixed on my mind, because I had just been elected to a Balliol Scholarship, an event which, as the Home Secretary, Mr. Asquith, has recently told us, was the greatest joy of his life, and, as I may add, of mine. Immediately after the announcement, I was hurried off to the Union, which at that time was held at Wyatt's Room in the High Street. We were promised a great passage of arms between two heroes of debate, a gentleman-commoner of Magdalen Hall, named Trevor, afterwards a Canon of York, who in later years was well known in the Northern Convocation of the Clergy, and Mr. Lowe, the subject of this memoir. The golden age of the Union was beginning to pass away; those of my generation were living in the silver age. At the time of which I am speaking the Society met in a very mean and unattractive building, which was used in the daytime as an auction-room. It had been in existence about ten years. During that ten years it had a far greater fame than it has ever had subsequently. The voices of Mr. Gladstone, Mr.

Milnes Gaskell, Archbishop Tait, W. G. Ward, Bishop Wilberforce, Cardinal Manning, Lord Cardwell, and Sir Thomas Acland, had been often heard within its walls. It had then, much more than later, the character of a real House of Commons; there was more earnestness, and greater freshness of interest. Those were the days of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, of the first Reform Bill, of the new Poor Law, of the Municipal Corporations' Act, of the Emancipation of the Slaves in the West Indies—a political world before the flood, which has passed out of remembrance. Never has there been so strong a party-feeling as was manifested in England between the years 1829 and 1834. The popular excitement penetrated even to the Universities, but with a difference—the majority fixing their eyes regretfully on 'the old paths,' a very few 'looking out for new ones.' The Union, too, had wars and secessions, divisions and reconcilements of parties; it was once in danger of dissolution. It was not without poets to celebrate its glories, though of the comic and macaronic sort. The tradition of the eloquence of those days descended to our generation, but we acknowledged, as, indeed, we could not help doing, that we were far inferior to our predecessors. There still remained among us two chiefs of the olden time, and they were the champions whom I have just mentioned.

I cannot clearly remember what was the subject of debate. I believe that, like many other efforts of human oratory, it was inspired by a personal controversy. Canon Trevor was supposed, in some way or other, to have compromised the dignity of the Union by his communications with an American Bishop, which he had contrived to get inserted on the notice-boards of the Colleges. This impertinence Bob Lowe, as we used familiarly to call him, undertook to chastise. There was also an old score which he had to settle, for his opponent had, a year or two before, accused Lowe's friend and schoolfellow, Lord Cardwell, of fabricating the accounts of the Union, a

charge which, with difficulty, he was induced to retract. A friend, who remembers the occasion of which I am speaking, compares the questions and answers which passed between Mr. Lowe and his opponent to shots fired from a revolver. There was laughter and cheering on both sides at the manner in which the hits were given or received. Lowe was the interrogator, Trevor the respondent. The latter, who was the more finished speaker of the two, defended himself warily, and with a dignified reserve, against his adversary. No one else took much part in the debate. It was felt by the audience to be a drawn battle, in which the two combatants were well-matched, and neither had much advantage over the other.

The only other occasion on which I saw Mr. Lowe between the years 1835 and 1842, was in the Common Room at Balliol, where he astonished us by the precision and variety of his talk. He had been reading Napier's *Peninsular War*, and was greatly impressed, not by the military glories which are recorded in that brilliant history, but by the horrors which he found there. The three great sieges of the Peninsula were distinguished by him as having each a peculiar character: one was marked by robbery and pillage; another by lust; a third by cruelty. I refer to this occasion because, after an interval of half a century, the words and the persons present (none of whom are now living) come back vividly to my recollection. Mr. Lowe was at that time about twenty-seven years of age, and he left on the mind's eye the same impression of vigour and power which he made in later life. Literature was always one of his favourite topics of conversation; the habit of discussing books which he had recently read was very characteristic of him. He loved to talk about great writers, especially about the Greek and Roman classics; yet he was also very ready and versatile, pouring out things gay as well as grave, and passing rapidly from one to the other. He would turn from Herodotus and Thucydides to a recent French novel, or an article in a magazine. I have heard him trans-

late a remark made at a dinner-party into a Tacitean sentence, as, on another occasion, he took the sting out of a ribald epigram by converting it into Latin, and Greek verse. Like Mr. Canning he delighted in such *jeux d'esprit*, which he would recite to his friends. The discomfiture of the Match Tax he converted, 'out of the abundance of his wit,' into a nursery rhyme ('If Lucy can't sell 'em,' &c.), which at least showed that he was not put out of temper by his defeat. In a more mischievous strain, but not without good reason, he complained of the Revisers of the New Testament (who substituted 'the evil one' for the old translation 'evil'), 'that they had let the Devil into the Lord's Prayer.' He is said to have made a most diverting speech at the 'millenary' of the foundation of University College by King Alfred. 'The fact,' as Lord Eldon tells us, 'has been sometimes doubted;' but it ought not to be doubted by any member of the college. When it was objected to this famous myth that the lands of the college were not even within his dominions, Mr. Lowe replied that 'it was more in accordance with the experience of history that Alfred should have given what did not belong to him than what did; following the example of the Romans who, after the battle of Cannæ, formally presented to one of their citizens a piece of land which was in the hands of the enemy.' Once, when we were staying together at a country house in Scotland, he said, at breakfast, of a passage in Plato which he was quoting, 'How good that is!' The words were uttered in a peculiar tone, like a person smacking his lips over some rare wine. The passage referred to (Protag. 327 D, E) was that in which Protagoras, comparing civilised men with barbarians, makes the reflection that an Athenian whose lot was cast among savages would long to 'revisit the rascality of his part of the world.' In one of his Budget speeches in the House of Commons, he was not very well heard, and a cry arose, 'Turn round, turn round!' He retorted, quick as lightning, 'Honourable members want me to act the part of a well-

known character in the *Pilgrim's Progress*—Mr. Facing-both-Ways.'

While an undergraduate, Lowe had already a considerable academic fame; he was at University College, and afterwards became a Fellow of Magdalen. He was remembered by his contemporaries to have been a formidable person in an argument, and to have pulled in the boat. Fifty years afterwards, when on a visit to Oxford, he insisted on trying his hand in one of the ticklish outriggers which, long after his time, had come into fashion on the Oxford river. The experiment was successful, and he did not discover that a boatman had followed to watch over his safety. He was always a good horseman, and quite late in life had learned to ride upon a bicycle. Once he took me into the stable at Caterham to show me, not his horses, but his bicycles. He was fond of talking about his college days, but had not equally pleasant recollections of school. His early years were a dreary time to him, and probably cast a shadow over his whole life. It is sad to think how, sometimes, the restless, half-inspired boy has been misunderstood by his parents or friends; and afterwards, when he has grown up to be an eminent man, from this unknown cause working in him, he has been 'misunderstood' still. The consciousness of some personal defect may have sunk too deeply into the mind at a time when reason was not strong enough to fight against such impressions. The child, too, has sorrows for which no one is to blame, and which are known only to himself. Lord Sherbrooke used to give ludicrous descriptions of the sufferings which he and other boys had endured at Winchester; in the narration of them I have heard him set the table in a roar. Whether these tales were strictly true, or merely the afterthoughts of an over-sensitive nature about an old-fashioned place of education, I cannot tell. Certainly the youth of our day have a much better time at a public school than their forefathers had.

He had already made up his mind, while still an under-

graduate, or probably in boyhood, that he was a Liberal in politics; and ten years before the repeal of the Corn Laws he was a sound Free Trader, and could give a reason of the faith which was in him. Like many other able men, in early life, he was a rebellious spirit, who was by no means satisfied with things as they are, either in the University, or in the State, or in his own College, and, naturally, did not commend himself much to the authorities of his Alma Mater. He once or twice essayed to attack the Hebdomadal Council in a Latin speech in Convocation, which was in those days the only 'liberty of prophesying' recognised by the University. He was of a very self-reliant, independent nature, and at no time of his life much under the influence of any clique or person. While an undergraduate he was a diligent student. In the class-list of Easter, 1833, remarkable above any other for the number of distinguished persons who were included in it, there occurs, together with the names of Liddell, Scott, Jelf, Lord Canning, Bishop Jackson, H. H. Vaughan, &c., that of Robert Lowe, who added to the distinction of a First Class in Literæ Humaniores, that of a Second Class in Mathematics, for which he was examined, as was the custom in those days, in the same term.

For several years after he obtained his degree, Mr. Lowe remained at Oxford, taking pupils. He used to have as many as nine or ten in the day, each of them reading separately with him for a single hour. Some of the most distinguished young men in Oxford, such as Stafford Northcote, Gatherne Hardy, and others, with whom he afterwards came into contact in political life, were among his pupils. I have been told that he taught without a book—the state of his eyesight at that time rendering it difficult for him to read; the strength of his memory supplied the defect.

After a few years, he married a clever and handsome lady of some fortune. The undergraduates used to admire him and his bride riding together—they were both very good-looking. They lived quite simply, at a small house in St. Aldate's,

Oxford (No. 16), and the pupils were still necessary, though Mr. Lowe was beginning to look about for some less laborious mode of life. Many years afterwards he was interested to hear that Sir Alexander Grant, an eminent tutor of a later generation, took pupils in classes. 'Ah!' he said, 'if that had been the custom in my day, I should never have left the University.' In the ten years between 1830 and 1840 there were several distinguished private tutors at Oxford, such as Dr. Jeune, of Pembroke, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough; Mr. Michell, of Lincoln; Mr. Cox, of St. Mary Hall; Mr. Johnson, of Queen's, afterwards Dean of Wells; Dr. Elder, of Balliol, afterwards Master of the Charterhouse; Mr. Wall, of St. Alban Hall, and Mr. Lowe himself. They were eminent men, and did good service to the University at a time when the tuition of the colleges was at a rather low ebb. They all of them, like Mr. Lowe, took single pupils at separate hours. The relation was a very intimate one; the tutor was, in many cases, the friend and adviser, almost the confessor, of his pupil. The life was intolerably exhausting, yet I do not think that any of them, by the hardest work, could have made an income of more than 700*l.* or 800*l.* a year.

During the latter part of his residence at Oxford the Tractarian movement swept over the University. At that time questions of theology chiefly stirred the minds of his own generation; but they had little or no interest for him. He was outside the Tractarian party and their sphere of influence; and he warmly espoused the cause of University reform, to which they entertained a great dislike. But though generally of an unecclesiastical turn of mind, he was stirred to express his righteous indignation at *No. 90* in two pamphlets addressed to his old friend and tutor, Mr. Michell of Lincoln College. The methods of interpretation employed in the famous tract appeared to him not only to affect the verities of theology, but to be subversive of truth and common-sense.

Of Mrs. Lowe, whom I did not know until after their

return from Australia, I should like to say a few words. During many years she was a good friend to me; I was always warmly greeted by her in the frequent visits which I made to them in Lowndes Square and at Caterham. She was a personage in society, and numbered among her friends several distinguished ladies. Having a strong character, she was very independent of the conventionalities of the world. She said just what came into her head at the moment, without thinking of the persons who might happen to be present; and, as she was rather brusque in her manners, she could not fail to be criticised with some asperity. But she was really a woman who possessed a great deal of sense and courage; though not without failings, she had a heart and a head, and bore a great part in Mr. Lowe's life. A repartee of hers to the French Ambassador, who said to her that 'in England, which was said to be a land of shopkeepers, he did not expect to find such great military displays,' was not forgotten. She replied that 'the people of different countries did not understand one another. She, too, had been under the impression that the French were a great military nation!'

She looked back to the old days in Australia as the happiest in her life. A curious circumstance happened to her while working one day in her garden at Nelson Bay. A poisonous snake came out of a heap of rubbish and attacked her, biting through her dress. The servants forsook her and fled, but she seized a spade and held down the snake's head until someone came to her assistance and killed the creature, a fair revenge, as she thought, for its taking her life. She then crawled to the house, and after writing a line of farewell to her husband, lay down on a couch to die. But when an hour or two had elapsed, she found that she was still alive, and that the poison of the snake had not penetrated the skin, but had been intercepted by her woollen dress.

While at the Bar, at Sydney, Mr. Lowe was employed to defend an atrocious criminal, who was a member of a

distinguished English family, for murdering a poor widow in her house. The widow left two children, who were educated by Mr. and Mrs. Lowe, and came to England with them. They were brought up with great care and kindness by Mrs. Lowe. Mr. Lowe had not less kindness for them, though he would declare that 'they were inflicted on him for his sins.'

Mrs. Lowe was a devoted wife; she was constantly being chaffed by her husband; to her he remained to the end the idol of her youth. She would say to me, 'Robert is such a very kind man,' in which remark I entirely agreed, though to some persons, who only knew him by the incisiveness of his public utterances, it would have seemed to be a paradox. Once, at a large party, he was discoursing to a lady, who was his neighbour at dinner, upon the absurdity of the words of the marriage service, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow.' 'Now,' said Mr. Lowe, 'when I married my wife I had not a rap.' A voice was heard from the other end of the table, saying, 'You forget, my dear, your magnificent mind;' to which he replied, in the hearing of the company, 'I didn't endow you with that, did I?'¹ Such sallies did not at all interfere with the harmony in which they lived. He nursed her with the greatest solicitude during her last illness; and it was to comply with a wish of hers that, shortly before her death, his poems were printed. He said to a friend in later life: 'I should remember that when I married her she had a fortune and I had nothing, and she had the chance of having a blind man on her hands for life.'

He had no general fame until he went to Australia, where the English world from time to time heard of him as a thorn in the side of Colonial Governors and of the Secretary to the Colonies in England. Fifty years ago the opinion respecting

¹ The Biographer has kindly informed me that this anecdote has been already mentioned, with some variation, at p. 199, by Mr. Goldwin Smith, who was present on the occasion. I have given it as it was repeated to me, but think that Mr. Goldwin Smith's, which is the kinder, is also much more likely to be the correct version of it.

the relations of the colonies to the mother country was not what it has since become ; and Mr. Lowe, like other reformers, had to pay the penalty of being in advance of his age. But he easily conquered this prejudice, and when he came home quickly made his way in the English world. He was soon discovered to be the best of company ; no one was more quick-witted or had greater resources of learning and anecdote. He could also, if he pleased, lay a heavy hand on an opponent. Dean Milman remarked of him that 'no one brought more good literary talk into society than Bob Lowe.' He had the charm of originality ; he was very unlike other people. He was fond of the society of ladies ; three or four distinguished women (of whom one is still living) gave a light to his existence, as he did to theirs. He was much in need of sympathy, though at times seeming also to repel it. He was a great gentleman ; there was nothing weak or sentimental about him ; and he was very constant and loyal to those who at any time of his life had been his friends.

As a politician he was inclined, in later years, to be an alarmist. It was really an aristocracy of education and intelligence, not a democracy, with which he was in sympathy. Hence he was a great advocate for appointments being made to the Public Service by Open Competition ; he thought that it would increase the efficiency of the Government Offices, and raise the morality of public men. This was a measure against which many interests were arrayed. When first introduced, it was much ridiculed and denounced by the upper classes ; but in the present generation it has met with universal acquiescence ; no one can find a substitute for it. A similar measure has been much talked about, but never heartily adopted, in the United States of America. It was applied to India at the time when Mr. Lowe was Secretary to the Board of Control, and he was one of the most influential supporters of it.

Another measure, in the framing of which he took a lead-

ing part, was the Law of Limited Liability, which was introduced by the Government of which he was a member. This again was a change of first-rate importance; and although some of its effects were not foreseen at the time, has been approved by the commercial experience of the last thirty years. It was a measure which was entirely in accordance with Mr. Lowe's economical convictions. He would have asked, Why should we impose greater restrictions on the free circulation of capital than the lender of it demands? The *onus probandi* was on the other side. The benefit conferred by the change in the law has not been sufficiently recognised, because the limitations which it has removed are forgotten.

The story of his opposition to the Reform Bills, first, of Mr. Gladstone, and secondly, of Mr. Disraeli, is narrated elsewhere in these volumes. It was a magnificent effort, in which he stood almost alone against both parties. Never did he show such talents for debate, or such a deep conviction. The last expiring voice of Conservatism seemed to be concentrated in the words of one who, during the first half of his life, had been a vehement Liberal. But it was a forlorn hope that he was leading; the cause was already lost—the course of events was hardly affected by his gallant endeavour. On the one side was London society; on the other, the leaders of both parties, and a large majority of the English people. He was anxious, as a safeguard, to preserve the rights of minorities; and this proposal received a good deal of support, but it was not suited to the temper of the times, and it is doubtful whether, if carried, it would have produced any considerable effect.

There was no public man for whom Mr. Lowe, in the latter part of his life, entertained a deeper or more sincere admiration than Mr. Bright. He grew personally to like and admire him, although he had been his stoutest foe on the question of Parliamentary Reform. He respected his character, and having been a Free Trader himself from the days of his

youth, he never lost his faith in the principles which they held in common. The last relic of Protection, the small duty on foreign wheat, he himself, while Chancellor of the Exchequer, swept away, rather, it would seem, from the wish to carry out a principle than with a view to any important practical result. There were other questions of principle on which Mr. Lowe more nearly agreed with Mr. Bright than with many of those on his own side. He was not a lover of war, or of great armaments, or of interference with the affairs of foreign countries. Once or twice, as in the Abyssinian War, he came into conflict with the *Civis Romanus sum* prejudices of his countrymen. He was a great believer in the virtue of economy, and was always anxious to put the right man in the right place. He was an enemy to sacerdotalism, and while at the Council Office he had many encounters with the clerical party. In all this he had points of contact with Mr. Bright. He was also a great admirer of his eloquence. He thought Mr. Bright the first orator in the House of Commons; he dwelt on the felicity of his illustrations, on his beautiful applications of Scripture, his excellent, though rare, displays of humour; he had the sympathy for him which one man of genius has for another. I remember his speaking to me with especial commendation of a quotation of Mr. Bright's, from the Old Testament, which went to his heart. On the occasion of a dinner given in his honour, Mr. Bright, in reply to the toast of his health, compared himself to the Shunamite woman in the Book of Kings, who, when she was asked by the Prophet: 'What is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the King, or to the Captain of the Host?' made answer: 'I dwell among mine own people.' The beauty of this application was not lost on Mr. Lowe.

For Mr. Cobden he also came to have a very high esteem, although in the Palmerstonian era he had gravely differed from him. No one, he thought, had a better manner of speaking, or was more attentively listened to; his speeches he

compared to an exquisitely wrought chain, of which the parts exactly fitted into one another. Having a very clear head, Cobden, he said, easily found his way through the difficult problems of Political Economy. Mr. Lowe used to describe his style as possessing no literary qualities, except the highest of all—simplicity and good sense. With him, too, he had more points of agreement than of difference. He often spoke of Cobden and Bright, and never with any bitterness or jealousy. Their training had been different from his own. At the time of the Crimean War and in the Reform struggle they had been in opposite camps; but in later years he strongly sympathised with them, and was very ready to recognise their great qualities.

There was another person for whom Mr. Lowe entertained not only admiration, but affection and reverence; this was Mr. Grote, who, when living at Barrow Green, in Kent, was within a ride or drive of him at Caterham. He treated Mr. Grote as a superior being, whom he would never have thought of contradicting, any more than Johnson would have contradicted a Bishop, and with whom he did not think it decorous to enter into argument. The *bonhomie* of that remarkable lady, Mrs. Grote, charmed him. Other friends living in the neighbourhood whom he visited were Sir John and the late Lady Lubbock, and, occasionally, Mr. Charles Darwin.

Of his colleagues in the Cabinet, probably the one on whose judgment he would have set the greatest value was Sir George Lewis. There was also a deep sympathy and congeniality of tastes by which they were united. They were two of the most intellectual men of their time, both excellent classical scholars, and both retaining the capacity for acquiring knowledge of all sorts at any age of life. They had, therefore, endless topics of conversation in common. One was the liveliest and brightest and most charming of mankind; the other had what Cicero has called *comitate condita gravitas*—the courtesy of a man of the world, repressed, or perhaps a

little weighed down, by his extraordinary attainments. Although so different, they were extremely well suited to one another, having what is the best basis of friendship—a great mutual respect. Mr. Lowe would have attended carefully to any opinion expressed by Sir George Lewis, and Sir George Lewis, in his modesty, would have readily acknowledged the superiority of his friend.

Another friend of Mr. Lowe's, whom I often met at his house, and of whom he entertained the highest opinion, was Sir John Simon, Medical Officer of Health to the Privy Council. They had worked together at the Council Office in the cause of sanitary reform. For in this, too, Mr. Lowe had been 'before his age.' He often spoke of the inestimable services which Sir John had rendered to the country, and of the manner in which he had sacrificed his professional prospects for the good of the public.

Mr. Lowe's name has been most conspicuously before the public as Minister of Education. In this department his merits have never been duly estimated, because the measures which he initiated are no longer in harmony with more recent public opinion. To him, more than to anyone, may be attributed the 'payment by results,' the special requirement of the 'three R's,' the transfer of the Government grant from the Council Office to the managers of schools, the examination of individual scholars. He may be said to have done more than anyone to organise education in the second generation, and to have filled up the interval between the first beginnings of Sir James Shuttleworth, and the comprehensive measure of Mr. Forster. His opinions in the present day would appear antiquated; but the experienced persons who are now entrusted with the direction of education are aware how much of the efficiency of the present system is due to him, though he and Lord Lingen—of whose loyalty and constancy in the many battles which they had fought side by side about education he always spoke with the greatest enthusiasm—incurred a good

deal of obloquy in their own day, in consequence of the necessary changes which they introduced. He was, or would have been, opposed to the abolition of fees as a waste, and equally to the aiding of secondary education out of the rates, for the same reason, because he would have thought that it was unjust to assist out of the national funds those who could afford to pay for themselves.

He was, notwithstanding his defect of sight, one of the few persons who are constantly reading. Seldom has any professed scholar coursed over so wide a range. He had read through the Hebrew Bible five times, and was always inclined to linger over the prophet Isaiah. At one time in his life he had studied German philosophy, which he by no means despised or condemned; he thought it a wonderful creation of the human mind, though his own ways of thinking inclined towards the opposite pole. The most difficult of Hegel's writings—*Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*—was the work which most attracted his attention. Then again he would return to old recollections of Sanskrit, or he would occupy himself with Thucydides or Lucian. A friend dedicated to him a translation of Thucydides; ¹ an attention by which he was greatly touched, and he remarked sadly, when acknowledging the compliment, that 'he had not been over-praised in life.' He was not a regular student, but, like Dr. Johnson, he 'tore the bowels out of books,' and retained a vivid impression of them long after he had read them. He was very willing to repeat poetry; once he recited to me, when walking in Hyde Park, the patriotic Irish

¹ 'To the
Right Honourable Viscount Sherbrooke,
one of the
best Greek scholars in England,
whose
genuine love of ancient classical literature
(though sometimes dissembled),
is as well known to his friends,
as the kindness of his heart,
and the charm of his conversation.'

ode, 'Who fears to speak of '98?' with its refrain, 'But a true man, like you, man,' &c. The revolutionary sentiments of the ode did not at all interfere with his admiration of its great poetical merit.

Though he never had the leisure which is necessary for the accomplishment of a great work, the character of Mr. Lowe's mind was essentially literary. He wrote verses; he took a great delight in English literature; during several years of his life he was working hard as a journalist, and from time to time writing in magazines. There was yet another branch of knowledge which exercised a great fascination over him; this was Natural Science. He hardly knew anything of it, but it seemed to him to have the promise of the future. It was the only knowledge in the world which was both certain and also progressive. Of Charles Darwin he spoke in a strain of respect which he would not have employed towards any other living person. Though a scholar and a man of various learning, he felt that from this greater world of Science he had been, unfortunately, shut out; like many of us, he had the misfortune to be born 'in the pre-scientific age.' Hence he was sometimes led to speak of his own subjects in a manner which, to the public, was puzzling and inconsistent. He was a good deal amused at a commendation of him which appeared in the *Weekly Dispatch*. 'At any rate,' the writer said, 'Bob Lowe is above the humbug of Latin and Greek.' It was not strange that he should have been so misunderstood; for at different times he was swayed by opposite impulses; he said what first occurred to his mind, and hardly at all considered how the many aspects of life and knowledge were to be harmonised. Still less did he reflect how far the visions of his youth might coincide with the maturer wisdom of his later years.

He made mistakes, as he himself confessed, but greater mistakes than his are readily pardoned by the world to a man of his ability and force of character. His fault as a politician was his fixedness. He might have truly argued, in

an *Apologia pro vita sua*, 'That on no important question had he ever changed his opinions; he had only stood still, while the rest of the world had gone forward.' But this was also a serious political misfortune. His mind did not move in sympathy with the pulse of the country. He was not exactly popular—his tongue was too sharp for that—and he did not take enough pains to conciliate public opinion. But there was also an undercurrent of good will towards him; the people knew that he was incorruptible, and was not actuated by any motive but what he thought to be the good of the public. He was never a hanger-on of great men; he struck out a path for himself. Everybody felt that he was a person who could not be ignored, and that he was entitled to one of the first places in the Cabinet. The prophecy placed under his portrait in *Vanity Fair*—'A man whose talents will make him Prime Minister'—was not destined to be fulfilled, but it was not deemed to be absurd or unreasonable. It used to be a matter of speculation how he and his great Chief would get on together in the same Cabinet. The answer is that they were loyal to one another, and that they agreed in many more ways than might at first sight have been supposed. Mr. Lowe always felt the generosity of Mr. Gladstone in giving him a place in the Government after his opposition to the Reform Bill. Though they were men made by Nature in different moulds, they had both received the same training, and had common academical leanings and interests. There were many subjects on which they were absolutely at one; as, for example, in their desire for Free Trade, for University reform, for the extinction of patronage in the Public Offices, for economic reforms, for an unambitious and peaceful foreign policy. The Crimean War and the American War affected the minds of both of them in the same manner, and, indeed, exercised a peace-making influence on the whole country.

As a speaker, Mr. Lowe was trenchant and forcible, though somewhat uncertain. He had the disadvantage of being un-

able to see the effect of his words upon an audience; hence he could not adapt himself to their varying moods. As a conversationalist his fame stood higher than as an orator; there was no one who was more sought after, or who made a greater figure in London society. First of all, though not a regular humourist, he had a great deal of humour; he had the touch of sympathy which 'makes all things kin,' and he was never beaten in an argument, or at a loss for a repartee. He had the faculty of finding amusement, and of helping others to find amusement, in trifles. No one said more of the good things which make life bright and graceful; they came out unexpectedly, and he was exhilarated by them himself. Like Socrates and Dr. Johnson, he thought that there was nothing in the world more agreeable than a 'good talk.' He was never dull or depressed; he talked from a full mind, and had a marvellous memory. He never appeared to fear anyone; certainly, as he said himself, he was not at all afraid of 'clever young men.' It was delightful to wander with him in the country, or to sit alone with him. Sometimes he would ask a friend to come and take a walk or a ride on the Surrey Hills, in order to settle a matter of business; but the matter of business was apt to be forgotten, and the conversation easily diverged into more attractive themes, such as history or poetry. Even in Downing Street literary interests were not forgotten in his conversation with subordinates in his office.

Of all Mr. Lowe's qualities, some of his friends have thought his natural love of intelligence to have been the most charming and characteristic. He was, perhaps, a little severe on the dull, the prejudiced, or the commonplace; he was not one of those who 'suffer fools gladly.' But he lighted up at once when he met with a congenial spirit, and he was always ready to welcome anyone who could give him valuable information. A glow of satisfaction came over him whenever any new idea occurred to his mind; he rejoiced at any fresh discovery in Science as if he himself had had a part in it. In the language

of Plato, he might be said to have been 'a lover, not of one kind of knowledge only, but of all.' From youth upward, this striving after intelligence had been his chief pleasure and solace. His early years were a time of struggle to him, for he had been unlike other boys and young men. But he had always been sustained by absorbing intellectual interests; this was the golden thread which ran through his life.

The time came when that luminous intellect grew dim, and that eloquent voice could only speak in broken accents. Warned by the case of a friend, he knew what was happening to him, but he did not complain. He seemed only to study how he could be more gentle and considerate to others. He was still sometimes to be seen in the gallery of the House of Lords, or at the entertainments of friends. The battle of life was over; he never dreamed of returning to it. Though sometimes only half-awake to the things which were going on around him, he was always conscious that he had treasures of affection lavished upon him. He did not show the least impatience, or utter a word unworthy of himself. His friends could not think his lot unhappy when they saw with what dignity and fortitude he met the stroke of adversity, and how lovingly he was cared for to the end.

