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**THE SERVANT OF ALL**





**JAMES WILSON**

**THE SERVANT OF ALL**  
**PAGES FROM THE FAMILY, SOCIAL**  
**AND POLITICAL LIFE OF MY FATHER**  
**JAMES WILSON**

**TWENTY YEARS OF MID-VICTORIAN**  
**LIFE**

**BY**  
**EMILIE I. BARRINGTON**

**VOL. I**

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

**LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.**  
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**INSCRIBED IN LOVING MEMORY  
TO MY MOTHER AND TO  
MY SISTERS**

## PREFACE

At their death a similar tribute was paid to two illustrious Victorians whose lives I was asked to write, I having known each intimately. In his contribution to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," Sir Robert Griffen, for some years assistant editor of the *Economist* newspaper—having thereby more incessant intercourse with Walter Bagehot than any outside Bagehot's own family,—wrote of him, "He was certainly greater than his books." G. F. Watts, R.A., a brother artist who had known Lord Leighton for more than forty years, wrote, "There was something even greater than his work, and that was the man himself."

It is mostly with the desire to pay a like tribute to my father that I have attempted to write these records of his family, social, and political life. I am his last remaining daughter, so am best able to give a full testimony to the deep affection he felt for my mother and his children, moreover to the fine qualities he ever displayed in our family life. But I should not for that reason alone have ventured to undertake such a task. Of course I am naturally partial, though I do not believe I am unduly partial, but others who have not the same reason to be favourably prejudiced have recorded in writing the virtues my father possessed, besides an intellectual mastery over many most intricate and difficult subjects, and his abnormal power of work.

Immediately following my father's death, my brother-in-law, Walter Bagehot, wrote a memoir of him as a *Supplement* to the *Economist*, which *Memoir* won high

approval from all those who knew my father best and who had appreciated his value, especially from those who had been associated in his work. Within its scope it was considered as faithful and complete a record as could have been written, and the manner in which it was treated was much praised. Its scope was, however, inevitably limited. The fact that it appears as a supplement to my father's own newspaper, and that it was written by so close a relative, entailed a certain amount of restraint. There is doubtless felt in its pages an undercurrent of warm appreciation, but it was neither the time nor the place for much enthusiastic eulogy. In writing a more personal record of my father sixty-six years after his death, I have thought well to reprint freely from this memoir, for no other pen could have expressed with a more profound understanding my father's qualities as a politician, his great gift as a financier and an economist, or could have traced with more fidelity his public career.

After they grew up, my two elder sisters kept diaries, and I have also quoted freely from these, as they give the everyday family life and the social events which occurred. These I have edited, so to speak, by slight sketches of the public events to which they refer, especially the questions brought forward in the House of Commons during the twelve years from 1847 to 1859, when my father rarely missed a sitting. Letters written by and to my father form, however, the chief original matter in these pages.

A few years ago, most unexpectedly, hidden in recesses of unused cupboards, were found a vast number of letters addressed to my father by very notable contemporaries, also many written by himself to his family. My mother, who died in 1886, had preserved these letters, but had left no record of their existence. Although showing, as it were, but side-lights on my father's character and gifts, they are valuable not only for their intrinsic interest but for my present purpose, as tracing my father's public career from an intimate point of view,

and prove the esteem in which he was held by many of the prominent statesmen of his day. Unfortunately, owing to the length of years that have elapsed since my father died, it has been impossible to secure, except in one instance, my father's letters to these correspondents. This exception was, however, one of importance. Through the courtesy of Mr. Duff Gordon, Sir George Cornwall Lewis's relative who now owns Harpton Court, cases of papers preserved by Sir George Cornwall Lewis and deposited in the strong room were searched, and thirty of my father's letters, some of great length, written by my father to him, were found, and these Mr. Duff Gordon has most kindly given me. These, and more than forty of Sir George Cornwall Lewis's to my father complete the correspondence between them.

I have to acknowledge gratefully the permission given me to publish two kindly complimentary notes written by Prince Albert to my father, also permission to quote letters written by the third Earl of Radnor, the third Earl of Clarendon, the Rt. Hon. Charles Villiers, the Rt. Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Mr. Richard Cobden, Mr. John Bright, and Sir Bartle Frere, Bt.

I should feel remiss did I not express my warm gratitude to two friends who have helped me considerably in writing these pages—Miss Florence Upfield Green, who with devoted friendship and very uncommon intelligence has given me secretarial help of the utmost value to me, also to my friend Colonel W. D. Thomson, C.M.G., a lover of history, who has given me valuable notes on questions which were debated in Parliament.

I have included in these pages those from the "Life of Walter Bagehot" which refer to my father, as they find a more appropriate place in a work ostensibly devoted to him. Not foreseeing at the time I wrote Bagehot's Life the possibility of my venturing to make the attempt I have now made, I recorded circumstances which related to my father during the last three years of

## PREFACE

his life, after Bagehot became intimately connected with it.

I have also quoted several passages from Charles Greville's Journals, as they give an intimate flavour to public questions in which my father was concerned.

E. I. BARRINGTON.

HERD'S HILL, 1926.



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# THE SERVANT OF ALL

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS

IN the year 1909 one of my father's nephews asked my eldest sister, Mrs. Walter Bagehot, kindly to write any recollections she had of his uncle, James Wilson, as the younger generation of the family was anxious to learn more of their distinguished relative.

My sister consequently noted down the facts of my father's life which, as a child, she had been told, and those she remembered herself.

"My father, James Wilson, was born at Hawick on June 3, 1805 : he was the fourth of five sons who survived to manhood. Five sisters also grew up and married. Their mother died after the birth of her fifteenth child, and my father was brought up by his eldest sister, Catherine, for whom he felt a great love and veneration. My grandfather owned large wool mills ; he had joined the Society of Friends; and had become an influential member of it. Both his sons and daughters were sent to the Quaker School at Ackworth in Yorkshire. The discipline there was strict ; no talking was allowed at meals, so the boys conversed on their fingers. I remember when we were children my father teaching us the deaf and dumb alphabet. From a boy he had a strong will, but a most genial character and pleasing voice. He was very sociable and a very good talker, so much so that I have heard him compared to Sir Walter Scott. He had a very retentive memory. I remember

his drawing a map of England and Wales for us children whilst sitting at dessert, in which every creek and headland were correctly given. With all his social gifts, my father was not only modest, but extremely shy. He told us that, as a young man, he would sometimes walk half a dozen times up and down before a house, where he was expected as a visitor, before venturing to go in. My father's sister, Aunt Elizabeth, wrote that 'as a schoolboy James was exceedingly clever and learned his lessons with very little trouble, but never excelled in play. His temper was very mild, and he was always remarkably agreeable and good-natured. In 1816, when eleven years of age, he went to Ackworth school. Before leaving he was at the head of the school in every respect, both as regards conduct and learning. He was highly esteemed by everyone connected with the school. When he left, acceding to his own desires, he went to Earl's Colne in Essex to study as a tutor. His father allowed his sons the privilege of choosing their own occupation, and James thought he would prefer teaching to anything else ; but he changed his mind, and wrote home, " I would rather be the most menial servant in my father's mill than be a teacher." He was, of course, immediately allowed to return to his family, where he received a most hearty welcome.'

" My father told a friend in 1859 that ' When I was at school (Ackworth) Mr. Joseph Gurney gave me and several other boys a theme to write on three great attributes of God, viz. the Omnipotence, the Omniscience, the Omnipresence, divided into three subjects, and for the best paper he offered a prize, which I was happy enough to win.' "

Soon after his arrival at school my father, in a beautiful handwriting, sent home the following letter :

" ACKWORTH SCHOOL,

" 12 mo : 18th 1816.

" DEAR FATHER :

" I take this opportunity of writing a few lines to inform thee that I am in health ; and I hope this will

find thee the same. I am very comfortably settled at school, which I like very much. In Arithmetic I have advanced as far as Practice. I am in the 2nd Classes in Grammar, Reading, and Tables, and I expect soon to be in the 3rd in Spelling. Please to give my love to the families of William Ingols and William Miller. As Brother John intends writing to Sister Isabel, he has desired me to tell you that he is no longer in the apartment, having been permitted to leave it about 3 weeks since ; he is much pleased with the change, and I hope we both endeavour to make the best use of our time. Brother John unites with me in love to thee, Brothers, Sisters, Uncles, Aunts, and Cousins.

“ From thy affectionate son,  
“ JAMES WILSON.”

In Walter Bagehot's Memoir of my father he says, “ Mr. Wilson often narrated that after leaving Earl's Colne he had much wished to study for the Scottish bar, but the rules of the Society of Friends, as then understood, would not allow his father to consent to the plan. He was sometimes inclined half to regret that he had not been allowed to indulge this taste, and he was much pleased at being told by a great living advocate that, ‘ if he had gone to the Bar, he would have been very successful.’ But at the time there was no alternative, so he accordingly commenced a life of business. He did not, however, lose his studious predilections. For some years at least he was in the habit of reading a great deal, very often late into the night. It was indeed then that he acquired almost all the knowledge of books which he ever possessed. In later life he was much too busy to be a regular reader, and he never acquired the habit of catching easily the contents of books or even of articles in the interstices of other occupations. Whatever he did he did thoroughly. He would not read even an article in a newspaper if he could well help doing so ;— but, if he read one at all, it was with as much slow,

deliberate attention as if he were perusing a *Treasury Minute*.”<sup>1</sup>

“When about twenty,” my sister writes, “my father and his brother William set up a business in London, each provided with a capital of £2,000 from their father, and they were very successful. In 1831, when visiting Newcastle-on-Tyne, he met Miss Elizabeth Preston. Her father was dead and she was living with her mother and her brother William, who was a man of refined and artistic tastes; my grandmother was a beautiful, grand-looking old lady, and my mother was handsome and accomplished.” Our grandfather belonged to a Yorkshire county family, but had run away to sea as a boy, the old Squire’s home régime having given little scope for his erratic propensities. His family so far forgave him that visits in the four-in-hand coach were made to his home in Newcastle, where he had established himself. An oil painting and a miniature of him exist which portray him as remarkably handsome. Four of his daughters, including my mother, inherited beauty of a type not commonly seen in England, though at times met with in the Highlands of Scotland. It recalled the Greek type rather than the Norman or Saxon. This type recurred very distinctly in my eldest sister, also in my aunt Anne and in one of her daughters. My father was very sensitive to beauty and also to the pleasures of music and art, which were fully enjoyed in the home of his future wife. He himself, when young, played the flute, and never throughout his life lost his great love of music and of pictures. Soon after he met my mother they became engaged—again to quote from my sister’s notes.

“The marriage was arranged when my father was in his twenty-seventh year. My mother belonged to the Church of England, and my father left the Society of Friends after being interviewed by two of their elders.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of the Right Honourable James Wilson*, 1860, by Walter Bagehot. This Memoir was published as a Supplement to the *Economist*, immediately after Mr. Wilson’s death.



ELIZABETH PRESTON  
Mrs. James Wilson



I suppose they protested, but I never heard what passed between them. My father decided to build a house close to his business and to the river Thames at Southwark, and the wedding was deferred for six months because the house was not ready. It took place on January 5, 1832, at eight A.M., as the young couple intended to post from Newcastle to Durham in the day. My mother's beautiful sister Anne was a bridesmaid and joined them at Durham, accompanying them to London as 'travelling bridesmaid,' a usage customary in those days. A year later she married the Rev. William Thorpe, a Yorkshire squarson, who shortly after became Vicar of Bawtry."

Mr. Thorpe owned coalfields and had studied scientific chemistry and wrote thereon. My father, when starting the *Economist*, enlisted him as a contributor on subjects of the like nature.

"Until his marriage my father and his brother William were living with two of their sisters. My mother became very fond of her sisters-in-law, but did not care about the dull grey curtains and other sober appurtenances with which these dear Quaker ladies had furnished her first home. These were a great contrast to the yellow satin curtains and other adornments which I remember being made under her direction for the drawing-room of our second home, Dulwich Place. She had great taste in dress and capacity in all household matters, and when my husband first visited us at Claverton Manor he told his people when he returned home that ours was the only house he knew where body and mind were both equally looked after. In 1836 my father took Dulwich Place, a large house with extensive grounds." It was one of those charming suburban residences which no longer exist in their original status—mansions surrounded by fine lawns and ample gardens. Now—either house and gardens have disappeared altogether, or bricks and mortar choke all the space that formerly surrounded the house.

My father had become much absorbed in the

movement for the abolition of the Corn Laws. All his family interested themselves much in politics, but only he and my Uncle George took any active part in promoting the Abolition of the Corn Laws. My Uncle George was Chairman of the Metropolitan Anti-Corn-Law Association and a member of "The League" in Manchester.

Walter Bagehot writes :

"He (my father) took great pleasure in such intellectual society as he could obtain ; was specially fond of conversing on political economy, politics, statistics, and the other subjects with which he was subsequently so busily occupied. Through life it was one of his remarkable peculiarities to be a *very animated* man, talking by preference and by habit on *inanimate* subjects. All the *verve*, vigour, and life which lively people put into exciting pursuits, he put into topics which are usually thought very dry. He discussed the Currency or the Corn laws with a relish and energy which made them interesting to almost everyone. 'How pleasant it is,' he used to say, 'to talk a subject out,' and he frequently suggested theories in the excitement of conversation upon his favourite topics which he had never thought of before, but to which he ever afterwards attached, as was natural, much importance. The instructiveness of his conversation was greatly increased as his mind progressed and his experience accumulated. But his genial liveliness and animated vigour were the same during his early years of business life as they were afterwards when he filled important offices of State in England and in Calcutta."

Soon after the move to Dulwich Place my father found a very congenial neighbour and friend in Mr. George Porter, then Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade and author of the work "The Progress of the Nation." They were in entire sympathy in all questions bearing on Free Trade,—questions which were then stirring the whole nation. It was also while living at Dulwich Place that my father's lifelong friendship began with M. de Brouwer de Hogendorf, a Belgian

married to a Dutch lady, who belonged to the distinguished family of de Hogendorf of the Hague. M. de Brouwer then sat in the Belgian Parliament as member for Malines. Many visits were paid by the de Brouwers to Dulwich Place and later to Hertford Street ; many return visits were paid to Malines by my father and mother and elder sisters, who became life-long friends of Zénobie, the de Brouwers' only child. My sister Mrs. Orby Shipley, who was born at Dulwich Place, was named after her. When my sister grew up, she resented being called by such a grandiose name, and curtailed it to Zoë. My mother was very fond of Mme. de Brouwer, a charming lady with singularly refined manners, while my father and M. de Brouwer were not only in entire sympathy on political questions, but letters show that they had a very warm affection for one another.

Another family with whom my father formed an intimate friendship during those days was that of Mr. and Mrs. Sibeth, who lived in a home similar in character to Dulwich Place on Herne Hill. Mr. Sibeth was an eager politician and became a member of the Reform Club. He occupied no public position in fighting the cause of Free Trade, but followed closely everything connected with it. On September 17, 1841, he wrote a somewhat prophetic letter to my father: " I have only seen the second edition of the *Sun* of last evening, and from that it appears that Sir Robert Peel has *nothing* to say and no secret to reveal ! I expected nothing more. He will send his crew home for hunting and shooting as soon as he possibly can, and then consider what he can propose next year ! Six hundred years ago there was a King who had stolen too much power, therefore the proprietors of the land said : We are likewise Kings and will also have a word to say, there being at that time no other authority except a few slaves. At present, however, there are the millions, the masses, growing powerful by numbers, not alone, but more so by intelligence. Will they not dream some of these days of being

Kings likewise? and will they be wrong in thinking so? Will both parties be rational enough to avoid a concussion?"

My father soon became acquainted with Cobden, Francis Place, and others who were keenly alive to the necessity of urging measures of reform. Those indeed were agitating times. Starvation and misery prevailed among all the poorer class in the towns and all over the land. Ardent spirits, aflame with passionate pity for the sufferers and fierce indignation against the laws which conduced to the suffering, were battling eagerly to redress valid grievances, which, however, seemed to be unheeded by Parliament and ministers alike. Towards the end of a lengthy letter to my father, Cobden writes, "Your loss at Surrey is but the ebb of the great tide of justice, which will roll on and overwhelm the oppressors when they least expect it."

As is well known, Richard Cobden was first and foremost in arousing sympathy in the "Cause" among the masses. Walter Bagehot wrote in 1846 to his old school-fellow, Sir Edward Fry, "I do not know whether you are much of a free-trader or not. I am enthusiastic about—am a *worshipper* of—Richard Cobden." When students together at University College, London, Mr. Hutton and he would fly about London to any gathering where they had the chance of hearing Cobden speak. Twenty-one years later, a few days after Cobden's death, Bagehot embodied the vivid impressions of those days in the first leader in the *Economist* of April 8, 1865. "Twenty-three years ago—and it is very strange that it should be so many years—when Mr. Cobden first began to hold Free Trade meetings in the agricultural districts, people there were much confused. They could not believe the Cobden they saw to be the 'Mr. Cobden that was in the papers.' They expected a burly demagogue from the North, ignorant of rural matters, absorbed in manufacturing ideas, appealing to class prejudices—hostile and exciting hostility. They saw a sensitive and almost slender man, of shrinking

nerve, full of rural ideas, who proclaimed himself the son of a farmer, who understood and could state the facts of agricultural life far better than most agriculturists, who was most anxious to convince everyone of what he thought the truth, and who was almost more anxious not to offend anyone. Very rarely, if even ever in history, has a man achieved so much by his words—been victor in what was thought at the time to be a class struggle—and yet spoken so little evil as Mr. Cobden. There is hardly a word to be found, perhaps even now, which the recording Angel would wish to blot. There has never, perhaps, been another time in the history of the world when excited masses of men and women hung on the words of one talking political economy. The excitement of these meetings was keener than any political excitement of the last twenty years,—keener infinitely than any which there is now. It may be said, and truly, that the interest of the subject was Mr. Cobden's felicity, not his mind ; but it may be said with equal truth that the excitement was much greater when he was speaking than when anyone else was speaking. By a kind of keenness of nerve, he said the exact word to touch, not the bare understanding, but the quick, individual perception of his hearers. . . . He did not possess the traditional education of his country, and did not understand it. . . . The late Mr. Wilson used to say, 'Cobden's administrative powers I do not think much of, but he is most valuable in counsel, always original, always shrewd, and not at all extreme.' . . . He has left us, quite independently of his positive works, of the repeal of Corn Laws, of the French Treaty, a rare gift—the gift of *unique* character. There has been nothing before Richard Cobden like him in English history, and perhaps there will not be anything like him."

It was this extraordinary individuality possessed by Cobden, *not his opinions*, which undoubtedly made the impressive mark it did on his times. His opinions in reality seemed to be the least part of him. These were probably narrowed by his early circumstances. The

opinions he expressed in writing would appear to be those of a trader—a glorified trader doubtless, nevertheless a trader. In his nature were the elements of wings wherewith to soar high above prejudices resulting from the restricting influences of early poverty. In the first pamphlet he wrote, entitled, “England, Ireland and America,” published as “by a Manchester Manufacturer,” the opinions he expressed there seemed unduly to extol the position trade should hold in the interests of a nation. “We must keep out of wars, for war stops civilisation, prosperity and liberty, and we must cultivate peace, industry and *trade*.” The last word is the keystone. . . . “Nothing but trade can save the country. . . . Peace means trade, and trade makes peace.” So ran his political creed. “Non-intervention in the quarrels of other nations fosters trade. Whatever hinders trade must be banished.”<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered, however, that, so far as his own interests in trade were concerned, Cobden sacrificed them entirely in order to work for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen. He was as surely a true patriot as one who risks his life on the battlefield. His fellow-countrymen fully recognised the sacrifices he had made on their behalf. When the fight was over and the battle had been won, Cobden’s own business was well-nigh ruined. £75,000 was subscribed and offered to him by those who appreciated his patriotic sacrifices. No, it was not his creed as a non-fighting trader which won Cobden his triumphs. It was that in his nature he had the zeal of a reformer, the enthusiasm of a philanthropist, the faith of a missionary, the eloquent persuasiveness of an orator—above all, such a magnetic attractiveness in his personality as made his audience *want* to agree with him. Nevertheless his theories, which he retained to the end, tended to an almost fetish worship for the economic side of politics.

<sup>1</sup> *Richard Cobden*, by Richard Gouing, quoted from 23rd thousand, published by Cassell & Co., in the series of the World’s Workers, now out of print.

Again to quote Walter Bagehot (1865) :

“ Mr. Cobden was very anomalous in two respects. He was a sensitive agitator. Generally, an agitator is a rough man of the O’Connell type, who says anything himself, and lets others say anything. You ‘peg into me, and I will peg into you, and let us see which will win,’ is his motto. But Mr. Cobden’s habit and feelings were utterly different. He arraigned principles, but not persons. . . . Mr. Cobden had a delicate dislike of offending other men’s opinions. He dealt with them tenderly. He did not like to have his own creed coarsely attacked, and he did—he could not help doing—as he would be done by ; he never attacked any man’s creed coarsely or roughly, or in any way except by what he in his best conscience thought the fairest and justest argument. This sensitive nature is one marked peculiarity in Mr. Cobden’s career as an agitator, and another is that he was an agitator for men of business. . . . If a thing was right to Mr. Cobden’s mind it ought to be done ; and as Adam Smith’s doctrines were admitted on theory, he could not believe that they ought to lie idle, that they ought to be ‘bedridden in the dormitory of the understanding.’ . . . He was altogether a man of business speaking to men of business. Some of us may remember the almost arch smile with which he said, ‘The House of Commons does not seem quite to understand the difference between a cotton mill and a print work.’ It was almost amusing to him to think that the first assembly of the first mercantile nation could be, as they were and are, very dim in their notions of the most material divisions of their largest industry. It was this evident familiarity with real facts and actual life which enabled Mr. Cobden to inspire a curiously diffused confidence in all matter-of-fact men. He diffused a kind of ‘economic faith.’ . . . Mr. Cobden had nothing classical in the received sense about his oratory ; but it is quite certain that Aristotle, the greatest teacher of the classical art of rhetoric, would very keenly have appreciated his oratory. This sort of economic faith

is exactly what he would most have valued, what he most prescribed ; he said ' A speaker should convince his audience that he was a likely person to know ' ; this was exactly what Mr. Cobden did. And the matter-of-fact philosopher would have much liked Mr. Cobden's habit of coming to the point. . . . He (Mr. Cobden) was not altogether equal to meaner men in some beaten tracks and pathways of life, though he was far their superior in all matters requiring an original stress of speculation and innate energy of thought. . . . His character is of the simple, emphatic, picturesque sort which most easily, when opportunities are given, as they were to him, goes down to posterity. May posterity learn from him ! "

In the fine sermon preached in West Lavington Church the Sunday after Cobden's death, by his intimate friend James E. Thorold Rogers, is the following eulogy : " He was full of the humility of true greatness, abounding in the sympathy which always goes with sincere devotedness. Careful and cautious in the best sense, he had achieved, or possessed naturally, a complete mastery over himself. No one ever heard a hasty or an angry expression from his lips. . . . But free as he was from passion, he had an absolute loathing for deliberate untruth. . . . He had outlived the rancour of party spirit, and had put to silence the imputation of party interests. Never perhaps did any man so conciliate the respect of those whose policy or whose instincts urged them to conclusions different from his own." These last words were amply proved to be true, for in 1859 Lord Palmerston strongly urged Cobden to enter his Cabinet by accepting the Presidency of the Board of Trade, which tribute he nevertheless declined.

In the first chapter of his *Economic Studies*, Walter Bagehot writes :

" Years ago I heard Mr. Cobden say at a League meeting that ' Political Economy ' was the highest study of the human mind, for that the physical sciences required by no means so hard an effort. An orator cannot be expected to be exactly precise, and of course Political



Economy is in no sense the highest study of the mind—there are others which are much higher, for they are concerned with things much nobler than wealth or money ; nor is it true that the effort of mind which Political Economy requires is nearly as great as that required for the abstruser theories of physical science, for the theory of gravitation, or the theory of natural selection ; but, nevertheless, what Mr. Cobden meant had—as was usual with his first-hand mind—a great fund of truth. He meant that Political Economy—effectual Political Economy, Political Economy which in complex problems succeeds—is a very difficult thing ; something altogether more abstruse and difficult, as well as more conclusive, than that which many of those who rush in upon it have any notion of.”

Cobden's second pamphlet, entitled *Russia*, was written when he was beginning his business as a cotton printer in Manchester. After writing this famous essay in 1836, and after he had been defeated in 1837 as candidate for the borough of Stockport, he resolved to make the repeal of the Corn Laws his exclusive aim. The task he set before himself was that of *instructing the nation*. It was about that time he became acquainted with my father. He and others formed the Anti-Corn-Law League at Manchester, which took form the same year as my father's book, “Influences of the Corn Laws,” came out. A periodical paper was started as an organ of the League. Lecturers were sent all over the country to preach and argue on its doctrines. Meetings were called in towns and in country districts. The spokesmen at these meetings encountered much hostility, and the battle which Cobden and his associates fought was often fierce and tumultuous. Many of the members of the League, whose vision was narrower and more prejudiced than Cobden's, made the fight a question of class against class, a view which my father strongly condemned. The interests of all classes he considered ought to be recognised as claiming at least consideration in any measures of reform. Moreover, our legislators at that

time belonged to that class which the extremists of the Manchester school were anathematising, but who nevertheless had the power to effect reforms; and therefore were those who above all ought to be convinced of the necessity of Reform and not made its enemies by party vindictiveness. Mr. Gouging gives the following account of the forming of the Anti-Corn-Law League:

“In 1838 the distress in the country was great. The Chartist agitation had begun to grow violent. The Chartists—the most advanced Reformers, were not satisfied with the Reform Act of 1832, and they began their movement soon after the passing of that Act. . . . Writing on the subject of their disturbances, Cobden expressed the hope that these scattered elements (the Chartists’ demands) might yet be rallied round the question of the Corn Laws, which he thought could be made irresistible if it were agitated in the same manner in which the question of slavery had been agitated. A meeting of seven men was held in October in Manchester, and an Anti-Corn-Law Association was formed. Cobden and others at once joined the band and this was the foundation of the League. . . . Richard Cobden soon became the master spirit of the movement. A great Free Trade Banquet was held. On the day after the feast Mr. Cobden met a number of delegates from various towns, and explained to them his scheme for the formation of local Anti-Corn-Law Associations in different centres of population, to be all united in one centre of Manchester. Thus the Anti-Corn-Law League was initiated in the early days of 1839.”

Cobden and his partners in their great agitation met with little encouragement from the reigning statesmen of the day. In a speech he made some years later he says, “When we came to London six years ago in the spring of 1839 (there were three of us in a small room at Brown’s Hotel, Palace Yard), we were visited by a nobleman, one who had taken an active part in the modification of the Corn Laws, but not the total repeal. He asked us, ‘What is it that has brought you to town?’”



RICHARD COBDEN

We said 'We come to seek the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws.' The nobleman said, with an emphatic shake of the head, 'You will overturn the Monarchy as soon as you will accomplish that.'

The deputation had interviews with Sir Robert Peel, who gave them no hope, and with Sir James Graham, who answered them by an exclamation, "Why, you are levellers! Am I to infer that the labouring classes have some claim to the landlord's estates?"

In that same spring, 1839, two hundred delegates waited upon the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, the head of the Liberal Administration, and when he heard the object of their visit, he replied, "You know that to be impracticable." They were viewed, in fact, as little better than madmen. This was only seven years before the repeal of the Corn Laws, the measure brought in by Sir Robert Peel himself.

Notwithstanding this attitude of ministers, the agitators were hopeful as to the progress of the cause in the country. My father's youngest brother, George Wilson, being Chairman of the Metropolitan Anti-Corn-Law League which had been started in London, made a fine speech addressed to his "fellow-countrymen" at Drury Lane, and said: "We again appeal to you in your own cause, we urge the question of abundance of food for human beings, living by food which God and Nature offer abundantly as the reward of toil and industry. We ask once more whether you will endure the monopoly which, by obstructing the supply of food, wars against the beneficent ordinance of Providence, and fills the country with deep, universal, and prolonged distress, distress at length admitted and deplored by all parties, although the obvious remedy is still resisted. . . . With the progress throughout the nation of Free Trade principles,—and especially with that of the conviction and determination that the Corn Laws must and shall be repealed, there is every reason to be satisfied. The evil is of unparalleled enormity, and the popular protest against it has already overpassed the usual limits

of successful agitation. The time is at hand when it will again be seen what effect it will produce upon the legislation. Any proportional result it would be idle to expect : the legislature is the stronghold of the food monopoly ; we have to ask its abolition from the very class by whose influence and for whose imagined profit that monopoly was created and instituted. We seek it from a government which was raised into power for the sake of its preservation, and yet, who does not already see the shadow of the coming event? Who, now, dreams that the question is anything more than one of time? . . . People of England, the League speaks to you from the heart of this great Empire with the Voice of assembled thousands. In your millions you will respond to us, throughout the country. Once again let the united cry of the people reach the legislature, as the prayers of the people ascend to God for daily bread. And may the legislature at last be moved to grant that the food which Providence bestows shall not be intercepted or diminished by taxation."

## CHAPTER II

### "INFLUENCES OF THE CORN LAWS"

My father had been watching carefully the current of events while Cobden and his friends were exciting the country to battle for the good cause. No one felt more keenly the absolute necessity for repealing the Corn Laws than did my father, but the aim he set himself to achieve was not to aid in stirring up the feelings of the populace, but, by lucid argument and by the exposure of proven facts, to convince those who possessed the power to reform the legislation of the urgent necessity of doing so. This aim he embodied in his first publication, entitled "Influences of the Corn Laws." Numerous letters which he received from strangers, as well as from friends, show that this book greatly tended to achieve its object. My sister writes in her notes, "At Dulwich it was that my father wrote a small book called 'Influences of the Corn Laws,' which made a mark. I remember his coming home one evening in high spirits because Sir Robert Peel had been quoting it in the House of Commons." The book started my father's political life, which lasted twenty-one years—1839 to 1860. Charles Villiers,<sup>1</sup> a brother of the Earl of Clarendon, was one of

<sup>1</sup> The Right Honourable Charles P. Villiers was born 1802, and was therefore three years my father's senior. He was called to the Bar 1827, and when my father first knew him was Examiner in the Court of Chancery. He held his post from 1833 to 1852, was Judge Advocate from 1852 to 1858, and President of the Poor Law Board from 1859 to 1866. He was known as "the Father of the House of Commons." Elected in 1835, for more than fifty years he sat for Wolverhampton. Letters show that he was at one time urgently pressed to stand for South Lancashire, when in those days a County Constituency was of more importance than that of a Borough, but he stubbornly refused to stir from Wolverhampton—*J'y suis, j'y reste.*

the comparatively few Members of Parliament who had, up to that time, taken the questions of Free Trade and the Abolition of the Corn Laws seriously to heart. It was his custom to bring forward a motion advocating the *Cause* every year. Every year the motion was rejected, but, nothing daunted, with imperturbable pertinacity, he brought forward motion after motion. On receiving my father's book he wrote : " I only wish that I had had time to peruse it before the Debate. Though my motion was rejected by a reckless, interested majority, I yet hope that the movement is progressing." Before bringing forward his motion the following year, he writes : " Could you appoint any time when we could meet (anywhere you like) ? I want very much to speak to you on the subject of my motion." They met, and thus commenced a lasting friendship between Charles Villiers and my father.

Of all those whose acquaintance with my father began in these early years Charles Villiers is the one of whom I retain the most distinct vision. He came often to Hertford Street in my father's lifetime, and continued his intimacy with our family after my father's death. He was an original and attractive person : he lived several years in Regent Street, a strangely unsuggestive abode for a politician. He was decidedly untidy. His letters were untidy, his hair was untidy, his collar was untidy. Within this negligent setting were finely chiselled features, a countenance of Machiavellian subtlety, and a suggestion of his salient characteristics, an imperturbable persistency and a strong vein of quaint, satirical humour. Gainsborough, and *only* Gainsborough—with his unerring flip, his convincing certainty of line—his acute insight into character, could have painted Charles Villiers, and duly given the special finesse of form, the careless tangle of the hair, the soft crumple of the collar, and left on the canvas a vivid aspect of this aristocrat of aristocrats.

Charles Villiers sought my father's advice almost every year before he brought forward his motion. He writes one year :

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*Private*

*Thursday.*

“EXAMINER’S OFFICE, ROLLS YARD, CHANCERY LANE.

“ My DEAR SIR,

“ Is there any time that we could meet to-day, or would to-morrow suit you better? I am so overwhelmed with work here, and you have this subject so completely at your fingers’ ends that I am tempted to bother you especially to aid me to any novelties in this matter, or in the enforcement of what is most striking and important in what is old.

“ I would wait here till 4 to see you to-day or be anywhere at any time to-morrow or call upon you now if that would suit you. I want your advice as to what you think would be the most useful way of presenting it this year to the House, and which particular evening would be best?

“ Yours very truly,

(Sgd.) “ C. P. VILLIERS.”

Soon after they became acquainted Charles Villiers wrote to my father, “ My brother, Lord Clarendon,<sup>1</sup> is very desirous of seeing you. Would it be convenient at any time to-morrow or Wednesday, and where would suit you best if it is possible for you to meet him? ” Again, “ As soon after half-past four as will be convenient to you will suit my brother best. He will be at the Athenæum at half-past four, two doors from the Reform. I shall be with him, if you will be kind enough to ask for me.” Thus commenced Lord Clarendon’s friendship and intimate intercourse with my father, recorded in the very numerous and amusing letters which my mother preserved. Unfortunately the most entertaining passages in these letters are of too private a nature—the witty criticisms of too drastic a character for publication even at this distance of time.

<sup>1</sup> Earl of Clarendon, born 1800, and died 1870. Entered the Diplomatic Service as Attaché at St. Petersburg in 1820. First Commissioner of Excise 1824–1833. Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at Madrid 1833. Lord Privy Seal 1840–1841. President of the Board of Trade 1846–1847. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1847–1852. Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1853–1858. Again in 1865–1866, and again 1868–1870. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1864–1865.



The most fruitful friendship in my father's life arose out of admiration for the "Influences of the Corn Laws." From Longford Castle, Salisbury, November 5, 1839, Lord Radnor writes :

"SIR,

"I hope you will pardon my troubling you with this letter ; but being a great admirer of your work on the Corn Laws, and having spread it pretty largely in hopes of bringing over persons opposed to the repeal of them, I am anxious to be enabled by you to contradict or to account for all objections which I have heard urged against your calculations " (then follow several queries with regard to the theories in my father's book). "I am the more anxious in the matter as I make no doubt that in the spring session of Parliament the matter must come into discussion, and if I take any part, I shall ground myself mostly (if not altogether) on the data contained in your arguments. I owe you many apologies for this trouble, and can only urge in excuse the interest I feel in the subject and the importance I attach to it. I am, Sir, your obedient and humble servant,

"RADNOR."

After receiving my father's answer, Lord Radnor writes :

"I have not been able to-day to read over your letter received this morning with all the attention it deserves and which I find necessary to make myself master of its details, but I will not allow this post to go out without offering to you my thanks for the very obliging manner in which you have replied to the queries I ventured to put to you. I am really sincerely obliged to you, and with your kind permission will not hesitate again to trouble you, if I have occasion. I am quite delighted that the Cause has so able and zealous an advocate. I tremble for the next year at our prospects with regard to the price of corn. Even in this dry country a great deal of land intended for wheat is not sown, and in the northern parts



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of the country the matter is still worse. Fortunately I hear there has been a most abundant harvest in America.

“ Again expressing my thanks, I beg to sign myself,  
“ Sir, your obedient humble servant,  
“ RADNOR.”

Immediately following these first letters a constant correspondence ensued between Lord Radnor and my father which, had my father's letters been to the fore, would have yielded some valuable records of many political situations during the forties : as it is, those alone from Lord Radnor, of which over sixty have been preserved—the first dated 1839, the last 1859 on the advent of my father's departure for India—furnish not only several notes on the growth of Free Trade policy, but afford most pleasant reading as evidence of an earnest nature, alive with philanthropic sympathies, of a beautiful character, of the kindest feelings towards my father, and a keen appreciation of his powers. This friendship bore valuable fruit in aiding my father to achieve two important successes in his life,—the establishing of the *Economist* newspaper and the securing of a seat in Parliament as member for Westbury, Wilts.

Judging from Lord Radnor's letters and from my own knowledge of my father, sympathy on fundamental grounds existed between them. Both had a simple undoubting religious faith : both viewed political questions as profoundly serious problems, affecting, as they did, the morals, welfare and happiness of thousands of their fellow-creatures : both recognised that party strife was worse than useless, impeding, as it did, the progress of what was of *most* real consequence, the enlightenment of the community at large, and both were equally free from any class prejudice. My father had recognised with regret that many of the Manchester School of reformers were influenced by an animosity arising from class prejudice, which narrowed alike their sympathies and their outlook on important public questions. Though keenly appreciative of power and

capacity in others, concerning his own abilities Lord Radnor was eminently modest and diffident. In answer to my father's request that he should attend a meeting, he writes, "I am much flattered by what you say about my attendance at the Anti-Corn-Law Meeting on the 31st. I am by no means certain that I shall be in town at that time, but if I am it is so completely out of my habits to attend public meetings of the kind, and I feel that I am so entirely inefficient on such occasions, that, though the Cause and the occasion vehemently tempt me, I do not think I shall be able to bring myself to attend. However, I will bear the matter in mind."

In July 1840 my father asked Lord Radnor to join the Anti-Corn-Law Association. "Certainly I have *no* wish at all that my name should *not* be published as a Member of the Anti-Corn-Law Association, and as a subscriber to its funds," was the written reply. "I consider its object as strictly one of charity and I heartily wish that you may not be disappointed in your expectation that my example may be followed. I quite agree with you on the propriety of keeping the objects of the Association quite distinct and unmixed with any other political question whatever. This seems to be generally felt by all the friends of the Cause, and I trust that nothing will occur to disturb or alter this arrangement."

Lord Radnor was an ardent politician and had sat in the Commons for Salisbury from 1802 to 1828, when he succeeded to the peerage. He was Patron of seven livings, owned two large estates surrounding Coleshill House and Longford Castle, and a town residence in Grosvenor Street. When his friendship with my father began he was sixty years of age, while my father was only thirty-four. Though taking a paternal interest in my father's career, letters show the elder man in the light of a disciple, ever deferring as a pupil to a master. It seems to have been generally recognised that my father had great influence with Lord Radnor. Cobden writes from Manchester in 1842, "I regret that it is out of my power to meet Lord Radnor on Tuesday. I wrote to him a few

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days ago to ask him to attend our great banquet at Manchester in January. I know you have great influence with him, and I wish you would try to induce him to come. Our friends here reckon much on his presence." Again Cobden in describing how he has been writing to several magnates in the South-West of England to arrange a meeting to assemble at some central place, say Salisbury : " I have suggested that Lord Radnor would probably preside if invited. Will you see his Lordship or write to him on the subject ? "

After reading the " Influences of the Corn Laws," my father's friend and neighbour, Mr. George Porter, wrote:

" WHITEHALL,  
" 11th March, 1839.

" . . . I have to offer you my best thanks in my individual capacity for your kindness in sending me your volume, and must as a member of the community for all the research and thought which you have brought to bear upon the subject of the Corn-trade, a subject which yields to none in importance at the present day and in this country. I have read every word of your book, with the greatest attention and pleasure, and go along with you completely in almost every view and opinion that you have expressed. You have made a very valuable addition to our literature upon one of the most practical, but least understood, branches of economical science."

So while Cobden and his friends were using their eloquence to convert the populace by holding exciting gatherings all over the country, my father's book was reaching the reading and thinking part of the community. And whether it converted the reader or not, there was but one opinion among the educated classes as to the perfect form in which he argued his case. Lord Melgund, eldest son of the Earl of Minto, whose estate was near Hawick and whose family held friendly relations with my father's, writes from the Admiralty in 1840 :

" On a question of such magnitude and involving so many intricate points it can perhaps hardly be expected

that I should come to a sudden conclusion, but I may venture so far as to say, if I am not quite a convert to all your opinions, I am at least bound to bear testimony to the very able and candid manner in which you have discussed the subject."

In the *Leeds Mercury* newspaper appeared a long review of the book, headed *Pernicious Influence of the Corn Laws on the Agriculturists*. "This is a most valuable and original work, the best we have read on the subject, and worth more than all the speeches that have been delivered upon it in Parliament. It is entitled :

"'Influence of the Corn Laws, as affecting all Classes of the Community, and particularly the *Landed Interests*. By James Wilson, Esqre.'

"This little work of 130 pages is a very masterly piece of reasoning and illustration ; and we earnestly recommend it to the perusal of every man who wishes really to understand the Corn Law question, but especially to the Agriculturists. Not one word of invective or contempt, not even a trace of party feeling, not a symptom of what interest the author himself belongs to,—appears in this tract, which is pervaded by a chain of calm, luminous and convincing argumentation, founded on the evidence of official documents, and is also animated by a spirit of benevolent patriotism, and leading to conclusions that reconcile and harmonise the interests of all classes.

"Mr. Wilson takes a view of the Corn Laws differing in many respects from the views commonly taken both by the agricultural and manufacturing interests, and he exposes the fundamental errors of both parties. He shows, by an unanswerable deduction from admitted facts, that the Corn Laws are *far more prejudicial to the agricultural interest*, including farmers, labourers, and landlords, than to any other. On this account, and because we are firmly convinced that Mr. Wilson is in the right—all our recent inquiries having caused us to *approach* to this view, which we are now brought by this admirable publication decisively to embrace—we par-

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ticularly invite the attention of the land-owners and farmers to Mr. Wilson's demonstrative reasonings."

A very long review, including many quotations, follows.

From the *Leeds Mercury* Office, March 21, 1839, the editor, Mr. Edward Baines,<sup>1</sup> after expressing the same views as appeared in his newspaper on "The Influences," writes: "It exposes errors which are as universally prevalent as they are practically mischievous, and it is calculated to overcome the prejudices of that class which is all-powerful in the Legislature.

"We have felt, in reading it, that such views and facts as your work contains ought not to be confined to the very narrow circulation which a 5s. publication can only obtain: and we think it not impossible that your wish to render a service to your country may induce you to permit its re-publication in some very cheap form, calculated to increase its circulation immensely, though not to yield profit to yourself.

"On behalf of the Leeds Anti-Corn-Law Association, and also on our own behalf, we beg to ask if you would give permission for the printing of your work on a stamped sheet as a Supplement to the *Leeds Mercury*, to be distributed to all our subscribers, which are 10,000 in number, and which are spread over both the manufacturing and agricultural districts of the North of England, especially of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

"This would give a currency to your views which they could not receive in any other way in this part of the country; and we cannot but hope the effects would be exceedingly beneficial."

Mr. Baines ends his letter by referring my father to his own publishers, Messrs. Longmans, and to their

<sup>1</sup> Edward Baines, born 1774 and died 1848. Under the Reform Act, Leeds became a two-member constituency 1832, when Macaulay was elected. Upon his going to India, Baines succeeded him. Represented Leeds till 1841. Gave support to the Anti-Corn-Law League. Was a good speaker and was accorded a public funeral. He wrote *History of the Reign of George III.* Was Editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, the most influential newspaper in that part of England. Was a leading member of the Leeds Anti-Corn-Law Association.

County Members, Lord Morpeth and Sir George Strickland, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Mr. Porter of the Board of Trade, and other notables, as vouchers for the importance of the vehicle through which my father's book would be conveyed to a numerous public, and stating that the head of his firm is M.P. for Leeds.

In further correspondence it was decided to include the whole of my father's book within the pages of the *Leeds Mercury* itself, in the editorial part of the paper, in separate numbers.

Thus the book reached the 10,000 subscribers to the paper.

From a stranger :

" BELPER,  
" April 11, 1840.

" I write to you as the author of a work on the corn laws in which you leave violence and exaggeration to those who do not know the value of truth, while you show, by a clear and convincing statement, the actual position of this country under restriction, and its probable condition under free trade. I conceive your work more calculated to operate beneficially upon thinking minds than any other which has fallen into my hands. I have read many.

" . . . I am not sure that I should have felt it my duty to tender you my thanks for your book if I had no other object, but I am quite sure, if I had not done so, that I should have neglected a public duty . . .

" I am, Sir,

" With great public respect,

" Your obedient Servant,

" J. W. HANCOCK."

Certainly the book came out at the moment when it was most wanted. The lucid, forcible manner in which the case was explained cleared away the haze which hung over the subject in many thinking minds. When congratulating my father on his being elected member for Westbury in 1847, a landowner, not personally known to him, writes : " I must rejoin a word to express my



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great satisfaction at the signature which it bears [my father had answered a letter from the writer] as that of the author of a little work which first satisfied and convinced me some years ago of truths which I had seen, but only dimly perceived before on the important subject of the Corn Laws and their influences. As a landlord and a farmer, and chiefly dependent on land myself, I have never ceased to urge the truth of those views by every argument and opportunity—and the farmers of this—my own county—so to speak, have, during the late election shown anything *but difference* with my views on the subject by their requisition to me to come forward as a candidate.”

Cobden writes, May 3, 1839 : “ We shall make constant use of your valuable work by quotations and shall continue the review of it. Our Anti-Corn-Law circular will carry far and wide any opinions you may have to promulgate. We print ten thousand copies, and it goes to every large town. We are making efforts to distribute as many as 20,000 copies. If you will favour us with a communication for one of the early numbers we shall be glad. At all events we shall make use of your labours in the circular. Hoping to hear from you again.

“ *P.S.*—I think you have lost sight of one *gain* to the aristocratic land-owners—the *political* power arising out of the present state of their tenantry—and political power in this country has been pecuniary gain. When in London our delegates talked to Lord Nugent about proposing to guarantee the Duke of Buckingham his present rental for twenty years, with a free trade in corn—‘ Ah ! ’ said his lordship, ‘ but the Duke wants something else, he wants the county representation ! ’

“ There is also another point we say, and justly, that the land would increase in value through the increase of trade by freeing commerce. But we forget the jealousy that feudal lords have to the growth of plebeian fortunes. If the agriculture is only to increase in profit through the extension of the trading interest, then the landlord takes his proper place secondary to the merchant or cotton-

spinner. But the aristocracy prefer their present relative position at the expense of some positive loss."

In his memoir of my father Walter Bagehot writes :<sup>1</sup> "The time at which Mr. Wilson commenced his career as an economical writer was a singularly happy one. An economical century has elapsed since 1839. The Corn Laws were then in full force, and seemed likely to continue so ; the agriculturists believed in them, and other classes acquiesced in them ; the tentative reforms of Mr. Huskisson were half forgotten ; our tariff contained perhaps some specimens of every defect—it certainly contained many specimens of most defects ; duties abounded which cramped trade, which contributed nothing to the Exchequer, which were maintained that a minority might believe they profited at the expense of the majority ; all the now settled principles of commercial policy were unsettled ; the 'currency' was under discussion ; the Bank of England had been reduced to accept a loan from the Bank of France ; capitalists were disheartened and operatives disaffected ; the industrial energies, which have since multiplied our foreign commerce, were then effectually impeded by legislative fetters and financial restraints. On almost all of these restraints Mr. Wilson had much to say.

"Upon the Corn Laws Mr. Wilson developed a theory which was rare when he first stated it, but which was generally adopted afterwards, and which subsequent experience has confirmed. He was fond of narrating an anecdote which shows his exact position in 1839. There had just been a meeting of the Anti-Corn-Law League at Manchester, and some speakers maintained, with more or less vehemence, that the coming struggle was to be one of class against class, inasmuch as the Corn Laws were beneficial to agriculturists though they were injurious to manufacturers. The tendency of the argument was to set one part of the nation against the other part. Mr. Wilson was travelling in the North, and was writing in a railway carriage part of the 'Influences of the Corn-Laws.'

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir.*

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By chance a distinguished member of the League, whom Mr. Wilson did not know, happened to travel with him and asked him what he was about. ‘I am writing on the Corn Laws,’ said Mr. Wilson, ‘something in answer to the rubbish they have been talking in Manchester.’ ‘You are a bold man,’ was the reply; ‘Protection is a difficult matter to support by argument.’ But it soon appeared that Mr. Wilson was the better Free-trader of the two. He held that the Corn Laws were injurious to all classes; that the agriculturists suffered from them as much as the manufacturers; that, in consequence, it was ‘rubbish’ to raise a class-enmity on the subject, for the interest of all classes was the same.”

In the “Influences of the Corn Laws” my father writes: “We cannot too much lament and deprecate the spirit of violence and exaggeration with which this subject has always been approached by each party, which no doubt has been the chief cause why so little of real truth or benefit has resulted from the efforts of either; the arguments on either side have been supported by such absurd and magnified statements of the influences of those prohibitory laws on their separate interests, as only to furnish each other with a good handle to turn the whole argument into ridicule. It therefore appears necessary to a just settlement of this great question, that these parties should be first reconciled to a correct view of the real influences, which thus exerted over their interests of the country at large, to a conviction that the imaginary fears of change on the one hand, and the exaggerated advantages expected on the other hand are equally without foundation; that there are in reality no differences in the solid interests of either party; and that *individuals, communities, or countries* can only be prosperous in proportion to the prosperity of the whole.”

“It is indisputable also,” writes Walter Bagehot, “that, for the purposes of the Anti-Corn-Law agitation, Mr. Wilson’s view was exceedingly opportune. Mr Cobden said not long ago, ‘I never made any progress with the Corn Law question while it was stated as a

question of class against class.' And a careful inquirer will find that such is the real moral of the whole struggle. If it had continued to be considered solely, or mainly, as a manufacturer's question, it might not have been settled to this hour. In support of this opinion Mr. Wilson made many speeches at the meetings of the Anti-Corn-Law League, though he had little taste for the task of agitation."

In my sister's notes she writes : " My father was a member of the Council of the Anti-Corn-Law League in London, and spoke at Meetings held in Drury Lane Theatre with Cobden, Bright, O'Connell, Milner, Gibson and others ; but that sort of agitation was not to his taste, and he would say later that he would be sorry to see other political questions worked in that way." He felt a very distinct repugnance for the proceedings of the Chartists.

Walter Bagehot writes : " Mr. Wilson's habits of always beginning with the facts, always arguing from the facts, and always ending with the result applicable to the facts, obtain for his writings an influence and a currency more extensive than would have been anticipated for any writings on political economy. It is not for the *Economist* to speak of the *Economist* ; but we may observe that through the pages of this journal certain doctrines, whether true or false, have been diffused far more widely than from their somewhat abstract nature we could expect them to be diffused—far more widely than they are diffused in any other country but this. The business-like method and vigorous simplicity of Mr. Wilson's arguments converted very many ordinary men of business, who would have distrusted any metaphysical and abstruse disquisition, and would not have appreciated any elaborate refinements. Nor was this special influence confined to mercantile men. It penetrated where it could not be expected to penetrate. The Duke of Wellington was, perhaps, more likely to be prejudiced against a theoretical political economist than any eminent man of his day ; he belonged to the ' pre-scientific period ' ; he had much of

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the impatient practicality incident to military insight ; he was not likely to be very partial to the ‘doctrines of Mr. Huskisson’ ; nevertheless, the Duke early pointed out Mr. Wilson’s writings to Lord Brougham, as possessing special practical value ; and when the Duke at a much later period was disposed to object to the repeal of the Navigation Laws, Mr. Wilson had a special interview to convince him of its expediency.”

## CHAPTER III

### WORK OF THE MINORITY—DISSENSION IN THE CAMP

HARDLY credible is it that people of the labouring classes should have endured without revolting the misery and starvation which were their lot during the hungry forties. Even less credible does it seem that Parliament should have turned so blind an eye, so deaf an ear to the actual state of things.

Many Members of Parliament, Lords and Commons alike, owned country estates where they resided when the Houses were not sitting. They must have witnessed for themselves the hunger and misery endured often by their own tenants, and yet the majority failed to recognise that their first duty as legislators was to strive to ameliorate that misery. What these hardships actually were in Heyshott, the village where her father was born, Mrs. Cobden Unwin, Cobden's daughter, lately gathered first hand from those inhabitants who survived and reached an old age. The food which the labourers lived on can only be compared with what was meted out to our soldiers in the German prisons during the Great War. The following are a few of these records :

Widow Saunders : " If I was to tell yer all the trouble in me life this room wouldn't hold it. Me and me husband and eight children to bring up on nine shillings a week, and bread 1s. and 2d. a loaf ! "

Charles Robinson, a woodman : " You ask what sort of food we had. Well, crammings was common. It was made of what was left after the flour in the bran was taken away, and what was left, mixed with a little bread flour, we called crammings. You ask 'ow the

people did get on. Well, they got into debt, and then again they lived on 'taters' and kept pigs. Salt was 21s. a bushel, and when we killed a pig we 'ad to sell 'alf of it to buy the salt to salt down what was left. . . . Tea, well the mother used to buy 2 oz. for 6*d.*, which had to last a week for six people, and then to make it last out we would mix the black crusts with the tea."

David Miles, labourer: "It wor awful bad for the low class: many on 'em were nigh starvin'. If 'ee complained to the masters they on'y said, quite indifferent, 'Ee can go; we don't want 'ee.' It worn't no manner o' good a-trying to raise yourself, 'ee wor just a slave—and that's the truth. . . . Folks used to put up a little 'ill o' taters for the winter, not two rods from their winders, but people 'ud come by night and steal 'em. A 'ungry belly makes a man desprit. They'd steal a'most anything—even beets and brocli from the garden. When a man 'ad a large fam'ly, they were pretty nigh starvin' mostly. Ten hours a day is what we worked, a-threshin' corn in the barn. 'Twas hard, wearin' work."

Charles Ustridge, ex-Postman for Midhurst and district: "Often on a Saturday I'd see Jonathan Heath, the son of a wheelwright, an' had a large family, coming along with a penny bag of crammin's—that's what they give the pigs nowadays—to make the Sunday puddin' with."

This was the state of things in Sussex, a home county. The cruelty of the times was, if possible, more terrible in the distant West Dorset, Somerset, and Devon. Comparatively few politicians, however, in either House took the matter much to heart. Year after year Charles Villiers's motion calling the attention of the House to the question was invariably negatived. Naturally this apathy caused indignation in the minority who were sensitive to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures. Lord Radnor was one of the few peers who moved in the matter, and he relied much on active support from my father.

From Wentworth House, September 16, 1841, he writes : " This morning I have received your letter. We have all here been much scandalised at the proceedings in the House on Thursday. A Committee appointed to consider of the saving and restitution of the two Houses of Parliament ! a Bill ordered to enable Kensington Palace Gardens to be sold on Building Leases !! and another to annex Frogmore to Windsor Castle !!! *et voilà tout*. Not a word for the People—or about the People and their distresses. Oh : 'tis '*too bad*' and quite enow' to drive the People to madness. Under these circumstances I rejoice to see the desire to address the Queen extending itself and I hope 'twill go on.

" I hope to be in Town in the course of next week and will then endeavour to see you and we will talk of this.

" I rejoice to hear of the progress of Corn Law Question in London : the mode adopted to diffuse information and to obtain Proselytes is, I think, a very good one. In the country I cannot tell whether it progresses or not. The labourers are undoubtedly everywhere favourable to it, and I believe that they quite understand it : their own experiences, since the Corn Law Amendment Bill has been in operation, have taught them its true blessings—but the Farmers and the Landowners seem to be more rancorous and bitter than ever. Possibly, however, this may be a good sign ; indicating either that they have misgivings on the subject, or that they doubt whether they will be able to support the Law, as it stands. Mr. Sydney Smith, whom you name in your letter, has been lately lecturing in the North of Wilts, not very far from this place and has been grossly insulted in one or two places. I have had a little correspondence with him about his coming into this immediate neighbourhood (to Highworth and Swindon).

" What you state of the financial state of the country does not surprise me : and ought to open the eyes of the First Lord of the Treasury and of his colleagues.



It is quite clear to me that if we can go on at all, it can only be by free trade *in everything*. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must, I should think, see this : but I confess it requires much courage to venture on the step—and to do that, which, I think, would be the best ; viz. to change the whole system of the taxation. A Law, I suppose, could hardly be carried, and a preparation for such an Income of the Assessed Taxes as you contemplate would not be more successful—indeed I think it would be hardly just, if farmers were called upon to pay on past establishments, and if they were allowed time to reduce them it would not be effectual. I confess I think a Property Tax the right thing—not an Income Tax, but a Property Tax—and that nothing should pay but Property enjoyed, and used for enjoyment—*i.e.* land and money. Capital employed in trade, the wages of labour, salaries, the profits of trade ; Incomes derived from professions, etc. ; these things, it seems to me, should be exempt. In principle this appears to me to be correct, and if adopted, would, I think, after a time, be for the good of all, for it would give such an impulse to all profitable (that is, useful and beneficial to the community) employment of capital, that all would benefit,—the owners of the land and of the money as well as others. But how to get into this course is very difficult. However I am not sufficiently conversant with these matters to speak with any confidence, and do not feel at all certain that you may not perceive some gross absurdity at the very foundation of my plan. My principle is, that no property used in productive employment should be taxed at all, only such as is used to minister to the wants and pleasures of the *consumere nati*."

"P.S.

"COLESHILL HOUSE,

"Jan. 16, 1841.

