

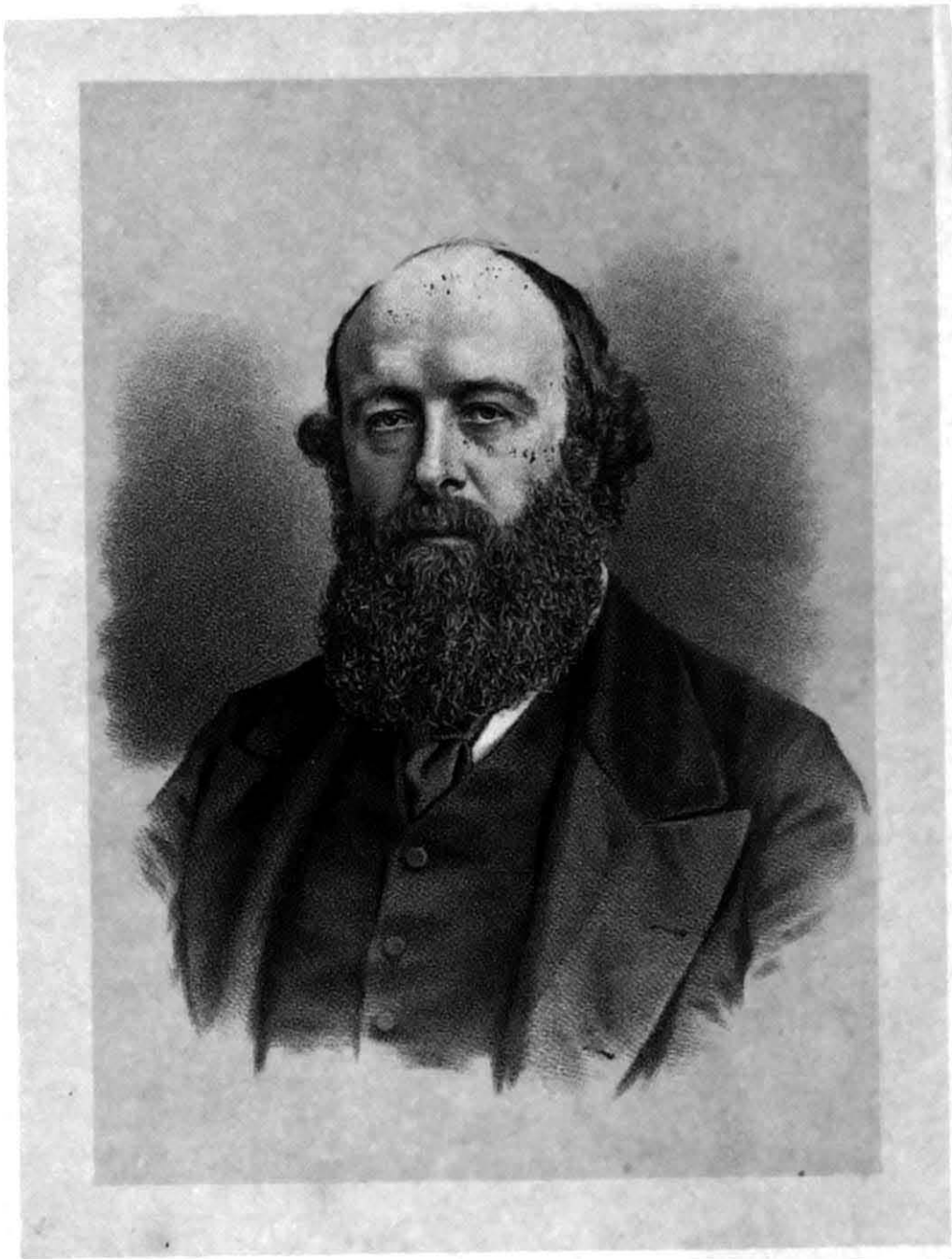
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ROBERT ARTHUR TALBOT GASCOYNE-CECIL
THIRD MARQUESS OF SALISBURY

BY G. H. R. ...

GLADSTONE

AND HIS

CONTEMPORARIES:

SIXTY YEARS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROGRESS.

BY

THOMAS ARCHER, F.R.H.S.,

AUTHOR OF "THE WAR IN EGYPT AND THE SOUDAN;" "PICTURES AND ROYAL PORTRAITS;"
"OUR SOVEREIGN LADY QUEEN VICTORIA;" &c.

FROM 1880 TO THE END OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION OF 1889,
AND TO THE YEAR 1890.

VOL. IV.

1860 TO 1890.



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P R E F A C E.

In the present work it has been the intention of the writer to recount earnestly, truthfully, and without political bias, the wonderful story of the last sixty years; to present a graphic view of a period which, perhaps, beyond any other in the history of the country, has been marked by great events, intense inquiry, and striking incidents; to comprise in the narrative such characteristic sketches of those who have been conspicuous in the arena of public life, as will vividly indicate those personal associations which are inseparable from great social or political advances.

Though Mr. Gladstone's name forms the main title of the book, readers need hardly be reminded that the story of our time is too full and varied to be bounded by even the most illustrious life, or to be told in a single biography. The design, accordingly, has been to depict with some colour and effect all the chief men who have aided in the making of history during six decades,—history, that is to say, not only in a political or legislative meaning, but in the wider sense, which includes the striking events, occurrences, errors, achievements, struggles, failures, and successes that have been the stories of our national lives from year to year.

It was not contemplated to make this book adhere slavishly to strict chronological sequence. A reference calendar is not history, nor can the great drama of a country be even so much as indicated in a narrative broken by undue subservience to the succession of dates. The major and minor events, the serious, romantic, and humorous episodes, overlap and bear constant reference to each other, independently of the particular time at which they occur. In other words, the narrative of "Sixty Years of Social and Political Progress," consists of a number of concurrent stories in which the plots sometimes intermingle; the situations have certain points of contact, the characters meet and separate, without special regard to dates, except when here and there a turning-point or a crisis may arrest attention.

It will be found, however, that due regard has been shown for chronological order, and that dates have been recorded in such a manner, that while the reader will not be harassed by a continual sense of broken sequences, the student will not be at a disadvantage for want of sufficient information.

It is sincerely hoped that to young men and women seeking to learn what has been the history of the last sixty years, the book will be found none the less useful because some endeavour has been made to give life and colour to the scenes and people described. It is believed that the record is accurate, that the characters of the personages have not been misrepresented, that the reflections and observations are the results of impartial and often indeed of anxious thought.

If there is one lesson more than another to be learnt from these pages it is, that an intelligent understanding of the events, the legislative achievements, and the moral, intellectual, and commercial developments which together are the measure of the social and political progress of the country,—is no longer confined to the higher or to any class of the community. Men and women of every station, though they may neither desire nor attain the reputation of “politicians,” are taking a deep and earnest interest in the course of public events, in the method and meaning of the proceedings in parliament, and the principles on which the government of the country is conducted. That this interest is increasing with the spread of education is one of the most hopeful signs of our time, and any one who may be able to help in soberly and righteously assisting it has reason to rejoice.

In this new edition the narrative has been continued up to, and includes the early parliamentary session of the present year, 1890.

THOMAS ARCHER.

LONDON, *June, 1890.*

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