To those who were not personally acquainted with him, he may, perhaps, be most truly described as a man of genius who entered the arena of politics. He was not an idealist or philosopher; but he was full of life and character, a lover of knowledge and of human improvement, and one who never allowed personal interests or party politics to stand in the way of the good of the country.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

B. JOWETT.

Balliol College, Oxford:
February 11, 1893.

LORD SHERBROOKE : A STUDY

By SIR JOHN SIMON, K.C.B.

My official relations with Mr. Lowe, beginning in 1859, rapidly led to a friendship and intimate personal association between us, which continued till his death, thirty-three years afterwards; and as this not only caused me to observe with much interest his public actions during the time, but also gave me the advantage of knowing how he himself regarded them, his Biographer, aware of the circumstances, has invited me to supplement my departmental testimony by contributing what I can from this wider basis towards a general appreciation of my late Chief's character and career.

The thought which comes first to me in the matter is to notice a strange myth which misrepresented Mr. Lowe. Twice in his parliamentary life he was the object of angry vituperation: first, at the period when he took his memorable part in defeating Lord Russell's Reform Bill supported by the mass of the Liberal party, and when the leading agitators for that Bill took so savagely personal a tone against him, that he described them as 'denouncing him with the most virulent abuse for the hatred, perhaps the vengeance, of his fellow-countrymen;' secondly, during the period of his Chancellorship of the Exchequer, when it happened from time to time that deputations which had sought to obtain his consent to questionable subsidies from the public purse, and had found him in their opinion too strict a guardian of its resources, returned in anger from their interviews with him, and spoke of him to their constituents and to the public in such terms

as could only have been appropriate if he had been showing himself the miserly and churlish guardian of some private property of his own. On the strength of those two disseminated angers, which proclaimed themselves as Mr. Lowe's 'unpopularity,' there grew up into extensive newspaper currency the particular myth to which I have referred. He was travestied as a man without ordinary human sympathies, cross-grained and morose and cynical, scowling with spite at most of his fellow creatures, essentially a kill-joy in all matters of popular sentiment, and a sort of Satan in the paradise of politics. In those representations of Mr. Lowe, persons who knew the original could not find even the merit of caricature, for not a feature of the real man was suggested in them—not even, as it were, the squint of Wilkes, or the nose of Wellington. The unlikenesses occasionally amused him; and many contemporaries will remember how, when a certain doggerel epitaph from last century was re-animated to serve as lampoon against him, he requited his revilers by laughingly translating into epigrammatic Latin and Greek the different forms in which the rubbish had been reproduced.

Mr. Lowe, in fact, was one of the kindest-hearted and least cantankerous of men; a man quite exceptionally free from any sort of spleen or malice; a man in whom (as Sydney Smith wrote of Sir James Mackintosh) the anatomist might have failed to find a gall-bladder. Nature had started him with a strikingly wholesome and happy mental constitution; such that, with his vigorous and exertion-loving intellect, he was exceptionally without contrariety or impatience or moodiness of temper; and from first to last, all who were nearest to him and knew him best (I might almost include the very beasts and birds about the house) bore testimony to his constant good humour and cheerfulness, and to the unfailing amiability and solid kindness of his daily life. It would be hard to believe that, with this as his domestic and social

character, he deserved that his public life should be vituperated as it often was; and the vituperation would probably have been absent if they who started it had been better able to contest the arguments, or evade the questions, with which he had met them on the merits of their cases. Fortunately, there remains permanent record of his conduct and language throughout the Reform campaign which followed Lord Palmerston's death; and for the other matter, persons who were behind the scenes and are still living can bear witness how unreasonably he was accused.¹

Well-marked general ability and adroitness of intellect, with eminent aptitude for quick logical judgment, were certainly among the chief qualities which gave Mr. Lowe his success in life; and his powerful common sense (not to mention the learning which corroborated it) would have struck anyone who had to do with him; but the influence which I think most befriended him in his career was the extraordinary degree in which he had strength of purpose. Nature, which in so many respects had been bounteous to Mr. Lowe, had, at one very important point, left him most sadly behind his fellows; and, in respect of that one congenital defect, he was heavily handicapped for the race of life. Born an albino, and severely afflicted from birth with the intolerance of light and the

¹ I well remember that at the Privy Council Office, the late Sir Arthur Helps, who was Clerk of Council from nearly the beginning of Mr. Lowe's time, and who could speak almost as a specialist in questions of courtesy, eulogised to me of his own accord the style in which Mr. Lowe received disputatious deputations; and probably Sir C. Rivers Wilson, who, while Mr. Lowe was Chancellor of the Exchequer, held office as his private secretary, could dispel many a cloud of misrepresentation as to the manner in which Mr. Lowe received and answered there the many applicants for public money whom it was his duty to send empty away. Among such applicants, some no doubt would have found, to their confusion, that Mr. Lowe was an expert in the Socratic method of eliciting truth—the method by which the advocates of weak cases are gradually questioned round into full view of absurdities involved in their own first pleadings; and it may be admitted that this method, even when most blandly applied, is peculiarly apt to exasperate those whom it constrains to refute themselves; so much so, indeed, that the Athenian Arch-questioner himself had at last to be silenced by hemlock.

imperfections of vision which attend albinism, he could hardly look open-eyed into the face of friend or foe, and, if he had been of weak purpose, might well have excused himself from the cruel difficulties of reading and writing. The fortitude with which he accepted his misfortune, the uniform buoyancy of heart he maintained in spite of it, and the indomitable pluck and perseverance with which he set himself to work against all such consequences of it as he could hope to conquer, were signs of a very noble mind. Under surgical threats of impending utter blindness, he gained his early distinction as a scholar, and won ground after ground in the subsequent hard struggles of a virtually disinherited manhood. In middle life he possessed such command of languages, ancient and modern, and such wide range of literature, as probably few of his contemporaries could exceed. An omnivorous reader, he yet seemed to remember all but the refuse of what he had read; and the great philosophers, historians and poets, whose teachings had once impressed him with reverence, remained always thenceforth as household gods in his memory. Yet, year by year, he was ever endeavouring to extend or improve his knowledge; and, till the time when his eyesight entirely failed him, he gave it habitual employment in reading what others could not read to him. I remember that soon after I first knew him he was intent on Scandinavian studies, and was reading Icelandic sagas in their original; and I remember as one of his before-breakfast industries during the period when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he then refreshed his recollection of Hebrew by reading the Hebrew scriptures twice through. With all this reading, however, he was strikingly not a bit of a bookworm. In talking with graziers, he readily let his talk be of bullocks; and one saw with astonishment that, in struggling against his natural defect, he had become no less strong and self-reliant for outdoor life than ready for works of scholarship and reflection. The evident familiarity of his relation with horses, and the absolutely

fearless skill and tact with which he rode and drove, were as characteristic of him as his love of Aristotle; and it was a curious illustration of his spirit of enterprise in all self-discipline, that, in the earliest days when bicycling began to be cultivated, he rapidly made himself a thorough master of the art, and was for some years a leading bicyclist in town and country. In an opposite direction, too, desiring to bring himself into touch with portions of contemporary scientific study, he, at intervals, during some of his busiest years in the House of Commons, spent what leisure he could on endeavours to master the use of the microscope and the astronomical telescope; but here not even the strength of his perseverance could surmount the obstacles which nature had set up against it, and he at length had to recognise that his labour was in vain.

The courage and the love of independence which Mr. Lowe displayed in struggling so resolutely against the physical disadvantage with which he had been born, were qualities which pervaded his whole life, and impressed their strong mark of straightforwardness on all his habits of thought and speech. As he was a truly sincere thinker, never contenting himself with mere words, but always trying to reach the bottom of his matter of thought, and to see it without sophistries and double meanings, so, too, his talk was the frankest possible expression of his thought. His ordinary conversation had the charm of that perfect frankness, and of an unpretentiousness and good humour equally perfect. If the occasion happened to bring forward any of the higher topics of scholarship or philosophy or politics, he of course would enter on them with special interest, and what he said would be specially worth hearing; but his conversation was not under need of running at high level, in order that its strong individuality should be perceived. At whatever level it chanced to be, it was the presentment of a high-minded, clean-thinking, kind-hearted, genial Englishman; and equally at all levels the

intellectual characteristics of the man would shine out—the rare rapidity and acuteness of apprehension, and the ever-ready cheerful lights of a wit which had no malice, and a humour which had no coarseness. Where the talk was on matters of feeling, he would, as on other matters, express himself with absolute candour; but, typical Englishman as he was by every influence of nature and education, and deeply under the self-restraints which philosophy teaches, his heart was not on his ‘sleeve for daws to peck at,’ and he knew how to express his feelings without gush. In arguing, he never tended to harangue, or to overbear, or to utter inappropriate sarcasm; of his ‘sarcasms,’ indeed, I believe I may truly say (as Lord Orrery said of Dr. Arbuthnot’s) that they were never more than ‘satirical strokes of good-nature’; but, master as he was of those short cuts of argument which are found in ways of joke and irony, he could easily, in case of need, prick the pompous wind-bags of self-conceit with a word or two of pointed question or quotation.

As a public speaker, he was of course hampered, though immeasurably far from being subdued, by his defect of eyesight; on the one hand, that, never really seeing the audience he addressed, he was disadvantaged as to following their movements of mind; and, on the other hand, that he found it almost impossible to refer to notes or printed matter as he spoke. His public speaking was as unaffected as his private talk; lucid to the highest possible degree, in whatsoever it had to expound or argue, but with singularly little care for oratorical display. He abhorred, as of false pretension to the praise of eloquence, all such digressive flourishes of speech, all such irrelevant garlands and festoons of decoration, as represent no strength of movement towards the speaker’s logical aim; and he no doubt had his standards of eloquence in those grand Attic examples in which exposition and argument keep unbroken course, though revealing from time to time, by more impassioned tones, that logic and feeling are,

as it were, one blended current in the speaker's mind. Until the Reform Bill crisis of 1865-7, the House of Commons perhaps hardly knew how great were Mr. Lowe's resources as a controversial speaker; but in the speeches which he then delivered with signal success, it found masterpieces of which it could well be proud. Their sustained logic rose again and again into eloquence, which was all the stronger for its dignified self-restraint; and they abounded with brilliant illustrations of the penetrating quality which is given to argument when wit and humour help to fashion it.

Mr. Lowe's political career always seemed to me to be of genuine political earnestness. Temperament and education had made him strongly self-reliant and fearless, essentially and immensely superior to all ways of pettiness and pretence, and sure to be of broad independent judgment in every matter where he should have to judge. His nature was to be a man of work, and his taking to politics was in that spirit. To his mind, the practice of politics needed as truly to rest on scientific principles as the practice of surgery or the practice of engineering; and the studies from which politics derive their scientific principles had been chief among the studies of his life. The House of Commons attracted him, not as the dilettante's 'best club in London,' nor as a vantage-ground from which to forward himself in exterior interests, but emphatically as the field of duty for which he had best qualified himself, and in which he would most rejoice to take part. As member of Parliament, he would be ready to accept office, if office on conditions he approved were tendered him; but he would never let his scale of living depend on the contingency of emoluments of office;¹ nor would ever accept or retain office under conditions at all conflicting with self-respect; and, whether in office or out of office, he would give

¹ He told me, on more than one occasion, that he had never, at any time of being in office, used any part of his official salary as income for his annual expenditure.

to the duties of his membership the very best work of which he was capable. On that footing he served in the House of Commons for some twenty-eight years, and was in office in different capacities for about sixteen of them. Always, whether Minister or not Minister, he was conspicuously a worker among the workers.

Of services rendered to the public by Mr. Lowe as holder of office in other branches of government than that in which I worked with him, I cannot speak with departmental knowledge, and therefore do not attempt to speak in detail. It is only for me to note that both in the years in which he was parliamentary joint secretary to the Indian Board of Control, and in the years in which he was Vice-President of the Board of Trade, very important reforms and extensions of law in those two provinces of government were advocated by him in the House of Commons, and that the period of his Vice-Presidency of the Committee of Council on Education signalised itself as an era of radical revision and reconstruction in the administrative system of the department.¹ During Mr. Lowe's Chancellorship of the Exchequer, his views on current questions of national finance were, of course, presented in his successive budget speeches; with which may be classed the important speech which he made in debate, June 2, 1871, insisting on the claims of national duty in relation to the repayment of national debt, and strongly dissenting from proposals to subordinate that duty to the object of largely reducing indirect taxation. Regarding the strictness with which, while at the Exchequer, he watched against the various forms of undue expenditure from the public purse—a strictness by which (as before stated) he no doubt gave rise to a class of

¹ Mr. Lowe, when he had retired from office as Vice-President of the Education Committee, did not cease to interest himself in educational questions concerning the public, but, on the contrary, continued to take an active and influential part in discussing them; as particularly in the years 1867–8, with reference to questions of middle-class education, and to the effect of scholastic endowments. See his educational addresses delivered at Edinburgh and Liverpool, and his pamphlet on 'Endowment or Free Trade in Middle Class Education.'

personal malcontents against himself, it is essential to observe that the vigilance he exercised was but an honest fulfilment of one of the loudest and most constant professions of Liberal policy; and that, when he pronounced against particular claims for subvention from the proceeds of taxation, he did so on definite principles, which he was always quite ready to explain. Notably, he was careful not to subsidise with public money any commercial undertaking which he thought should depend for its success on ordinary private competition; and in cases where there was question of promoting non-commercial interests in science, or literature, or fine art, he was averse from bestowing public money if he believed the applicants could more fitly appeal to the liberality of private patronage.¹ It deserves notice that, while he was strict towards the world at large in his solicitude for the tax-payers' just interests, he was more than strict towards himself in the same matter: that, for instance, he saved the public considerable cost by waiving his right to the official residence in Downing Street during the years in which he was Chancellor of the Exchequer; and that subsequently, when he was offered an ex-Minister's life-pension of 2,000*l.* a year, he would not avail himself of the offer.

Mr. Lowe's relation to the distinctions of party in Parliament, and his view of the political principles involved in that relation, were substantially unchanged throughout his career. In a party speech made to his Kidderminster constituents in December 1858, he discussed the question of Parliamentary Reform in exactly the same spirit as that subsequently shown by him in the parliamentary debates of 1865-7; and the language he then used on the subject of his party relations was as explicit as could be: 'Ever since I could understand

¹ A good illustration of the spirit in which he regarded cases of the latter sort is to be found in his answer to an appeal addressed to him by Earl Stanhope on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries, that a grant of public money should be given for the purpose of examining the tumuli about Troy. See vol. ii., p. 375.

anything, I have been a thoroughgoing Liberal. I have suffered in different ways for my opinions when they were not quite so popular as they are now. . . . The times have come to me instead of my being compelled to go to the times.' It was as Liberal member that Mr. Lowe was returned to Parliament during the twenty-eight years of his membership; it was as Liberal member that, during sixteen of those years, he held office under the successive premierships of Lord Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Gladstone; and the relation in which he stood to all the most important legal and administrative reforms of his time, as especially to those of the departments in which he held office, is evidence enough, if evidence be wanted, that his liberalism was as 'thoroughgoing' as he professed. He, in truth, was a Liberal of Liberals; and it was distinctively from that basis, and without any touch of paradox, that he declined to promote the democratisation of his country. He pointed out that the arguments which were used in support of the Franchise Bills of 1865-6 were not limitable to the proposals of those particular Bills, but could be construed as favouring proposals indefinitely larger; he urged that the principles fully applied would convert the political constitution of England into a tyranny of mere numbers—a tyranny, wherein of necessity the largely predominant influence would be that of the less educated classes; and he insisted that to accept such principles would be a revolt from the traditions of the liberal party, would endanger the best fruits which the liberalism of past times had won for the civilisation and welfare of the country, and would tend to make future liberal government impossible. 'Because I am a Liberal, and know that by pure and clear intelligence alone can the cause of true progress be promoted, I regard as one of the greatest dangers with which the country can be threatened a proposal to subvert the existing order of things, and to transfer power from the hands of property and intelligence and to place it in the hands of men whose whole

life is necessarily occupied in daily struggles for existence.' (Speech, H. C., May 3, 1865.)

The rightness of Mr. Lowe's contention, that the arguments used in favour of the Bills of 1865-6 might readily be pressed to an indefinitely wider extent in favour of democracy, was afterwards amply demonstrated by the legislation of 1867-8 and 1884-5. Whether he was equally right in predicting that such legislation would be of fatal effect on the interests of good government in England, will be for future history to declare. Meanwhile, however, as regards the spirit of the prediction, be it remembered that the opinions he expressed against the hasty acceptance of democracy for England were the conclusions of a mind deeply versed in political science and familiar with political administration.¹ Unpossessed, too, by any sort of class prejudice or class interest, and individually not at all a man to regard with indifference the fortunes of classes less educated or less well-circumstanced than his own, Mr. Lowe had always accepted, as his first principle in politics, that different forms of government deserve praise or dispraise in proportion as they tend, or do not tend, to the greatest good of the greatest number; but, with regard to democracy for England, he was not prepared to admit that *rule by* the greater number would conduce to *good for* the greater number, or even that the less educated classes as rulers could promote their own welfare as successfully as other classes had till then promoted it.

In the ordinary warfare of party politics, apparently Mr.

¹ Part of Mr. Lowe's qualification for excelling in the debates of 1865-6 consisted in his intimate knowledge of the working of democratic constitutions in the British Colonies and in the United States of America. Between the time when he gave up his Oxford tutorship and the time when he first became a member of our House of Commons, he had spent eight years in New South Wales, practising as barrister in Sydney, and taking a very active and influential part in the local politics. The introduction of universal suffrage in the Australian colonies, which took place shortly after his return to England, had been a constitutional experiment immensely interesting to him as an ex-colonist with much local knowledge, and in connection with this interest he had become an habitual close observer of the workings of democracy in general.

Lowe did not give his opponents much opportunity for scoring success against him. On the occasion, in 1864, when a hostile vote in the House of Commons, carried in spite of statements he had made, decided him to resign his Vice-Presidency of the Education Committee of the Privy Council, Lord Palmerston, at his instance, obtained from the House that the accusation implied in the vote should be referred to a select committee for inquiry; and as the report of this committee convinced the House that its former vote had been unjust, the vote was at once rescinded. In extra-parliamentary speeches incidental to the mere skirmishing of parties, Mr. Lowe's outspokenness was always a fair challenge to those who differed from him; for on such occasions (which perhaps reminded him of old Winchester times) he would dash into the fray, hitting right and left, with an evidently youthful zest for the exercise, and a perhaps too youthful indifference to the blows which might be aimed at him in return; but even on these occasions he spoke with such reserves of real strength that he had little reason to fear reprisals; and, so far as I am aware, only one occasion ever arose on which the challenge by him was taken up to his disadvantage.¹

In the course of the general election of 1874, Mr. Disraeli, wishing to turn into ridicule before one of his Buckinghamshire audiences the opponent who of late years had been specially a thorn in his side in the House of Commons, jeeringly described

¹ The one occasion alluded to was in the summer of 1876, when Mr. Lowe, referring at an election meeting at Retford to the history (as he supposed) of the Royal Titles Bill then before Parliament, undoubtedly made a slip; laying himself open to the charge of having spoken with wrong information on a subject on which he had better not have spoken at all; and giving to the leader of the opposite camp a chance he could quickly turn to account in the House of Commons. The opportunity was used to the utmost, but with no more than momentary effect against Mr. Lowe; for he, with characteristic candour, not uttering a word of comment on the party tactics which had been used against him, and not attempting by a word to minimise or explain away the language he was reported to have used, frankly confessed fault in the matter, and expressed regret for it in terms so entirely proper and sufficient that the incident was at once as if it had never been.

Mr. Lowe as a man so unlikely to be the elect of any popular constituency that, except for the franchise given in 1867 to the University of London, he probably would have been without a seat in Parliament. It perhaps did not occur to Mr. Disraeli that his remark implied any disparagement of the constitution he had himself provided for Parliament; but it may be conceded him that the taunt had in it just enough of a certain sort of verisimilitude to make it effective for its purpose. In relation to democratic constituencies of ignoble type, Mr. Lowe, no doubt, by reason of his merits, might often have made but a poor show at the poll; for he would not have eaten dirt in order to succeed, would not have been the puppet of wire-pullers, would not have bribed or flattered or lied, would not have promised each individual voter to rejoice him with the moon of his desire, would not have debased his own better knowledge and better conscience by doing homage to sectarian spites, or by compromising with the exactions of ignorance and greed. Certainly he would rather have swept the pavements at Whitehall than have entered Parliament on conditions like those. Further, too, we can freely admit that Mr. Lowe, like other men, would probably sometimes more or less have shown (as the French express it) *les défauts de ses qualités*. Hating humbug as he did, and personally indisposed to sentimental platitudes of speech, he perhaps would not always have taken sufficient care that, when he had to express unpleasant truths, he tempered them with as much oil or sugar as possible; nor perhaps, with his strict standards of political science, would he always have sufficiently recognised, or seemed to recognise, that sentiment, as well as science, is a power in politics. Defaults in such respects might no doubt have counted somewhat against him with average constituencies; but even among average constituencies, and still more among constituencies of markedly high type, Mr. Lowe's great qualities could never have failed to find appreciation. It would be a superfluous tribute to his memory to follow further that line

of thought; but, for the future of England, be it ardently hoped that courage and integrity like his will ever, more and more, be valued by the people. Democracies, equally with princes, are apt to have their weaknesses turned to account by the parasites who pretend to serve them; and a wise democracy will not choose its representatives from among men who are mere sycophants of the multitude. Whether the welfare and the long descended honour of England shall be in the future what they have been in the past, will mainly depend on the rightness of popular judgment as to the merits which qualify for statesmanship. Surely it will be essential that one who pretends to represent the people shall not only be the possessor of ripe knowledge, but shall feel, and shall bravely fulfil, the moral responsibilities which knowledge imposes; that he shall, at all hazards, be loyal to what he knows; that no ambition for applause shall make him the false prophesier of pleasant things; that no popular craze or outcry, no *civium ardor prava jubentium*, shall daunt him from his allegiance to truth; that in the spirit which distinguished Mr. Lowe's Kidderminster speeches, the spirit in which Edmund Burke had been wont to address the Bristol electors, he shall frankly and fearlessly speak out his best counsels on all which is of public concern, and shall thus, as far as possible, aid his constituents to judge with understanding between right and wrong.

REMINISCENCES OF LORD SHERBROOKE

No. 1. BY MRS. CHAWORTH MUSTERS

It has been thought well that one of Lord Sherbrooke's own family should add a few words to these memoirs, and the pleasurable duty has devolved upon the niece who specially loved him, and in whom, perhaps, he took the greater interest as being the successor in Nottinghamshire of 'Byron's Mary,' the Mrs. Musters of his boyhood.

Looking back upon many a long summer's day and winter evening of never-ending talk and discussion, one feels how impossible it is to depict the vivid personality, the rapidity of thought, the inextinguishable gaiety, that made my uncle Robert so charming a companion.

He and my father, his elder by fifteen months, were, perhaps, seen at their best together. Both ardent lovers of Sir Walter Scott, they delighted in repeating their favourite passages, and recalling the days when they read the early novels all night, because in the daytime the elders were occupied with them, to their exclusion.

It was very pleasant to see these two brothers, though opposed in their religious and political views—the younger Chancellor of the Exchequer, the elder a simple squire devoted to country sports and pursuits—talking and writing to each other without a shadow of restraint or jealousy.

'Robin,' as my father called him, belonged to a discriminating, if not a criticising, family, and he often said laughingly of himself that he was 'nothing if not critical.'

But how amusing, how suggestive were his trenchant remarks! Every topic called forth something worth remembering, and every chord was responsive.

Even in conversing with a child he was spontaneous, natural, unstilted, and had the faculty, so fascinating to the youthful, of talking to them as equals, discussing the books they read, and forming their tastes by giving reasons for his own likings and dislikings, and eliciting their own.

One felt instinctively that he was a Protestant in everything.

He was always on the side of private judgment against authority, of freedom against tyranny and bigotry, of the right of the young to form an opinion and carry out a plan. He did not consider that Age necessarily implied Wisdom, and all this made him very attractive to fledgelings just beginning to try their wings. My uncle's manner, too, was very caressing, and his smile particularly sweet to those he was fond of.

His was a many-sided intellect, and nothing came amiss to it—poetry, politics, history, science, art, drama, human and animal nature; but I think the fairy godmother who presided at his birth was she of whom Macaulay wrote, and that the 'love of his life' was poetry. He 'lisped in numbers,' and the incidents of every day reminded him of some line stored up in that marvellous memory, teeming with apt quotations and out-of-the-way knowledge.

His taste in poetry, though fastidious, was comprehensive. All that was direct, that was stirring, that was finely felt, that was poetically expressed, pleased him, from Scott and Byron to Matthew Arnold and Swinburne. The latter's lines—

Before the beginning of years there came to the making of man:
Time, with a gift of tears; grief, with a glass that ran,

he used to repeat with pleasure, and great favourites of his were the Irish verses beginning—

Who fears to speak of Ninety-eight,
Who trembles at the name?
When cowards mock the patriot's fate,
Who hangs his head for shame?
He's half a knave or all a slave
Who mocks his country thus;
But a true man, like you, man,
Will drink his glass with us.

These my uncle would repeat with a *verve* worthy of a Fenian; but his admiration was purely literary, and it is scarcely necessary to say that he had no sympathy with Home Rule aspirations.

Indeed, I well remember that in 1885, when a prominent Irish official, now dead, told me that he expected to see a Parliament in Dublin before three years were over, I asked my uncle what he thought of the idea. He merely answered, contemptuously, that no responsible Minister dare suggest such a thing.

Though ready to be amused wherever he might be, the society that was most congenial to the subject of this memoir was that of cultivated and high-bred ladies. He liked their quick perception, and always said that they could appreciate the fine *nuances* of

thought and expression more readily than men. His manner, accordingly, to women was charming, chivalrous, and gentle, without a touch of patronage or flattery. From his earliest days he had had the advantage of associating with unusually able and well-read women, and it did not occur to him to treat them as other than intellectual equals.

Love-stories always interested him profoundly, in fiction as in real life. The *Bride of Lammermoor* and *St. Ronan's Well* were, perhaps, his favourites among the 'Waverley Novels,' and he admired *Gerfaut* as a specimen of the best French *roman d'amour*. My uncle has been called cynical, but a more faithful believer in true love never penned a sonnet or treasured a lock of hair.

Matthew Arnold's poem, *Tristan and Iseult*, pleased him much, especially the dialogue between the Queen and the dying Knight beginning—

Ah! harsh flatterer, let alone my beauty;
I, like thee, have left my youth afar.

Perhaps this may be the fittest place for my uncle's own unpublished verses, which he gave me about the year 1866, and which, I venture to think, could only have come from a heart full of tender and refined feeling.

You are my friend no more. 'Tis even so.
Why should I cling to shadows, why deceive
My heart by doubting what too well I know,
Or, unbelieving, struggle to believe?

The keen and searching anguish that I feel,
The grief, the disappointment, the distress—
These are realities, like fire or steel,
The rest is silence, nothing, nothingness.

And yet not thus, not wholly thus should end,
Without a word the crushing change to tell,
The kindly intercourse "twixt friend and friend,"
The gentle memories treasured all too well.

I blame not that a few short months have torn
The fragile thread that linked us for a day;
But not in recklessness, but not in scorn,
Should even such as I be cast away.

Too much I have misread you; wit and youth
And beauty touch, but tame not, heart like mine.
But oh! if kindness, nobleness, and truth
Were ever stamped on human brow, 'tis thine.

You are my friend no longer. Be it so.
 I cannot change so lightly. What I gave
 Is mine no more, to take or to bestow;
 My heart shall be my wronged affections' grave.

And oh! if ever better thoughts incline
 To seek the sympathies which now you spurn,
 The grave shall open, and the dead shall rise,
 And, true and constant, shall your friend return.

R. L.

Oh for one Hour of Thee!

Oh for one hour of thee! one hour, to trace
 Wit, fancy, feeling, mantling in thy face.
 Stirred by each thought as ocean by the wind—
 The noble image of a noble mind.
 To drink those tones so liquid, pure, and soft,
 Heard all too seldom, and recalled too oft,
 And as the spell o'ercomes me more and more,
 To love, fear, reverence, idolise, adore.

R. L.

My uncle was fond of choosing illustrative poetry for pictures and photographs, and hit upon some quotations that were very happy. Sitting by Mrs. Goodall, the wife of the painter, one day at dinner, she described Goodall's just-finished picture, 'Gordon's Last Message,' representing a tired camel and rider, vultures hovering above the bones of dead horses, and creeping things just visible on the desert sand, the first streak of daylight on the far horizon. Mrs. Goodall asked Lord Sherbrooke for a legend to place under the picture, and he at once suggested:—

Yes, grief will have way, but the fast-falling tear
 Should be mingled with deep execration on those
 Who could bask in that warrior's midday career,
 And leave him thus lonely and dark at its close.