"'Tis very true that I shrink instinctively from the idea of having the Tories (Sir Robert Peel and Lord Stanley and Sir J. Graham) in power, yet I cannot deny

that there is too much reason to think that if they were, liberal Ideas would advance more rapidly than they do now. In the meantime I yet hope for better things, and the language of the Chiswick and the Globe lately about the Walsall Election encourages me to do so."

On November 17, 1841, Lord Radnor writes :

"Dear Mr. Wilson, I perceive by the Paper that subscriptions are being raised to relieve the distress at Paisley and I suppose other subscriptions will be set about in other places. What think you of a meeting to petition the Queen to issue an order in Council, that for the next (say) 4 or 5 months all corn, potatoes, meat, fish or other food for men be allowed to be imported or, if in bond, be taken out of Bond without payment of Duty provided it was bought by any Committee or Society who might distribute soup or food to poor people either gratis or at reduced prices—and who could without bond appropriate the Articles so imported or taken out of bond to say other purposes than that of charity? If a good large meeting—or a multitude of such meetings could be got to put up such Petition, I think the Monopolists would be bothered.

"Think of this. I hope to be in town tomorrow evening, and shall hope to see you within a day or two.

"If you would do me the pleasure to take a family dinner with me on Friday or Saturday and would make an arrangement with Mr. Porter to meet you (at 7), I shall be most happy."

Acting on Lord Radnor's suggestion to present a Petition to the Queen, my father discussed it with the members of the Metropolitan Anti-Corn-Law Association in London. Francis Place,<sup>1</sup> the tailor, of whom

<sup>1</sup> Born November 23, 1771. Was apprenticed to leather breeches-maker in 1784. In 1796 assisted in the publication of Paine's *Age of Reason*. In 1799 opened a shop at Charing Cross. In 1807 took interest in Westminster election. In 1813 was member of the British Foreign-School Society and was introduced to Joseph Hume. In 1817 handed his business over to his eldest son. In 1818 took part in General Election. Romilly and Burdett elected for Westminster, and Lamb defeated Cam Hobhouse, Byron's friend. General Election, 1820.

Mr. Graham Wallas, Professor of Political Science in the University of London, has published a *Life*, was the "weekly chairman" of the Association. He had great influence among the Reformers, not solely from his undoubted ability, capacity and his zeal for the *Cause*, but from the fact that no trace of self-seeking was ever to be traced in his actions. He was a pure-minded patriot, but had made it a rule to carry on all the work for the *Cause* in his own home, and it was only with difficulty that Charles Villiers induced him to take the position as weekly chairman of the Anti-Corn-Law Association in London. After some discussion it was decided that my father should talk over this matter of the Petition to the Queen with the members of the League at Manchester.

Joseph Hume was for going to Manchester with my father (to whom he wrote): "It is not for me to offer an opinion on what has already been decided upon, but I should have objected to have any Committee in London to interfere with that of Manchester. The effort should be local if at all. I am anxious to have some conversation with you on the corn and provision laws and will try to appoint a time when we can meet. I remain, Yours sincerely, JOSEPH HUME."

Before leaving London, Place wrote to my father :

"Joseph Hume must not go to Manchester. He would concur in nothing with you when you came to particulars. The matter is safe, sound and almost certain to go forward in your hands ;—he would embarrass you, put you out, and by his interference, from time to

Hobhouse and Burdett were elected at Westminster and kept the seats unopposed for 13 years. Took part in Reform Agitation 1831-1832. In 1836-1839 wrote *History of the Reform Agitation*, and in 1837 organised Workingmen's Association. In 1848 drafted the "People's Charter." From 1840-1846 joined in Anti-Corn-Law agitation. In 1841 visited Manchester for Anti-Corn-Law League. Health gave way. He died January 31, 1854. In the Manuscript department of the British Museum are 71 volumes of unfinished books by Francis Place, on the Reform movement, Working-class movement, and pamphlets and letters concerned with the history of his times ; 180 volumes of material which were deposited in the Newspaper Department of the British Museum have since been removed to the store-room at Hendon.

time, miss all. My respect for J. Hume is such that I never refuse anything to him, cost what time it may, but there are things in which he must not interfere."

"Hume was a vigilant critic of the estimates, and his public services to public economy were invaluable. But he took too much upon himself. His finger was in every pie; he spoke on every subject, and there was nothing upon which he was not prepared to pronounce an authoritative opinion," writes a modern historian—so evidently *thought* Francis Place.

My father was on very friendly terms with Joseph Hume, and several letters show that at times Joseph Hume sought my father's opinion on public questions, notwithstanding what appears to have been his incurable habit of tackling every question as if he were the special authority on it.

After my father's first visit to Manchester, where he found no cordial sympathy with Lord Radnor's scheme, Place writes, with reference to the doings of the League, "I consider you as placed in a very arduous and by no means comfortable position, and I will therefore go with you to Manchester and back you up to the best of my ability."

My father's views were too moderate for the League. He strongly objected to any excessive action or language. He said excess always defeated its own ends, for it always carried with it a recoil. When, accompanied by Place, he returned to Manchester, a meeting was held, at which Place took a prominent part, and subsequently wrote:

"I was a little obstreperous to-day—it was intentional. I did not like to discover that——had been manœuvring to make us (the Metropolitan Anti-Corn-Law Association) subservient to the League, which I for one will not be. There is no good reason why, if the League do not like to address the Queen, that we should not do so. I see in our doing so the means of much teaching, and considerable progression in the right way, during a period when if we are quiescent there will be a retrogression. We are discharging a duty we cannot honestly neglect.

. . . I have read your article in the Dundee paper" (my father had been contributing articles from time to time to this Dundee paper) "—it is very much to the purpose and an excellent teaching for those who can think. We talked of a paper to be given away in reference to the address to the Queen. I therefore suggest that your essay should be the paper;—put an introduction to it, to make it relate to the address,—put a conclusion of the same kind to it, and we will print it. There are two places where it needs a word of qualification, and the last paragraph must be changed for one more to the present purpose and more correct. I mean the words which would convey the meaning of good and wisdom in relation to Ministers. Ministers deserve no word of praise. They stultify themselves for Parliament and the Middle Classes, and never moved, no, not once, in the right way until they were condemned as they deserve. Lord Radnor told the Lords in 1832 that they acknowledged the rapid and beneficial progress of every art, science, manufacture of every kind of useful enterprise, but proceeded in regard to Legislation as if that most important science had stood still, and he warned them of the consequences. His words made a great and an indelible impression upon me, they ought to have done so on Ministers and on Parliament, but they did not. Ministers proceeded in the very worst way, and I can show you in letters four years ago that I pointed out to Members of the House of Commons—step by step what has really happened. Let us state facts, but do not let us commit ourselves by undeserved praise of those who deserve nothing but censure."

The violent spirit in the League was voiced in the *Sun* newspaper :

" COLESHILL HOUSE.

" Jan. 22, 1842.

" DEAR MR. WILSON,

" . . . I have been so disgusted with the second leading Article in the *Sun* of Thursday (the object of which is to excite our friends to immediate measures on

the Corn Question, and holding up, as traitors to the cause, all those who dissent from their plan) that I have been thinking (in case Lord Melbourne or Lord John will not stir) whether it might not be advisable to put an anonymous advertisement into the Paper, inviting all Peers and M.P.'s of the late or present Parliament, friendly to Free Trade, to meet at such a town on such a day, to consider the expediency of forming an Anti-Monopoly Club. This would doubtless bring people together, and discussion would arise, and out of it a weekly or fortnightly dinner might be arranged which would, of course, as I hope, extend beyond Parliamentary men.

“Do not take the trouble to answer this : if the aforementioned Lords will not do anything, and I think more of this, I will come up to town and see you : without seeing you, I will do nothing,—and I hope these Lords will prevent me—or perhaps that the force of events will render any more steps unnecessary. See the letter from Nottingham in the *Sun & Globe* of Thursday.

“Truly yours,  
“RADNOR.”

About this time Charles Villiers, who had not much love for the League, wrote to my father : “My position with respect to the question of the Corn Laws now is rather inconvenient. It is difficult to disconnect it with the movement out of doors, and consequently I am fettered in some degree in acting upon my own judgment and of that of friends like yourself on whom I rely. The case of the League, as they state it to me, is shortly this—That I shall completely mar all their proceedings for the year and disturb every plan they have made if I bring on my motion before Easter. Now it is clear that whatever goes wrong for the year, if I do bring it on before Easter, will be laid at my door. As there will be no result by bringing it on sooner any more than later, I am disposed to let them have their way. That it will

entirely deprive my motion of the least interest and exhibit them as weaker than they imagine themselves, I have no doubt, unless some unforeseen circumstance occurs—which I sincerely hope may occur ; for though I have no reason to be very well pleased with some of the things they have done, and are doing, for their own personal glorification with reference to the cause, yet I shall not leave them or do otherwise than give them all the aid I can while the enemy is so strong, or while I can be of the least use to the cause.”

Again he writes :

. . . “ I will certainly do my best to be with you this evening. The impracticables ” (the extremists of the Manchester School) “ are certainly becoming more urgent, but I cannot sacrifice your Cause to suit the convenience of any Conference. They fixed their day of attendance without consulting any human being that I heard of except their own *ex-parliamentary* clique—I am much averse to any discussion, however, if it can be avoided—though dictation from Cobbett’s friends, the *buttonless*, I cannot stand.”

More and more as my father felt the urgency of the abolition of the Corn Laws, more and more distasteful to him was the manner in which the Manchester School—always excepting Cobden—was being carried on by its members—and in this he had the full sympathy of those politicians with whom he was most intimate—Mr. Porter, Lord Radnor and Charles Villiers. Though personally quite exempt from the failings which my father considered marred the usefulness of their work, Cobden naturally viewed the doings of the League, which was his own child so to speak, with more tolerance than did my father and his friends. Cobden even did not entirely scout the Chartists’ creeds and doings, but to my father they seemed little less than criminal and most baneful to any real progress.

The first of Lord Radnor’s kindly acts on behalf of my father’s public life was to propose his nomination for election as a member of the Reform Club. He writes

from Coleshill House, March 17, 1841: "I received your note of the 12th on Saturday in town, just as I was setting off for this place—since that I have been called to town again, or I would have answered you sooner. I very much rejoice to find that you were elected at the Reform Club—I had, however, little fear on that score—and I apprehend the names of your proposer and seconder have had little to do with your success.

"It has occurred to me that our cause of Corn-Law Repeal might be forwarded if we could manage to have a periodical meeting of the zealous friends to it, / whether in Parliament or not, and of either house, / members of the Reform Club. I believe the rules of the Club allow of private House dinners, and it appears to me that a fortnightly or monthly House dinner of such known friends to the cause, as might agree thus to meet, might be the means of producing a unity of action, and of regulating the proceedings (which it might be deemed advisable to take) which would be of great use.

"I leave town tomorrow, and I suppose there will not be many Members of Parliament in town before Xmas; but if you could, consulting with other friends, arrange something of the kind, to begin in January, or about the time when Parliament should meet, I should be very glad to join in such an arrangement.

"Believe me,

"Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) "RADNOR."

"It is said now that Parliament will meet in January; the 25th is the day I have heard named.

"R."

"GROSVENOR STREET,

"Nov. 21, 1841.

"DEAR MR. WILSON,

"I have seen Duncannon, and he very much encourages our plan, and I have accordingly written to you, as we agreed that I should. I understand from him that he is going out of town for a few days; but that on



his return he will be frequently at the Reform Club ; you will then have an opportunity of talking the matter over with him, and it is impossible to advise with a better person. He takes precisely the same view of the feelings of the gentleman at Manchester that you did, and agrees that nothing could be more damaging to the cause of Corn Law Repeal—or to the party—than any hasty or inconsiderate motion in Parliament on the subject.

“ Kinnaird is out of town and not expected for a fortnight.

“ If you will take the trouble of speaking to such members of the Club, whom you might think willing to join in this plan, and whose assistance might be useful, and if you found the idea favourably entertained, I think a note might be circulated amongst friends to the Cause about a fortnight before Parliament met, saying ‘ That it is proposed that such members of the Club as are friends to Corn Law Repeal should dine together at the Club on such a day (probably the day/or a day or two before the meeting) and inviting them to join the party.’ I am very raw at organising any such meeting, but this is what at the moment strikes me.”

“ WOOLBEDING, MIDHURST,  
“ Nov. 23/41.

“ DEAR LORD RADNOR,

“ I highly approve of your plan of having periodical meetings of the advocates for the Repeal of the Corn Laws and I shall be most happy to join the party. Union is strength, and I think it most desirable that we should endeavour to arrange some plan of proceeding and collect well authenticated facts previous to the meeting of Parliament—as you agree with me in advocating the *Total* Repeal. I am quite willing to follow your standard. Lady Kinnaird was applied to some months since, before I knew the real object of the A.-C.-L. Bazaar to become a Patroness, but refused, stating that her reason for doing so was that the question had become so much a political one that she thought Ladies ought not to interfere.

“ My name is down and we intend to send things to aid the sale. If the Committee think it really an object that Lady Kinnaird’s name should be added to the list, I have no doubt she may be induced to consent. I do not expect to be in Town before the 15th of December.

“ Yours faithfully,  
(Sgd.) “ KINNAIRD.”

Lord Radnor writes to my father :

“ I enclose the answer which I received yesterday from Lord Kinnaird—the first part refers to our plan of having Anti-Corn-Law dinners at the Reform Club.

“ My daughter Jane will readily comply with your request to be named as a Patroness to the Anti-Corn-Law Bazaar ;<sup>1</sup> as for Mary she will endeavour to contribute to it ; but she is too young to be named as Patroness.

“ To my great surprise I learn to-day that in the Tory County of Wilts they are talking of a public meeting on the subject of the birth of the Duke of Cornwall and of the *prevailing distress*. What will Sir Bobby say to this ? ”

“ COLESHILL HOUSE,  
“ HIGHWORTH,  
“ Dec. 14, 1841.

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ The same post which brought me your letter this morning, brought also one from Lord Kinnaird inquiring whether anything more had been done towards getting meetings of Members of the Reform Club previous to the meeting of Parliament ; as was suggested some time ago. In answer I have written to him that you have only lately returned from the Continent—and that I doubt not that when he is in town, as he expects to be for a week, about 27th inst. you will gladly confer with him on the subject. I have proposed to him to come here : if he agrees to that, perhaps you will meet him.

<sup>1</sup> My father and mother interested themselves much in this Bazaar and canvassed among their friends to obtain supporters in making it a success.

It is a very short trip hither by the Great Western Railroad, and at any time I should be very glad to see you. The view you take of things is gloomy indeed : but I fear, too well founded. Peel's conduct appears to me wholly inexplicable. It is impossible he can be ignorant or doubtful of the great and increasing distress of the country, and the absolute necessity of some strong legislative measures being adopted to remedy it. Is he then still hesitating what these measures shall be ? or why does he put off the Meeting of Parliament till the last possible moment ?—or is he really hoping that the Repeal of the Corn Laws will be crammed down his throat, as Catholic Emancipation was ? I can't help hoping sometimes that this is his policy.

“ I am very glad to hear that you think of taking the Emigration Scheme in hand. As the means of permanent relief (or indeed if any relief at all) 'tis ridiculous, and it ought to be well exposed. No one will do it better than you.”

“COLESHILL HOUSE,  
“Jan. 2, 1842.

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ . . . Except a day or two this week at Quarter Sessions I do not expect to leave this, till I move to town for Parliament, or for attending some meeting which may be arranged at the Reform Club, preparatory to the meeting. In the meantime, if it is agreeable to you to run down hither we shall be happy to see you. The Great Western Railroad will bring you in less than three hours to the Shrivenham Station, about five miles from this, and if you give me notice beforehand a carriage will meet you there.

“ My son Edward has lately passed two days at Bowood with Lord Cottenham, Duncannon (the Liberal Whip, afterwards Lord Bessborough), Palmerston and John Russell. I do not learn from him that there was much conversation about politics or the Free Trade Question : but he understood from the last that he did

not mean to move, or encourage to the moving of an Amendment to the Address at the opening of the Session (indeed he said to him that he hoped I had no intention of doing so, and in truth I have not) but to be quiet and to await the plan of the Government—in truth, as I understand it, very much to pursue the course which you recommend. Speeches, however, I presume, will not be wanting when the occasion arises, and I hope not. Indeed with the feelings manifested by Lord John's Address to the Devonport people, Lord Palmerston's to the Bridgworth, I think, and Melbourne's to the Derby, 'tis impossible that they should, and if the Chiefs are moderate, I cannot think that a little evidence and some few fierce illustrations from others will do much harm—but every possible effort must be made to prevent thinking of motions or pledging the House to any course prematurely by pressing divisions on any matter connected with these subjects.

“ In the meantime I collect from the papers that the distress in the manufacturing districts is increasing rapidly and fearfully—in the agricultural I do not believe it is much less. Incendiary fires are becoming not unfrequent, and one sees in villages and small towns young men idling about as they used to before the new Poor(law) Bill. The workhouses too are fuller than they were last year, and last year was fuller than the year before. Corn is dear and we hear of Agricultural distress because Landlords and Farmers are doing well—but you may recollect that in times of 'Agricultural Distress' all the witnesses before the Commission of the Houses of Parliament spoke to the *well* being of the Landowners. I hope you have quite recovered from your late indisposition, and that your family also are well. With the Compliments of the Season, I remain, Dear Sir, Yours truly, RADNOR.

“ I believe that my daughter Jane is about to write to you respecting the sending of Articles to your Bazaar. She and her sister and friends are packing their contribution as fast as they can.”

The meeting at Coleshill between Lord Kinnaird<sup>1</sup> and my father established a friendship between them. But few peers at that time favoured Reform. Lord Kinnaird was one of this minority and very zealously worked for the *cause* in the House of Lords. In 1842 he wrote to my father, from 23 Brook Street :

"I have been, and am, confined to the house by indisposition. Otherwise I fully intended being in the Lords on Thursday and trying to persuade Lord Clarendon to give notice of moving the following resolutions—or something similar—

" 1. Lord Howick's motion of admitting wheat at 6*d.*

" 2. Provided the first was negatived—of all corn from a *certain longitude* to come in at a final duty of 6*d.*

" 3. If the foregoing were negatived—the damaged flour for manufacturing purposes should be admitted free.

" My object in asking Lord Clarendon would be not only to show that there is one man in the late Cabinet who goes with us ; but I think he would have *more weight* than I have—or even perhaps Lord Radnor, as I know we are both considered *wild theorists* by these *obtuse* headed Lordships. However, if no one else will bring on another discussion in the House, I will do it, and even more than one if required, as with truth, justice and a host of facts bearing on the subject, it is not difficult to prove our case, particularly as they have nothing to say in reply. I shall not go out before 3 o'clock to-morrow if you are in the neighbourhood, as you say you may chance to be."

<sup>1</sup> George, 9th Baron Kinnaird, born 1807 and died 1878. Educated at Eton. Joined the Guards 1826. Owing to services of his father and grandfather to the Whigs, Earl Grey recommended him for a Peerage of the United Kingdom as Baron Rossie of Rossie. In 1860 this title was changed to that of Baron Kinnaird of Rossie. In 1840 was made Privy Councillor, and given the Order of Knight of the Thistle in 1857. Was Lord-Lieutenant of Perthshire in 1866. Took prominent part in Free Trade Agitation, and was intimate with Ricardo, Cobden and Bright. He married, in 1837, Lady Frances Ponsonby, daughter of Lord de Mauley.

Again he writes :

"I could not persuade Clarendon to bring the question of corn and distress forward, but you will see that Lord Radnor has laid on the table a bill to repeal the Corn Laws, so as to have a discussion on Thursday—though it is of little use in that House. I should like much to see you before that day. I could meet you anywhere on Sunday or Monday."

A few days later he writes :

"I understand that Mr. Wallace has given notice of the motion similar to the one we were talking about ; but I should like to see you any time that you have leisure. I could meet you anywhere you like. I mentioned in the House last night the saving which would be effected if bread was only one penny cheaper."

Again he writes :

"I should like to see you before you leave town again, and would call on you at any time or anywhere that would suit you, as my time is not so valuable as yours, and I generally go out about 3 o'clock. The report you have sent me is very interesting—Many thanks. I am anxious to offer you my best thanks for all the valuable information you gave me on the subject which I brought before the House of Lords. Their Lordships wavered, while many others seem determined to shut their eyes as to what is going on in the country."

In November of the same year, 1842, Lord Kinnaird writes from Rossie Priory :

"The prospects for farmers and landowners are most gloomy, as not only are prices low but there is no possibility of selling even at the low price. The farmers all about here are furious with Peel, and he, with his Corn-laws and Tariff will get the credit of the low prices, while the real secret is the want of means among the consumers, and not the *panic* which I see some of the papers talk of. The real panic is that all graziers who bought in lean stock in the Spring at the *then low* price are losers. I have a servant going to town on Wednesday and will send you some game."

## CHAPTER IV

PAMPHLETS : " FLUCTUATIONS OF CURRENCY, COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES," 1840—" THE REVENUE ; OR, WHAT SHOULD THE CHANCELLOR DO?" 1841

IN 1840, the year after the " Influences of the Corn Laws " came out, my father wrote " Fluctuations of Currency, Commerce and Manufactures." With reference to his views on Currency, Walter Bagehot writes :

" On no subject perhaps did Mr. Wilson take a more characteristic position. He saw certain broad principles distinctly and steadily, and to these he firmly adhered, no matter what refined theories were suggested or what the opinions of others might be.

" Mr. Wilson was a stern bullionist. He held that a five-pound note was a promise to pay five pounds. He answered Sir Robert Peel's question ' What is a pound ? ' with Sir Robert's own answer. He said it was a certain specified quantity of gold metal. He held that all devices for aiding industry by issuing inconvertible notes were certainly foolish, and might perhaps be mischievous. He held that industry could only be really aided by additional *capital*—by new machines, new instruments, new raw material ; that an addition to a paper *currency* was as useless to aid deficient capital as it was to feed a hungry population.

" Mr. Wilson held, secondly, that the *sine quâ non*, the great pre-requisite to a good paper currency, was the maintenance of an adequate reserve by the issuer. He believed that a banker should look at his liabilities as a whole—the notes which he has in circulation and the deposits he has in his ledger taken together ; and should retain a sufficient portion of them (say one-third) in

cash, or in something equivalent to cash, in daily readiness to pay them at once. Mr. Wilson considered that bankers might be trusted to keep such a reserve, as they would be ruined, sooner or later, if they did not; and if the notes issued by them were always convertible at the pleasure of the holder, he believed that the currency would never be depreciated. He thought, however, that as bank-notes must pass from hand to hand in the market, and as in practice most persons—most traders, especially—must take them in payment whether they wish to do so or not, some special security might properly be required for their payment. He would have allowed any one who liked to issue bank-notes on depositing Consols to a sufficient amount—the amount that is, of the notes issued, and an adequate percentage in addition.

“Lastly, Mr. Wilson believed that the bank-note circulation exercised quite a secondary and unimportant influence upon prices and upon transactions, in comparison with the auxiliary currency of cheques and credits, which has indefinitely augmented during the last thirty years. So far from regarding the public as constantly ready for an unlimited supply of bank-notes, he thought that it was only in times of extreme panic, when this auxiliary currency is diminished and disturbed, that the bank-notes in the hands of the public either could or would be augmented. He believed that the public only kept in their hands as many notes as they wanted for their own convenience, and that all others were in the present day paid back to the banker immediately and necessarily.

“Unfortunately, however, the currency is not discussed in England with very exact reference to abstract principles. The popular question of every thinker is, ‘Are you in favour of Peel’s Bill, or are you against it?’ And this mode of discussing the subject always placed Mr. Wilson in a position of some difficulty. He concurred in the aim of Sir R. Peel, but objected to his procedure. He wished to secure the convertibility of the bank-note. He believed that the Act of 1844



indirectly induced the Bank Directors to keep more bullion than they would keep otherwise, and in so far he thought it beneficial ; but he also thought that the advantages obtained by it were purchased at a needless price ; that they might have been obtained much more cheaply ; that the machinery of the Act aggravated every panic ; that it tended to fix the attention of the public on bank-notes, and so fostered the mischievous delusion that the augmented issue of paper currency would strengthen industry ; that it neglected to take account of other forms of credit which are equally important with bank-notes ; that, '*for one week in ten years*'—the week of panic—it created needless and intense apprehension, and so tended to cause the ruin of some solvent commercial men. In brief, though he fully believed the professed object of Sir R. Peel—the convertibility of the bank-note—to be beneficial and inestimable, he as fully believed the special means selected by him to be inconvenient and pernicious.

“ Opinions akin to Mr. Wilson’s, if not identical with them, are very commonly now entertained, both by practical men of business and by professional economists. The younger school of thinkers who have had before them the working of the Act of 1844 and the events of 1847 and 1857, and are not committed by any of the older controversies, are especially inclined to them. Yet from peculiar causes they have not been so popular as Mr. Wilson’s other opinions. His views of finance and of the effect of Free-trade, which were half heresies when he announced them, have now become almost axioms. But the truth of his currency theory is still warmly controverted. The reason is this : Sir R. Peel’s Act is a sort of compromise which is suited to the English people. It was probably intended by its author as a preliminary step ; it undoubtedly suits no strict theory ; it certainly has great marks of incompleteness, but, ‘ it works tolerably well ’ ; if it produces evils at a crisis, ‘ crises come but seldom ’ ; in ordinary times commerce ‘ goes on very fairly.’ ”

“The pressure of practical evil upon the English people has never yet been so great as to induce them to face the unpleasant difficulties of the abstract currency question. Mr. Wilson’s opinions have, therefore, never been considered by practical men for a practical object, and it is only when so considered that any opinions of his can be duly estimated. Their essentially moderate character, too, is unfavourable to them—not, indeed, among careful inquirers, but in the hubbub of public controversy. The only great party which has as yet attacked Sir R. Peel’s Bill is that which desires an extensive issue of inconvertible currency ; but to them Mr. Wilson was as much opposed as Sir Robert Peel himself. The two watchwords of the currency are ‘caution’ and ‘expansion’ : the advocates of the Act of 1844 have seized on the former, the Birmingham school on the latter ; the intermediate, and, as we think, juster opinions of Mr. Wilson, have had no party cry to aid them, and they have not as yet therefore obtained the practical influence which he never ceased to anticipate and to hope for them.”

After reading Walter Bagehot’s Memoir Earl Grey wrote :

“HOWICK, ALNWICK,  
“24 Nov. 1860.

“DEAR SIR,

“I cannot forbear writing to you to say with how much interest I read your memoir of Mr. Wilson in the Supplement to last week’s *Economist*. Having had the pleasure of knowing him very well, and the advantage of much valuable assistance and advice from him when I was in office, I can bear testimony to the strict accuracy of all you say with regard to his great ability in public affairs, and especially with reference of all questions of commerce and finance. His death is indeed a great calamity to the nation, and still more so to India, and though I trust the great measures he had begun there had made so much progress that the sound principles on which they rest may ensure their success,

it is impossible not to feel that the probability of this is greatly diminished by their execution being no longer guided by his energy and judgment.

“ If I were to make any criticism upon your account of his opinions on public questions, it would be that your statement of his views with regard to currency, though accurate as far as it goes, is incomplete. I had much communication with him on this subject when I was engaged as Secretary of State, in making the arrangements for establishing Government paper currencies in Mauritius and New Zealand, and it was a great assistance to me to find how completely he concurred with me as to measures which ought to be adopted, and which were to a great extent carried into effect, though not in so perfect a manner as I could have wished owing to the obstacles offered by the Treasury. The two points on which your statement of his views as to the currency are defective are these. First—though it is quite true that he held that if paper money is to be issued by a *bank* the issue ought not to be a monopoly, but should be open to competition subject to the guards you have mentioned ; still I think he recognised the advantage of dividing entirely the functions of *issuing* money and of *dealing* in money, the latter being the proper business of bankers and traders, the former of the Government. If I am not greatly mistaken, he concurred with me in thinking that the issue of paper money belongs as properly to the State as the issue of a metallic currency, and that the best and soundest paper currency would be one under the control of a public authority, provided that authority were strictly confined by law to the duty of issuing paper only in return for the precious metals, and on the other hand giving coin or bullion in exchange for paper on demand.

“ The second point on which I think your statement is defective is as to the importance to be attached to the saving of national capital, which may be effected by substituting paper for coin as an instrument of exchange. He thought that under a proper system the value of a paper currency might be securely maintained by its

convertibility into bullion without having any metallic currency whatever, except small coins for change, and that if this can be done, keeping up a large gold circulation as we do in this country is a needless waste of the national capital. But in England where capital is so abundant, this is comparatively a minor evil; in our Colonies and in India, where the want of Capital is one of the greatest difficulties to be contended with, the substitution of a cheap for a costly instrument of exchange is of the greatest importance. It was with this view that I with his assistance established paper currencies in the two colonies mentioned, and with advantage, though the advantage has been less than it might owing to the interference of the Treasury. The same view is I think to be traced in his great measure respecting the Indian currency which is still in progress, and I am persuaded that if he had only lived to carry that measure and superintend its working, he would by degrees have extended its operation, though he very wisely thought that in the first instance it would be inexpedient to risk creating alarm and raising up obstacles to the introduction of a state paper currency, by attempting to obtain the greatest possible amount of pecuniary advantage from it.

“Faithfully yours, GREY.”

My father's great currency measures for India met with an even more disastrous fate than those of Lord Grey's mentioned in this letter. Mr. Bonamy Price<sup>1</sup> writes :

“ 11, PRINCE'S TERRACE,  
“ PRINCE'S GATE,  
“ March 25, 1861.

“ MY DEAR MR. HUTTON,

“ I am perfectly savage this morning. That . . . Wood has been ear-wigged by Overstone, and

<sup>1</sup> Bonamy Price, 1807-1888. Double First in Classics and Mathematics at Oxford. Pupil of Dr. Arnold. Friend of J. H. Newman and F. W. Newman. Thrice elected. Was fifteen years Professor of Political Economy at Oxford. Prince Leopold attended his lectures and became much attached to him. Wrote on “Currency and Banking,” “Principles of Currency,” chapters on practical political economy.

upset Wilson's glorious scheme in India. It is a public disgrace, and calamity. Never before were scientific power and practical political talent so combined as in Wilson : and the last Indian Minute was the glory of his life. And to be overthrown by such contemptible, despicable twaddle, as that a paper currency must vary in quantity as if it were metallic. My wrath now overflows on you and Bagehot. You were the guardians of Wilson's fame : and you never would let me do anything to set forth the power, the truth and the accuracy of that unrivalled paper on a paper currency. And now the one distinctive greatness of his life is gone. I am glad you are not in my way to-day : you would find me dangerous. What is to be done now, I cannot tell. My spirit knows no peace. It is too late for an article in the next *National* : and nothing but an article will suffice for going to the root of the matter, and making the world understand the atrocity of the crime committed. When will you come and dine alone ?

“ Ever yours, B. PRICE.”

In 1860 Mr. Bonamy Price had written to Mr. W. R. Greg :

“ Among our foremost public men, he [my father] always seemed to me, on his own subjects—and most numerous they were—to be the very first. He was emphatically a strong man, and a most kind-hearted man too. He has left no equal behind him for the combination of science with practical genius.”

In a letter written to Walter Bagehot at the same time Mr. Bonamy Price says :

“ His last paper on a Paper Currency in India alone entitles him to rank with the very highest of financial philosophers.”

In a letter Prince Albert wrote to my father—quoted later—the Prince says that my father could not have dealt with the most important, but most difficult question of Paper Currency, without having a strong “ belief in the unalterable truths of political economy taught by abstract science.”

Joseph Hume writes in September 1842 :

“ In your pamphlet of 1840 on ‘ Fluctuations of Currency, etc.’ on page 13 you give a table of the value of Corn consumed in the United Kingdom brought down to 1839, and I ask whether you have brought that table down to the present year, as you should the statements from the same source of Documents. The papers differ, and you might have put down the Authority, whether Porter, or any other, to have prevented cavilling. I should be pleased by-and-bye to talk these matters over with you.”

On February 23, 1843, Hume writes :

“ The decrease of Work—decrease of Revenue and increase of Poverty—must soon compel Sir Robert Peel to proceed with his plans for free trade. I only fear that the Monopolists will allow trade and manufacture to be so crippled that they will revive with difficulty, if at all. The decrease of the Ordinary Revenue in the past year is £3,227,084, if you exclude the Corn Duty £801,530 more in 1842 than in 1841—and in the last quarter corn duty included the decrease is £1,379,057, or at the rate of five and a half millions in the next 4 Quarters. . . . With the want of work and with wages decreasing what better hopes are there? Unless we have free trade in corn and in everything else the public Dividends will be in danger—!!

“ Believe me, yours sincerely,

“ JOSEPH HUME.”

Of my father's third publication Walter Bagehot writes in the Memoir, “ Mr. Wilson's pamphlet entitled, ‘ The Revenue, or What should the Chancellor do?’ which attracted considerable attention when it was published in 1841, is worth reading now (1860) though dated so many years ago; for it contains an outline of the financial policy which Sir Robert Peel commenced, and which Mr. Gladstone has now almost completed. The pamphlet which is not very short (it has 27 moderate pages) was begun as an article for the *Morning Chronicle*,

but proved too long for that purpose. It was written with almost inconceivable rapidity—nearly all, we believe, in a single night—though its principles, its principal figures, will bear a critical scrutiny even now.”

Of the power of my father’s writing, Walter Bagehot says :

“ He was a great *belief-producer* ; he had upon his own subjects a singular gift of efficient argument—a peculiar power of bringing home his opinions by convincing reasons to convincible persons.”

## CHAPTER V

### STARTING THE "ECONOMIST"

"If we made ourselves too little for the sphere of our duty—if, on the contrary, we do not stretch and expand our minds to the compass of this object ; be well assured that everything about us will dwindle by degrees, until at length our concerns are shrunk to the dimensions of our minds."—Burke's words chosen by James Wilson as the Text for the *Economist*.

In 1842 my father wrote an article for Mr. Fonblanque's paper, *The Examiner*, which was followed by two others written in 1843. It was in consequence of what happened respecting these contributions to Mr. Fonblanque's paper that my father, greatly encouraged by Lord Radnor and Charles Villiers, decided to start a weekly newspaper of his own. The subject was amply discussed on the occasions of my father's visits to Coleshill, and when he dined quietly with the Radnors in Grosvenor Street. Lord Radnor advanced part of the money for the venture ; which my father soon repaid, owing to the immediate success of the paper. Fonblanque and my father were on very friendly terms, but the length of the articles contributed by my father exceeded the space which Fonblanque thought fit to accord to them in the *Examiner*.

On February 23, 1843, he writes : "The length of your article will, I fear, make it quite impossible to get it into my next number, I am so pressed for room. Yours most truly, A. FONBLANQUE."

A month later he writes that, though very anxious to avail himself of my father's article, his printer said it would take four columns, for which there was no room



in the *Examiner*. He adds, "There is nearly the same difficulty about the other article, besides another question about it which I have to consider."

This article took the form of a letter to Gladstone with reference to a particular action taken by the Government. It finally did appear in Fonblanque's paper, but in sending the proofs he writes, "I have omitted the first paragraph, as I think the article will begin more effectively with the analysis."

This omission Lord Radnor very much regretted. Joseph Hume wrote, April 1843: "Your letter to Mr. Gladstone in the *Examiner* of the 15th caught my eye, and I was pleased to see the question brought within so narrow a compass and in a somewhat new form." Cobden wrote: "Your letter in the *Examiner* is a perfect and unanswerable demonstration of the failing of Treaties. We are printing it in the circular and should like to see it distributed to the members and men of that stamp."

As my father's articles drew much attention from the readers of the *Examiner* it is perhaps only natural that Fonblanque should not have wished that a considerable portion of his columns should be filled by the writings of a powerful rival.

An interesting account of the birth of the *Economist* is given by George Walker in the *Nation*, New York, April 5, 1877.

"The birth of the *Economist* in 1843 was significant of the revolution which had taken place in English politics. . . . The *Economist* was the proof and exponent of the new régime. Singularly enough its establishment was partly due to the incapacity of the *Examiner* to realise and conform to the new aspect of public questions; or what is equally probable, to the reluctance of its editor to share the honour of his position with a new and ambitious aspirant. 'Sed non omnes omnia possunt.' What Albany de Fonblanque had so brilliantly accomplished in the field of political reform, it remained for another *master-mind* to achieve in the field of financial and commercial legislation. The prophet of the new

dispensation was James Wilson. In its early years the *Economist* was almost wholly the work of his own hands. He wrote not only the leaders, but the majority of the lesser articles ; and what is of hardly inferior importance in journalism, he arranged and classified all its various information in such a manner that readers of every class knew just where to find the matter that concerned them, and were sure to find it. In the seventeen years which intervened between the establishment of the *Economist* in 1843, and the relinquishment of its control by Mr. Wilson, on going to India as Finance Minister at the end of 1859, there occurred a series of economic events not less momentous than those political ones which had made the reputation of the *Examiner*."

It should be remembered that when my father undertook this enterprise he had had no previous experience whatever in the kind of work that the editorship of a paper entails.

Walter Bagehot<sup>1</sup> writes :

"It was not by mere correctness of economical speculation that Mr. Wilson was to rise to eminence. A very accurate knowledge of even the more practical aspects of economical science is not of itself a productive source of income. By the foundation of the *Economist* Mr. Wilson secured for himself, during the rest of his life, competence and comfort, but it was not solely or simply by writing good political economy in it. The organisation of a first-rate commercial paper in 1843 required a great inventiveness and also a great discretion. Nothing of the kind then existed ; it was not known what the public most wished to know on business interests ; the best shape of communicating information had to be invented in detail. The labour of creating such a paper and of administering it during its early stages is very great ; and might well deter most men even of superior ability from attempting it. At this period of his life Mr. Wilson used to superintend the whole of the *Economist* ; to write all the important leaders, nearly all

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir*.

of the unimportant ones ;\* to make himself master of every commercial question as it arose ; to give practical details as to the practical aspects of it ; to be on the watch for every kind of new commercial information ; to spend hours in adapting it to the daily wants of commercial men. He often worked until far into the morn—and impressed all about him with wonder at the anxiety, labour, and exhaustion he was able to undergo."

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1843, after my father's articles appeared in the *Examiner*, Charles Villiers wrote : "Have you done anything about your paper ? I was in hopes to have seen you or heard from you about it. I waited till half-past eight on Monday in hopes to have seen you in the House, but was obliged to leave on account of the dangerous illness of one of my brothers. I am sure there never was a time when an *independent* organ was more required. We are losing a valuable moment now in not working on the excitement produced in the last six months. Yours very truly, C. P. VILLIERS."

Cobden, on the contrary, was discouraging. He wrote : "I should like to talk over the subject of your paper before you launch it. I don't like to appear a croaker, though I do feel as one at times. From all that I can learn, Newspapers have been *graves to fortunes* in London, and as a rule those papers started for utility (as the *Companions to the Newspaper*) have, without exception, failed. Have you made up your mind to a great and continued pecuniary loss ? Bright is strongly of opinion still that your pen, in conjunction with Fox and others in a League paper would give you greater power of usefulness and influence, but I don't like to say anything to discourage you. Ever yours, R. COBDEN."

\* \* \* \* \*

To start a weekly newspaper is a costly as well as a difficult enterprise and, as Mr. Cobden wrote—in many cases a ruinous venture. In 1839, while my father was writing the "Influences of the Corn Laws" he had sustained a loss of £25,000, the circumstances of which will

be explained in these pages later on. Though in 1843 he had a sufficient income for ordinary expenses he was by no means so rich as he had been. He owned two houses, 15 Hertford Street and Dulwich Place. This last had not suited my mother's health, so a move had been made in 1839 to Queen Street, Mayfair, and in the following year my father bought a seventeen years' lease of 15 Hertford Street. This house had a special interest for him as Lord Grey, who passed the Reform Bill in 1832, had lived in it. To meet the cost of starting the *Economist*, Dulwich Place had to be let. There was a tradition when my family lived there that every pine-apple grown in the hot-houses cost two guineas. There were no two guineas available for the production of such luxuries now that the *Economist* had to be started: moreover it was decided that my mother and her six daughters should go to Boulogne—for the elder sisters to learn French, for all six to bathe in the sea, and last, but not least, to reduce household expenditure. All servants were dismissed except Susan, our nurse, who lived with us fifty-three years, Emilie, my mother's maid, and a man and a house-keeper to look after my father in London. This migration took place in April 1843, five months before the first number of the *Economist* appeared. In consequence of my father and mother being often separated, letters exist stating very distinctly the special views my father had in starting the paper; they are also interesting as evincing the devotion my father had for my mother and his children.

From Dulwich Place, in April 1843, he wrote to my mother: "I duly received your letter and was very glad to hear you had all arrived and got comfortably housed. . . . The Queen was confined this morning; that will now define the season. . . . On Sunday I dined with the Sibeths. Edwards had some strawberries and French beans ready for Sunday morning and I wished much for an aerial carriage to send them to the *Rue de Lille*,—as there was not, I sent them to Mrs. Sibeth where I was dining. . . . I have many things to write

about but I am in great haste going to the Tower Hamlets and the Trade Banquet. What says little Emmie? Has she forgotten Papa? Give my dearest love to all the children." A letter written on May 2 tells the fact that Dulwich Place was let and that my father's move to Hertford Street was being made. Before leaving he writes that "Mr. Villiers came down to spend Sunday with me quietly to consult about his motion which comes on on the 9th, and Mr. Cobden came to dinner at six. Fanny cooked it very well, and Richard dressed himself quite smartly and waited very well. We were very quiet and had a pleasant evening."

From Hertford Street he writes: "The house (Dulwich) was miserably quiet without you all. Poor little Emmie I miss so very much. I am glad I have got away. I am indeed most grateful and happy to hear that you feel better. I calculate very much from your entire freedom from the harassing care of the house and servants, and with this very beautiful weather I hope you will rapidly get strong; but be careful of your chest and particularly in going out in the evening. . . . I start my journey to-morrow and will be back again about the 11th. . . . You will easily conceive that what with business to attend to, with the moving, and preparing to go my journey, I am overwhelmed with bustle and business. I have had the severest labour since you left that I ever remember. Kiss all the little darlings for me and tell little Emmie that Papa will come to see her, and *dearest Eliza*, believe me, in great haste,

"Your own ever affectionate,  
"JAMES."

My father was about to start abroad to visit his friend, M. Brouwer de Hogendorf, when he had a short illness. My mother writes:

"103, RUE GRANDE,  
"BOULOGNE SUR MER.

"MY DEAREST JAMES,

"I have just received your letter informing me of your illness, and I am deeply grieved to learn you have

been so great a sufferer and that you have been alone without the comforts of your home adds much to my concern. I shall feel most anxious for your next letter—if you should have a relapse (which heaven forbid) let me go to you. I am also anxious for your safe arrival in Holland, the sea here has been so rough and the wind so high. . . . God bless you, dearest James, and with best love I am ever your affectionate,

“ ELIZA.”

On my father's return from Belgium, my mother wrote :

“ September 1st :

“ 103, GRANDE RUE,

“ BOULOGNE SUR MER.

“ MY DEAREST JAMES,

“ I received your letter announcing your safe return to London and I shall be truly glad when we are again settled with you, for with advantages we have many drawbacks here that remind us we are not at home. However we must not be ungrateful for the agreeable charms of France. When I think of the expense of that great house at Dulwich ! ”

Later my father writes : “ The receipt of your letter has made me most unhappy and anxious about poor *Sophie*, and the more so as I must be kept in suspense for some days about the dear little girl.”

From Newcastle on May 10 my father writes : “ I have had two letters from Lord Radnor here. He is unwell with a rheumatic attack,” and on the 13th adds : “ I have pushed forward so anxiously to get home to learn about poor *Sophie* that I have not had a moment to finish this letter. I have been travelling all night from Leeds, and can assure you on receiving your letter on my arrival my mind was much relieved. I am going to see Lord Radnor by appointment at half-past one, and Mr. Cobden at three. Mr. Sibeth is to take me up at the Reform Club at half-past four. You will see in the papers the excitement of the present debate. I am dreadfully dull

and want very much to see you, and I should also like much to see the children ; but there's no chance of my getting away before Whitsuntide, which is yet *three weeks*. If you are all quite settled, and the children all well so that you can leave them with confidence, I wish you would come and stay with me for a week or two. Write me by return of post and say if you can, conveniently for the children's sake, do this. Do not let me interfere with your wishes about the children, but if you can come I see there is a boat leaves Boulogne at four o'clock on Sunday morning—of course you would go on board over night. If, however, you feel that it would be too much fatigue for you, I must try to rub on for a fortnight longer till Whitsuntide and then see you all together. Decide what you think will be for the best and I will be content. Write and let me know what you decide upon.

"I hope Eliza and Julia and Matilda are very attentive to their lessons and that they will get well on. Give my tenderest love to them and say I expect they are very attentive. Also give my best love to dear little Sophie, Emmie and Zénobie, and kiss them all for me. And yourself, dearest Eliza, receive all that is affectionate and kind from your own dear and devoted JAMES.

"P.S.—If you decide on coming, come as early as you can, by Friday's boat if possible."

On May 19 he writes : "I am favoured with your letter of the 17th, and I write by this post to say that, however much pleasure it would give me to receive you on Sunday, yet I beg you will not come if you think the fatigue of the journey will be at all prejudicial to you, or if you feel that it would be better for you to remain at Boulogne. My first wish is that you should consult your own health and comfort and that of the children, and, if those considerations are not consistent with your undertaking the journey, by no means come ; especially if the weather be bad or broken. I shall however go down on Sunday to Gravesend, and I will go on board the Boulogne Boat, and come up with her ; and so if you are

there will accompany you to the Wharf where Richard will be waiting for us. There is a good deal of excitement here about the Canada Bill—it comes on to-night. I dined at the Book Society at Mr. Garrard's. All enquired kindly after you. Mr. Porter has published a second volume of his 'Progress of the Nation.' I write in a great hurry for the post. If you do not come by the boat on Sunday, send a note by the steward or stewardess for me. I go on very quietly and dull enough here, I am not in good spirits. What with bad weather and not very good health, I am out of spirits, but still I will bear up for a fortnight rather than put you to any annoyance to come over—if you feel the fatigue or cold weather. Do just as you feel disposed—but if you do not come, write me a long letter by the boat."

On May 29 my eldest sister gets the following :

"Mamma arrived here after a very fine passage of twelve hours, quite well. I went to Gravesend and met her there and we came up together."

On June 11 he writes : "I arrived safely on Tuesday at 3. On Wednesday I dined with Mr. Hindley. I met Howard Elphinstone, M.P., Mr. Oldham, M.P. for Leeds, Charles Villiers, and McGregor, one other gentleman and several ladies. We spent a pleasant evening, the party very much increased after dinner in the drawing-room, but Villiers and I left early. On Thursday at 12 I started for Antwerp and found Col. Sykes and his family on board, going to Baden. You have heard me speak of him ; he is an active member of the Statistical Society ; is on the Council and is an East India Director. That made the journey pleasant. The boat was much crowded. De Brouwer was waiting my arrival, and after seeing my lawyer we all three went to Malines." The Belgian Government was in treaty with M. de Brouwer to purchase some of his property. "The Sale took place, but the Government, requesting a postponement of three weeks, it was complied with, so nothing definite was done. I do not, however, regret having gone, as it has put me in possession of all the circum-



stances of the Sale, and what is likely to be done. I much fear the Government will not pay a fair price for it. I saw Mme. de Brouwer, Zénobie and Mlle. de W—— who is still with them. I specially delivered Eliza and Julia's messages to Zénobie, and she equally specially desired her love to them and the 'little Pippy' and Zeno. The same evening I went to Ghent by the last train, stayed there all night—started at 6 yesterday morning, arrived at Ostend just as the Mail packet was leaving for Dover, had a dreadfully rough passage of *ten hours*, got to Dover just as the last coach was leaving at ten o'clock in the evening to join the railway at Ashford. From Dover to Ashford we passed through Folkestone, Sandgate, Hythe, a beautiful drive along the coast, and in the distance I had a peep at the French coast, and could fancy I could rest my eye on the point where Boulogne lay, but it was too dull to see plainly. From Ashford I left at ten and arrived here at one, having spent between Ghent and London *tenpence*, for a cup of coffee and a piece of bread-and-butter at Ashford. I had not time anywhere, and the rough sea indisposed me to eat. I am, however, I think, much better for my journey. To-day I have been seeing Mr. (Francis) Place, with whom I had a long talk about the paper. I then went to Lord Radnor, with whom I also spoke on the subject; Lady Jane very kindly enquired after you and the children, and so did my Lord. My Lady was very gracious and told me that Lord and Lady Worsley were going to Boulogne in a few weeks, and that it was now becoming quite fashionable. Lady Radnor is going to Baden, and Lord Radnor goes with her, also Lady Mary; Lady Jane stays with her sister Mrs. Bouverie, who I suppose will be confined during the autumn. Lord Shelburne is on the eve of being married again to some lady in Vienna. I had a long gossip with Lord Radnor, who is in excellent spirits. I then went to the Club and met Villiers by appointment;—we had a long gossip, and among other things about the paper. He is very fond of the thing,—but from what he said, I fear we shall have

some difficulty with the League :—it appears they are extremely jealous of their importance and will want it ostensibly a League Paper, and as such I will have nothing to do with it. I will see Cobden and Villiers at the House to-morrow night on the subject. Cobden is not in town to-day. I afterwards drove to Herne Hill in time for dinner at half-past six, where many kind enquiries were made for you—I will conclude to-morrow as it is one o'clock.

“ Monday. Nothing new to-day. I have to meet Villiers and Cobden to-night. Kiss all the little and big darlings for me. In a fortnight when the railroad is open to Folkestone I shall be within six hours of you. Lord Radnor told me yesterday that the Directors are to go to Folkestone from London in a fortnight—to have a steamer ready for them to go to Boulogne, where they are to dine and to return to London the same day. Tell little Emmie that she must not forget *Papa*. I hope Sophia and Eliza's colds are better—they require care. *Write by first post.*”

“ 23 June, 1843.”

“ MY OWN DEAREST ELIZA,

“ I have received your letter of the 21st and I cannot resist the feeling to write to you by return. I do not know why, or what I have particularly to say, but to a sort of overflowing of feeling and affection to you and the little darlings whom I long to see, a letter may give some vent. With regard to the paper, Cobden has quite come over to our way of thinking (that is, Lord Radnor, Villiers and myself)—that my paper would be of greater consequence than any other, and that I must be quite independent of the League, only with their assistance in circulation. I have written to Thorpe [my mother's brother-in-law] to ask him to supply articles on Agricultural Improvements, Geology, Agricultural Chemistry, etc., for which he is so capable ;—and I think with my great fund of commercial and statistical matter, and very original articles on Free Trade and Political Economy, there is no danger but a good and attractive paper may

be made. You know the facility with which I write on all these subjects, and with weekly practice that facility will increase, and my style will improve, although it is considered extremely good, clear and effective for such subjects at present. The only thing now to be determined upon is how far the League will undertake to assist it with their aid in circulation, and that will be determined on Monday next, when George Nelson and John Bright are to come to London for that purpose. They want a distinct League organ which perhaps they will have of their own, instead of the Anti-Bread-Tax Circular. My paper would not do for that purpose ;—mine must be perfectly philosophical, steady and moderate ;—nothing but pure *principles*. We will see on Monday. The great advantage of having only Lord Radnor with me is that I shall be secure of support—and that no question will ever arise as to the property, or to whom the benefit of the paper will belong after it shall have risen into a good circulation which I hope it may do in time.

" I have to dine with Lord Radnor on his return from Longford Castle where he is now.

" On Saturday the Directors of the Railway (Dover) go at six o'clock in the morning to *Folkestone*. They wished Lord Radnor to go but he could not.

" The weather is now very fine, and I hope you are enjoying it with your gay evenings ; I have been very quiet this week ; I keep well.

" I wrote to Thorpe that I thought we would go down about the 10th of July. I propose to leave this next Thursday night—arrive in Boulogne on Friday about twelve ; the boat leaves at one in the morning—stay *Friday, Saturday* and Sunday and return with you on Monday—and on the following Saturday or Monday to go down to the Thorpes. I look forward to Friday with infinite pleasure. . . . I am very uneasy about Eliza's continued cold ; it must be closely looked to. Tell all the children that I am coming next week and will stay two or three days,—and tell Miss Emmie that I must

have no pouting lips. Kiss them all from me over and over again ; and *my own* dear blessed Bessie receive all that is *dear, kind* and *affectionate* from your own

“ JAMES.”

On June 28: “. . . I intend to leave here by the boat at one o'clock on Friday morning and hope to be with you at twelve on that day. I hope to meet you all at the pier.

“ The difficulties which presented themselves with the League at first are clearing off and the path becomes clear about the paper.

“ I dined last night at Grosvenor Street—all very kindly enquired about you. They go off to Baden on Sunday week.

“ Mr. and Mrs. Bouverie were there and we spent a very pleasant evening. Lady Radnor has become very friendly and confidential ; she improves every time I see her. Lord Radnor is as kind as ever. Mr. Bouverie expects to be returned for Hythe ; it is near Folkestone and the present member retires.

“ I have a letter from Thorpe. He has been unwell and Mrs. Thorpe has been confined with a slow rheumatic fever. I have written to ask if they will be ready to receive us when I mentioned.”

As my father had written with regard to the paper, Cobden had in conversation quite come over to his, Lord Radnor's and Charles Villiers' way of thinking, but when he read the Prospectus that my father had prepared he took alarm. “ Let me entreat you,” he wrote, “ to hold back your Prospectus until we have a full agreement with the Manchester people. You must have their acquiescence—nay, their *coalition*, and to effect this there must not be too much precipitation. I find a strong current against your plan running in the minds of the Leaders ; not stronger than in my own mind previous to our last interview, when you convinced me that your plan was the best. Had you shown me the Prospectus before convincing me, I should have been harder to convince—this is *human* and the nature of the Manchester

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people is *not* superhuman, and their weakness must be regarded. Don't therefore put out your Prospectus until we are fully agreed among ourselves. It can be done, but we must not risk failure by precipitation. The more I think of it the more am I convinced that you must have the kindly co-operation of the League. The first thing asked by the Free-Trade party throughout the Provinces will be 'Is this paper recommended by the League?' I quite agree with you that the sugar debates, or the shirk of a debate, is a proof of the want of such a paper. Again requesting you to give time for a friendly understanding,

"Yours truly,  
"RICHARD COBDEN."

On September 2, 1843, the first number of the *Economist* was issued. More than eighty years have elapsed since that day, and no week but one during the general strike of 1926 has passed without a number of the *Economist* appearing. Curiously enough, when I was describing how the paper was started, an American friend sent me an American newspaper—the *Outlook* of Wednesday, January 30, 1924. In this number is an article on "James Wilson," by Lawrencé F. Abbott, contributing Editor of the *Outlook*, in which are the words "the *Economist*, which is now perhaps the leading journal of its kind in the world."

On receiving the first number, Cobden writes (he has apparently not entirely forgiven my father for straying into wider fields than the Anti-Corn-Law League Circular): "Your first No. was sent to me here (Tunbridge Wells). I find in it a great deal of useful matter. Can there be a sufficient number of readers with intelligence to appreciate it found to make such a paper pay? I am curious to learn what amount of support you will find. First article is too long. It would have been better in *two*. The Brazilian article should have commenced at the top of the second page. The style of this article is too much of an essay for a newspaper. *There should be no preface to a leader.*"

From Rochdale on September 8, John Bright writes :

“ JAMES WILSON.

“ ESTEEMED FRIEND,

“ The *Economist* has given me much pleasure. I find a few errors in the printing, which may be avoided hereafter.

“ Its business department and arrangement are good, but perhaps an improvement might be made in making more of a separation from the preceding part when commencing the articles which are somewhat like the *Spectator's Topics of the Day*. The report of the Liverpool Meeting is quite as much as a weekly paper can be expected to give. It was about the best meeting I have ever seen. A full report is published in a pamphlet, one of which I enclose (the said pamphlet includes the whole of John Bright's speech at the Meeting). Thou wilt see how much I am indebted to thee for my material. Five thousand have been circulated among the electors of Liverpool, besides the twelve or fourteen thousand copies of newspapers in which the report appeared—so I hope some good has been done—indeed, I know Wm. Brown, the great American Merchant, after the meeting, sent £50 to the Association in Liverpool unsolicited, and before this he had stood for Whiggism and fixed duties—some other subscriptions have been given in a like manner, and I hear that several influential converts were made. As to the Brazilian trade [that of sugar]—it is a serious affair, but I confess I doubt if any effectual demonstration could be got up in this district—*party—party—party*—this is the evil spirit which is working the ruin and making us powerless. The League will hardly be disposed to make a distinct move in that direction from the danger of appearing to quit their hold of the Corn Laws. I expect to see Cobden and the Council tomorrow, when I will mention the matter. . . . We hope to decide upon the plan of the new campaign how the means are to be raised. The Anti-Slavery reporter attacks me this week—I send thee a copy of it for thy

amusement. The weather is superb. I hope the harvest will turn out well. Wishing thee every success,  
 " I am, thy sincere friend,  
 " JOHN BRIGHT."

In thanking my father for sending him some information, again he begins: " Esteemed Friend, I am greatly obliged to thee for the particulars of the wool trade—they will be very useful I am persuaded at Kelso, Alnwick and at other places with the farmers.

" I think we have no facts more conclusive against protection than those thou hast furnished me with.