The Icelandic and Norsk Sagas interested my uncle extremely, from the time that he learnt Icelandic as a young man; and when Dasent's translation of *Burnt Njal* appeared about 1863, Lord Sherbrooke wrote to me as follows, after reviewing the book in the *Times*. 'I quite agree with you that there is something very poetic in *Njal*. It is more like Homer than anything else. The Icelanders consider Skarphedinn the true type of Icelandic *bondi* or land-owner, just as Hrappr is of the lower caste. There is a grand unity of action throughout, so different from the desultory writing of Pulci, Boyardo, and Ariosto. I don't think there is any translation of Munch, but Danish is very easy indeed; I taught it myself without the least trouble.'

This last remark reminds me that my uncle's weak point through life was his inability to realise that what was play to him was hard work to other people. As Helps says, 'How wise the clever men would be if they could understand the stupid ;' and that was a wisdom he never acquired. Himself an intellectual giant, he did not, as one of his friends has said, 'suffer fools gladly,' and consequently made enemies of those who saw that he despised what he thought their want of application.

Of Lord Macaulay, a kindred spirit, he wrote in 1876 :—

'I think Macaulay was much to be admired in this, that he mainly read originals, and read them through, instead of wasting time on secondhand and inferior works. You cannot do better than read good translations. Jowett has translated *Thucydides* very well, I think, and I suppose will soon bring it out. George Trevelyan is clever, and would be cleverer if he was not so determined to be exactly like Macaulay. I think the book, on the whole, does him credit' (the *Life of Lord Macaulay*).

It had always seemed to me impossible for my uncle to do himself justice as a statesman holding office, because of the want of eyesight, which, he tells us, prevented him from judging men's countenances, and therefore their characters. One of my many suggestions that he should turn his attention to writing, rather than to practical politics, met with the following reply about this time :—

'I don't think Nature has qualified me either for a literary or Parliamentary career, or, indeed, for any career at all. All my faculties drive me in a direction requiring sight. I am no dreamer, and cannot be the thorough man of action for which Nature meant me. Macaulay was not made for politics, and I was not made for literature.'

This was written in a moment of discouragement, and I hoped that he would reconsider the matter, and in 1880 I urged him, instead of going to the House of Lords, to retire from public life, in the hope that he would translate the Sagas, one of which he had already rendered into English verse, and so leave an imperishable addition to the fame he had won by his speeches on 'Reform.'

It was not to be, however. The old war-horse cares not to leave the ranks, and my uncle employed himself on the committee work of the Upper House, and in preparing the Employers' Liability Bill, in which he took great interest. As long as his old friend, the Duke of Somerset, lived, they sat together, and the Duke kept him instructed as to who was speaking, and almost to the end of my uncle's life he enjoyed listening to a good speech from the Peers' Gallery.

As a trustee of the British Museum he took great interest in Sir Charles Newton's researches in Asia Minor, and loved to look

again and again at the Greek statues and friezes, with an instinctive feeling for art which was very wonderful and acute. How he acquired such taste without eyesight and without special training seems inexplicable.

Though no great theatre-goer, my uncle liked a good play, and I remember going with him twice to see Fechter in *Hamlet*. His rendering of the part pleased him, and he admired the way in which he spoke the lines, with a slight foreign accent :—

The Time is out of joint ; O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right !

It has been said that the subject of this memoir depreciated the classical education to which he owed so much ; but what he really felt was his own want of physical and scientific knowledge, with which to begin the world, and he deplored the time spent in his day in polishing verses, to the exclusion of English literature and modern languages. When he was between seventy and eighty he read *Æschylus* in the original Greek, and after the sad days came when he could no longer distinguish the characters, he never tired of hearing Homer read aloud.

He was almost as fond of Scotch melodies as his favourite Scott, and knew a number of them by heart. Music was a great resource to him in his blindness, and he reminded his aunt, Miss Pyndar (who outlives him at the age of ninety-seven), a few months before his death, of the words of an old song he had learnt as a child on her knee.

A great love for animals was always his characteristic, from the time when a boy he wished to set free the golden eagle his father had brought from Scotland as a pet. His horses, dogs, cats, and birds were all spoilt children, and he could not bear any creature to suffer. He wrote once to me from Surrey : ‘ I went to my town house yesterday, and found great deposits of soot, which were accounted for by a poor pigeon, which had fluttered down the chimney, been unable to get back, and was starved to death. I wish I had been a day or two sooner, as it was only just dead. How miserable it must have been ! There is a subject for your muse. Cowper would have made something of it.’

Another time he says he is writing with ‘ the cat asleep in the waste-paper basket and the little doves on the table.’

‘ The Horse’s Epitaph,’ in his *Poems of a Life*, shows the love and admiration he felt for such creatures.

Boundless in faith and love and gratitude :
Happy the man, if there be any such,
Of whom his epitaph can say as much.

In closing these desultory memories it would be ungrateful to forget my uncle's power of true and constant friendship. Clear-sighted and critical as he was, when once his affection was given, it continued unshaken to the end. Through evil report or good report, as he said of himself—

Here, at least, is the smile that no cloud can o'ercast,
And the heart and the hand all thine own to the last.

No. 2. BY THE HON. LIONEL A. TOLLEMACHE

Direxit brachia contra
Torrentem, *nam* civis erat, qui libera posset
Verba animi proferre, et *famam* impendere vero.

JUVENAL (*adapted*).

It was in 1862, two years after I had taken my degree, that my father told me that Mr. Lowe had kindly consented to give me his advice as to the best career for one who, like myself, suffered from an extreme defect of eyesight; and I accordingly called on him. Nothing could exceed the sympathetic interest that he took in my case. Although my ocular defect was wholly different from his, we had had at least one odd experience in common: each of us, alas! had known what it was to blot with his nose what he had written. He informed me that, many years ago, his belief in oculists had been rudely shaken. Suffering from his eyes in his early youth, he consulted an eminent specialist, who foretold that he would lose his sight in seven years, if not earlier. And he went on to say that, as a matter of fact, he could see quite as well when speaking to me as when he had been doomed by the oculist.

My father wished me to practise at the bar, and I asked Mr. Lowe how far my eyesight was likely to be an impediment to my success. He answered that I must at any rate confine

myself to chamber practice. He, for his part, after hearing the forebodings of the medical Cassandra, had judged it necessary to earn a competence as soon as possible. He therefore betook himself at once to the Australian bar; where, there being much less competition, he was very successful. His professional income, I think he said, at last rose from 1,000*l.* to 2,000*l.* a year.

He explained that his abnormal eyesight was dazzled by lateral rays; so that, in order to see comfortably, he had to keep his eyes almost closed. But he preferred wearing a pair of metal spectacles with a hole in the middle of each. Such spectacles are suggestive. A distinguished living clergyman told me that most of his clerical brethren seem to him to have blinkers on; they can see straight before them, but have no side-lights. Something analogous to the metal spectacles would seem to be needed by a class of men of a quite opposite character, by the class of widely analytical thinkers, such as Pattison, as Renan, and, indeed, as Mr. Lowe himself—thinkers who through their very catholicity of vision are oppressed by side-lights, and who find it hard to isolate the moral phenomenon they are examining; whose sense of sin tends to lose itself in a sense of the hereditary and incurable weakness of human nature, and whose pity for a single drop, so to speak, of human suffering tends to lose itself in pity for the limitless ocean of human, or rather of animal, suffering. Such philosophers have a high, perhaps the very highest, function to fulfil. But they must not be condemned if they have the *défauts de leurs qualités*. They are by nature ‘dark with excess of light;’ or, if they seek to correct this natural tendency—if they, as it were, put on metal spectacles—they still cannot see as others see. In fact, their point of view is unintelligible to the rest of the world; and, the more honestly they try to explain that point of view, the more certain they are to be misconstrued. They furnish a clue to Bacon’s dark saying: ‘The man that never dissembles, deceives as much as the

dissembler; for the majority either does not understand, or does not believe him.'

Charles Austin, whose somewhat original views on democracy I have detailed in *Safe Studies*, once said to me, 'I agree with Lowe that the extension of the franchise will do no good in administration or legislation; but, unlike him, I think it dangerous to stand still.' Wishing to confront Mr. Lowe with such criticisms as the above, I was glad of the opportunity offered by a walk which I had with him (I think in 1867). He began by asking me whether I thought of entering Parliament, and, on my answering that my poverty and not my will prevented me, he exclaimed, *Nous avons changé tout cela*. Thereupon I ventured to express surprise at a statement made by him in a recent speech, that the belief in the inevitable triumph of democracy was the fundamental error of De Tocqueville. 'If you will show that I am wrong,' he said, 'I am quite willing to retract.'

I observed that, from time immemorial, things had been working in the democratic direction. He seemed unwilling to confine himself to this issue, but enlarged on the dangers of democracy, and quoted more fluently than distinctly some Greek verses bearing on the subject. I suppose they were from the *Knights* of Aristophanes; but I could not well follow them at the time, and certainly cannot recall them. At last he pointed to an omnibus and said, 'The Radical theory is as if the passengers in that omnibus were to turn the coachman off the box, and were all to begin tugging at the reins.'

It may not be without interest to contrast this view with the very opposite view of Bentham, whose plea for universal suffrage was reported to me by Mr. George Norman, the last survivor of the early Benthamites. All political ills, said Bentham, spring either from the want of will to do right or from the want of ability. The majority will not do wrong wilfully; for their interest is the standard of right, and they will not willingly go against that interest. Nor are they likely

to go wrong through ignorance. Most men, though they know little or nothing about medicine, have discernment enough to choose a good doctor; and in like manner most men, though they know little or nothing about politics, will have discernment enough to choose a good representative. Mr. Norman said that, when young, he thought this position irrefragable. But he owned that, with advancing years, he had grown more Conservative and less sanguine.

Mr. Lowe showed, both in his speeches and in his conversation, a complete and ready command of the classics. Great, therefore, was the surprise which he excited when, in mature life, he, as was thought, undervalued classical education. In consequence of this real or supposed disparagement of a source of his own influence and distinction, he was wittily satirized as the Philippe Égalité of classical culture; and such was his sense of humour that he was probably himself amused by the comparison. Occasions, however, there were when his sense of humour and his critical sense seem to have been in some measure warped by his principles. According to my father, he felt nothing but repugnance for the admonitory forebodings of that clever squib, *The Battle of Dorking*.

An incident illustrative of the view taken by Mr. Lowe on verse-composition at public schools has been related to me, so to say, by an *ear-witness*. One Harrow speech-day, many years ago, when the question of classics *versus* modern studies was under discussion, Lord Lyttelton, in returning thanks at the Head Master's luncheon, had spoken on the side of classics. Mr. Lowe had to return thanks for the visitors, and gave the following as an instance of the ordinary method of verse-making at public schools. When at Winchester, W. G. Ward had to compose some verses on the Hebrides. He was at his wits' end what to write; so, after a pause, he began (Cardwell, Lowe, and other schoolfellows standing round):—

There are some islands in the Northern Seas,
At least I've heard so, called the Hebrides.

A dead stop ensued. Looking into a gazetteer, he found the islands were without trees. So he went on:—

The people there have very little wood—

Another pause; then he went on again,

Therefore they can't build ships,

Lowe broke in—

They wish they could.

Can these verses have been serious? ¹

For the two following anecdotes I am indebted to an accomplished scholar and divine who, without guaranteeing their verbal accuracy, has kindly sent them to me:—

Michell was in the Common-room of St. Mary Hall, when a batch of Australian papers was brought to him. He looked through them, and suddenly exclaimed, 'Well, here is a startling proof of Lowe's memory. He quotes a passage from notes on Aristotle by a French writer, which I showed him three years ago, and which he cannot have seen since; I am satisfied that there is no copy in Australia; the book is too rare.' He then called the Common-room scout, and told him to fetch the book from his library. When Michell saw it he said: 'There's the very mark I put in it for Lowe, and I have not opened the book since.' The company compared the passage, more than half a page long, with Lowe's speech, and it was a literal rendering into English. Michell was sure that Lowe had not taken a copy. He also told of one of his pupils, whom I understood to be Lowe, that, when reading Thucydides, he found the man had not read a word of Herodotus. On Michell expressing indignant surprise, the pupil went away, sat up all night, and without leaving his rooms read through the whole of Herodotus at a sitting, and stood Michell's cross-examination in it the next day.

¹ In illustration of the opposite view of school verse-making, I am tempted to contrast with the above doggerels, two typical lines which, in my Oxford days, were quoted as a very juvenile effusion of one who has since achieved high literary distinction. In order to show how wide may be the influence even of an insignificant person, he wrote (as reported):—

There's not a pebble tumbling on the beach
But shakes Orion and the Pleiades.

These lines especially (indirectly suggestive of *τῆν γῆν κωήσω*) strike me as having the exact ring of the composition of a very clever schoolboy. They are pretentious; but they have the note of promise.

In connection with this second anecdote, I may mention that another scholar says that he fell into a discussion on Greek style with Lowe, and that Lowe 'was most agreeable, and quoted Thucydides by the yard.'

Lord Aberdare has favoured me with very interesting particulars about Lowe, some of which have a distinct bearing on what has been already mentioned.

Accommodation (he writes) for Ministers in the House of Commons was scarce. He, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I, as Home Secretary, shared the same small room. My attendance at the sittings of the House was necessarily much more prolonged than his, and he kept a small collection of books to while away the time. They were mostly classics. I remember one day finding him with a book in his hand which he showed me, and talked of with high approbation. It was the work attributed to Tacitus, *De Claris Oratoribus*.

Once at a dinner party somebody referred to Pope's well-known lines on Sir R. Walpole in private life—

Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social pleasure, ill exchanged for power ;
Seen him uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe.
Would he oblige me ? Let me only find
He does not think me what he thinks mankind.¹

He asked me if I could repeat them, which I did. 'Ah!' he said, after listening to them with intense enjoyment, 'we have no one now who can write like that.' I understood him to mean that not only was Pope unrivalled in his way, but that he was a greater poet than any living one.

In fact, Lowe, like Grote and Charles Austin, shared Byron's preference—

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope.

Is it not probable that towards this preference many scholars, and most orators, whatever may be the critical fashion of their time, have a conscious or unconscious bias ?

¹ I would call especial attention to these lines because nothing gives us a truer insight into Lowe's inner self than to see before us the poetry he so much admired, and likewise, perhaps, because to me it seems that the last couplet, if not also the first, has (*mutato nomine*) a more special application than at first sight appears.

Lord Aberdare's reference to the scanty accommodation for Ministers suggests the notion that the material apparatus of government is, or was, rather antiquated. The following incident confirms that notion. One of my kinsfolk writes:—

I was once staying with the ——s when the Lowes were there. A bag of important despatches arrived for him. He had lost the key, and so could not open the bag. But his trouble was soon over; for the French governess, who had a very small hand, managed to insert it underneath the flap, and got out all the despatches without opening the lock at all. I saw it done before my own eyes. His own answer was afterwards inserted in the same way, and back went the bag.

We return to Lord Aberdare's account:—

His (Lowe's) conversation, I need not say, was most brilliant and delightful. Lord Granville once said to me that he had known all the best talkers of the day, Macaulay, Bishop Wilberforce, Luttrell, Charles Greville, &c., and that he thought that 'for an hour or two' Lowe beat them all. I did not quite understand his limitation to 'an hour or two,' for I never knew Lowe to flag in conversation. *Omnia tetigit*, and he was excellent in all, with a certain cynical flavour, generally, but not always, goodnatured.

The late eminent police magistrate, Mr. Knox, told me that, when he and Mr. Lowe were on the staff of the *Times*, they sometimes discussed wide questions, and that he once heard Mr. Lowe say: 'I utterly refuse to believe in a God who is worse than I am'—worse, that is, according to the standard of human morality—worse in the sense of inflicting everlasting punishment on anyone, or, indeed, of inflicting any punishment except for remedial ends.

In my article on my father I speak of the instinctive repulsion with which some political economists of the old school would have regarded the masterful beneficence and restless supervision of even a model landlord. Mr. Lowe himself was so much of a disciple of Ricardo that he objected altogether to the principle of Mr. Gladstone's Land Act (he said to a kinswoman of mine, 'It's the first clause of the Bill

that beats me'); and for a somewhat similar reason he can hardly have quite relished paternal landlordism.¹

My father, perhaps suspecting this to be the case, took him for a drive on his Helmingham estate, and, calling his attention to a new cottage, asked the labourer's wife to say frankly which she preferred, the present cottage or the old one. 'Well, the *ould* one for choice, if you please, my lord.' Mr. Lowe was delighted with this answer. If, however, he and my father differed as to the principle of *laissez faire*, they heartily agreed in their opposition to the extension of the franchise.

At the time of Lord Russell's Reform Bill, my father told me that he listened to Mr. Lowe's speeches with quite as much interest as to those of any other orator in Parliament. He may have been biassed; so I will add that Mr. Gladstone once said to me, 'When he made those speeches on Reform, he was *quite at the top of the tree*.'

Quite lately—indeed, after the last paragraph had been written—Mr. Gladstone further informed me that Lowe showed greater skill in his opposition to the Whig Reform Bill, than in his opposition to Disraeli's Reform Bill; and that he was more successful in attack than in defence—more successful, that is, than either in self-defence, or in defence of any government with which he was connected. Mr. Gladstone shares my surprise at the line taken by Lowe in reference to classical education; for he regards Lowe's English style as abounding in indications of classical culture. When speaking to me of modern writers and speakers, distinguished alike for their classical scholarship and for their English style, he cited as examples, Macaulay, Tennyson, Lowe, Lord Houghton, Matthew Arnold and Mr. Goldwin Smith. He called Lowe a 'master' of good English.

¹ A high estimate of the *vis medicatrix inertiae* was formed by Lord Melbourne who (as a veteran diplomatist once told me), when some ingenious proposal was laid before him, used first to ask, *Can't we leave things alone?*

At the time when Lowe and his friends formed the Cave which turned out Lord Russell's Government, an old Liberal acquaintance said to him, 'You think you have killed us, but we shall write on the hatchment, *Resurgam*.' 'You had better not,' rejoined Lowe; 'remember the line,

' Lie still if you're wise ;
You'll be damned if you rise.'

Mr. Lowe quoted with great enjoyment some lines that were written on the occasion of the famous proposal to tax lucifer matches :—

Ex luce lucellum,¹ we all of us know ;
But, if Lucy can't sell 'em, how then, Mr. Lowe ?

'The Cabinet,' he said, 'were unanimous in thinking the tax an excellent one.'

When first opposed in the House of Commons (says Lord Aberdare, who speaks, be it noted, with the authority of a former Home Secretary), the match-tax was carried by a large majority. Afterwards, when the tide set heavily against it, it was determined to drop it. This was several days before anything had been heard of the famous procession of match-makers, which had the reputation of having extinguished it. This is one of those vivacious lies which no amount of contradiction will expose. Another is the popular belief that 'garotting' was suppressed by the Act which provided for the flogging of garotters, whereas the offence had ceased for upwards of six months before the introduction of the Bill.

I remember when, sitting next to Lowe and Cardwell, the speech of a minister of great ability but unattractive as an orator, was at its conclusion loudly applauded. Said Cardwell, 'Was that approbation or relief?' 'Egypt was glad at their departing,' was Lowe's comment.

When he was appointed Secretary of the Board of Control for India he found that the Conservative agent who was conducting the petition against his return for Kidderminster had recently been appointed solicitor to that Department. Lowe was reported to

¹ When one thinks upon all the mist and confusion which shrouded the agitation on the match-tax, one feels that *Ex luce lucellum* should have been supplemented with the classical admonition, *Non fumum ex fulgore*. One feels it, even as one has felt that to the Napoleons the admonitory motto should have been assigned: *Satis una superque Vidimus excidia et captæ superavimus urbi*.

have written to him, 'Dear Mr. Brown. Had Zimri peace who slew his master? Yours affectionately, Robert Lowe.' I doubt the letter, but I have no doubt of the saying.

A day or two before the resignation of the Gladstone Ministry Lowe dined with the Fishmongers. A certain M.P. returned thanks for the House of Commons. In doing so, by a slip of the tongue, he said, *ore rotundo*, 'Gentlemen, the House of Commons is as old as the Creation;' meaning, of course, the Constitution. 'He puts it rather far back, Mr. Lowe, don't you think so?' said an Alderman. 'I don't know,' answered Lowe very seriously, 'Adam was certainly the first Speaker.'

I remember once when at a dinner at the Mansion House I made at least my tenth speech on the toast of the House of Commons—Lowe and Mrs. Lowe sitting beside me—I spoke of the difficulty of saying anything new on this well-threshed subject, and added that I must take refuge in that commonplace which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had in some famous dog-latin lines somewhat irreverently applied to the then Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University,

Vice-Chancellor in fit,
Multaque dicta before, et quæ race postera dicet.

'Many things which the last generation had said, and the next will say.' 'Hulloa! What is he at now?' I heard Lowe say to his wife; but I think he enjoyed the quotation.

Two of the foregoing anecdotes illustrate Lowe's felicity in adapting Biblical texts. So, too, does his famous sentence on the Irish Church—*Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?* He showed a like ingenious readiness when, on the eve of a Dissolution (which was kept secret), he and several other Cabinet Ministers dined together. Mr. Lowe then proposed for a grace, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

Speaking of a great ecclesiastic in reference to some question of orthodoxy, he said, 'Oh, you know, the Archbishop has taken the Queen's shilling.' I may cap this with a remark of the late Sir Benjamin Brodie (the professor of chemistry), who, on my expressing surprise at some unexpected piece of orthodoxy on the part of a very Liberal clergyman, drily observed, 'It is hard for a dog to run with thirty-nine stones round its neck.'

Two of Mr. Lowe's opinions, unlike save in being alike unexpected, may here be thrown together. We learn with surprise that, in spite of his bad eyesight, he spoke of the *colouring* as what most struck him in Athens and its neighbourhood; and we learn with greater surprise, that he thought the first chapter of Isaiah the finest chapter in the Bible—finer, therefore, than the finest of the Psalms, or of the twenty-seven chapters subjoined to Isaiah by the great Prophet of the Exile.

We cannot but suspect that, in this latter criticism, Mr. Lowe in some measure took what Matthew Arnold calls 'the historic estimate.' In preferring the first chapter of Isaiah to the fortieth, the fifty-fifth, and the sixtieth, he must needs have been biassed by the thought that, in this chapter, we come suddenly upon the beginning of a new ascent, upon the first utterance of an earlier John the Baptist—of the harbinger of a better religion.

Mr. Lowe accepted his peerage with very doubtful satisfaction, considering himself as thenceforth bound with a golden chain, or rather as doomed to a political euthanasia.¹ He gave my father-in-law (the late Lord Egerton) a humorous account of the interview in which the subject was first broached to him. He seems to have wittily applied to himself the four Latin verbs active in form but passive in sense: *fio, exsulo, vapulo, veneo* (I am made, I am exiled, I am whipped, I am sold).

He regarded as a sort of desecration the taking down of Wellington's statue from the arch near Hyde Park Corner. So strongly did he feel on this subject that he went the length of applying to it—indirectly, of course—Juvenal's famous lines on the dragging down of the statue of Sejanus. He quoted the lines in Dryden's translation:—

¹ Lord Beaconsfield, when asked how he liked being in the House of Lords, answered, 'I am dead, but I am in the Elysian fields.' To *him* (a *præsens divus* in his little heaven below), this novel mode of death was in nowise unacceptable: *Credibile est ipsum sic voluisse mori.*

Down go the titles ; and the statue crowned
 Is by base hands in the next river drown'd.
 The guiltless horses, and the chariot wheel,
 The same effects of vulgar fury feel.

In his old age his literary investigations were usually devoted to some point of scholarship, or to some historical question bearing on matters of passing interest. On one occasion he gave a curious proof both of the breadth of his culture and of the non-failure of his eyesight. He asked for a Hebrew Bible in the Athenæum library. He added with a smile, 'Without points' (that is, vowel-marks). In fact, he wanted to have the Hebrew text in its original form. Bentham warned his followers to beware of 'question-begging epithets;' and, if he were now alive, he would probably warn controversialists, orthodox and Positivist alike, to beware of question-begging capital letters (*latet error in capitalibus*). Lord Sherbrooke's smile showed a disposition to beware of question-begging vowel-marks,—of vowel-marks by which pious commentators, while seeming merely to explain an obscure text, may unintentionally have (in legal phrase) made its meaning *elastic*—have adapted it to their own views. Might he not have exclaimed: *Timeo vates et dona ferentes?*

The following incident reached me less directly. It is said that there is (or was) a strong personal resemblance between the King of the Belgians and Mr. Mundella; and his Majesty speaks excellent English. Chancing to meet Mr. Lowe at an evening party, the King expressed regret that he had not seen him before. This amazed Mr. Lowe, who imagined his interlocutor to be Mr. Mundella, between whom and himself there had recently been some sharp encounters in debate. He expressed his astonishment with a frankness by which, until the circumstance was explained, his Majesty must have been not a little startled. Perhaps, after all, this comedy of errors is merely *ben trovata*; but, if so, it is *benissimo trovata*.

One of the ablest of Liberal politicians said to me in 1876,

‘ If I ask Lowe his opinion on a public question, he will generally give me his answer in writing, stating his reasons in the fewest and clearest possible words. If I ask Forster for his opinion, the difference is great indeed ! The odd thing is that Forster may be Prime Minister some day, while Lowe cannot. It seems that the British public like statesmen to be a little confused ! ’ George Eliot has somewhere said that if you tell an average Englishman that black is black, he will shake his head and look puzzled. But, if you say that black is not so very black, he will say, ‘ Exactly.’

Not long ago, a member of the Civil Service who, if I were at liberty to mention his name, would be regarded by all readers as eminently qualified to form an opinion, was asked whom he ranked first of the statesmen under whom he had served. He unhesitatingly answered : ‘ Gladstone, Disraeli, and Lowe.’ All the rest he placed distinctly below these three.

Lord Sherbrooke startled me by adopting Mill’s view that the Utilitarian principle ought to be extended to our relations with the lower animals. In my ‘ Recollections of Pattison ’ I say that

it is less easy to show that the principle ought not to be so extended, than that, if so extended, it might involve a *reductio ad euthanasiam*. May it not be argued that, from the philozoic point of view, the existence of the human race is altogether a mishap ? Does the Unconstitutional Monarchy of Man minister to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of sentient beings (including earwigs and animalcules) ?

When I sent this volume to Lord Sherbrooke, I wished to discover whether he would object to the foregoing passage. I have mislaid his letter of acknowledgment ; but I remember that it contained the statement that he ‘ knew Mark Pattison well,’ and his reference to the biographical notice was more than sympathetic.

It appears, however, that, in spite of their mutual regard,

there was less complete sympathy between the two men than might have been expected. In seeking to explain this anomaly, let us revert to our former comparison. The natural tendency, we have said, both of Lowe and of Pattison was to be (morally) dazzled by side-lights. Well, Pattison let the side-lights play upon him, while he himself studied them and their effects; but Lowe, being a man of action, had to rid himself of the side-lights; he had (metaphorically as well as literally) to wear metal spectacles. The result was that his intellect became trenchant, while Pattison's became more and more subtle and sceptical. Both these classes of men have their proper work; but the difference between the two classes of work, and, indeed, of workers, is very great. The sword of Richard is not the scimitar of Saladin.

And now we can define more exactly than heretofore the nature of Mr. Lowe's success, and can indicate one cause of its incompleteness, or rather of its differing in kind from the success of a trained craftsman. Like most of us, but more than most of us, he was conscious of a twofold or manifold disposition. A permanent official, who did much business with him, told me that he had expected to find him 'overbearing,' but that, on the contrary, he found him not merely willing to listen to reason, but sometimes even 'too ready' to be swayed by arguments on the opposite side. In fact, Mr. Lowe was, in a manner, a union of extremes. Boswell has somewhere observed that the inconsistencies or anomalies of a great man are more apparent than those of lesser folk; and he might have added that one reason of their being so apparent, so disquieting, is that the great man himself can scarcely be quite unaware of them. Thus it was that Mr. Lowe paid to the uttermost farthing the penalty which all rich and complex natures pay more or less. The dogmatic force which had become a second nature to him never quite blended with, and never quite extinguished, the critical diffidence which formed part of his original nature. Perhaps, even, the dogmatism

may have taken its characteristic form through a half-consciousness of the underlying scepticism. I have elsewhere contended that, in extreme cases, physical courage may be a harder virtue for a general in command, than for a subordinate; for the subordinate ignores the danger while he is facing it, whereas the general has to take full account of it all the time. Like the general, Mr. Lowe had to combine the man of action with the man of thought. As a man of thought, he could not but see clearly the details of the adverse point of view which, as a man of action, it behoved him to keep in the background.¹

In his case, the manysidedness of the philosopher clashed somewhat with the consistency of the politician, and with the confidence of the orator; the philosopher in him threw cold water on the orator's red heat. I compared his intellect to Richard's sword. More strictly, I should say that it did much of the work of a sword, and a little of the work of a scimitar; each work it did excellently, but it could not be expected to do either perfectly.