" I am very truly,  
 " Thy friend,  
 " JOHN BRIGHT."

Naturally, the Chartists were very adverse to the tone of the *Economist*. Cobden writes: " I wrote my hasty note before leaving town, after having been taunted by the Chartist leader as being identified with the anti-popular article in your paper, in order to record my written dissent from them, and there I quitted the matter. . . . I quite admit that no person has a right to identify you with liberal politics *because* you are a Free-Trader—but I still regret as much as ever the view you take (conscientiously no doubt) upon the danger to property consequent upon giving the working people the suffrage—because I find, in the inevitable tendency of democratic principles it places you in an unfavourable position in the eyes of a class which must exercise more and more power in the legislation. A word upon the parting recommendation of the *Economist* in our last League paper. I strongly advocated with my colleagues some weeks before we closed our agitation, the handing over our readers to your paper as our successor. . . . I have reason to suppose that my recommendation was not without its influence."

Owing to my mother, who preserved the letters written to my father which I possess, being away from him when the *Economist's* birth took place, there are comparatively few existing which relate to this first number.

## CHAPTER VI

### 1846 : PASSING OF THE CORN LAWS

1841 was the year when Lord Melbourne's administration came to an end, two years after the "Influences of the Corn Laws" was published, two years after the Anti-Corn-Law League had been formed. Cobden again stood for election at Stockport, and was returned. His persuasive eloquence was now heard in orations to a very different kind of audience from those he had been addressing up to that time, and one more difficult to influence through the emotions. Sir Robert Peel, the great Conservative leader, had a majority in the House of 91, and there were only 90 members in favour of the total repeal of the Corn Laws. Charles Villiers' annual motion was that year rejected by a majority of 303.

Cobden made his first speech in the debate on the meeting of the new House after the general election, a debate which resulted in Sir Robert Peel replacing Lord Melbourne as Prime Minister. Cobden's speech was a notable and masterly performance and made a distinct impression in the House and on the country. Still, his arguments were hardly admitted as valid except by a small minority. The ground-work of caution, so characteristic in the English nature, made the majority view with alarm the upheaval of such old-established customs, which the abolition of the Corn Laws would effect. It appears that the members who advocated Free Trade in its more general aspect numbered 120. Joseph Hume sent the following paper to my father, March 22, 1841 :

"SIR,

"I have the honor herewith to enclose a copy of resolutions agreed to at a Meeting of Members of the



British Parliament, and sanctioned by upwards of one hundred and twenty of that body.

“ The subject of *Free Trade* and the extension of our Commercial relations with the rest of the World, by simplifying our *Tariff*, and thus leading other Nations, by such an example to co-operate with us for the attainment of so important and so desirable an object, has lately engaged much of the public attention in this country ; and the general feeling manifested in favor of such changes, will, we confidently hope, soon induce the Government and Legislature to take the proper steps for carrying out extensive measures of Commercial Reform.

“ The *Report* of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, with the Evidence given before it on the subject of Import Duties, in the last Session of Parliament, has been chiefly instrumental in producing a state of public opinion favorable to a more liberal commercial Policy, by clearly proving that the Restrictions and Prohibitions of the present Commercial Code of the British Empire, are in the highest degree prejudicial to the best interests of the Nation. Allow me, therefore, as the late Chairman of that Committee, to forward you a copy of that Report and Evidence ; and to request the favour of your most earnest consideration for it.

“ The Liberal Course recommended by the Committee, will be found applicable to the wants of all Countries, and in a matter so deeply interesting to the Peace of the World, and to the prosperity of Nations, I venture to hope for your zealous support, in the conviction that the enlightened friends of Free Trade may be appealed to with peculiar propriety at the present moment, and that a vigorous and simultaneous movement in the different parts of the Commercial and Civilized World cannot fail to be attended with most important and beneficial results.

“ I send you, also, a copy of the last report of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, in which the

opinions of the Merchants and Manufacturers of that great Commercial Community are strongly and favourably expressed.

“Public Meetings of the Merchants and Inhabitants of Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Bolton, Ashton, and many other Cities and Towns, have already been held, where Resolutions have been agreed to warmly approving of the Cause recommended by the Select Committee and by the Meeting of Members of Parliament.

“It will give me much satisfaction if you will favor me with any suggestions likely to forward the great object we have in view ; and, on my part, I shall be most happy to supply any information which you may deem it desirable to obtain, and which it may be in my power to afford.

“I have the honor to remain,

“Your obedient and humble Servant,

“JOSEPH HUMÉ.”

While these urgent measures were being taken by some zealous members in the House of Commons to urge the necessity of the Repeal, my father every week wrote important leaders in the *Economist* with the same object. The *Economist* had secured a considerable circulation, especially among the thinking classes. The unconverted as well as the converted were among its readers—it was read, in fact, by nearly all those who took a serious view of the question. While listening to debates throughout long sittings in the House and to Cobden's vehement appeals, an interest doubtless was aroused in many who would otherwise have remained passively indifferent. In the leisurely hours of Saturday morning these same politicians would read my father's articles in their *Economist*, and would find therein equally telling arguments for the *cause*, but in a form which appealed more exclusively to their reason, and written by one whose judgment was in no way warped by class prejudice, or influenced by a one-sided view of public

questions. My father adhered faithfully to the lines on which he started his enterprise. "The paper," he wrote to my mother, "must be perfectly philosophical and moderate, nothing but pure principles." But however philosophical and moderate the tone of the articles might be, the style in which they were written was vigorous and direct,—vital with original and independent thought,—a style which, as before cited, Walter Bagehot called "a great *belief-producer*, he [my father] had on his own subjects a singular gift of *efficient* argument—a peculiar power of convincing reasons to convincible persons." But a newspaper has no personality; comparatively few only of the public could distinguish which of the articles in the paper were his. Hence the great part that the *Economist* took in the abolition of the Corn Laws was not so fully recognised as due to the force of his own pen and to his personal efforts as it assuredly was. That little mattered to my father, however. He was too fully absorbed in promoting the redress of evils which the legislation engendered as it then stood to heed who was publicly acknowledged as the promoter.

Gradually the truth of these facts sank into the minds of members and wrought a change of opinion in the Government and in the House. Sir Robert Peel was somewhat of an enigma even to many of his own party. When and how far Free Trade arguments convinced his understanding no one could exactly guess, except perhaps Gladstone, the one politician who was supposed to enjoy his entire confidence. In March 1842 Lord Radnor writes to my father :

"There is in Peel's proceedings and language,—such a mixture of liberality and the contrary—that I am quite at a loss to guess whether he really understands the questions mooted, or whether, understanding them, he blinks the real points in order to satisfy his *il*liberal followers—but I am inclined to think that, understanding them partially, and not thoroughly, he is made the tool of Gladstone. Gladstone is said to be the only person with whom he consults at all. His colleagues in office he is

said to treat as cavalierly as his Parliamentary colleagues, and these last repay him (while they follow) with the most violent abuse, and, I believe, a very cordial hatred. I say this, however, not of my own knowledge, but on the representation of others."

In Greville's Journal of July 6, 1850, written six days after Sir Robert Peel's death, there is an interesting account of what Greville believed to have been passing in Peel's mind while he was being converted to Free Trade.

"At length," he wrote, "ten years after the Reform Bill was passed the Whig Government was overthrown, and Peel became Minister. At this time the great bulk of his supporters coveted power principally for the sake of Protection. They believed that it was the duty, the inclination, and the intention of Peel to maintain the Corn Laws, and they had a right to think so. He had been the vigorous and ingenious advocate of the protective system, not, however, without some qualifications and reservations, which, though they were enough to excite the jealousy and mistrust of the most suspicious, were still insufficient to neutralise the effect of his general professions. It is almost impossible to discover what the process was by which he was gradually led to embrace the whole doctrine of Free Trade. We cannot distinguish what effect was made upon his mind by the reasoning, and what by the organisation and agitation, of the Anti-Corn-Law League. It would be interesting, if it were possible, to sum up periodically the exact state of Peel's opinions upon commercial and fiscal questions, and to know how he combined them with other political as well as party considerations, which he was obliged constantly to keep in view. No man but himself could explain and vindicate the whole course of his conduct. It may safely be assumed that when he began to re-organise the Conservative party, he did not contemplate a repeal of the Corn Laws, and that it was by a severely inductive process of study and meditation that he was gradually led to the conception and elaboration of the

commercial system which the last years of his life were spent in carrying out. The modification, and possibly the ultimate repeal, of the Corn Laws must have formed a part of that system, but what he hoped and intended probably was to bring round the minds of his party by degrees to the doctrines of Free Trade, and to conquer their repugnance to a great alteration of the Corn Laws, both of showing the imprudence of endeavouring to maintain them, and by the gradual development of those countervailing advantages with which Free Trade was fraught. That, I believe, was his secret desire, hope and expectation ; and if the Irish famine had not deranged his plans and precipitated his measures, if more time had been afforded him, it is not impossible that his projects might have been realised. He has been bitterly accused of deceiving and betraying his party, of close designs, and crooked counsels, and there is no term of reproach and invective which rage and fear, mortification and resentment, have not heaped upon him. He has been unjustly reviled ; but, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that, wise as his views, and pure as his motives may have been, his manner of dealing with his party in reference to the changes he contemplated, could not fail to excite their indignation. If they were convinced that the Corn Laws were essential, not merely to the prosperity, but to the existence, of the landed interest, he had been mainly instrumental in confirming this conviction. It was indeed a matter of extraordinary difficulty and nicety to determine at what precise period he should begin to disclose to his supporters the extent of the plans which he meditated. His reserve may have been prudent, possibly indispensable ; but although they were not unsuspecting of his intentions, and distrusted and disliked him accordingly, they were wholly unprepared for the great revolution which he suddenly proclaimed ; and at such a moment of terror and dismay it was not unnatural that despair and rage should supersede every other sentiment, and that they should loudly complain of having been deceived, betrayed, and abandoned."

Whether Greville's conjectures were correct as to Peel's intentions of gradually awakening the minds of his colleagues to the truths he himself had mastered, I am convinced that had my father been in Peel's place, that would have been the course he would have adopted towards his colleagues. He would neither have broken away from them nor tried to override them, but with earnest patience and probably with less reserve than Peel evinced, endeavoured by lucid explanation and indisputable proofs shown the disastrous effects the Corn Laws produced.

In November 1844, after £100,000 had been collected to forward the cause of the League, *The Times*, which had been violently opposed to it from its start, published a leader which was known as the '*great facts leader*.' It began: "The league is a great fact. It would be foolish, nay rash, to deny its importance. It is a great fact that there should have been created in the homesteads of our manufacturers a confederacy devoted to this agitation of one political question; persevering in it year after year, shrinking from no trouble, dismayed by no danger, making light of every obstacle. It is a great fact that at one meeting in Manchester more than forty manufacturers should subscribe on the spot at least £100, some £300, some £400, some £500, for the advancement of a measure which, right or wrong, just or unjust, expedient or injurious, they at least believe it to be their duty, or interest, or both, to advance in every possible way. *A new power has arisen in the State.*"

It took five years for the truth to permeate through the prejudices of Sir Robert Peel's majority in the Commons. In the nature of things, the Lords were still more stubbornly opposed to the Repeal. However, in 1846 they saw they had no other course but to yield. In the May of that year a large meeting of the Peers took place at Lansdowne House, for their lordships to consider what line they should take as a body when Sir Robert Peel's measure for the abolition of the Corn Laws should come forward. That it would be passed was clear, and

whether resistance would be of any avail was more than doubtful. Lord Radnor wrote to my father :

*“Private.* Our meeting at Lansdowne House lasted till half-past two o’clock. There were some forty or fifty lords, and of Commons only Lord John and Palmerston.” Lord Radnor then gives a list of the speakers numbering twenty-three, with an analysis of many of their speeches. “This is, I think, a tolerable sketch of what took place. The word compromise was not mentioned—nothing was said of joining with Peel—and I think nothing then of taking office and being supported by the Protectionists. But in the street afterwards, talking with Phillimore and Lovelace, I think the latter did so. The universal feeling is to support the Bill on the second reading, and the almost universal to keep it as it is in the Committee. I think there was a feeling of regret at Lord John’s letter, but that is what I need not tell you,—but I did not participate, and also a very strong feeling on behalf of a fixed duty. I am sure from what he said to me before the meeting that Clarendon is quite right—but very few are. As I came home I met Habington, and he said he did not think there could be any amendment carried on the Committee. The House appears to me more angry than anyone.”

It was in March 1845 that Cobden had made the Free Trade speech which proved without question to Peel’s mind that the distress among the farmers was the result of the Corn Laws.

To quote Lord Morley : “The Prime Minister had followed every sentence with earnest attention ; his face grew more and more solemn as the argument proceeded. At length he crumpled up the notes he had been taking, and was heard to say to Mr. Sidney Herbert, who sat next him on the Bench, ‘*You* must answer this, for *I* cannot.’” And as Sir Robert Peel was walking across Palace Yard that night Sir Emerson Tenant remarked “That speech of Cobden’s would be hard to answer,” to which the Prime Minister with vehemence replied, “It is *unanswerable.*” In June of the same year Cobden

said, alluding to the Ministers : " What are they thinking about as to the Repeal of the Corn Laws ? I know it as well as if I were in their hearts. It is this : they are all agreed that this Corn Law cannot be maintained—no, not a rag of it—during a period of scarcity prices, of a famine season such as we had in '39, '40, and '41. They know it. They are prepared, when such a time comes, to abolish the Corn Laws, and they have made up their minds to it. They are going to repeal it, mark my words, at a season of distress," and the distress did come that year. Again to quote Lord Morley, speaking of the autumn of 1845 :

" It was the wettest autumn in the memory of man. Mr. Bright was travelling in Scotland. The rain came over the hills in a downpour that never ceased by night or by day. *It was the rain that rained away the Corn Laws.*" Moreover news came of a potato famine in Ireland, and the population of Ireland stood face to face with starvation. What had been stealing into Sir Robert Peel's mind for months, nay years, took a definite form. The Corn Laws must go. But Sir Robert could not persuade all his colleagues in the Cabinet to follow him ; Lord Stanley and the Duke of Wellington headed the opposition. After days of discussion, no decision was arrived at. It was then that Lord John Russell, the leader of the Whig Opposition, who had, however, never joined the Free Traders, published a letter to his constituents of the City of London, expressing concern that the threatened calamity had elicited no announcement from the Cabinet of a definite policy, and himself declaring for the Repeal of the Corn Laws. His desire during many years, he wrote, was to arrive at a compromise on the question, but now, " it is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty. Let us then unite to put an end to a system which has proved itself to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people."



Mr. Villiers's annual Free Trade motion had been defeated in the previous June by a majority of 132. Now Sir Robert Peel, the Tory leader, and Lord John Russell, the Whig Leader, in the House of Commons, were both loud for repeal. But Sir Robert, failing to carry his point with his Cabinet, resigned. Lord John was called upon to form a ministry, and failed, and Sir Robert Peel returned to office. A memorable night it was when he made his great Free Trade speech, stating that *on the question of the Corn Laws his opinion had undergone a complete change*. It was delivered to a crowded House, and Prince Albert was present. The measure for the abolition of the Corn Laws was carried by a majority of nearly a hundred votes ; but they were not to be completely abolished till after three years, though modifications were to be begun from that time.

Cobden wrote to his wife on June 20, 1846, " Hurrah ! Hurrah ! The Corn Bill is *law*, and now *my work is done*."

But he was worn out with the struggle, and when the fight was over he was sent abroad to rest and recuperate. Lord Ducies, one of the few enthusiastic Free Trade Peers, wrote to my father :

" I am glad to hear that you have a good account of Cobden. I am very anxious about him, for when he left England there was that in his look that I did not like. We cannot spare him yet. If he is restored to health he has much to do yet."

My father felt that he had also much yet to do. There was the question of cheapening sugar for the labouring classes, the repeal of the Navigation Laws, which laws impeded many industries and necessaries of life from being available to the poor. From the day when Sir Robert Peel had quoted the " Influences of the Corn Laws " in Parliament to the day when he announced his conversion and his intention to abolish them, my father had felt that there existed some link between his own understanding and that of Sir Robert's, and he had worked sedulously to bring about that

conversion. He had a great esteem and admiration for Sir Robert Peel, and no one appreciated better than he the candour and sincerity with which Sir Robert avowed his change of mind in the face of the violent opposition of the Protectionists who had brought him into power. My father had made many notable speeches in Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, some of which were printed and widely diffused. He was constantly writing articles in different newspapers, and from the year 1843, week by week he had urged Reform in the pages of the *Economist*. It was moreover no less by his powers of conversation than by his writing that he succeeded in bringing proselytes over to the *cause*. The force of his arguments and the lucid thoroughness in which he explained the rudimentary principles of right legislation were perhaps even more convincing, when conveyed by my father's singularly pleasant, impressive voice than when conveyed by his pen. It was by conversation that he converted the Duke of Wellington to the repeal of the Navigation Laws—the Duke's mind was not one easily diverted from established creeds, but in this case my father succeeded in doing so. Letters written to him, among others, by Charles Villiers, Lord Radnor, Lord Kinnaird, Lord Clarendon and Joseph Hume—colleagues in the cause who, though they needed no conversion, yet show how urgently they sought a conversation with my father before debates took place in which they intended to take part. Walter Bagehot would say that he knew of no more effective current literature than when my father, *in conversation*, would propound a subject to William Rathbone Greg, who would subsequently convert those conversations into articles, Mr. Greg's style being excellent and singularly appropriate to current literature.

The first literary distinction which Mr. Greg won was by writing prize essays on Free Trade, which Lord Radnor so much admired that he had them reprinted for widespread distribution. He became a regular contributor to the *Economist* after a correspondence had

taken place between my father and him respecting the Irish famine.

It was in 1846 that George Cornwall Lewis also became a contributor to the *Economist*, though anonymously.

On September 2, 1846, my father wrote :

*Private and confidential*

" 15, HERTFORD STREET,  
" MAYFAIR.

" MY DEAR LEWIS,

" You will be glad to see by the enclosed note from Mr. Looker, who is an excellent example of a very important and thinking class, that your views expressed in the article last Saturday met his concurrence.

" I am going out of town for a fortnight on Saturday. If you wish to insert anything in the interim, I leave orders behind me to do so, having every confidence that you will send nothing that I would not approve of if here. It had better be sent, if at all, through Mr. Villiers that it may not be known at the office whence it comes. Anything sent should be by Thursday at Midday.

" Perhaps you could let me know by a note to-morrow or Friday if you are likely to do anything.

" I am, Dear Lewis,

" Yours vry truly,

" JAMES WILSON."

The rain that rained away the Corn Laws in the autumn of 1845 created widespread disease in the potato crops all over Ireland, resulting in that ghastly spectre, the Irish famine. The crop had been meagre the year before, but this total failure produced unheard of human misery, mortality, and crime. The Viceroy, Lord Bessborough, was faced with colossal difficulties. He appealed to the Government for authority to exercise coercive measures. Sir Robert Peel brought in a Bill for this purpose, but the Bill was rejected and Peel resigned. Lord John Russell was sent for by the Queen and made one attempt to form a Government, which failed, but succeeding in the second finally formed what

proved to be the last Whig Government. Lord Clarendon was given the post of President of the Board of Trade, and with him my father discussed both the subjects second only in importance to the abolition of the Corn Laws and to which he was then devoting very earnest attention: the Repeal of the Navigation Laws—in other words the Opening of the Ports—and the Sugar Question.

Lord Clarendon writes from the Grove, October 11, 1846:

“MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“I quite agree with you upon the expediency now, and the absolute necessity a short time hence, of opening the Ports—*when* or *whether* it will be done I cannot say. It may require a little decision and courage, but they would be displayed for a good cause and in the right direction,—the reform of bad legislation is the best use to which panic and high prices can be turned. I should be much obliged by any information you can give me as to the practical operation of opening the Ports that might be expected, *i.e.* the quantities of grain that might come here if duty-free, but would if our present scale continued be sent to other countries, where the harvests have been short and where prices are not much lower than in England.

“You could perhaps also procure me some information as to the effect of permitting the use of sugar and molasses in Breweries and Distilleries—the quantity of barley they would displace, and the effect of that upon the Malt Tax. This would be a very desirable measure, but a more difficult one perhaps than opening the Ports. The *Economist* of yesterday probably gives all the information that is to be had, but mine is not arrived. Pray come and pay us a visit on Saturday next if you have nothing better to do. Believe me, very truly yours,

“CLARENDON.”

Later he writes: “The Dutch sugar question has arisen just as you predicted, and I quite agree in all you

say in the *Economist* upon the subject. Hume's letter, which I never saw before, is curiously to the point, and renders the difficulty of refusing the Dutch claim even greater than it was before. I shall grudge them the boon because we shall have shown our intention not to do it, and we shall, or *ought*, to be beaten, and because they give a bounty upon the export of their refined sugar and thereby compete unfairly against us. I should be much obliged if you can tell me whether the bounty will affect our refiners injuriously, and whether they are alarmed, with or without reason, at the Dutch claim."

Great complications arose with reference to the duty paid on sugar produced by forced labour and that produced in our own Colonies by freed slaves. In 1845, Peel, then a Tory Prime Minister, gave preference to colonial-grown sugar, leaving the very heavy duties on foreign and slave-grown sugar untouched. After the Corn Laws had been repealed by Peel, and he had been succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord John Russell, Lord John reduced the foreign-grown sugar to a duty of twenty-one shillings and provided that in five years the duty should be brought down to fourteen shillings, which was the figure at which colonial-grown sugar was taxed. This arrangement was carried against both Protectionists and Abolitionists, these last protesting very indignantly against the measure. The object of reducing the duties on slave-grown sugar was to cheapen sugar for the rapidly increasing industrial population of Great Britain ; but by the end of 1847 the reduction was found to have hit our West Indian islands very severely, and the Government began to cast about for some relief for them. Brazil and the Argentine were then the great growers of foreign sugar, and Lord Howden was sent to both countries to break it to them that the reduction of fourteen shillings must be postponed. The postponement was naturally resented by both Governments, who accused Great Britain of breaking her word. The matter, however, was compromised,

and the term at the end of which the colonial and foreign-grown sugars were equalised was extended by three years. The postponement gave a breathing-space to the West Indian and Indian-grown sugar, but eventually the equalisation did ruin the West Indian trade and affected that of India.

Lord Clarendon writes to my father from the Board of Trade, January 1847 : " Lord Howden has just been named Minister to Brazil and I am sure a better appointment could not have been made—his rank, ability, experience, and thorough knowledge of Portuguese men and things, peculiarly qualify him for the successful performance of his mission : he is likewise to call on the River Plate to settle matters in that quarter. Lord Howden is very desirous to make himself well acquainted with our commercial relations and the wants and wishes of those engaged in the trade with Brazil, and I have told him that I was sure that no one would be more willing and able to assist him than yourself. Is not the information he desires to be found in some numbers of the *Economist* of last year ? If so, pray tell me which. Could you give him any further facts or intelligence, and where or when could you see Lord Howden ? "

On January 29 Lord Clarendon writes : " Lord Howden is extremely obliged to you for your kind offers of assistance, which will be very valuable to him, and he meant to have called on you to-morrow, but having just been desired by Lord Palmerston to go to Paris this night in order to settle with the French Government the terms of a convention with respect to the River Plate, he must postpone the pleasure of seeing you till his return. I believe he is to sail on February 16."

On January 30 Lord Clarendon writes : " I wish very much to get together all the information I can respecting Brazil, in order to enable Lord Palmerston to instruct Lord Howden properly, and if you will help me I shall be greatly obliged. I know that a great deal of matter is to be found in the *Economist*—can you refer me to the numbers ? and can you introduce me

to any members of the trade in whom reliance can be placed ?

“ You authorised me to trouble you whenever I stood in need of assistance and I therefore make no apology for doing so.”

In February he writes : “ I am sorry to say that Lord Howden is detained at Paris by the unwillingness of the French Government to assent to any convention likely to terminate the business of the River Plate. They evidently intend to maintain a footing in Monte Video and are unwilling therefore to recognise its independence. I will let you know the progress of the affair, and when Howden is expected home.”

Later Lord Clarendon writes : “ Lord Howden, who wishes very much to see you, has gone down to the Queen at Osborne to-day, to-morrow he is completely engaged, but on Thursday he would call on you at any place or hour you would have the goodness to appoint. He would of course be very happy to see you in his own house, but it is in Hereford Street, and it might be inconvenient to you to go so far. Pray let me know for his information what appointment you can make. Believe me always yours very truly, CLARENDON.”

In June 1847 Lord Clarendon writes : “ I should be much obliged by your sending me this afternoon to the Board of Trade any information respecting the quantities of sugar used in the Breweries and Distilleries, as Lord Wharncliffe is to ask me a question to-morrow. I have no desire to give him more information than is to be obtained from official sources, but I shall be glad to make use of any facts you give me if you think any public good may be done thereby.”

Many servants of the State turned to my father for information on various questions, and he was not only willing but ever desirous to help all public interests by passing on facts from his own great store of knowledge on questions which were not studied as a rule by most politicians. Gladstone was an exception in this respect. As shown in letters to my father and from his Budget

speeches, he thoroughly mastered the minutiae of finance and of all matters connected with commerce.

Lord Carlisle<sup>1</sup> wrote to my father :

“ MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ Excuse this unprovoked trespass. I have got to make a speech to the Town Council of Aberdeen, when they give me the Freedom of their City. Can you direct anyone to furnish me with a few plausible statistics about the place and its part in shipping? You must forgive me for going to the best fountainhead for all these topics.

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ CARLISLE.”

Lord Radnor writes :

“ GROSVENOR ST.,

“ May 17th, 1846.

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ I *must* have an early conversation with you about this Scotch Banking job.

“ If it suits you to look in here at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past seven you will find Sunday fare and no one but the girls and myself, and I shall be at home all the evening.”

On the other hand, Ministers would give my father information that he required. Lord Granville, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with whom my father was intimate, wrote :

“ LONDON,

“ Feb. 27/52.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ I am shocked beyond measure at finding this letter in one of my boxes.

“ Yours, G.”

“ LONDON,

“ Feb. 25/52.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ Belgium is by the Treaty Engagements of the Great Powers, an independent and perpetually neutral

<sup>1</sup> Earl of Carlisle, born 1802. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1855 to 1858 and again in 1859.



State—and is bound to observe the same neutrality towards other States. Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia have guaranteed the execution of these conditions.

“ Ever yours as the maids write,  
 “ In great haste,  
 “ GRANVILLE.”

Now the renowned “ Scrap of Paper ! ”

On going to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant in 1847 Lord Clarendon wrote :

“ I go to Ireland on Friday. I will write to you occasionally when I have any information worth your knowing to give. Why should you not come over there in the course of the summer ? ”

Lord Radnor in letters to my father forwarded information concerning French finance obtained by him from his brother-in-law Mr. Mildmay, one of the heads of the Baring House.

In January 1850 Lord Clarendon writes from V.R.L. :

“ Before the 1st of March there will be nearly 6 millions worth of property for sale under the Enc. Est. Comn. and men having the command of capital may select some of the finest land in the world, and if they take enough—a whole Union for instance—it will be their own fault if they *feel* the poor rates—they are more likely to suffer from want of hands if justice is done to the soil. Moreover we have statistical information here such as there is no idea of in England and there is not a parish in Ireland about which I could not at once give you the minutest information, *circa* population, tenements, valuation, soil, cultivation, etc. etc.—so that no man need buy a pig in a poke.

“ It is really absurd, however, that in Ireland land should be lying waste and in England, 24 hours off, money should be doing the same, when if the two were brought together they would produce a *mint* for the coining of gold.

“Let me beg of you to take up this subject seriously, and work it as you know how better than any one else, and I advise it because I am here. You may do it honestly and safely.

“I send you some information about P. Law which you will find interesting—the reduction in the numbers on the relief lists and the cost of maintenance are remarkable as compared with the corresponding period of last year, and the year closed without a single order having been issued by the Comm<sup>rs</sup> under Section 2 (able bodied destitute).

“Let me know if there is any more information I can send you.”

## CHAPTER VII

### WESTBURY AND THE IRISH FAMINE

THIS acquaintance and constant correspondence with politicians, together with an impulse to use his power of speaking in the House of Commons—in fact to participate first-hand in passing measures which he thought all-important to be passed, led my father to desire a seat in Parliament.

The *Economist* was well established. The manager, Mr. Aird, besides being a very efficient manager, was whole-heartedly devoted to my father. He undertook much of the work of the City and Financial part of the paper, and my father felt quite ready, even anxious, to embark on fresh lines of activity.

One evening, early in 1846, when my father was taking a family dinner with the Radnors—his own family being still at Boulogne—the subject was discussed, and Lord Radnor suggested to him the Borough of Westbury, in Wilts, as a suitable constituency. The Tory faction was a strong one at Westbury, and Sir Ralph Lopes, then the member, was a staunch Protectionist. It was rumoured, however, that he did not mean to stand at the coming general election; still Sir Ralph owned property at Westbury and his family influence there was considerable. The wife of Mr. Ludlow of Heywood, a good property a mile distant from the town, was Sir Ralph Lopes's sister. A family named Phipps also were, with one exception, Tories, and had influence in the place. Still Lord Radnor was of opinion that there was a good chance of my father's succeeding. A feeling among many of the electors was tending towards

Liberalism, and so strong was Lord Radnor's belief in my father's power of pleading effectually the virtues of Free Trade that he advised him to try for the seat.

The proper means having been taken to acquaint the electors that it was his wish to represent them in the Liberal interest, a requisition to visit the town was forwarded to him, in which he was begged to propound his views on political questions. "From an old cart" my father explained these views at much length, and succeeded in satisfying his audience as to their being those they were prepared to support. He bought considerable property in the borough and a house called Fontainville close to the town. Arrangements were forthwith made for the family to return to England and make Fontainville their country home.

It was in November 1846 that we—my mother and sisters—arrived at 15 Hertford Street *en route* for Westbury. After a few days' stay in London we travelled by the Great Western broad-gauge line to Chippenham, whence we drove in carriages sixteen miles to Westbury. My eldest sister was then fourteen years of age and I was five. The most distinct recollections of my childhood begin with that journey and those early days when, to our great joy, we found ourselves in a country home.

Very different was the approach to Westbury in those days to the many platforms and junctions of the present Westbury Station surrounded by ironworks. From its first railway station a country lane led to the quiet, old-fashioned town, under the slopes of the Wiltshire downs. A fine old church remains unaltered, also two large mill factories for cloth-weaving, and three Dissenting chapels. It was a stronghold of Dissent, and the waters of a large pool at the back of one of the mills was used as a Baptistery for the immersion of adults of the Baptist persuasion, a function which profoundly impressed us as children. There was a spacious market-place and a town hall. The notable feature of the place, however, was the White Horse on a slope of the downs,

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a Saxon trophy marking the passage of the Great Alfred and his army from the West Country. Three or four villages were included in the borough, and many isolated farms and cottages. Every evening at eight o'clock, from October to April, the curfew bell tolled from the old church tower. This was not intended as a signal for the *couvre feu*, but to guide travellers who lost their way in the mists on the downs. At every quarter of an hour the church clock chimed "God save the Queen," very much out of tune. Such was the little borough to which we came rejoicing in the late autumn of 1846 and which my father aspired to represent in Parliament.

In A. G. Bradley's "Round about Wiltshire" we find the following remarks concerning it :

"Cobbett called Westbury 'a nasty, odious, rotten borough ; a really rotten place !' In historical matters he was an infant, but quite as confident in his conclusions. The rustic of ancient times, in Cobbett's opinion, had been, by comparison with those of his own day, a well-fed and happy individual. But how 20,000,000 of them (his figures) could have been rendered thus in an ill-cultivated country, he makes no attempt to explain. The size of the churches was sufficient proof.

"The cloth trade of Westbury is reduced to two small factories, and modern ironworks are near the station. The principal inn proclaims that the Lopes family are a leading influence, and in 1810 they gave £6,500 for the political reversion of this 'rottenest of rotten boroughs.' In the south transept of the church is a monument with effigies of Sir James Ley, Earl of Marlborough, and his wife. The earl lived at Heywood. Aubrey says he began life as Vicar of Teffont, near Wilton, and while he studied at Lincoln's Inn his butler officiated at Teffont. The title ran out in 1679."

The early Westbury days I recollect as very happy days. It was a great joy to us, especially to my sister Zénobie and myself, to be given gardens of our own. We appropriated also as our own ducks that swam on the pond, but had not been given to us, and resented

with indignation and tears seeing one duck after another appear on the dinner-table. On the Bratton road was a row of six cottages belonging to my father. These we also appropriated ; as being six in number, we considered one was meant for each of us. Even in the cold, chalk soil of Wiltshire, vines grew over those six cottages, which bore ripe, sweet water grapes.

My father was rejoiced to have us all with him again after the many separations during our stay at Boulogne. He commenced feeling his way among the electors and canvassing them very sedulously as soon as we were settled, but, however pressed for time he might be by electioneering and *Economist* work, his constant devotion to his family never flagged. He *lived* with us in every sense. He liked to make us enter into all the questions that occupied his own mind, and into the important political measures which were exciting the country. I well remember his encouraging us to make speeches on questions before Parliament when we came in to dessert. When he took us for walks he would discourse on these and try to explain to us their importance and how they influenced the comfort and happiness of the poorer classes. No less would he enjoy with us our games and pursuits. A red-letter day was it when he took us to the stables to give us a great surprise by introducing us to Charlie and Fanny, two New Forest ponies he had bought on which to teach us to ride. How keenly he participated in our exuberant glee at seeing our new possessions. My father was a good horseman and very fond of riding and driving. By turns we six daughters were mounted on Charlie and Fanny,—my father on his big horse between the two, holding a leading rein from each pony. When, after a few lessons, the ponies were released from the leading reins, what wild rides we had on those Wiltshire downs ! Charlie and Fanny, feeling the fine turf under their feet, would fly over it for miles quite regardless of anything we could do to stop them, only breaking their speed when tired out.

A romance clung to those downs and the White

Horse, those eerie heights midway between earth and sky—vast—still—lonely—where the skylark's trill high above in the ether was the only sound that broke the silence. Seen close, the White Horse seemed a kind of monster, with something of the marvel of a giant about it : on the eye—a large, round patch of green sward—there was room enough for a picnic party to be seated. Sheltered in a wooded chine in the downs belonging to my father a spring of water had fostered the growth of trees and grass and flowers. Across this dell, called Well Head, was to be heard the most distinct of echoes. It was a truly romantic spot. A lonely little thorn-tree growing below one of the grey-green slopes belonged, in my fancy, to fairyland. For some years I imagined I should be buried beneath its shade. Connected with it was an incident which memory has ever kept very vividly before me. After taking our walk one afternoon with our governess to the thorn-tree we, as usual, were sitting round the fire after dessert recounting to my father and mother the doings of the day. I was seated on his knee and began telling him how, when we reached the thorn-tree we saw fairies dancing round it. On I went, describing what wonderful things my fairies did, when,—suddenly, I saw my sisters, with open eyes of astonishment, laughing at me. I awoke to the fact that my fairies were all a make-up of my own ! Covered with shame, I burst into tears, threw my arms round my father's neck, and hid my face on his shoulder. That was eighty years ago, yet I still see his amused, kindly smile, and remember the soothing, loving caress. It was indeed a great happiness and a great good to have so much affection bestowed on us, it had a mellowing effect on all the days that were to come.

Our childhood was also strongly influenced by the sense that even in ordinary life my father's mind was engrossed in work that mattered—that had to do with questions of public importance. This made the tender side of his nature the more treasured. To us, from our earliest days, he was always a great man, and it was in

those months when we were living in the country for the first time, enjoying its beauties, and before my father entered Parliament, that we had more of his companionship than ever after.

Travelling westward into Somerset as the train slackens on the now widespread lines of Westbury junction before entering the station, there they are—the same downs, the same White Horse of our childhood, but how prosaic and commonplace contrasted with the vision stored in the memory of eighty years ago, visions centring round the loving influence that dominated our lives. . . .

“ I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.”

In his Memoir of my father, Walter Bagehot writes : “ His enjoyment of simple pleasures, of society, of scenery, of his home was very vivid. No one who saw him in his unemployed moments would have believed that he was one of the busiest public men of his time. He never looked worn or jaded, and always contributed more than his share of geniality and vivacity to the scene around him. Like Sir Walter Scott, he loved a bright light ; and the pleasantest society to him was that of the cheerful and the young.” Verily my father's power of working without fatigue for any length of time was abnormal. Work seemed to act on him as a stimulant, leaving him in high spirits, ever ready keenly to enjoy pleasures of other kinds.

Electioneering in those days was a very exciting business, and party feeling ran very high. My father, however, would never countenance any action or speech likely to produce a sore feeling or excite malignity. His supporters did not invariably show the same Christian tolerance towards his opposers, and we younger children took a part in the canvassing which was distinctly criminal,—naturally, therefore, kept secret from our elders. We filled our pockets with lollipops and told any children who came in our way that on condition they



called out "Wilson for ever!" they should be given some.

My father soon obtained zealous supporters in the town. Still the Tory influence was not easily to be overcome—success was not to be won without strenuous effort. My father had no aristocratic relations to help him, and in those days the kindly influence of the aristocracy was a great advantage to a candidate. That influence, however, my father did possess through his friendship with those who were highly placed. He impersonated a cause in a form which was pure and unsullied by any motives of self-interest or self-glorification. His long-sighted discretion and correct taste enlisted the entire confidence of those of his friends who held office. As proved by many letters, the *Economist* was felt to be a safe, worthy mouthpiece for making known public matters on which it was desirable that the public should be informed, while, on the other hand, the *Economist* fed those friends in office with information on questions with which they had to deal. His nature was one which inspired affection. It is evident, from many of the letters that he received, that a warm attachment was felt for him by most of the writers.

My father's mind was an original, independent mind. His estimation of others, whether Peers or Commoners, whether holding opinions which coincided, or did not coincide with his own, was based entirely on intrinsic qualities of character and intellect. In his own nature was a simple dignity, and that kind of self-respect which begets respect in all those whose respect is worth having. Hence the entire confidence he enjoyed from all the public men who were his friends.

Lord Clarendon wrote from Bowood, December 14, 1846: "*Private*. I have spoken to Lord Lansdowne about Westbury, and he would be glad to render you service, but he has no local influence beyond his friend Colonel Phipps, whom he has informed of his good wishes for your success. Lord Lansdowne cannot interfere with Mr. Thomas Phipps, for he is not sure

whether he even knows him, and believes, moreover, that he has always been a staunch Tory."

Lord Radnor writes: "I am much pleased with your report, and trust that things may turn out as you expect. You do quite right in sticking to Westbury—and I do not see why Westbury should not permanently stick to you. I hope it will. You have, in any case, my best wishes."

My father and his supporters soon recognised that it was of great importance to secure the adhesion of Colonel Phipps, who, even by his family who held contrary views to his own in politics, was considered to be its most influential member. He was an intelligent, elderly gentleman, who with his wife lived at Dilton Court, a property two miles from Westbury, and it was not long before they became our intimate friends. One John Phipps, a rich merchant in Liverpool, came to Westbury with the idea of standing against my father, but gave up the idea when he found that he could not obtain the support of his relative, Colonel Phipps, who nevertheless had not yet promised to support my father.

Lord Radnor and Charles Villiers made my father's success at once a matter of their own personal interest. Charles Villiers writes:

"DEAR WILSON,

"I have had a long talk with Tufnell<sup>1</sup> about Westbury. I see (I think) how it could be made safe—but I should wish to have some conversation with you on the subject and I will try to do so tomorrow.

"Lopes voted against Free Trade—but at present he is not providing a successor of the same politics—Phipps is yet undecided and I think wants to be joggled by your Whigs. He is certainly not combining at present with the Lopes party. Tufnell is supposed to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henry Tufnell was a politician, who had been Private Secretary to Lord Minto under Lord Melbourne's administration, and subsequently was one of the Lords of the Treasury, and predecessor of my father as Parliamentary Secretary of the Treasurer, and also as Member for Devonport.

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be friendly, from what I collected to-night. I spoke to A'Court, Lord Heytesbury's brother, and I think he is not unfriendly.

"Yours very truly,  
"C. P. V."

" $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2.  
"REFORM CLUB.

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"I am sorry that you were gone when the House was up. I wanted to see you. If it would be of real & essential service to you for me to go tomorrow & be there on Sunday, I will do it. But I am told that Lord Radnor does not go & that the only chance of doing good would be on Monday. Now I must be at my office as soon after 11 as possible. It is one of my very busy days there. I wanted to know what means there is of being in town in time for me to be in Chancery Lane at that hour. Would it not be better to fix a time when 2 or 3 could be there together to see Phipps? However if he is to be seen on Sunday, and you think my doing so will be of any *real* advantage to you, I will not mind inconvenience etc., and I will go tomorrow at one—still if it is not certain that my mere presence can be of any *positive* use—I shall be glad to defer it till I am stronger & that there is somebody or other with whom one could co-operate in serving you with Phipps—or that one could communicate with him on behalf of the Government. At present your able articles against the Ministers for the last 3 weeks will naturally make them hostile in return. I leave this & shall send for a reply at 9 tomorrow—at this club—& if you really attach great importance to my presence at Westbury on *Sunday* I will be at the station at one.

"Yours very truly,  
(Sgd.) "C. P. VILLIERS."

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"I have just got your second note. I will send to the person to whom I gave the extract and will have it left with you early. However I do not think it offers

anything but proof that the local authorities were not dissatisfied with y<sup>r</sup> controlling power—and what happens in one place must pretty much be the same elsewhere. They are more satisfied with the Commissioner than they like to avow. Many of the persons who have objected to them, see now that they were about to exchange King Stork for King Log, and are naturally frightened. The Bill will now pass and the Commissioners are to be removed. They have had an odious task to perform and there are none who could have escaped obloquy.

“ Their assistants have always thought themselves as good as their chiefs and with a Secretary to marshal them were always ready to be discontent. They have been as a *Central Board* unduly assailed. The mixture of central and local authority is what works best in this busy country and what really suits the taste of the people best. It is a protection ag<sup>st</sup> the abuses of the local power—w<sup>h</sup> is in its character oligarchical.

“ Yours very truly,  
(Sgd.) “ C. P. VILLIERS.”

*Private*

“ 27, REGENT ST.,  
“ *Friday Evg.*

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ I intended to have called at your office to-day but could not get released till the evening, and I have a conscience about coming there on a Friday night. If you do not go out of town early I shall perhaps see you. I met my brother in the course of the week and he told me you were out of town or I should have called before. I am unfortunately engaged to dinner with Molesworth on Saturday next—however, if I can get off I will come—unfortunately Whitsuntide is no holiday for me—as my office is open and I am obliged to attend, tho’ perversely enough it is shut this week. I hear no news, I don’t think the dissolution will be so soon as is expected. I thought as much when I saw the *Chronicle* calling for it immediately. It seems to get as good information as if it was Ministerial. To the best of my belief however

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it is wrong ab<sup>t</sup> the P. L. Commissioners being retained tho' all that abuse I suppose is personal on the part of one of the Proprietors—paltry enough too !

“ Yours truly,  
(Sgd.) “ C. P. V.”

*Private*

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ I do not know if your contribution<sup>7</sup> of the gossip of the day, would insert any allusion to the South Lancashire Election and myself. If so—I would be particularly obliged to you, if it is not too late, to let it be as short as possible, and with no opinion in its favour. They would suppose I had got it inserted if there was anything favouring it—as I have recommended the *Economist* so much there,—and it is so much read—I am threatened to-day with a contest there [Wolverhampton], consequent upon this somewhat unfair and injudicious proceeding<sup>1</sup> of Bright & Co. in going on using my name—as if I were a willing party. What I do not want said, is that I wish this canvass, however great an honour it is.

“ Yours ever truly,  
(Sgd.) “ C. P. VILLIERS.

“ I sent my letter to-day by the post at 12.”

“ GUARDIAN OFFICE,  
“ MANCHESTER, June 2, 1847.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ We are in a pretty mess here with the representation of the southern division of the county. Can you give me any clue to Villiers's real views and inclinations on the subject? I suspect that he does not wish to represent us; and that, if returned, he will not sit. Else why should he hesitate to offer himself at once, when he must have known that success was perfectly certain? It is all very well to talk about his obligations to the electors of Wolverhampton; but there are other obligations, and duties of a higher character, to be

attended to, and I cannot help thinking that there is something at the bottom which our friends of the League are not inclined to let out.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd.) “ J. W. GARNETT.

“ JAS. WILSON, Esq.”

Lord Radnor writes from Folkestone : “ This morning before I left town I received a letter from the Admiral [Bouverie] by which I learned what was going on at Westbury. I hope that when I see you you will be able to confirm what he says of your successful canvass. By his account Colonel Phipps seems to have behaved very well—on the part of the others there seems to have been something like treachery, or at least deceit. I came here with Mary to-day, but hope to return to town on Friday. From what I hear I am inclined to think we shall have an early dissolution—some say in July—others earlier if the Government don't carry the Irish Poor Bill ; which I don't see any chance of their not carrying.” Two days later : “ I found your letter and one from Colonel Phipps quite confirming your favourable view of the canvass. I have now no time to do more than congratulate you. Will you dine here on Monday ? Going to Westbury next Sunday is out of the question. It is more probable I shall be able to do so on Sunday week, and if I can I will. I like Phipps's note very much. It is that of a fair ingenuous man. I think he has now got into the right faith, and will, I have little doubt, stick to it.”

Clearly enough the important matter at the moment was to secure Colonel Phipps's active support. Charles Villiers writes : “ The great thing I suppose is to keep off a junction between Lopes and Phipps.” All my father's friends were working for that end, and finally succeeded. A letter from Mrs. Phipps definitely shows that Colonel Phipps was far from joining my father's opponents.

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" MY DEAR SIR,

" I opened your letter which has just arrived, in consequence of Col. Phipps being too unwell to enter into any matter of business, and at present I do not intend to let him see it ; I am therefore induced to write, though as a lady I feel I have nothing to do with Elections. I beg *most decidedly to assure you that* there is not the *least foundation* for the report of Col. Phipps having turned to the opposite party ; since he saw you in March he has not been able to enter into politics, nor has he mentioned the subject to anyone ; had he been in a better state of health he would have communicated with you before this. I have often heard him say before his illness that he felt quite sure you were secure of your election. I feel it due to Col. Phipps to let you have these particulars, as I am quite certain he is as consistent in his political opinions as ever. I intend calling upon Mrs. Wilson this morning. Hoping you will not bring forward my name in this matter, I remain,

" Yours sincerely,

" SOPHIA PHIPPS."

A characteristic note came about the same time from Charles Villiers :

" I got a letter from Overbury to-day in which he says that T. Phipps has died suddenly ! ! and that it will be in your favour. Does it make the seat more secure for you ? As the poor man must have gone soon, the event is fortunate if this is the case ! I conclude it is the one that was using his influence in favour of his relation against you."

Another matter, however, besides the election was occupying my father's thoughts and pen. Charles Villiers writes :

" I have only a minute to say that I saw Tufnell, and that he is ready at any moment to give you any assistance you wish and the Government may give, but he does at the same time ask *if you are not hostile* to the Government ? and he is afraid that another man may represent himself

as ready to support Ministers. I have seen Moffatt. I will write if I see Tufnell again. I do not believe that any person will be favoured by Tufnell until it is known what you do. I should think you had done right in not going to Downing Street before you had seen how things were going at Westbury. I advised you as I should have acted myself. Yours ever truly,

“ C. P. VILLIERS.”

It was certain articles that my father had written on the measures with which the Government was attempting to relieve the appalling distress in Ireland that made Mr. Tufnell dubious as to my father's readiness to support Lord John Russell's Government. He had criticised in a convincing manner the measures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Radnor writes: “ I am glad that the *Economist* has given Palmerston and C. Wood a wipe—particularly the last.”

Sir Charles Wood was by common consent not very happily placed in this post. He was distinctly a high-principled, industrious, conscientious servant of the State, but evidently lacked a power which Walter Bagehot ascribed pre-eminently to my father: “ Mr. Wilson's predominating power was what may be termed a *business imagination*. He had a great power of conceiving transactions.” Sir Charles Wood apparently had not the originality of thought or the imagination to stamp his own individuality on the measures he brought forward. An historian writes of him:

“ Sir Charles Wood was the reverse of Brutus. *Magni refert hic quid velis. Sed quidquid volet valde volet.* It was of little consequence what he meant. For he did not mean it much—or long. . . . Sir Charles Wood's Budgets were like the American politician's opinions. If they were not acceptable, they could always be altered.”<sup>1</sup>

His nature was superior to feeling any personal resentment against my father for the articles in the *Economist*, which, though always courteous and moderate

<sup>1</sup> *Modern English History*, Herbert Paul.



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in tone, criticised his policy in a severely adverse manner—or for the praise my father's views often received at the expense of his own : still, the absence of those qualities with which my father was gifted prevented him, as was recognisable in the future, from fully appreciating them in another. My father was never but on friendly terms with any honest politician, however the opinions of such a one differed from his own. Walter Bagehot wrote : " Few men ever transacted so much important business with so little of the bitterness of personal feeling." And Sir Charles Wood himself, in a letter he wrote to Walter Bagehot in 1862, affirms that there was never anything petty or crooked in my father's personal feelings towards those who differed from him on public grounds, nor was there, indeed, in Sir Charles Wood's feelings towards my father, as shown by the following letter, written after his policy had been so severely criticised in the *Economist*.

" DOWNING STREET.

" DEAR SIR,

" Since I saw you I have seen an article in the *Globe* of last night, which differs from the views of the *Economist* on the subject of late financial measures, as well as those which were proposed for the future.

" It is hardly likely that you should suppose that I had in any way suggested even such a line being taken in the *Globe*, but as I am anxious that there should be nothing to interrupt the most friendly and unreserved intercourse between us, I write to assure you that I never have had any communication on the subject with anybody.

" I thought that in your article of Saturday you were encouraging hopes of which the state of the revenue would probably prevent the realisation, and I resolved to take the straightforward course of sending to see you on the subject and giving you a *hint* at least of probabilities. I shall always be glad to act in the same (what I hope you will consider friendly) way, and I am anxious

that no momentary suspicion should interrupt the good feeling that I hope will always subsist between us.

“Yours truly,

“CHARLES WOOD.”

Assuredly the famine in Ireland was one of the most difficult problems that any Government had ever had to tackle. Walter Bagehot wrote that my father in the *Economist* had effectively and thoroughly dealt with it. The very nature of the Irish people made any relief given in money a very dubious help, and the reckless manner in which the Government was spending millions of English money in giving famine wages to the Irish to make roads and railways which no one wanted, and which enticed farmers and labourers away from their really useful work, raised indignant expostulations from those on whom the burden of paying the millions fell. The Government had issued a loan for eight millions, but certainly not half that sum ever succeeded in alleviating any distress.

My father's old friend, Mr. Porter, wrote to him, “I quite agree with you about the proposed Irish measures. It makes me heart-sick to think of them. Your article on Saturday was excellent.”

Lord Clarendon, loyal to his Government, wrote : “I cannot congratulate you on your article on Saturday. The *Economist* has been some time in labour, but has only produced a *very* small mouse. Yours most sincerely,  
“CLARENDON.”

On this my father sent him several letters from William Rathbone Greg, the first beginning with the following paragraph :

“WANSFELL,

“February 8, 1847.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Your two last Papers on Ireland are admirable, and should produce great effect. Is it not astounding and alarming, that measures unanimously condemned by all the able and influential organs of the Press, and

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by all the acknowledged thinkers in the country, should yet be passing in Parliament almost by acclamation,—and that even the very authors and supporters of them should be (as I believe they are) in *their hearts* fully aware of their monstrous culpability ? ”

In returning the letters Lord Clarendon writes :

“ B. OF T.,  
“ March 8/47.

“ Many thanks for these letters which I have read with great interest. I agree entirely in the opinions of the writers as to the mischievous tendency (or rather certainty) of the course we are adopting, but I still believe that that course has been unavoidable because it has been imposed upon us by a force of circumstances impossible to resist, by the overwhelming character of the calamity, and by the nature of the people we had to deal with. The best proof of this is that nobody has had anything better, even with the benefit of experience, to propose, for you must excuse me for saying that the *Economist* has suggested no plan—the gigantic proportions of our Frankenstein do not add to the stature of your mouse—you *in fact* say *do nothing*, which is exceedingly comfortable for a gentleman writing by his fireside in London, but not at all practicable for a Government having to answer to the humanity and generosity of England for the mortality of Ireland. You admit that sound principles are clearly laid down by the Government and Treasury at the beginning of the crisis—that they will understand their duty and the necessity of non-interference—why then should you not, in common justice, suppose that these principles would not have been departed from unless under circumstances that were beyond control?—that the dykes were too weak for the torrent that swept them away. You lay down abstract principles and desire that men should be left to act upon them, which is quite right if ordinary men under ordinary circumstances were in question, but you have to deal with Irishmen. . . . It is a great misfortune for us to

have such a people under our charge, but we cannot leave them entirely to their own devices at a moment when they are unusually incapacitated.

"In haste, believe me,

"Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) "CLARENDON."

"GROSV<sup>R</sup> CRESC<sup>T</sup>.,

"June 28/47.

"MR DEAR MR. WILSON,

"... The Art. in the *Economist* on Ireland is very alarming because it is strictly true, but I am glad you have called public attention to a state of things which must incalculably aggravate all the ordinary difficulties of managing (governing is out of the question) that unfortunate country.

"I quite agree with you that the distress next winter will be greater than the last, and as the tide of public and private charity which has been flowing in from this country will altogether cease, and the people will be thrown upon their own resources which are nil, there is an amount of famine and anarchy enough to appal the stoutest hearted Ld. Lt. in Ireland and Prime Min<sup>r</sup> in England.

"Believe me, Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) "CLARENDON."

"I go to Ireland on Friday. I will write to you occasionally when I have any information worth your knowing to give. Why should you not come over there in the course of the summer?"

Early in May 1847, when the Irish famine had reached its worst, the Viceroy, Lord Bessborough—known formerly in the House of Commons as Lord Duncannon, Whig Whip—died. By some it was believed he had succumbed under the difficulties and appalling anxieties of his post. He had been refused the authority to employ coercive measures, for which he had applied to the Government, Sir Robert Peel's Ministry having been defeated on the Bill brought



THE EARL OF CLARENDON

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forward to grant them, and the strain of meeting the existing conditions in Ireland had, it was believed, tried his health to breaking-point. Truly responsibility without power is an unjust burden.

Lord Clarendon was appointed to succeed him, and judging from all accounts and from the letters which he wrote to my father, a better appointment could not easily have been made. Starting life in diplomacy as an attaché to the British Legation at St. Petersburg, and subsequently appointed to the Embassy at Madrid, he early acquired a free play for the qualities he possessed which were singularly useful as Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland. He was naturally gifted with tact and gracious manners, was much favoured by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he had a ready wit, tongue and pen, all of which the Irish people fully appreciated, and he was acknowledged by all to be a just ruler. He is now well known as one of the leading statesmen of his day, his character, no less than his great abilities, having won him a crown of laurels as Foreign Minister in the difficult years of the 'fifties. In dealing with the Irish during the abnormal difficulties of his rule, while he recognised to the full all the self-inflicted troubles which impeded this unfortunate people from themselves improving their lamentable condition, his breadth of mind and understanding and kindly qualities made him ever on the alert to perceive any signs of effort and of a higher and more reasonable standard of living. But on arriving, Lord Clarendon found a work of enormous difficulty awaiting him. Normal difficulties which every Viceroy had had to face were egregiously aggravated by the famine. The long-indulged animosity between the Orangemen and the Southerners, caused by difference of race, religion and temperament, an animosity fostered by an incurable *habit* of hating one another—the chronic warfare between the landlord and his tenants, and the tenant and the labourers, made it impossible to get different factions to help one another in this common appalling distress. The labouring class, who suffered

most, seems to have behaved the best. Mr. Edward Bouverie wrote to him: "I have a most distressing account from Kerry, where my friend says the people excite his astonishment at their patience under such sufferings. They are all crowding into the workhouses." Whereas Charles Villiers writes, referring to a gentleman he knew who had written to my father from Ireland. "he has been for the last year acting as Inspector of something—under the arrangement for feeding Ireland and robbing England. He is quite credible. He went over there a Tory, but he has been completely converted from having daily ocular proof of the atrocious conduct of the proprietary class, their brutal neglect of the people, and their imbecile helplessness in the management of their property. Lord John made an excellent speech last night and I agree entirely with him that the Irish and not the British should support the Irish. I believe the Poor Law to be a condition of good order in any community of which we have any experience—but it is treated, as far as I have seen hitherto, in a small, Vestry-like, narrow-minded spirit. I don't look upon it as an advantage to the poor, but as a safeguard against the principle of population operating as we see it has done. Of course it may be administered in two ways, like any other law, one to carry it out—the other to defeat it."

My father was not hopelessly pessimistic as to a possible improvement in the Irish, resulting from their misfortunes, and the line he took in the *Economist* was encouraging. A stranger, Mr. James Tuke, wrote from the West of Ireland urging measures for the permanent improvement of Ireland—and adds: "he hopes his views may not be unlike those so ably advocated in the *Economist* for which he feels really grateful, it being so much the fashion nowadays to write down at every point the poor degraded Irish instead of calmly considering what measures may be adopted for their real elevation and improvement."

Lord Clarendon's letters to my father from Ireland—many several pages long—are excellent—and very

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amusing reading. The passages, however, in which his wit, humour, and trenchant irony are most pithily expressed were, obviously, never intended by him to be published and therefore cannot be quoted. His brilliant levity, however, was but superficial play—but a light handling of what in reality to him were very serious matters, for it is clear that he was seriously and incessantly studying the questions which he hoped would tend towards the amelioration of the sufferings of the people during his tenure as Viceroy.

Lord Clarendon and his brother, Charles Villiers, both indulged in pleasant irony, but it was of a different quality. Lord Clarendon had buoyant high spirits which gave a liveliness to his cynicism. Charles Villiers had delicate health, and a dry subdued quaintness characterised his humour which made it singularly entertaining.

While Ireland in her misery was chiefly occupying my father's pen, he was steadily gaining ground with the electors of Westbury. In March 1847, one of his most enthusiastic supporters, Mr. Overbury, wrote to him that Sir Ralph Lopes had definitely decided not to stand. He received great encouragement from most of his friends who believed in his power of convincing the electors of the value of Free Trade. In May Mr. Edward Baines writes from Leeds, which he represented on Macaulay going to India, "I called on you partly to-day to say how glad I was that you are going into Parliament,—partly to express my pleasure at the coincidence of our views on the great question of Free versus Government education. . . . Your article of the week before last was admirably clear and sound (*selon moi*). . . . The state of the country is truly alarming. I hope there can be no doubt of your return for Westbury; and that when in Parliament you will uphold the sound and broad principles you have advocated in the press with a strong faith and growing success."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The year after this letter was written Mr. Baines died, and was accorded a public funeral.



Walter Bagehot wrote : " He (Mr. Wilson) showed considerable ability in electioneering, and a close observer once said of him, ' Mr. Wilson may, or may not, be the best political economist in England, but depend upon it, he is the *only* political economist who would ever come in for the borough of Westbury.' Though nominally a borough the constituency is half a rural one, much under the influence of certain Conservative squires. Except for Mr. Wilson's constant watchfulness, his animated geniality, his residence on the spot, his knowledge of every voter by sight, the Liberal party might never have been successful there. A certain expansive frankness of manner, and a wonderful lucidity in explaining his opinions, almost to anyone, gave Mr. Wilson great advantages as a popular candidate ; and it was very remarkable to find these qualities connected with a strong taste for treating very dry subjects upon professedly abstract principles. So peculiar a combination had the success which it merited."

Till July the Tories failed to produce a candidate and it appeared certain that there would be no opposition. Most unexpectedly, however, in the early days of the month, Matthew James Higgins, better known as Jacob Omnium, appeared on the scene in the Tory interest, and began canvassing with much energy. Up to then he had been accounted a Free Trade Liberal. He had lately returned from visiting an estate he had inherited in British Guiana, from which, as well as from other sources, he derived wealth. He was a giant in stature, being six feet eight inches tall. When at Oxford he had preferred hunting to scholarship, and had failed to take his degree ; later, however, he developed literary tastes, and was one of the chief contributors to the *Morning Chronicle*, then under the Editorship of John Douglas Cook. He had also written for the *Times*, but the editor having refused to publish one of his letters, Mr. Higgins had quarrelled with the paper. His first article in the *Times* appeared in 1845, entitled " Jacob Omnium," a name by which the writer was known ever after. The

article was a satire on mercantile dishonesty. He had written a pamphlet on the sugar-producing colonies, and had served on the Relief Commission for the Irish Famine. Such, in brief, was Jacob Omnium's record before he appeared at Westbury to oppose my father as a Tory. On his assuming Tory colours, having previously announced himself a Liberal, even a Radical, Lord Radnor writes : " I am sorry that we shall not see you " (the unforeseen opposition kept my father at Westbury). " The readiness with which people give up principle as soon as they find a temporary inconvenience from sticking to it, or think a partial good may be obtained by the departure from it, is really contemptible. Things present or near seem so much more important than those at a distance. Little things appear large, things distant appear—so at the end of a vista—small, and this is the real cause of all the evil and wickedness and misery in the world. Such, alas ! is human nature. Reason and religion are allowed to contradict and correct this error, but they have a sad, stubborn material to work upon.

" Phipps's note and the unusual favour the *Economist* meets with must act as a great encouragement to you, and at all events prevent despair."

On July 18 Lord Clarendon wrote : " I am very sorry to hear that Goliath has taken the field. May you be to him another David ! Judging from his Irish letters it would never have occurred to me that that man was a Tory Protectionist. He used to be a Radical, I believe. In haste, always yours truly,

" CLARENDON."

Charles Villiers wrote : " I heard from Edward Bouverie last night that Jacob Omnium was going to Westbury ! I was astonished, for I had met him a fortnight since at Milner Gibson's, and from his conversation I concluded he was a Liberal—and his strictures public and private, upon Ireland led me to suppose that he was a sound politician. He is, however, a man of the world, and though he has money, he will not, therefore,

I suppose, be easily taken in, or will be such a fool as to risk the loss of his seat by indiscriminate Bribery. He will therefore not believe everything he is told. He has a good many friends in the idle world (I believe) and the morality of that class about Elections and Public Life is not very nice. He may have in view to come in *as he can* and then support the Ministers. If you remember, Jacob Omnium's letter about West Indian property and the sugar duties, was quite in the Free Trade line. I am very much annoyed at hearing that you are not left undisturbed there, I was in hopes that you were going to walk over so quietly. He will not succeed by fair means—if there is to be any faith in men. I know nothing against him—on the contrary, privately—but I should suppose his travelling name describes his public principles pretty accurately.”

As the contest grew fiercer, Lord Radnor wrote : “Pray let me hear how you are going on, and how Higgins. I have read in the *Wiltshire Independent* the account of your meeting at Westbury last Saturday. I need not say how pleased I am with it. I have also learned that Higgins has returned to town in great wrath and says he can afford to spend £1000 better than you, and that he will make you *bleed* !

“John [Lord John Russell] is ruining himself—I hear that he declared last night in the House that the session should last till Christmas rather than not carry the Hereford Bishop Bill, on which Tom Duncombe gave him a proper dressing for giving up Health of Towns, Registration of Voters, and the Wants of Towns, but standing out for a bishop. He is looking equally ill about the Poor Rates ; he told me yesterday that in the Commons they will put on again the two clauses (Mr. Borthwick's) struck out by the Lords—Alas ! what folly ! With every good wish, yours, RADNOR.”

The bishop who was thus retarding the proceedings of the Government was Dr. Hampden. Lord Melbourne had appointed him Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. While holding this office he disclosed opinions

which, though not very obviously heretical to any but the High Anglo-Catholics, raised very strongly the condemnation of that party. Lord John Russell was a staunch Protestant, indeed a "fighting Protestant," and a loyal upholder of the authority of the State, and he saw in the Tractarian movement a danger of encroachments on the part of the Church of Rome. In order to enforce his disapproval of the High Church party, he recommended Dr. Hampden to the Queen for the bishopric of Hereford, and the Queen having given her approval, Dr. Hampden was offered the see. Many members in the House of Commons, and bishops, protested against the Prime Minister's choice, and heated debates took place.

The Tories at Westbury were getting rabid. On July 19 Lord Radnor writes : " I have just been reading in the *Devizes Gazette* [the Tory newspaper] sent to me by Burrows [the editor of the Liberal paper], the account of Higgins's speech. It is like all other moves of the Tories and their adherents, and much kindles my wrath by the presumption and assumption of superiority which runs through it. Is there any pretence for what the *Gazette* alleges of attempts to interrupt him and put him down? I daresay not—I presume this is one of ——'s lies—but it is carefully propagated. I was told it by George Barrington, Lord Barrington's son, whose brother married Higgins's first cousin.<sup>1</sup>

" I am sorry to say that it is now gravely supposed that the dissolution will not take place this week. John is to fight to the death for the Bishop, and if Tom Duncombe and Wakely are obstinate, they may protract the contest indefinitely. Only think—Lord John trying to outbid Graham and all the Tories for the good grace of the Church ! "

<sup>1</sup> Lord Barrington was my husband's uncle, and his daughter-in-law, Mr. Higgins's cousin, was an early friend when I entered my husband's family. Except that she was rich, she in nowise resembled her cousin, Jacob Omnium. She was of a very modest and retiring disposition, was a devout Anglican Churchwoman, had refined tastes, was an enthusiastic admirer of Tennyson's poetry, and a godsend to the poor in her village. She was the mother of the present Viscount Barrington.

Later : " I never heard anything more impudent than the revising barrister of the Borough appearing as a partisan. I know him of old, however, to be capable of anything impudent, over-bearing and pushing. I hope the judges of the Circuit (and now on the Circuit), will be informed of his proceedings, that he may not be appointed again." Later he writes : " I rejoice to hear of your amended prospects, at least of the relaxed efforts of the enemy. I anticipate your ultimate success, and the triumph will be great—all the greater for these reiterated and fruitless attempts to oppose you. If not kept away by the prorogation, I hope to see you to-morrow."

Lord John did not carry out his threat of deferring the dissolution till the question of the Bishop was settled, and the Parliament elected in 1841 was dissolved on July 24, 1847, and the election took place on July 31.

As the day drew near the activity of both parties became alarmingly energetic. My father had all he could do to restrain the reckless enthusiasm of his supporters within the limits of fair play. One of our gardeners had to be carefully watched on the polling-day, for it was discovered that he had had designs to allure some of the enemy voters into a public-house along the Marsh Road, and then detain them in a manner which would incapacitate them from reaching the poll in time to vote. There were many cases in which it was a case of *trop de zèle*.

On July 28 Lord Radnor wrote : " I heard from Phipps last night. He writes me word that he has written to let you know that he intends voting for you on Friday—and that, feeling unequal to the excitement of proposing you, he has begged Matravers to do so as from him—I trust everything will go on satisfactorily."

Everything did go satisfactorily. The nomination and polling being over, it only remained to await the result.

That next day I remember well. It was a bright sunny July morning when my mother and her six daughters, clad in the Liberal colours—white, pink and

blue—issued forth from out the gates of Fontainville, and wended their way by a quiet lane to the back entrance of a house whose front windows looked on to the market-place, facing the Town Hall, in front of which the hustings were erected. We took our places at two windows and awaited the thrilling moment. A huge figure then appeared, standing on the platform with my father. When the numbers were read out, announcing my father's majority, the cheering and hooting were tremendous, and general excitement made an unnerving tumult to me. My father's supporters insisted on chairing him, which caused more noise and hooting from the opponents. There were vehicles among the crowd and two opposing traps went for one another: I see now the horses plunging and prancing up into the air. It was all too much for me—I howled, and was quickly removed to a quiet back-chamber.

From the Vice-Regal Lodge Lord Clarendon had written on July 28: ". . . I hope to hear a good account of your proceedings at Westbury in a day or two. Ever yours truly, CLARENDON." And on August 5: "I heartily congratulate you upon your success and upon having prevailed over the Philistines. I only hope you may not find attendance in the H. of Cs. a useless as well as a disagreeable occupation. The new House will be an odd medley, very difficult to manage or to do any good with, and I sincerely hope that Lord John will not attempt to carry on the Govt. if he does not meet with efficient support."

Very welcome to my father were the congratulations of his oldest political friend, Mr. George Porter, who wrote from

"BOARD OF TRADE,  
"4 August, 1847.

"Let me offer my hearty congratulations upon your success in an object which you much desired. I wonder at your taste, but that is a matter of opinion."

Jacob Omnium did not take his defeat kindly: certain actions he took, and letters he wrote to Mr.

Edward Bouverie, aroused Lord Radnor's indignation. He ends a letter in which he expresses his disapproval of Mr. Higgins's conduct in very strong terms by "congratulating you and myself on the different conduct of Liberals and their opponents." Mr. Higgins further vented his annoyance by filing a petition against my father, but that came to nothing.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ENTRANCE INTO PARLIAMENT

FOLLOWING the storm of the election came two calm months at Fontainville. One day my two eldest sisters, Eliza and Julia, took my father out for a walk with the object of informing him that they thought our dear governess, Miss Knowles, fond as they were of her, had little more to teach them in general education, and nothing at all with respect to foreign languages or music, and that they would like to expand their learning in wider fields than in her schoolroom. They suggested going abroad. My father considered their demand reasonable, and though the separation entailed a great sacrifice on his part, he at once took steps to grant it. His old friend, Mr. Porter of the Board of Trade, had two daughters who were being educated on the Continent, and he gave my father the advice that in Germany the education was more thorough than elsewhere and music could best be studied. Mr. Sibeth, my father's old friend, was then applied to, and recommended a school at Cologne, belonging to a Herr Spielmann, married to a French lady, where also two highly educated French governesses taught the language, and the best professors in Cologne gave lessons in music. The result of this advice was that for eight years, from 1848 to 1856, the Spielmanns had among their pupils two, and at one time three, of my father's daughters, and that every year my father was travelling on the road to and from Cologne, either to take or fetch his children. He seldom allowed anyone else to do so. The school proved a great success, especially in teaching German, French, and music.



There were enjoyments also novel to English girls. Expeditions to castles on the Rhine, and those romantic valleys behind the hills, where the meals from the "restaurations" were served under trees out of doors. Performances of classic plays, Racine, Corneille, Molière, were given at stated intervals during the term, and also school concerts, attended by the first professors in Cologne. In the summer, at five o'clock A.M., walks through the silent streets were taken on the way to the wonderful, rushing river to enjoy the Rhine-baths. The summers were very hot, the winters very cold, and there were *events* arranged for the sunny weather as also for the wintry. Life was anything but dull in the Spielmann establishment; it coloured somewhat the rest of our lives with an unprosaic and foreign tone, which no English school could have given.

My father was repaid for his sacrifice in several ways, often through the help my two sisters gave him in translating foreign letters and pamphlets he received (Ackworth had not instructed him in foreign languages), but even more so through the great pleasure he derived from their singing and playing. When he was Secretary at the Treasury, and at Fontainville and Claverton, he generally retired after dinner to his study to prepare work to be sent up in the Treasury box next morning, but after the work was done, he invariably came into the drawing-room before retiring to enjoy some music.

During these quiet autumn months, Ireland and her difficulties still demanded the attention of the *Economist*.

Lord Clarendon supplied much first-hand information, and my father in his turn sent Lord Clarendon many facts that he required.

" CARTON,

" July 29/47.

" MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

" I enclose a Report in addition to the one I sent you yesterday. At this time last year the failure was certainly more general than it is now, but still I have no reliance on the crop. Accounts naturally differ very

much as to the quantity of potatoes planted—the general belief is that it was not one fourth of the usual amount, and I feel sure from the best information I have been able to collect that it cannot be one half. The quantity of turnips and other roots sown is perfectly unprecedented and the breadth of grain is also much greater than was ever known before. Parts of Galway however and the extreme West were not cultivated at all—the people being ignorant and destitute and having waited until too late in the belief that *somebody* w<sup>d</sup> do *something* for them—the misery there is great and will be greater w<sup>d</sup> is of course much to be regretted, but it will serve as a warning to others that without exertion and self reliance nature has ordained that man shall perish.

“Very truly yours,  
(Sgd.) “CLARENDON.”

On August 30 Lord Clarendon writes :

“MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“It is very difficult and perhaps it may be impossible to improve the relations between Landlord and Tenant in this Country, for the two contending Parties cannot be brought to comprehend the real identity of their interests, various practices obtain in different parts of the country, all of them fatal to good farming and profitable investment of capital—the people are litigious, the attornies promote litigation ; both therefore are opposed to simplicity of arrangements . . . such causes are not favourable to good relations between L<sup>ds</sup> and Tenant or to legislation between them. Still I wish to make the attempt and as far as possible to protect each from the misdoing of the other. Can you assist me or do you know anybody whose attention has been directed to this complicated subject ? There were some very good art<sup>s</sup> in the *Econ<sup>t</sup>* in the early part of the year upon Tenant rights and the whole question of L<sup>ds</sup> and Ten<sup>t</sup> with reference to agriculture, but I am not sure that they would be applicable to Ireland. You also pub<sup>d</sup> a model lease w<sup>d</sup> looked well on paper,

but can you tell me if it was ever put into practice and if so how it worked. I can easily conceive its being an ample form of agreement between sensible men understanding their reciprocal interests. In short any hints you can give me I shall be much obliged to you for.

“ Within the last week an alarm about the potatoes more real than the preceding ones has arisen and I now have little doubt that after a few days’ rain the failure will be complete—fortunately not above 1/4th of the usual quantity was sown—from want of seed rather than from prudential motives—but we shall have a sad amt of suffering next winter—perhaps worse than the last because public and private charity cannot again be brought into activity. I dare not be sanguine but I still venture to hope that better prospects are opening upon this unhappy country, because there is an entirely new spirit of exertion and self-reliance manifesting itself and because people seem tired and ashamed of the miserable degradation in w<sup>h</sup> they have hitherto existed. My confidence in the Poor Law has much increased since I came here, and I am more and more convinced that it will compel the upper classes for their own interests to better the condition of the lower.

“ Most truly yrs.,  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

1847 and the years following were those when the importance of the *Economist* teaching was specially valued. Walter Bagehot wrote : “ Within seven years from the foundation of the *Economist*, Mr. Wilson dealt effectively and thoroughly with three first-rate subjects—the railway mania, the famine in Ireland, and the panic of 1847, in addition to the entire question of Free Trade, which was naturally the main topic of economical teaching in those years. On all these three topics he explained somewhat original opinions, which were novelties, if not paradoxes then, though they are very generally believed now. To his writings on the railway mania he was especially fond of recurring, since he believed that by

his warnings, very effectively brought out, and very constantly reiterated, he had saved several men their fortunes at that time."

When the prorogation of Parliament took place it was concluded that the new Parliament would not meet till the Spring of 1848, but most important questions necessitated an autumn session. Throughout the summer the money-market had been greatly agitated; matters grew worse and worse till, during September, no less than fifteen of the largest houses in London stopped payment, likewise important houses in Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow. To raise quickly the eight millions "*to demoralise*" Ireland, the Government had to offer special terms for payment in advance; the railway mania, however, more than any other, it has been said, was the chief cause of the financial crisis in the autumn. The Government, supported by Sir Robert Peel, refused to interfere till after the general election had taken place, but in October the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England waited on Sir Charles Wood in order to inform him that credit would be stopped within twenty-four hours. Whereupon the Chancellor of the Exchequer authorised the Bank to replenish its reserve from the currency. Though the Directors never acted on this permission, the crisis came to an end, and confidence was restored. Besides the question of this proposed violation of the Bank Charter Act,—the Act established by Sir Robert Peel in 1844 to separate the currency from the banking department,—Ireland was in such a state of chaos that Lord Clarendon demanded special powers from Parliament for coercion, without which he pleaded that he could not repress crime in the disturbed regions. He came over to England personally to urge the necessity.

The new Parliament met in November. My father and mother went to London, leaving the rest of the family at Fontainville. Having taken his seat in the House, my father delivered his first speech on November 30.

Walter Bagehot writes : " Mr. Wilson made his first speech in the House of Commons on the motion for a Committee to enquire into the commercial distress at that time prevalent. And it was considered an act of intellectual boldness for a new member to explain his opinions on so difficult a subject as the currency, especially as they were definitely opposed to a measure supported by such overwhelming Parliamentary authority as the Act of 1844 then was. Judging from the report in ' Hansard,' and from the recollection of some who heard it, the speech was a successful one. It is very clear and distinct, and its tone is very emphatic, without ever ceasing to be considerate and candid. It contains a sufficient account of Mr. Wilson's tenets on the currency—so good an account, indeed, that when he read it ten years later, in the panic of 1857, he acknowledged that he did not think he could add a word to it. At the same time, however, the test of his Parliamentary success was not the absolute correctness of its abstract principles, but, to use appropriate and technical language, ' its getting a rise out of Peel.' Sir Robert had used some certainly inconclusive arguments in favour of his favourite measure, and Mr. Wilson made that inconclusiveness so very clear that he thought it necessary to rise ' and explain,' which, on such a subject, was deemed at the moment a great triumph in a first speech."

Lord Radnor wrote :

" COLESHILL HOUSE,  
" Decr. 2, 1847.

" DEAR MR. WILSON,

" I returned hither to-day after having been for 36 hours in town ; during which time I was not able to call on you—and I cannot resist the pleasure of writing to congratulate you on the success of your speech of Tuesday. I heard it lauded by two persons who heard it, a friend and a foe. And I have just read the observations on it in the *Morning Herald* of this day ; which unwillingly commends it in general ; but censures a part ; in which it is so evidently wrong that the censure

only shows its spite. The first step being taken I feel sure you will have no difficulty hereafter and I anticipate your being a conspicuous and useful Member.

“ With best wishes in all your pursuits,

“ Yours faithfully,

“ RADNOR.

“ I have exhorted Ned [Edward Bouverie] to be prepared to take a part in this currency debate, but he seems averse from doing so, which I lament as I am confident currency questions will become daily more interesting and important in the public estimation; and he is quite right on the subject; and will be sure to say what will hereafter be acknowledged to be so. And what I think very few but you and he and some  $\frac{1}{2}$  dozen others whom I could name would say.

“ R.”

Mr. Wylie, an important Liverpool authority from whom my father received communications respecting imports from America, wrote on December 2: “ My dear Sir, I must write to congratulate you on your speech which from perusal seems a perfect triumph. At last we have the *man* in the House who can grapple with the question—you have been *the* topic here today, and people wish you were in Sir C. Wood’s place—Very ineffective was he.”

“ As might be expected,” continues Walter Bagehot, “ from so favourable a commencement, Mr. Wilson soon established a Parliamentary reputation. He was not a formal orator, and did not profess to be so. But he had great powers of exposition, singular command of telling details upon his own subjects, a very pleasing voice, a grave, but by no means inanimate, manner—qualities which are amply sufficient to gain the respectful attention of the House of Commons. And Mr. Wilson did gain it. But speaking is but half, and in the great majority of cases by far the smaller half, of the duties of a Member of Parliament. Mr. Wilson was fond of quoting a saying

of Sir R. Peel's, 'That the way to get on in the House of Commons was to take a place and sit there.' He adopted this rule himself, was constant in his attendance at the House, a good listener to other men, and always ready to take trouble with troublesome matters. These plain and business-like qualities, added to his acknowledged ability and admitted acquaintance with a large class of subjects upon which knowledge is rare, gave Mr. Wilson a substantial influence in the House of Commons in an unusually short time.

"The Corn Laws had been repealed, the pitched battle of Free-trade had been fought and won, but much yet remained to be done in carrying out its principles with effective precision, in applying them to articles other than corn, in exposing the fallacies still abundantly current, and in answering the exceptional case which every trade in succession set up for an exceptional protection. These were painful and complex matters of detail, wearisome to very many persons, and rewarding with no *éclat* those who took the trouble to master and explain them. But Mr. Wilson shrank from no detail. For several years before he had a seat in the House, he had been used to explain such topics in countless conversations with the most prominent Free-traders and in the *Economist*. He now did so in the House of Commons and his influence correspondingly increased. He was able to do an important work better than any one else could do it ; and in English public life, real work rightly done, at the right season, scarcely ever fails to meet with a real reward."

To meet Lord Clarendon's demands for more stringent means to repress crime in Ireland, Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, introduced a Bill, which was passed almost unanimously, prohibiting in all regions where the Lord-Lieutenant thought fit, the use of arms without a licence, giving the police special rights to search houses where any suspicion of mischief lurked, and making it a crime to refrain from assisting a constable in the apprehension of a criminal.

After the Bill was passed Lord Clarendon wrote to my father, inviting him to come over to Ireland to see for himself the state of things.

In a letter telling my father that he had sent his name to the Lord Chancellor for his nomination as a magistrate for the county of Wilts, Lord Lansdowne adds : " It gives me great pleasure to hear that you are going to observe Ireland with your own eyes. In the midst of much evil, there are, as I think I can prove, the elements of an improved state of things developing itself in those parts where sufficient security from raids exists, and both the good and the evil are most interesting subjects for examination—on which I hope to have an opportunity of hearing your opinion." My father had often intercourse with Lord Lansdowne in the country no less than in London, as Bowood was but sixteen miles from Fontainville, and my father would drive there when he paid a visit to Lord Lansdowne. I remember, as if it were but yesterday, my running to see him off to Bowood one day. For the long drive the large carriage horses were harnessed to the phaeton, my father himself handling the reins. He was fond of driving and as good at it as he was at riding.

On my father asking Lord Clarendon to give him information with respect to the out-door relief given in Ireland he received the following :

*Private*

" V. R. L., Xmas Day, 1847.

" MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

" I am sorely pressed for time, for work as I will I cannot keep down arrears being compelled to devote nearly 6 hours a day to seeing people. I will however try and answer some of your queries and I send you some papers that you will find interesting. You can use the matter but they must not be publicly alluded to nor extracts made from them. The Paper marked A is a letter from Redington to me and is quite reliable ; the matters have got worse since the time it was written.



“In the week ending 9th Dec. the Outdoor Relief Lists were increased by 30,000 (10 p<sup>r</sup> c<sup>t</sup>) and estimating the

Indoor relief at	180,000
Outdoor Do.	315,719

gives receiving relief	495,719
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This is a fearful state of things, but it is nothing to what it will be, for the destitution and with it the mortality increases every week. In the week ended 2nd Decr. the number of Unions in which the mortality exceeded 8 p<sup>r</sup> 1000 weekly had increased from 7 to 9, and in the week ended 9th Decr. the number had further increased to 14 Unions.

“It must be remembered too that we have hardly yet entered upon the period of real pressure for up to the middle of Decr. rates are collectable, but henceforward one might as well go wheat-gleaning on the turn-pike road as expect to get any rates in Connaught.

“There is a letter from Mr. Mounsell in the *M. Chron.* of Friday or Sat<sup>r</sup> last that I wish you w<sup>d</sup> read. I don't mean for the reforms of the Law that he suggests but for the manner it operates in his part of the Country and I might add thro'out Munster pretty generally. Mounsell, Stafford, and many others are open-mouthed ag<sup>st</sup> having a Com<sup>ss</sup> next Session and want the Gov<sup>t</sup> at once to introduce amend<sup>ts</sup>. That w<sup>d</sup> never do, for then they w<sup>d</sup> all fall foul of the Gov<sup>t</sup> plan w<sup>d</sup> of course w<sup>d</sup> have for its object to make the Law as just and effective as possible. A Com<sup>ss</sup> there must be, if it were only to let the Irish Members see how discordant all their own views and remedies are, and when that is placed beyond doubt the Govt. may have a better chance of doing something useful, and the more eager they are for a result the less they will talk and delay in Com<sup>ss</sup>. Some amend<sup>ts</sup> are necessary and if people are tolerably honest and reasonable great improvements may be made without *much* difficulty.

“We can never make a fair start however in Ireland or give capital and food agriculture a decent chance of

success without some depletion. It is all well to say that there are not in Ireland more hands than are really wanted w<sup>a</sup> might be true if you w<sup>a</sup> locate each man just where his labor is required and find money to pay him for it, but on the other hand if the skies were to fall we sh<sup>d</sup> catch plenty of larks—there is no use discussing what might be when we know it won't and can't be. In Connaught and Munster vast masses of people were just able to subsist under the potato system (and even then during 3 months of the y<sup>r</sup> they endured horrible privations) but they are and must be absolutely destitute under a different system when landlords are getting rid of cotters and squatters and consolidating farms, and having rec<sup>d</sup> little or no rent for 2 years can give no employment. These surplus labourers must be removed and even if they c<sup>d</sup> be supported they w<sup>a</sup> always be incumbrances, for bred up in the lazy habits of a potato cultivator they w<sup>a</sup> not be the sort of people that an English or Scotch capitalist w<sup>a</sup> desire to have or c<sup>d</sup> employ with advantage. 1/3d of Ireland is now virtually, tho' not publicly, in the market and ready to change hands, and there is plenty of capital ready for investment attracted by the low price of land w<sup>a</sup> varies from 16 to 19 y<sup>rs</sup> purchase, but there is not a bidder for an acre because no one knows what his liabilities may be. 42s<sup>h</sup> in the £ is the rate required at Ballina for the support of the poor—who w<sup>a</sup> buy land in such a Union? and what we want is to be able to shew the Scotchman that his rates with ref<sup>co</sup> to the population *cannot* be more than a certain am<sup>t</sup>, and this can only be done by previous emigration. I agree entirely with Montegle as to his views upon Emign tho' not entirely as to his plan for giving effect to them but that is mere matter of detail. I send a letter marked B from him to me and another C (w<sup>a</sup> was an enclosure in A) shewing how the law now stands and how inoperative it has been with respect to Emigration.

“Notwithstanding all the distress at home and all the demands for economy we shall find it impossible not to relieve such helpless, hopeless, increasing destitution

as now exists in Ireland, and there is no form under w<sup>h</sup> such relief can be given with such permanent utility, and as paving the way for profitable investment as Emigration. If Eng<sup>d</sup> will guarantee the money necessary there will be no fear about Ireland paying the in<sup>t</sup>—a 2*d* rate in the shape of Cy Cess will be sufficient for that and for providing a Sinking Fund likewise.

“It is not only humanity but our own in<sup>t</sup> that calls for some assistance of this kind, and if, as I hope, you will agree with me upon the necessity for it you might most usefully prepare the public mind for it before Parl<sup>t</sup> meets without committing yourself to the manner in w<sup>h</sup> the measure sh<sup>d</sup> be carried out.

“I have written in g<sup>t</sup> haste and hardly know if I am intelligible.

“Believe me

“Very truly y<sup>rs</sup>”

(Sgd.) “CLARENDON.

“Pray tell me how things commercial and manufacturing are going on in England.”

My father had hoped to visit Ireland and was making arrangements with Mr. Edward Bouverie to do so with him, but when the time came he found too many urgent subjects arose which required treating in the *Economist* for him to do so.

Lord Clarendon writes :

“V. REGAL LODGE,

“*Jany.* 15/48.

“MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“With your numerous avocations I don't wonder at your being unable to spare time for coming over here, but I very much regret it for I am sure it w<sup>d</sup> have been useful both for yourself and the public that you sh<sup>d</sup> have seen some things with your own eyes here. In Ireland it is difficult enough to get at facts even on the spot, but without searching for it oneself it is almost impossible to know the truth. There is not one man in ten who speaks or writes upon Irish subjects either

from analogy or some preconceived notion or theory of his own who is not more or less wide of the mark, or who w<sup>d</sup> not find much to correct after personal experience and enquiry. In a fortnight you might have seen a great deal and I had arranged a plan that w<sup>d</sup> I think have answ<sup>d</sup> your purpose, but I hardly know whether to advise your coming so late as tomorrow week. To remain in Dublin w<sup>d</sup> be useless and a week for the Provinces, with very little assistance in travelling from railroads w<sup>d</sup> be a very short time, particularly as the South and West w<sup>d</sup> be the field of y<sup>r</sup> enquiry. However a short visit might be better than none, but I don't think it w<sup>d</sup> be worth putting yourself to great inconvenience for.

“ It is unlucky that the increased distress of the W. Indians sh<sup>d</sup> be coincident with the change of the Law, as they of course argue that it is consequent upon that change—not altogether without reason I apprehend, as they have had to compete with large importations of for-sugar wh. w<sup>d</sup> have been excluded if the Law had remained the same, but that is no reason ag<sup>st</sup> the change and still less for reverting to the old system w<sup>h</sup> however I cannot believe is in the contemplation of the Govt., for not only w<sup>d</sup> that be retaxing the whole community for the benefit or the supposed benefit of a particular class, but as you justly say it w<sup>d</sup> be a complete triumph to the Protectionists and beyond all doubt lead again to a Corn Law agitation. . . .

“ Sir George Grey's new Bill has worked well hitherto. Nobody has been oppressed by it or put even to inconvenience except those who possessed arms for bad purposes and who had been obliged to conceal them instead of carrying them about to the terror of the peaceable, and committing every species of outrage to wh. they were tempted by the mere possession of arms, while on the other hand the farmers have expressed their delight at being freed from bondage and a reign of terror that rendered all property insecure and their own lives unendurable. Most of them passed their nights in

watching their cattle or produce, or, if they went to bed it was always in the expectation of being attacked before morning. The operation of the Bill has been confined to districts disturbed, and if, by a measure so moderate and strictly applicable to the evil it was intended to remedy tranquility is restored, I think that the Gov<sup>t</sup> who proposed, and the Parl<sup>t</sup> that passed it, will both have reason to be satisfied.

“ Believe me always,  
“ Very truly yours,  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

## CHAPTER IX

### TAKES OFFICE—THE IRISH FAMINE

PARLIAMENT met early in February 1848, and the migration of our family from Fontainville to Hertford Street took place the end of January.

Lord John Russell introduced the Budget himself on February 18. It raised a blaze of opposition: Cobden and Disraeli alike attacked it mercilessly. Joseph Hume, after hearing the Prime Minister's speech, exclaimed, "*Are we all mad?*" In this time of peace the income-tax was to be raised from 7*d.* to 1*s.* for Navy and Army estimates, the reason being that the Duke of Wellington had written a letter, improperly made public, stating that England might easily be invaded, as she had neither soldiers nor equipments sufficient to protect her shores. France was the danger; she it was who, it was supposed, was about to attack us.

However, six days after Sir Charles Wood's Budget had been introduced and anathematised, events happened in France which put an end to all alarms on that score, and Sir Charles Wood promptly proceeded to change the unpopular items. A revolution had taken place in France, the Monarchy had collapsed, the King, Queen and Guizot had escaped to England, their Majesties finding a haven of safety at Claremont. Queen Victoria, forgetting everything in her sympathy for their misfortunes, showed them every kindness and consideration.

The path now cleared of the scare of invasion and the unpopular elements in the Budget, the Government set to work to forward Free Trade measures. A notable debate took place on March 12 in which my father took a very active part. Greville writes: "Wilson (of the

*Economist*) made a very fine speech, Disraeli very amusing, and Gladstone very good. It was a great night for free trade, which Wilson and Gladstone vindicated with great ability." Disraeli in one of his published letters to his sister, after alluding to this debate, adds, "Wilson very good." The measures which were being fought for at that particular time were the abolition of the Navigation Laws, in other words the Opening of the Ports, and the reduction of the duties on sugar. My father had been writing on both these subjects in the *Economist* for two years, and in 1846 he had elicited from Lord Clarendon the letter on the Opening of the Ports already quoted.

It was in April 1848 that my father took the first consignment of his daughters—the eldest two—to the Spielmann establishment at Cologne, after writing a specially convincing article in the *Economist* on the nature of the true spirit of Freedom, which evoked from Lady John Russell<sup>1</sup> the following letter, dated April 8 :

"I cannot, as a fellow-countrywoman, resist my wish to tell you with what admiration we have read the first article in your paper of last Saturday. My own opinion would be of little or no value, but you may like to know how thoroughly Lord John approves of the spirit—I believe I may also say agreed with all the views expressed in it ; and how useful he thinks it ought to be, and hopes it may be, in these times when the real meaning of the word *freedom* is likely to be forgotten.

"Trusting that nothing may occur next Monday to prove us mistaken in having 'no fear for England,' I remain, dear Sir, with much respect,

"Yours,

"FANNY RUSSELL.

"32, CHESHAM PLACE."

On the "next Monday" referred to, the great demonstration of the Chartists was to take place. They

<sup>1</sup> Lady John Russell (Lady Fanny Elliot, daughter of the Earl of Minto) was a former neighbour of my father's family.

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had announced that a procession, numbering thousands, headed by Fergus O'Connor, would march to the Houses of Parliament, and lay before the Government a petition signed by six million Chartists. Every kind of preparation was made to subdue any disturbances. The Duke of Wellington arranged that a military force should be held in readiness; every gentleman and all clerks and those employed in the different offices were ordered to be sworn in as special constables,—all ground-floor offices on the threatened route were to be barricaded—every precaution was taken to put down any hostile attack. When Monday morning came, April 10, twenty thousand of the petitioners assembled on Kennington Common. Mr. Mayne, who had charge of the London Constabulary, also arrived on the scene, and informed Mr. Fergus O'Connor that the meeting might be held, but no procession would be allowed; whereupon Fergus, who had expected to be arrested, and was terribly frightened—to quote from Greville—“insisted on shaking hands with Mayne, swore he was his best of friends, and instantly harangued his rabble, advising them not to provoke a collision, and to go away quietly,—advice they instantly obeyed, and with great alacrity and good humour. Thus all threats evaporated in smoke. Fergus himself then repaired to the Home Office, to see Sir George Grey. . . . Grey asked him if he was going back to the meeting. He said no; that he had had his toes trodden on till he was lame, and his pocket picked, and he would have no more to do with it.” So ended the swagger of the Chartists so far as they endeavoured to force their doctrines in the precincts of London on that occasion. There was indeed “no fear for England” there, but massed meetings were held in different parts of the country, and the Chartists remained a disturbing element in the land.

However inflammable other European countries might be, England kept her head. In Ireland it was sadly different. Ireland was in a most dangerous state, the Repealers and Republicans being wild and wicked



and the would-be revolutionaries in communication with the full-fledged revolutionaries in France. Lord John Russell had unfortunately allowed the Irish Arms Bill to expire. Had it not been for Lord Clarendon's judgment, tact, alertness, vigilance and firmness,—aided, perchance, by the inveterate habit the Irish have of falling foul of one another when conducting any so-called patriotic movement, a revolution must have broken out.

In this crisis Lord Clarendon distinctly showed qualities great as a ruler no less than as a statesman. His position in history is for the most part based on his notable efficiency as Foreign Minister from 1852 to 1857, years which included very difficult times for the Foreign Minister ; but his task in Ireland was one still more anxious and arduous, and success in it more difficult to achieve. Nor was it made easier for him by the action of the Government. Greville writes, August 10, 1848 :

“ I found a letter from Clarendon when I got to town telling me he ‘ had been much bothered by the vacillation and timidity of our rulers on this occasion, as on the preceding ones, when I was impelled to insist on further power for the protection of life and the maintenance of law and order. It is not pleasant to have to poke a Cabinet into a sense of duty, or to extract by threats as if a personal favour that which should be so readily acceded to when the public necessity for it was proved and manifest. However, that has been my task, and I don't care if the thing is achieved and nobody knows it. . . . Against the clubs a law of some kind was necessary. No one could doubt that, and so I insisted, making *for the third time* my remaining here conditional upon it ! So they succumbed, but not with a good grace.’ ”

Sir Robert Peel in an interview with Lord Clarendon implored him to remain in Ireland at all events till signs of the regeneration of that unfortunate country showed themselves.

Shortly after Lady John Russell wrote to my father,

a few changes took place in the Government, and Lord John offered my father the office of Secretary to the Board of Control, which, after some demur, he accepted. On hearing of this Cobden wrote to W. R. Greg that, in taking office, "Wilson had committed political suicide." This was not Lord Clarendon's opinion. On June 7, from the V. R. Lodge, he wrote :

*Private*

"MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

"Pray excuse me for not having sooner told you what pleasure your kind and friendly letter gave me, but my time belongs so much more to others than to myself that I am never certain of  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour to do what I wish. This has constantly made me postpone writing to you as I intended to congratulate you upon your remarkable (though by me quite expected) success in Parliament, and to thank you for some articles in the *Econ'* which exhibited your accurate knowledge of Ireland and your friendly feelings towards myself :—politically and personally they were of great use to me in the task I have had to perform here which was certainly one of peculiar difficulty, for, as you truly observe, a mistake might at any moment have led to disastrous consequences. I have been almost as much troubled by the exuberance of loyalty as by the excesses of sedition and it was far more easy to produce civil war on the one hand and open rebellion on the other than to prevent them, but my endeavour was to check without offending the zeal of the Orangemen, and by distinguishing between what was threatened, and what was intended,—not unnecessarily to exasperate the disaffected, but at the same time to shew myself perfectly prepared for whatever they might attempt. In all this I have passed three of the most troublesome months of my life, but the result is that even up to this day Orange addresses of loyalty and confidence come pouring in, and that Dublin is almost the only capital in Europe where, since the French Revolut<sup>n</sup> there has not been a broken head or a broken window. Things

are better now, but I still feel like the Governor of an ill-guarded jail, obliged to keep constant watch over the inmates. Mitchell, a fanatic, but really a man of purpose and action, has been removed from the scene, but he has left a band of adventurers behind him whose trade is turmoil and who utterly disdain any other livelihood than *patriotism*. There are some clever lawyers among them who suggest now the most mischief can be done with the greatest impunity. There are 26 Clubs in Dublin alone, most of them armed, which meet every day and have correspond<sup>ts</sup> all through the country. And there are papers without number circulating venom at every hour of the day. So there is still trouble in store, but if the people were left alone they would not get on so ill, nor are they worse than might be expected after 25 years of incessant agitation during which time they never heard a syllable of useful advice from the leaders in whom they blindly confided,—they have been made a nation of political gossips instead of agricultural labourers, and as they sow in idleness so they reap in misery. The special Commission and the Act against outrage (which does enough and no more and annoys nobody but offenders) had complete success. Crime had gradually diminished since and the proclaimed districts are almost as quiet as Kensington Gardens. The offences committed in May 1847 were 2647,—in May 1848 they were 1182,—for the whole of Ireland. Notwithstanding that the Poor Law was introduced under circumstances most calculated to ensure its failure, it has upon the whole, though with some exceptions, not worked ill as you will see by the annual report about to be laid before Parliament, and which is well worthy of your attention. I hope you have looked at the Agricultural Statistics which were presented some time ago and which I set about preparing as soon as I arrived here. They are very interesting and important, and I don't think that any country of Europe can shew returns more accurate or in a better form.

“ I have given you such a dose of Hiberniana that I

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have left myself no time for other matters though there are many English ones that I would gladly have adverted to. The W. Indian mess is an awful one, and as it came to its full maturity soon after the Bill of '46, of course the whole blame of years of mismanagement and evils arising from protection, is laid upon our legislation ; still, however, we cannot deny that that Bill did what was wanted in England, viz. reduce the price of sugar, and the West Indians are in unmistakeable distress, and though I doubt their being really benefited by the relief which your Committee proposes, I think it is right to make the experiment. It will be a blow to the Spaniards and Brazilians which I shall be glad of (provided our own consumers are not injured) as they have behaved with perverse illiberality and deserve nothing at the hands of England.

“ It gave me sincere pleasure when I learned that you had joined the Government, though, if you had come to the Board of Trade while I was there it would have been the arrangement of all others most gratifying to me. The India Board may be very unattractive but I hope you will not hastily leave that office, for it gives you more leisure than any other and you are of course quite unfettered in your opinions. You should, I think, make some sacrifice to remain in office even though you may not like it, because, as no man has done what you have to rectify public opinion and diffuse correct information upon commercial questions, the people will feel secure that nothing wrong with respect to them can be done so long as you remain a member of the Government.”

Writing of the effects of the Revolution in France, Lord Clarendon adds : “ The French seem likely to be useful to the rest of mankind. They have erected themselves into a beacon to warn future ages of the rocks on which nations split and go to pieces :—pleasant work they have made of it, but the smash they have created everywhere else has, I fear, ruined all our customers and will paralyse our manufactures and trade. When you have a few minutes to spare you would really oblige

me by letting me know what you think our prospects are, and whether the want of employment this year is likely to be severely felt and to lead to bad consequences, political as well as commercial and financial.

“ Believe me, my dear Mr. Wilson,

“ Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

After a visit to Paris my father writes to Sir George Cornwall Lewis :

“ 15, HERTFORD STREET,

“ MAYFAIR,

“ Dec. 21st, 1848.

“ MY DEAR LEWIS,

“ The French are worn out and used up. They will submit to almost anything. I neither fear civil strife nor foreign war ; but I do empty pockets and unpd. dividends. The people are imbecile, the public men intensely selfish and without spirit. At this moment of difficulty they are all thinking more about *not committing themselves* than of saving their country. I know much of what goes on behind the scenes, and every day makes me think them a weak puerile and despicable race. More than ever ‘ I have no hope for France.’ Everything I said in March is confirmed now. Louis Napoleon is the toy and gewgaw of the day. What they want and the only thing that will do them good, is the iron grasp of a sturdy but wise despot. He alone would save them.

“ Yours truly,

“ JAMES WILSON.”

The revolution in France commenced this European turmoil of which Lord Clarendon wrote—a desperate fight between the soldiers and the mob in the streets of Berlin ; the flight of the Prince of Prussia (afterwards King, subsequently German Emperor, who, like the royal family of France, sought a refuge in England, finding it at the Prussian Embassy in Carlton Gardens with Chevalier de Bunsen) ; a revolution in Austria, the

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downfall and escape of Metternich, a constitutional *régime* announced ; expulsion of Austrians from Milan and assertion of Milanese independence ; an uprising of the people of Hungary and a general dissolution of the Austrian Empire. The *Economist* reviewed all these stirring events in an article about which Lord Grey, an acquaintance and admirer of my father, wrote the following :

“ BELGRAVE SQUARE,  
“ April 4, 1848.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Your article in Saturday's *Economist* upon the prospects of the different countries in Europe in these revolutionary days was such an admirable one, that I cannot forbear suggesting to you that it would be very useful to have it printed separately in a cheap form for general circulation. Perhaps if you thought of doing that you could follow out the same line of argument a little further, so as to render it more easily understood by persons of limited education. Lord Lansdowne desires me to say that he had not read the article when you dined with him, or he would have expressed to you how much he liked it, and that he quite agrees with me as to the great utility of having it widely circulated. There is one point which you have just touched upon which it seems to me would be of great advantage to have a little further illustrated—I mean the value of long *prescriptions* in considering the comparative merits of different forms of Government. The best constitution in the world newly established is necessarily for a long time wanting in that authority and power over men's minds which time alone gives to any system of government not exceedingly defective. This consideration, and the inevitable effect of all political changes in postponing the exercise of the powers of the State in practical amendments, are important in showing that unless the evils in the Constitution of a Government are very great it is an unwise sacrifice of the end to the means for a nation to occupy itself in re-modelling its legislature instead of

urging on that legislation, be it what it may, the passing of useful laws. In this country, looking to the whole course of our legislation since the Reform Bill, it can hardly be doubted that our existing constitution gives to the great body of the people when their opinion is really decided, the means of making it practically obeyed. With your views of the factory act you may perhaps think the legislation a little too easily influenced by the uneducated masses of the people.

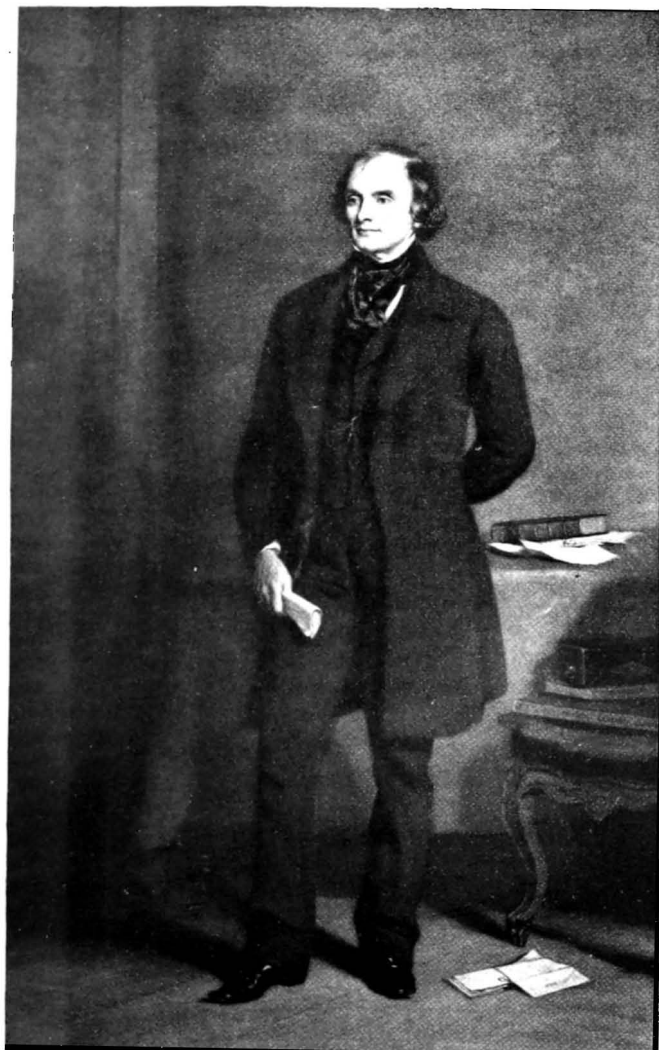
"I am, faithfully yours,

"GREY.

"JAS. WILSON, Esq., M.P."

On the subject of my father taking office, Walter Bagehot writes in the Memoir: "Mr. Wilson was offered office before he had been six months in the House of Commons; the office being one of the Secretaryships of the Board of Control. Mr. Wilson related at Hawick his reluctance to accept it, and the reason. Never having given any special attention to Indian topics, he thought it would be absurd and ridiculous in him to accept an office which seemed to require much special knowledge. But Lord John Russell, with 'that knowledge of public affairs which long experience ensures,' at once explained to him that a statesman, under our Parliamentary system, must be prepared to serve the Queen 'whenever he may be called on'; and accordingly that he must be ready to take any office which he can fill, without at all considering whether it is that which he can best fill. After some deliberation, Mr. Wilson acknowledged the wisdom of this advice and accepted the office offered him. Long afterwards, in the speech at Hawick, to which we have alluded, he said that without the preliminary knowledge of India which he acquired at the Board of Control, he should never have been able to undertake the regulation of her finances.

"When once installed in his office, he devoted himself to it with his usual unwearied industry. And at least on one occasion he had to deal with a congenial topic.



LORD JOHN RUSSELL  
(The Right Hon. Earl Russell)



The introduction of railways into India was opposed on many grounds, most of which are now forgotten—such as ‘the effect upon the native mind,’ ‘the impossibility of inducing the Hindoos to travel in that manner,’ and the like ; and more serious difficulties occurred in considering the exact position which the Government should assume with regard to such great undertakings in such singular circumstances—the necessity, on the one hand, in an Asiatic country where the State is the sole motive power, of the Government’s doing something—and the danger, on the other hand, of interfering with private enterprise, by its doing, or attempting to do, too much. Mr. Wilson applied himself vigorously to all these difficulties ; he exercised the whole of his personal influence, and the whole of that which was given to him by his situation, in dissipating the fanciful obstacles which were alleged to be latent in the unknown tendencies of the Oriental mind ; while he certainly elaborated—and he believed that he originally suggested—the peculiar form of State guarantee upon the faith of which so many millions of English capital have been sent to develop the industry of India.”

I well remember my sisters and myself watching my father planning these Indian lines of railway on the dining-room table at Fontainville—lines over which eleven years later he himself was destined to travel.

“ Besides discharging the duties of his office, Mr. Wilson represented the Government of the day on several Committees connected with his peculiar topics, and especially on one which fully investigated the sugar question. Of the latter, indeed, he became so fully master that some people fancied he must have been in the trade ; so complete was the familiarity he displayed with ‘Brown Muscovado,’ ‘white-clayed,’ and all other technical terms which are generally inscrutably puzzling to Parliamentary statesmen. On a Parliamentary Committee Mr. Wilson appeared to great advantage. Though sufficiently confident of the truth of his own opinions, he had essentially a fair mind ; he always had the greatest

confidence that if the facts were probed the correctness of what he believed would be established, and, *therefore*, he was always ready to probe the facts to the bottom. He was likewise a great master of the Socratic art of inquiry ; he was able to frame a series of consecutive questions which gradually brought an unwilling, or a hostile witness to conclusions at which he by no means wished to arrive. His examination-in-chief, too, was as good as his cross-examination, and the animated interest which he evinced in the subject relieved the dreariness which a rehearsed extraction of premeditated answers commonly involves. The examination of Lord Overstone before the Committee of 1848 on Commercial Distress, that of Mr. Weguelin before the Committee on the Bank Acts in 1857, and several of the examinations before the Committee on Life Insurance, of which he was the chairman, may be consulted as models in their respective kinds. And it should be stated that no man could be less overbearing in examination or cross-examination ; much was often extracted from a witness which he did not wish to state, but it was always extracted fairly, quietly, and by seeming inevitable sequence."

Lord Broughton (Cam Hobhouse) was President of the Board of Control when my father entered it. He was by nineteen years my father's senior, and it would seem that he had lived strenuously every hour of his life, so full was his record of vital interest and striking events. My father and he became close allies ; indeed, he became a distinct feature in my father's life at that time. Lord Broughton had the power, evidently, of attracting natures as different as were those of my father and of Byron. The intimacy which began in London at the Board of Control was furthered in Wiltshire. Lord Broughton then rented Erle Stoke, from Mr. Watson Taylor, a property eight miles from Westbury, where he lived, when the Houses were not sitting, with his two daughters. In 1818 he had married Lady Julia Hay, a sister of Mr. Watson Taylor's wife, daughters of the Marquis of Tweeddale. She had died before his acquaintance with

my father began. The influences of his early eventful life clung to him yet somewhat in these his soberer days, and made his society uncommonly stimulating. After his friendship with Byron at Cambridge, after their travels together in many lands, after their last meeting at Pisa, when, in parting, Byron spoke these now historic words—"Hobhouse, you should never have come, or you should never go," Hobhouse turned his energies to fighting the cause of Free Trade. He carried into the fight much Byronic resistance of conventional procedure, and, in consequence, found himself in Newgate prison for a breach of privilege. From his prison he issued his address to the Electors of Westminster; when he regained his freedom he defeated George Lamb, Lord Melbourne's brother, by 446 votes, and retained his seat there for fourteen years.

He entered Parliament as an advanced Radical and made his maiden speech in the House on May 9, 1826. Forty years later he joined Lord John Russell's Government, and was said to be the most Conservative member in it. My father never was, and never could have been, a Radical. He had in his nature that to which sudden and ruthless uprooting of any long-established tradition would never have appealed, nor seemed a right course to pursue. But, like Lord Broughton, he had commenced his political life in the company of Radicals, because the Abolition of the Corn Laws had been at that time the absorbing aim alike of Radicals and Whigs, and he had feelings of sincere friendship and admiration for Cobden, whose Radicalism was tempered by his delightfully sympathetic nature. When my father accepted the Secretaryship of the Board of Control, he and Lord Broughton were in entire sympathy on all political questions.

Of the leisure attached to his post which Lord Clarendon intimated he could enjoy, my father certainly did not avail himself. If he had found but little work to do in any department to which he was appointed, he would have made work. Walter Bagehot wrote that

my father's predominating power was what might be called a "*business imagination*": to those gifted with imagination what joy is there like that of exercising that king of gifts? In exercising it is created a sense of the power to achieve. My father delighted in work, in carrying out the imperative impulses of his conceptions. It acted on him like a stimulant of the finest flavour. No reward did he ever seek, but a worthy scope in which to exercise his powers and make them fruitful of good results. Lady Canning, writing to her mother from India, says, "work which he [my father] delighted in with all his heart."

The *Economist*, his own creation, had for the previous five years given that "business imagination" ample scope, and this scope still remained to him. On less independent lines, he was nevertheless to exercise it in the departmental work of the Government.

In Ireland matters grew more and more difficult as the years went on and the prospects of the famine more than ever disastrous. Lord Clarendon kept my father well informed of the state of the country. Of all questions the problem of how to mitigate the misery of the people still remained the one most difficult to solve. My father's articles in the *Economist* contained, it was generally allowed, the soundest teaching on the question of how the problem might be solved without involving distress in other quarters.

On July 23, 1848, Lord Clarendon wrote :

*Private*

"MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

"Many thanks for your letter. The Priest's account of the Dublin streets is quite correct but I have not much fear that our Rebels will cut them up into ditches in the way he announced, as that would imply an amount of toleration on the part of the Police and the Military that I don't at all anticipate.

"If you have time I hope you will look at the *Nation* and Fenian newspapers of yesterday as they will correctly

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inform you what are the opinions of the gentlemen who have already assigned to themselves their respective places in the Provisional Government of Ireland.

“Repeal of the Union or political grievances have long ceased to be thought of—redistribution of property by means not only of a civil but a servile war is the object—a Parisian fate for the towns and a Gallician fate for the country are to ensure the Pandemonium which ‘Ireland’s noblest sons’ mean to call a Republic. The next 3 weeks will be very critical. The leaders are desperate and at present really mean what they say. They are determined that by means of a rebellion the political prisoners shall not be tried, or if convicted, shall be rescued. I don’t sleep on a bed of roses.

“Believe me, my dear Mr. Wilson,

“Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) “CLARENDON.”

A month later :

“Nothing can be worse than the accounts of the potatoes, and the consequences of a famine this year will be far more disastrous than in ’46 for the reasons so clearly and with such perfect truth stated in the *Economist* of the 12th.”

Several lengthy letters follow in the same strain.

*Private*

“V. R. LODGE,

“Sept. 26/48.

“MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“I have had so much to do lately that I have postponed longer than I intended telling you how much I liked your article on Ireland a fortnight ago. That of Saturday last I liked even better, for it hit *all* the right nails on the head. Our hyper-critical policy has doubtless been a mistake because it has not answered, but it is an error which is convenient to have made because until its failure had been proved every political Quack would have insisted that it was the only nostrum.