Mr. Lowe once (unlike the villains of *Hudibras*) damned the virtue he was inclined to, by paradoxically pronouncing himself 'sure that candour was the original sin.'² I have already alluded to his *παρρησία*, to the natural, but skilfully and effectively utilised, tendency to outspokenness which was as conspicuous in Mr. Lowe as in Prince Bismarck, and which, if not always conducive to popularity, was assuredly an element of moral force. I shall not be misunderstood if I

¹ My meaning may be illustrated by the life-like portrait which Disraeli, in *Tancred*, has given of Monckton Milnes in his character of Vavasour. He writes: 'With catholic sympathies and an eclectic turn of mind, Mr. Vavasour saw something good in everybody and everything, which is certainly amiable, and, perhaps, just, but disqualifies a man in some degree for the business of life, which requires for its conduct a certain degree of prejudice.' Observe that Monckton Milnes had far more of this genial scepticism—of this free play of the side-lights—than Mr. Lowe had; and he was proportionally less successful as a practical politician. In Cicero's phrase, he formed his opinions *fortasse vere sed ad communem utilitatem parum*.

² Lord Houghton's *Life*, vol. ii. p. 175.

illustrate this wholesome frankness by recalling Shakespeare's comment on one who resembled Mr. Lowe as little in character as in political principles. Cassius says of Casca :—

This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,
Which gives men stomach to digest his words
With better appetite.

Let me state my meaning more precisely. What a man habitually gives to the world, the world at last habitually expects from him. And thus the world at last expected the unvarnished truth from Mr. Lowe—expected it, and generally acquiesced in it. He became, as it were, a privileged orator. A less able man would soon have abused such a privilege, and would have lost it. But Mr. Lowe forbore to compromise himself by exaggeration.

He will be remembered as an orator at once brilliant and trustworthy—as *splendide verax*.

Athenæum Club, Pall Mall, S.W. :

Jan. 9, 1893.

LETTER FROM THE REV. WILLIAM ROGERS

THIS letter, from the popular Rector of Bishopsgate, came to hand as the final sheets were being passed for press, and its contents could not, therefore, be incorporated with the text.

Rectory, Bishopsgate: March 1893.

Dear Sir,—I esteem it a great compliment that Mr. Goschen should have mentioned me to you as being on old and intimate terms with Mr. Lowe, for to be reputed a friend of so eminent and accomplished a man is a distinction.

When I first went to Oxford, Mr. Lowe was the great 'coach' of the period, and I have heard him say he never worked so hard or felt his work so oppressive as during that time—ten hours a day with pupils.

In after days, though I frequently met him at the houses of Professor Jowett, the Rothschilds, Lord Airlie, and others, I was not brought into intimate relations with him till later, when he did me the honour of consulting me on the subject of popular education. Our intercourse, however, on my part at all events, was always a little strained and reserved; for in his company, so little was he changed, I could never shake off the feeling that he was still the Chief Examiner in the Little-go School, wielding the great power of Pluck, which he exercised with a liberal hand. I remember on one occasion when I was summoned to give evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, of which he was the chairman, I approached the ordeal with considerable diffidence. He, however, treated me with great consideration and respect. I thanked him afterwards for the manner in which he had conducted the examination, attributing his moderation to his sympathy with me in the question before the Committee. 'Not at all,' he said; 'I always look upon you as a boy, and I treated you with the delicacy due to your tender years:

Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.'

At the time when the Bill for the amendment of popular education was under consideration, he used frequently to advise with me, as I was supposed to be an expert, having been member of the Royal Commission (Duke of Newcastle's), and having had an oppor-

tunity of practically carrying out my views. On one occasion he asked me to come down to his house at Caterham to take luncheon with him and to go afterwards for a walk over the Downs. I went. We had an excellent luncheon and a most agreeable walk, but the word 'Education' was never mentioned.

While on this subject, I remember that on one occasion I had to stand by a friend, an inspector of schools, who was summoned to appear before 'My Lords' to answer for misconduct of which he had been guilty. The charge was that he had kissed some girls on Putney Bridge. My friend pleaded guilty, and all I had to do was to get as good terms for him as I could. The three judges were Lord Granville (President of the Council), Mr. Lowe (Vice-President), and Mr. Lingen (Secretary)—Minos, Rhadamanthus, Æacus. I begged them to deal with the culprit leniently. There arose a great dispute: one of the judges said he ought to be summarily dismissed, the other two were more merciful, and at last it was arranged that he was to have three months' leave and then disappear. I met Mr. Lowe in the lobby afterwards, and I said, 'I think you were rather hard upon the poor fellow, for, after all, he has only committed an offence of which we have all of us at some time in our lives been guilty.' He said, 'Yes—it was not the fact that he kissed the girls, but that he was such a fool as to do it on Putney Bridge.'

Some time ago Baroness Burdett-Coutts's Market, upon which she had expended large sums of money, was the lion of the East End. Mr. Lowe proposed paying me a visit in the City, and going afterwards to inspect the market. When we arrived we found magnificent buildings, model lodging-houses, plenty of bricks and mortar, but no life. 'Where is the Fish market?' said Mr. Lowe. And we were shown a Costermonger's Hall, containing a few red-herrings and some whelks, and, naturally, no customers. Being of a literary turn of mind, Mr. Lowe wished to see the reading-room. We were introduced to a spacious apartment with a few chairs and a table, upon which reposed a beer-stained copy of *Bell's Life*, and an old sheepskin-bound Bible, tattered and torn. Any friend of Mr. Lowe's may conceive the sarcastic remarks of the great economist; giving utterance to which, in no measured terms, he retired.

Mr. Lowe, though he was a statesman and a profound scholar, enjoyed most keenly the fun of life. So I am disposed to think he would not be displeased if these trivial episodes found an odd corner in his biography.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM ROGERS.



Sir John Shertbrooke K.B.
(1796)

MEMOIR
OF
SIR JOHN COAPE SHERBROOKE, G.C.B.

CHAPTER I

INDIA
(1797—1799)

It must be frankly avowed that this brief memoir of Sir John Sherbrooke is of the nature of an afterthought called forth as the result of investigations demanded by the preceding pages. The actual relationship between Sir John and Lord Sherbrooke was a very close and somewhat peculiar one, being that of a cousin by descent and an uncle by marriage, he and Lord Sherbrooke's father, the rector of Bingham, having married sisters. Accordingly the late Lord Sherbrooke from a boy always referred to the old Peninsular veteran and Governor-General of Canada as 'Uncle.'

Apart from their close relationship, and the similarity in many points of their character, there is a kinship also in their careers, each having passed a number of eventful years in the vast outlying portions of the Empire of Greater Britain. It is true that their colonial records are in a sense utterly diverse—the one, a born soldier, serving his Sovereign in many countries and ending his public life as Viceroy in British North America; the other going forth as a simple colonist to New South Wales, and there persistently, in the face of Viceroys and other constituted authorities, upholding the inherited liberties and noble traditions of his race. But, as every colonial Englishman instinctively feels, there is a kind of family likeness in the inner histories of all colonies which gives to the story of a Canadian Governor-General and that of an Australian colonist

and statesman a strange and startling similarity. From their different standpoints they are each called upon to solve precisely the same social and political problems. From the minds of both, if of the calibre of these two, there could never be absent that strange, eventful history of the disruption between the mother-country and the older American colonies which are now the United States.

It is, perhaps, fortunate for the present writer that the scope of this work would not admit of a full and exhaustive biography of Sir John Sherbrooke. For, strange as it may appear in this age of reckless self-advertisement and inquisitorial journalism, when he passed away in his quiet country home only sixty years ago but few echoes of his deeds reverberated in any portion of the land he had served so long and so faithfully. The military biographies of the time would be ransacked in vain for any account of the hero of Talavera.

Sir John Coape Sherbrooke was born in the year 1764, and entered the Army on December 7, 1780, his first regiment being the 4th King's Own Infantry. From this he went into the 85th, from which he finally exchanged into the 33rd Regiment of Foot. After he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, he served in Flanders with the Duke of York, whose unfortunate and memorable retreat the 33rd was ordered to cover. This gave Colonel Sherbrooke the first opportunity of showing that cool moral courage which, even more than mere physical bravery, is the true characteristic of the civilised warrior. To be thus ordered to cover a retreat might not seem an auspicious opening of a military career; but as in life, so in soldiering, it is adversity which tries a man, and brings out his finer qualities—if he be fortunate enough to possess any. Such clear evidence did Colonel Sherbrooke on this occasion display of calm intrepidity and firmness that it gave all under his command the requisite sense of complete reliance which will alone make men faithfully and intelligently obey a leader. From this time forward he could feel assured that the 33rd would do whatever he ordered, for the regiment had now a fixed belief in his judgment, and a feeling that whatever line of action he decided on would in all human probability be crowned with success.

Two regiments of French cavalry were seen coming down on the 33rd, with the intention of charging them in the rear and cutting them to pieces. Colonel Sherbrooke faced his men to the rear and gave the word, '33rd, Steady!' Not a man of them moved, but in this supreme moment stood like statues and awaited the onset. When the first French regiment was within fifty yards the command was given to 'Fire!' The steady coolness of the men gave it full effect; scarcely a musket was fired in vain, men and horses rolled on the ground; those who were neither unhorsed nor wounded halted

and attempted to retreat, but before they could get out of range a second volley completed the work of destruction, and the regiment was all but destroyed to a man.

The second French regiment, on witnessing this sorry scene, with a true Falstaffian sense of the superiority of discretion over mere valour, faced about and were no more seen.

This brilliant action Sir John Sherbrooke always declared was more satisfactory to him, and he took more pride in it, than in any affair in which he was ever engaged. The mutual confidence then and there established between the Colonel and his regiment rendered them, he was wont to declare, invincible; and as we shall see in the subsequent narrative, it was to the 33rd that his heart always went out, and the last honour conferred on him, at his own desire, by a grateful sovereign, after his retirement from official life, was the colonelcy of his old regiment.

After the 33rd returned from Flanders it sailed with an expedition to the West Indies, but tremendous storms drove all the ships that escaped their fury back to England. In those grim days the doors of the Temple of Janus were never shut. On April 6, 1796, Colonel Sherbrooke sailed with his regiment to India, disembarking at Calcutta, February 16, 1797. He soon afterwards joined the army under the command of General (afterwards Lord) Harris in the Mysore.

In Wilkes's *Historical Sketches of the South of India* will be found a very clear description of the military operations that culminated in the storming of Seringapatam.

'On the 27th of March, 1799,' says this authority, 'the English army, on preparing to take up its ground of encampment to the westward of Malvilly, distinctly perceived the Suldaun's army drawn up on a height little exceeding two miles from the intended encampment. The English general (Harris) ordered the ground to be reconnoitred, and the troops to continue their march in such order as should admit either of encampment or action. The troops intended for the advance pickets, under Colonel Sherbrooke, moved out as usual to examine their ground, and were soon threatened by large bodies of the enemy. After some manœuvring they took post with their right to a village, and the support of these troops eventually brought on the action. The division under Colonel Wellesley advanced in echelon of corps to turn the enemy's right, supported by a brigade of cavalry under Colonel Floyd. As Colonel Wellesley approached his object the Suldaun's cushoons advanced in very creditable style against the 33rd, which was the leading corps, giving their fire and receiving that of the 33rd till within sixty yards, when the regiment, continuing to advance with a quickened step, they gave

way, and Colonel Floyd, availing himself of the critical instant, charged and destroyed them to a man. The result to the Suldaun of this injudicious affair was the loss of 1,000 men.'

General Harris had no despicable foe in Tippoo Suldaun, and his stronghold of Seringapatam might have been made impregnable had the great Mussulman despot condescended to follow the counsel of the French Engineer officers who were with him. The Suldaun was in all respects a typical Oriental potentate, ruling his subjects with a veritable rod of iron. He was a bigoted Mussulman, filled with a fiery zeal against the Giaour, subjecting the Christian soldiers and the Hindoo women to the greatest cruelties. But with all his cruel and fanatical zeal he was a true fatalist, and accordingly resigned himself, as is well known, with calm fortitude to the storming soldiery of Baird.

It would be useless to recapitulate the innumerable cruelties of this remarkable Oriental despot. But anything concerning Colonel Sherbrooke's regiment has a direct connection with this narrative, and may excuse the relation of the following genuine tale of horror. It seems that twelve men of the 33rd lost their way and were made prisoners. They were taken into Seringapatam, and brought before Tippoo, who ordered that they should be 'murdered by threes' at night. For four successive nights the victims were taken from their cells. This delay not only increased their torture, but enabled their torturer to devise fresh methods of despatching them.

One mode was by twisting their heads while their bodies were held fast, thus breaking their necks. For this purpose the Suldaun's jetties were employed—a caste of Hindoos who performed feats of strength. Others were despatched by having nails driven through their skulls. No wonder that rough old General Baird, who had himself undergone the torture of Tippoo's dungeons, was heard to declare that 'he would deliver Tippoo over to be dealt with by the grenadiers of the 33rd.'

We now come to the siege of Seringapatam. It is not necessary to repeat any of the full accounts of this memorable achievement of British arms, which may be found in every Anglo-Indian military history. From first to last Colonel Sherbrooke was in the very thick of the fray. It was he who dislodged the enemy from the advanced position they occupied in front of the outer field-works, by which 250 men out of 2,000 were destroyed and the remainder compelled to fall back, while the English losses were one man killed and twenty-four wounded. The possession of this entrenched position mainly contributed to General Baird's success. The assault on Seringapatam was made by two columns of troops under Colonel Sherbrooke and Colonel Dunlop, while Colonel Arthur Wellesley commanded the reserve.

The following letter, written by Colonel Sherbrooke two days after the storming of the fort to his brother, William Sherbrooke, conveyed to his family a modest account of his own share in the memorable event:—

Camp before Seringapatam : May 6, 1799

Dear Sherbrooke,—I am happy to have it in my power to inform you that Seringapatam was taken by storm on the 4th inst. Tippoo Sultaun was killed, and two of his sons taken in the Palace. A third (who was the eldest of the young princes that were given over last war as hostages to Lord Cornwallis) delivered himself up early the next morning. He asked Kowl—i.e. *protection of person and property*—for Hyder Saeb (who was the favourite natural son of Tippoo). This having been promised, I suppose he will be in very soon, as his camp is not above ten coss from the fort. Major-General Baird commanded the storm. The troops were divided into two columns. I had charge of the one directed to take to the right on entering the breach, Colonel Dunlop of that ordered to the left. The loss on our side I have not been able as yet accurately to ascertain; the carnage among the enemy was dreadful. We marched out of our trenches to the attack at one o'clock, and the whole was carried in broad daylight. I received a spent ball, which knocked me down, on entering the breach, but soon recovered, and have got over the siege without any wound or trying whatever. I send this by the overland despatch, which will not take letters of a larger size, to inform my dear mother and those interested about me that I am well by the earliest conveyance in my power. With kind remembrance to all, believe me, dear Sherbrooke,

Your very affectionate brother,

J. C. SHERBROOKE.

In a brief personal memoir of this kind it is not, perhaps, desirable to discuss the incidents of the campaign in the Mysore. Those familiar with this stirring episode in Anglo-Indian history may remember that there was considerable friction, to use a mild phrase, between Baird and Harris, and also between the former and Lord Wellesley, who, Baird considered, had shown undue favouritism to his brother, then Colonel Wellesley, by appointing him, shortly after the storming, Commandant of Seringapatam. It is, however, noteworthy that Colonel Sherbrooke stood well in the eyes of each of these distinguished military leaders. In an anonymous, and, on the whole, worthless life of Sir David Baird, the authorship of which is generally attributed to Theodore Hook, it is recorded that Colonel Sherbrooke, on behalf of the field-officers who personally served under General Baird, presented him with a

dress-sword of the value of 200 guineas. This gift seems to have been intended to mark the fact that to General Baird, and not to his commanding officer, General Harris, belonged the honour of subduing Tippoo's stronghold. Some unpleasant correspondence passed between the conflicting parties, but it is noticeable how in everything from the pen of Arthur Wellesley, even during a disagreeable *contretemps* of this character, there shines out in his clear transparent phrases the spirit of a true gentleman.

To revert to Colonel Sherbrooke. There can be no better evidence of his valour at the storming of Seringapatam than the report of General Baird, which was afterwards embodied in the General Order of the Commander-in-Chief.

General Order

Seringapatam: May 8, 1799

Lieutenant-General Harris has particular pleasure in publishing to the Army the following extract of a report transmitted to him yesterday by Major-General Baird, as it places in a distinguished point of view the merit of an officer, on the very important occasion referred to, whose general gallantry and good conduct since he has served with this army have not failed to recommend him strongly to the Commander-in-Chief:—

‘If, where all behaved nobly, it is proper to mention individual merit, I know no one so justly entitled to praise as Colonel Sherbrooke, to whose exertions I feel myself much indebted for the success of the attack.’

Colonel Sherbrooke was now actively engaged, not only on the great Indian battlefields of the Empire, but immediately under the eagle eye of Sir Arthur Wellesley. Scattered here and there through the earlier volumes of the *Wellington Despatches*—that unique collection of official documents, written in such straightforward and vigorous English—will be found interesting references to Sir John Sherbrooke. From these it will be necessary only to quote sparingly, though in the sincere hope that the reader may be induced to take down from the shelves Colonel Gurwood's volumes, which supply one of the finest commentaries on the modern history of England in the language. But in addition to the official and other references made to Sir John Sherbrooke by the Duke of Wellington in his despatches and general orders, it is with unfeigned pleasure that I take this opportunity of transcribing the full text of certain letters of the Duke hitherto unpublished, and which the Sherbrooke family have religiously preserved. The first of these reveals the fact of the chronic ill-health which, in the case of a man of a less heroic mould than Sir John Sherbrooke, would have effectually

marred his career from the very outset. No commander was less tolerant of light excuses for the non-fulfilment of duty than the Iron Duke. When, therefore, he who never spared himself or others furnishes excuses for a subordinate on the score of ill-health, we may be sure that the physical suffering was severe and incapacitating.

*Letter from the Duke of Wellington (then Sir Arthur Wellesley)
to Colonel Sherbrooke*

Camp: Oct. 15, 1799

Dear Sherbrooke,—In a former letter I told you that my intention in regard to the Bungalow in the garden of the Saul Bang was to make it the quarter of the commanding officer of the regiment, whom I intended eventually to quarter in the Palace, which has hitherto been an hospital. The necessity, however, of finding a quarter for Colonel Close for the present, and of giving him the palace at Saul Bang, as nothing else will be large enough to hold him and his gentlemen, will occasion the delay of the execution of this plan, at least for some time. If, therefore, you wish to inhabit the Bungalow, I have no objection; but I think that you will find yourself more comfortable, as well as more conveniently situated, in my house, to a residence in which you are perfectly welcome, whether I am in or out of it. I am sorry to hear that you have had a return of your bad health, and that in consequence thereof there should be a necessity of your leaving Seringapatam for a change of air. I will not hide from you that I have long thought that your health has been worse in India than I recollect it to have been since I have known you; it is, indeed, almost true that you have enjoyed scarcely one day's perfect health since you landed in the country. Under this circumstance, is it worth considering whether it would not be proper for you to go Home? I can only say that, were I in your situation, I would go in the first ship that sailed. I am now giving you an opinion contrary to my own interests; I know that if you go my troubles and anxieties will be twice greater than they are at present; but that consideration has no weight when the health of a man is at stake. The future ease of your circumstances might probably create some doubt in your mind respecting the expediency of going immediately, if there appeared any probability of your being placed in a position by which they might be bettered. Since I have left Seringapatam I have written to General Harris twice, and have stated my wishes that you should be provided for to your satisfaction. To that part of these letters I have received no answer, and although the arrangements for this country are not made yet, or are not made publick, I cannot but augur ill from this silence. It is true that he may have made an arrangement in which

your interests and claims are considered, but he has not imparted it to me.

In your situation I would do this : I would make up my mind, and prepare everything quietly, to go away in the January or February fleet ; if you find that your health mends, or if your claims are considered, you can stay, and nobody will be the wiser. But if you continue in bad health, or if you are passed over, you ought to go without hesitation. There is no chance of a war in this country, which might make it worth your while to stay.

Let the 12th Regiment have the Tooke Klanah as barracks when they arrive.

Believe me,

Yours most sincerely,

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

Sir John Sherbrooke's brief but brilliant Indian career was now drawing to a close. As soon as his intended retirement was known a meeting of the officers of the 33rd took place, and Major Shee was requested to convey to their Colonel the expression of their keen regret at losing him, and their sorrow for the cause that compelled his departure. Colonel Sherbrooke's comrades in arms further stated that 'they feel some consolation in reflecting that when the service of your country called for your exertions, neither ill-health nor any other cause could induce you to decline it.' And with many expressions of warm personal regard they express the hope that they may yet again serve under his command.

On the day of the receipt of this letter (December 5) Colonel Sherbrooke feelingly responded. And so for the time being his connection with the 33rd Regiment came to an end.

Turning to the *Wellington Despatches* (vol. i. p. 49), there appears a communication to Colonel Close, from Sir Arthur Wellesley, which shows that to the very last day of his sojourn in India the invalid officer was doing his best to withstand native impudence and rapacity :—

Seringapatam : December 26, 1799

. . . I have just received your letter of the 24th. You are the best judge what ought to be done with the Amildar at Chenahalam. Colonel Sherbrooke complains of him, and it appears by the man's own account that he had no reason to complain of the colonel. As he had a gentleman with him who understands the language, there could be no doubt of his having refused to go to Colonel Sherbrooke. This the Amildar now denies ; but I observe a probability that it is true, even in the excuse which he makes—viz. that he had not received orders to advance and meet him. Colonel Sherbrooke is

not a man who requires all the extraordinary attentions described in your letter, nor, if he did, is it probable that any of the amildars would pay them; but it is proper that he and all the officers passing the road should receive civility, and therefore it is that I wish that this amildar may receive a check for his conduct which will be an example to others. Of this we may be certain, that the officers will not bear incivility, and therefore it is better for all parties that the natives should understand at once that they are to be attentive to travellers. You must be as sensible of this as I am, and whatever you do will be right.

Three days after this, in a letter dated Seringapatam, December 29, 1799, addressed to Colonel Mackenzie, afterwards General Mackenzie Fraser, the great commander thus refers to the close of Sir John Sherbrooke's Indian career:—

‘. . . You will have heard of Sherbrooke's departure for Europe. He has never had a day's health in India, and he therefore does right to go home.’

Sir John remained in India till January 26, 1800, when he embarked on board the *Marquis of Lansdowne* East Indiaman for England, and landed at Eastbourne on July 5 following, with a great accession to his military fame, but, unfortunately, with health materially injured by severe campaigning under an Indian sun. The next six years was a period of comparative rest. He held successively different commands in Sussex, Norfolk, and Essex. On January 1, 1805, he attained the rank of major-general. On June 14 following he sailed for Sicily in the *Chiffonne*, and then recommenced another period of strenuous toil and unremitting anxiety.

CHAPTER II

SICILY

(1807—1808)

WHEN Sir John Sherbrooke took the command at Messina, it was a trying and anxious time, for Bonaparte was now in the very heyday of his fame, and was toppling over old thrones and principalities like ninepins. All over Europe, but particularly in the south, there was a party, generally styling itself the popular party, ready to hail the Corsican conqueror as a heaven-sent redeemer from old galling feudal despotisms. Meanwhile England by sea and land, in every zone and clime, was warring against the forces and the wild

enthusiasm created by the genius of this modern Attila. At this time Southern Italy was all but in the hands of the French invader. The English held on to Scylla, on the Italian coast opposite Messina; but General Reynier was in possession of the surrounding country. To hold Scylla or to vacate it after Reggio fell became more difficult every day.

Communications with the outer world were few and far between. The only circumstance that could have lent a ray of hope to Major-General Sherbrooke at Messina, or to Colonel (afterwards Sir Hudson) Lowe at Capri, was the fact that the ever-vigilant Collingwood had command of the fleet in the Mediterranean. Once at their perilous posts, these trusty soldiers expected nothing from Downing Street, and were, therefore, not disappointed. All depended on themselves and on the great seaman, generally, at this time, lying off Syracuse, waiting day and night to dart out and destroy the French fleet.

At Messina we find General Sherbrooke soon again in very active service indeed, not only as a soldier, but as a diplomatist. In May, 1807, he sailed in the *Melpomene* to Alexandria, and returned to Messina in the September following, after conducting a successful negotiation with the Beys Achmet and Emin. The rest of his weary and anxious stay in Sicily would be almost a blank to us save for certain official despatches and private letters to Sir Hudson Lowe, which have been preserved in the latter's large and interesting collection; and of these documents, the greater part throw, at this distance of time, but little light on the narrative. It is significant that in almost every letter the isolated General begs the Colonel, who, from Capri, had greater facilities of communication with the outer world, to forward him, whenever possible, 'packets of *Foreign Gazettes*.' In fact, such was the dearth of news to the English garrison at Messina, that no officer ever seems to have put pen to paper without asking his correspondent for one of these journals, though knowing full well that every number would be stuffed with Napoleonic fictions for the special purpose of misleading him. The following letter may, perhaps, give a clearer impression of General Sherbrooke's far from enviable position than many pages of descriptive writing:—

Messina : January 1, 1808

Sir,—I have to acknowledge yours of the 2nd ult., with its enclosures and the *Gazettes* sent along with it. . . . I trust that you will be able to discover the murderer of the soldier of the Royal Corsican Rangers, as, exclusive of the interest one feels when any of our own people are cut off in this infamous way, it is always for the general benefit of society that the perpetrator of such a horrid deed should be brought to justice.

Your two letters of December 27, with the *Foreign Gazettes* you entrusted to Captain Church,¹ have been delivered to me by that officer. . . . We had already received intelligence, by the way of Trieste, that the Russian Ambassador had been ordered by his own Court to quit London, and that the English Minister had been sent away from St. Petersburg. An immediate declaration of war on our part will, I should suppose, be the natural consequence.

As I think it will not be prudent to allow too many of your officers to be absent together at this particular period, I should rather wish Ensign Cerbara's leave to be delayed until Captain Church's return. I send this by Captain Handfield, of the *Delight*, and am, Sir,

Your obedient, humble servant,

J. C. SHERBROOKE.

It will be seen that when this letter was written the war-clouds were more threatening than ever. It well behoved this handful of English soldiers at remote and isolated outposts to be brave as well as wary. The whole world seemed to be rising in arms against their little island home.

On the same day Colonel Lowe informed Admiral Thornborough, at Palermo, of an ominous proclamation to the effect that the Emperor of Russia would cease all communication with Great Britain until satisfaction was made to Denmark and peace concluded with France, adding, however: 'received through the suspicious medium of a French translation.' Suspicious medium or not, the news was so important that Captain Handfield was despatched with a copy of the Russian proclamation to Lord Collingwood at Syracuse.

All this time General Sherbrooke had to keep a sharp look-out on an active enemy much closer to him than the Russian Czar; this was the French general, Reynier, who, greatly reinforced, was pushing forward a body of troops into Lower Calabria.

'General Reynier,' he informs Colonel Lowe, 'is at present, with between three and four thousand men, upon the Piano di Melia, with supporting corps at Palmi, Seminara, &c. He has made a road over the Aspromonte, by which he expects to get his artillery up to attack Scylla Castle. By the assistance of the Masse, which are collected thereabouts, I have been enabled to render the Pass of Solano impracticable, for the present, at least, and these fellows, with a little encouragement I have given them, have already considerably annoyed the enemy.'

General Sherbrooke, like almost all men of highly nervous

¹ Afterwards Sir Richard Church.

organisation and weak physical health, was subject, if things went wrong through the folly of others, to fits of violent rage. He was at all times a sharp disciplinarian. The following brief note to Colonel Lowe speaks for itself :—

Messina : January 19th, 1808

Sir,—Captain Church, of the Royal Corsican Rangers, having considerably overstayed the ten days' leave of absence I consented to your granting him, I have directed that officer to join his regiment by the present conveyance, and am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,
J. C. SHERBROOKE, Major-General.

The manner in which this sharp reproof was administered to the errant officer must have been very severe, for Colonel Bunbury, writing to Hudson Lowe on the same day, remarks :—' I am afraid Church has been hurt by the brusque (and perhaps rough) manners of our Commander.' But for all that, as we shall subsequently see, Colonel Bunbury, who had every opportunity at Messina of testing the commanding officer's capacity and character, formed the very highest opinion of him, and parted from him with every feeling of personal esteem and regret.