“We have now ascertained by long and melancholy experience that the Irish are about as fit for the blessings

of British Institutions as the Ashantees, and it is our duty and our interest to protect them against themselves. . . . Some stringent means must be resorted to for giving protection to farmers and the smaller gentry who are absolutely pining for it and are worn out by the system of intimidation they are exposed to, and ruined by the losses they sustain and the expense they incur for watching their stock and their harvests. Comparative tranquillity now prevails because the *Leaders* have told the people that, pending the trials, outrages may injure the Prisoners, but when they are over, I have information that everything is ready for robbing the mails, attacking detached police stations, plundering houses, carrying off hostages, and resisting every legal claim for rates or rents. If these infernal projects are carried into execution I shall not hesitate to adopt summary measures for the maintenance of order, and for any overstepping of legal limits I shall not have much fear of getting an indemnity from Parliament. I am curious to hear how your Articles have been received by the middle classes and large constituencies in England and whether they are prepared to go your lengths. Pray let me know this as it may to a certain extent guide my proceedings, though whatever I think *right* I shall do and fear not. If the people of England concur with you *now*, I'll warrant that enough will happen to confirm their opinions before Parliament meets again.

“The potato disease has been steadily advancing—in some parts of the country there is not a sound potato now—in most there will not be one at Xmas. Sir W. Somerville is just returned from Meath and has been going about and digging up the potatoes himself. He says unless he had seen it he would not have believed the extent of their rottenness which is far worse than in the September of '46. There is no employment, no activity of any kind—the farmers are in despair—the gentry panic-stricken at the rates that famine may bring on them, and the people are in sullen readiness for any mischief—a worthy Priest upon whom he can rely told

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him that in and about Cavan upwards of 1,000 men had arms concealed and at any moment would be prepared to use them and that no entreaty or threat of his had induced the surrender of a single weapon.

“ I know also that just the same story might be told of many other localities. No very pleasing prospect for the winter ! The wheat crop is everywhere much below an average, but even the farmers admit that the oat crop is very heavy and of good quality.

“ Believe me, my dear Mr. Wilson,

“ Very truly yours,  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.

“ Pray tell me what you think of our manufacturing, commercial and financial prospects.”

“ V. R. L.,  
“ Oct. 15/48.

“ MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ I was exceedingly obliged to you for your instructive and interesting letters from Francfort and Paris. This terrible outbreak at Vienna is but a consequence of the state of things you described as existing in Germany. I expect a 2nd edition of it from Berlin, and possibly a 3rd at Paris which will not tend to promote prosperity in England nor tranquility in Ireland. *However, things are quiet here just now, and if no fresh devilment takes place this week I shall be at the Grove on Saturday next and go to London on Monday for a few days* when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you. So for the present I will not enter upon any of the various subjects I wish to speak to you upon.

“ Ever yours truly,  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

“ V. R. L.,  
“ Decr. 28/48.

“ MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ The complete Poor Law returns are in the hands of the Printer but I am afraid will not be very soon ready. The enclosed, however, will give you a correct

notion of things a fortnight ago. They are daily getting worse and the reports from Connaught exceed anything I ever heard of human misery. Pray use the contents of the enclosed letter carefully for at present it is confidential and has been printed only for the use of the Cabinet.

“ Very truly yours,  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

“ V. R. LODGE,  
“ May 7/50.

“ MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ It is an age since we have had any direct communica<sup>n</sup> together and tho’ I read your opinions every week I often feel that as you are a great centre towards w<sup>a</sup> intelligence converges you must have more to tell than is contained in the columns of the *Economist* James Wilson, Esq., M.P. &c. &c. &c.

“ There certainly never was a time when men’s opinions differed more widely upon matters of vital importance nor is this to be wondered at for there is so much of good and bad, of hopeful and doubtful in our state that satisfaction or alarm may be equally justifiable according to the frame of mind in w<sup>a</sup> the solution of our social problems is undertaken. The Art<sup>s</sup> in the *Econ<sup>t</sup>* upon future prices were admirable but altho I admit that your inferential process was conducted with extreme caution I cannot quite bring myself to agree in your conclusions. In average years and when there is neither continental scarcity or revolution I cannot in my mind *realise* a price exceed<sup>g</sup> 40<sup>sh</sup> per Q<sup>r</sup> for wheat, tho I won’t trouble you with the various reasons and scraps of information that have led me to this conclusion, but if it be correct I am sure that it is at least 5<sup>sh</sup> too low for the present am<sup>t</sup> of capital and skill applied to agriculture and that consequently the landed interests will for some time longer remain depressed. That it will be permanently so I do not believe but relief will only come when largely increased production yields profit at low prices and the manuf<sup>rs</sup>



of food like those of cotton turn their raw material to the very best acc<sup>t</sup> in the meanwhile foreign and *home* competition will treat bad farming and cold lands about as roughly as the spinning jenny did the distaff, and in anticipation of this I must begin to set my own house in order. My agents in Warwickshire and Wiltshire, both of them highly intelligent and practical men, write me sad acc<sup>m</sup> of my prospects. At Kenilworth an excellent tenant holding 290 acres (of w<sup>a</sup> only 27 are not food land) at a rent of £300 a y<sup>r</sup>, situated  $\frac{1}{2}$  way between Coventry and Leamington, with a railroad close to him, has thrown up his farm declaring that he is ruined. Others want to do the same and I am told that no desirable Tenants can be found to take their places. At Wootton Bassett where I have some of the finest land in Eng<sup>d</sup> the Tenants have all demanded an abatement tho their rents are low and I have not raised any man a shill<sup>l</sup> since I became possessed of the property. Now I know perfectly well that this ought not to be and that if these estates were *properly* farmed and the soil were made to yield what it is capable of producing every Tenant might do *well* at his present rent but they are all wedded to the *old system* and have not capital or energy enough for modern improvements, and even if I c<sup>d</sup> bring myself to make a clean sweep of people who have held the land from father to son I might not get better Tenants in the present state of agricul<sup>t</sup> talk and alarm, but I expect they will all go to the workhouse and that I shall follow them. My faith however in the principles of free trade and my conviction of their ultimate triumph are not one atom shaken by any reverse of fortune that may happen to myself.

“What really alarms me because I don’t see the remedy for it is the short supply of cotton and the probability of its being permanent partly owing to its no longer being a very remunerative growth, and partly to the increased demand for it in the manufactures of the U.S. w<sup>a</sup> is the worst cause for it hits us both ways. Can you give me any comfort on this score? Pray tell me too generally what you think of our prospects and whether

we are *beginning to forget* the fatal railway mania. I want you to look at the Report (the 18th) of the Comm<sup>rs</sup> of Public Works in Ireland now about to be (if not already) laid upon the table of Parl<sup>t</sup>, and I am sure you will be pleased with the results of the Land Improvement Act of w<sup>h</sup> a detailed account is given. You will see how well the land repays the capital expended on it. How judiciously many Prospectors are now attending to their concerns. How well good example operates upon the Tenants. How the Labourers prosper with task work and money wages. This is all new and all the result of *legislation* ag<sup>st</sup> w<sup>h</sup> Irishmen are so fond of declaiming and the Land Improvem<sup>t</sup> Act will by degrees furnish all that Ireland most wants. I think you might make a highly interesting and encouraging article upon this subject and I w<sup>d</sup> suggest an allusion by name to all the Landlords who are now manfully and successfully performing their duty. It is too much the fashion to abuse them indiscriminately and it irritates and discourages the good ones.

“ Believe me,

“ Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

## CHAPTER X

### THE REPEAL OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS—PALMERSTON'S AGGRESSIVE ACTION TOWARDS GREECE—THE GORHAM CASE—DEATH OF SIR ROBERT PEEL

The important question of the Session of 1849 was the passing of the Repeal of the Navigation Laws, for which measure my father had been working unremittingly ever since the Abolition of the Corn Laws had been passed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The laws known as the Navigation Laws were first introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament of 1652, known as the "Rump."

The nominal object was to foster the carrying trade of England by excluding foreign ships from English ports, thus encouraging English shippers to build and sail English ships in competition with the Dutch, then the sea-carriers of the world.

The real reason was that Sir Harry Vane and the Parliament leaders wished to establish an armed service to free themselves from control by the Army and its leaders—Cromwell, Ireton, etc., and to eclipse the glories of Dunbar and Worcester by greater glories on sea.

Whatever the reason, the result was very remarkable. Until these laws were passed, England had no merchant navy, and consequently no Royal Navy, worth speaking of. There were a few King's Ships, but a fleet had to be equipped, the few merchant ships which had survived the Elizabethan wars had to be impounded.

During the Middle Ages the carrying trade of Northern Europe was in the hands of the Hansa League, but after the blow given to the League by the Thirty Years' War, the trade fell into the hands of the Dutch.

The Navigation Laws enacted that English ships only should be allowed to import the products of foreign countries. This is the first case of Protection, enacted not for Revenue, but deliberately to establish and foster a new industry.

The effect was almost magical, especially in Scotland and Ireland, then newly incorporated with England. London and Bristol thrived greatly, but Glasgow and Leith, Dublin and Waterford even more. This benefit to Ireland and Scotland lasted but a short time. At the Restoration of Charles II the Irish and Scotch Members returned to their own local Parliaments, and the jealousy of the English merchants insisted on Scotch and Irish ships being regarded as foreign, thus damaging the newly created prosperity.

The English continued to build ships and conquer trade, chiefly from the Dutch. The subsequent Dutch Wars were really Trade Wars, and their defeat threw the carrying trade into the hands of England.

The hardships in Scotland only lasted till 1707, when England and Scotland

Lord John Russell announced that the Government, if beaten on it, would resign, and Lord Lansdowne was to state that determination to the House of Lords. Lord Stanley was bent on defeating the Government, and "made a magnificent speech," the best he ever made, and one of the "most brilliant and effective ever made by anybody" (Greville). The Duke of Wellington was known to be adverse to the Bill, but contrary to all expectations he promised the Government to support it. What had happened was that my father had had the special interview with the Duke before mentioned, that had converted the Duke to acknowledge the expediency of the repeal. Among the speeches which were considered the most convincing delivered on the question in the Commons was my father's. Greville writes: "Wilson of the *Economist* very fine, Disraeli amusing, Gladstone good." In a published letter to his sister Disraeli writes, referring to this debate, "Wilson very good." A correct report of my father's speech was printed separately and one was sent to Prince Albert and another to Sir Robert Peel.

"Dear Sir," Prince Albert wrote, "I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter accompanying a copy of your able speech upon the Navigation Laws, for which I return you my best thanks.

"Believe me always,

"Yours truly,

"ALBERT.

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE,  
"March 27, 1849."

were united by the Act of Union, and complete freedom of trade and navigation ensued. Ireland continued to suffer for the profit of English merchants till her union with England in 1800. This was one of the crying grievances of Ireland.

About 1840 it was clear that the *raison d'être* of the Navigation Laws had vanished. Britain built ships for the world and had the carrying trade of the world, never challenged, until about 1890 the German Empire began to dream of becoming a sea power.

In the meantime the British industrial population had immensely increased, and it was important that food for it should be imported as cheaply as possible. Despite the natural opposition of shippers and agriculturists, in 1849, on the motion of Mr. Labouchere, the Navigation Laws were partially repealed.

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From Whitehall, March 23, Sir Robert Peel wrote : " I am much obliged to you for a corrected report of your very able Speech on the Navigation Laws—the more obliged because I was unavoidably absent from the House on Monday on which it was delivered, and had only read a not very correct report in the newspapers."

The real struggle for the Bill was in the House of Lords ; however, on the second reading, it was carried by a majority of ten, and no opposition was raised on the third reading, so the Bill was made law. My father had done good work in converting the Duke, for it was said that had the Duke opposed it he would have carried with him many votes—as he voted for it he carried with him a few.

After the Repeal of the Navigation Laws was passed the rest of the session of 1849 was occupied chiefly by the question of reducing the Estimates and the difficulties in Ireland. Cobden, Bright, Joseph Hume, and my father were naturally very active in the debates on the Estimates, and Sir Robert Peel made a memorable speech in opposing an amendment proposed by Disraeli.

The Session of 1850 was noted by Lord Ashley passing his Factory Act, and William Ewart, M.P. for Dumfries, a friend of my father's, carrying a bill in which my father was very much interested, that of allowing local authorities to raise a rate for the building and maintenance of free libraries. The first free library was established at Manchester, and opened in September, 1852, by Dickens, Thackeray and Bulwer. The Bill, which passed early in the Session for the Abolition of the Lord-Lieutenancy in Ireland was carried by 295 votes against 70, but it was never made law, or, indeed, heard of again. This strange sequence of the fact that such a large majority recommended it has been accounted for by Lord Clarendon being so capable as Viceroy that the Government was afraid to displace him at such a time. Lord John, in suggesting the abolition of the post, proposed that there should be a Secretary of State for Ireland, and that the Chief Secretary should do most of the work

on the spot, previously performed by the Viceroy. My father was much interested in the measure owing to his friendship with the reigning Lord-Lieutenant.

The great event of the Session was one which included grotesque elements, European disturbances, and one of the most famous debates ever heard in the House of Commons, and followed as it was by a tragic event which for the time absorbed every other interest in the Kingdom. Lord Palmerston, who had previously by many inexcusably high-handed and independent proceedings aroused the indignation of the Queen and Prince Albert, wholesale condemnation from his colleagues in the Cabinet—whom he completely ignored—and acute friction in European Diplomatic circles, surpassed all audacity in the early spring of 1850. The Duke of Bedford, his own brother, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Clarendon, Lord Grey, had one and all put pressure on Lord John Russell to dismiss him—nevertheless, Lord Palmerston remained Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Prime Minister knew well that by dismissing Lord Palmerston he would most probably be also dismissing himself and his Government; for, however erratic his actions might be, Palmerston remained the idol of the people. He struck that Bismarckian note, England *über Alles*, which rang flatteringly in the ear of that portion of the populace whose patriotism is never unduly tempered by modesty. The condemnation of the Crown, of his colleagues and their friends was quite inadequate to affect Palmerston's popularity with the multitude.

His position as Foreign Minister was nevertheless distinctly imperilled by what happened in 1850. A Rothschild was at Athens that Easter-time, and there may possibly have been special reasons why the Greek Government showed consideration for his feelings. In any case an order was given that Judas Iscariot was not to be burned that year—a game which the Athenians were wont to enjoy every Easter. Deprived of their amusement, they furiously assaulted, and well-nigh

demolished, the house of Don Pacifico, a Portuguese Jew born in Malta, and consequently, unfortunately, a British subject. He was, it seems, a ridiculous, fraudulent person. Instead of applying to the Greek Courts for reparation, thinking he would get more out of Lord Palmerston, he sent in to the English Foreign Office most absurdly extravagant demands for reparation for lost property, claiming to have possessed valuables which could never possibly have been his. Other grievances against the Greeks were brought forward by the English in Athens, and through mismanagement and misunderstandings, Palmerston, always free for a fight, chose to assume that our subjects had been intentionally insulted and injured. Consequently, on January 18, he instructed Admiral Sir W. Parker, through the Admiralty, to proclaim a pacific blockade of the Piræus. Greek ships were prevented from leaving, being detained by our Fleet. France and Russia were joint guarantors of Greek independence. Consequently France and Russia resented this arbitrary, independent action of Lord Palmerston's; Russia, through Count Nesselrode, forwarded a very strong protest to our Government against the coercion of small States by the maritime power of England; France, in a more conciliatory tone, offered, through the French Ambassador in London, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, to mediate between the English and Greek Governments. This offer was accepted, and Lord Palmerston and M. Drouyn de Lhuys agreed that joint Notes should be sent to the French and English Ministers in Athens, Baron Gros and Mr. Wyse, to investigate the claims English subjects had against the Greeks, and submit them to their respective Governments. Baron Gros received his instructions, but Lord Palmerston failed to forward any to Mr. Wyse, who, aided by Sir William Parker, proceeded to enforce payment from Greece. Whereupon the Foreign Minister of the French Republic, General Labitte, recalled M. Drouyn de Lhuys, and a rupture took place between the diplomatic relations of France and England.

Lord Palmerston must have felt that he had gone too far; he denied through the Prime Minister and the President of the Council that Drouyn de Lhuys had been recalled, though fully aware that such was the case, a fact which General Labitte announced in the French Senate the next day, and subsequently the Russian Minister refused to attend Lord Palmerston's dinner for the Queen's birthday. Greville writes on February 14 :

“ The Greek question is the worst scrape into which Palmerston has ever got himself and his colleagues. The disgust at it here is universal with those who think at all about Foreign matters : it is past all doubt that it has produced the strongest feelings of indignation against this country all over Europe, and the Ministers themselves are conscious what a disgraceful figure they cut, and are ashamed of it.”

Later Greville writes : “ As the case more develops itself (for now all the Blue Books are out, French and English) it resolves itself into a very small point : Did Palmerston, or did he not, send instructions to Wyse in conformity with what was agreed upon between himself and Drouyn de Lhuys ? This is what the French have a right to ask ; if he did, let him show these instructions ; if he did not, he broke faith with the French Government. By Wyse's letter of the 15th it seems pretty clear that he did not send him such instructions. I do not see how volumes of Blue Books, or all the conferences and debates imaginable, can put the case in a clearer light, or bring it to a more direct issue than this.”

M. Drouyn de Lhuys not only knew he had been recalled, but in a letter he wrote to my father seemed doubtful as to the result of Palmerston's misdeeds and how far they would lead to more complete rupture between his country and England. M. and Mme. Drouyn de Lhuys were friends of my family ; and stayed at Fontainville, when I remember my father driving M. Drouyn de Lhuys to Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, in which he was much interested. While in Paris after his recall owing to the Greek affair, he sent a letter



thanking my father for some important information he had written him, ending "Veuillez offrir mes hommages respectueuses à Madame Wilson et croire à l'assurance de mes sentiments dévoués. De quelque manière que se décide la question diplomatique, j'irai, au moins comme voyageur, revoir l'Angleterre et vous serrer la main."

On June 18, with regard to this Greek question, Lord Stanley brought forward in the House of Lords a motion which was a vote of censure on the Government. He made a masterly speech, effectually denouncing Palmerston's action. He was supported by notable speeches from Lord Aberdeen and Lord Canning, and the motion was carried. The Cabinet, however, decided not to resign, which decision was constitutionally in order. Lord John Russell announced this intention to the House of Commons on June 26, and on the 24th Mr. Roebuck moved a motion in support of the foreign policy of the Government, following which speeches were made by Palmerston, Gladstone, and Sir Alexander Cockburn, which were reckoned among the finest orations ever delivered in the House. The Peelites led the attack on the Government and were supported by Cobden and Sir William Molesworth. On the second night of the debate, Palmerston rose at half-past ten P.M. and sat down at half-past three A.M., having spoken with consummate ability for five hours. He met his impeachment in a defence which, if it did not convince the House that his action in the Greek business was other than unjustifiable, was so admirable a performance that for the moment it carried with it the feeling that in any case Palmerston had triumphed, "though he had not a leg to stand on."

The debate ended in the Government having a majority of 46. Perpetrate what mischief he might, it appears that Palmerston had a power of overriding the consequences of his misdeeds with a something which, while it made him the idol of the people, prevented those who condemned him from taking active measures for his removal from the position which gave him the power to

do mischief. In Mr. Gladstone's memorable speech, said to be the first great speech he delivered, he had the courage to refute on Christian principles Lord Palmerston's arguments, an uncommon course for any member to venture on in the House of Commons. Mr. Cockburn, as he then was, followed Mr. Gladstone, and was considered to have surpassed himself as an orator and special pleader in his defence of the Government.

But the words retained most vividly in the memory of those who heard this notable debate were those spoken as from a higher platform—solemn as the last utterances in that assembly of the great statesman who had been its leader for so many years. To a crowded House, through an impressive silence, Sir Robert Peel, abstaining from any reference to Lord Palmerston's behaviour or to the policy of the Government, dwelt on the lofty purpose for which Diplomacy was instituted. "Diplomacy," he said, "is a costly engine for maintaining peace, a remarkable instrument used by civilised nations for the purpose of preventing war. Unless it be used to appease the angry passions of individual men, and check the feelings which arise out of national resentment, it is an instrument not only costly but mischievous. If your application be to fester every wound, to provoke instead of soothing resentments, to place a Minister in every Court of Europe for the purpose, not of preventing quarrels, or of adjusting quarrels, but for the purpose of continuing an angry correspondence, and promoting what is supposed to be an English interest by keeping up conflicts with the representatives of other Powers, then I say that not only is the expenditure upon this costly instrument thrown away, but the great engine used by civilised society for the purpose of maintaining peace, is perverted into a cause of hostility and war."

No one assuredly in that House could have listened with more appreciation to these memorable words than did my father. When the great statesman who uttered them passed from the House of Commons into the light of early dawn, it was fated that he should never enter those



THE RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT PEEL

doors again. As Sir Robert Peel was riding down Constitution Hill on the following day his horse shied ; he was thrown and sustained mortal injuries. On July 2 he died.

I remember as clearly as if it happened yesterday what took place on the following morning, July 3, when Sir Robert Peel's death was announced in *The Times*. My father was in the habit of always breakfasting with us—but there had been a very late sitting in the House on the previous evening—and we had finished breakfast and had looked at *The Times* before we heard him coming downstairs. We ran out with the paper and told him the news. He stopped short—looked at the announcement—then, without speaking, walked into the dining-room, his eyes full of tears. That was the only time that I remember seeing tears in my father's eyes. He had not been a close personal friend of Sir Robert Peel's—he was more intimate with Mr. Frederick Peel, Sir Robert Peel's second son—but he felt the death deeply. As before noted, ever since that day when Sir Robert had quoted the "Influences of the Corn Laws" in the House of Commons, my father had felt that there existed a link between Sir Robert's understanding and his own, and had followed Sir Robert's policy with the conviction that his mind was steadily awakening to the truth and recognising the chief cause of the great misery that existed.

Lord Palmerston's triumph was but of short duration : the Government had distinctly lost prestige both in the House of Commons and in European political circles through his misdemeanour. In the early part of the Session there had also occurred notorious events, which, though concerning more exclusively ecclesiastical matters, influenced nevertheless the political aspect of the time. Though I was but eight years old, and did not understand what the quarrel was about, I remember that the Gorham case rang in one's ears from all sides in that spring of 1850. It caused such a sensation that everyone seemed to become interested in it. Beginning with

the concerns of two ecclesiastics, its notoriety spread into all circles—social and political, as well as those of the Church.

The Rev. George Gorham had been presented with the living of Brampford Speke, in the diocese of Exeter. Dr. Philpotts, the Bishop, was High Church, Mr. Gorham Low Church. The Bishop refused to induct Mr. Gorham, holding that he was not sound on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration as held by the Church. Gorham appealed to the Dean of the Court of Arches, Sir Herbert Jenner, who gave judgment in favour of the Bishop. Gorham then appealed to the Privy Council. The two Archbishops and the Bishop of London were invited to give their opinions to the Judicial Committee, though they could not vote, likewise Baron Parke, as "in the Court of Delegates a Common Law Judge was always indispensable. . . . The Court was finally composed of Lords Langdale and Campbell, Baron Parke, Vice-Chancellor Knight-Bruce, Doctor Lushington and Mr. Pemberton Leigh. Lord Lansdowne came the first day in January and opened the proceedings . . . the Court was crammed full almost every day." After the cause had been very elaborately argued both for the Bishop and for Gorham, judgment was deferred being given for some weeks. On March 8 it was delivered at the Council Office. "The crowd was enormous, the crush and squeeze awful. . . . Langdale read the judgment well (in favour of Gorham) and the people who heard it (at least those I talked to) thought it able and judicious; but of course all the high-flyers and Puseyites will be angry and provoked, and talk of schisms and secessions which will be, I am firmly convinced, *bruta fulmina*. . . . Lushington said he had the greatest difficulty in making out what Gorham's doctrine really was, and he was much struck with the fact that in no part of the Bishop's pleadings did he say explicitly with what he charged him" (Greville).

Not only in ecclesiastical circles but among politicians the judgment in favour caused much perturbation.

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The Peelites were Tractarians. Lord John Russell was a "fighting Protestant," and, as in the case of Bishop Hampden, the Prime Minister and the Peelite faction disclosed very definitely the difference of their opinions. Many Bishops signed a petition against the judgment, which was a case of rebellion against the authority of their Archbishop, and many distinguished laymen, including Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert, talked of doing so, but abstained.

My father looked on at all these disturbances and dissensions in the name of religion with no desire to join either of the combatant factions. Walter Bagehot wrote: "Mr. Wilson's moral character in its general features resembled his intellectual. He was not a man of elaborate scruples and difficult doubts. . . . His conscience was of a plain, but very practical kind. He had a single-minded rectitude which went straight to the pith of a moral difficulty—which showed him what to do. . . . 'The common sense is so-and-so,' he used to say, and he did not wish to be plagued with anything else." And so it was with my father's religion. He lived his religion. "What does thy God require of thee? to do justly and to have mercy." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and promote peace and goodwill among your fellows. My father's life was a consistent carrying out of these plain commands. Instinctively, as well as from early training, his nature invariably sought peaceful lines of action.

In my father's nature, together with the sanguine radiancy of his habitual moods, existed a deep strain of religious feeling. Except to my mother he was very reserved in speaking of any phase of his inner life, but when attending Divine Service I remember that the expression of his countenance revealed earnest piety. He had no bias towards the tenets of either high, low or broad Church parties, but, far from attending Church services in order to conform to a desirable custom, or as a mere performance of duty, or as a good example to

others,—as is often the case with some—when my father went to church he went to worship God with devout earnestness. All his actions were directed by the “sense of reality necessary to excellence”—as Bagehot puts it.

In the name of religion to excite the discordant and combative elements in human nature was to him an *irreligious* proceeding, especially as, in the Gorham case, it appeared that never were hairs split to finer threads than trying to discover wherein Mr. Gorham’s heresies were precisely to be found.

But the true issue which aroused such combative feelings and heated discussions was not whether the Rev. George Gorham was sufficiently orthodox to be inducted as Vicar of Brampford Speke, but really as to whether in ecclesiastical matters the State was to rule the Church or the Church to rule the State,—in fact whether the religion of England was to be taught on Tractarian or on Protestant lines.

But the Gorham case, absorbing and notorious as it was for the time, was soon forgotten over what was denounced as the “Papal Aggression.” England went Protestant-mad, led by the Prime Minister. In the famous Durham Letter he denounced the dogmas of the Church of Rome as “the mummeries of superstition,” and her pretensions as “endeavours to confine the intellect and enslave the soul.” Every element of bigotry in English men and English women apparently got the better of their Christian feelings and creeds.

## CHAPTER XI

1851-1852 : RETURN OF MY SISTERS FROM COLOGNE—  
MAYFAIR—COUP D'ÉTAT

DURING the autumn session of 1847, and those of 1848-9, my father sat many hours of the day and night in the House of Commons. He was a constant attendant; he worked at the Board of Control from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.; every week he wrote the principal leaders in the *Economist*, besides generally supervising each number as it appeared; he was, moreover, a weekly contributor to the *Manchester Guardian*. His pen was felt to be a valuable power in the cause of Free Trade, also, as Walter Bagehot wrote, "Mr. Wilson dealt effectively and thoroughly with three first-rate subjects—the railway mania, the famine in Ireland, and the panic of 1847. . . . On all these topics he explained somewhat original opinions if not paradoxes then, though they are very generally believed now." Notwithstanding all this work my father found time to attend to the interests of his constituency and to be with us a part of every day.

He wrote to Mr. G. Cornwall Lewis :

"FONTAINVILLE,  
"WESTBURY,  
"WILTS,  
"December 16th, 1849.

"MY DEAR LEWIS,

"You will perhaps remember a woman of the name of *Smith* of this place being *executed* last Summer at Devizes for the murder of her children in infancy except the eldest a girl now of 18 years. Her case has been brought before me lately. Her father is a sad reprobate.



He had all his furniture seized for rent and taxes, and the poor girl, young, innocent from all I can learn, delicate and genteel looking far beyond what one could expect, has found a temporary asylum in the house of a very respectable but poor neighbour, who has almost entirely kept her since her mother's death.

"The neighbours all feel very desirous that she should be sent away and put into some way of earning a livelihood, and where she is not known. The people round here where she is known have a natural aversion to take her into their service.

"Is there any establishment that you know of, where she could be placed to learn household work and from which she might afterwards procure a place?"

"I am,

"Dear Lewis,

"Yours very truly,

"JAMES WILSON.

"G. C. LEWIS, Esq. : M.P.

"P.S.—I go to town on Tuesday for a few days and will try to see you.

"W."

After breakfasting together one or two of us would ride with him in the Row before he went to the Board of Control. On Sundays he would take us for walks, generally to the Serpentine to see the waterfowl and to play a game which it always amused my father to watch—that of throwing a level pebble so that it skimmed the surface of the water, and leapt up in the air two or three times before sinking. One Sunday I remember walking to Kensington Gore to see the site on which the great museum was to be built, for which my father, when Secretary of the Treasury, had often to supply the funds. Kensington Gore was then a locality which seemed quite detached from London—like a suburb. In the year 1850 my father made time to take his third daughter, Matilda, to Cologne to join my two eldest sisters at the Spielmanns' establishment. There she insisted on



ELIZA WILSON  
(Mrs. Walter Bagehot.)

remaining for four years, so greatly was she engrossed in the music which she was able to study there seriously and under first-rate tuition.

The great family event of the winter of 1850-1 was the return for good of my eldest two sisters, Eliza and Julia, from Cologne.

These two wonderful sisters—for as wonderful I ever remember them in their unselfishness, their beautiful mothering care of “the little ones,” as they called us; as devoted daughters to my mother, and as my father’s closest friends. Full of loving kindness, interested in questions that mattered, and attractive to intellectual acquaintances, their presence in the home life was an immense gain. In character and temperament they were by no means similar, and the difference was more apparent because they were never apart; from childhood they played together and studied together, quite separately from the four younger sisters.

My sister Eliza’s nature was absolutely void of vanity, pride, self-assertion, or ambition. She had a strong sense of duty, and an almost strained amount of conscientiousness. History records, however, that once the Devil entered in, and she stole some sugar; but for months she denied herself sugar in her tea in order to punish herself. No one for years after knew of the theft, or the expiation. She had a rare instinct always to do the right thing without much reasoning power to know why it was right. In practical matters she would always acquiesce in my sister Julia’s decision, but she could not be said to reflect her nature in her thoughts and feelings; her own distinct personality was never lost. A passive serenity, all her own, added to her beauty as she grew up, had a great charm and attractiveness, especially for elderly people. She was noted in the family for her good luck; she would always win the prize in lotteries—she won Walter Bagehot—a prize indeed! She had that good luck which the ordainers of luck seem often to shower on those who have no showy gifts or special original genius, but a something of

unreasoning goodness and understanding which rise above intellectual virtues.

My sister Julia had a more positive nature, more alert to take the initiative, and, where she saw an advantage to be gained, more often an advantage for others than herself, would take lively action. Her mind was a sparkling, original mind, and she inherited much of my father's powers in conversation. Above all she possessed the rare gift of being able to enter sympathetically into views opposite to hers, while staunchly adhering to her own. She was the sister in the family to whose judgment all the other five bowed. "What does Julia say?" and what Julia said always decided the matter. At the age of seventeen she won the devoted friendship of William Rathbone Greg; many, many years later she married him. Her strong affection I believe for children was more really inrooted in her nature than any other.

On their return from Cologne they were both good German and French scholars; they were, moreover, both accomplished musicians. They sang duets very sweetly together—those old favourites by Mendelssohn which especially delighted my father—likewise did Eliza's tender singing of "Annie Laurie" and the like Scottish ditties. I remember her playing of Haydn's Sonatas as very happy; she seemed to have an especial understanding of their charm. The pianoforte performances of Julia I recollect best were Schumann's "Kinderscenen" and "Schlummerlied" and her singing of some of Pergolese's Church music and of Schubert's "Müller Reise." In these latter days we hear the impassioned "Dein ist Mein Herz," in "Lilac Time," and elsewhere, but to my ear never has it been sung so convincingly as my wonderful sister Julia sang it. Had she devoted herself to painting, Eliza might have been a pretty landscape artist. On scraps of paper, easily, and without forethought, she would scribble delightful little country scenes. The home life of those days, however, was too strenuous for the quiet pursuit of Art. When our governess, Miss Knowles, had left, and my other



JULIA WILSON  
(Mrs. W. Rathbone Greg.)

sisters were at Cologne, I shared a governess with Meta Ford (daughter by his second marriage of Richard Ford, author of the *Handbook of Spain*). In all the whirl of a London season, Eliza undertook to give me lessons on certain subjects. It was on every Wednesday morning, I recollect, she would try to instil into my brain the principle of the rule of dozens. How patiently she sought to do this difficult task! She might think she had accomplished it, but every next Wednesday she would find my small mind a vacuum respecting it. She had at last to give up trying to make its residence permanent. At Mr. Greg's instigation both my sisters wrote very good criticisms of books for the *Economist* and Julia for the *National Review*. Both taught in the Sunday schools at Westbury, and in London did district-visiting among the immediate poor. Such are the recollections I have of these donors of so much happiness in our young lives.

These dear paragons arrived laden with all the things which in Germany bedeck a Christmas tree. Such a thing had never before been seen or heard of in Wiltshire, but my sisters contrived to show its good people a splendid specimen. My father had a fine fir tree uprooted from Well Head and placed in its tub between the two stately pillars that divide the outer and the inner halls at Fountainville, and on its branches coloured tapers, glistening toys, and every conceivable kind of bonbon were hung. My darling sister Julia had, through her advanced education, become aware of the fact that water always rises to its own level. This information she put to a practical use for our wonderment and delight. She constructed a fountain to play in the centre of a grotto, placed in front of the Christmas tree. It was all ice and snow (cotton wool sprinkled with silver dust and frosted glass), the cistern containing the water which was to supply the fountain being hidden mysteriously on a higher level. Our Christmas of 1850 was indeed a happy one, and my father felt rewarded for the sacrifice he had made in sparing his daughters for two years, so charmingly

did they sing and play to him, so thoroughly had they acquired the French and German languages, and so companionable were they to him in his work. My sisters started keeping diaries on New Year's Day. In quoting from them in these records E. will mean my sister Eliza's, J. my sister Julia's. Mr. Greg was our only house visitor that Christmas time. His wife was an invalid, and did not then live at home. From the time when he and my father corresponded on the subject of the Irish famine our house served as a second home to him. In Diary E. is recorded how all the neighbourhood was summoned to view the new sight.

Jan. 1 : " Mr. Greg left. Tradespeople came to tea to see the Christmas tree."

Jan. 3 : " Mr. Atkins and Mr. Pyle (farmers) and Mr. C. Smith came to tea and wine." Day after, " dinner-party at home." " A children's party and a grown-up tea. Tree lighted and ornaments distributed to the children."

Jan. 8 : " Papa left for London at 8 in the morning, whence he went in the evening to the Grange, Hampshire, Lord Ashburton's seat." So ended the Christmas revels.

In the year 1849 Chalcott, a charming country place two miles from Fontainville, was taken by a family with whom we soon became very intimate. It consisted of Mrs. Shipley, her four sons, and a daughter with her husband Captain Crofton, of the Irish family of Croftons, and their little girl. The eldest son, Conway, began life in the Navy, and inherited from his father a property in Hampshire. He was a great traveller and a beautiful artist. The two next brothers went into the Army, and rose to the rank of Generals, and Orby, the youngest, went into the Church, and in 1868 married my sister Zoë. Their father was a clergyman, their grandfather Bishop Shipley, and their great-uncle Bishop Heber. The Shipleys ever remained among our closest friends. Captain Crofton was a great admirer of my father and warmly attached to him. Some years later my father

obtained for him the post of Inspector of Prisons in Ireland. Referring to my father's death, in 1860, Sir Walter Crofton, as he then was, wrote to Walter Bagehot :

" THE CASTLE, DUBLIN,  
" 23rd Sept. 1860.

" For my own part I can think of nothing else. Such a short time since he left us in health and spirits to encounter the great work before him. No person will ever know what he has suffered mentally in his anxiety for the success of his mission. He has died for his country as surely as if he had perished on the Redan. It is so very sad, that at times I can scarcely realise the sad event. I picture him as I knew him years since at Westbury, devoting his spare time and talents to your wife and her sister Julia. I think of him again always taking a cheerful and bright view of everything, and contriving to throw sunshine on those around him. Would that he had never left England for that hateful country. Tell them all how very deeply I feel for them. No one out of their own family can do so more. They have lost an affectionate father—I have lost a kind, good friend. It is the will of God and we must bow, but there is a sad fearful blank, and we can't fill it. He has passed away from us and it is hard to spare him.

" Ever yours sincerely,  
" WALTER CROFTON."

My sisters were very helpful to my mother in filling her place when the intense headaches from which she suffered kept her often three days in a darkened room, unable to see anyone. Considering how incapacitated she often was, it is remarkable that under her direction every household matter was so perfectly arranged. My father was by nature hospitable and many guests came to stay at Fontainville as well as to lunch and dine, but the establishment seemed always equal to any number of visitors.

During the month before the family move to Hertford Street there was constant intercourse between this family



at Chalcot, Dilton, Col. Phipps's home, and Fontainville. Seldom was my father happier than when in the saddle, and always feeling the desire that his family should share with him all his interests and pleasures, he wished to see us also often in the saddle. He even induced my mother, who had never, I believe, before been on a horse in her life, to take one ride with him.

Diary E. Jan. 21 : "Mamma rode for the first time with Papa and Julia, and I walked with them to Bratton." Though nothing alarming occurred, that was the last as well as the first time my mother ventured to mount a steed ; but she would take drives in the phaeton with the riders, so as to gratify my father in the desire of having all his family with him on riding excursions. But the gallops on the downs, the pleasant quiet intercourse with country neighbours, gave place to other scenes of a very different character.

E. Jan. 31 : "Luggage, 57 pieces, left by morning train."

Feb. 1 : "Came up from Westbury to London by 5 o'clock train and reached Hertford Street at 11."

Those days in Mayfair were not wanting in radiancy or vital interest ; momentous events happened—momentous people came and went. Something there was to give a sense of life to every hour of the day, which even as children affected us. In the early mornings the music from German bands would float into our windows through the sunny summer air. Directly after breakfast the horses and one pony would come round for the early rides with my father before he went down to his official work. Opposite our house was that of Sir Alexander Cockburn's, the Attorney-General, and his horse and two ponies came round to his door about the same time for himself and his nephew and niece. They both bore a very strong resemblance to their uncle, and had, as we six sisters had, red hair. Earlier in the century it was considered a veritable calamity to have red hair, but, fortunately for us, the Pre-Raphaelite painters and the coloured reproductions of the Early Italian Art by the

Arundel Society made it quite the right thing to have "carrots," as they had previously disrespectfully been called.

Then there were the Hamilton Gardens ; this was a little world in itself—a sort of initiating entrée into Society for the children of Mayfair, and it was there, with Miss Knowles, we spent mostly our out-of-door life in London, and made our London friends. The family of the de Rothschilds, whose house was next Apsley House, afforded some of these. The Baroness was a tall, gracious and kind lady ; the lovely Leonora and Evelina were the two daughters, the eldest boy, who became Lord Rothschild, Alfred de Rothschild, known so well in after days as a collector of unique pictures and *objets d'art*, and my first little lover, Leopold, aged about ten when we first met. A mitigated compliment I remember his paying me : " If it were not for your freckles you would be the prettiest little girl in the gardens." Leopold had no freckles and was quite the most beautiful little boy there. He and his family went to Germany one autumn, and he brought me back a beautiful Dresden parasol handle—perhaps meant as a delicate attention to help towards shading me from freckles ! As long as he lived Leopold de Rothschild never refused to give me a donation for any good work for which I asked him, writing that he never forgot those happy days of childhood together in Hamilton Gardens, " where," he added, " my own children now play." There were also the five daughters of the Williams family, rich owners of the Temple on the river near Great Marlow, Welsh property, and a house in Mayfair. These young ladies all made brilliant marriages, the youngest becoming the Duchess of Wellington. My elder sisters made a great friendship with Tissy Somerville, daughter of Sir William Somerville, Irish Secretary, with whom my father had become intimate over problems raised during the Famine. " Tissy " would often accompany her grandmother, the aged Marchioness of Conyngham, who would walk slowly up and down the gravel paths, leaning on her stick. Carry

Norton, a very original young lady, who later on married "a man of the people," was one of our intimates; she was the niece of the notable Mrs. Norton, one of Sheridan's daughters, an authoress, and who, it was said, was the original of the lady in Meredith's "Diana of the Crossways" who divulged State secrets. She would often come into the gardens, and I remember her well, a dark beauty with a striking countenance and very pronounced level black eyebrows. There were the Ladies Pepys, daughters of Earl Cottenham, the Ladies Hay, daughters of the Earl of Kinnoul, and other fledglings of the aristocracy who frequented the gardens, but the one of all others to be remembered was the great Duke of Wellington. He would walk up and down the gravel path on to which the gate of the garden of Apsley House opened. He was then much bent and would generally lean on the arm of his beautiful, stately daughter-in-law the Marchioness of Douro. I remember watching my father as he walked on the other side of the Duke. As previously noted Walter Bagehot wrote that the Duke had early called Lord Brougham's attention to my father's writings, and a personal intercourse started on the occasion of my father converting the Duke to the abolition of the Navigation Laws. I believe that the qualities my father possessed were those that the Duke especially appreciated—common sense, vitalised by vigour and animation, uncommon abilities, the exercise of which was invariably tempered by a spirit of moderation.

One afternoon, when my father was walking with the Duke, my two sisters Zoë and Sophie, some of our girl friends and myself were trying to fly a kite. The Duke stopped walking and watched us for a minute or two, then, seeing that we were doing it all wrong, broke away from Lady Douro and my father—almost ran across the lawn and took the matter into his own hands—whereupon the kite flew joyfully away high up into the air.

Through the railings of the gardens we could watch the full-fledged votaries of fashion whirling round the Park in fine carriages drawn by beautiful horses, a con-

trast indeed to the unpicturesque swift cars of the present day. On special occasions, such as the opening and proroguing of Parliament, or the Queen's Drawing-rooms, the equipages were fine indeed, with the solid coachman in cocked hat and grand livery sunk down in the centre of his gorgeous hammock; and the two lackeys with gold- or silver-bedecked liveries, powdered hair and silk stockings, erect, hanging on by straps to the carriage behind. Those were something for the populace to look at!

Curzon Street Chapel was the church we attended, and there many of the fine folk of Mayfair would go. The only time the Marchioness of Londonderry was ever seen on foot in the streets was, as I well remember her, in grand and jewelled attire, walking down Hertford Street on Sunday mornings going to Curzon Street Chapel, her lackey behind her carrying her Bible and Prayer Book.

Three tragic events occurred in those early days in Hertford Street. Returning from a Sunday outing one evening, Susan, our much-loved nurse, pulled out of her pocket a beautiful King Charles puppy which she had brought home "for the children." Prinney, as he was christened, became our idol at once; but my mother had made it a law that she would not have dogs in the house. However, when my father was appealed to, he induced her to make Prinney an exception, and both my parents grew greatly attached to him. Behind Curzon Street Chapel, and between it and the end of Hertford Street, was a turning leading to Shepherd's Market. It was considered a low place, and during all the seventeen years we lived in Hertford Street none of our family ever entered it. Costermongers who supplied the poor of the neighbourhood, and a nest of dog-stealers were the inhabitants of Shepherd's Market. Three times was our idol, Prinney, stolen by these wicked men. It was an organised gang, having a medium between the thief and the dog's owner in an important person, Mr. Bishops, who had a gun-shop in Bond Street. The only means

of recovering Prinney was to go to this medium, who accosted us always with the same words, "Found a dog, ladies?—oh! lost a dog, that's very sad." Then after much irrelevant conversation he would fancy he knew a man who knew another man who for a consideration might return the dog. Ransom having been paid—it was three or four pounds the first time—in a few days, one single rap was given to the front door, and poor, dejected, unkempt, half-starved Prinney would, to our unbounded delight, enter in. The second ransom was five pounds, the third seven; but on this last occasion an anonymous letter was written saying Prinney might be fetched from some place near the Seven Dials. The butler and coachman, for neither would go alone, went to the named spot and were met by two of the thieves, who led them blindfolded to a room where they were given refreshment; but no Prinney was yet produced. They were taken back, also blindfolded, to the place where their return omnibuses started; then poor Prinney was handed in to them, and assurance given that there was honour among thieves—that enough had been made out of that little dog, and that he should not be stolen again, and sure enough he never was. An attempt to expose this knavery, by the owner of a stolen dog, was most cruelly punished by the poor little dog's paws being cut off and thrown down the owner's area.

But to return to pleasanter matters.

One of the treats of Mayfair was sitting in the open carriage under the shade of the plane trees of Berkeley Square and eating cream ices, conveyed to us from Gunter's classic establishment opposite. A humbler refreshment was likewise afforded to us children by the cows, under the trees at the end of the Mall, whose milk was made into frothy syllabub; but notwithstanding the ices and the syllabub and the very aristocratic company in Hamilton Gardens, I for one greatly rejoiced when the day came for our return to Westbury—to the downs, to the hawthorn-tree, to the lanes, to the gardens of our *own*.

That was the London life for us of the nursery and the schoolroom ; the London life of my " wonderful " sisters stretched over a far wider area.

On February 4 the Queen opened Parliament in person. The night before, my father attended Lord John Russell's full dress dinner to the members of the Government to read to them the Queen's speech and, on February 5, peers and Members of the House of Commons received tickets for a private view of the Exhibition in the Crystal Palace, as it was named. My father, mother, and elder sisters went. The formal opening was not till May 1, and the arrangements in the interior were not completed.

Diary E. Feb. 6 : " Mamma, Julia and I spent the afternoon paying calls. We made the acquaintance of the Dowager Lady and Miss Molesworth."<sup>1</sup> Sir William Molesworth was a friend of my father's, though far more of a Radical.

On February 19 our country neighbour—and now my father's staunch political ally—Colonel Phipps appeared in London with a petition, named the Warminster Petition, signed by all the inhabitants of the countryside, rich and poor alike. It purported to press the Government to use all possible means to arrest "*the Papal Aggression.*" My father, though in nowise in sympathy with the bigotry of by far the greater part of the English population, took him to the Home Office and introduced him to Sir George Grey, to whom Colonel Phipps presented the petition. While on this errand

<sup>1</sup> Miss Molesworth became our very intimate friend, and soon after this meeting she married as his third wife the famous Richard Ford of " The Handbook of Spain." The Fords lived in Park Street, Mayfair, and Mrs. Ford would constantly come round to talk over politics with my father on the evenings when the House was not sitting. As previously noted, after our dear Miss Knowles left us, I shared a governess with Meta Ford, the daughter of Mr. Ford's second wife. Sir Clare Ford, our Ambassador at Madrid and Rome, was the son of his first. The house in Park Street I remember as a treasure mine of Spanish art. Mrs. Ford was to be seen at every political and social gathering of any note in London for many years—up indeed to the time when she was a very old lady. After the death of her brother, Sir William Molesworth, and of his wife, Mrs. Ford inherited the fine family estate of Pencarrow in Cornwall.

Colonel Phipps, a very charming old bigot, was given a taste of the gay London life.

Diary E. Feb. 20: "Colonel Phipps came at 10 in the evening and accompanied us to an assembly at the American Minister's [Mr. Lawrence], Cadogan House, Piccadilly."

The cry of "No Popery" which assailed the Queen on her road to open Parliament was resounding throughout the country, and much of the Session of 1851 was taken up by endeavours to satisfy the clamour.

On February 7 Lord John Russell introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, the object of which was to confute Cardinal Wiseman's action in establishing an English Roman Catholic Hierarchy consisting of one Archbishop (Dr. Wiseman himself) and twelve bishops, each with a diocese of his own. Lord John's Bill was carried, only 63 members, including the Irish, having the courage to vote against it; if they had, it would have been at the peril of losing their seats, so completely had Protestant bigotry got hold of the country.

But defeat of the Government was imminent. For many causes it had become steadily weakened. Sir Charles Wood brought in his Budget, and that did not mend matters. On February 20 Mr. Locke King moved to introduce a Bill, supported by Hume and Cobden, to equalise the county and borough franchise to the same valuation, namely, ten pounds; Lord John opposed the Bill, and the Government was beaten, the Ayes being 100, the Noes 52.

Diary E. Feb. 21: "Papa had been going to speak on the Income Tax." Lord John had sent a note by hand that morning:

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I shall be very glad if you will speak early to-morrow. I think the Income Tax, rather than the Budget, the point to be kept in view. Yours truly,

"J. RUSSELL."

But before my father rose to speak Lord John adjourned the House, having tendered his resignation to Her Majesty.

Diary J. : " Papa, who had to speak at the House, came home early with the news ' All was up. ' "

Feb. 23, Sunday : " Great political excitement. "

24th : " Lord John in again. The House adjourned till Friday. "

26th : " Lord John again resigned. "

27th : " Lord Stanley tried to form a Government, but failed. "

28th : " The Queen called the Duke [of Wellington], who advised her to pause. House adjourned till Monday. "

March 3 : " Old Government in again. Papa went to the Speaker's dinner and on to Lady Granville's. "

April 3 : " The Drawing room. Made our curtseys well. I went with Mamma to Lord Monteaigle's in the evening. "

7th : " Went to the House to hear Papa speak. "

8th : " I and Mamma to Mme. de Bunsen's At Home. "

9th : " Eliza went with Papa to Mansion House dinner. "

11th : " Eliza and Mamma to Lady Molesworth's At Home. "

30th : " Party at Lady John Russell's. "

May 1 : " The Exhibition opened. " My father and mother had seats inside the building. We watched the procession from Hamilton Gardens.

Diary E. May 7 : " Queen's Ball. Mamma too ill to go. Papa dined with John Bull at Turnham Green. Waited for him till 11.30. Got to the Palace at 12, left at 3. " Another Queen's Ball twelve days later—and yet another later on, to which my elders were summoned.

Diary E. July 14 : " The third Queen's Ball. Saw Her Majesty come in. Many foreigners—six hundred persons. Papa joined us at a quarter to one. Left at 2.30. "



The Queen was very happy and hospitable that year. The Exhibition was a huge success, and it was Prince Albert who had created it! Lord Clarendon wrote to my father from Ireland, and after expatiating on its great success added—"30,000 people visited it on the Derby Day."

Greville wrote: "On the day of the opening of the Great Exhibition I went into the Park instead of the inside, being satisfied with fine sights in the way of processions and royal magnificence, and thinking it more interesting and curious to see the masses and their behaviour. It was a wonderful spectacle to see the countless multitudes, streaming along in every direction, and congregated upon each bank of the Serpentine down to the water's edge; no soldiers, hardly any policemen, to be seen, and yet all so orderly and good-humoured. The success of everything was complete, the joy and exultation of the Court unbounded. The Queen wrote a touching letter to John Russell, full of delight at the success of her husband's undertaking, and at the warm reception which her subjects gave her. Since that day all the world has been flocking to the Crystal Palace, and we hear nothing but expressions of wonder and admiration. The *frondeurs* are all come round, and those who abused it most vehemently now praise it as much."

The Exhibition was indeed a magnet to thousands. It was a triumph of a most satisfying kind to the wise Prince Consort; for it opened the minds and gave knowledge of many important matters to crowds—foreigners, colonials, Americans, no less than to Englishmen. Prince Albert's fine character and rare gifts as a statesman were hardly generally appreciated till shortly before his death, but this great enterprise, an example for many others on the same line to follow, gave him a popularity which at his first coming to England the Prince did not enjoy. It was the great event of the year, and it was Prince Albert's inspiration—carried out most successfully by Sir Joseph Paxton. My uncles and aunts came from Scotland to see it, and my mother's

family from the North. My grandmother I remember well standing erect in the drawing-room in Hertford Street, very stately, wearing a Marie Antoinette fichu, and, as my sister wrote in her notes, "a grand old lady."

During that summer I enjoyed three red-letter days alone with my father. He took me to Richmond when he went to see Lord and Lady John Russell at Pembroke Lodge. I rode on our pony Fanny with him to Herne Hill to see Mrs. Sibeth and (Diary E.) "Papa and Emy to the Exhibition." Clearly do I remember that event. The exhibits retained in my memory were the Crystal Fountain, Gibson's Tinted Venus, and a jewelled little bird from Paris, which jumped out of a box, sang a song, folded its wings and jumped in again. But it was not the exhibits that excited me most : it was that, in crossing a space empty of visitors, we came straight up against *Thackeray* ! While my father was talking to him I looked to my heart's content at the tall, square, high-shouldered figure, the broad face, the big spectacles, the irregular features, and listened to the pleasant tones of his voice, a voice which his daughter Annie, my friend of after years, inherited. Becky Sharp, who could have been so good a woman on £5,000 a year, the pompous *menu* of simple fare, *navets à l'eau*, *pommes de terre au naturel*, were already household words to us in the schoolroom ; and the figure standing there was the creator of these things, looking like a very ordinary person, talking to Papa !

On the 29th of that same month my parents and sisters went to Thackeray's lecture on Congreve and Addison, also during the season to many other lectures, to a course by Kinkel, a German savant, and lessons in Italian from a refugee, Signor Moscardi, which were held at the house of our friends, Sir Benjamin and Lady Haws. Those were the days of the great singers, Mario, Grisi, Alboni, and Lablache, and of Taglioni and Les Graces, equally famous dancers. The opera was a great enjoyment to my family, especially to my father. The French play also was going, where Rachel was acting (Diary J. : "Rachel in Phèdre and Hippolyte,

*wonderful!*"), and many visits to the Princess's Theatre, where the Charles Keans were acting, to private views of picture exhibitions, to the Vernon Collection, the Ellesmere Collection in Bridgewater House, and the Grosvenor House Collection. In an note to my father the Duke of Westminster writes :

" I recommend Wednesday—as fewer visitors will be in the house than on Thursday. I should be delighted to send any other admissions you might desire, but this will be the last week as the pictures are covered after we leave town on Monday.

" Truly yours,  
" WESTMINSTER.

" GROSVENOR HOUSE.

" Tuesday, 5th August, 1851."

Then in all its glory was Grosvenor House itself, and the " Blue Boy " with all his beautiful mates hanging on the wall.<sup>1</sup> My father's great love of pictures secured him the friendship of those possessing important collections and any admissions he wanted to the galleries for himself, his family and friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean were much respected and welcome members of London society. They were friends of my parents. From his letters Charles Kean appears to have had a sincere attachment and reverence for my father. I note this as my father is referred to chiefly as a Political Economist and a Financier, and Political Economists and Financiers have not, as a rule, much attraction for actors and actresses. But my father was many-sided, and the Keans were exceptional members of their profession in those days. Their aim was to induce all their fellow-artists to take a worthy view of their profession, and to elevate by their example the tone and morals of the stage. They were producing, at a loss it

<sup>1</sup> Many years later I again saw the " Blue Boy " unspoilt and the other glories of Grosvenor House when the next Duke lent his house to Miss Octavia Hill for a meeting of the members of the National Trust, in which society he was one of the first to be keenly interested.

appears from a letter Charles Kean wrote to my father, Shakespeare's plays at the Princess's Theatre in a new form. As children we were taken to see these plays as part of our education. Mr. Kean, when calling one day, asked my father whether "the children" would not like to be initiated into the mysteries of "behind the scenes." So to our great delight we were taken one morning to do so. Charles Kean himself was our *cicerone*. It was *The Tempest* which was then being played. As he was showing us how scenes were shifted and other miracles wrought to produce marvellous effects, a little girl ran along the passage near us. "Ah, that is our Ariel," Charles Kean exclaimed, and beckoned her to him. "She is a good little girl and helps her father and mother." He put his hand in his pocket and gave her a coin, and she tripped away. That little girl became the charming, much-admired Kate Terry, who fascinated—among many others—the philosophical and religious-minded Richard Holt Hutton, Walter Bagehot's greatest friend. He had her photograph always before him when he was writing at his bureau. Her sister, if possible still more bewitching and lovable, is now our Dame Ellen Terry of good works, but whose Portia, Beatrice, and Lady Macbeth—the last immortalised by Sargent—ever linger in the memory, and the tones of the tender, persuasive, veiled, yet thrilling voice yet haunt the ear. She it was whom Watts also immortalised in his exquisite picture "Choosing," in his "Ophelia," "Watchman, what of the Night," and "Sisters," portraits of Kate and Ellen together.

Charles Kean was six years my father's junior, and he survived him six years. In 1850 he undertook the management of the Princess's Theatre, resigning it in 1859. The good work he did for the stage during those years was widely appreciated, very notably so by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Besides producing in a new and complete manner very nearly all Shakespeare's plays, he produced many others. Apparently by common consent the part in which his own acting was considered the

greatest was that of Louis XI in Boucicault's adaptation of Casimir de la Vigne's play. On his resigning the management of the Princess's Theatre, a public banquet was given in his honour at St. James's Hall on July 20, 1859. The Earl of Carlisle was in the chair, and members of a committee formed of noblemen and others who had been educated at Eton—Kean himself being an Etonian—were present. The following letter was in reply to one in which my father expressed his great regret at his inability to be present at the banquet, and also the warm appreciation and admiration which he felt for Kean's powers of acting and the high and worthy manner in which he had conducted the management of the Princess's Theatre.

“ MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ If anything could reconcile me to your absence on the 20th it would be the receipt of your most kind letter, which has given me so much gratification.

“ It was indeed a great compliment. The greatest that was ever paid to an actor, and compensates me for all I have gone through during the last nine years. I have endured during that time many annoyances—disappointments and losses, leaving my management a poorer man than when I entered upon it. But, I would endure it all again to receive such a recompence !

“ I sent Mrs. Wilson an *Era* with a very detailed account of the proceedings, but my speeches were best reported in the *Morning Post* of the 21st.

“ I hope you will do me the honour of being present, if we are all well and alive, next Spring when the Testimonial will be presented at St. James's Hall.

“ Believe me, my dear Mr. Wilson, to be ever yours most sincerely,

“ CHARLES KEAN.

“ P.S.—Pray present my kindest regards to Mrs. Wilson and your daughters.

“ 7, UPPER HYDE PARK ST., W.,

“ 27th July, 1859.”

In reading over my sisters' diaries it is amazing to see how many events in those days could be crowded into the twenty-four hours. Certainly none of our family found this Victorian Era in which we then lived, dull, and the "little ones," as we were called in the diaries, partook, as much as was compatible with their youth, in every pleasure and interest enjoyed by the elders. As from the earliest days, though working at the Board of Control, and for the *Economist*, and attending nearly all the sittings in the House of Commons, my father yet found time to enjoy many social and artistic pleasures with his family—"always," as Sir Walter Crofton wrote, "taking a cheerful and bright view of everything and contriving to throw sunshine around him." The political folk of those days were very sociable. The diaries note that dinner-parties and large evening assemblies and balls were given nearly every week by one or other of the Ministers' wives, as also by many members of the Government. On Independence Day a notable reception was given.

July 4 : "Mr. Peabody gave a ball to the American Minister and Mrs. Lawrence. Concert, ball and supper. Decorations sumptuous. Got home at 3.15."

Many dinner and evening parties were given at home, for, notwithstanding my mother's uncertain health, she somehow arranged that my father's hospitable tastes should be satisfied, not only amply, but in a very finished manner. My father's conversational powers were alone a magnet to draw interesting friends to his table, and his incessant work never lessened the vitality wherewith he could enjoy social intercourse. Among the most frequent visitors were Sir George and Lady Theresa Lewis; Lady Theresa being a sister of two of my father's earliest political friends, Charles Villiers and Lord Clarendon. The diaries record that much intercourse took place between Kent House and Hertford Street. "The little ones" went to their first children's ball at Kent House, given by Lady Theresa for her little daughter Alice, afterwards Lady Borthwick, and her

nieces, the Ladies Villiers. Towards the end of this notable Exhibition season Lord Clarendon came over from Ireland.

Diary E. July 26: "Lord Clarendon . . . dined with us."

Aug. 6: "To Lady Theresa Lewis, Lord and Lady Clarendon, Mr. and Mrs. Ford, Sir Charles Wood, Mr. Labouchere, Sir William Somerville"—later Lord Athlumney—his daughter "Tissy"—on her marriage Countess of Charlemont—was the friend before mentioned of my elder sisters.

While all this social dissipation was taking place Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, in which no one save himself seemed interested, made but a melancholy progress. The Government was decidedly weaker at the end of the session than it had been at the beginning, and there was not much to be said for its stability even then.

Greville wrote: "I broke off what I was writing to go to Ascot. There is a picture in *Punch* of the shipwrecked Government saved by the 'Exhibition' steamer, which really is historically true, thanks in great measure to the attractions of the Exhibition, which have acted upon the public as well as upon Parliament. The attacks upon the Government have for some time past become so languid, and there has been so much indifference and *insouciance* about politics and parties, that John Russell and his Cabinet have been relieved from all present danger. The cause of Protection gets weaker every day; all sensible and practical men give it up as hopeless; nevertheless that party will make a desperate struggle when the elections take place, and though they will infallibly fail in bringing back Protection, they will probably have success enough to make Government, if possible, more difficult than it is now."

Diary E. Aug. 8: "Prorogation of Parliament by the Queen. Mamma went to the House of Lords. We went with her and saw the pageant from the roof

over the door." My mother and "the little ones" left for Fontainville a few days later, the rest of the family lingered in London.

Aug. 9 : "All went to the Exhibition, and Pier Ibrahim Khan and interpreter explained to us many things in the Indian Department."

Aug. 12 : "Papa went to Blackwall to see some shipping with Earl Grey and remained to dinner."

Aug. 18 : "Papa dined with Lady Jane Ellis to meet Lord Radnor."

Aug. 22 : "Left for Westbury."

So ended, as far as my family was concerned, that brilliant season of 1851, and virtually the last session of the last Whig Government, for on February 20, 1852, the Government had a minority of 11 and Lord John Russell resigned.

Much had happened during the interval which tended to dislocate its cohesion. The disturbing element was again Lord Palmerston. In 1850, to such a height had the Queen and Prince Albert's indignation risen against him for the manner in which he had ignored Her Majesty and his own Cabinet, that on August 12 of that year a State Paper was written which would certainly have made most Ministers resign. But Lord Palmerston did not, nor did he hint to any of his colleagues that he had received it. On August 14 he asked for an interview with Prince Albert, and behaved with unwonted humility, and wrote to Lord John that the Queen's wishes should be complied with. The memorandum dated at Osborne on August 12, 1850, was a State Paper of much importance.

"With reference to the conversation about Lord Palmerston which the Queen had with Lord John Russell the other day, and Lord Palmerston's disavowal that he ever intended any disrespect to her by the various neglects of which she has had so long and so often to complain, she thinks it right, in order to prevent any mistake for the future, to explain what it is she expects from the Foreign Secretary.



“ She requires,

“ 1. That he will distinctly state what he proposes to do in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her Royal sanction. Having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister. Such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of what arises between him and the Foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken based upon that intercourse ; to receive the foreign despatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her, in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents, before they must be sent off. The Queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston.”

Palmerston's penitence bore little fruit. During the autumn when the Memorandum was received the Austrian Marshal Haynau came to England and visited Barclay's Brewery, whence he was ousted by the draymen attacking him with broomsticks, and he had to fly under the protection of the police. The Marshal was noted for having committed excessive cruelties in Hungary and for having flogged women. Palmerston and all right-feeling people sympathised with the draymen, but caution as to expressing sympathy was necessary for diplomatic reasons. Palmerston was required to offer regrets for their conduct to the Austrian *Chargé d' Affaires*, but he merely wrote that it was imprudent for unpopular foreigners to excite public aversion. Lord John insisted that the despatch containing this view of the incident should be withdrawn. It had already been sent. Palmerston resisted, but eventually gave way. In the July of 1851 appeared Mr. Gladstone's famous letter to Lord Aberdeen, describing the horrors of cruelty he had seen perpetrated at Naples, where he had spent the winter. King Ferdinand, known commonly as Bomba, was the

perpetrator of these monstrosities, and Palmerston hated Bomba for his inhuman behaviour, and also had a grudge against him for having had to apologise to him for having helped the insurgents in Sicily with arms. Palmerston sent a copy of Mr. Gladstone's letter to the British Ministers in every country in Europe, and instructed each to bring the matter before their several Governments. He also extolled Mr. Gladstone strongly in the House for having taken up this question of Bomba's iniquities. This incident somewhat widened the chasm which already existed between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Palmerston having acted independently and without consultation with his Cabinet. Further, in October 1851, Kossuth, the great Hungarian patriot, arrived. He spoke English perfectly, and delivered most eloquent speeches on revolutionary lines at Southampton and Winchester. He wrote to Lord Palmerston, saying he wished to thank him in person for having used his influence in order to obtain his release from the Sultan. Palmerston forthwith invited him to Broadlands, whereupon Austria threatened to withdraw Count Buol, her Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, if our Foreign Minister had any communication with the rebel Kossuth, who had headed the rebellion against her Emperor. Lord John wrote to Palmerston begging that he would not receive Kossuth. Palmerston replied that he was at liberty to receive whomever he liked in his own house. A Cabinet was summoned, and all but Lord Lansdowne stood by Lord John. So Palmerston had to give way; but a few days later he received at the Foreign Office a Radical deputation from Finsbury and Islington to congratulate him on Kossuth's release.

Against the violent language held by the Radicals Palmerston *did* protest, and he did not get his dismissal on that score. But the *Coup de grâce* was imminent. On December 2 Louis Napoleon perpetrated an astounding and audacious crime—the *Coup d'état*. It succeeded—a military despotism was established in France.

Seven millions of French people voted for it, half a million against it. Lord Normanby, our Ambassador in Paris, showed his disapproval of Louis Napoleon's behaviour, but Palmerston without the consent of his Cabinet told M. Walewski, who had succeeded M. Drouyn de Lhuys, that he approved of it, and on December 6 in the Queen's name and as from the Cabinet gave orders that no alteration was to be made in the English relations with the French Government, and that Lord Normanby must abstain from all interference with French affairs, which regarded the French alone. In other words, he backed Louis Napoleon. Lord Normanby remonstrated, and Palmerston explained that he preferred Louis Napoleon to the Assembly, and was glad he had got his way. Lord Normanby meanwhile had expostulated to Lord John, and the Queen desired a full explanation of what had occurred, which Palmerston postponed giving for some days. Lord Normanby was Lady Normanby's husband, and she had been the Queen's most favoured Woman of the Bedchamber in Melbourne's Government.

On December 17 Palmerston received his dismissal, and Lord Granville, the most pronounced Liberal in the House of Lords, was appointed to reign in his stead.

In explaining to the House the cause of Lord Palmerston's dismissal, Lord John quoted the Queen's Memorandum, taking on himself the full responsibility of it. Save for two members, the House was mute in showing any sympathy for Lord Palmerston. Perhaps it was not only approval of the Memorandum itself which kept the House mute, but disapproval of the conduct of a Minister of State, who had received such a severe rebuke from his Sovereign, and yet who had not resigned his office.

Of the *Coup d'état* Walter Bagehot wrote, in letters written from Paris in 1851, published by his friend William Roscoe in *The Inquirer* :

"I only know what a person who is in a foreign country during an important political catastrophe cannot avoid knowing, what he runs against, what is beaten

into him, what he can hardly help hearing, seeing, and reflecting.

“ That Louis Napoleon has gone to Notre-Dame to return thanks to God for the seven million and odd suffrages of the French people—that he has taken up his abode at the Tuileries, and that he has had new Napoleons coined in his name—that he has broken up the trees of liberty for firewood—that he has erased, or is erasing (for they are many) *Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité*, from the National Buildings—all these things are so easy and so un-English, that I am pretty sure, with you, they will be thought signs of pompous impotence, and I suppose many people will be inclined to believe the best comment to be the one which I heard—*‘ Mon Dieu, il a sauvé la France : la rue du Coq s’appelle maintenant la rue de l’Aigle ! ’* . . . I shall not, I fancy, have room to say much on the moral defensibility or indefensibility of the *Coup d’état*. . . . The political justification of Louis Napoleon is, as I apprehend, to be found in the state of the public mind which immediately preceded the *Coup d’état*. It is very rarely that a country expects a revolution at a given time ; indeed, it is perhaps not common for ordinary persons in any country to anticipate a revolution at all ; though profound people may speculate, the mass will ever expect to-morrow to be as this day at least, if not more abundant. But once name the day, and all this is quite altered. As a general rule the very people who would be most likely to neglect general anticipation are exactly those most likely to exaggerate the proximate consequences of a certain impending event. At any rate, in France five weeks ago, the tradespeople talked of May ’52 as if it were the end of the world. Civilisation and Socialism might probably endure, but buying and selling would surely come to an end ; in fact, they anticipated a worse era than February ’48, when trade was at a standstill so long that it has hardly yet recovered, and when the Government stocks fell 40 per cent. It is hardly to be imagined upon what petty details the dread of political

dissolution at a fixed and not distant time will condescend to intrude itself. I was present when a huge *Flamande*, in appearance so intrepid that I respectfully pitied her husband, came to ask the character of a *bonne*. I was amazed to hear her say, 'I hope the girl is strong, for when the revolution comes next May, and I have to turn off my helper, she will have enough to do.' It seemed to me that a political apprehension must be pretty general, when it affected that most non-speculative of speculations, the *reckoning* of a housewife. With this feeling, everybody saved their money: who would spend in luxuries that which might so soon be necessary and invaluable! This economy made commerce—especially the peculiarly Parisian trade, which is almost wholly in articles that *can* be spared—worse and worse; the more depressed trade became, the more the traders feared, and the more they feared, the worse all trade invariably grew. . . . The only notion of '52 was '*on se battra dans la rue.*' . . . You will, I imagine, concede to me that the first duty of a Government is to ensure the security of that industry which is the condition of social life and civilised cultivation; that especially in so excitable a country as France it is necessary that the dangerous classes should be saved from the strong temptation of long idleness; and that no danger could be more formidable than six months' beggary among the revolutionary *ouvriers*, immediately preceding the exact period fixed by European as well as French opinion for an apprehended convulsion. It is from this state of things, whether by fair means or foul, that Louis Napoleon has delivered France. The effect was magical. Like people who have nearly died because it was prophesied they would die at a specified time, and instantly recovered when they found or thought that the time was gone and past, so France, timorously anticipating the fated revolution, in a moment revived when she found, or fancied, that it was come and over. Commerce instantly improved; New Year's Day, when all the Boulevards are one continued fair, has not (as I am told) been for some

years so gay and splendid ; people began to buy, and consequently to sell ; for though it is quite possible, or even probable, that new misfortunes and convulsions may be in store for the French people, yet no one can say when they will be, and to wait till revolutions be exhausted is but the best Parisian for our old acquaintance *Rusticus expectat*. . . . I fear it must be said that no legal or constitutional act could have given an equal confidence. What was wanted was the assurance of an audacious Government, which would stop at nothing, scruple at nothing, to secure its own power and the tranquillity of the country. That assurance all now have ; a man who will in this manner dare to dissolve an assembly, constitutionally his superiors, then prevent their meeting by armed force ; so well and so sternly repress the first beginning of an outbreak ; with so little misgiving assume and exercise sole power—may have enormous other defects, but is certainly a bold ruler—most probably an unscrupulous one—little likely to flinch from any inferior trial.”

*Punch's* cartoons portraying Lord Palmerston at that time represent him always with a straw in his mouth and his hat on one side—very suggestive of the light and airy way in which he got through the diplomatic embroglios which he himself created. His *insouciance* and light-hearted courage went far to disarm his sedate critics. He could not be snubbed because he *would* not be snubbed. Evidently *sedate* Lord Palmerston never could be, even in the discussion of the most momentous questions, but he had, it would seem, that *something* which makes its possessor unable to be suppressed for long,—this *something*, so indefinable, and yet so very definite in its results. Palmerston was dismissed on December 17, 1851 ; he turned out the Government who had dismissed him in the spring of 1852, having had, as he wrote, “his tit for tat with John Russell.” Before many years passed we find him not a State Minister for *something*, but Her Majesty's Prime Minister, for even the Queen had to succumb to the *something* and

acknowledge the fact that with her subjects Palmerston was all-powerful. This power, it would seem, lay in his possessing a strong will and very definite independent purpose, very genuine feelings of indignation against acts of cruelty and tyranny, and using his position and influence as an aristocrat in the interests of popular prejudices. Plainly he held no very definite political creeds, except that of Free Trade, and little loyalty to any one party. It was believed that it was only his staunch adherence to the principle of Free Trade which prevented his joining the Derby Government, though the personal resentment he felt against Lord John Russell might have otherwise inclined him to do so. It must also be remembered that Lady Palmerston and Lady Palmerston's *parties* counted for much in the political life of London. If Palmerston was popular in the country, Lady Palmerston was popular in London Society. Her parties were incessant; in the diaries we have "went to Lady Palmerston," "went to Lady Palmerston," "went to Lady Palmerston" I over and over again, and although all distinguished notables, sooner or later, found themselves among her guests, there was no dull stiffness of grandeur in these entertainments, for, as the diary remarks, referring to one of these parties, "it was so pleasant and easy." Even Cobden succumbed to Lady Palmerston's offer of hospitality. When he arrived from America on June 27, 1859, he found a letter from Palmerston offering him to be President of the Board of Trade, with a seat consequently in the Cabinet, which Cobden firmly refused notwithstanding the urgency with which Palmerston and the Foreign Secretary pressed him to accept. But two nights after he was a guest of Lady Palmerston, having accepted *her* invitation.

"Hayward says truly that Lady Palmerston's career only began after her second marriage. Lord Palmerston was the great love of her life and her powers and her talents were employed to secure his position in the country. . . . She had always been in touch with politics, and her affection for her brother and family



THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT PALMERSTON



traditions had led her to use the homes of her first marriage, with Earl Cowper, as meeting-places for the Whig Party.

"With her experience she knew that she could do much for Lord Palmerston, soften his asperities, and guide him into easier relations with the world at large. To this end she bent the whole force of her talents, and at the same time secured her own happiness. . . ."

The Hayward above mentioned was Abraham Hayward, the author of "Faust, a Dramatic Poem by Goethe translated into English Prose, with remarks on former translations and notes," published in 1833, when Hayward was aged thirty-two. Carlyle, among other literary authorities, considered it the best English version that had appeared. Hayward was a prolific writer and had a notable position in the literary world of his time. Socially he became popular as a first-rate *raconteur*, and as such I remember him well. He would take 15 Hertford Street on his Sunday afternoon beats, when, equipped with two or three good stories, he would make the round of the houses of his specially favoured acquaintances. These stories he would deliver in a harsh, grating, monotonous voice, not at all pleasant in itself, still somehow giving a telling flavour to the story. With such a gift he was naturally a much-sought guest at the dinner table, where a natural proclivity, emboldened by *recherché* viands and choice wines, made him often overstep the bounds of propriety. Walter Bagehot said of him, "Hayward becomes decent when the ladies leave the table." The dinners he gave in his chambers in the Inner Temple were noted both for choiceness of fare and for the distinction of his guests, "Lockhart, Macaulay, Sydney Smith, Lord Lansdowne, Henry Bulwer, Lyndhurst, Hooke, and Mrs. Norton being his constant guests" (see "Dictionary of National Biography").<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hayward continued following his calling as a society *raconteur* well into the 'seventies, himself being in his 'seventies. I remember during an afternoon call in the year 1874, his amusing the company by an uncommonly characteristic story at the expense of Gladstone, Hayward having been with him that afternoon to a *matinée*,—delivered, as ever, in the same harsh, grating, monotonous voice.

“After her marriage she [Lady Palmerston] at once saw the advantage it would be to Lord Palmerston, whose brusquerie did him great disservice, to open her doors, not alone to his friends and supporters in political life, but to all merit, literary, artistic or social. The charm of her parties lay in the fact that their component parts were as carefully chosen as a dinner party, and that an invitation to one party did not necessarily include all. The warmth of Lady Palmerston’s manner cast an atmosphere of welcome over the assembly which communicated itself to the youngest and shyest girl making her first appearance in the world under her mother’s wing. The hostess herself would cross the room to talk to a girl sitting unnoticed in a corner, and draw her gently into the conversation of the crowd. Should Lord Palmerston require votes or support for some measure—‘Stay! we will have a party,’ said Lady Palmerston. Her daughters, Lady Shaftesbury and Lady Jocelyn, were summoned, and while Lady Palmerston wrote the invitations with her own hand, her daughters addressed the envelopes. When these were finished and Lady Palmerston looked them over before despatching them, she would carefully correct her daughters’ handwriting, dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s to their secret annoyance. ‘What did the envelope matter?’ said Lady Jocelyn in after years: Lady Palmerston thought otherwise. To her, every detail was important when it concerned Lord Palmerston. ‘When any great subject of dispute between parties is on the *tapis*, I do not see my friends of the opposite side for a few days,’ she told Lady Robert Cecil.”<sup>1</sup>

To Lord Palmerston his wife wrote in 1848 :

“I am sure the Queen is very angry with you!! I am afraid you contradict her notions too boldly. You fancy she will hear reason, when in fact all you say only proves to her that you are determined to act on the line she disapproves, and which she still thinks wrong. I am sure it would be better if you *said* less to her—even if you *act* as you think best. I often think there is too much

<sup>1</sup> *Lady Palmerston and her Times*, Mabel, Countess of Airlie.

Knight errantry in your ways. You always think you can convince people by Arguments, and she has not reflection or sense to feel the force of them—therefore the strength of your Arguments and all the explanations you give only prove to her how deeply imbued you are with what she calls error, and how impossible it is for her to make any effect on you. I should treat what she says more lightly and courteously, and not enter into argument with her, but lead her on gently, by letting her believe you have both the same opinions in fact and the same wishes, but take sometimes different ways of carrying them out.”<sup>1</sup>

My father knew and liked Lord Palmerston well, though he disapproved highly of his belligerent propensities. He was fully sensitive to that *something* which over-rode his misdoings, for, like charity, it covered a multitude of sins. They would often walk home from the House of Commons together, their ways lying in the same direction—Palmerston’s to 94 Piccadilly, my father’s to 15 Hertford Street. At the breakfast table the next morning my father would repeat many of Lord Palmerston’s amusing sayings.

But those walks were not always amusing. My father told us that in hours of the night or early morning, when the streets were empty of traffic, strange and terrible sights were at times to be seen : beings so deformed as to be hardly recognisable as human beings would creep out into this solitude, shrinking from all contact with their fellow creatures. My father was keenly sensitive to the tragic condition of these pathetic beings, so separated from their kind as to shun ever being seen by them. He felt acutely the pain of pity. Coming out from debates in the House of Commons,—from contact with some human specimens possessing the highest developments of intellect and culture, to meet these terrible sights produced a sadness difficult to dispel.

\* \* \* \* \*

Back again at Fontainville in the autumn of 1851, the

<sup>1</sup> *Lady Palmerston and her Times.*

life of riding and intercourse with country neighbours was resumed.

Diary E. August 23 : " After dinner walked to the Hawthorn and climbed on the right side of the White Horse, and Julia rode with Papa on the downs." A few days later : " Papa and Julia rode the new horses and christened them Beauty and Grace. All went on the downs, some riding, some driving with Mamma." Two days later : " I rode Grace, Papa Beauty, Zeno Fanny, to Trowbridge."

Those Wiltshire downs continued to have a strange fascination ; and not only did our New Forest ponies feel exhilarated and lawless when they felt the spring of the turf beneath their feet and the light sweep of the air fanned their manes, but my father's sedate and well-trained chestnut mare also one day asserted her right to have thereon her own way in the matter of speed.

E. Nov. 26, 1852 : " Papa, Mr. Greg, Julia and I rode on the downs. Beauty ran away with Mr. Greg."

Mr. Greg was as experienced a rider as my father, but perhaps had not his controlling power of will, and it is said that a horse is as much, or more, guided in its conduct by the will of its rider as by any mere handling of the reins. Be that as it may, Beauty ran away with Mr. Greg—she never ran away with my father, whose impressive will was doubtless felt by his horse as well as it undoubtedly was by human beings.

On September 26, Pier Ibrahim Khan Said and Abdullah, the interpreter, and two servants arrived. This was an exciting event for the good people of Westbury, most of whom had never seen an Indian before. When they were taken drives the carriage was followed by children, calling out, " Look at the Devil."

Their gorgeous array was a note of colour hitherto unknown in those parts. Two dinner parties were given in their honour, they eating only fowls killed in the orthodox manner of their sect and by their own servants—an operation which I remember we " little ones " watched with the greatest interest from our bed-room

windows. Pier Ibrahim and his suite attended church on Sunday.

E. Sept. 28 : " Interest and curiosity to see Indians in church."

29th : " Indians, Julia and Papa drove in the blue carriage to Longleat. Second dinner party at home."

30th : " Showed Indians over the church. They and Mamma drove, and Papa, Julia and I rode to Bradford to see cloth manufacturing. People in the evening."

Next day the Indians left for London. They had evinced most intelligent interest in all they were shown, and in our friends whom they met. Our old friend, M. Brouwer de Hogendorf, came from Malines to stay with us after they left.

The Christmas tree was again put up, and on Christmas Eve :

E. : " Dined at 4. Christmas carols. Little boy with flute brought into the drawing-room. Christmas Day. Tree lighted up after dinner 5 o'clock. Snow and ice round the fountain. Papa read Burns aloud."

While the House had been sitting it would seem from the Diary that my father almost lived in the train, going backwards and forwards from London. He would bring us the news of what was going on in the political world, known only to those within the circle of the Government. Mr. Greg also gave us the details of the cause of Palmerston's fall as regarded his friendliness towards Kossuth. Mr. Greg had lady friends, who were fighting for the liberty of oppressed nations, through whom he became acquainted with Kossuth. When we returned to London he introduced the Hungarian to us and he became a visitor at our house. I remember him as very tall and handsome. He spoke to us perfectly in English, which it is said he learnt only on his journey to England from Constantinople. He had the sympathy of all the country people, and Palmerston's attitude to him was much applauded : naturally, however, the Government had no desire to go to war with Austria.

Riding was everyday's pleasure.

E. "Papa rode over to Erle Stoke and lunched with Lord Broughton," "Papa and Emy rode the ponies," "Sophie rode with Papa on the ponies. We walked to the hawthorn tree and saw Sophie run away with."

My sisters accompanied my father and mother when they stayed at Erle Stoke and Coleshill. They enchanted Lord Broughton by their singing and playing. He said he wished his daughters could give him music like that every evening. Moreover, my sisters rode to the meets of his harriers on the downs, and of this he also approved.

Diary J. : "I went coursing with Papa and Lord Broughton, one hare killed."

Pending the election, which was to take place before long, a general move of the family was not made. My mother spent some time in Hertford Street with my father, and Col. Phipps paid him a visit there. On February 3 Parliament was opened.

Diary J. 20th : "The Government resigned, having been beaten by 11 on an amendment proposed by Lord Palmerston on Lord John Russell's Militia Bill."

Feb. 21st : "Letter from Papa to say the Ministers had resigned."

Thus Lord Palmerston had his revenge. The Queen sent for Lord Derby, who formed his first Government, he acting as Leader of the House of Lords, Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. This Government had an insecure basis from the beginning, for, whereas Lord Derby had pledged himself to his Protectionist followers over and over again to bring back Protection, Disraeli, being bent on his Government retaining office as long as possible, and knowing full well that a policy favouring Protection would lead to it very quickly being turned out, played for Free Trade, though in somewhat ambiguous terms.

Greville writes, February 5 : "Derby has shuffled and prevaricated and involved himself in a studied and laboured ambiguity, which has exposed him to bitter taunts and reproaches, and Disraeli has been a perfect

will-o'-the-wisp, flitting about from one opinion to another, till his real opinions and intentions are become matter of mere guess and speculation . . . he pronounced such a full and unreserved panegyric on the results of Free Trade, and so clearly stated them in detail, that his speech was hailed as a practical conversion, and as such cheered vehemently by the Whigs, and received in gloomy silence by his own people. On subsequent occasions he attempted to shuffle out of his previous declarations."

Lord Grey writes to my father :

" CARLTON TERRACE,

" March 2, 1852.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I received your letter yesterday but had not time to answer it. With regard to the Cape I am upon the whole inclined to believe that the best policy is to be quiet unless any further attack is made by the other side. I doubt whether within the compass of a newspaper article much could be added to what has already been very well put in the *Economist*, and the old proverb '*qui s'excuse etc.*' would be applicable to any further defence in the absence of attack.

" On the much more material question as to what ought to be our policy as a party in consequence of Lord Derby's speech, I agree with you in great part but not entirely. I concur with you in thinking it of great importance to force the new Government if possible to a clearer declaration for or against protection and to an early dissolution—but I do not think that such a resolution as C. Villiers contemplated is the right way to do so. My recollection of the famous 'Appropriations' Resolution when we were in opposition to Peel's short Government at the beginning of 1835 makes me most unwilling to have anything to do with such resolutions. If we confine ourselves to mere abstract resolutions we gain nothing by passing them, as we then found, and if we are compelled to proceed further (as in the case I have referred to) and obstruct the progress of the

Government the inconvenience would be very serious. My belief is that a mere abstract resolution would not be carried by a large majority and would neither bind a future House of Commons nor yet compel the next Ministers to pledge themselves either for or against protection. Hence I conceive that the better course would be, without moving anything to raise debates, or going into Committee of Supply, to press the Government to declare either for or against protection. I think the extreme injury which would be inflicted upon the country by keeping it doubtful whether protection is or is not to be proposed might be so urged that they could not escape in the end explaining themselves. Should they declare that they adhere to protection, then I think our own line ought to be that, as Derby has himself admitted that a majority of the present House of Commons is opposed to this policy and has no confidence in the Ministry, it is impossible that he should wish to go on in this way, but must desire to bring the question in fairly before the Country, that we are ready to co-operate with him in accomplishing this, and will therefore assist in winding up the immediately pressing business of the Session in voting the supplies which will be required to carry on the Public Service Bill,—a new Parliament can be summoned, but that until the public anxiety is relieved on the question as to whether an attempt is, or is not to be made to re-establish protection, we will not concur in voting more money than is necessary to meet the immediate wants of the public service.

“Probably in the present state of affairs it would be better to make this declaration only as regards the Civil Service—the Army and Navy Estimates might be voted as usual for the year, and the means of compelling them to dissolve and meet the new Parliament without delay might be sufficiently retained by keeping the miscellaneous estimates in hand.

“This is what occurs to me, but I have had very little communication with other persons on the subject.

“In the meantime I think it would be of great use



if the Press, and especially the Provincial Press, would direct public attention to the monstrous dishonesty of the course which Derby seems to propose to follow by neither avowedly abandoning nor yet distinctly adopting the policy of protection. There were articles yesterday both in the *Chronicle* and *Globe* taking pretty much the right line according to my notion, but that argument requires to be followed up and enforced.

“ I enclose a letter I received a few days ago from Guiana—will you return it at your leisure ?

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ GREY.

“ JAMES WILSON, Esq., M.P.”

My father had a good deal of correspondence with Lord Grey on Colonial matters, especially with respect to the sugar duties. Lord Grey writes :

“ CARLTON H.T.

“ May 4, 1852.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I enclose a newspaper sent to me by Lord Elgin which contains two remarkable Lectures on the progress of Upper Canada, it might be worth while in the *Economist* to give a short account of the results.

“ I am preparing for publication an account of the progress of the Colonies during my tenure of Office—in the course of it I shall wish to show the success of our sugar measure, and I would be glad to have a little conversation with you on the subject some of these days :

“ Yours faithfully,

“ GREY.

“ JAMES WILSON, Esq.”

During the spring and summer sessions, Mr. Walpole, the Home Secretary, brought forward his Militia Bill of 1852 on the lines which Lord Palmerston had defined ; the Duke of Wellington supported it and it was carried. Lord John Russell voted against it. The other important measure was that brought forward

by Sir John Pakington for giving a constitution to New Zealand. That also became law.

On April 25 my father drew up a petition to Parliament for the preservation of the Crystal Palace.

Diary E. : " Julia rode with Papa to Dilton Court and to Chalcott to get the petition signed. Julia and I called on Mr. Wilkins and Matravers for signatures, which Papa sent by post to Mr. Heywood, who brings forward the motion to-morrow night."

Soon the canvassing began.

Diary E. March 1 : " Papa came down by first express. We were going to ride and drive but rain prevented. Papa and Julia played at battledore and shuttlecock instead. The Marquis of Bath came of age. Charlie Smith and Mr. Zeal with Papa all the evening on electioneering business."

From that date the canvassing went on every day except when my father ran up to town for an important division in the House or when any question had to be discussed with his fellow-politicians relative to the line the *Economist* should take on any special matter.

The contest was going to be a severe one. The Tory candidate was Mr. Massey Lopes, the eldest son of Sir Ralph Lopes, whose family had held the seat for many years. He was a consistent Tory and personally a pleasant, quiet gentleman, his appearance bearing distinct traces of his foreign ancestry. Though a severer contest than the first, so far as his opponent went it was a pleasanter one. Mr. Massey Lopes acted nowise in such a manner as would have aroused Lord Radnor's wrath. Had there been universal suffrage in those days my father's majority would have been probably very large. Among the poorer class his popularity had increased much through his having so materially helped in obtaining for it cheaper bread and cheaper sugar ; but as it was, my father felt no stone must be left unturned if success was to be secured. It was not chiefly for his own seat in Parliament that he fought so eagerly—interesting though parliamentary life was to him,—it

was the fact that the *Cause* was again in danger. The Tories were in power and England was menaced by Protection being again imposed in some form or other. It was the duty of every sound Free Trader to use every effort to turn the Tories out.

Diary E. Feb. 28 : "Papa came from town by first express. Papa, Julia and Zeno rode. Read Lord Derby's speech of last night explanatory of his policy."

March 17 : "Papa held a public meeting at 8 in the British school room."

18th : "Papa had gentlemen with him all the evening till 2 A.M."

19th : "Active canvass. Success sure. Public meetings."

April 10 : "Papa came by the early express. Canvassed for an hour before dinner. After dinner Julia and I rode with him to Chalcott. Saw everyone. Enthusiastic cheering everywhere."

Diary J. June 29 : "During the night the opposite party carried off Joseph Applegate and locked him up. Great commotion."

30th : "Papa and Mr. Moffatt had an interview with Mr. Lopes about the kidnapped man. Both parties met in the afternoon at Bratton. Ours carried off Joseph triumphantly."

July 2 : "We copied lists of the voters who are to have rosettes. Papa closeted with other party at Daniells, out all evening."

July 7 : "Nomination Day. All the gentlemen and ladies assembled here. Some of the gentlemen took us down to our windows at the Crown, a gentleman between two ladies. Captain Crofton Returning Officer. Col. Phipps proposed Papa, Mr. Alfred Whittaker seconded. Major Phipps and Mr. Bush proposed and seconded Mr. Lopes. Bush and Shoreland violent and vulgar. Show of hands in favour of Papa 4 to 1. All the ladies and many of the gentlemen returned with us to luncheon. Mr. Harrop gave a dinner to the Marsh men and many of the voters at Bratton. Papa walked

home to Marsh with them. The gentlemen about all night. Papa in bed half an hour."

8th : "Day of the Poll. We went down to the Crown with Mrs. Matravers ; Lopes 29 ahead. Wilson 4 ahead. Wilson 8. Wilson 3. Wilson 11. Final state Wilson 145, Lopes 138. Col. Boyle and others came over. Mrs. Phipps and Mrs. Crofton came home for refreshment. Despatched letters to all our friends."

9th : "Declaration. The business was transacted in the Town Hall at 10. The gentlemen returned here. Mamma in bed with head-ache. Papa rested all day."

It had been a very hard contest and my father's friends had been anxious about the result. Lord Broughton wrote :

"ERLE STOKE,  
"Wednesday, 7 July.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Pray let one of your people send me a line by post with the state of the poll at the close of to-morrow.

"I need not add that I wish you every success.

"Sincerely yours,

"BROUGHTON."

Diary E. July 16 : "Letter of congratulation on Papa's return from Lord John Russell."

"MINTO,  
"July 14, 52.

"DEAR WILSON,

"I was very glad indeed to see your return ; especially as I had been rather anxious about it.

"The *Economist* reasons rather wildly about the approaching extinction of the Whig party. As the Whig party has always been the party of steady progress, that party can never become extinct till no further progress is required—and that time seems a good way off.

"The next problem will be to see what part Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert will take.

"I remain yours faithfully,

"J. RUSSELL."

The *Economist* was right. After that date the *Whigs* were extinct ; Liberals and Conservative-Liberals took their work in hand, as Conservatives took the place of Tories.

Diary E. July 17 : " Papa went to Warminster to see Mr. Sidney Herbert."

19th : " Papa drove to Warminster at 8.50 to poll for Messrs. Sidney Herbert and Wyndham, and went to London."

20th : " Triumph of the Liberals in South Wilts. Herbert 1547, Wyndham 1304, Long 1062."

The result, however, of all the elections was that the Liberals lost many seats. Some important members were beaten: my father's friend, Mr. George Cornwall Lewis in Herefordshire, his own county, Sir George Grey in Northumberland.

The most notable Liberal gain was at Edinburgh: where, unsolicited, Macaulay was elected.

Lord Grey writes, while staying with Sir Charles Wood, his brother-in-law :

" July 22, 1852.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I meant before I left London to have written to you to congratulate you on the result of your contest ; your success gave me much pleasure and is of the more importance in consequence of so many of our friends having been defeated. The County elections seem to be going so ill as to show that the farmers and county gentlemen do not yet understand how far the Protectionist party have been from being their real friends, and I think before the meeting of Parliament the *Economist* might be very useful by trying to enlighten them a little on the subject. I understand from my brother that in canvassing Northumberland for Sir George Grey (who I trust will succeed though the contest will be a very close one) he has found that although the farmers perceived that they cannot get back Protection there is an angry feeling among them against us for having deprived them of it, and a belief that the Ministerial party will do something

for them if they can, and at all events wish them well, which we do not. Hence what requires to be explained to them is the real injury done to them by the manner in which the Protectionists have for the last six years kept up a doubt as to whether the Free Trade policy would not be reversed, and the real impossibility of their giving anything by any change in the system of test ultimatums and the removal of local burthens. The speeches made by Disraeli are an indication of the direction at least in which the new Government will endeavour to move next session, and to prepare for the discussions which are to be expected in Parliament it would be very desirable that the public which is always very slow to understand such matters should have the truth explained to them by the Press. The chief points to be insisted upon are I think the following—1st. that a diminution of rates would really be an advantage not to the tenant but to the landowner—and 2nd. that the owners of land, far from having any claim to relief, are on the contrary singularly favoured in this country. It seems to be forgot that the land of this country was originally given subject to the burden of providing for all the expenditure of the State which in those days was met by the feudal proprietors who were obliged to furnish a military force, and the feudal system also recognised the obligation of the landowners to pay aids and services to defray the other expenses of those days. Local services of all kinds were from the earliest times provided for by the counties, parishes etc.—hence it is perfectly clear that land was acquired subject to all these charges, and to more than all these charges it is now liable. The money amount of rates has no doubt greatly increased, but in a far less proportion than the rents from which they are paid. There are some curious details in the *Agricultural Journal* showing how very much rents have increased even in the last century. Now the only thing that makes land more valuable in this Country than in the rich Prairies of Western America is the large population of this Country, and surely nothing can be more

just than that those charges and expenses which arise from the increase of population (which apart from any exertions on the part of the owner continually adds to the value of land) should continue to fall as they always have done on rents. Of course I speak only of that part of the rent of land which is strictly to be regarded as rent. I know that a large proportion of what is paid under the name is really interest for capital laid out. But rent properly so called seems to me of all sources of income that of which a proprietor may most fairly be demanded by the State to meet the necessary expenses of Government.

“ I shall be glad to hear from you occasionally as to what you may hear or think of the state of the country and of opinion. I am going to Howick the day after to-morrow and shall probably remain there till Parliament meets.

“ I hope you got my speech on the Militia Bill which I desired Ridgway to send you.

“ Yours very faithfully,  
“ GREY.

“ To JAMES WILSON, Esq., M.P.”

Lord Broughton also gives the same account of the general result of the elections.

“ ERLE STOKE,  
“ 11 July, 1852.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Thanks for your last about the County, but I am afraid that the victory in your borough would go but a very little way towards reconciling the farmers to another beating. My brother went to Ipswich without consulting anyone that I know of, and had no sort of chance from first to last, except he chose to pay, but they tell me he made a good fight as far as stirring up the good folks went.

“ It is a great disgrace to our two divisions that two members should be taken from one family—and such a family too. But I see no help for it. I would rather

vote for Stephen Mills or my galloping Major though he was your active enemy.

"If your Committee have anything like a jollification to celebrate your return they must permit me to send them a buck.

"With best compliments to your ladies,

"Sincerely yours,

"BROUGHTON."

"FONTAINVILLE,

"WESTBURY, WILTS.

"July 25th, 1852.

"MY DEAR LEWIS,

"I received your note of the 21st. I can quite understand the position which you felt and that you could not avoid contesting your County; and I must say that you fought a hard battle with great spirit and gallantry. I can well sympathise with you, for I assure you that nothing but a similar feeling would have induced me to meet and counteract the dirty work of a *four months'* incessant canvass, with such a combination against me as I had here. The labour and loss of time and the demoralizing demeaning truths that one had to encounter are too high a price to try even for success; and nothing but a sense of duty first to a great principle and party, and secondly to my friends here, as no other liberal but myself could have had the slightest chance, would have induced me to confront it. I fear there has been an amount of electoral demoralization during the last four months that will cling to the country for many years; but I hope the Derby-Beresford and other similar cases will at least expose the means by which liberal candidates have been defeated and Derbyites elected.

The ballot would no doubt cure many evils, but I fear it would introduce others of perhaps a graver importance. It would greatly detract from the public interest in Elections and I fear from public interest in politics and good government. It would go far to destroy that ardent public spirit which is no doubt our best security in the long run.



" I am very sorry to see Sir Geo. Grey's defeat, and the small majority makes one only feel the more. From a letter I had from Lord Grey two days ago, I expected a different result, though a very close run. I hope both he and yourself will secure seats immediately on the meeting of the House.

" Believe me,

" Dear Lewis,

" Yours truly,

" JAMES WILSON."

In the following winter Mr. G. Cornwall Lewis again attempted to obtain a seat, but was unsuccessful. My father writes :

" R. CLUB,

" Decbr. 8/52.

" MY DEAR LEWIS,

" We were all grieved and disappointed beyond expression on Saturday Night at the news brought by Telegraph from Peterboro': for in addition to the personal feelings which I in common with others had in the matter, we felt that a good man was lost to the public and a most inferior being put in his place. I suppose the true reason was the want of a little of that good management which at least seemed to consult the feelings of the Electors.

" I hope however that we lose you only for a short time. With my best regards to Lady Theresa and hoping that Mrs. Villiers is quite recovered,

" I am,

" Dear Lewis,

" Yours truly,

" JAMES WILSON.

" P.S. The Budget cannot stand.—J. W."

In 1853 G. C. Lewis's father died, and he succeeded to the baronetcy and his father's seat in Parliament for the Borough of Radnor, which he retained to the day of his death in 1863.

## CHAPTER XII

### DEFEAT OF LORD DERBY'S GOVERNMENT—COALITION GOVERNMENT FORMED—UNDER LORD ABERDEEN.

THE event in the Autumn of 1852 which for the time was of absorbing interest, was the death of the Duke of Wellington. No subject of the Queen it appears, had ever possessed the dominating position which the Duke held, not only in Society and in the political world, but with the people of England at large.

Diary E. Nov. 18 : " Mr. Greg, Mr. and Mrs. Sibeth, Mr. Hayter, Col. and Mrs. Phipps, were with us at the windows."

Dec. 9 : " Papa brought forward a motion on sugar. Spoke an hour and a half. Sir J. Pakington answered him. Admitted the beneficial effects of Free Trade policy and the motion was unanimously carried."

On Disraeli's budget many believed that the Government would be defeated, and eight days later, so it was.

Diary E. Dec. 17 : " News of the Government's defeat on the Budget by a majority of 19 : at 4 A.M. House adjourned till Monday next. Ministers resigned to-day. Read Disraeli's defence and Gladstone's attack."

Dec. 24 : " Papa and Mr. Campbell [later Lord Stratheden and Campbell] arrived by last train. We stirred the Christmas pudding."

The Derby Government was defeated, but who was to reign in its stead? Lord Palmerston had turned out the Whig Government, but the Court was not yet prepared to forget and forgive him for past misdemeanours. On December 22 Greville writes from The Grove that Lord Clarendon told him that the Duke of Bedford " had

had a confidential communication from Stockmar, asking for his advice as to whom the Queen should send for if the Government was beaten and if Derby resigned. Clarendon advised him to recommend Lansdowne and Aberdeen, and he wrote to that effect. The very morning after the division, just as they were going out hunting, the hounds meeting at the Torr, a Queen's messenger arrived with another letter from Stockmar, requesting that the Duke would communicate more fully his sentiments at the present crisis. This messenger was ordered to keep himself secret, and not to let his mission transpire. The Duke, under Clarendon's advice, wrote a long letter back, setting forth in detail all that had, not long ago, passed about Palmerston and Lansdowne, and his notions of the difficulties and exigencies of the present time. He said that it was evident that Lord John could not make a Government, and that he was himself conscious of it." Resulting from this correspondence Lord Lansdowne and Lord Aberdeen were sent for ; Lord Lansdowne, as usual, gave what was accepted as a valid excuse for not undertaking the task, and Lord Aberdeen consented to do his best to form a Government.

Again to quote Greville : " Clarendon writes me word that the meeting at Woburn between John Russell, Aberdeen, Newcastle, and himself, has been altogether satisfactory, everybody ready to give and take, and anxious to promote the common cause, without any selfish views or prejudices. Newcastle is particularly reasonable. . . . There is no disposition to take in Cobden or Bright, but they would not object to Molesworth. Palmerston, it appears, would not at first serve under Lord Aberdeen, but eventually was persuaded by Lansdowne to do so. Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet therefore consisted of Whigs, Peelites and one Radical."

Earl of Aberdeen . . .	<i>First Lord of the Treasury.</i>
Lord Cranworth . . .	<i>Lord Chancellor.</i>
Earl Granville . . .	<i>Lord President of the Council.</i>
The Duke of Argyll . . .	<i>Lord Privy Seal.</i>

Mr. Gladstone . . .	<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer.</i>
Viscount Palmerston . . .	<i>Home Secretary of State.</i>
Lord John Russell (and later Earl of Clarendon)	<i>Foreign Secretary.</i>
Sir James Graham . . .	<i>First Lord of the Admiralty.</i>
Mr. Sidney Herbert . . .	<i>Secretary at War.</i>
Sir Charles Wood . . .	<i>President of the Indian Board.</i>
Sir William Molesworth . . .	<i>First Commissioner of Works.</i>
The Marquis of Lans- downe . . . . .	<i>Without Office.</i>

On Christmas Day, 1852, the Duke of Newcastle wrote the following letter to my father :

*Private*

" 17 PORTMAN SQUARE,  
" 25 December 1852.

" DEAR MR. WILSON,

" Lord Aberdeen is so overwhelmed with letters and interviews that he has asked me to assist him with his present heavy labour.

He is very anxious to obtain your valuable assistance in the official arrangements which he is now making.

As it is possible that his numerous engagements may prevent his seeing you before the Meeting of the House on Monday (though he will be anxious to make your acquaintance as soon after as possible,) can you without inconvenience call upon me on Monday morning before 12 o'clock ?

" I am, dear Mr. Wilson,

" Yours very sincerely,

" NEWCASTLE."

My father wrote in answer :

*Private*

" FONTAINVILLE,  
" WESTBURY, WILTS.  
" December 26, 1852.

" MY DEAR DUKE,

" I am favoured with your note of yesterday. I go to town by the first train in the morning which ought to reach at  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 11, so I hope to have the

pleasure of calling upon you before the hour you name, 12 o'clock.

As I have long looked forward to the formation of such a Ministry as Lord Aberdeen has now, I am sure at a great personal sacrifice undertaken to construct, as the only means of securing to the country an efficient and permanent government, I will only add that I shall regard it as a great privilege to have it in my power to facilitate his arrangements, in any way that I shall deem really useful to the public service.

“ Believe me, my dear Duke,

“ Most sincerely yours,

“ JAMES WILSON.

“ THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.”

Diary E. Dec. 27 : “ Papa went to town at 8, and had an interview with the Duke of Newcastle about his appointment.”

Dec. 31 : “ Letter from Papa stating that his appointment to be Financial Secretary to the Treasury was settled.”

In Walter Bagehot's Memoir is found in what consisted the duties of this Office and how eminently successfully my father fulfilled them.

“ On the formation of the Aberdeen Government he [Mr. Wilson] accepted the office of Financial Secretary to the Treasury, which he continued to hold for five years, until the dissolution of Lord Palmerston's administration in the spring of 1857, and upon his efficiency in which his remarkable reputation as an official administrator was mainly based.

“ The Financial Secretaryship of the Treasury is by no means one of the most conspicuous offices in the Government, and but few persons who have not observed political life closely are at all aware either of its difficulty or of its importance. The office is, indeed, a curious example of the half-grotesque way in which the abstract theory of our historical Constitution contrasts with its practical working. In the theory of the Constitution—

a theory which may still be found in popular compendiums—there is an officer called the Lord High Treasurer, who is to advise the Crown and be responsible to the country for all public moneys. In practice, there is no such functionary : by law his office is “in commission.” Certain Lords Commissioners are supposed to form a Board at which financial subjects are discussed, and which is responsible for their due administration. In practice, there is no such discussion and no such responsibility. The functions of the Junior Lords of the Treasury, though not entirely nominal, are but slight. The practical administration of our expenditure is vested in the First Lord of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Financial Secretary of the Treasury. And of these three the constitutional rule is, that the First Lord of the Treasury is only officially responsible for decisions in detail when he chooses to interfere in those decisions. Accordingly, when a First Lord, as was the case with Sir R. Peel, takes a great interest in financial questions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer does the usual work of the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of the Treasury has in comparison nothing to do. But when, as was the case in the Governments of Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister takes no special interest in finance, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is very fully employed in the transaction of his own proper business, and an enormous mass of work, some of it of extreme importance, falls to the Secretary of the Treasury. Of late years, the growth of the miscellaneous civil expenditure of the country has greatly augmented that work, great as it was before. In general, it may be said that the whole of the financial detail of our national expenditure is more or less controlled by the Secretary of the Treasury ; that much of it is very closely controlled by him ; and that he has vast powers of practical discretion, if only he be a man of ability, industry and courage.

“For such an office as this Mr. Wilson had very peculiar qualifications. He was perfectly sure to be

right in a plain case ; and by far the larger part of the ordinary business of the Government, as of individuals, consists of plain cases. A man who is thoroughly sure to decide effectually and correctly the entire mass of easy, obvious cases, is a safer master of practical life than one eminently skilled in difficult cases, but deficient in the more rudimentary qualification. Nor is the power of certainly deciding plain cases rightly, by any means very common, especially among very intellectual men. A certain taint of subtlety, a certain tendency to be wise above the case in hand, mars the practical efficiency of many men whose conversation and whose powers would induce us to expect that they would be very efficient. Mr. Wilson had not a particle of these defects. He struck off each case with a certain sledge-hammer efficiency, and every plain case at least with infallible accuracy.

“The archives of the Treasury contain countless minutes from his pen, many of them written with what most men would call rapidity, just while the matter was waiting for decision, and on all sorts of subjects, many of them very complicated ones—yet it may be doubted whether any one of those minutes contains a single sentence not thoroughly and conspicuously clear. The same excellence which has been shown in countless articles in the *Economist* appears in his business-like documents. Wherever his leading articles were written and under whatever circumstances—and some of the most elaborate of them were written under rather strange circumstances (for he could catch up a pen and begin to write on the most involved topic, at any time, in any place, and as a casual observer would think, without any premeditation)—but wherever and however these articles might be written, it may be safely asserted that they do not contain a sentence which a man of business need read twice over, or which he would not find easily and certainly intelligible. At the Treasury it was the same. However complicated and involved the matter to be decided might be—however much it might be loaded with detail or

perplexed by previous controversy—Mr. Wilson never failed to make immediately clear the exact opinion he formed upon it, the exact grounds upon which he formed it, and the exact course of action which he thought should be adopted upon it. Many persons well acquainted with practical life will be disposed to doubt whether extreme accuracy of decision is not almost a secondary merit as compared with a perfect intelligibility. In many cases it may be better to have a decision which every one can understand, though with some percentage of error, than an elaborately accurate decision of which the grounds and reasons are not easily grasped, and a plan of action which from its refined complexity, is an inevitable mystery to the greater number of practical persons. But, putting aside this abstract discussion, we say without fear of contradiction or of doubt, that Mr. Wilson added to his almost infallible power of deciding plain cases, an infallible certainty of being entirely intelligible in complicated cases. Men of business will be able to imagine the administrative capacity certain to be produced by the union of extreme excellence in both qualities.

“One subsidiary faculty that Mr. Wilson possessed, which was very useful to him in the multifarious business of the Treasury, was an extraordinary memory. On his own subjects and upon transactions in which he had taken a decisive part, he seemed to recollect anything and everything. He was able to answer questions as to business transacted at the Treasury after the lapse of months and even of years without referring to the papers, and with a perfect certainty of substantial accuracy. He would say, without the slightest effort and without the slightest idea that he was doing anything extraordinary: ‘Such and such a person came to me at the Treasury, and said so and so, and this is what I said to him.’ And it is quite possible that he might remember the precise sums of money which were the subject of conversation. A more useful memory for the purpose of life was perhaps never possessed by any one. In the case of great literary



memories, such as that of Lord Macaulay and of others, the fortunate possessor has a continued source of pleasurable and constantly recurring recollections ; he has a full mind constantly occupied with its own contents, recurring to its long-loved passages from its favourite authors constantly and habitually. But Mr. Wilson never recurred to the transactions in which he had been engaged except when he was asked about them ; he lived as little in the past perhaps as is possible for an intellectual person ; but the moment the spring was touched by a question or by some external necessity, all the details of the past transactions started into his memory completely, vividly, and perfectly. He had thus the advantage of always remembering his business, and also the advantage of never being burdened by it. Very few persons can ever have had in equal measure the two merits of a fresh judgment and a full mind.

“ Mr. Wilson’s memory was likewise assisted by a very even judgment. It was easier to him to remember what he had done, because, if he had to do the same thing again, he would be sure to do it in precisely the same way. He was not an intolerant person, but the qualities he tolerated least easily were flightiness and inconsistency of purpose. He had furnished his mind, so to say, with fixed principles, and he hated the notion of a mind which was unfurnished.

“ All these mental qualities taken together go far to make up the complete idea of a perfect administrator of miscellaneous financial business, such as that of the English Treasury now is. And Mr. Wilson had the physical qualities also. An iron constitution which feared no labour, enabled him to accomplish with ease and unconsciously an amount of work which few men would not have shrunk from. In the country, where his habits were necessarily more obvious, he habitually spent the whole day from eleven till eight, with some slight interval for a ride in the middle of the day, over his Treasury bag ; and as such was his notion of holiday, it may be easily conceived that in London, when he had

still more to do in a morning, and had to spend almost every evening in the House of Commons, his work was greater than an ordinary constitution could have borne. And it was work of a rather peculiar kind. Some men of routine habits spend many hours over their work, but do not labour very intensely at one time ; other men of more excitable natures work impulsively, and clear off everything they do by eager efforts in a short time. But Mr. Wilson in some sense did both. Although his hours of labour were so very protracted, yet if a casual observer happened to enter his library at any moment, he would find him with his blind down to exclude all objects of external interest, his brow working eagerly, his eye fixed intently on the figures before him, and, very likely, his rapid pen passing fluently over the paper. He had all the labour of the chronic worker, and all the labour of the impulsive worker too. And those admitted to his intimacy used to wonder that he was never tired. He came out of his library in an evening more ready for vigorous conversation—more alive to all subjects of daily interest—more quick to gain new information—more ready to expound complicated topics, than others who had only passed an easy day of idleness or ordinary exertion.

“ By the aid of this varied combination of powers, Mr. Wilson was able to grapple with the miscellaneous financial business of the country with very unusual efficiency. Most men would have found the office work of the Secretary of the Treasury quite enough, but he was always ready rather to take away labour and responsibilities from other departments than to throw off any upon them. Nor was his efficiency confined to the labours of his office. The Financial Secretary of the Treasury has a large part of the financial business of the House of Commons under his control, and is responsible for its accurate arrangement. The passing a measure through the House of Commons is a matter of detail ; and in the case of the financial measures of the Government, a large part of this—the duller part, and the most

unenvied—falls to the Secretary of the Treasury. He is expected to be the right hand of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in all the most wearisome part of the financial business of the House of Commons ; and we have the best authority for stating that, under two Chancellors of the Exchequer very different from one another in many respects, Mr. Wilson performed this part of his duties with singular efficiency, zeal, and judgment.

“ The Financial Secretary of the Treasury is likewise expected to answer all questions asked in the House as to the civil estimates—a most miscellaneous collection of figures, as any one may satisfy himself by glancing at them. Mr. Wilson’s astonishing memory and great power of lucid exposition enabled him to fulfil this part of his duty with very remarkable efficiency. He gave the dates and the figures without any note, and his exposition was uniformly simple, emphatic, and intelligible, even on the most complicated subjects. The great rule, he used to say, was to answer exactly the exact question ; if you attempted an elaborate exposition, collateral issues were necessarily raised, a debate ensued, and the time of the House was lost.

“ Mr. Wilson’s mercantile knowledge and mercantile sympathies were found to be of much use in the consolidation of the Customs in 1853, and he took great interest in settling a scheme for the payment of the duties in cheques instead of bank-notes, by which the circulation has been largely economised and traders greatly benefited. During the autumn of 1857, his long study of the currency question, and his first-hand conservancy with the business of the City, were valuable aids to the Administration of the day in the anxious responsibilities and rapidly shifting scenes of an extreme commercial crisis. It would be impossible to notice the number of measures in which he took part as Secretary of the Treasury, and equally impossible to trace his precise share in them. That office ensures to its holder substantial power, but can rarely give him legislative fame.”