Day by day General Reynier was preparing to capture Scylla ; he and General Sherbrooke were at remarkably close quarters. On the morning of January 30, 1808, the English commander, sauntering along the beach and keeping a sharp look-out with his field-glasses, observed some battalions of French troops lurking round the outskirts of Reggio. While gazing he suddenly saw the four Neapolitan gunboats of Messina making their way across the Straits. General Sherbrooke, who was an extremely vigilant man and very suspicious of the Neapolitan character, made immediate inquiries at the arsenal as to the movements of these gunboats, and was assured that they were crossing over to punish the Frenchmen for so imprudently exposing themselves. But, as the General quickly noted, the gunboats did little in the way of cannonading the foe ; he saw at a glance that our treacherous ' allies ' had simply gone over, gunboats and all, to General Reynier. ' Run, run ! ' he exclaimed to Bunbury, ' run to Captain Handfield, and tell him to bring those d—d villains back.' Captain Handfield was the commander of the *Delight* brig-of-war, and the *aide* ran off as fast as he could to the quay at Messina. One can picture the rage of the irascible English general who at such times was not sparing of strong language ; but the incident had a tragic ending. Captain Handfield, as gallant a young English sailor as ever walked the quarter-deck, realising the situation, prepared without a moment's loss to chase the run-

aways, and General Sherbrooke, stamping with impatience, soon saw the *Delight* in full pursuit. But by this time the Neapolitan gunboats were lying under shelter of the walls, behind which were the French infantry. It appears that with that dramatic instinct so strong in Southern races the Neapolitan gunboats and the French soldiery indulged in a kind of sham fight, and the crews of the gunboats, after aimlessly discharging their volleys in the air, hauled down their colours. The French soldiers were just boarding the gunboats when the *Delight* came up, and in the excitement of the moment Captain Handfield ran the brig so close in, that he was exposed to a deadly fire from the French infantry on the walls. The brave young fellow and most of his crew were shot dead in the space of a few minutes. The French troops now thought they had secured the English brig as well as the Neapolitan gunboats; but, fortunately, the *Bittern* sloop-of-war, which had been cruising in the Straits of Messina, came to the rescue. Captain Downes of the *Bittern* dislodged the French soldiery from the *Delight* after a sharp engagement; many of them were killed scrambling on shore, but it was found impossible to float the *Delight*, and she was burned. The great gain to the French was the acquisition of the 24-pounders in the Neapolitan gunboats; with these they could pound at the castle of Scylla. General Sherbrooke had previously made up his mind to cross the Straits and land in the night and attack Reynier, but now his plans were all upset. Bunbury relates how after witnessing the escape of the gunboats he repaired to the arsenal and apostrophised the Commandant in these words:—

‘I don’t know what your government will do with you. You are not under my command, luckily for you; for if you were, by G——, I would try you by a drumhead court-martial and hang you up in half an hour.’

‘And,’ adds Bunbury grimly, ‘Sherbrooke would assuredly have done so.’ In a day or two he cooled down, and there is no trace of his tremendous rage and excitement in the following brief letter to Hudson Lowe, conveying the intelligence of the loss of the gunboats and the death of Captain Handfield.

Messina : February 2, 1808

The *Kingfisher*, which is a long way off, having sent a boat on shore, not meaning to anchor here but to return to Capri, I write a few very hurried lines to inform you of the melancholy fate of the *Delight*, and of her late much-to-be-lamented commander. The enemy, on the evening of the 30th ult., possessed themselves of four Sicilian gunboats, which the *Delight* endeavoured to recover, in doing which the brig got on shore near Pintimile, just under a wall and house occupied by the French. Captain Handfield was shot

dead through the head, a number of his people were killed, and Captain Seacombe, of the *Glatton* (who went on this occasion on board the *Delight*), was wounded and made prisoner with the remainder of the ship's company.

I have sent over a flag of truce to General Reynier, who has permitted Captain Seacombe to return on parole, and has consented to exchange the other prisoners.

The wounded men, with the dead body of Captain Handfield, are here, and I am now going to pay the last sad tribute of respect to the memory of that very zealous, active, enterprising officer. Indeed, I have seldom seen a youth of fairer promise than the late Captain Handfield, and I, among his other surviving friends, have extremely to lament that the public service should have sustained so severe a loss.

In a subsequent despatch, dated April 11th, to Viscount Castlereagh, General Sherbrooke tells the same disastrous story, adding that Captain Seacombe died of his wounds. This disaster cast a gloom over the English forces at Messina, for everyone seems to have keenly lamented the loss of Captain Handfield. In his private correspondence with Hudson Lowe, Colonel Bunbury remarks: 'No officer of his rank was ever more generally lamented.'

The loss of the gunboats and of the *Delight*, with her gallant young captain, were the prelude to the evacuation of Scylla. General Sherbrooke had evidently for some time seen that this was inevitable, and had bent all his energies towards effecting a clearance with the minimum of loss to himself and the maximum of injury to the enemy. This, as the subsequent clear and characteristic despatch to Lord Castlereagh will show, he managed to achieve—the loss, it was estimated, to the English forces being twelve killed and thirty wounded, while the French lost at least 300.

Messina : Feb. 23

My Lord,—I have the honour to state, for your Lordship's information, that I have found it expedient and, to the best of my judgment, for the good of His Majesty's Service, to withdraw the British troops from the castle of Scylla, which was evacuated accordingly, by my order, on the 17th inst. The place was immediately entered by French troops, and it is now in their possession. I beg leave also to lay before your Lordship the enclosed report made to me by Lieut.-Colonel Robertson, late Commandant of Scylla, as it contains a detailed account of the events as they occurred from the 31st of December last (the day on which the enemy came before the place) until the time of its evacuation; which measure, I am led to hope, will not only appear to your Lordship to have been absolutely

necessary under the circumstances, but that our troops were not withdrawn until no other means remained of preventing the brave garrison falling into the enemy's hands. I likewise transmit a return of the killed and wounded of the detachments forming the British garrison of Scylla during the siege. Having already, on a former occasion, had the honour of submitting my opinion that the castle of Scylla would be no longer tenable when the enemy should succeed in bringing battering-guns against it, the fall of this place will excite no surprise in your Lordship's mind, when you perceive the very formidable force with which it was attacked, and the very ample means with which the enemy was provided to possess himself of it. Much reliance has been heretofore placed upon the assistance which might be afforded by the gun and mortar boats in the defence of Scylla, and of the annoyance they might give the enemy on his approaches ; but, unfortunately, the weather from the 11th to the 17th was so stormy that it was quite impossible for them to be employed with any hopes of advantage. On the morning of the 15th inst. Lieut.-Colonel Robertson having informed me, by telegraph, that the parapet of the work was destroyed, and that all his guns were either dismounted or disabled, I felt very anxious indeed to withdraw the troops ; but a continuance of the gale rendered this impracticable till the 17th, when, during a temporary lull (every necessary arrangement having been previously made), the transport's boats, protected by the men-of-war's launches, ran over from the Faros, and succeeded in bringing away the whole of the garrison, who effected their retreat by the sea-staircase to the boats, when they were exposed to a most tremendous and galling fire from the enemy, till such time as they could pull out of the reach of it. I am happy to add that the loss of the troops in this exposed position was only four killed and five wounded, and that of the seamen, one killed and ten wounded. Captain Otway, of the Navy, who commands the ships of war stationed here, entrusted the execution of this very dangerous piece of service to Captain Trollope, of the *Electra*. More judgment, coolness, and intrepidity were never displayed on any occasion ; and I feel myself particularly indebted to Captain Trollope and to the officers and seamen serving under him, to whose gallant exertions I owe the preservation of the garrison. The gallantry and good conduct of the officers and men employed in the defence of Scylla Castle merit my highest approbation. More could not have been expected from any men than these have performed.

Lieut.-Colonel Robertson, who commanded, I beg leave to recommend in the strongest terms to your Lordship's notice and protection. The ability, zeal, and gallantry displayed by him in the defence of this little fortress deserve my warmest praise and

commendation. When your Lordship comes to consider what the numbers of the enemy were before Scylla, with a strong supporting army at hand, from which he could draw reinforcements at pleasure, I trust it will appear to your Lordship that prudence would not have warranted my making a diversion in favour of Scylla by risking a landing on the Calabrian shore. The only effort, therefore, that I could make was to prevent the brave garrison falling into the enemy's hands; and this, with the co-operation and assistance of the naval force under Captain Otway, has been happily effected, in open day under the enemy's fire, with much less loss than might reasonably have been expected.

J. C. SHERBROOKE, Major-General.

A sentence or two here and there from the private correspondence of Colonel Bunbury and Colonel Lowe, who were evidently fast friends, may perhaps relieve these official despatches, and throw a side-light on these gloomy, and at times tragic, occurrences, in which General Sherbrooke was the chief actor. Colonel Bunbury's letters, even to the eye of a stranger, and at this distance of time, are fresh and charming reading. In a sentence he exactly hits off the situation, when, after the capture of Scylla 'and the arrival of the January packet' (which gives him an insight into home affairs), he thus summarises the state of things:—

'No Commander-in-Chief for this station yet nominated! Dissensions seem to exist in our Cabinet; Canning and Perceval both choose to play first fiddle, and though either would give way to Lord Wellesley, the King, it is said, objects to the latter as Premier.'

It is to be feared that the Colonel acquired his information as to Cabinet secrets too exclusively from *Cobbett's Register*; a journal in which he confesses he took delight. Here is another bit of information gleaned for the benefit of his friend at Capri:—

'Jefferson and the majority of the American Congress seem bent upon war, but I hope the dispute may yet be amicably settled.' In the same letter Colonel Bunbury, with pardonable pride, expounds the details of a journalistic venture of his own, to which 'General Sherbrooke has given his approbation.' This was no less than the establishment of the *Gazetta Britannica*, a journal in the Italian language intended to counteract the mendacious *Foreign Gazettes*. Such a venture at such a time certainly displays the Colonel's abounding vivacity; and in attempting to enlist Hudson Lowe's good offices, excellent reasons are shown for the publication of the new journal.

'I am unreasonable enough,' he writes, 'to hope that you will occasionally contribute information, *exposés*, &c., towards an undertaking which I hope and believe may prove useful in Sicily and

other parts of the Mediterranean. All the intelligence the Sicilians now receive is through the polluted channels of the French papers, and (let people who despise quackery say what they will) this gives a considerable bias to publick opinion, and consequently to publick affairs.'

In a later communication the same writer sadly remarks :— 'How strange it is that in such a critical moment as the present our Government should not only have named no Commander of the Forces in Sicily, but not *even have hinted to the actual Commander their wishes or intentions.*'

What a picture these few words present of the long-suffering, resourceful, harassed man of action thus kept in the dark at Messina, while the babbling and envious politicians were fighting for place in Downing Street.

The one memorable and characteristic fact is, that never once, either in his public despatches or private letters, did Sir John Sherbrooke murmur at this treatment. The anxiety to one of his temperament and with his shattered health must have been indescribable. Every day he expected intelligence from home of the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief, whose place he was only temporarily filling. At last, in a letter from his great friend, Sir John Moore, came definite intelligence ; as will be seen, it contains other matter of interest to the student of our military history, to whom the words of the hero of Corunna must always strongly appeal.

Sir John Moore to Major-General Sherbrooke

London : March 18, 1808

My dear Sherbrooke,—Sir John Stuart is about to return to Sicily, and as I neglected to write to you by the packet, I avail myself of this opportunity to say a few words to you, and to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of November 24. The court-martial of General Whitelocke, which commenced on January 28, is now terminated ; we assemble at Chelsea this forenoon merely for the form of seeing the President sign the proceedings. Whilst this was going on I had time to attend to nothing else. I shall now attend to my own concerns and enjoy my freedom. When I first arrived in England I necessarily had several interviews with Lord Castlereagh respecting Sicily. I told him everything I thought with regard both to men and things there, and with the same freedom with which I have written to him. The exact determination which Government have come to I know not, but I know enough of it to suspect it is not the best. It was never intended nor proposed to me to return there, which I was glad of, as it is against my principle to decline any duty ; and I should not have wished the command in

the Mediterranean, fettered with a Minister, or without paramount power. At this moment the publick are under some degree of apprehension about Sicily, in consequence of the entrance of the Rochefort Squadron. My own opinion is, that if 10,000 men are landed in Sicily, the island is theirs, nor can you prevent it. A force, however, has proceeded from Gibraltar, which, if it arrives, by increasing your disposable force, may enable you to risk a battle. Sir John Stuart is hurried out sooner than was otherwise intended, but the fate of Sicily must be determined before he can reach you. Lord Forbes goes as second, but does not leave this before April.

There is much conversation about expeditions, and the papers make frequent mention of my name—I believe, however, with little foundation. I hope not to be left always idle; but I have no intimation of my immediate employment. Fraser and Paget are on the Staff in Essex, and Oakes is talked of for Malta, should Sir Charles Green come home. They are all in good keeping. As I doubt not but you have plenty of occupation, I am inclined to hope you are well, and without bile, in which case you will perhaps think the Mediterranean service as good as any other, and will not apply to quit it. I shall thank you to remember me to all my friends, and particularly to Cole and to the Aireys, not forgetting my good friend Miss Talbot. If I have time before Sir John sails, I shall perhaps write to Airey. The Bunburys, I conclude, have left you; if not, remember me to them. General Fox and Caroline are well, but poor Mrs. Fox declines daily.

God bless you, my dear Sherbrooke. Nobody wishes you better than I do, nor no one has more confidence that you will extricate yourself with credit from whatever situation, however arduous, in which you may be placed.

Always very faithfully and sincerely yours,

JOHN MOORE.

At last Sir John Stuart arrived, and the air of Messina was rent with a salute of seventeen guns and the cries of 'Viva Stuart!' There were illuminations, and the Governor and Bishop duly called upon the new Commander-in-Chief. All of these Southern ebullitions were no doubt faithfully recorded in the *Gazetta Britannica*. Quietly amidst it all General Sherbrooke, who had held on so bravely, sailed for Malta on June 6 in the *Prévoyante*. In a letter dated four days afterwards, Colonel Bunbury, relating these various exciting incidents to Hudson Lowe, and referring to General Sherbrooke's departure, added, with emphatic brevity: 'He is a *very* great loss to this army.'

Sir John Sherbrooke's military rule in Sicily was brief, but historically interesting. He had not only to withstand the forces

of General Reynier, but also to keep a watchful eye on the Sicilian Court and people, both of whom were prepared to desert their English protectors, or in some manner play them false. But he had a keen and resolute mind, and a stout heart; he was never in the slightest degree daunted or discouraged, and his occupation of Sicily, though it has received but scant attention in our military annals, displayed very marked administrative ability. Nothing seems to have escaped his vigilant eye. At a very early stage he determined to put down the use of the stiletto, which these Southern people brought into play as freely as the lower class in England would use their fists.

The following extract from *A View of the Present State of Sicily* (Letter II.), by T. W. Vaughan, will explain Sir John's method:—

‘In point of morals, if we speak of what particularly strikes an Englishman with horror—I mean assassination—the Sicilians are certainly improved, I hope I may say reformed, since the English settled here, and I cannot but date the era of this change to the period when General Sherbrooke (the present Sir John) was Commander-in-Chief, who contrived in his short reign not only to conciliate the confidence of the Army, but, what was not less difficult, the approbation of the Court. At that time the stiletto was so much in fashion that in the course of four months twenty-three English sailors from our transports, and soldiers, were stabbed in Messina; and no steps being taken by the police, notwithstanding our remonstrances, to check this dreadful evil, the General, it was understood, waited upon Governor Gaultichine, and stated that unless some immediate stop was put to these outrages he should be under the necessity of giving out an order that the first person found near the body of an Englishman assassinated should be hanged on the spot. “And suppose, sir,” said the Governor, “that happened to be me——?” “If, sir,” replied the General, “imperious necessity calls for such an order, it must be obeyed.”’

It was alleged that after this interview English soldiers and sailors were no longer assassinated. The letter previously quoted, concerning the murder of the soldier of the Royal Corsican Rangers, is strongly corroborative of General Sherbrooke's determination to put an end to this cowardly crime.

There is a story told with regard to his Proclamation, warning the Sicilians that if an assassin stabbed a British soldier with a stiletto he would be promptly hanged on the spot, which shows his strict sense of justice. A soldier had been killed, and the murderer arrested on the spot; a drumhead court-martial was assembled, and the gallows erected. Meantime, Sir John discovered that the soldier, who had been drunk, had first assaulted the Sicilian, who

was sitting quietly in a wineshop ; and the latter, snatching up a stool, broke the skull of his assailant.

'Oh! oh!' said Sir John, 'that is quite another affair.' Then turning to the trembling prisoner, he continued: 'You have killed one of my soldiers, my man; but you have killed him in hot blood, and in a fair fight which he provoked. You had a right to resist, and you did not stab him; if you had, I would have hanged you. As it is, I set you free, and here is a piece of money to reward you for not having used your knife.'

In after years Sir Henry Bunbury, who had a fine eye for the lights and shades of character, gave a most graphic account of his old commander, in an unpublished work entitled, *Military Transactions in the Mediterranean*. From it we gather that Sherbrooke was a relentless disciplinarian, and, as the Duke of Wellington always declared, given to bursts of overpowering anger and indignation. According to Bunbury, the brigade commanded by Sherbrooke which 'wined' under the sharpness of his discipline, revenged themselves by comical stories of his severe and occasionally rough sayings. No doubt Colonel Bunbury himself had come in for some of these knocks, but he was evidently a bright and clever man, who quickly learned to appreciate the fine and even lovable qualities of his commander. 'Sherbrooke,' he writes, 'was no ordinary man; few officers could have discharged with better judgment, with more unwearied activity and zeal, the arduous duties which devolved upon him after Sir John Moore's departure. He was an original. A short, square, hardy little man, with a countenance that told at once the determined fortitude of his nature. . . . From the moment Sherbrooke assumed the command of our little army in Sicily, he applied himself to the improvement of our means of defence. Forts and batteries were formed along the shore of the Straits; roads of communication were opened; the fortresses were improved; the discipline of our troops was confirmed by the personal attention of the General, and the activity which prevailed in every quarter revived the spirits and the confidence of our officers.'

It would take a volume to give anything like a complete picture of the extraordinary Court at Palermo of Ferdinand and Caroline, King and Queen of Naples, at the time when Sir John Sherbrooke on land, and Lord Collingwood by sea, were doing all that British foresight and courage could do to save them from the rapacity of the great Napoleon. Across this curious stage moves the strange figure of Sir John Acton, Prime Minister—'now far advanced in age,' writes Hugh Elliot, the English Minister at Naples—'neither much enlightened nor energetic; but well-intentioned, and as straight-

forward as one could expect a man to be who had been trained in the old courts of Italy.' Of this strange trio Queen Caroline seems to have been the master-spirit. She was a born *intrigante*, and completely baffled Sir John Stuart, who took over the command from Sir John Sherbrooke; while she made a fool and a laughing-stock of our Admiral, Sir Sydney Smith. In fact, she outwitted them all, including the diplomatic Elliot—all except the fine old Northumbrian sailor, Lord Collingwood, and the blunt, honest, vehement soldier, Sherbrooke. On this latter point Sir Henry Bunbury, who had the sharpest of eyes, says: 'It might be supposed that the long-practised intriguers of the Court of Palermo would have found it no difficult matter to impose on so plain and downright a person as John Sherbrooke; that they could easily deceive and turn to their purposes a man who never had to do with courts or politics. On the contrary; none of our successive commanders ever baffled them so completely. They could not comprehend a man who only told them what he wanted and what he thought, without caring whether they were pleased or not. They were always imagining and perplexing themselves by attempts to discover some hidden designs or reserved opinions, while in Sherbrooke's nature there was neither concealment nor reserve.'

CHAPTER III

THE PENINSULA

(1809)

THE following extracts from a Diary kept by Sir John Sherbrooke briefly record the various steps by which he was once more brought into active service under Wellington in the Peninsula:—

January 2nd, 1809.—Received a communication from the Adjutant-General that I was placed on the Staff of the army serving in Spain, from December 25, 1808.

3rd.—Waited on Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, who directed me to call upon Lord Castlereagh, which I did immediately, in Downing Street, when his Lordship appointed me to meet him at eleven o'clock that night, at his house in St. James's Square. On going there his Lordship informed me that I was to take upon me the command of a body of troops then embarked and about to sail, and

desired me to call again at twelve o'clock the next day, when he would give me my instructions.

4th.—Waited again upon Lord Castlereagh, who told me that I must leave town for Portsmouth this evening, and that my instructions should be sent to me by four o'clock. I immediately waited upon Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, who said that the instructions I had to receive from H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief could not be ready by that time, but that they should be sent after me to Portsmouth. I received Lord Castlereagh's instructions about five o'clock, and left London for Portsmouth at nine the same evening.

5th.—Arrived at Portsmouth, and received H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief's instructions for my guidance. Also a memorandum from Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon relative to batt. baggage and forage.

6th.—All the staff and field officers' horses were embarked, and the expedition was reported to the Admiral in readiness to sail at four o'clock this evening.

8th.—Admiral Montagu informed me that he had received orders to detain the convoy till further orders. Received the warrant to empower me to convene General Courts-Martial (yesterday). The messenger Lord Castlereagh directed me to send to Sir John Moore sailed on board the *Iris* for Corunna, and I gave into his charge all the letters which had been committed into my care for Sir John and the other officers serving with the army in Spain. I also wrote to Sir John Moore by the same conveyance.

9th.—Received from Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon an answer to my representation 'of the loss the troops would sustain if obliged to take up dollars to complete their pay' to March 24 at Portsmouth, saying that 'the subsistence was not to be drawn there to the disadvantage of the men.'

14th.—Found on inquiry at the Admiral's Office that the 25,000*l.* in doubloons which had been transmitted to Portsmouth to be put on board the same ship with me had by some mistake been sent in the *Iris* to Corunna, which circumstance I communicated without delay to Lord Castlereagh. At twelve o'clock this night I received Lord Castlereagh's final instructions to proceed to the place of my destination without delay, and to leave the two Brigades of Light Guns and the Company of Artillery (as it was not embarked) to follow by a separate Convoy.

15th.—At eight o'clock this morning I embarked with my Staff on board the *Niobe* frigate, Captain Loring, at Spithead. At two o'clock we weighed, with the intention of running through the Needles. But, it blowing too hard for some of the ships to get their anchors—came to at Cowes for the night.

16th.—Weighed again early in the morning and the Convoy put to sea.

February 5th.—The Convoy bore up for Cork.

9th.—The *Niobe* anchored in Cork Harbour, and I had just time to notify the circumstance to Lord Castlereagh per post.

25th.—Sailed again from Cork Harbour.

March 6th.—Fell in with the *Fisguard* off the Rock of Lisbon, who informed us by telegraph that the Brest Fleet, consisting of fifteen sail of the line and eleven frigates, had got out on the 2nd instant, and that the British Fleet was in chase of them.

8th.—The Convoy arrived off Cadiz. The *Niobe* had got a pilot on board, and was proceeding into port, when the *Black Joke* lugger came out, being charged with despatches from Lord Castlereagh directing the expedition to proceed to the Tagus to assist in the defence of Portugal. Captain Loring in consequence shaped a course for Lisbon with the Convoy, but at my request sent back the lugger into Cadiz to bring off Captain Cooke, whom the Commander said was waiting there with further despatches for me.

9th.—Captain Cooke came on board the *Niobe*, and brought me Lord Castlereagh's despatch of February 6.

10th.—Sent Lieutenant-Colonel Bourke¹ forward in the *Black Joke* lugger to Lisbon with the state of the Force under my command, and to inform Sir John Craddock of the orders I had received from Lord Castlereagh.

11th.—Anchored in the Tagus.

12th.—Landed at Lisbon.

Three days before this, matters having come to a crisis under the previous Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Dalrymple, Sir Arthur Wellesley issued his famous 'Memorandum of the Defence of Portugal.' It will be remembered in what clear and unmistakable terms the new Commander-in-Chief in that document laid down the principles of his plan of campaign. No one had seen clearer than he the inherent weakness of the system of 'dual control,' by which the disciplined and warlike forces of Britain were hampered by Spanish and Portuguese general officers.

'The whole of the army in Portugal'—so runs a clause in the Memorandum—'Portuguese as well as British, should be placed under the command of British officers. The Staff of the army, the Commissariat in particular, must be British.'

Self-reliant as Wellington was above almost all military leaders, nothing was more natural than that he should desire, on taking upon himself the tremendous task of driving Napoleon's marshals

¹ Afterwards Sir Richard Bourke, Governor-General of New South Wales.

across the Pyrenees, to surround himself with some of those trusty lieutenants who had been tried and *not* found wanting on the battle-fields of India. Of these there was none of whom he thought more highly than of Sir John Sherbrooke.

He wrote from Lisbon, April 27, 1809, a letter full of details and instructions concerning the movement of troops, the opening sentences of which show how much he valued the co-operation of his old comrade in arms:—

‘I have received your letter of the 25th, and I assure you that I derive great satisfaction from the renewal of our old connection and friendship; and that I am convinced I shall derive the greatest advantage from your advice and assistance.’

‘It is my intention,’ he added, ‘to advance forthwith upon Soult.’ This was the march commenced on May 7 from Coimba to dispossess the French of Oporto—Lieut.-General Sherbrooke having a brigade of six-pounders—which division passed the Vonga on the evening of the 9th.

Then followed the passage of the Douro. Here Sherbrooke showed that he had lost none of the old dash and determination which were so prominently displayed at the storming of Seringapatam. His fresh achievement in the Peninsula cannot be enshrined in fitter words than those of his great commander to Lord Castle-reagh (*Despatches*, May 12, 1809):—‘Lieut.-General Sherbrooke, who by this time had availed himself of the enemy’s weakness in the town of Oporto, and had crossed the Douro at the ferry between the towns of Villa Nova and Oporto, having appeared upon their right with the Brigade of Guards and the 29th Regiment, the whole retired in the utmost confusion towards Amaranti, leaving behind him five pieces of cannon, eight ammunition tumbrils, and many prisoners.’

In his General Order dated the same day Sir Arthur Wellesley thus commemorated the event:—‘The timely passage of the Douro, and the subsequent movement on the enemy’s flank by Lieut.-General Sherbrooke with the Brigade of Guards and 29th Regiment, and the bravery of the two squadrons of the 14th Light Dragoons, under the command of Major Hervey, and led by the Hon. Brigadier-General C. Stewart, obtained the victory which has contributed so much to the honour of the troops on this day.’

It was on this occasion that General Paget was severely wounded, a casualty which, it will be remembered, Sir Arthur Wellesley personally deplored. Then followed the occupation of Oporto, and the issue of the characteristic Proclamation (May 13, 1809) of ‘Arthur Wellesley, Commander of the British Army in Portugal, and Marshal-General of the Armies of H.R.H. the Prince Regent,’ by which he prevented the Portuguese inhabitants from wreaking

their vengeance on the wounded and the prisoners—already the French soldiers were being massacred by the infuriated peasantry before they could be saved by the British advance-guard. ‘This last circumstance,’ observed Wellington when writing to Castlereagh, ‘is the natural effect of the species of warfare which the enemy have carried on in this country. Their soldiers have plundered and murdered the peasantry at their pleasure, and I have seen many persons hanging in the trees by the sides of the road, executed for no reason, that I could learn, excepting that they had not been friendly to the French invasion and usurpation of the government of their country; and the route of their column on their retreat could be traced by the smoke of the villages to which they set fire.’

In the same letter to Lord Castlereagh he thus explains how it was that, after routing the French, he had not been able to pursue and annihilate their scattered and flying forces:—‘I hope your Lordship will believe that no measure which I could take was omitted to intercept the enemy’s retreat. It is obvious, however, that if an army throws away all its cannon, equipments, and baggage, and everything which can strengthen it and can enable it to act together as a body, and abandons all those who are entitled to its protection, but add to its weight and impede its progress, it must be able to march by roads through which it cannot be followed with any prospect of being overtaken by an army which has not made the same sacrifices.’

On May 16 General Sherbrooke again figured prominently in an affair with the enemy’s rear-guard at Solomonde. On this occasion, late in the evening, the Guards under Generals Sherbrooke and Campbell attacked and turned the left flank of the French by the heights, which they abandoned, leaving behind them a gun and prisoners. At this point of the narrative may be fitly placed the following private letter from General Sherbrooke to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Sherbrooke, of Oxton Hall.