On reading Walter Bagehot's Memoir, Mr. George Arbuthnot wrote :<sup>1</sup>

“ TREASURY,  
“ 1 Dec. 1860.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have read very carefully the passages in your Memoir of Mr. Wilson which relate to his work in the Treasury, and I see nothing whatever that requires correction. I think however that they are susceptible of some addition. You might, with justice to his memory, refer to the very cordial manner in which he discussed subjects with those who acted under him, listened to their objections or suggestions, and often governed himself on them. While he worked as no other Secretary of the Treasury ever worked, so far from depressing others, he encouraged their exertions, co-operated with them, and was always ready to bear hearty testimony to the merits of deserving officers. For myself, it would be very gratifying to me, if you made some allusion to the generous spirit in which he forgot temporary animosities which are too apt to arise among earnest men who differ in opinion, and which spirit prevented him from allowing them to operate to the prejudice of the public service. He was eminently tolerant. In my own case, after differences which were enough to ruffle the temper of any man, he soon allowed all personal feeling to subside, and it has been a great consolation to me to reflect that, previous to his departure for India, I had the opportunity of confidential and unreserved communication with him on matters of great public interest, and that we parted with as much cordiality as if there had been no unpleasant passages between us. I had several letters from him from India written in the same spirit, and in the last which I received from him, he enquired

<sup>1</sup> George Arbuthnot (1802-1865) was a distinguished permanent Civil Servant. When 18 years of age Lord Liverpool made him a junior clerk to the Treasury, and in that department he served till he died, at which time he held the appointment of Auditor of the Civil List. Had previously been Private Secretary to Sir Charles Wood for four years when Sir Charles was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

about several officers in this Department with whom he had been thrown principally in contact, expressing great interest in matters affecting their prospects of advancement.

“ Yours very truly,

“ G. ARBUTHNOT.

“ W. BAGEHOT, ESQ.”

Lord Welby sent me the following tribute to my father's work as Financial Secretary of the Treasury to include in the life I wrote of Walter Bagehot :

“ 11 STRATTON STREET,

“ 12th January, 1913.

“ DEAR MRS. BARRINGTON,

“ I entered the Treasury as a junior clerk in the summer of 1856. Your father was then Financial Secretary of the Treasury, having been appointed to that post at the end of 1852, when Lord Aberdeen formed the Coalition Government. Mr. Wilson remained Financial Secretary under Lord Palmerston, and he went out with him in 1858. He had therefore an unusually long tenure of that post, I think longer than any one since the Reform Bill. In the 'fifties the post of Financial Secretary to the Treasury was, if not the first, at least as good as any out of the Cabinet. At that time the functions of Government were very restricted, and the middle-class régime, then supreme, had no liking for a widening of Government interference. The Administrative Departments, then the Home Office, the Board of Trade, the Poor Laws Board, were not in prominence. On the other hand, the country was only beginning its great recovery from the calamities and the sufferings which the war had inflicted on the people. The Public was really interested in Finance. Sir Robert Peel had been the great economical Minister of the Treasury, and the Treasury power of controlling expenditure was very great. The Treasury itself was divided into two branches, (1) Financial, (2) Control.

“ The Chancellor of the Exchequer was the Executive

head of the Treasury, and the Financial Secretary of the Treasury was his lieutenant.

“Chancellors were chiefly interested in the finance side, and the Financial Secretary of the Treasury was contented with the control of expenditure. This control was summed up in the formula, ‘Treasury consent is necessary to every measure increasing or tending to increase the public expenditure.’ The powers actually exercised by the Financial Secretary were very large. He was in the main judge as to questions of control which should be reserved for the Chancellor. Your father wielded these powers with great freedom and effect for between five and six years. A rapid and indefatigable worker, he was the chief organiser of the public service in that time. These were days before shorthand and typewriting, and I remember with wonder the extent and amount of the minutes and memoranda which he wrote with his own hand. I have said that I entered the Treasury as a junior in 1856. I had, therefore, no personal knowledge of Mr. Wilson at that time, but for years and years—in organisation of the service—the lines which he had laid down were, so to speak, a bulwark of fortification, and what he called the ‘forma paper’ of a subject, that is its file, commonly commenced with a remark in his rapid but somewhat difficult-to-follow hand. He was a keen practical man of business, and I remember a reform of the Treasury Department which he carried out, turning a sleepy office of eighteenth-century type, into what was, for that time, an active office with greater opportunity for the clerks to learn their work and fit themselves for responsibility. Your father served, during their Ministry, under Mr. Gladstone till 1855, and then under Sir George Cornwall Lewis. The story was that when he was pressing the Treasury reform on Sir G. Cornwall Lewis (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), who was not an active administrator, the latter said, ‘You see, Wilson, you are an animal, I am only a vegetable.’

“Your father was not only an active and very capable

financial administrator, but he took great interest, as you know, in Currency questions, taking the side opposed to Peel, Overstone and Sir Charles Wood.

"Looking back from the beginning of the twentieth century, I have always considered your father the most vigorous and most efficient Financial Secretary of the Treasury we have had. Perhaps there might be question between him and Huskisson, though I feel convinced that as administrator he was the best.

"Yours very truly,

"WELBY."

Fifty-five years after my father's death I received the following letter from Sir Charles Rivers Wilson :<sup>1</sup>

"9, BERKELEY SQUARE,

"April, 1915.

"You will hardly remember me for you were very young when I first visited Claverton Manor in the year 1856. I was Private Secretary to your father and continued to hold that position until the change of Government in 1858. I look back upon my connection with Mr. Wilson with great pleasure and gratitude to him—as one of the chief opportunities of my life. . . .

"As regards Mr. James Wilson, it is not too much for me to say that I have always venerated his memory, his kindness to me, his conversation, the patient trouble he took to instruct me—for I was quite young in the Treasury and a stranger to him until Lord Palmerston asked him to take me as his secretary. I have in the course of a long experience known many men of high business reputations and achievements but never have I met his equal. No other man who ever lived could have accomplished what he did in the too short period of his ministry in India—and what a tragedy it was that so brilliant and useful a life should have been so abruptly

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, subsequent to his being my father's private secretary, held the same post with Lord Palmerston and Mr. Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke) when Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gladstone and Disraeli. He won distinction as a financier in Egypt and in America.

terminated. I could not refrain from writing you these few lines for not only have I always cherished a feeling of real affection for your father but I always recognised with gratitude how much I am indebted to him and his kindly training for whatever success I may have met with in life. . . .

“ Sincerely yours,  
“ C. RIVERS WILSON.

“ I have an excellent engraved likeness of your father which hangs in my house and which I often contemplate with veneration and affection.”

Parliament met early in February 1853, but the family move from Fontainville to Hertford Street was not accomplished till March 2. Similar dinner parties and evening assemblies at the houses of the Ministers of State took place as in previous years.

Diary E. Good Friday : “ Duke of Wellington called and gave us twelve tickets for Apsley House.”

26th : “ Went at 2 to Apsley House with which we were much interested.”

The business which chiefly occupied my father during the early weeks of the Session was that of assisting Gladstone to frame his Budget, which was produced on Monday, April 18. My father worked out the separate items with Gladstone either in conversation or by correspondence.

Diary E. March 6 : “ Papa worked all day solving the Income Tax question.”

Diary J. April 16 : “ Got part of the Budget out of Papa.”

Diary E. April 18 : “ Lady Theresa Lewis spent an hour here ” [without a doubt to discuss the all-absorbing topic—the Budget !] “ Gladstone brought forward his Budget. Made a splendid speech of four hours and a half.”

Greville writes : “ He had kept his secret so well that nobody had the least idea what it was to be, only it oozed out that the Income Tax was not to be differen-



tiated. He spoke for five hours, and by universal consent it was one of the grandest displays and most able financial statements that ever was heard in the House of Commons ; a great scheme, boldly, skilfully and honestly devised, disdaining popular clamour and pressure from without and the execution of it absolute perfection." With the merit of the speech as a performance my father obviously could claim no particle of share, but with the framing of the matter he could justly claim a very important share.

As is well known Gladstone was a born orator and could, with convincing eloquence, speak for hours with unremitting power and with no sign of weariness or fatigue, and on this particular occasion he seems almost to have surpassed himself. But the Budget had been a work of arduous labour to prepare, and in this preparation he had undoubtedly been greatly assisted by my father. Letters written from Mr. Gladstone to him during the weeks previous to its production have been preserved.

" DEAR MR. WILSON,

" Lord Aberdeen and I saw a West Indian Deputation to-day and gave them to understand *inter alia* that the intentions of the Government as to Sugar Refining would probably be declared at the time when the Financial arrangements of the year are announced.

" I remain,

" Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) " W. E. GLADSTONE."

*Private &  
Confidential.*

" MILTON HOUSE.

" Ap. 2, 53.

" MY DEAR MR. WILSON,

" I have read your letter and the paper on the Terminable Annuities : and I presume that Mr. Maitland would come a great way towards meeting you by admitting that on his principle the tax ought to be perpetual in order to make it exactly just.

" That, however, is not the principle on which I find it possible, or at least satisfactory, to deal with the subject.

The mathematicians appear to me to be right as against the actuaries : but I like Mr. Babbage's mode of statement much better than that of Mr. Warburton which, as I understand it, is the purely scientific one.

" I am, however, persuaded that there is no consideration of abstract justice applicable to the question which is sufficiently determinate and clear to be made available for settling it. But I am also one of those who lean to the opinion that the tax ought not to be an ordinary part of our fiscal system : but that it should be resorted to from time to time for adequate (and to be adequate they must be very great) purposes, and dropped when those purposes shall have been attained.

" I am glad we are agreed in looking at the question so far from our point of view that we both ask ourselves what mode of proceeding will best preserve the integrity and efficacy of this great financial Engine ?

" My opinion is that the present unpopularity of the tax arises mainly from the fact that of late years the association of it in the public mind with great and beneficial reforms has not been duly preserved ; and I am very doubtful whether except by means of such association with public benefit or with necessity the tax either equal or differentiated will ever for any length of time be endured.

" I do, however, really hope that the Legacy or Succession Duty offers an opening for *some* mitigation of the difficulties of the question : not so much between realty and personalty, as between property on the one hand, which is thought to be too much favoured by the Income Tax, and intelligence and skill on the other, upon which that Tax is conceived to bear too hard.

" It appears to me that at this moment, upon the whole, money and stock in trade are more favoured, in the strict sense, by our fiscal system than either land and visible property, or intelligence and labour. A change in the Legacy Duties might, I think, do something towards the cure of more than an anomaly.

" If I write shortly, and do not enter into detail, or

if at any moment my communications with you seem less full than might be desirable I am sure you will kindly ascribe it only to the multitude and weight of subjects which are now in motion, as compared with the deficiency of my strength to meet them. Even memory sometimes feels as if it would wholly give way under the pressure.

“ I remain,

“ Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) “ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

Mr. Gladstone evidently had not, as has at some times been stated, a very strong constitution. Though he could speak for hours together with unwearied eloquence, it must have been more the inspiration of oratory that enabled him to do so than any unusual strength. It was on account of health that Mr. Gladstone was ordered not to dine late when he had to attend the House after dinner, and that that most unwholesome of meals, high tea, was invented. We suffered from it at home on the evenings when my father did not return to dinner.

In one letter Mr. Gladstone wrote to my father :

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ Unless there is a prospect of progress with my matters to-night I wish not to come down to-night as bodily rest is very useful to me. I have promised not to take the Customs' Committee nor the Spirits after twelve. If therefore at twelve you have not reached either of these will you kindly put them off till Monday—and also my two Bills. The business for Monday should stand—

1. Income Tax 3.
  2. Customs (Resolutions) Committee.
  3. Excise Spirit D. Comm.
  4. Customs do. do.
- Succession Duty over to Thursday.

“ It has just occurred to me whether the Savings Banks and Annuities Bills will not require a preliminary Committee since they, one or both, authorise (I apprehend) cheques on the Cus. Fund.

“ Perhaps you would ask Mr. Jones, and if this appears even probably to stand so it would be right to set up a Committee for Thursday on the Acts—and this Committee might perhaps be put next to the Orders I have received, for it is important to get them in.

“ Mr. Hayter will send to me if India is off before twelve.

“ Sincerely yours,  
(Sgd.) “ W. E. GLADSTONE.”

However the Budget was prepared, and its manifold points fully discussed without any hindrance on the score of Mr. Gladstone’s want of health.

“ D. ST., *Ap.* 2. 53.

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ Sir James Graham and I are inclined to think that no sum should be taken in miscellaneous Estimates this year for the harbours of Jersey or Alderney.

“ If nothing of this kind has yet been printed, then it would be convenient to wait a few days before printing that number of the Estimates, unless it is required for early discussion. Within that time we hope to go into the question.

“ Sincerely yours,  
(Sgd.) “ W. E. GLADSTONE.

“ Could you come to me on Wednesday at four—when I hope to have Sir J. Graham, Mr. Charles Wood, and Mr. Cardwell, on the subject of the term Duties.”

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ I am much obliged by your note and labours about the Supplemental Votes of last Autumn ; your announcement is consolatory. What I should be glad to know further, *when* you can tell me positively is—

“ I. Will the amounts of these votes, in the upper part of the April Balance Sheet, stand as part of the Expenditure of the year, under their proper heads, or as part of the surplus which will balance the Expenditure

with the Income? Would the surplus in that account have been the same, if those sums had never been voted, or will it be less by the amount of them?

"2. In the lower part of the Balance Sheet for April, will they form part of the Balances in the Exchequer on April 5 or will they not?"

"Sincerely yours,  
(Sgd.) "W. E. GLADSTONE.

"D. St. Ap. 4. 53."

"DEAR MR. WILSON,

"Enclosed is a note from Mr. Bromley.

"His cause will not fail from want of being somewhat pertinaciously pushed.

"I am not sure whether we have yet taken any measures for the examination and checking of the calculations in his talk. I do not know that the case depends on them but they form a material element in it; and they must be thoroughly examined as to their basis, and not only (but also) as to the deductions from it: of course by one or more of the most competent persons, who are to be sought I presume among the actuaries.

"I remain,

"Sincerely yours,  
(Sgd.) "W. E. GLADSTONE.

"D. St. Ap. 4. 53."

My father wrote to Gladstone<sup>1</sup> two days previous to his bringing the Budget forward:

"TREASURY CHAMBERS,  
"April 16th/53.

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"Can I in any shape whatever be of any service to you in preparing or arranging anything for you for Monday? If so command me at any hour.

"I am not sorry upon the whole that my customs

<sup>1</sup> Miss Gladstone kindly allowed me to copy this letter and others written by my father to Mr. Gladstone, and preserved by him, when I was writing the Life of Walter Bagehot.

statement is postponed : it will now come as an appendix to your Budget and before any discussion will have ensued. I have arranged with Lord John for Thursday night.

" Most truly yours,  
(Sgd.) " JAMES WILSON."

" Diary E. April 21 : " Papa came home at 3 and took Julia and me to the House to hear his statement on Customs Reform. He spoke three hours. His plan was received with unanimous approbation from all sides of the House. We stayed till 10.30."

Many minor questions were dealt with in Mr. Gladstone's Budget—the indirect tax on soap was repealed, and on a hundred articles of food,—apples being one. The tea duty was to be gradually reduced to a shilling in the pound ; the main questions dealt with, however, were the Income Tax and the Succession Duties. The Income Tax then stood at sevenpence in the pound. Mr. Gladstone maintained that the Income Tax should be levied in the time of war only, and not at that moment contemplating that war was not a far-off calamity, he proposed gradually to reduce it and that in 1860 it should be entirely abolished. The Succession Duties displeased the land proprietors and pleased the manufacturing classes. Lord Aberdeen, however, got them passed in the Lords, which was considered a triumph.

The Budget was passed as it had been produced with the exception of one item. Mr. Milner Gibson, who with Mr. Bright represented Manchester, had, previous to the announcement of the Budget, carried a motion for the abolition of the duty on newspaper advertisements.

14th : " Mr. Greg called after breakfast with Monckton Milnes. Laura came at 6, Mr. Greg at 8 and we all went to the House of Commons. Milner Gibson's motion on the tax on newspaper advertisements. Heard Bright, Cobden, Disraeli, Sidney Herbert, Lord John Russell. Papa came home with us at 12."

In his Budget Mr. Gladstone proposed that the tax

should be reduced from eighteenpence to sixpence, but the Government being again beaten in Committee the duty was entirely taken off. During that session Lord Palmerston as Home Secretary distinguished himself by successfully achieving work of a serious and most useful character. He instituted Winter Assizes in order to afford the means of more frequent trials of prisoners, he carried a Bill for the amendment of the Factory Acts for the protection of children, and worked with much effect on the important question of sanitary reform. It was during this Session also that through Mr. Gladstone's efforts the first Civil Service Commission was appointed. The report was in favour of open competition for the Civil Service in England, as had been already established for the candidates for Civil appointments in India. In the debates on all these questions my father took a part.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CRIMEAN WAR

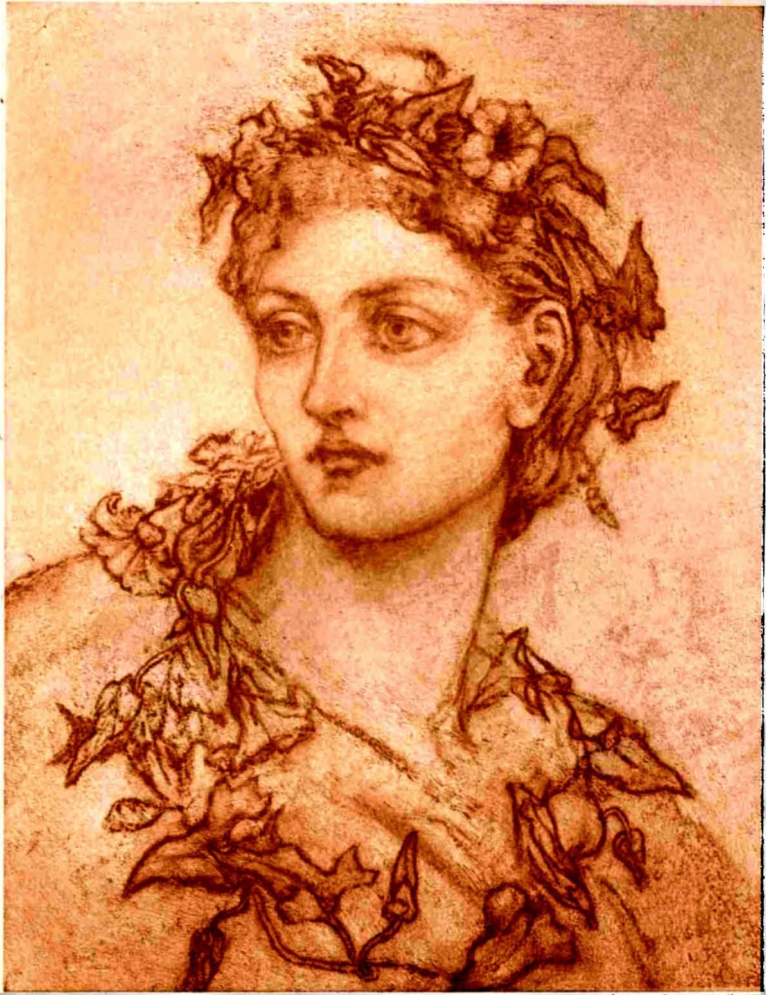
ON the day after my father made his notable speech on Customs Reform, Diary E. "Ball at Lady Graham's (Admiralty). Magnificent party. Perfect galaxy of beauty. Lady Lavinia Byng, Miss Ashworth and Miss Hobhouse."<sup>1</sup>

My dear sister might well have included herself in this galaxy, for she also was beautiful—not only in the prejudiced eyes of a sister but by others, as the following testifies :

Diary E. : "Dinner party of 18. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, Colonel and Mrs. Phipps, Mr. F. Peel, Mr. and Mrs. Gardner, Sir William and Miss Somerville, Lord Ernest Bruce, Mr. Brand, Mr. Russell and Sir Richard Bethell. I sat between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Frederick Peel. After dinner about sixty people." Though only thirteen I came down to these evening parties. On this occasion I was sitting with my mother on a sofa and Mr. Frederick Peel and Mr. Boxall, the Royal Academician, were standing by, and, though talking to her, were gazing fixedly at my sister Eliza. Suddenly Mr. Peel exclaimed enthusiastically, "*But—*

<sup>1</sup> I remember, as a child, the last named beauty, Lord Broughton's daughter, when she called on my mother at Fontainville from Erle Stoke in 1840. She told my mother that she wanted to see "the little ones," so we three were marshalled from the schoolroom into the drawing-room, where sat the beautiful lady on a sofa. She was a brunette and had what in those days were named aquiline features. She was attired in puce-coloured cloth, and her appearance struck my child's imagination as rarely distinguished. Many years after she reappeared within my horizon as Lady Dorchester when she and her husband were intimate friends of my husband's cousin George, Viscount Barrington, and were constant visitors at Beckett.





Emilie T. Wilson del. & sculp.

Sketch from memory of Elizabeth Wilson  
by her sister Emilie T. Wilson

Mrs. Wilson, your daughter is *beautiful*—she is *beautiful*! How rejoiced was I to hear thus recognised what I had always felt to be so true! But never was beautiful woman less conscious of her beauty or who ever tried less to make others recognise it than did my sister! Vanity was a foible non-existent in her nature. I remember her being likened to the handsome Lady Maidstone, but it was more in their colouring than in their features that lay any resemblance. Among the Halicarnassus fragments in the British Museum is a Greek head that might well have been modelled from my sister Eliza. On one evening, when she was being dressed in blue tarlatan and wreaths of convolvulus to go to a dinner-party at Lady Granville's, I was struck especially with her beauty, and some years later tried to make a record of it as I then saw it from memory.

Diary E. April 27: "Rode with Papa and Emy. Papa and Mr. Lowe went to a dinner given by the Indian Directors to celebrate the opening of the Bombay Railway. Papa fetched me for a party at Mrs. Sidney Herbert's."

May 11th: "Sir G. Cornwall Lewis breakfasted with us and gave us the whole history of the Whig party from Sir Robert Walpole's time, as shown by the Greville and Bedford papers. Mr. Greg dined here. Talked of stories told by Sir Jonah Barrington. Went at 11 to a ball at Lady Clarendon's, Foreign Office. Very fine."

May 23rd: "Papa has been ill three days. Dr. Dickson called in. Sir John Herschel sat some time with him."

24th: "Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Headlam called on Papa."

My father's constitution was not, as has often been asserted, uniformly robust. His great power of working for many hours together, without apparent fatigue, arose more, I am convinced, from his strength of will and to the intense interest and pleasure he took in any work which he undertook, than from any special physical health.

Diary E. June 4 : "Papa dined at Trinity House. Prince Albert (Master) in the chair. Mamma and I to Adrienne Lecouvreur, Rachel, Raphael and Regnier."

12th : "Mr. Villiers dined with us. Talked of Customs and Reforms. Germany in 1848. Frankfurt's Parliament etc."

14th : "Went to Drawing room. Mamma's dress white silk petticoat with Brussels flounces, blue, white and silver train. Ours white gauze and silver petticoats, white silk train with lilac flowers on petticoat and heads."

15th : "Went to Queen's Ball. Very beautiful. Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe, lovely. Got home at 3."

July 1st : "Dressed early for Queen's Ball. Papa obliged to remain at the House."

6th : "Dinner party at home. 2 Trevelyans, 2 Fords, 2 Blacketts, Dow. Lady Molesworth, Layard, Harvey, 2 Thorpes, Mr. Greg, Mrs. Lowe. Evening party very full. Over at one o'clock."

9th : "Went with Papa to dinner at Sir J. and Lady Matheson's—most elegant party. Dinner à la Russe."

16th : "Papa dined at Lord Aberdeen's."

July 20 : "Emma [von Forkenbeck, a schoolfellow of my sisters' who was staying the season with them], Emy and I rode with Papa to the Treasury and then in Rotten Row. Papa, Julia, Emma and I to Princess' Theatre—Macbeth. Then to Attorney General's."

23rd : "Mamma still ill, so I went in her stead with Papa to the Ministerial dinner at the Mansion House. Sat between him and Mr. Waddington. Mr. F. Peel on Papa's right. Almost all the Cabinet Ministers spoke, but very prosily. Dropped Papa at Lord Ashburton's."

27th : "Strike of cabmen, none to be seen."

August 3 : "Had a semi-official gentlemen's dinner party."

August 6 : "Julia, Emy and I started at eight-thirty for Chobham with Capt. Crofton. Queen at the Camp. Redoubt stormed and a mine sprung under it. Went

to 7th Fusiliers' tent to lunch with Capt. Reginald Shipley who showed us over the camp." This review marked a novelty in ladies' attire. I remember the three beautiful Ladies Hamilton appearing on the ground in what was ever after called Chobham hats : these started the fashion of hats being worn by ladies instead of bonnets.

11th : "Got up at 4. Mr. Hayter (Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury) called for us at 5 A.M. to go to the Naval Review at Portsmouth. Returned at 12, Mr. A'Court with us."

13th : "Papa went to the Whitebait dinner at Gravesend, Lord Palmerston in the chair—afterwards to Lady Palmerston's."

24th : "Papa went to Boulogne to choose a house."

There was no Fontainville that autumn or winter. We migrated first to Boulogne, where my three sisters from Cologne spent their holidays with us, and where, among other friends, were Sir Howard and Lady Elphinstone and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean.

Diary E. Sept. 28 : "Papa, Mamma, Julia and I breakfasted with the Andrews to see the Emperor open the Pont du Barrage."

Most of the month of October was spent with Mr. Greg at the Craig, his charming place above the Lake of Windermere. The Matthew Arnolds and M. Eber, a distinguished Hungarian refugee, were among Mr. Greg's guests. M. Eber discoursed on the Hungarian war and the Siege of Buda Pesth. On our way south we stopped at Liverpool, where my father received two deputations, and returned to London on November 17 for him to keep an engagement to dine with the Duke of Newcastle on that day.

Diary E. Nov. 27 : "Papa at home all day reading up for his proposed pamphlet on Reform."

29th : "Papa, Julia and I to a party at Lady Molesworth's. The élite of the Liberal Party."

30th : "We all went to the Princess' theatre. The Corsican Brothers and Marco Spada, beautifully acted

and got up. Mrs. Kean came round to our box to see us."

December 10 : "Papa, J, & I to a party at Lady Palmerston's, very pleasant and easy. Chats with Lady Molesworth, Mme. de Bunsen—Attorney-General, etc."

Lord Palmerston had, on December 5, resigned his office as Home Secretary, ostensibly on account of his objection to Lord John Russell's Reform Bill—in reality, Lord Aberdeen affirmed, from his war-like views on the Eastern Question differing from those of his Cabinet. He almost at once, however, withdrew his resignation—and in two months' time Lord John postponed his Reform Bill indefinitely.

We spent the Christmas of 1853 and the New Year, 1854, at Chalcott with Mrs. Shipley and Captain and Mrs. Crofton, my father spending many days visiting his constituency at Westbury.

Wars and rumours of wars were the topics of all others which engrossed the Cabinet and the public at large during the year 1853. Mr. Gladstone's Budget had hardly been fully digested before storm clouds began to gather over diplomatic and political circles in England as they had already gathered on the Continent. When all the sufferings of that tragic calamity were disclosed, when the monstrous mismanagement in the conduct of the war was fully brought to light, after Mr. Kinglake's incomparable book, "The Invasion of the Crimea," was published, what sadder reading could there be than this page of English history? Over and over again peace might have been secured had the sound purpose, the straight-forward patriotic aims of Ministers who were earnestly working to avoid the terrible calamity, not been frustrated by the revengeful personal hatred, the self-willed domination, and the skilful perversion of facts of three leading culprits. As is now universally acknowledged, the Emperor Napoleon, Lord Palmerston and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe contrived to bring about such conditions as made war inevitable. Each of the three for different causes entertained a personal grudge

against the Emperor of Russia. They meant war, they were determined to have war, and they had war. Owing to their position, the Prince Consort and the Prime Minister were in England the most conspicuous advocates for a peaceful settlement of the Russian and Turkish disputes, but Lord Clarendon, Foreign Minister, Lord Granville and others in the Cabinet were also strenuous in their efforts to solve the problem in the right way—all to no avail!

My father, always moderate in his views and tolerant in his relations with others, was more moderate than ever when these questions arose as to the causes which made it necessary for England to go to war with Russia. But he was not in the Cabinet, so had no voice in the decision; he was in the Government and therefore had not an entirely free hand. As the country had in 1851 gone Protestant mad, it now went war mad, and by far the greater majority of the English people were infected by Russophobia: Lord Palmerston was more than ever a hero, and a portion of the Press wrote scandalous abuse of the Prince Consort owing to the wise and cautious views he advocated. In Greville's Memoirs is disclosed in full all this pitiful story, ending in the triumph of the belligerent trio.

More than twenty years later Walter Bagehot wrote an article in the *Economist*, November 4, 1876, entitled "The Prince Consort and Lord Palmerston." After comparing the far-sighted policy of the Prince with that of Lord Palmerston, he writes:

"When Lord Palmerston as an Englishman received a shock, he immediately felt the importance of making the person who caused it receive a shock in return, and if possible, a worse shock than had been given (see his vaunt that he had had 'his tit for tat with John Russell' in 1852); and so his diplomacy sometimes amounted to little more than the part of a valiant diplomatic boxer, who was likely enough to get the best of the game at which he was playing, but had no sort of security that when he had got the best of it he should not be found to

have secured for himself and for his country a very doubtful advantage, if not an inheritance of positive mischief.

“Of course, the best illustration we can give of this power of the Prince to understand a great question far better than the Minister whose mind he would have impressed, if he could, with his own larger view, is the memorandum which he wrote when Turkey had declared war on Russia in 1853, and the Prince, presuming that we should be drawn into taking part with Turkey, was doing his best to impress on the Queen’s Ministers the grave responsibility of such a step ; and especially the great danger that it might commit us to a general support of Turkish policy instead of that very limited and conditional support of Turkey against external aggression, to which he was so anxious to limit it. His words are words which can hardly be now read by any English statesman of that day to whom they were submitted without producing a certain sense of shame, if not self-reproach, that they did not effect more in the way of warning us from a dangerous policy, and guiding us into a wise one.

“ ‘ In acting,’ he said, ‘ as auxiliaries to the Turks, we ought to be quite sure that they have no object in view foreign to our duty and interests ; that they do not drive at war while we aim at peace ; that they do not, instead of merely resisting the attempt of Russia, to obtain a Protectorate over the Greek population, incompatible with their own independence, seek to obtain themselves the power of imposing a more oppressive rule of two millions of fanatic Mussulmen, over twelve millions of Christians ; that they do not try to turn the tables upon the weaker power now that, backed by England and France, they have themselves become the stronger. There can be little doubt, and it is very natural, that the fanatic party at Constantinople should have such views ; but to engage our fleet as an auxiliary force for such purposes would be fighting against our own interests, policy, and feelings. From this it would

result that if our forces are to be employed for any purpose, however defensive, as an auxiliary to Turkey, we must insist upon keeping not only the conduct of the negotiation, but also the power of peace and war in our own hands, and that Turkey, refusing this, we can no longer take part for her. It will be said that England and Europe have a strong interest, setting all Turkish considerations aside, that Constantinople and the Turkish territory should not fall into the hands of Russia, and that they should, in the last extremity, even go to war to prevent such an overthrow of the Balance of Power. This must be admitted, and such a war may be right and wise. But this would be a war, not for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but merely for the interests of the European powers and of civilisation. It ought to be carried on unshackled by obligations to the Porte, and will probably lead, in the peace which must be the object of that war, to the obtaining of arrangements more consonant with the well-understood interests of Europe, of Christianity, liberty, and civilisation, than the re-imposition of the ignorant, barbarian, and despotic yoke of the Mussulman over the most fertile and favoured provinces of Europe.'

"It is sufficiently evident from Lord Palmerston's reply to this memorandum, how far in advance of Lord Palmerston was the Prince Consort in his conception of the true character of the Ottoman rule, and the danger to be apprehended from giving it artificial support. Lord Palmerston's mind at the time was riveted on one point, and one point alone—the excessive pretensions and ambitions of Russia. He had no room in his mind for any second idea. He had not, like the Prince Consort, the power of looking to other almost inevitable consequences of the war he was contemplating, besides the one which he wished to bring about,—consequences which would be, in all probability, as mischievous as those on which his attention was centred might have been beneficial. In his communication, addressed to Lord Aberdeen, on the Prince Consort's memorandum,



he writes thus : ' It is said also that the Turks are re-awakening the dormant fanaticism of the Mussulman race, and that we ought not to be helping instruments to gratify such bad passions. I believe these stories about awakened fanaticism to be fables invented at Vienna and Petersburg ; we have had no facts stated in support of them. I take the fanaticism which has been thus aroused to be the fanaticism which consists in burning indignation at a national insult, and a daring impatience to endeavour to expel an invading enemy.' No more short-sighted passage was ever written by an able statesman ; but much of Lord Palmerston's action at the time was even more one-sided and cavalier still. For example, before even Turkey had declared war at all—and, of course, long before England and France had declared war, which was not till several months later—Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord Aberdeen (on 7th October, 1853) saying that he wished to propose to the Cabinet, ' first, that instructions should be sent to Constantinople that in the event of war being declared ' (by Turkey) ' the squadrons should enter the Black Sea, and should send word to the Russian Admiral at Sebastopol that, in the existing state of things, any Russian ship of war found cruising in the Black Sea would be detained, and given over to the Turkish Government.'

" A rasher and more violent proposal could hardly be imagined. Of course we now know that war between the Allies and Russia was not avoided, and we are apt to think that even then it was inevitable. But at the time the statesmen of the day were clearly bound to consider all the best means by which it could be avoided, and the Russian aggression nevertheless repelled—and of such means it is perfectly clear that Lord Palmerston's violent and self-willed proposal was not one. A better recipe for ensuring war between the Western Powers and Russia than the proposal which Lord Palmerston desired to press upon the Cabinet could hardly have been imagined. Indeed, if Lord Aberdeen contributed to bring on the war by too great hesitancy, we can all admit now that his

excuse was great in having for his Minister a colleague whose impulses were so obviously violent and self-willed, and not marked by the reticence and self-control of a true statesman. On the whole, no thoughtful man will compare the statesmanship of the Prince Consort during the years 1853-54 with the statesmanship of Lord Palmerston without some sense of regret that the more far-sighted, the more sober, and the more effectually self-controlled statesman did not gain the ascendancy which he deserved over the far more impetuous and imperious, though much older, adviser, who at that time guided the policy of England."

There can be no doubt that my father's views must have accorded with those of the Prince Consort rather than with those of Lord Palmerston. The special qualities of high statesmanship possessed by the Prince were precisely those which appealed especially to my father's understanding and sympathies, whereas the high-handed recklessness with which Lord Palmerston assumed the right to dominate, in the name of England, the continent of Europe, though approved of by the majority of the English people, was obviously entirely wanting in the long-sighted, moderate and deliberate thoroughness which belongs to the highest statesmanship. My father, who above all things, sought a sound principle on which opinions ought to be grounded, naturally appreciated to the full the thoroughness with which Prince Albert studied all questions of importance, and apprehended what the future, no less than the present, effect any measure might have either for good or for evil.

The Queen opened Parliament on January 31, 1854.

Diary E. : "Papa took me to the North gallery of the House of Lords. House quite full. Queen little cheered, some groaning. Turkish Minister immensely cheered."

My father was working incessantly during some days in February though he was not at all well.

Diary E. 12th : "Papa came home to luncheon and worked at home all the afternoon, not being well."

13th : " Emy's lessons. Papa came home at 10 and dictated an article on Lord J. Russell's Reform Bill (brought on this evening) to me till 1 p.m."

14th : " Papa too stiff and poorly to go to the House. Dr. Dickson called in—Papa discussed the Reform Bill and his future parliamentary plans."

17th : " Papa better, but stayed at home all day writing for the *Économist*."

On the 22nd, however, the Diary records : " First *lèvee*. Dinner party at home. Sir J., Lady and Miss Fremantle, Dow. Lady Molesworth, Sir George and Lady Theresa Lewis, Miss Lister [married later to Sir William Harcourt], Lord Elcho, Mr. Villiers, Phipps, Dix and Hume. Went afterwards to a large and elegant party at Lady Molesworth's."

March 6 : " Mamma, Julia and I to the House at half past 3 p.m. Called for Papa at the Treasury. Gladstone's budget. Disraeli attacked him. Gladstone answered most spiritedly."

This Budget was a far less notable performance than the one produced in 1853, but the Eastern question engrossed all minds and left little interest for anything else. A fortnight before the declaration of war my father was seized with an attack of smallpox. No one entered his room but the doctor, one servant, and my two sisters, who nursed him and acted as his secretaries. He never ceased working during his illness.

March 14 : " Papa came home at 8.30, very poorly with influenza, saw Dr. Dickson."

15th : " Papa in bed all day. All too indisposed to go to the Attorney-General's."

16th : " Papa very feverish, Dr. Dickson called three times. Wrote for Papa all the morning, and spent evening in his room."

17th : " Got up at 7 A.M. to sit with Papa. Dr. Dickson said he had smallpox in a mild form."

18th : " Nursed Papa all day. Wrote forty notes putting off our dinner and evening party of next week."

20th : " We were all vaccinated from a baby. Papa very uncomfortable and poorly."

21st : " Papa's worst day."

27th : " Papa better. Queen's message to Parliament. Cessation of peaceful relations with Russia."

28th : " Declaration of war. Papa improving."

29th : " Mr. Greg came to tea."

30th : " Mr. Greg to breakfast. He wrote for *Economist* all the morning and afternoon,—then rode with me on the Harrow Road."

April 3 : " Papa dictated to me a Treasury Minute on prohibition of gunpowder exportation, etc. He came down in the evening."

5th : " Wrote for Papa. The Russians have crossed the Danube."

6th : " Wrote for and read to Papa. He told us of the Higginbottom-Brown controversy and Mr. Kennedy's misdemeanours."

7th : " Wrote an article on Quarter's Revenue Returns for *Economist* from Papa's dictation."

9th : " Julia wrote part of Papa's article for *Manchester Guardian*. Papa drove in close carriage for half an hour."

11th : " Wrote for Papa and drove with him twice round the Park. He gave us each a beautiful little watch." These watches my sisters wore nearly to the end of their lives. Birds in diamonds on blue enamel adorned them.

12th : " Reform Bill postponed indefinitely by Lord John. Read aloud Gladstone's speech on the balance-sheet."

14th : " Papa dictated articles for the *Economist* to Julia all day. Mamma, Emy and I started at 6 for St. Leonard's, arrived at 10, no room in hotels, drove to Hastings and found rooms at the Castle."

15th : " Took 74 Marine and got in at 2 P.M. At 4.30 walked to station to meet Papa."

16th : " Papa down to breakfast for first time at 11 o'clock."

17th : " Papa dictated an article for *Manchester Guardian* on ' Commercial Effects of the War.' "

22nd : " With Papa and Mr. Greg to Hastings. Met Mr. Charles Villiers, staying at Marine Hotel, suffering from his chest and one lung affected. "

23rd : " Mr. Villiers dined with us, but left at 8, being forbidden night air. "

24th : " I wrote Papa's Manchester article on the effects of the war on our finances. "

26th : " Day of solemn prayer—humiliation in consequence of the war. All shops closed. Mr. Villiers came to dinner. "

May 1 : " Started for London. "

8th : " Papa went to the House for the first time. Gladstone's second Budget this year. " This was the War Budget. The Income Tax was raised from sevenpence to one and twopence in the pound, and a shilling a gallon was added to the duty on Scotch whisky and eightpence on Irish, and the taxes on sugar and malt were raised.

13th : " Went at 11 in open carriage to see the launch of the *Royal Albert*. The Queen christened it. "

22nd : " Dined at 3 before Papa went to the House. Great field day. Finance of the war. Papa answered Tom Baring in a long speech. "

Suggested by Lord John Russell, some important reorganisations took place in the Cabinet at the commencement of the war. Hitherto the Secretary at War had not the position of a Secretary of State, but worked under the Commander-in-Chief, but the Commissariat was the business of the Treasury. Lord Aberdeen's Government, sanctioned by Parliament, now instituted the post of a Secretary of State for War, and the Commissariat became the business of the War Office instead of that of the Treasury. This new appointment was given to the Duke of Newcastle, which turned out to be an unfortunate choice. The new office of necessity required efficiency in controlling business such as the Commissariat entailed, and on which the conduct of a war so very materially

depends. When the dire disasters in the conduct of the Crimean War became notorious, naturally the War Office was called to book. Greville writes : " I hear Newcastle is very low, as well as he may be, for no man was ever placed in so painful a position, and it is one from which it is impossible for him to extricate himself."

In my sister's Diary is the entry : " Papa and Mr. Greg much excited at the mismanagement of the Army ; Papa called this war ' the death-blow of the Aristocracy.' " It certainly appeared that the only reason for entrusting such vitally important business as was the Commissariat to the Duke of Newcastle was that he was the Duke of Newcastle—and a personal friend of the Prime Minister.

As Financial Secretary of the Treasury, matters came within my father's scope which the Cabinet did not divulge to the public. Enough, however, was known generally which prevented men consenting to recruit for service in the Crimea. Disease had ravaged our troops, intense sufferings had been caused by lack of rations and warm clothing. Ample clothing and food were actually only six miles away from our troops, yet the organisation of the Commissariat was so despicably negligent that neither ever reached them. Men from the class from which recruits were drawn knew little and cared less for the *casus belli* ; how indeed could the protection of the Ottoman Empire against Russian aggression, or the supposed necessity of keeping the Balance of Power among the Powers of Europe, be understood or be of any importance to them ? The Russophobia inoculated into the public mind by the Press, directed by higher powers, had not affected the rustic population, whose notion of a Turk was of a barbarous heathen who massacred Christians. Why should our soldiers help them to massacre more ? Sufficient relays of soldiers not being forthcoming from England, it was arranged that 15,000 men from Sardinia should be sent to the Crimea ; these were mercenaries paid exclusively by England. Naturally the mismanagement of this war, causing this great extra

expenditure, added very materially to the draw on the Treasury ; this was very keenly noted and resented by the guardians of the nation's purse.

Sir George Cornwall Lewis estimated the expense of the Crimean War at seventy-seven and a half millions.

What line Austria meant to take remained for a time involved in mystery. My father did not believe her conduct meant treachery towards England and France—and he was right, as time proved.

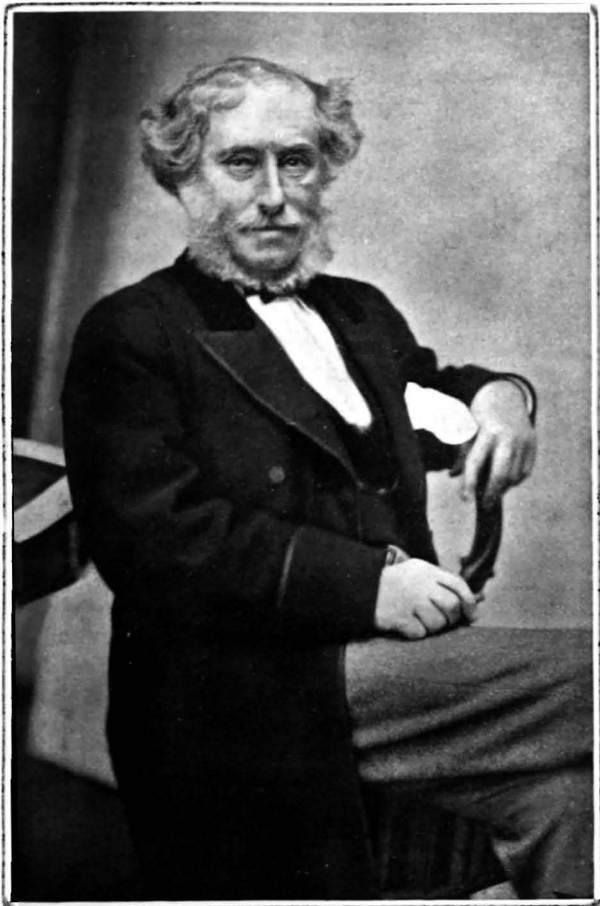
In my sister's Diary she writes : " Papa believes in Austria's fidelity to the Western Powers—but we cannot." This divergence of opinion between parent and daughters explains itself in this wise. Mr. Greg's distinguished Hungarian rebels, Kossuth and Eber, had inoculated him with an assured belief in Austria's baseness in every direction, and with this belief Mr. Greg had inoculated my sisters. He wrote a letter to my father, also an article on the subject my father forwarded to Lord Clarendon—who answered :

*Private*

" GROSVENOR CRESC."  
" Ap. 18/54.

" MY DEAR WILSON,

" I return Greg's letter with many thanks—his article is very able and he has pressed into his service every adverse contingency and several facts which are not facts—he attributes to Austria language that she has not held, and cites the entry into Servia as a proof of her perfidy, whereas not an Austrian soldier has crossed the frontier and she has informed both the Porte and England and France that she will only enter Servia if the Russians do so, or if there is an insurrection in favor of Russia, and that in either case it will be to maintain the *status quo* and uphold the authority of the Sultan. Greg quotes the story in the *Times* of the Magyars having been hung, whereas there has been no execution at all and so forth. Without disguising from myself that the policy of Austria is always a balance of fears, and that there is much for her to fear in the different cases put by Greg, I still think that



WILLIAM RATHBONE GREG



probability is in favor of your views which are fairly and impartially stated. Austria is justified in saying that until the allied armies have arrived at Constantinople, and are cutting out work for the Russians, she would not be called upon to declare war and to draw upon herself, single-handed, the whole weight of the Czar's vengeance, uncertain as she is to this moment whether Prussia would not then commit some felonious act against her either by siding with Russia or by exciting the German Powers against her.

"*Anyhow* it will be a tremendous conflict and I look with great anxiety to all we shall have to go through before it is brought to a close.

"I sincerely hope you are now getting better, but you have had a tremendous conflict too. You are well out of the London East wind which, is pestilential.

"Very truly yours,  
(Sgd.) "CLARENDON."

This last sentence refers to my father's attack of smallpox.

The following is the letter from Mr. Greg which my father forwarded to Lord Clarendon. He also refers to my father's illness :

"The complication is tremendous. Next week I will send you a view of the probable policy of Russia and of Italy, if I can.

"PARIS, *Wednesday*.

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"I was very glad to see your hand-writing again : I have no doubt you are getting on as fast as any reasonable man can expect.

"I send you the result of much thought, of many conversations, and of three days' labour. If you are not prepared to adopt it, put it in as a 'Communication,' in large type, or suppress it as you like. The entrance of

the Austrians into Servia staggers, but does not convince me. It is a suspicious circumstance that Servia (its capital especially) is precisely the province of Turkey which Austria has most coveted ; and it has all along been understood that the entrance into it of *Austrian* troops (who are hated there) would be the immediate signal for an insurrection in the *Russian* interest. I am therefore by no means sure that this is not an overt act of perfidy on the part of the Austrians. Still I am bound to say that it is not considered so here by Drouyn de Lhuys or other high authorities.

“ I finished this paper this morning before breakfast, and then to give it the advantage of the latest consultations, I went to see several parties before posting it. Among others I had a long talk with Guizot (with whom I sit an hour or two every other day), and he thinks me quite wrong. He fully admits that Austria is between two dangers, but that she will choose to avoid the *nearest*—*i.e.* the insurrection of Hungary and Italy. He allows that her sympathies go with Russia, but that she will be governed (at first at least) by her fears rather than her sympathies. He regards the Servian movement, *if undertaken with* the connivance of the Turks, as an act of almost open hostility to Russia and *says that the Russians both here and in Brussels regard it as such*,—or at least that they are exceedingly chagrined and disquieted by it, and by the attitude of Austria altogether during the last few days. This last point is very important—the more so as Guizot is particularly *lié* with the Russian party, especially with the Princess Lieven, and I believe he was with her and Brunow last week at Brussels, so that his information about Russia is very good. Both he and M. de Circourt (also a first-rate source of information as to Russia) say that she is preparing for an inflexible, stubborn and probably a purely defensive war—that she has no idea of yielding,—and that driving her back and taking Finland, Bessarabia and perhaps the Crimea, will be the only means of making her seek peace. These are easier said than done. Guizot is much amazed at her having abandoned Aland ;

and sees nothing to prevent our seizing, fortifying and retaining it, as the key to the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland. If we do this we may have the whip hand of Russia for ever. Have our Statesmen pluck for this? Guizot thinks there is no great danger of a Polish insurrection—that if Austria joins us, Hungary and Italy will be quiet, or will be kept down; and that this consideration will determine her. At the same time he allows the probability of Russia creating a Slavonian insurrection against her. He thinks we *may* permit Austrian neutrality—that we *may* beat Russia, without either her aid, or that of Hungary and Poland—if we are prepared to act on a just scale, with consummate vigour, and to take Finland, Bessarabia and the Crimea—smashing Sebastopol and Cronstadt by the way.

“ I give you the best opinions I can get—though so diametrically opposed to my own. It is possible that by Friday Lord Clarendon will be able to tell you whether matters are still so doubtful and suspicious as to make it safe to publish my article. I cannot comprehend the Russians crossing the Upper Danube in a quarter where they are so enormously over-matched by Austria, unless they have an understanding with her. *Look at the map*: remember that 200,000 Austrians are *échelonnés* from Kronstadt in Transylvania to the Borders of Bosnia, and then consider what an awful position the Russians are in, if Austria be really hostile. It is scarcely credible they will thus have seen into the fiery furnace.

“ Yours ever,  
(Sgd.) “ W. R. GREG.”

In the following autumn Lord Clarendon writes :

“ THE GROVE,  
“ Oct. 25/54.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ The Aust<sup>n</sup> Govt wants of course to put a stop to the Danube Blockade and I was as much in favor of it as y<sup>r</sup> correspond<sup>t</sup>. I referred the question to the Admiralty and it so happened that on the same day a

letter arrived from Adm<sup>l</sup> Dundas saying that the mouths of the Danube were *completely commanded* by the Russian forces and that consequently the idea of abandoning the blockade c<sup>d</sup> not be entertained as only Russian produce w<sup>d</sup> then come out unless they chose to permit Austrian produce to do so, but even then they w<sup>d</sup> probably not allow corn w<sup>b</sup> w<sup>d</sup> be for the use of the Allies.

‘ I shall look more into the question, however, before I ans<sup>w</sup>.

“ Many thanks for your paper on Russian trade which, in my opinion, shows both the necessity and the fairness of the proclamation.

“ I have sent it to our printer and you shall have the proofs as you desire.

“ Very truly yrs,  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

It was in the year 1854 that my father had to investigate the state of the Irish prisons and to sanction an outlay on improving the system on which they were run. He was the means of obtaining the post of Inspector of Prisons for our old friend Captain Crofton, who was knighted for his successful work in Ireland. The subject is explained in the following letters :

*Private*

“ G. C.

“ May 7/54.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ Will you have the goodness to read the enclosed w<sup>b</sup> tells its own story and about w<sup>b</sup> I forgot to speak when you were here.

I know not what plan of prison reform is in contemplation for Ireland, but I do know that it is grievously required there and in fact cannot be dispensed with now that transportation is abolished. I know also that Connellson is a very clever man and has devoted himself as Insp<sup>r</sup> of Prisons to what I may call *criminal philosophy*. His heart is in the cause of criminal reformation, he has studied it abroad and he has been thanked by all the Irish Judges for the result of his labors at home. I feel

sure therefore that the public w<sup>d</sup> be served by giving him more authority and a wider field of usefulness.

“ Very truly yours  
(Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

“ The Irish Government is about to propose an extension of our prison machinery to meet the pressing requirements of our convict population, which is congesting and accumulating, without *even* accommodation—must less the means of reformatory discipline, in application of their labor—as at Portland—to works of public utility—such as fortifications, the construction of safety harbors etc. England has disbursed immense sums for these objects, but *here* we have merely struggled on with series of make-shifts, and now the total abolition of transportation renders immediate relief indispensable. Our Secretary Young has already been in communication with Wilson as to the establishment of a Board, of which it is proposed that I should be Chairman or that some office should be created which would place me in a better position than I now occupy. Since my appointment I have worked *most earnestly*, and two years ago, at my own expense, I spent my short annual vacation in visiting all the penal and reformatory institutions of France with the view of extending to Ireland some means of *Juvenile* reformation on the same or a similar basis to that of *Mettray* (near Tours), which was the prototype of our Parkhurst and Redhill, as in this country we are utterly wanting in such. Under these circumstances and as I am naturally very anxious to be placed in a favorable light before the eyes of Wilson, as the arbiter of my financial fate, and I should accordingly be very grateful to you if you could find time for five *words* of testimony to my being a working officer. The matter will no doubt be one of the business of improvement submitted to the Cabinet, but as yet it is in embryo and, I presume, kept pretty secret. Young starts for London tomorrow (Saturday) on which day Wilson returns there—and they are to meet on Monday I believe. I possibly may be

wanted to run over and attend to the details of an amended prison Bill, and if so Grosvenor Crescent will be the first place at which I shall present myself. Having written to Lady Clarendon 3 days ago I will inflict no more upon you but beg you to give her and your mother my kindest remembrances.

“ Ever my dear Lord C.,  
 “ Your most faithful,  
 (Sgd.) “ CORRY CONNELSON.”

A fortnight later Lord Clarendon forwards this letter from Nathaniel Hawthorne—the novelist.

*Private*

“ G. C.

“ May 19/54.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ The enclosed from Mr. Hawthorne (the American Author and Consul at L'pool) was placed in my hands to-day by Mr. Buchanan. We have no right whatever to levy Income Tax upon the fees paid by American Citizens to the American Consul and I conclude there must be some error in the matter, but pray cause it to be rectified forthwith or it will add another to the numerous ‘difficulties’ already existing between this Country and the U.S. and will place the maintenance of friendly relations between the 2 Countries in some danger.

“ Very truly yours,  
 (Sgd.) “ CLARENDON.”

“ U.S. CONSULATE,

“ LIVERPOOL, May 16th, 1854.

“ SIR,

“ I beg leave to ask your opinion, whether I ought, in justice, to be burthened with the English income tax on my official emoluments.

“ As our General Government lays no income, or other direct tax, the positions of consuls in the two countries cannot be exactly compared. But I have ascertained that the British Consul in Massachusetts

pays no poll-tax, nor any tax whatever on his official revenue, whether accruing in the shape of salary, or derived from fees. I presume the case to be the same in all the other States.

" You would greatly oblige me by taking such steps as you may deem expedient, in order to put this matter on a proper footing.

" Very Respectfully,

" Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) " NATH : HAWTHORNE,

" U.S. Consul.

" HIS EXCELLENCY

" JAMES BUCHANAN."

*Private*

" G. C.

" May 23/54.

" MY DEAR WILSON,

" I hope you have settled the matter respecting the American Consul at L'pool. Foreign Consuls may not be exempted from certain direct taxes in the countries where they live, but to tax their official salaries that they receive from their own Governments must, I think, be contrary to usage if not to law.

" Very truly yours,

" CLARENDON."

## CHAPTER XIV

### DIARIES

To revert to the diaries which record Queen's Balls, dinners at home and elsewhere, and many visits to Operas and plays, notwithstanding the war.

Diary E. June 24 : "Mamma, Julia and I went to a party at Mrs. Bernall Osborne's—at the Admiralty—Music—Mme. Alboni sang. Had a long talk afterwards with Papa on the fate of the Government."

July 6th : "Charles Kean's benefit. We took a box opposite the Queen's—She was present with the Prince."

11th : "Went to Covent Garden—Le Prophète with Mme. Viardot Garcia, and Lablache—the Queen, Prince and two Princesses in the box opposite ours."

21st : "Emy's last drawing lesson. She and I went to the Duchess of St. Albans to tea."

Lady Clarendon had arranged drawing and singing lessons to take place in a studio in Sloane Street for her three daughters and her niece, Alice Lister. She invited Lady Diana Beauclerk, Lady Sophia Pelham, Meta Ford and myself to join these classes.

22nd : "Emy spent the afternoon at Kent House—Alice Lister's regular Saturday's romps."

The Kent House of those days had a spacious garden attached to it, shaded by large trees, where these Saturday romps took place. Alice Lister's elder sister (afterwards Lady Harcourt), always kind to the younger ones, and dear Lady Theresa Lewis would often appear on the scene. The tall, slightly bent figure of Sir George Cornwall Lewis might at times be seen looming in the distance. He took little notice of the frolics going on, but a most charming, sympathising friend to children



was Lady Theresa—taking an interest alike in their games and in their lessons. No one knowing her, however young at the time, could ever forget her, so kindly, so radiant, so full of the family vein of humour was Lady Theresa Lewis. She would often take her daughter Alice to the Sloane Street studio, also to the famous classes which my sisters and I attended, where M. Roche taught history, geography and arithmetic in French. I remember her as she sat behind us smothered in proofs which she was correcting of the "Lives of the Chancellors," a book she was then writing. Alice Lister, afterwards Lady Borthwick, was original and already showed literary tastes. She would take me to her room and in confidence show me her writings in prose and verse. These performances she took very seriously.

Lady Theresa Lewis was a keen politician and was also given to good works. She writes to my father :

" KENT HOUSE,  
" KNIGHTSBRIDGE,  
" May 23.

" DEAR MR. WILSON,

" You will think it rather hard to be bothered again so soon with my application for sea-going boys, more particularly as we are none of us in the right line for advancement just now. The boy, Ben: Beeston for whom you had so kindly got a berth aboard a Post Office Packet to the W. Indies has returned from his voyage and is paid off with others, and is very anxious to get afloat again directly to go to India and to be out for a longer time. He is promised a very good character from the Captain, and he seems very zealous in the service, always hoping to be afterwards admitted into H.M. Service in a man-of-war. I hope you are as indignant as I am at the end of the Vote of Censure. I have no doubt it was inevitable and was all right to be withdrawn, but if one acted upon personal feelings I would much rather be killed outright in the great battle of Division than *seem* to run away. However we must

hope, that the rest of the saying is to be fulfilled, and that those who run away 'will live to fight another day.'