Oporto : May 25, 1809

As I well know how anxious my dear friends in Notts always are about me, I address these hurried lines to you just to say that I last night returned to this place after performing one of the most harassing, fatiguing marches I ever remember to have taken. We have been employed in pursuing Marshal Soult and his army to the northern frontier of Portugal, over which Sir A. Wellesley has driven him into Gallicia. The troops are returned absolutely bare-footed, and this army is about to take up a position between the Vonga and the Mondego, there to refresh and to refit. From the present appearance of things I shrewdly suspect we shall not long remain in a state of inactivity. Marshal Victor has advanced to

Alcantara, and is there in possession of the bridge over the Tagus. Probably his move might be only with the intent of making a diversion in favour of Soult. Be this as it may, it appears to me likely that as soon as our troops are refreshed, and our army reinforced, we shall advance into Spain. The Marquis Wellesley having been appointed Ambassador there strengthens me in this opinion. . . .

Believe me, my dearest Sister,

Your affectionate Brother,

J. C. S.

P.S.—At Truxillo, the birthplace of Pizarro, the house is still standing which he built on his return from the New World, and at Medelina the cottager is still standing in which Cortez was born.

Having thus gallantly assisted in the work of driving out the invader from Portugal, General Sherbrooke and his brigade marched to Abrantès, whence they crossed into Spain.

From this place the General again writes to his sister-in-law.

Abrantès : June 17, 1809

Many thanks to my dearest Mrs. S. for her very kind letter of the 22nd ultimo, which, together with one from my brother dated the 28th, reached me yesterday at Punhete, from whence I have this morning been ordered to remove to Abrantès.

I myself have been very sensible of the bad effects of the heat of the weather for this week past. But by taking care not to expose myself to the sun except when my duty requires me to do so, I still hope I shall be able to serve a summer campaign (should that measure be determined upon) without any material injury to my constitution. By a letter from the Commander-in-Chief (Sir J. Dundas) of the 27th ultimo, I find that His Majesty has been graciously pleased, unsolicited, to appoint me Colonel of the 68th Regiment. This mark of my Sovereign's approbation of my conduct is not only very flattering, but it puts me in a situation to leave me now no reason to dread being reduced on half-pay should it be my lot to survive till peace comes again. At the same time, it is much more gratifying to me to succeed to an old regiment, in the way I have now done, than it would have been to have obtained one some time hence, after much solicitation, and after having troubled my friends to exert their interest to procure one for me. I feel myself infinitely obliged both to Sherbrooke and you for your very friendly attention to my Calverton concerns. . . . I propose writing to my brother before the army leaves this. From some circumstances I conjecture we shall not move for some days, and perhaps we may remain in the present cantonments for a fortnight longer. I was

sorry to learn from Sherbrooke the accident which had befallen my Beelzebub filly, but if I have luck with the others I ought not to repine at her loss.

Your truly affectionate brother,

J. SHERBROOKE.

From Abrantès Sir Arthur Wellesley moved his forces to Castillo Branco, and thence, crossing the Tagus into Spain, he quartered them at Plascencia. His instructions throughout this march were of the most peremptory character, his one great aim evidently being that his victorious troops should not on any account relax their discipline; for he felt that everything depended on the superiority of his comparatively small British force as a fighting machine. As is clear from his despatches of this date, the greatest troubles arose from the Commissariat; and in Spain in particular the British forces, for whose sustenance he was willing to pay, were left half starving, while the French were being well fed on the compulsion of the sword's point. 'The Spanish army,' he complained to the British Minister, Hookham Frere, 'has plenty of everything, and we alone, upon whom everything depends, are actually starving.' Still, however extreme the provocation, he allowed none of his officers, not even the most valued and trusty, to make complaints.

The following letter, under the circumstances, is eminently characteristic.

To Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke

Plascencia : July 18, 1809

I am not astonished that you and the general officers should feel indignant at the neglect and incapacity of some of the officers of the Commissariat, by which we have suffered and are still suffering so much; but what I have to observe, and wish to impress upon you, is that they are gentlemen appointed to their office by the King's authority, although not holding his commission, and that it would be infinitely better and more proper if all neglects and faults of theirs were reported to me, by whom they can be dismissed, rather than that they should be abused by the general officers of the army. Indeed, it cannot be expected that they will bear the kind of abuse they have received, however well deserved we may deem it to be; and they will either resign their situations, and put the army to still greater inconvenience, or complain to higher authorities, and thereby draw those who abuse them into discussions, which will take up hereafter much of their time and attention.

I do not enter into the grounds you had for being displeased with Mr.—, which I dare say were very sufficient, but I only desire

that in all these cases punishment may be left to me, who alone can have the power of inflicting it.

But though this was the attitude of Wellesley on this question even to an esteemed and favourite comrade, he took care to let Lord Castlereagh know very promptly that he had threatened, and meant, to return to Portugal if the Spanish authorities did not furnish at once supplies for his troops. This threat, uttered by a man who never indulged in idle menace, seems to have brought the Central Junta to a proper sense of the situation. The consequence of which was the joint operation with General Cuesta, which resulted in the famous victory over the French at Talavera de la Reyna.

Even if we make some allowances for the magnificent contempt of the Spanish general to be found in the stirring pages of Sir William Napier, it is very evident that the English commander in thus engaging the veterans of France did not place too much reliance on his Spanish allies.¹ But he knew well the material out of which the Indian soldier who had been foremost at the siege of Seringapatam was made, and to him he gave special instructions.

Talavera : July 27, 1809
Half-past 9 A.M.

My dear Sherbrooke,—As soon as you shall receive this you may withdraw across the river ; have Mackenzie's division and the cavalry (Anson's brigade) at their old positions in the wood, and come yourself with the Germans to the town. If you have no enemy near you, it does not much signify where you cross the river ; if you have an enemy near you, I recommend you to cross it at a ford nearer the bridge, and at a greater distance from the heights than the ford is at which you first crossed.

Believe me, &c.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

P.S.—I have desired Murray to look this morning for such a ford as I have above described, and to have it shown you.

The great importance which Wellington himself attached to the battle of Talavera is shown in the despatch in which he refers to 'this long and hard-fought action with more than double our numbers,' and then goes on to speak of the enormous losses in killed and wounded on both sides. But the general reader of these stirring events may have overlooked or forgotten the fact that General Sherbrooke's division bore much of the brunt of this terrific

¹ Appendix, No. II.

battle, and that he himself has some special claim to be remembered as the hero of Talavera as well as of Seringapatam. On this point Sir Arthur Wellesley left no doubt in his General Orders to the officers and troops engaged, and in his despatches to headquarters at home. 'I have reason to be satisfied,' he wrote to Lord Castlereagh, 'with the conduct of all the officers and troops. I am much indebted to Lieut.-General Sherbrooke for the assistance I received from him, and for the manner in which he led on his division to the charge with bayonets.' And this emphatic commendation was echoed back in the General Order issued from the Horse Guards (August 18, 1809), which runs as follows:—

'The Commander-in-Chief has received the King's commands to notify to the army the splendid victory obtained by his troops in Spain under the command of Lieut.-General the Right Honourable Sir Arthur Wellesley, on the 27th and 28th of last month, at the battle of Talavera de la Reyna. The conduct of Lieut.-General Sherbrooke, second in command, has entitled him to the King's marked approbation. His Majesty has observed with satisfaction the manner in which he led on the troops to the charge with the bayonet, a species of combat which on all occasions so well accords with the dauntless character of British soldiers.'

The King also acknowledged his services by conferring on him a knighthood, and General (now Sir John) Sherbrooke had the gratification of receiving a still more signal mark of distinction at the hands of his great commander, who was himself created a peer under the title of Baron Wellesley of Douro and Viscount Wellington of Talavera (August 26).

To Lieut.-General Sir J. Sherbrooke

Badajoz : October 5, 1809

. . . I received last night a letter, of which I enclose a copy, containing the King's commands to invest you with the Order of the Bath, which I shall carry into execution with great pleasure either to-morrow or next day, if you will come over here. Let me know which day will be convenient to you, that I may make arrangements to do the business in a suitable manner. Send me over the insignia and any papers you may have received with them. Bring with you the general officers and staff of your division, and the commanding officers of the battalions of the Guards.¹

In the full tide of triumph, with these honours thick upon him, and with the prospect of 'a peerage or Westminster Abbey' straight before him, the old demon of ill-health once more disabled the

¹ *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 535.

dauntless soldier, whom nothing else could have withdrawn from the path of duty. Again we may be sure he had the full sympathy of the Iron Duke. In fact we have evidence of it. Writing to the Earl of Liverpool (December 21, 1809), Wellington remarked:—‘That, however, to which I wish principally to draw your attention is the state of health of Sir J. Sherbrooke. He is at times quite incapable of doing anything, and he very lately told me that he could not pretend to serve through another summer, and that he must go in April next at latest. . . . The only officers I know of fit to succeed him are General Graham, General Oakes, or Sir G. Prevost.’

Sherbrooke’s career in the Peninsula thus sadly drew to its close. On April, 24, 1810, we find the Duke making special arrangements with the Vice-Admiral to have him conveyed to England in a ship of war, and to be landed at Portsmouth, in order to avoid the long journey to London from Western ports, to which—so shattered had he become—he was quite unequal. Accordingly, Sir John Sherbrooke returned to his native land in the month of May, 1810. The only hope was that rest and quiet at Cheltenham, that favourite resort of the Anglo-Indian invalid, or amidst the leafy glades of Sherwood Forest, of which his ancestors had been verderers, might restore to him some measure of health and vigour. For, be it borne in mind, that though his Indian and Peninsular careers were now closed, he was still only in his forty-sixth year.

The Duke of Wellington did not forget his old comrade, now in an enforced retirement which must have been galling indeed to such an active spirit. He knew that, though absent in body, Sir John was often present in mind on the battle-fields of the Peninsula, and that news of the gallant troops from whom he had been forced to part would be, of all news, to him the most keenly interesting. Accordingly the Duke, who was not given to idle correspondence, wrote some private accounts of the campaign to Sir John Sherbrooke, which are here published for the first time.

Wellington to Sir John Sherbrooke

Alverca: July 14, 1810

My dear Sherbrooke,—I received your letter of 24th here, from Cheltenham, three or four days ago, and I am very much obliged to you for the pamphlet you enclosed. We have been, and are still, in the same position, in fact, in which you left us. The rear only has been closed up to the front, and we have been waiting to see whether we could relieve Ciudad Rodrigo. But that was impossible. Mas-sena had the whole of Junot and Ney’s corps, which, according to

intercepted returns of a very late date, amounted to above 57,000 men, including above 9,000 cavalry; and he had other troops on his right and in his rear. The place fell on the 10th at night; at least it then ceased to fire; but as the enemy have made no movement since, I suspect that hostilities were then suspended, to see whether we could relieve it, and that they have not yet got possession of it. I am glad that you find your health so good. The army continues remarkably healthy and in good order; the horses in particular are very much improved. You will lament the loss of poor Talbot, who was killed in an affair of the outposts on the morning of the 11th.

Ever, my dear Sherbrooke,

Yours most sincerely,

WELLINGTON.

July 18th.—Ciudad Rodrigo has certainly fallen, but the enemy have as yet made no movement of importance. They are bringing Reynier's corps across the Tagus, and Hill will cross the Tagus likewise at Vilha Velha.

The next letter, now also for the first time published, was written five months later from Portugal, and explains in the clearest possible terms to his old brother-in-arms the Fabian tactics he had adopted against the fresh army of Massena, which had necessitated the breaking-up of the British army on the frontiers of Estremadura, and its return to the Tagus 'round affrighted Lisbon'—

Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew;
And ever great and greater grew.
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarm.
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines.

Wellington to Sir John Sherbrooke

Cortaxo : December 15, 1810

My dear Sherbrooke,—I am very much obliged to you for your letter of November 17, which I received two or three days ago, and I am happy to find that your health is improved. You will be able to form some opinion of our situation here from the accounts which will have been published. Massena is in an awkward situation, from which, I think, he cannot easily be relieved. He came into

Portugal with 70,000 men of all arms, and I don't think he has now more than 50,000 remaining. I have 60,000 regulars, including 5,000 Spaniards. He has no communication whatever with Spain: not less than 1,500 men can move through the country, and he is in the greatest distress for provisions and supplies of every description. Indeed, it is astonishing, and you who are acquainted with the dearth of provisions in Portugal, and the difficulties we have always experienced in collecting provisions for our armies in Portugal, will be particularly surprised that he has been able to exist at all so long. But we have the most terrible accounts of the distresses of the troops, and we found numbers of dead bodies in the houses, fields, &c., on the marches on which we followed them from Sobral here.

Under these circumstances I have been much tempted to attack him; but I have been prevented; first because they are in a very strong position to which the access is very difficult. Their left rests upon the Tagus at Santarem, and the approach to their right is nearly impracticable at present, on account of the bad state of the roads, and would be dangerous on account of the difficulties of communicating between one column and another. Secondly, if it was more easy to attack than it is, I should think it advisable to refrain from the attack, because Massena's army must diminish in numbers daily; and no reinforcement which it can receive in the course of the winter can enable it to attack us in our strong position; if he should attempt to retreat, his loss must be enormous.

Thirdly, it cannot be expected that I should succeed in the attack of a position which the French have selected without great loss. After this loss, should I be able to follow them even to the frontier of Portugal? Should I be able to maintain my position against the remains of Massena's army joined by the other troops which I know are in Castille? I therefore leave Massena alone. He occupies the ground which stands between Santarem, Ourem, Thomar, and Punhete. Both parties send to Beira their patrols, and I have all the rest of Portugal. Our light detachments operate upon his flanks and rear by Mondego and the left of the Zezere, and upon his right by Beira, &c. It is a matter of indifference to me how long they stay in their present position. They can do us no harm. In the meantime the Guerillas and others are settling business in Castille, &c. In short, I consider, as I always have done, that as long as I can maintain myself in the Peninsula there is no end to the war. The French can settle nothing, and must lose army after army. But as I have the only army in the Peninsula which can keep the field at all I must take care not to lose it or to weaken it by any disadvantageous contest, to such a degree as that it would be

unable to maintain itself, for I see no prospect of any material loss being replaced.

Ever, my dear Sherbrooke,
Yours most sincerely,
WELLINGTON.

The last clause of this letter explains the real difficulty of Wellington's position—standing at bay with a single army, any 'material loss' in whose fighting strength was irremediable against an Imperial gamester who could throw army after army into the Peninsula under his great marshals, and who was altogether reckless of the wholesale loss of human lives. If this private letter to Sir John Sherbrooke be compared with the despatch sent on the same day to the Earl of Liverpool, or to the 'Memorandum of Operations in 1810,' drawn up by Wellington on February 23 following, it will be found how absolutely unvarying is the record. The letter to Sir John was, of course, meant for no other eyes but his, yet it is as completely free from vain boastings or self-glorification—or extraneous matter of any kind—as are the official papers themselves.

Yet who can doubt that the other English soldier, now becoming convalescent, on reading this plain, unvarnished tale from the scene of action, must have felt his pulse astir again; and we may be sure that if any inquisitive denizen of Cheltenham had chanced to ask Sir John Sherbrooke what was his news from abroad, the prediction would have come sharp and clear that unless a stray bullet made a sudden end of the English commander, the French must inevitably be overwhelmed, and driven out of the Peninsula.

CHAPTER IV

NOVA SCOTIA

(1811—1816)

A YEAR'S enforced retirement having in some measure restored Sir John Sherbrooke to health, he was exactly the type of man to feel

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use.

And in a very short time we shall find him embarked in an

entirely new career—that of a Colonial Governor. In his diary of the year 1811 may be noted these brief extracts :—

August 12th.—Put upon the Staff of Nova Scotia as a Lieutenant-General.

19th.—Date of my commission as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova-Scotia.

September 5th.—Arrived at Portsmouth.

7th.—Received my commission as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia from Greenwood's, who paid 109*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* for the fees and stamps upon it.

8th.—Received letter number one from Lord Liverpool (with three enclosures), dated August 21, which I acknowledged (the ship being under sail at the time) from off Cowes and sent my letter on shore to be put in the post-office there by Lord George Seymour.

8th.—Sailed from Portsmouth.

October 16th.—Arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

His actual appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia dated from July 1811. Another highly important event in his life took place a few days after he received his commission. On August 24, Lieutenant-General Sir J. C. Sherbrooke, K.B., was married, at Areley, Worcestershire, to Katherine, eldest daughter of the Rev. Reginald Pyndar, of Areley House, sister of the late Viscount Sherbrooke's mother. Lady Sherbrooke and one of her sisters sailed with Sir John to Halifax on September 8, a fortnight after her marriage; and took up her position as the reigning lady of Acadia.

In reference to this old French colony, which Sir John Sherbrooke was now called upon to govern, it has been appositely remarked that 'Poetry, not fact, makes popular history.' The world, despite Mr. Goldwin Smith's protest, will probably continue to place a childlike faith in Longfellow's sweet poem of *Evangeline*. Nova Scotia, however, quite apart from the romance that still hangs round the story of the old French Acadians, has a peculiarly suggestive and interesting history of its own; for it was on her bleak shores that those colonists who had remained loyal to the British Crown during the War of Independence found a refuge after the triumph of Washington made it no longer possible for them to live in their old homes. At this distance of time we, who are of the same race, should at least be able to attempt an impartial estimate of these sturdy, old-fashioned American colonists who stuck to George III. and his blundering ministers, in some cases with a noble stubbornness. It was among such men that Sir John Sherbrooke found his best advisers and warmest friends in Nova Scotia.

So painfully true is the vulgar saying, 'Nothing succeeds like success,' that it will sound like an absurd paradox, and yet it is a literal fact, that there was at least one of these American 'exiles' who in his day of prosperity and pomp in New Hampshire must have loomed before the eyes of men as a much greater figure than the young Virginian officer of militia, George Washington (who had capitulated, everybody then would have remembered, to the French Captain de Villier), or than that somewhat aggressive and altogether *bourgeois* person, Benjamin Franklin, the printer. I refer to Sir John Wentworth, Baronet, the most remarkable loyalist, as Washington became the greatest 'rebel' in North America.

Although Sir John Sherbrooke seems to have had no open differences with him, Wentworth was almost too great and conspicuous a man for a mere colonist and subordinate. Moreover, there was this element of delicacy about his position; he had actually been Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia and had ruled matters with a right royal hand, entertaining at one time Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent (the father of Queen Victoria), who, we are told, 'paid compliments to Sir John and congratulated Lady Wentworth in her drawing-room.' His tours through the province were like royal progresses: and the Acadian poets of the period celebrated them in befitting strains:—

When tyrants travel, though in pompous state,
Each eye beholds them with indignant hate;
But when our loyal Wentworth deigns to ride
(The Sovereign's fav'rite and the subject's pride),
Around his chariot crowding numbers throng,
And hail his virtues as he moves along.

But, as in New Hampshire, so in Nova Scotia, there were other prominent colonists who were uneasy at his favoured pre-eminence. As a connection of the Marquis of Rockingham he was always thought to have possessed undue influence in London by means of which he advanced his own family and friends, and correspondingly kept in the background other capable and aspiring provincials.

Nothing, perhaps, is so disgusting to the colonial mind as the feeling that a brother-colonist is in a position to gain political privileges and social distinction from London. Such a presumption of favouritism is very apt to convert those who would be very glad to benefit by it into a species of red-hot republican patriot; and it may be quite true that the early system of appointing colonists to the provincial governorships in America, may have had something to do with precipitating the War of Independence.¹

To revert, however, to Sir John Wentworth, who was finally

¹ See Appendix, No. II.

superseded in the administration of the government of Nova Scotia in 1808 by Sir George Prevost, a distinguished English military officer. It was stated that the reason of this appointment was the prospect of war with the United States, but to the student of these early provincial annals it is evident that the far-seeing and statesmanlike Castlereagh had come to the wise conclusion that the nepotism of men like Sir John Wentworth, and the popular dissatisfaction openly expressed in the colony thereat, were dangerous to the Imperial connection. Sir John had appointed his only son, afterwards Sir Charles Mary Wentworth, with whom the baronetcy expired, secretary and registrar of patents, deeds, and records; and he wrote to Lord Castlereagh to confirm the appointment as a personal favour to himself in his 'advanced age, for the faithful service of nearly forty-two years.' In superseding this most remarkable and distinguished of colonists, Lord Castlereagh acted with the greatest delicacy, granting him, from the Imperial purse, a pension of 500*l.* a year, and expressing a hope that the Assembly of Nova Scotia would supplement it by a similar amount. Despite the great qualities of the retiring Governor, it was not without difficulty that the British statesman induced the Nova Scotians to act thus liberally. Finally, all was arranged, and the House presented Sir John with a handsome address, to which, as may be expected, he responded in dignified and suitable terms.

Sir George Prevost, after a tenure of the office of Governor, which was largely occupied by petty conflicts with the United States, was appointed to the Governor-Generalship of Canada; and then followed the reign of Sir John Sherbrooke.

Sir John Wentworth was now in his seventy-sixth year, and had retired from any active participation in the affairs of the province. But foremost among the new Governor's ministers and members of Council were certain other 'loyalists' exiled on account of their English patriotism from the United States. The most noteworthy of these, after Wentworth, was the Right Rev. Charles Inglis, D.D., Bishop of Nova Scotia, and the first colonial bishop ever appointed in the Anglican Church. Bishop Inglis was a member of the Council of Halifax, and it was specially arranged that his seat should be next after that of the Chief Justice, and that he was *not* to administer the government at the death or during the absence of the Governor.

The son of Charles Inglis became the second Bishop of Nova Scotia, while his grandson was Major-General Sir John Eardley Wilmot Inglis, who was knighted for his heroic defence of Lucknow. His eldest daughter married Brenton Halliburton,¹

¹ Not to be confounded with another Nova Scotian Judge, Haliburton, of 'Sam Slick' fame, who was of quite a different family and origin.

afterwards Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, who lived to be knighted by Queen Victoria. Sir Brenton Halliburton, with whom Sir Walter Scott was eager to claim kinship, was the son of Dr. Halliburton, another exiled loyalist of Massachusetts; and he was certainly one of the ablest and most high-minded public men of Nova Scotia.

The list of these distinguished exiles could be much further extended; but enough has been said to show what an important element they formed in the community over which Sir John Sherbrooke presided.

In those days a Governor was not one in name alone; but he actually possessed wide executive authority. In all but title he was a king, ruling with the advice of a small bureaucracy which he himself created. It is not to be doubted by anyone who has studied the early American annals that this office of Governor, under these circumstances, was more ably and faithfully filled by Imperial officers than by provincial notabilities. The type of disciplined veteran who had served in the great wars under Wellington was one very likely to furnish a strong and capable colonial ruler. Besides, his military qualifications might at any moment be called into requisition to keep in check those other colonies, which had now crystallised into an independent and for some time most antagonistic nation.

Sir John Sherbrooke had first-rate practical qualities: and very soon began to set his house in order according to his own notions. Naturally, he had a keen eye to the Services; and almost his first act was to recommend a grant of 2,000 acres of the Crown lands to Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Campbell, acting inspecting field-officer of Militia for the eastern part of the province. Sir John also at once proceeded to rectify the system whereby naval and military men stationed at Halifax were subjected to a severe loss by the fact that bills drawn on England could not be discounted at less than fifteen to twenty per cent.

Then there was a personal grievance to redress before the new Governor felt himself at all comfortable in his post. Shortly after his arrival he learnt from the *London Gazette* that his private secretary had been appointed without consulting him. He at once put his foot down. Sir George Prevost had twice appointed his own military secretary to this office, and Sir John, acting on this precedent, had given the post to Captain Addison, of the 1st Dragoon Guards, who had actually resigned the position of Major of Brigade to follow the fortunes of his chief in Nova Scotia. It is almost needless to say that Sir John Sherbrooke on this point had his own way.

On January 13, 1812, Sir John Sherbrooke wrote to 'Robert Peel, Esq.,' respecting the coal mines of Nova Scotia—'requesting to

be informed of the proper channel through which to make an application for the working of coal mines, as several requests for that purpose have been made to me. I am led to suppose that they were some time since granted exclusively to the Duke of York, but am ignorant whether a communication should be made to H.R.H. in the first instance, or to the Secretary of State, and shall not proceed until I am honoured with your opinion.' One other piece of business demanding his immediate decision was likewise despatched before the date of meeting of the Provincial Assembly. Orders had been received to send the 98th Regiment from Nova Scotia to Bermuda; 'but Sir John sent only two companies, not considering it safe to send them all away; and he requested reinforcements if war with the United States were deemed probable. He thought New Brunswick the most vulnerable and likely to be the first attacked.'¹

Early in February, the tenth General Assembly of the province met, elected its Speaker, and proceeded to move resolutions against quit-rents, which was the mode then employed for endowing the Anglican Church in these provinces. The members seemed to have put the matter very clearly to His Excellency, on the broad ground that no church or sect should be supported out of the general revenue unless the entire community were of one way of thinking in religious matters. In reference to this infant Parliament of Acadia it may be noted that the Speaker's salary was 200*l.* a year, and that the members were paid 10*s.* a day, which amounted in all to 1,129*l.* 10*s.*

'It was at this time,' writes Murdoch, 'the custom for the Admiral to leave Halifax in the latter end of November or in the beginning of December, and with the whole of the squadron to proceed to the Bermudas, where he usually remained until the beginning of June in the ensuing year. Sir John Sherbrooke represented to the minister the danger, if an American squadron should make a hostile visit to this port while our squadron was at Bermuda. He tells him, that 2,000 fishing schooners are employed, belonging to the coast from Cape Cod to Newbury port, and thinks their crews would readily volunteer on such an expedition. These men are rivals to our people in the fisheries, and in case of war will probably carry on a predatory hostility unless our shores had a force for protection.' The preparations for war in the United States were now beginning in real earnest. In Canada, the Glengarry regiment of 700 or 800 men was raised, and other corps were in progress. In the United States, recruiting was actively proceeding. At this time, French war vessels were capturing and destroying American ships—

¹ *History of Nova Scotia*, by Beamish Murdoch, Esq., Q.C., vol. iii. p. 230.

‘a gentle stimulus administered by Bonaparte to induce the United States to declare war against England.’

Thence followed what is generally known as the war of 1812. It was on June 18 in that year, by an Act of Congress, with the approval of President Madison, that the United States declared war against Great Britain. Five days afterwards Captain Richard Byron, of H.M.S. *Belvidera*, was attacked by three large frigates and two smaller vessels of the American navy. The unequal contest was desperately maintained, lasting several hours, and Captain Byron was severely wounded before the *Belvidera* could escape into Halifax harbour. On June 29, at the early hour of ten A.M., Sir John Sherbrooke summoned his Council, and the exciting intelligence of war with the United States was then publicly announced. No time could be lost. The first class of the militia, men from eighteen to fifty were balloted from, to form a corps for the protection of the exposed coasts. Other prompt measures he took such as would naturally suggest themselves to an experienced soldier, which need not be recounted. Concerning this war, however, there is one very significant fact, of an eminently reassuring kind to those who still fondly believe that, with the progress of a truer civilisation, wars shall cease.

‘As the people of Eastport and Moose Island desired to keep up amicable terms, Sir John Sherbrooke and the Admiral acquiesced in that plan, and on July 3 his Excellency issued a proclamation, forbidding any person under his command from offering molestation to the American people living on the frontier of New Brunswick or interfering with their goods or their coasting vessels. This war was said to be very unpopular in the Eastern States, and Sir John says he was informed on reliable evidence that when the declaration of war reached Boston, all the vessels in the harbour immediately hoisted their colours half-mast high, three excepted. The populace compelled the three vessels to follow the general example.’¹

¹ Murdoch, vol. iii. p. 328.

CHAPTER V

WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES—SHANNON AND CHESAPEAKE—
THE INVASION OF MAINE

(1812—1814)

SIR JOHN SHERBROOKE was now in his element, and his proceedings display all his old military alacrity. He applied without a moment's delay for reinforcements, while the Admiral on the station simultaneously urged an increase in the naval strength. The poor little storm-blown province was now thoroughly aroused from one end to the other. Sir John, we are further told, sent to the *custodes rotulorum* (a term which, even in connection with such tragic events, makes us think of Justice Shallow), and instructed them to report to him the names and addresses of all aliens in their respective countries. Then he convened the Assembly, and after some dissensions between that body and the Council on the old, familiar subject of 'amending a money-bill,' the energetic Governor got the requisite issue of treasury notes and an authorised loan of 20,000*l.* While the parliament-men were thus discussing, the war-ships and privateers had begun business in real earnest all along the coasts. One privateer from Salem, says the chronicler, took eleven prizes in three weeks. Then Captain Richard Byron, in the *Belvidera*, made up for his previous disaster by capturing three American vessels; a triumph that was more than capped by a United States frigate which shortly after seized a transport with 145 English soldiers on board. This game of American privateering was so vigorously carried on that Sir John found it necessary to prohibit the sailing of merchant vessels from Nova Scotia without convoys. All this time the militia was doing brave and effective service along the threatened coasts. Sir John Sherbrooke was, however, prevented at present from taking any aggressive steps of his own by reason of the state of Canada, for the defence of which he had sent a large supply of arms. He kept on pressing for reinforcements with all the persistency of his energetic temperament. It must have been no small annoyance to him that Dr. Croke, his judge of the Court of Vice-Admiralty, who had in his charge an ample supply of dollars taken in prizes, refused to hand the specie over to him for bills at the current rate of exchange. It is strange to note how the commercial instinct contrives to find an outlet even at a time of such bitter hostilities. A proposal, according to Murdoch, was made to Sir John to grant licenses to vessels carrying British manufactured goods from Nova Scotia to the United States. They were in great

demand there, and would be carried in against the American laws. He asked permission of the Minister to do this. They were to be thus protected from interference or capture by English cruisers. This became an extensive trade during the war.

All through the months of August and September the fighting between English and American ships was unceasing. The Americans, on the whole, in these isolated combats seem to have come out the victors, a very trying experience for English naval commanders flushed with the triumphs of Nelson and Collingwood in other waters. The Nova Scotians were, however, cheered by the intelligence of the surrender of the American General Hull, who had invaded Upper Canada, to General Brock at Fort Detroit. Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren now arrived with several ships to reinforce the squadron at Halifax. Meantime the activity of the Governor knew no abatement; he was preparing forts, enlisting militiamen, arranging for the importation of food supplies, and negotiating with the Indians day and night. We may note for what it is worth the remark of the patriotic, but by no means prejudiced historian of Nova Scotia. 'At this period of the war,' observes Murdoch, 'the English ships of war did not molest the unarmed coasting and fishing vessels of the Americans. The American privateers were not of the same mind. Our coasters, fishermen and colliers were captured, pillaged, and sometimes used cruelly.' Then he proceeds to give some painful instances; but perhaps the American annalists would hardly admit that they acted with less chivalry than the Nova Scotians during this deplorable contest. There can be no question of the severity of these encounters; considering that they were isolated combats either between a couple of frigates or two small bodies of men, the slaughter was often appalling. It seems clear enough that the Americans, on the whole, came off best in the naval battles, from a chance remark of the patriotic Nova Scotian annalist. 'A sad series of disasters,' he says, 'on which it is not necessary to dwell here, as they are only connected with the history of our province indirectly, though the effect they produced on the minds of our people was great, stimulating their patriotism and loyalty, instead of depressing them.'

It was, indeed, a momentous time for other parts of the empire besides Nova Scotia. Napoleon had started forth in his vain attempt to conquer Russia, and, as we have seen, had induced the United States to harass our North American possessions with a view of distracting the power of England. Meanwhile Wellington was still engaged on his mighty task in the Peninsula. With a thousand ships in commission, the press-gang was kept busily at work, and the strain on our reserved force in men and money was something terrific. The year 1813 found Sir John Sherbrooke in

very deadly earnest in his encounter with the United States. If the Americans could make a profit by privateering, so could the Nova Scotians, and letters of marque were forthwith issued. Now, too, the French vessels began to assist the Americans in preying on our merchantmen and transports. The Nova Scotian Assembly was again convened by His Excellency, who expatiated on the overthrow of Napoleon and his Russian army, and then went on to express admiration of the zeal, loyalty, and courage of the Canadians in repelling the Americans, and expressed his reliance on Nova Scotians exhibiting the same qualities if needful.

Toronto, then a village known as York, was captured, but not retained by the Americans. The American army was increased by vote to 55,000 men. England, realising the serious aspect of affairs in Canada, began to pour in regiments of troops. Then followed the historic naval duel between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, which has left such an impression on the public mind that it stands out to this day as a memorable event, while so many other incidents of this conflict are entirely forgotten. It is still remembered how in this deadly fight, the American Captain Laurence was killed and the English Captain Broke sorely wounded, and the First Lieutenant shot hauling up the English colours; while the young Second Lieutenant Wallis, a native Nova Scotian, who steered the victorious *Shannon* into Halifax Bay, passed away only the other day in his 100th year, a retired admiral in the British Navy. Laurence was buried with military honours at Halifax, after an impressive funeral service at St. Paul's; and Broke, who slowly recovered from his wounds, was made a baronet, and lived for many years to stroll along the lovely English lanes as a quiet country gentleman, patting the little children on the head with kindly greetings, and with scraps of his beloved Horace on his tongue for his grown-up friends and intimates. These events, especially the career and recent death of old Sir Provo Wallis, are the links connecting us with the Napoleonic wars, and with the American War of Independence. The duel of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* took place during the governorship of Sir John Sherbrooke, and the two ships, with the wounded and dead captains, were brought to his capital of Halifax. It was certainly the most striking incident that occurred during his rule, and one which must have profoundly affected the entire population of the province.

In a despatch from Lord Bathurst to Sir John Sherbrooke, it is stated that arrangements had been made for bringing to England the American prisoners of war in Nova Scotia. One can see that the feelings of the Nova Scotians during this protracted contest must have become very embittered towards the Americans. There are some curious statements to be found in a memorial of the

colonists (Oct. 8, 1813) to Earl Bathurst. They urged that if the Americans on the restoration of peace be admitted to trade with the West Indies, 'these colonies will be in a perpetual infancy.' Neither the French nor the Americans should again be privileged to fish 'in the narrow seas and waters of these northern British colonies.' They even complained to the noble Earl of the 'sentiments, habits, and manners, both political and moral, of the lower order of Americans.' Certainly President Madison, in going to war to oblige Bonaparte, created a very bitter feeling between the kindred peoples on the American continent; while, despite the risks and harassments of the war, the feeling of loyalty in Nova Scotia towards the mother-country rose in intensity with each fresh conflict.

In his summary of the events in Nova Scotia of the year 1813, which includes the stirring episode of the *Shannon* and *Chesapeake*, Murdoch gives this bright and evidently truthful picture of the social condition and public sentiment of Halifax:—'The operations of the combatants were brought much nearer than ever, and on the sea were more frequent. Our harbour had become the temporary home of the ships of war, and the place where their prizes were brought and disposed of. Our youths were eager to participate in the path that seemed to lead by a few short steps to honour, glory, and fortune; and, indeed, when it is borne in mind that four or five Halifax lads rose to be admirals, we can hardly wonder at the schoolboy's desire to wear the white stripe on his collar, and the small ivory-hilted dirk that indicated his authority to command men. The little capital, then occupying a restricted space, became crowded. Trade was active. Prices rose. The fleet increasing, provisions were in great demand, and this acted as a large bounty in favour of the agriculturist and the fisherman. Rents of houses and buildings in the town were doubled and trebled. A constant bustle existed in our chief streets. Cannon were for ever noisy. It was a salute of a man-of-war entering or leaving, practising with the guns, or celebrating something or somebody. The events of the contest in Europe from 1811 to 1815 were almost, in aspect, a melodrama, yet a serious tragedy in truth. What was most popular at this period here, I may justly say, was the British Navy. Their courageous and adventurous life, their unsophisticated manners, their good-hearted, reckless generosity, and even their little faults and aberrations, won them a place in the esteem and affection of our people. Their quaint phrases were re-echoed, and even their prejudices were sometimes adopted.'

On February 10, 1814, Sir John Sherbrooke inaugurated the fresh session of the Assembly by a viceregal speech in which he referred to the British victories in Europe, and the Canadian successes in repelling the American invaders. 'They have not only been repelled from these provinces,' he proudly exclaimed, 'by

inferior numbers, but the British flag now flies triumphantly on the fort of Niagara, and the American frontier is at the mercy of the conquerors !'

On May 21 news was brought to Halifax of the entry of the allied sovereigns into Paris, and the abdication of Napoleon Bonaparte. Halifax was illuminated, and bonfires blazed on all the neighbouring heights. There was more common-sense in these public ebullitions than is usual in such manifestations of popular joy. For the downfall of Napoleon meant that England could give augmented attention to the war with the United States. Twenty battalions of the English veterans in France were ordered to embark for North America ; troops were sent direct from Bordeaux to Quebec. This alteration in the aspect of affairs soon enabled the energetic Governor of Nova Scotia to assume the aggressive. I here avail myself of a few extracts from Sir John Sherbrooke's Diary for 1814, which briefly record his successful inroad into the State of Maine.

August 26th, 1814.—Rear-Admiral Griffith and myself embarked on board the *Dragon*, 74, and sailed with the expedition destined for the Penobscot.

September 1st.—At sunrise this morning we were in sight of the enemy's fort, Castine. A few shots were fired from it, when the United States officer blew up the works, carrying away with him the boats and two brass field-pieces, but leaving the heavy ordnance behind.

During the day we made good our landing, and occupied the town and peninsula of Castine, pushing our pickets forward about a mile beyond the fort.

Belfast was likewise occupied by the troops under Major-General Gosselin, and a detachment of small craft under Captain Barrie, R.N., and of troops under Lieutenant-Colonel John, were sent up the river to Hampden, with the intention of bringing away the United States frigate *Adams*, which had been wharfed up there for safety. But on the approach of the British the *Adams* was blown up, and her captain, officers, and crew escaped.

12th.—All necessary arrangements having been made for the security of Castine, the Admiral and I sailed for Machias, which place had been taken possession of by a force under Captain Parker, R.N., and Lieutenant-Colonel Pilkington, which had been detached from Castine for that service. Major-General Gosselin was left in command of the troops in the Penobscot territory.

13th.—Major Addison sailed with my despatches for England in the *Martin* sloop-of-war.

15th.—The Admiral and I arrived at Moose Island.

16th.—Visited St. Andrew's.

18th.—We arrived at St. John, New Brunswick.

19th.—Sailed from thence.

20th.—Landed in Windsor, Nova Scotia.

Sir John Sherbrooke's well-conceived invasion of Maine is fully described in James's *Account of Military Occurrences in America*. The noticeable fact is that a large tract of country fell under the power of England at such a small cost in troops or money; while the American newspapers and publications of that period state that he made Castine and the fortifications on the peninsula 'a second Gibraltar,' from which his troops could not have been ejected by the whole force of the State of Massachusetts.

Thus, without pomp or parade, did he jot down the bare facts of this most successful military campaign. It is not always safe to follow provincial historians in their narratives of such undertakings, but if we consult an American work entitled *Notices of the War of 1812*, by John Armstrong, a major-general in the army of the United States, and Secretary of War, we shall find that the enemy admitted Sir John Sherbrooke had very cleverly planned and very successfully carried out his enterprise. 'The entire purpose of the campaign,' says General Armstrong, 'was accomplished with little, if any, loss within the short term of a few weeks; Eastport, Castine, and Machias falling in succession without resistance. Encouraged by these successes to enter the interior and complete the conquest, the British commander was preparing to do so when General Brewster (acting under State authority) made a formal surrender of the whole territory to the arms and dominion of His Britannic Majesty.'

No attempt is here made to give any general account of this war of 1812-4 with the United States. Briefly, it may be recorded that after the arrival of the Peninsular veterans, Washington was taken and the Capitol burnt; but the attack on New Orleans was baffled, and eventually the English forces were compelled to retire from the enemy's territory. With these events Sir John Sherbrooke had no concern. His work, which he accomplished with perfect success, was to secure the safety of Nova Scotia and to defend New Brunswick from American aggression. Afterwards, when the requisite forces were placed at his disposal, he vigorously carried the war into Maine, captured several of its towns and strongholds, and annexed the northern portion of the State. It may, I think, be truthfully asserted that most of our own historians, with that ultra-cosmopolitan spirit which distinguishes them, have been too ready to throw on their own country the entire blame of what proved to be a deplorable and profitless conflict. We, no doubt, aroused the

anger and jealousy of America by exercising the right of search on board foreign vessels. But I think even the foregoing fragmentary narrative will show that the Americans were not by any means unwilling to aid Napoleon in the work of humbling England; while it is quite clear that the attacks on Canada and New Brunswick—especially on the latter—were far from popular in Maine and Massachusetts. Sir John Sherbrooke, at all events, simply did his duty in withstanding these assaults valiantly, and in punishing them swiftly and effectively as soon as he was able.

After peace was restored, and Sir John Sherbrooke had returned to Halifax, the House of Assembly voted him 1,000*l.* for the purchase of a piece of plate, and in their address on the occasion very explicitly stated their reasons for so signal a token of their appreciation.¹

In July 1815, intelligence of the Battle of Waterloo reached Halifax, and great were the rejoicings thereat, and most generous the voluntary donations of the Nova Scotians for the relief of the widows and orphans of the slain in the old country. This last manifestation of true patriotism and popular sympathy must have been more gratifying to Sir John Sherbrooke than even the costly present to himself.

On February 24, 1816, Dr. Charles Inglis, Bishop of Nova Scotia, died, in the eighty-second year of his age and the fifty-eighth of his ministry, and was buried under the chancel of St. Paul's Church, Halifax, Sir John Sherbrooke and Sir John Wentworth being among the chief mourners. Sir John Sherbrooke's career in Nova Scotia was now drawing to a close, as he was appointed by the Prince Regent Governor-General of Canada in February 1816. They were very loth to part with him. At the farewell dinner given to him in Halifax on the eve of his departure for Quebec his health was drunk with the felicitous toast, 'May he enjoy as much happiness in Canada as he has bestowed in Nova Scotia!' And after Lady Sherbrooke's health had been honoured the Governor withdrew; but as soon as he had gone, the Judge, Brenton Halliburton, who was felt to be the fittest man to give expression to the sentiment of the entire community, proposed 'His Excellency Sir John Coape Sherbrooke—a man, take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again.'

Murdoch, whose provincial history is full of personal traits, tells us that full-length portraits of Governors Wentworth, Prevost, and Sherbrooke are preserved in the Province building. It appears they were not men of imposing physique, but, as he says, they were all three capable business men, who, with much tact and unflinching

¹ See Appendix No. III.

assiduity, devoted themselves to the well-being of the colonists. Sir John Sherbrooke, as I hope I have shown, was even something more than this. In a most trying time, when the mother-country was engrossed by a great European war, he kept at bay the American forces, and, when the time came, struck a most effective blow, and with little or no loss annexed a good slice of Maine.

In every respect Sir John Sherbrooke proved himself to be an admirable viceroy. On one important point, too, he closely resembled the great proconsuls of Imperial Rome—and that was in his absolute impartiality and his tolerance in religious matters. Sir John was himself a loyal son of the Church of England, but both in Nova Scotia, and afterwards in Canada, he treated the French Roman Catholics with every consideration. The Abbé Bresseur de Bourbourg, in his *Histoire du Canada, de son Église, et de ses Missions*, relates how Sir John received the Bishop of Quebec with every courtesy when he came to Halifax to enlist his favour for the different tribes of Micmacks, all Roman Catholics, who were living around that city. We shall find the same story repeated when he was Governor-General at Quebec.

It must be admitted that Sir John was a man of very hasty temper; he could never bear interruption when engaged on any business of importance. A story is still handed down from father to son among the old Nova Scotian officials, of how Sir John on one occasion was drilling a batch of raw recruits for the Militia—and for him there was at the time no more important business than this. Suddenly the postmaster of Halifax rushed into the barrack-yard with the news of the victory of Salamanca, and proceeded breathlessly to unfold his tale. To his utter discomfiture, Sir John turned furiously upon him and ordered him out of the place, and then proceeded with his drilling, abating not a single 'half-turn' or 'right about, face!' But as soon as the drill was over, he rushed off to the postmaster, with many apologies for his discourtesy, and begged him to repeat his news of Salamanca, while his keen eye glistened as he heard of the victory and the fresh laurels reaped by his old and honoured chief.

Many years afterwards, in his retirement at Calverton, Nottinghamshire, Sir John Sherbrooke was gratified at receiving a letter from a distinguished Nova Scotian, written with evident sincerity, and showing how warmly he was still remembered in the province. The writer was James Stewart, Judge of the Supreme Court, who had been Solicitor-General, and for many years a most respected member of the Council. He, too, was by descent an American 'loyalist,' his father, Anthony Stewart, having fled from Maryland at the Revolution, and settled in Halifax.

Halifax : August 20, 1825

My dear Sir John,—. . . Your province—for so I will call it—is growing fast in colonial importance, and our present Governor,¹ lately returned to us, has the will and the power to avail himself of every opportunity to further its welfare. The population is increasing in all directions, and the improvement in our agriculture and our roads would astonish you. We are not yet rich, but we are a happy and a contented people, and have been so fortunate in a succession of able, wise, and independent Governors that our children's children will have reason to bless their names. I can assure you, my dear Sir John, that that of 'Sherbrooke' stands first on the list.

CHAPTER VI

CANADA

(1816—1818)

SIR JOHN SHERBROOKE was now to assume the responsibilities of the greatest proconsulship, with the exception of that of India, under the British Crown.

These are his entries bearing on the subject in his Diary for 1816.

January 29th, 1816.—I was appointed Commander of the Forces in British North America.

June 14th.—Received my commissions as Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief, dated April 10th.

27th.—Embarked on board the *Niger*, Captain Jackson, for Quebec.

29th.—Sailed at half-past six o'clock this evening from Menger's Beach.

July 12th.—Arrived at Quebec. Took the usual oaths of office, and assumed the administration of the Government.

Sir John Sherbrooke's predecessor in this high office, Sir George Prevost, had been relieved of the government at his own earnest request. As a matter of fact, he had found the control of this strange Anglo-French community too great a strain even for his seasoned nerves. He vacated Quebec at a most critical time. Not only was there widespread political discontent, but the farmers of Lower Canada were on the brink of a famine, by reason of the total loss of their wheat crop. Sir John was pre-eminently a man of

¹ Sir James Kempt.

action, and so, without waiting for the meeting of the local parliament he advanced a sum of over £14,000 for the immediate relief of the farmers, and to enable them to put in a new crop. It is a proof that colonial parliaments are not always so absurdly touchy and tenacious of their rights as is generally supposed, that the Canadian Legislature not only indemnified Sir John, but voted an additional sum of £35,000, to meet the emergency in Lower Canada.

After Sir John Sherbrooke had assumed the Governor-Generalship of Canada, he received the warrant from the Prince Regent reciting the conditions of the Treaty of Ghent, when peace was signed between England and America. In this document he was directed to deliver up Moose, Dudley, and Frederick Islands to the United States authorities. Some legal question arose as to whether this warrant should have been sent to Sir John Sherbrooke or to Lord Dalhousie, who had succeeded him as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. The matter was referred to the President of the United States; but whether the warrant was sent in the first instance to the Governor-General of Canada or to the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia is of the very slightest concern. The terms of the peace had been agreed upon and signed, and there was nothing either for Sir John Sherbrooke or Lord Dalhousie to do but to deliver up these places to the United States Government, which was accordingly done.

This is not the first time that our men of words have surrendered what our men of deeds have won; nor, it is to be feared, will it be the last. The northern portion of Maine, which Sir John Sherbrooke had conquered, should now form a portion of New Brunswick. No writer has put the matter more clearly than Sir Charles Dilke.

‘The province of New Brunswick,’ he writes, ‘is maimed by a monstrous boundary line. The greater part of the State of Maine belongs geographically to New Brunswick or to Lower Canada, and that a large portion of that state is not British territory, is the fault of our own representatives.’¹ The writer here refers to the blundering of 1842 and 1846; but it seems clear that we surrendered lightly what we had won in Maine by the Treaty of Ghent as early as 1814.

All through 1816 a bitter conflict raged in Canada between the Legislative Assembly and the Council. The impeachment of Chief Justice Sewell and Judge Monk by the former had been dismissed by the Prince Regent. Lord Bathurst was then Colonial Secretary, and he seems, in his correspondence with Sir John Sherbrooke, to have adopted in turn all the arts of the Circumlocution Office. He, however, found Sir John the very worst kind of subject upon whom

¹ *Problems of Greater Britain*, vol. i. p. 44.

to exercise them. It is not worth while to resuscitate the story of this long and protracted dispute with the Canadian judges, which really arose out of a condition of things in which, while four-fifths of the popular Chamber were French, four-fifths of the high officials nominated by the Council were English. Sir John, however, succeeded in convincing Lord Bathurst that, as things had gone so far, it was impossible either to ignore the dispute or to hush it up. He advised him to come to terms with the Assembly by permitting it to appoint an agent in England; he also advised that the Speaker of the Assembly should be, *ex officio*, a member of the Executive Council; and with, I am afraid, a touch of cynicism, suggested that the principal enemy of the judges in the house might be detached from the Opposition by giving him office. On January 15, 1817, the Assembly inaugurated the session by choosing as speaker Louis Joseph Papineau, who has been described as the Daniel O'Connell of French Canada. Then followed acrimonious debates on colonial finance, on which it may be broadly stated that from a constitutional point of view the local Assembly was absolutely in the right. The Colonial Office meantime pursued a policy of irritating ineptitude. The only result of all this was first the utter disgust and then the complete breakdown of Sir John Sherbrooke.

Placed as he was in a supreme but most invidious position, he was made to feel at every turn how disastrous to the well-being of the colony was this shuffling policy of the Colonial Office, which, of course, reacted on the local politicians. Everything was in a state of turmoil, and the most violent personal recriminations were bandied about in the press and on the platform.

In a curious work entitled *A Political and Historical Account of Lower Canada, by a Canadian*, there will be found a characteristic anecdote of Sir John Sherbrooke which is well worth transcribing.

'For the purpose of conveying,' says the writer, 'a conception of the opinion which Sir John Sherbrooke had formed of those by whom he was daily surrounded, and whose duty it was by their advice to direct his conduct, I will relate an anecdote which will serve instead of volumes. This opinion was communicated to me in a conversation which I had the honour to hold with him at the Château St. Louis, at one of the balls given there by the Governor. After the ordinary salutations we entered into conversation; these salutations were by no means expected, inasmuch as he only knew me indirectly; and as I was neither lieutenant-colonel nor commissary-general, nor chief justice, nor attorney-general, nor even member of the Provincial Parliament, but one of that plain and honest class of citizens who are to be seen at public parties only, congregated in an obscure corner of the ball-room, or who may be found at one end of the supper table, endeavouring to drown their

mortification in wine, sometimes good but oftentimes indifferent. In spite of my insignificance, however, the Governor addressed me and asked me various questions upon various subjects, but more particularly respecting the *Canadian*, a newspaper of which I was incorrectly believed to be one of the proprietors. I gave such information as I thought at that time to be correct to these different questionings, when all at once the Governor said, *à propos* of what I cannot recollect at this moment :—

“ Why, sir, if I believed all that is said to me, I should not believe there is an honest man in Quebec.”

‘ This observation struck me so forcibly, that I am glad to be able to adduce it as a fact to show to what length things had been pushed under his administration, and to mark how difficult it must be for an honest man to maintain a good understanding with parties in such a state of hostility.’

The fact is, the whole political constitution of Canada required to be remodelled. But this was not effected until many years afterwards, under Lord Durham, advised by the gifted and lamented Charles Buller. At this lapse of time it is quite impossible to say what a conscientious and able man like Sir John Sherbrooke must have suffered in his earnest endeavour to ameliorate the general condition of the Canadian people and at the same time to uphold the authority of the British Crown, which was then foolishly supposed to be bound up in the bondage of the colonial system.

He had not served two years of his time of office when the end came, suddenly, calamitously. He seems to have had few friends and no confidant in Quebec either in his Council or among the leading officials; a fact which shows how utterly different his life was in Canada to what it had been in Nova Scotia. When it became known that he had applied to Earl Bathurst to be relieved of his viceroyalty and that the Prince Regent and his Minister had reluctantly consented to accept his resignation, the political busybodies attributed it entirely to Sir John Sherbrooke’s dislike of the place. Doubts were even thrown on the plea of ill-health which he had urged as a reason for the immediate acceptance of his resignation. All such doubts may, however, be dispelled by a glance at the pathetic entry in his private Diary for 1818.

February 6th, 1818.—It pleased Providence to visit me with a severe affliction. As I was returning from my walk between two and three o’clock in the day I was suddenly seized with a paralytic affection which deprived me of the use of my limbs on the left side, and rendered it necessary for me to return to England for the recovery of my health. I consequently sent home my resignation, and on July 28th was relieved by the Duke of Richmond.

August 12th.—Sailed from Quebec in the *Iphigenia*, Captain Hyde Parker.

September 2nd.—Landed at Portsmouth.

Like all honest and straightforward men, Sir John Sherbrooke won the respect even of those from whom he gravely differed. Nothing could be more gratifying than the terms of the letter in which Earl Bathurst conveys the official acceptance of his resignation :—

‘It is with feelings of the deepest regret,’ wrote the Minister, ‘that I found myself compelled to submit your request to the consideration of the Prince Regent, and to abandon the hope which I had entertained of your being able, after a temporary absence, to resume the administration of the Government. In notifying to you His Royal Highness’s acceptance of your resignation, I have received His Royal Highness’s commands not only to express to you the high sense he entertains of your services during the term that you have administered the government, but to assure you that the regret which His Royal Highness feels at your relinquishment of a situation which you have filled with such ability and with such advantage both to the colony and to the mother-country, is most painfully enhanced by the consideration of the circumstances which have rendered your resignation necessary.

‘I am too sensible of the interest you take in the welfare of the provinces you are about to leave to close this despatch without announcing that the Duke of Richmond has been nominated as your successor in the government, and that the Prince Regent entertains a confident hope that his known ability in the administration of civil affairs will give efficiency to the system which you have pursued, and thus advance the best interests of the colony.

‘Every endeavour is making by his Majesty’s Government to despatch his Grace at as early a period as possible, and I trust he will arrive in the province previous to the date of your departure.’

Despite the bias of political partisanship in Canada itself, there is evidence to prove that during his short tenure of the post of Governor-General, Sir John Sherbrooke made himself respected by the general public and beloved by those who came into personal relations with him. Fully to realise his position, it is essential to know the impression he created on the French as well as on the British Canadians. On this point there is a remarkable piece of corroborative testimony in a French Canadian work entitled *Histoire du Canada*, par F. X. Gameau, 1844. In that work a passage is quoted from a letter of the Abbé Roux, Supérieur de Saint Sulpice, which

shows how profoundly Sir John Sherbrooke's departure was deplored by that powerful section of the community. The letter, dated August 12, 1818, runs thus:—'La province et le clergé font des vœux ardents pour son rétablissement. La religion dans ce pays lui a des plus grandes obligations. C'est bien le gouverneur qui l'a le mieux traitée, et a fait le plus pour elle.' Surely a remarkable testimony, considering its source, to a non-Roman Catholic ruler. In the work from which the above extract is taken M. Gameau shows very clearly that he completely understood the Governor's painful situation.

'The rumour is current,' he asserts, 'that the Governor has gone away disgusted with the task before him. It would be difficult exactly to say what were his actual ideas as to the line of policy to be followed in Canada. It is probable that he was dissatisfied with all parties, but, above all, he distrusted the local oligarchy. He was a man of great good sense and of lofty views (*'c'était un homme d'un grand sens, qui avait des vues élevées'*), but knowing that the officials had the ear of the Colonial Office, he refrained from an open quarrel with them, all the more that he did not himself share the opinions of the Assembly.'

Nor did Sir John Sherbrooke's persistent endeavour to deal out even-handed justice to the French alienate from him the good-will and sympathy of the bulk of the British population, however displeasing it may have been to what the French-Canadian historian calls the oligarchy of Quebec. The valedictory Address of the citizens of Montreal is so singularly apposite, and gives such a very appreciative estimate of his character and general line of policy, that I cannot do better than quote it in this connection:—

'Two years have hardly elapsed since we hailed, with the most flattering anticipations, your arrival amongst us: our hopes were proportionate to the unfeigned regret expressed by all classes in one of our sister-colonies at the period of your departure for Quebec. The heartfelt gratitude of Nova Scotia became for Canada a pledge of what the inhabitants of this province had to expect from the conduct and character of their new Governor. Nor were we long without perceiving that our expectations, however sanguine, must fall far short of the benefits which we were to experience under your administration. Superior to all local prejudices, your first care was to guard against the impressions of party. Individual opinions, often guided by partial, often vindictive and interested motives, were not allowed to interfere with your views for the general good. Affable and condescending, yet carefully avoiding all hasty prepossessions, you soon convinced us that you were determined to judge for yourself upon the unerring principle of experience, and

that justice and impartiality formed the basis of your administration.

‘Hence the easy access to your Excellency which has been afforded on every occasion requiring the exercise of your functions. Hence your ready compliance with every just request, and your anxiety to discharge the important duties of your situation—an anxiety which has only been equalled by the correctness and equity of your decisions, and by your respect for constitutional rights.

‘To diffuse harmony and happiness amongst the inhabitants of this Province, to inspire them with the most unlimited confidence in the honour, the integrity, and talents of His Majesty’s representatives, have not been the only effects of your administration: you have studied our interest in every point of view with unceasing solicitude. Among the many objects which have attracted your attention, we have witnessed your efforts to develop the natural resources of the country. Agriculture has received new vigour from your patronage, and the physical advantages of the province are at length in a state of improvement from your attention to its internal communications. But, independently of these considerations, your humanity will ever entitle you to our grateful remembrance. Canadians will never forget the paternal solicitude with which you rescued from misery and famine the numerous inhabitants of a large district, who, by unforeseen accidents, had been deprived of the very means of existence. The Legislature seconded your benevolent views. The people will repay your humanity with everlasting gratitude.

‘In a word, we have discovered, in every act of your administration, those principles which alone can produce the peace and happiness of this province. We shall ever look back to the short period during which we have possessed you for a pattern of the conduct which we may expect from the best of governors, and for an example of those feelings which such a governor may expect from a grateful people.’

To which his Excellency was pleased to make the following answer:—

Montreal: July 23rd, 1818

‘Gentlemen,—I beg you to accept my warmest thanks for the very flattering expressions of approbation contained in your address on my resignation of the government of the province.

‘As my desire and endeavours have been steadily and invariably directed to the happiness of the people I have governed, it is a matter of pride and satisfaction to me to find, not only that my motives have been appreciated, but that there is some ground to hope that my exertions have not been quite without success; much of that success I must, however, in justice attribute to the people

themselves, and their representatives, whose liberality furnished the means which I have only applied, and whose wisdom devised those measures of public advantage which I have only executed.

‘The Province of Lower Canada may, among its future rulers, find many more able than myself for the charge of its government, but none more anxious than I have been to execute the trust with equal and impartial justice, none more earnestly desirous of promoting the welfare of its inhabitants; and, in leaving them, it is my parting wish that they continue as happy as it has been my endeavour to make them.

‘To you, Gentlemen, I have in a more particular manner to offer my acknowledgments for your good wishes for my welfare, and to return you mine for the enjoyment of all happiness and prosperity.’

Notwithstanding this mutual interchange of valedictory courtesies, it must have been patent to the minds of the people of Montreal, and it certainly could not have been absent from that of Sir John Sherbrooke, that his physical collapse had been brought about by the labours and anxieties he had undergone during the two years he had passed in Canada.

The last ten years of Sir John Sherbrooke’s life were passed in complete retirement in his native county. During this period his young kinsman, Robert Lowe, who was destined to ennoble the name which the soldier had already made illustrious, was frequently in his company; and the early recollections which were treasured through life by Lord Sherbrooke corroborated in essential points the truth of this brief memoir. The young Winchester collegian, and later the brilliant Oxford scholar, spending his holidays at home at Bingham, would always go over to see Sir John and Lady Sherbrooke at Calverton. The old veteran of Seringapatam and Talavera was then fast breaking up; his highly nervous demeanour showed that the long life of mental strain and anxiety had told heavily upon him. He was, nevertheless, beloved in the circle of his own immediate friends and relations, and it was with them almost exclusively that the evening of his life was spent. In looking back, too, upon his own career, he had the rare satisfaction of feeling that he owed everything to merit, and nothing to favour; and that in climbing up the steep ascent to fame he had never unworthily tried to keep back or to belittle a rival. All his arts had been manly arts.

If he owed his success in life in any way to what is vaguely called good fortune, that good fortune simply consisted in the fact that from the time when, at the head of his troops, he stormed the fortress of Seringapatam, he was brought directly under the notice of the Duke

of Wellington. This brief narrative, imperfect as it may be, must have shown how highly the Duke valued his services and the soldierlike qualities of his head and heart.

It seems probable that but for his frequent prostration by ill health, which alone drove him from the battle-fields of India and the Peninsula, terminating in paralysis in Canada, Sir John Sherbrooke might have closed his career at Waterloo with a fame second only to that of his great commander.

No account of Sir John Sherbrooke could be complete without a reference to the famous story of the Wynyard apparition. It occurred at Sydney, Cape Breton, where Captain Sherbrooke, as he then was, was stationed for a while with the 33rd Regiment, before his first memorable achievement in covering the retreat of the Duke of York in Flanders.

One evening Captain Sherbrooke and Lieutenant (afterwards General) George Wynyard, were seated in the latter's room, which had two doors, the one opening into an outer passage, the other into the bedroom. These were the only means of ingress or egress; so that anyone passing into the bedroom must have remained there, unless he returned through the sitting-room. The story goes that Sherbrooke suddenly perceived, standing by the passage door, a tall youth of about twenty, pale and wan, to whom he called his companion's attention. 'I have heard,' said Sherbrooke, 'of a man being pale as death, but I never saw a living face assume the appearance of a corpse, except Wynyard's at that moment.' While they were gazing, the figure, which had turned upon Wynyard a glance of sorrowful affection, glided into the bedroom. Wynyard, seizing his friend's arm, said in a whisper: 'Great Heaven! my brother!' 'Your brother?' replied Sherbrooke. 'What do you mean? There must be some deception; let us follow.' They darted into the adjoining room, only to find it empty. Another young officer, Ralph Gore, coming in at this moment, proceeded to join in the search. It was he who suggested that a note should be taken of the day and hour of the apparition. The mail brought no letter from England for Wynyard, but there was one for Sherbrooke, which he hastily opened, and then beckoned Wynyard away. When he returned alone to the mess-room he said in a low voice to the man next to him: 'Wynyard's brother is dead!' The first line in the letter had run: 'Dear John,—Break to your friend Wynyard the death of his favourite brother.' He had died at the very moment when the apparition appeared in his brother's room.

The sequel of the story affords a strange corroboration. Walking in London some years after this event, Sir John on passing a gentleman in Piccadilly, suddenly stopped with an exclamation—

'Sir, I have met you before!' when, perceiving that he was the exact counterpart of the apparition, Sir John explained and apologised for his mistake. The gentleman replied: 'I am not at all astonished; for when we used to be together, I was always taken for the twin brother of the ghost.'

In Earl Stanhope's interesting *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington* occurs the following characteristic commentary on this famous ghost story:—

'The conversation after dinner turned upon Sir John Sherbrooke and the strange story of an apparition seen by him and Wynyard when these officers were sitting together after dinner at Cape Breton. The Duke said that the time alleged for the story was when hard drinking was very much the fashion among officers, and that, in his opinion, all that the two gentlemen really did see was another bottle of rum or of whisky. Somebody present remarked that this was changing it from a story of ghosts into one of spirits.'

The Duke for once in a way libelled his old comrade, who was constitutionally abstemious. Moreover, it is only fair to the lovers of the supernatural to add that Sir John Sherbrooke, who was certainly anything but a man of weak intellect, or given to easy credulity, steadfastly believed to the last in the reality of the manifestation, which made such a profound impression upon him that he was averse to discussing it, and would never, I have heard Lord Sherbrooke say, allude to it in a light or casual way.

Lord Stanhope in the same volume records another story concerning Sir John Sherbrooke which throws into high relief his naturally passionate temper. After laying the Wynyard ghost, the Duke went on to say:—

'Sherbrooke was a very good officer, but the most passionate man I think I ever knew. I remember the day after we took Oporto his getting into a terrible rage before me about nothing with my Portuguese interpreter. He was standing with his hands behind his back, and said at last to the man, "It's lucky for you, sir, I can tell you, that I am now in the presence of the Commander of the Forces, and with my hands behind me; and I can tell you, you had better not wait until I bring them into the advanced guard!" I laughed, but the interpreter thought it best upon the whole to take himself off.'

Accepting this story as likely to be, considering its source, somewhat nearer the truth than most anecdotes, it can but enhance one's admiration for the man who, notwithstanding this infirmity, had gained so much control over himself as to hold on with such persistence during that anxious, harassing time in Sicily, and in after life to manage so successfully the self-willed men and irritating affairs of provincial government.

There is another story of his irascibility which has also been

quoted on the authority of Earl Stanhope, but which I do not think will be found in the above-mentioned work:—

‘The Duke also told us how Sir John Sherbrooke, when previously serving in Sicily, had, with the other officers, attended a great funeral at one of the churches. There were several enormous wax-torches, each nearly as tall as a man, to bear in the procession, and one of these was offered to each of the English officers, which was intended as a compliment and mark of respect. But Sherbrooke was seized with sudden indignation at the torch being offered him; he took hold of it, and knocked the man down with it, to the grievous discomposure of the company.’ (*‘Dryasdust,’ Nottingham Daily Guardian, Nov. 12, 1889.*)

On the face of it, this story does not seem very probable. Sir John Sherbrooke was by nature the reverse of an irreligious man, and always showed a very real respect for ecclesiastical forms of ritual, even when opposed to his own practice. Indeed, in his treatment of the Roman Catholicism of French Canada, which is quite mediæval in its intensity and bigotry, he was not only tolerant but even sympathetic.

So lasting an impression did this leave on the mind of M. Plessis, then Bishop of Quebec, that when this prelate went to London to endeavour to mollify Lord Bathurst, who had shown himself offended on the score of certain Papal Bulls which had been issued to Canada without consulting the English Government, M. Plessis records:—

‘La troisième [bulle] avait rapport au Collège de Nicolet, fondé en 1804, en faveur duquel le prélat sollicitait des lettres patentes d’amortissement. Cet appel chaloureux à la justice et aux intérêts de l’Angleterre avait été d’avance soumis par le prélat au jugement de Sir John Sherbrooke qui l’avait approuvé.

‘L’ancien gouverneur du Canada vivait alors retiré dans ses terres aux environs de Nottingham. Les patentes furent accordées en décembre 1821.’

The French-Canadian historian thus sums up his view of the character of Sir John Sherbrooke:—

‘Homme prudent, et l’un des gouverneurs les plus habiles que nous ayons eus sous le régime anglais.’

Sir John Sherbrooke was always held in great affection by the members of his own family. To this day the most precious heirlooms at Oxton Hall are certain relics of the gallant soldier. There is the gold medal of Talavera, set in crystal, with the date 1809; the ribbon and star of the Bath, with which he was invested by the Duke at Badajoz. Still more curious, if of less personal interest, is the curved sword of Tippoo Suldaun, with its blade inlaid with mother-of-pearl; and his rhinoceros-horn drinking-cup, known as the ‘poison cup,’ a

short, flat bottle, which he exclusively used to avert being poisoned. Also Tippoo's bridle, saddle, and holsters. In addition to these trophies the walls are adorned with an oil painting of Sir John in uniform, wearing his Talavera medal and ribbon and star of the Bath; and a fine miniature, which has been reproduced in this volume, taken in a scarlet uniform, with powdered hair and a black stock. Besides these, his private diaries and the letters of the Duke of Wellington and Sir John Moore, of which use has been made in these pages, have been religiously preserved.

In 1830 Sir John passed peacefully away, and, as already stated, the event was barely recorded, even in the military obituaries of the time. He was interred in the family vault at Oxtou, and a memorial tablet was placed in the village church of Calverton, the simple wording of which shows how much more highly he valued the colonelcy of his old regiment than even the high Imperial offices to which he had been called:—

'Sacred to the Memory of General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, G.C.B., Colonel of the 33rd Regiment of Foot. He died on February 14, 1830, aged sixty-five years. And his remains are deposited in the family vault at Oxtou, in this County.'

His widow, who survived him by some years, died at Sidmouth, Devon, in 1856, and her remains were also deposited in the family vault. One of the chief mourners at her funeral was her sister's son, the Right Honourable Robert Lowe, who had some few years previously returned from Australia, and was fast rising into fame as one of the great Parliamentary figures of our generation.

APPENDIX NO. I.—BATTLE OF TALAVERA

(CHAPTER III.—THE PENINSULA)

'CUESTA'S retreat (July 26, 1809) was conducted with extreme disorder, and must have led to the total rout of the Spaniards had not General Sherbrooke, with the division on the left, protected them. But this he did effectually, and then withdrew over the ford into the camp at Talavera.' (*Lord Londonderry's Narrative of the Peninsular War.*)

'Lapisse, crossing the ravine, pressed hard upon the English centre; his own artillery, aided by the great battery on his right, opened large gaps in Sherbrooke's ranks, and the French columns came close up to the British line in the resolution to win; but they were received with a general discharge of all arms, and so vigorously encountered that they gave back in disorder.' (*Napier's History of the War in the Peninsula, vol. ii.*)

'General Sherbrooke, posted in the centre, with the promptitude

required in such an emergency ordered the regiments of the brigade next to the Germans to wheel into open column, and then, facing them about, was preparing to storm the hill, when the happy arrival of General Hill's brigade restored the height to its owner.' (Earl of Munster, *British Campaign in 1809.*)

'General Sherbrooke commanded the advance at Cazalegas. It consisted of General Sherbrooke's division, General Mackenzie's division, and General Anson's cavalry. General Sherbrooke drew out his force on the high ground above Cazalegas, with a view to give them battle and check their advance. He received an order from Sir A. Wellesley to retire and take post about two miles in the rear. He did so, covering his retreat with the brigade of light cavalry, Colonel Donkin's brigade of infantry, and the sharpshooters. This was executed in the most masterly style. (From a private account of the Battle of Talavera, by an officer.)

The following letter on the subject speaks for itself. It was received by Sir John Sherbrooke, while in Spain, some time after Talavera. That he held the writer in esteem is proved by the fact that he preserved it:—

Blandfield, near Edinburgh :

Nov. 30, 1809.

My dear Sir John,—In a situation such as yours I almost fear you will consider my intruding upon you at present as troublesome; but so sincerely do I rejoice at the honour and glory you have acquired since we met, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of congratulating you on the high station you have so nobly attained. From my first acquaintance with your character it has been my firm persuasion that if you did not command success in your military career you would do more—you would deserve it. That you have both met with and merited it affords me peculiar satisfaction, and when I hear *Sir John Sherbrooke* named, I have a pride in saying, 'he was my commanding officer.'

Detached as I now am from the Army and its concerns, I cannot hear in my retirement with indifference the fame of a man I so highly value. It was with no common interest that I saw your gallant conduct so conspicuously noticed by the King himself, and I assure you that my reference to the Army List is more frequent than usual since I have had the pleasure of seeing your name there, followed by K.B., at the head of the 68th Regiment.

The marks of kindness I received from you while under your command and after it I never can forget, and that warmth of heart I have so often seen evinced leads me to hope that the assurance of respect of an old soldier will not be displeasing to you. I beg, then, that you will accept of my most perfect wishes for your success in all your pursuits, for your safe arrival in your native land, and that you may there long enjoy the laurels you have so gloriously won.

I have the honour to be, with high esteem, your faithful friend and sincere well-wisher,

WM. McDOWALL.

APPENDIX NO. II

(CHAPTER IV.—NOVA SCOTIA)

IN Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia* (vol. ii. pp. 541-544) the following summary is given of what I cannot but regard as one of the most extraordinary colonial documents ever forwarded to London. I also append the historian's comments on it, feeling that they are in harmony in the main, not only with the present-day sentiments of Nova Scotians, but with those of the majority of British colonists in all parts of the world. Let me further premise that this Memorial from the members of the Nova Scotia Assembly of 1775 was written just after the battle of Bunker's Hill, when loyal refugees were pouring into Halifax :—

The House passed a long Address to the King in both Houses of Parliament (presented by Lord Chancellor Bathurst, October 26th). It is very long, and would occupy about sixteen pages of this book, given in full. They called themselves the representatives of the freeholders of the province, and 'your loyal and ever dutiful House of Assembly.' They speak of 'this dreadful and alarming crisis, when civil discord and its melancholy consequences are impending over all British America.'

Actuated by the warmest ties of duty and affection to the person and family of their Most Gracious Sovereign, animated with the firmest attachment to the Mother-country, zealous to support her power and consequence over all the British dominions, and dreading a separation from her power and protection as the greatest political evil which can befall them or their posterity.

Influenced by the principles of humanity and the great rights of mankind in civil society, they tremble at the gloomy prospect before them. They feel for the King; they feel for their Mother-country, of which many of them are natives; they feel for the British-American race, once the most loyal, virtuous, and happy of mankind. They 'most humbly acknowledge our Gracious Sovereign, George III., King of Great Britain, the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, to be the supreme Legislature of this province, and of all the British dominions, and that it is our indispensable duty to pay a due proportion of the expenses of this great Empire.' They say it is necessary for the peace of the Empire that the taxes to be raised in the Colonies and disposed of by Parliament should be of a fixed and unalterable nature, and that the proportion of each colony should be permanently settled. They propose a duty of so much per cent. on all imports into the Colonies, 'not being the produce of the British dominions in Europe and America, except bay salt,' to be fixed every ten years, so as not to

vary in value with the increase or diminution of gold and silver. If any aid beyond this should be required, they wish it to be obtained in the old way, by the free votes of the colonial Assemblies. They ask for leave to pass a law, by which anyone convicted of illicit trade should lose his right to sue in civil actions.

They complain of the insolence of revenue officers, and wish them to be placed under control of the Governor, Council, and Judges. They offer as their opinion, *'that no native of this province may ever be appointed a governor, or lieutenant-governor, in this province. The ambitions of affluent individuals in the provinces to acquire governments have led to factions and parties, subversive of the peace and happiness of the people, the good of the province, and the honour of government. Probably the present disputes in America may have been promoted by this course.'*

They ask to have the members of the Legislative Council appointed for life, and to have a property qualification of one thousand pounds. (It was a genuine grievance of these freeholders that persons were often nominated to the Council who had no property in the province or interest in its welfare.) That no collector of customs or revenue officer should sit in the Council or House of Assembly. They ask for triennial Parliaments for the province and vote by ballot, and that officers of Government may be prohibited from interference therein under severe penalties. That the judges may hold their seats during good behaviour.

'We most humbly pray that, after the decease of the present judges, all judges may be appointed in England, and may not be natives of this province; we can trace the present unhappy disorders in America to the want of a regulation of this kind.'

With some further petitions against the 'oppression of practitioners in the law' and the Governor's 'power of escheating lands,' this extraordinary memorial, signed W. Nesbit, Speaker, concludes:—'And may the Father of Mercies preserve constitutional freedom to the British race in every part of the globe.'

Governor Legge seems to have been perturbed by these proceedings. Writing to the Earl of Dartmouth, he says: 'I am informed the House of Assembly have secretly prepared an Address to His Majesty, the contents of which have not been laid before me. On the best information, it sets forth some pretended grievances, but principally contains some project for the alteration of Government upon the American system of popularity, which, if attended to, may produce the same convulsions in this as in the other provinces. I should otherwise think they would not have concealed it from me.'

Murdoch's comments on these matters display his customary good sense. 'Some of the views expressed in this singular document appear very extraordinary now. Triennial Parliaments and vote by ballot read strangely among the profession of dependence on the British Parliament as then constituted. . . . The wish to prevent natives of the province from

filling the chair of government, or sitting on the bench of the Supreme Court, indicates a very different feeling from that now entertained. It is true, however, that in New York, Massachusetts, and other provinces, the desire to obtain the offices of Governor, Chief Justice, &c., had long caused divisions and parties amongst the principal families If they could have seen in a vision the mode in which all the higher offices of our country are now filled, they would have entertained no apprehension unfavourable to the legitimate ambition of the natives of that land in which they were settlers and founders of communities.'

APPENDIX NO. III

(CHAPTER V)

On Monday last his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor commanded the attendance of the House of Assembly in the Council Chamber, when the Speaker presented the following address:—

'To his Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir J. C. Sherbrooke, G.C.B., &c.

'The humble Address of the House of Representatives in General Assembly:—

'May it please your Excellency, the representatives of His Majesty's dutiful and loyal people of Nova Scotia feel it incumbent upon them at the close of the present session of the General Assembly to congratulate your Excellency upon the return of general peace which, through the blessing of Divine providence, is at length restored to His Majesty's dominions. During the whole of the late war with America we have felt a security and confidence arising from the evident propriety and efficacy of your Excellency's measures, and we have had the satisfaction to find those measures carried into effect with the smallest possible inconvenience to the Militia, and a trifling expenditure of the public money. That such benefits may not pass without some memorial of our estimation of them we have voted £1,000 to be expended in the purchase of a piece of plate, which we beg your Excellency to accept as a lasting proof of the grateful sense this province entertains of the wisdom of those measures by which your Excellency at the same time provided for the security of the country and consulted the ease of the inhabitants.'

To which his Excellency was pleased to make the following reply.

'Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:—

'It is very gratifying to my feelings to learn that the sums which were from time to time placed at my disposal by the Provincial Legislature during the late war with the United States of America have, in your opinion, been managed by me with care and economy. From you, Gentlemen, who have had an opportunity of obtaining the most correct information upon this subject, such an honourable testimony would in itself have

been ample recompense for any pains I may have taken in the execution of this part of my duty. But to these expressions of approbation you have most liberally added such a good proof of your opinion as claims my sincere and most grateful acknowledgments. Previous, however, to my acceptance of your valuable present, I consider it will be my duty to submit your offered kindness to the Prince Regent, and should His Royal Highness not object to my receiving it, I shall, with pride and pleasure, accept this distinguished mark of your esteem.' (*The Weekly Chronicle*, Halifax, April 7th, 1815.)

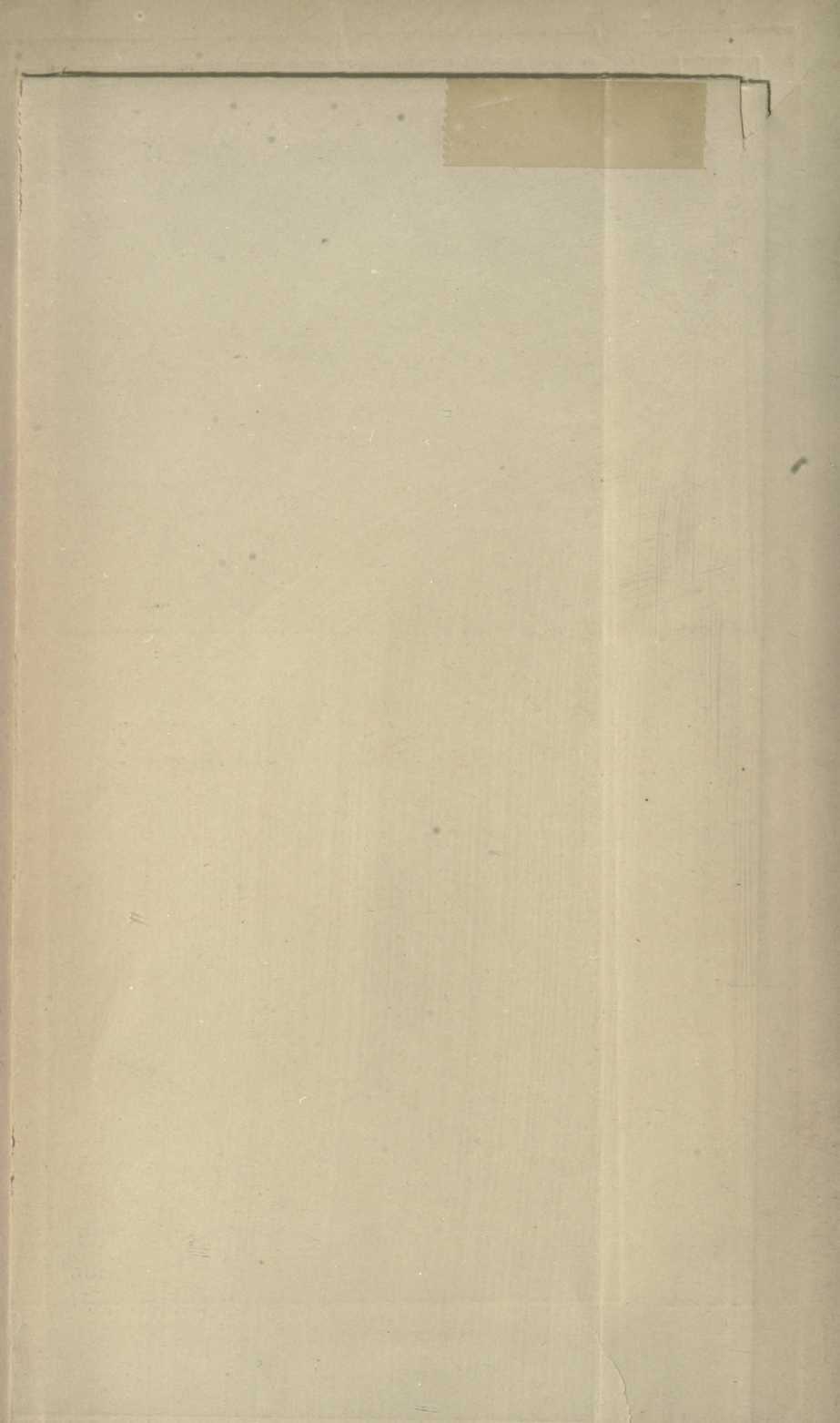
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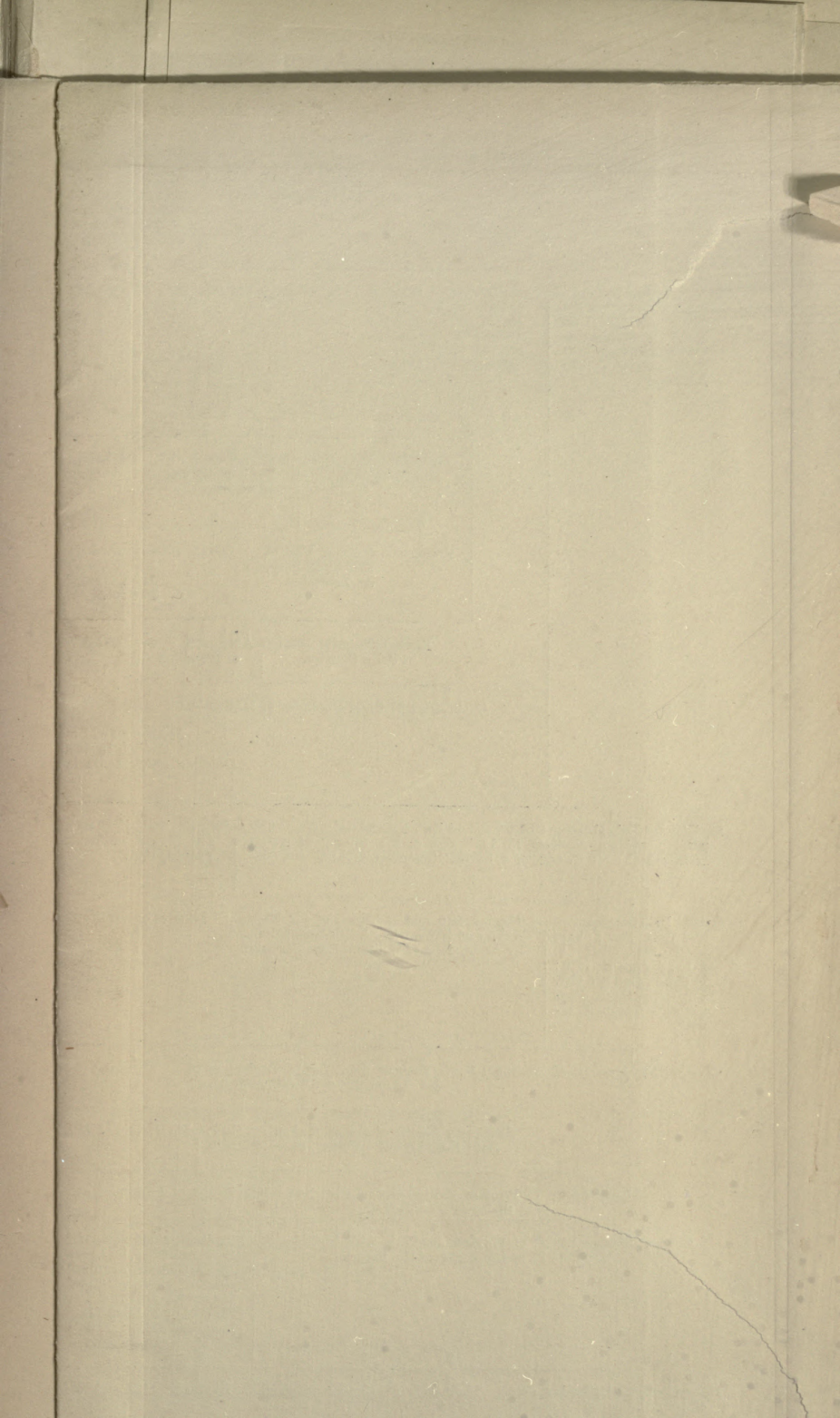
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