"Yours very truly,

"M. THERESA LEWIS."<sup>1</sup>

The season of 1854 came to an end towards the middle of August. My father went to the Ministerial White-bait Dinner on the 9th.

Diary E, 9th : "Mamma, Julia and I went to the North Gallery of the House of Lords to see the Queen prorogue Parliament."

21st : "Papa started at 9½ for a trip to the Royal Forests in Hampshire with Mr. Gore and Mr. Arbuthnot."

The family returned to Westbury on the 24th, except my father, who left for Cologne a few days later to fetch my three sisters home for the autumn holidays.

Sept. 5 : "Prepared for the arrival—made a large garland and wreath to hang in the hall—Papa, Tilly, Zeno and Sophy came at 3."

Anxiety brooded over the Chalcott home during those holiday weeks when constant intercourse was going on between the family there and Fontainville. Captain Reginald Shipley was with his regiment, the 7th Fusiliers, in the Crimea.

Diary E. Oct. 19 : "Emy's and Zeno's birthday kept. Lena Crofton spent the day with us and we played at taking Sebastopol, then charades and Pope Joan."

A visit to Chalcott followed, when my sister Eliza gave Lena and myself lessons.

Nov. 22 : "Mr. Greg came by last train and brought the *Globe* with the list of casualties at Inkerman." On the 5th Capt. Shipley had been severely wounded. How near did this sorrow at Chalcott bring the war home to us ! That battle raised Reginald Shipley to the rank of colonel—the youngest colonel in the army,—the casualties among officers being so great.

<sup>1</sup> As indicated in this letter, the opposition had moved a vote of censure on the Government, which had evaded it being carried to a division ; but as the year is not given when the letter was written, I cannot trace to which vote of censure it alludes.

Diary E. Dec. 27: Mr. Arbuthnot and Sir Charles Trevelyan spent the last days of December with us. Sir Charles Trevelyan brought Mr. Arbuthnot a letter from his son in the Crimea."

Dec. 31: "We all saw the New Year in."

The principal events of that January (1855) were the negotiations for peace at Vienna and Mr. Roebuck's motion.

Jan. 30: "Last night Mr. Roebuck moved for a committee to enquire into the prosecution of the war, which Government resisted and was turned out by a majority of 157. Lord Aberdeen went to Windsor to tender the resignation of the ministers."

Jan. 31: "The Queen who regretted much losing so favourite a minister, came to town and Lord Derby was sent for who undertook to try and form a government."

Feb. 1: "House met—Lord Derby gave up the attempt. Disraeli was furious with Lord Derby for giving it up. Lord John was sent for, and he undertook to try to form a government."

15th: "Lord John gave up the attempt and Lord Palmerston was sent for."

The Queen put the appointment off as long as she could, but, being consistently a constitutional monarch, was at last forced to put aside her personal feelings and do what was much against the grain. The *something* which this unwelcome minister possessed, the *something* which made him the idol of the English people, had conquered, and the Queen had to accept the people's idol as her Prime Minister. Lord Clarendon, a great favourite with the Queen, and who always endeavoured to throw oil on the waters in the political embroglios which embarrassed the Government during the 'fifties, did much to reconcile the Queen to this necessity.

Greville writes, November 10, 1856: "Clarendon talked to me of Palmerston and told me (what I think I had heard, and have very likely noted before) that on Aberdeen's fall Palmerston was quite ready to join Derby when Derby tried to form a Government, and that it was

Clarendon's refusal which frustrated that attempt. Palmerston endeavoured to persuade Clarendon to join, but when Clarendon put to him all the reasons why they had both of them better refuse, Palmerston saw them all very clearly, and rather imprudently said on leaving him, 'We are *both* agreed that it will not do to have anything to do with Derby and his Government.' When Clarendon went to the Queen and explained his own conduct to her, and she expressed to him the embarrassment which she felt, and asked him what she could do, he at once said, 'Send for Lord Palmerston, who is the only man, in the present temper of the people and state of affairs, who can form a Government that has a chance of standing. Send for him at once, place yourself entirely in his hands, give him your entire confidence, and I will answer for his conduct being all that you can desire.' The Queen took the advice, and has had no reason to repent of it, and Clarendon told me he had done everything in his power, and seized every available opportunity to reconcile them to each other, to promote a good feeling and understanding, and to soften any little asperities which might have made their intercourse less smooth, and the consequence is that Palmerston gets on with her very well, and his good sense as well as Clarendon's exhortations make him see of what importance it is to him for the easy working of his Government and his own ease to be on good and cordial terms with the Queen. It is therefore really to Clarendon that Palmerston is indebted in great measure, if not entirely, for being in his present position, but Clarendon has too much tact ever to remind him of it, or of what he was himself inclined to do in 1855."

Nevertheless, Queen Victoria's dislike of Lord Palmerston did not change, as an extract from a letter the Queen wrote to the King of the Belgians on the death of Lord Palmerston shows: "It is very *striking*, and is another link with the past—the happy past—which is gone, and in many ways he is a great loss. He had many valuable qualities, though many bad ones, and we had, God knows! terrible trouble with him about Foreign

affairs. Still, as Prime Minister he managed affairs at home well and behaved to me well. But I *never* liked him, or could ever the least respect him, nor could I forget his conduct on certain occasions to my Angel. He was very vindictive, and personal feelings influenced his political acts very much. Still, he is a loss."

My father was in no wise in sympathy with much of Lord Palmerston's policy, but, like Lord Clarendon, he fully recognised that, as matters stood in the country at large at that time, no other Minister could insure so continuous a support to a Liberal Government, and that without a stability or continuity progress in right legislation would not be secured, for Lord Palmerston had the undoubting self-confidence of an aristocrat, enforced by a wilfulness which more often than not led him to ignore the moral aspect of a question—as he certainly did in the Greek and Chinese questions; he had an instinctive understanding of the proletariat—almost as if one of it—and warm sympathies with rebellion against the cruelties of tyranny.

At his death (1865) Walter Bagehot wrote of Lord Palmerston: "Lord Derby happily said that he was born in the 'pre-Scientific' period, and Lord Palmerston was so born, or even more . . . his real culture was that of living languages and the actual world. He was the best French Scholar among his contemporaries. His English in all his speeches was sound and pure, and in his greater efforts almost fastidiously correct. The feeling for language, which is one characteristic of a great man of the world, was very nice in Lord Palmerston and very characteristic. It was from the actual knowledge of men, from specific contact that Lord Palmerston derived his data. . . . He was not a common man, but a common man might have been cut out of him. He had in him all that a common man has, and something more. And he did not at all despise, as some philosophers teach people to do, the common part of his mind. He was profoundly aware that the common mass of plain sense is the great administrative agency of the

world ; and that if you keep yourself in sympathy with this—you win, and if not—you fail. . . . No one resembled less than Lord Palmerston the fancied portrait of an ideal statesman, laying down in his closet plans to be worked out twenty years hence. He was a statesman for the moment. Whatever was not wanted now, whatever was not practicable now, whatever would not take now, he drove quite out of his mind. . . . Lord Palmerston's creed was never the creed of the far-seeing philosopher ; it was the creed of a sensible and sagacious but still common-place man. His objects were common objects ; what was uncommon was the will with which he pursued them. Lord Palmerston prided himself on his foreign policy, but it is not upon this that his fame will rest. He had a great difficulty as a Foreign Minister. He had no real conception of any mode of life except that with which he was familiar. His idea, his fixed idea, was that the Turks were a highly improving and civilised race, and it was impossible to beat into him their essentially barbaric and unindustrial character. He would hear anything patiently but no corresponding ideas were raised in his mind. A man of the world is not an imaginative animal, and Lord Palmerston was by incurable nature a man of the world ; keenly detective in what he could realise by experience—utterly blind, dark, and impervious to what he could not so realise, even the best part of his foreign policy was alloyed with this defect. The mantle of Canning had descended on him, and the creed and interests of Canning. He was most eager to use the strong influence of England to support Free Institutions—to aid 'the Liberal party' was the phrase in those days—everywhere on the Continent. And no aim could be juster and better—it was the best way in which English strength could be used. But he failed in the instructed imagination and delicate perception necessary to its best attainment. He supported the Liberal Party when it was bad, the country unfit for it, as much as when it was good and the nation eager for it ; he did not define the degree of his sympathy,

or apportion its amount to the comparative merits of the different claims made on it. . . . He prided himself on his exploits in Europe, but it is by his instincts in England that he will be remembered. . . . It is certain we shall never look upon his like again. We may look on others of newer race, but his race is departed, the merits of the new race were not his merits ; their defects were not his. England will never want statesmen, but she will never see in our time such a statesman as Viscount Palmerston."

1855. Diary E. Feb. 7: "Lord Palmerston had two interviews with the Queen. Still forming his Government. Gladstone and his friends agreed to join him, but it was under the understanding that the Roebuck Committee was not to be allowed."

Lord Palmerston, however, found public opinion, indignant at the gross mismanagement that was causing terrible sufferings to our soldiers in the Crimea, was so strongly in favour of the Committee that he consented to its being formed. On this Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, Sir J. Graham and Cardwell resigned.

Feb. 23: "Explanations in the House from the receders on their having resigned on account of Lord Palmerston having granted the Committee of Enquiry."

It was during this debate that Mr John Bright delivered a magnificent speech, the most eloquent and moving of his many speeches denouncing war and advocating peace. Lord John Russell as Colonial Secretary replaced Mr Sidney Herbert, Sir G. Cornwall Lewis as Chancellor of the Exchequer—Mr Gladstone, Sir Charles Wood as First Lord of the Admiralty—Sir James Graham, and Lord Stanley of Alderley as President of the Board of Trade—Mr Cardwell.

There was a question of my father being offered the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. This office, necessitated a fresh election. Sir Massey Lopes had, since the last election, inherited his father's estate and baronetcy, and with Lady Lopes had resided often at Westbury. My father's majority had been but seven in

the election of 1852, and he thought it more than probable that he would be defeated if he again contested the borough. Liverpool, however, where his great admirer, Mr. Wylie, had much influence, was open.

March 7 : "Papa got a telegram from Liverpool announcing Lord Ravensworth's death and asking him to succeed to Mr. Liddell who went to the Upper House."

9th : "More telegrams from Liverpool, but the Tories are looking out for a candidate, and Papa will not vacate his seat without a promise that there shall be no opposition. He declines coming forward."

Sunday, 11th : "Papa called on Lord Palmerston by appointment when Lord Palmerston pressed on him the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. Papa then telegraphed to Liverpool declaring himself willing to stand (if there was no opposition) and sent a message to Mr. Sidney Herbert, to ask if, failing Liverpool, he could have Wilton when Mr. A'Court gets the appointment intended for him. Mr. Herbert could not promise Wilton. Nothing decided about Liverpool."

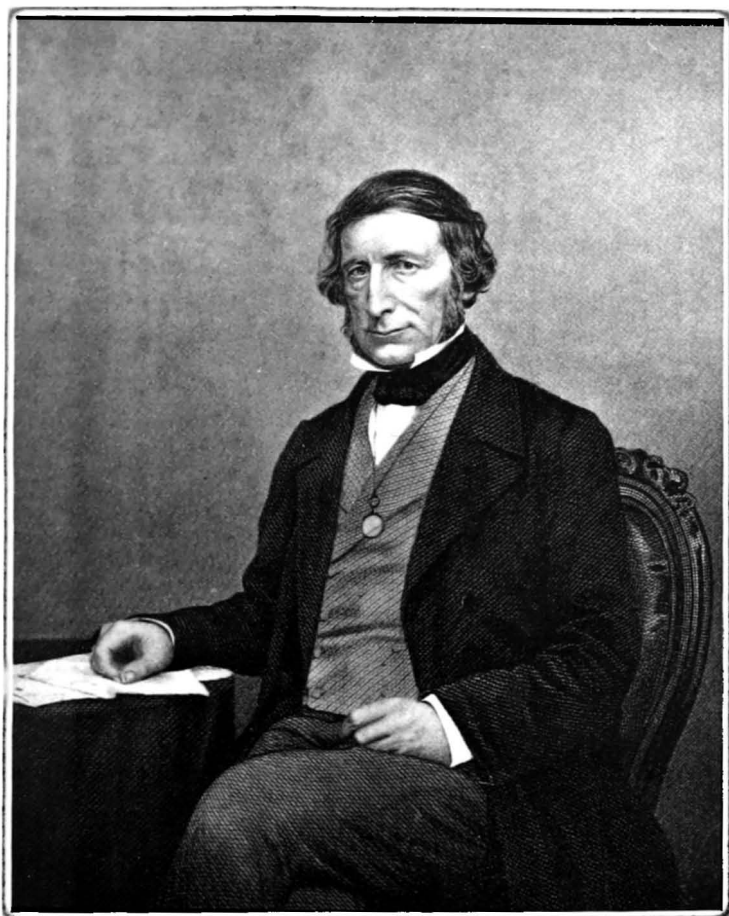
13th : "The Liverpool Liberals will not accept Papa's refusal. Mr. G. Gladstone and Mr. Wylie came as a deputation, but as it would not do for Lord Palmerston's Government to be defeated at Liverpool, Papa thinks he cannot run the risk, as it is too great."

As it turned out he was mistaken.

March 29 : "The Liberal elected at Liverpool with 400 majority."

My father's friend, Mr. Edward Bouverie, was appointed to the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade after Mr. Wilson had refused it. Walter Bagehot writes : "He [my father] did not, however, by any means wish for a change, as the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade, though nominally superior, is in real power far inferior to the Secretaryship of the Treasury." The fact also that Sir George Cornwall Lewis, his very congenial friend, was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, made my father further inclined to remain at the Treasury.





THE RIGHT HON. SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS



THE RIGHT HON. SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS

He had worked pleasantly and usefully with Mr. Gladstone, and was on the best of friendly terms with him, but with Sir George and Lady Theresa Lewis a stronger link of intimacy existed, similar to that between himself and Lady Theresa Lewis's brothers, Lord Clarendon and Charles Villiers.

Sir George Cornwall Lewis, a notably learned scholar, had written much on very erudite subjects, and had succeeded Mackey Napier as Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. On his being appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer it was said of him that "he knew everything *except finance*." If that was so, he was happy in finding a colleague in my father, who could ably aid him in supplying that want. I remember that it was asked at the time by not a few why the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer had not been given to the one who was, by common consent, a master of finance. My father, however, was himself quite contented to help in achieving results, though to the outside world the achievement was accredited to another. Besides the satisfaction of working with one with whom he was personally intimate, there existed a similarity of nature between himself and Sir George Lewis which facilitated the transaction of business.

"He [Sir G. C. Lewis] took a plain, obvious view of every subject which came before him. Ingenuities, refinements and specious fallacies might be suggested around him in any number or in any variety, but his mind was complication-proof. . . . A certain strong simplicity sweeps away all these outside matters.

"One great advantage of this sort of mind Sir George Lewis noted in an article in the *Edinburgh Review*: 'When Demosthenes was asked what was the first and second and third qualification of an orator, he answered "Delivery"; in like manner, if we were asked what is the first second and third qualification of an English Statesman, we would answer, "Intelligibility." As in oratory the most eloquent words, the wisest counsels will avail little if they are not impressed by voice and manner

upon the minds of an audience, so integrity and public spirit will fail to command confidence, if the course adopted is intricate or inexplicable.' Sir George Lewis could not have described his own sort of mind better if he had been trying to do so ; he *could* not be intricate or perplexed."<sup>1</sup>

Nor could he have well described my father's sort of mind better. In Gladstone my father had a Chancellor of the Exchequer who fulfilled very notably the requirement of Demosthenes of the first, second and third qualification of an orator, namely, "Delivery," so equally my father found in Sir G. C. Lewis a Chancellor of the Exchequer who possessed very distinctly the first, second and third qualification of a statesman—namely "Intelligibility"—a qualification which he himself possessed in a very remarkable degree.

But there was a dissimilarity no less than a similarity in their natures noted by Sir George himself in his saying,—quoted by Lord Welby,—"You see, Wilson, you are an animal, I am only a vegetable." By nature my father was an active administrator, Sir George Lewis was not. The intelligible clearness in which my father's ideas were framed, the lucid distinctness with which he could evolve details of financial problems, owing to his invariably sounding the principle of any question to its root, were of invaluable help to the two Chancellors of the Exchequer with whom he worked, but no less was his vital energy and vigour. Both Mr. Gladstone and Sir George Lewis fully appreciated these qualities in my father.

It was not only as shown in official work that my father's nature differed from that of Sir George Lewis. Referring to an inadequate article written on my father, Richard Holt Hutton, in a letter to Walter Bagehot, says it "gave no idea of the massive simplicity and geniality of his social character and tastes, which in a great financier was exceedingly remarkable. Thorough enjoyment of all the more genial sides of life distinguished him, I

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Sir G. Cornwall Lewis by Walter Bagehot, 1863.

should think, from Peel and Lewis and Lord Overstone, and all those whose interests came nearest to his."

Sir George Lewis's mind appears to have had no lighter side, though he had considerable humour of a dry kind. The vivacity of the French, the lively charm of Parisian social life which had a fascination for my father would probably have had no attraction whatever for him. Well-known is his characteristic assertion that "Life would be tolerable but for its amusements."

As a master of finance Hutton was fully as appreciative of my father's powers as of the lighter side of life which he enjoyed. He writes to Bagehot: "I think you are mistaken in fancying you estimated Mr. Wilson intellectually more highly than I did. My very incapacity to deal with his subjects in the same fashion at all, joined to great enough appreciation of those subjects to make me see how powerfully they were dealt with, made his intellect to me most fascinating. I have often on Friday nights walked down to the very end of Pall Mall with him at near three o'clock in the morning, merely to get half an hour's more conversation."

Of Sir George Lewis, Bagehot writes in the above-named essay:

"So unique a man has in truth rarely been lost to the country. Most men, most politicians specially, fall easily into some ready-made classification. . . . But Sir George Lewis, as all who knew him in the least will testify, did not belong exactly to any received type. People were puzzled how to classify a man who wrote on the Astronomy of the Ancients, the Fables of Babrius, and Roman History before there was history, and who was yet able to fill three difficult cabinet offices in quick succession. He wrote what most cabinet ministers would think it too much and too hard to read. No German professor, from smoke and study of many silent years, has ever put forth books more bristling with recondite references, more exact in every technicality of scholarship, more rich in matured reflection, than Sir George Lewis found time, mind, and scholarlike curiosity to write

in the very thick of eager English life. And yet he was never very busy, or never seemed to so. In the extremity of the Trent difficulty, when, as he was inclined to think, a war with America was impending, when a War Minister might be pardoned for having no time for general reflection, Sir George Lewis found time, at three o'clock on a busy Parliamentary day, to discuss with the writer of these lines, for some twenty minutes, the comparative certainty, or rather uncertainty, of the physical and moral sciences. It was difficult to know what to make of such a man.

"The difficulty was the greater because he made no pretence to be a marvel of versatile ability. Many statesmen have had the vanity of variety. But if ever there was a plain man, an unpretending man, a man who in matters of business affected to be *par negotiis neque supra*, that man was Sir George Lewis. The objection to him was that he was too prosaic, too anxiously safe, too suspicious of everything showy. It was not possible for an enemy or for an opponent—for he had no enemies—to hint that Sir George Lewis's miscellaneous books were written for a love of display. They were written from a bent of nature—from the born love of dry truth. . . . Sir George Lewis hated exaggeration as much as he could hate anything—and popular opinion is always exaggerated. 'There is,' says Sir Stafford Northcote, 'no quality for which Sir George Lewis is more remarkable than for a quiet courage, which emboldens him to give utterance from time to time, and sometimes without any apparent necessity for his doing so, to propositions of the most alarmingly unpopular kind. And such courage is admirable.' . . .

"To those, however, who had an opportunity of accurately observing Sir George Lewis there was no difficulty in making him out. He was so simple and natural that he explained himself. His principal qualities were all of a plain and homely species. . . . A very close political observer [that close observer was my father] who did not himself easily relinquish anything, once described

Sir George Lewis as the most pertinacious man he had ever known. 'He returns,' it was added, 'to the charge again and again, and he hardly ever fails.'"

At the time of his death Walter Bagehot wrote :

"When Sir George Cornwall Lewis had life before him, it seemed less important that he should throw away fame ; but now that all is over we wish that he had desired popularity more. He really had considerable powers of pointed writing. . . . He had not, indeed, the powers of a great literary artist ; it was not in his way to look at style as an alluring art. He wanted to express his opinion and cared for nothing else. He had no literary vanity ; and without the vanity that loves applause, few indeed cultivate the tact that gains applause. 'If you can do without the world,' says the cynic, 'the world can do without you.' And it is as true to say that few, if any, gain literary fame who do not long and hunger after it. As a sort of compensation, Sir George Lewis rose more rapidly as a parliamentary statesman than any of his contemporaries. He was in the first rank of the liberal party, yet he entered Parliament five years after Mr. Cardwell, fifteen years after Mr. Gladstone, nineteen years after Sir Charles Wood, and forty years after Lord Palmerston. It is curious at first sight that he should have done so. He was not an attractive speaker, he wanted animal spirits, and detested an approach to anything theatrical. He had very considerable command of exact language, but he had no impulse to use it. If it was his duty to speak he spoke ; but he did not want to speak when it was not his duty. Silence was no pain, and oratory no pleasure to him. . . . Yet we once heard a close and good observer say : 'George Lewis's influence in the House is something wonderful ; whatever he proposes has an excellent chance of being carried. He excites no opposition and he commands great respect, and generally he carries his plan.' The House of Commons, according to the saying, is wiser than anyone in it : there is an elective affinity for solid sense in a practical assembly of educated Englishmen which always operates, and which

rarely errs. Sir George Lewis's influence was great not only on his own side of the House but on the other. . . . He was a safe man, a fair man and an unselfish man. He had a faculty of 'patient labour,' which, as he himself remarked, '*was as sure* to be appreciated, when Englishmen meet together to transact business, as wit or eloquence'; and therefore it was that he had great influence in the House of Commons; and therefore it was that he rose rapidly. He filled three Cabinet Offices, that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the one which he liked best, the Home Office, where he had the opportunity of displaying great Judicial faculties, and the War Office."

Such a scholar statesman was the friend with whom my father had almost daily intercourse for three years from the spring of 1855 to the spring of 1858.

On one subject Sir George Lewis had a very decided opinion. He thought the Crimean War was a huge mistake.

Greville writes from The Grove, December 24, 1854 :

"George Lewis and I have been walking and talking together all the morning. He is fully as pacific as I am, and entertains exactly the same thoughts that I do, of the egregious folly of the war, of the delusion under which the English nation is labouring, and of the wickedness of the press in practising upon popular credulity in the way it has done. . . . This morning he again recurred to the circumstances of the negotiations now going on, and he gave me an account of the transaction which puts the whole thing in a very ridiculous light, which would be very comical if it were not so tragical."

1855 was an eventful year in our family life no less than in the political world.

Diary E. March 19 : "My father spoke at length in the House defending Gladstone's financial policy which had been vigorously attacked."

March 24 : "Mamma, Julia and I to a party at Mr. Monckton Milnes to meet Mr. and Miss Nightingale."



Diary E. April 3 : " Mr. Greg and all of us went to the Exhibition of Amateur Drawings for the Patriotic Fund. Princess Royal's water-colour drawing of women weeping over the body of a dead soldier on the battlefield very good, the sketch original. Papa went to Cologne."

15th : " Papa arrived at 2½ from Paris and went to Sir George Lewis about the Government Loan [to Turkey]."

16th : " Lord Palmerston, Sir G. Lewis and Papa received the contractors for the Loan at the Treasury. The Emperor and Empress of the French crossed from Calais to Dover, Prince Albert going in the *Vivid* to meet them. They reached London at 5 and Windsor at 7. Emy went with Lady Ouseley to Lady James, Piccadilly, and saw them well, but we did not from the gardens, the crowd being too great—most enthusiastically received."

19th : " We went to the *Economist* Office and saw the Emperor and Empress go to the Guildhall, where he was presented with the Freedom of the City."

21st : " The Emperor and Empress left. Prince Albert went to Dover with them."

25th : " Mr. Greg went with us to the Princess's to see Kean in Louis XI—wonderful acting, the best thing he has ever done."

May 2 : " Queen's Drawing-room—Matilda presented—Mamma and I went—Papa and Mamma dined at Sir G. Lewis's."

May 9 : " My sister Matilda went to her first Queen's Ball. On that evening we had a great laugh against Papa. Papa, Mamma, Matilda and I went. Mamma was in yellow satin and Brussels flounces and M. and I in white tulle, lilies of the valley and rosebuds. On Papa seeing us thus arrayed he exclaimed—' How *could* anything be prettier than these simple white muslin frocks ! ' " The simple white muslin frocks were in reality folds upon folds of *tulle d'illusion*, artistically arranged by Miss Rutherford the Court milliner, who dressed my Mother, and her daughters when they " came out."

11th : "Papa to the levée. Read Froude's famous history article aloud."

12th : "Evening party at home—80 people."

16th : "Papa and Mamma to a Ministerial dinner at the Mansion House. Then with Julia and me to a party at Mrs. Lowe's."

18th : "Mrs. and Miss Drummond, Mr. and Mrs. Lowe and Mr. Greg to breakfast at nine, and went with us to the Treasury to see the presentation of medals to officers and soldiers returned from the Crimea."

Rarely do I pass under the windows of those rooms in which my father passed most of his days during five years and more, without recalling the scene we witnessed from them enacted on the Square in front of the Horse Guards on May 18, 1855. The Queen seated in a large barouche in front of the archway, the troops lining the Square, Lord Cardigan in his dazzling Hussar uniform, galloping here and there on a finely bred charger that pranced and threw its head in the air, looking as self-important as did its rider. One by one each Crimean hero approached the Queen, who handed the medal to him, but the incident that I see before me more clearly than any other was the advent of a Bath chair, drawn up to the side of the Royal carriage, and the Queen rising from her seat, leaning down to its occupant, Sir George Burgoyne, while presenting him with the tribute to his valour. He had been so maimed that he could neither stand nor walk.

Diary E. 19th : "Mamma and Matilda to the Birthday Drawing-room—very crowded. Papa dined with Lord Palmerston—Emy to the Opera."

20th : "Papa called on Lord Radnor staying with Lord Folkestone. Party at Lady Clarendon's at the Foreign Office and a dinner party of eighteen at home."

May 25 : "100 majority for Government on vote of want of confidence." This was the vote moved by Mr. Roebuck on Lord Aberdeen's Government owing to the mismanagement of the war.

June 1 : "Another Queen's Ball."

June 3 : "Papa's 50th birthday—gave him a pair of braided slippers worked by Julia and me."

8th : "War debate ended without a division."

24th : "We walked in the Park with Papa. Meeting of workpeople to see 'how the rich enjoy their Sunday,' hooting the carriages—Lord Radnor and Mr. Wylie called. M. de Lesseps and the Matthew Arnolds dined here. M. de Lesseps gave a description of the canal projected at Suez and showed us the maps."

The workmen's meeting in Hyde Park was the result of Lord Robert Grosvenor's Bill to put down trading in London on Sundays. Sir George Grey, carrying out the existing law, prohibited meetings taking place in any of the London Parks; this prohibition caused very serious riots—windows and heads being broken in the collision between the police and the crowd.

18th : "Great crowd in Park. Mob smashed windows in Belgrave and Grosvenor Square."

The mob won the day, and Lord Robert Grosvenor's Bill was withdrawn.

July 2 : "The Queen's message was received by both Houses of Parliament respecting a pension of £1000 a year to be given to Lord Raglan's widow and £2000 a year to the son, to continue for two generations."

July 11 : "M. de Lesseps called and read us his pamphlet on the proposed canal at Suez, which M. Panizzi is having translated for him at the British Museum."

13th : "Lord John resigned, to the great relief of the Government."

He had been sent as our Plenipotentiary to Vienna, M. Drouyn de Lhuys as that for France.

1855 began with two notable deaths, that of Joseph Hume on February 20, and early in March that of the Emperor Nicholas.

In the last days of 1854 the representatives of the four powers met Prince Alexander Gortschakoff, the Diplomatist, at Vienna and drew up four points, which,

if agreed to, might lead to peace: 1st, was the transference from Russia to Europe of the Protectorate over Moldavia, Wallachia, and Serbia; 2nd, the free navigation of the Danube; 3rd, the termination of the Russian preponderance in the Black Sea; 4th, the establishment of a European Protectorate over the Christian population of Turkey. To the third point—the interference with the Russian naval power in the Black Sea—Prince Gortschakoff would in nowise consent—otherwise Russia would have accepted the terms. Lord John Russell and M. Drouyn de Lhuys were willing to make concessions to Russia on this point, but again Lord Palmerston and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe prevented a peaceful settlement. The Emperor of the French and Eugénie paid their visit to Queen Victoria while the conference was proceeding.

The conference ended on June 4, 1855. Lord John had asked for Lord Stratford's recall, but that did not coincide with Lord Palmerston's wishes, also Louis Napoleon was still bent on continuing the war, so his request was not granted; whereupon M. Drouyn de Lhuys resigned and a far inferior character, Walewski, succeeded him. M. Drouyn de Lhuys was one of the few Frenchmen of high integrity and ability who had consented to serve under the Emperor. He resigned in May 1855, Lord John on July 13.

Diary E. July 14: "Mamma, Julia, Matilda and I went to a déjeuner at Lady Shelley's, Fulham. We sang a trio. Papa, Mamma, Julia and Matilda to Lady Theresa Lewis's party."

17th: "Arrived at Fontainville about 8. Garden charming—roses out."

The Session of 1855 was prorogued by deputy on August 14, and on the 16th my father started for Paris to interview M. Fould and Lord Cowley, *en route* for Cologne to fetch my two sisters.

Sept. 1: "Papa, Zeno and Sophie arrived by last train."

3rd: "Papa and Mr. Greg drove to Devizes to a

Magistrates' meeting respecting the founding of a County Reformatory. Lord Lansdowne presided, and Papa and Mr. Greg returned with him to Bowood, sleeping there. Lady Shelbourne at home—no other visitors."

4th : "Papa and Mr. Greg returned at 12½ and drove to the sheep fair on the downs, at which Papa gives a prize for the finest flock."

10th : "A telegram from Mr. George Russell [then acting as private secretary to my father] announcing the fall of Sebastopol, which we sent round the town."

11th : "In honour of the fall of Sebastopol the Westburians had a bonfire—Fireworks till past midnight."

27th : "Mr. Greg set Julia and me to work reviewing books for the *Economist*."

29th : "Wrote a notice of 'Report of Committee of Crimean Army Fund.'"

Oct. 8 : "Papa, Mr. Greg, Julia and I started on horseback for Bath. Lunched there, then went to Claverton Manor by short, steep way. Went over the house and grounds. Very much pleased. Home at 9 very tired."

No wonder ! Bath was sixteen miles from Fontainville ! Claverton was owned by Mr. Vivian, the fellow-traveller in Spain with Richard Ford, author of the "Handbook," who married our friend Miss Molesworth. Formerly the property belonged to the notable Ralph Allen, whose monument in the churchyard of Claverton remains still its chief feature. In Ralph Allen's days the beautiful Elizabethan mansion stood next the church and above two carved stone terraces which are still intact. Ralph Allen, the friend of William Pitt, Richardson, and of most of the famous writers of his time, built Prior Park, close to Bath, now a Roman Catholic college, and lived alternately a few weeks there and a few weeks at Claverton. The old house was subsequently pulled down and a new one built on the top of the hill. It much attracted my father and mother owing

to its containing a fine library and a very notable picture gallery, in which were paintings by Paul Veronese and Sir J. Reynolds, and several Dutch pictures of note, also as having political and literary associations. Mr. Vivian wished to let the place, and my father, no longer anxious to remain at Westbury, as it had fallen into Conservative hands, decided to rent it.

On October 22 my father lost his friend Sir William Molesworth, at the age of forty-five. He had succeeded Lord John Russell as Secretary of State for the Colonies four months previous to his death. France was now getting anxious for peace, and the French Emperor was at last sick of the war, so Lord Palmerston, though still anxious to continue it, recognised that England could not go on fighting if France gave up. He offered the vacant Secretaryship of State to Lord Stanley, who was a strong advocate for making peace, and on his refusing to accept it, to Mr. Sidney Herbert, who, with the other Peelites, was opposed to the continuance of the war. He also having refused, Mr. Labouchere, a staunch Whig and a friend of my father's, was appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies. Events all tended to the advent of peace, and interest was being focussed in Paris. Emissaries from Saxony and from Bavaria arrived there to interview the Emperor, and the King of Sardinia with Count Cavour paid a visit to Paris, also to London, where he was enthusiastically received by the English lovers of liberty, and by Protestants, for the reason that he had been excommunicated by the Pope on account of the monasteries in Piedmont having been suppressed. All these visits tended to a settlement for peace.

My father, on his way to and from Cologne, paid many visits to Paris and had had many interviews and had become intimate with Lord Cowley and with M. Fould,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Achille Fould was born in Paris in 1800. He was the son of a rich Jewish banker. In 1847 he was elected as *député* and soon after, under the French Republic of 1848, Paris sent him to Parliament as "Représentant du Peuple," and he was chosen by the Prince President as "Ministre des Finances." Subsequently Fould and Magne were alternately at the head of French finance, Fould, however, being considered the abler financier and more favoured by

who, after M. Drouyn de Lhuys resigned, was Louis Napoleon's ablest and most honourable Minister.

He encouraged the Emperor to adopt that Free Trade policy in France which led to the Commercial Treaty of 1860. My father's conversations must have been especially welcome to him, urging as they did, in so enlightening a manner, the arguments for that policy. Fould was much attached to our country, and when he came over to see the Manchester Exhibition in 1857 he was received with great distinction. He was the Queen's guest at Windsor for the Ascot week, and Lord Granville entertained him at breakfast to meet the Chancellor and the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Governor and the ex-Governor of the Bank of England, and other financial authorities, one of whom was my father.

Lord Cowley was acting at that time almost as much as Louis Napoleon's Foreign Minister as our English Ambassador. It would appear that the Emperor's mode of conducting political questions was somewhat that of an adventurer. It was said that he would take no trouble to master detail, and was erratic and careless in carrying out his projects. But in regard to the position he wished to maintain among the potentates of Europe, he was sagacious enough to recognise the value of a figure-head who had the established and avowed high position of an English statesman. It was also undoubtedly an advantage to both countries that, during the French and English alliance, our Ambassador in Paris should be in constant personal touch with the Emperor. For his work at the Treasury my father likewise found it an advantage to have frequent opportunities of discussing financial questions with Lord Cowley and with Fould on the spot. So it was decided that the family should spend some months of the winter of 1855-6 in Paris.

As in the successful carrying through of the abolition

Louis Napoleon. Especially at the time of the Crimean War was Fould chosen rather than Magne to be head of the finance department. The rules he made in 1862 regarding public book-keeping, as well as his organisation of financial agents or functionaries as Paymasters and Receivers, are still existing (1927).

of the Corn Laws, Cobden's inspired zeal, splendid self-forgetfulness, and persuasive oratory were the most obviously acknowledged agents, so doubtless those gifts rightly gained him the credit of having initiated and finally completed the Commercial Treaty with France in 1860. Nevertheless, as my father's weekly articles in the *Economist* and in other newspapers, his speeches, and his personal interviews with politicians, where his great powers of conversation told so convincingly, were undeniable factors in the conversion of Sir Robert Peel and others; likewise by many conversations with Fould and frequent intercourse with Michel Chevalier during several years before Cobden went on his mission to France, my father must have notably prepared the ground for what Cobden accomplished.

In the published letters of Greville and Reeve,<sup>1</sup> Reeve writes :

" 11, RUE RICHEPANSE,

" PARIS,

" 17th Jan., 1860.

" . . . There never was a better hit than you giving me the letter to Fould. It turns out that he had been the chief mover with the Emperor in this affair of the Commercial Treaty, which was wholly unknown to the other Ministers, and when he received me on Sunday it was just the moment that the secrets, which had been most carefully kept, were allowed to transpire. He therefore gave me all the details, and very curious they are. Cobden originally came to Paris without a mission from the Government, though I expect he was asked to come by our mutual friend, Michel Chevalier, who is a most ardent Free Trader. He seems, however, to have thought that important results could be obtained, and a confidential mission was then given to him about three months ago with the Emperor on commercial questions. I have no doubt that it is mainly to Cobden's persuasive ingenuity that the result is attributable. The Treaty is now only waiting for Cowley to arrive to sign it, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of Charles Greville and Henry Reeve.* Fisher Unwin.



probably to-day or to-morrow this most important act will be completed, the most important and the most courageous of the Emperor's reign."

As early as August 1847 Michel Chevalier writes to my father :

" LODÈVE,  
" 9 Août, 1847.

" MONSIEUR,

" Je me reviens ici qu'aucun exemplaire de notre association française pour la liberté des échanges ne vous a été adressé. Je tiens à honneur, comme membre de Comité de l'association, de réparer cette omission. Nous aurons beaucoup à faire dans ce pays pour accréditer les bonnes idées sur ce point. Quelque favorable que doive être la liberté de commerce, établie avec la gradation que nous indiquons, elle rencontre une opposition acharnée de la part de ceux même qu'elle doit le plus servir. Les oligarques qui se retirent tout le profit se frottent les mains et se regardent comme affairés à perpétuité de conserver leur monopole. Nous comptons, nous, sur un résultat tout autre ; nous considérons leur défaite comme certaine, pourvu que de notre côté il y ait de la persévérance. Les effets de la grande expérience tentée en Angleterre, à la suite des efforts d'une Pléiade de bons citoyens et d'hommes éclairés, parmi lesquels vous figurez avec distinction, nous aideront puissamment à renverser l'échafaudage prohibitioniste. Si la France adopte une fois le principe de la liberté de commerce, ce principe sacré appuyé sur la double autorité des deux nations les plus civilisés fera la tour du Monde ; un impérissable avantage sera acquis à la cause de la Paix de l'univers et à celle de la liberté intérieure des Etats. Quand à nous, Monsieur, soyez persuadé que si nous avons le bonheur de voir le principe triompher dans notre patrie et la satisfaction d'y avoir coöperé, nous n'oublierons jamais que de nobles athlètes avaient donné en Angleterre, bien avec nous, l'exemple de la victoire glorieusement conquise, et avaient ainsi rendu le tâche beaucoup plus facile dans tous les autres pays.

“ Veuillez recevoir, Monsieur, l'assurance sincère de mes sentiments les plus distingués

“ MICHEL CHEVALIER,

“ Conseiller d'Etat, Professeur d'économie politique au Collège de France, à ce moment à Lodève.

“ Je ne sais si vous rencontrez quelquefois notre journal, le *Libre Echange*. S'il vous était agréable de la lire le Comité de l'association se ferait un plaisir de vous le faire adresser. Nos amies attendent avec impatience le volume de vous qu'annonce l'*Economist*.”

## CHAPTER XV

### PARIS

DIARY E. October 24 : " Up at 5.30. Started at 7.45."

Yes, it was at a quarter to eight A.M. on October 24, 1855, that we said good-bye to the country home enjoyed for the past nine years—to the old church with its chimes singing out ' God save the Queen ' all out of tune as we drove off to the station,—to the Downs, to the White Horse, to all that had made the romance of those nine years of our childhood. No more wild scampers over Wiltshire Downs on runaway ponies, no more happy birthday holidays at Chalcott, or Chalcott at Fontainville,—the old order changeth—Claverton Manor for Fontainville, 12 Upper Belgrave Street for 15 Hertford Street.

It was fifty years and more before I again saw that home we left that morning. It was when my sister Zoë planned a pilgrimage to the old haunts, and she, her husband, Orby Shipley, my eldest sister and myself paid homage to the scenes of our youth : to Fontainville,—its gardens and lawns, the fine old church, the Downs, the White Horse—Heywood—Chalcott—and the rest. None of the old friends remained either in the town or in the neighbourhood, but when walking through the sleepy little borough we were startled to see a relic of the election days of 1847 and 1852. There, on a stone wall which curved round from one street into another,—unobliterated, strange to say, by the rain and storms of sixty years—in white chalk letters were written the words " Wilson for ever ! " That ghost-like writing on the wall, what a yearning it awoke for the " days that are

no more"—for the one who made those days what they were. . . .

The Diary did not pause to sentimentalise. Briskly it went on.

"Reached Folkestone at 5.30 and Boulogne at 9.45."

24th : "Started for Paris at 12 and arrived 6.45 at 67 Champs Elysées."

25th : "Papa had interviews with Lord Cowley, M. Fould, M. de Magne, Chancellor of the Exchequer."

27th : "Papa saw Mamma, Julia, Matilda and me off to Cluny, and then took the children to the Louvre and to dine with Mr. Moffatt, and they started at 8 for Brussels and Cologne." "The children" who returned to Cologne this time included myself.

"COLOGNE,  
"Oct. 28/55.

"MY DEAR LEWIS,

"Before I left Paris yesterday I had very long conversations with Fould, D'Argout, and the Minister of Finance. The latter does not understand much of the subject, but as far as he goes he is sound:—he is however entirely guided by Fould as the head of the government and who is perfectly well versed in all these questions from the long attention he has paid to them, first as a Banker and next as a Minister. He entirely appreciates the peculiar character of the crisis, its causes, the difficulties in dealing with it, as distinguished from an ordinary money and commercial crisis, and from the fact that the main cause of the drain for the war is one which it is more important to prosecute, than it is even to alienate a money crisis. But one thing he said and evidently in earnestness, that from the Emperor through the whole government all men are determined *not* to allow the Bank of France to suspend cash payments. They are prepared to adopt every measure which may be practicable in order to economise the circulation in a way consistent with sound principle and the maintenance of convertibility, but they will suffer any pressure rather than permit the Bank to suspend. And in this they are

governed by obvious political considerations as much as financial ones. He is so well informed upon the subject and understands it so entirely that we shall have no difficulty in dealing with him.

“But he may have some difficulty in dealing with the Bank of France, though if needful and supported by public opinion, they will make short work of it. Poor old D’Argout belongs to another age, and his colleagues are nearly as old. In their way they are clever and intelligent, but it is a school of the past before the first principles of Banking were understood. I told you the difficulty there was to induce them to adopt notes of 100 fr. and 200 fr. which they only did under the pressure of 1847; before they had only notes of 500 fr. but their prejudice against them is so strong that they will not give the public half the quantity required for the circulation, and they accordingly are compelled to give 20 fr. gold and 5 fr. silver pieces for the rest. They will only partially supply a demand upon them for those more convenient notes, that is they will give a man who asks for say 5,000 fr. in notes of 100 fr. half the amount in the notes and the other half in gold coin. Fancy the Bank of England refusing to pay in notes and insisting on paying half in coin. Yet these men have such a strange notion of the nature of a paper circulation that they have already urged upon the Govt. the policy of allowing them to suspend cash payments. But this has been peremptorily refused, as Fould told me, and as D’Argout let out in conversation.

“I have now no doubt that the recent forced operations of importing bullion, have been accomplished in part by buying up all the English paper, and in part by creating paper for the purpose: and which it is hoped may be kept in circulation by re-drawing. D’Argout admitted that paper in England had become very scarce: I then asked him, in that case how did they manage to pay for the gold which they had bought and were buying? ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘we have a connexion, a very rich House with extensive connexions who manages it for us,’—was

the reply. As I went into his room I met James Rothschild and his son coming out ; as I thought at the time they were in London this is no doubt the foundation of the request that they might have a preference in discounts at the Bank of England and also of the fact of their drawing all their balances from their Bankers in London to employ in the operation. However the market is beating them. The scarcity of bills in London is already so great and the exchange has consequently risen so high that gold has been sent from Paris to London during the last week for remittance.

“ There is one curious operation with regard to our commissariat bills in the East which I have discovered has produced a direct drain from France, and ultimately from England to supply it. These bills as well as the French commis<sup>t</sup> bills are bought generally in Constantinople by Greek Houses ; the French bills of course they send to their correspondents in Marseilles, who at once discount them at the Branch Bank of France there, and remit the amount in gold : but in order to save time and to get the remittance in gold as quickly as possible they also send the English bills to Marseilles in place of London, but as foreign bills, that is, bills drawn abroad and upon a foreign country, cannot be discounted in the Bank of France, they are sold on the Exchange to Merchants, who either use them or remit them to Paris for sale, and with the proceeds procure gold from the Branch Bank of France, and send it off to Constantinople for the bills, and in the present demand for English bills in France it answers well, while a much quicker return of gold is got by the Greek Houses in Constantinople than if they sent the bills to London, and are thus sooner prepared to buy more bills and repeat the operation more quickly. But this is only another means by which our gold goes to the East.

“ I send you my book. The part to which I ask your attention chiefly is from page 200 forward. But as all the rest has reference to the Bank Act of 1844, and it will not take you long to run through, it may be worth

your while to do so. Peel's Act is the grandest piece of Peelism ever conceived. With a sound substratum (that is the act of 1819 which secured convertibility) it is a superstructure sustained by as many false but plausible assumptions as was ever pawned upon mankind; almost every fact and illustration used in support of it having been derived from periods when the Bank had suspended cash payments and the notes were inconvertible. However you will see that I have strongly insisted upon all that is really valuable and essential in that Act, viz., that this Bank shall at all times keep such a reserve of Bullion as will ensure not only the convertibility of the note, but the payment of their obligations generally, for curiously enough while Sir R. Peel took so much pains to secure a mechanism for the convertibility of the note, he entirely overlooked the fact that the deposits must also be provided for. However the chief injury of the Act is in the erroneous impressions it produces in the country and not in any real effect it has in restraining the Bank, except at some special and critical moment.

"It will depend upon the letters I receive on Tuesday if I return on Wednesday.

"My dear Lewis,

"Yours truly,

"JAMES WILSON.

"P.S. The impression that I have obtained in Paris, is, that while there has been a great expansion of trade caused by Railways and public work, there is nothing very unsound and nothing to be apprehended from speculation, unless distrust and discredit still bring on a serious crisis."

Diary E. Nov. 5: "Heard from Papa that the Vivians had accepted his offer for Claverton, and he arrived at Cluny at night."

10th: "Wild boar hunt at Chapège, le *Vieux Solitaire* killed. Started in diligence for Macon."

11th: "Started at 11, reached Paris at 7."

This visit to Cluny was paid to the Marquise du

Hallé, sister of the Countess de Bruntière, *née* Tallien, a widow with whom my family had become intimate during the stay which she and her daughter had made in London. Laure de Bruntière, a graceful charming young lady, became an intimate friend of my elder sisters.

Through Mr. Greg's introduction my family became acquainted with M. and Mme. Mohl and their niece Ida von Mohl, who lived with them. She was the daughter of the distinguished Jurist von Mohl. M. Mohl was a naturalised Frenchman and a *membre de l'Institut*, therefore had dropped the *von*. Mme. Mohl belonged to an old Scots family, and had an almost European celebrity as hostess of the last intellectual salon in Paris. Her abhorrence of Louis Napoleon was unmitigated. She was essentially Quartier St. Germain and lived in Cent Vingt, Rue du Bac.

The friendship between my family and that of the Mohls, formed during the winter of 1855, proved one of great intimacy and enjoyment.

Mme. Mohl's salon was the centre of a charming *côterie* in the Quartier St. Germain. Lady Elgin and her daughters, Lady Augusta and Lady Charlotte, resided in a hotel near the Rue du Bac. Lady Charlotte was the wife of our friend Frederick Locker the poet, and Lady Augusta became the wife of Dean Stanley. It was in Mme. Mohl's salon that Lady Augusta Bruce and Dean Stanley first met, and this meeting led to their engagement eight years later, on the occasion of which Queen Victoria writes to the King of the Belgians, Nov. 12, 1863 :

"My dear Lady Augusta, at 41, without a previous long attachment, has, most unnecessarily, decided to *marry* (!!) that certainly *most* distinguished and excellent man, Dr. Stanley !! It has been my *greatest sorrow* and trial *since* my misfortune ! I thought she *never* would leave *me* ! She seems, however, to think that she can by *his* guidance be of more use than before even. She will remain in my service and be often with me, but it cannot be *the same*, for her first duty is *now* to another."



Lady Elgin was the widow of the seventh Earl of Elgin and eleventh of Kincardine, who had been Ambassador at Constantinople ; she was mother of my father's friend who held the post, first of Governor of Jamaica and then of Canada.

In the year previous to this winter in Paris, my father had received the following letter from Lord Elgin from Canada :

“ QUEBEC,  
“ Sept. 23, 1854.

“ DEAR MR. WILSON,

“ I have received your two letters on the case of John Middleton and I will do what I can for his sons. We know nothing of them here or of their whereabouts but I have no doubt that they will present themselves in due time. I have already spoken to some members of the local Government on their behalf.

“ I am much obliged to you for your kind offer of service and shall not scruple to avail myself of it if I should have occasion to do so. It is very satisfactory to me to find that you appreciate the Reciprocity Treaty so highly. I do not think you overrate the economical benefits which it will confer on these Colonies. I am happy to inform you that the law necessary to give effect to it in so far as Canada is concerned was yesterday adopted by an enormous vote in each House of this Provincial Parliament and that I proceed this afternoon to give assent to it in Her Majesty's name.

“ Yours, dear Mr. Wilson, most sincerely,

“ ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.”

From 1838 Upper Canada peopled by the English and the Scotch, and Lower Canada peopled by the French, were in a disturbed condition. From 1798 they had been given a Constitution but not full Representative Government. A rebellion which broke out in both provinces led to the suspension of the Constitution of Lower Canada for three years, and the appointment of a High Commissioner who had *quasi* dictatorial power over both Upper and Lower Canada. The

appointment was given to Lord Durham. It appears that he was a Liberal,—indeed a Radical,—but like some Radicals, a most autocratic man when in power. He created an administrative despotism of which his personal staff were the executants. He passed sentences of death and banishment without trial. After great protests about him in the House of Commons, to which he replied in a violent and indiscreet Proclamation, he resigned. He then made a famous and most valuable report, on which, strange to say, was based the whole fabric of present-day Dominion Home Rule. The Report was one of the ablest State papers ever written, the guiding mind of Lord Durham being his secretary, Charles Buller.

On his resignation the insurrection broke out afresh, but it was put down by Sir John Colborne, who was superseded by Mr. Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham. In July 1840 another Bill became law, giving nearly complete Representative Government, and in practice securing the Responsibility of Canadian Ministers. The repeal of the Navigation Laws also brought contentment to Canada. By these laws the Colonies could only export their corn in British ships, the shipowners of course charging exorbitant freights, with the result that Canadian corn was undersold in the British market by United States corn. It was realised, and Lord Grey said plainly in the House of Lords, that if Britain persisted in the Navigation Laws she would lose Canada. The Laws were repealed in 1849 following the time when my father was so eagerly urging their repeal in Great Britain.

Lord Elgin became the first Governor-General of Canada in the new conditions, and in 1852 called a Ministry to his Councils which was French (or Liberal), they having then the majority in the population and in the Lower House. This Ministry passed a "Rebellion Losses Act," which compensated rebels for losses. Riots broke out in Montreal. Grey upheld Elgin, and Elgin's action was approved. This really gave full

representative Government to Canada. The Canadian Government, now with full powers, could give advantages to Great Britain as regards import duties, etc., in exchange for similar advantages. It was the first Commercial Treaty with Canada, on which many more have succeeded, one of the most important being the Reciprocity Treaty, the subject of Lord Elgin's letter to my father, and of other communications which passed between them.

In 1857 he was sent on the special mission to China to enquire into Sir John Bowring's proceedings there. On recognising the peril to which our English residents in India were exposed during the Mutiny, and the supreme need of more troops to defend them, Lord Elgin, with independent courage, hurried the regiments entrusted to him to the scene of danger. He succeeded Lord Canning as Viceroy of India, where he died, attended by the same doctor, Macrae, who so devotedly sought to save my father's life.

My family soon became intimate with Lady Elgin and her daughters, also with another interesting family belonging to Mme. Mohl's *côterie*—that of M. Tourgenieff. He was the owner of large estates in Russia. He had married a Scots lady, a relative of the Minto family. Both M. and Mme. Tourgenieff were too liberal in their feelings and political views to feel happy in Russia under her régime of autocracy, and as M. Tourgenieff had liberated peasants on his estate from the bondage of serfdom, he had drawn upon himself displeasure from the Russian Government. Consequently he and his family migrated to the Quartier St. Germain and soon became intimate friends of M., Mme. and Ida von Mohl.

Diary E. Nov. 14 : "Spent the day at The Palais des Beaux Arts. Met the Attorney-General. Papa went to M. Fould."

15th : "To the Palais de l'Industrie at eleven. The Court arrived at 12.30—Eugénie in crimson velvet covered with lace, pearl tiara and necklace. Princess Mathilde, Duke of Cambridge, Prince Jérôme, etc."

Negotiations were still going on with reference to the four points which were drawn up at the Vienna Conference in the spring of 1855, and as still no unanimous agreement had been arrived at as to their acceptance, Louis Napoleon held a Council of War which the Duke of Cambridge attended. Vienna was interfering and making things difficult, but it was generally felt that Louis Napoleon would carry his way even against Palmerston. The atmosphere in Paris was truly exciting.

Diary E. Nov. 18 : " Mr. Smith paid us a long call ; just returned from the Crimea. He is Miss Nightingale's uncle."

22nd : " Left cards and Mr. Greg's letters at Mme. de Bury's and at Mme. Mohl's. Papa, Mamma and I dined at the Embassy, the Cowleys very kind."

23rd : " Papa went to London. Mme. Mohl called and invited us to her Friday receptions. Mme. de Bruntière and Laure dined with us."

28th : " We went to a grand ball at the Hotel de Ville in honour of the King of Sardinia. Splendid sight. Saw Lord and Lady Canning and Lord de Tabley who were passing through Paris *en route* to India."

Dec. 3 : " Called on Mme. Mohl. Sat a long time. Saw her niece Ida, Charles Dickens and Mrs. Jameson. Lady Cowley sent us her box for the opera—' Robert le Diable.'"

5th : " Papa's report of the King of Sardinia was that he is brusque, almost rude."

7th : " Mamma, Julia and I went to Mme. Mohl's reception. Met Lady Charlotte Locker and her sister Lady Augusta Bruce, lady in waiting to the Duchess of Kent."

9th : " Mr. Greg arrived. . . ."

22nd : " Went to the Louvre, Ida went over the Italian Masters with us. Mr. Greg and Julia dined at Mme. de Bury's to meet Cousin, Villemain, etc."

23rd : " Papa arrived at 11 having travelled all night."

25th : "Papa, Mamma and Julia dined at the Embassy. Mr. Greg, Matilda and I dined quietly at Mme. Mohl's—very pleasant."

26th : "M. de Rémusat breakfasted with us. Papa called on Lord Cowley. M. and Mme. de Bury dined here, and Admiral Boyle came in the evening."

29th : "Reception of the Armée de l'Orient by the Emperor. We breakfasted with the Marquise du Hallé and saw it defile before him. M., Mme. and Ida Mohl dined with us. M. Jules Dufour and Admiral Boyle came in the evening."

30th : "Went to High Mass at St. Roche. Papa, Mamma and I dined at the Michel Chevaliers' . . ."

1856. Jan. 10 : "Mme. Mohl and Mme. de Bruntière called. Papa, Julia and I in the evening to M. Guizot and Mme. de Bury."

11th : "Papa and I called on Lady Elgin and Lady Augusta Bruce. Matilda to a juvenile ball at Lady Cowley's—Julia and I went to Mme. Mohl's."

12th : . . . "The de Bruntières, Marquise du Hallé, M. Emil de Girardin, Mr. McGregor to dinner." (Excursions followed with Mme. and Ida Von Mohl).

15th : "Went to the Tuileries by invitation to see the review and distribution of English Crimean Medals to the French Army by the Duke of Cambridge. We were in the Salle des Maréchaux with the Emperor and the Court. M. de Villemain, Guizot, M. de Rémusat and Guillemain dined here. Went to a Ball at the Embassy—Emperor and Eugénie there."

16th : "Papa, Julia and I went with Mme. Mohl to Rosa Bonheur's Studio." (I remember my sisters describing Rosa Bonheur dressed as a man and surrounded by animals. She lived outside Paris.)

"Papa and Mamma dined at M. Fould's, le Ministre d'Etat, at a banquet of 40 people, including Princess Mathilde. Matilda and I went in the evening when a concert took place and Mario sang."

17th : "Dined at the Mohls to meet M. Mignet, and to M. Guizot and the Embassy afterwards."

18th : " Moved from 20 Rue de la Madeleine to Hôtel des Isles Britanniques. Papa left for London at 6.30. We dined at the Marquise du Hallé and went to Mme. Drouyn de Lhuys in the evening."

19th : " Mamma, Matilda and I went to a small ball at the Tuileries in the Empress's apartments. Very beautiful. Duke of Cambridge there."

21st : " To Lady Elgin and to the Tourgenieffs."

24th : " Mamma, Matilda and I went in the evening to M. Guizot's and the Embassy."

25th : " We went to the Louvre, and Ida joined us to look at the Nineveh and Egyptian sculptures. Went to Rosa Bonheur's studio, saw her *Chasse* and *Spanish Muleteer*. In evening to parties at Mme. Drouyn de Lhuys and Mme. Mohl."

26th : " Went over the *manufacture des Gobelins*."

28th : " Drove to Sèvres and St. Cloud and went over the manufactories."

29th : " Matilda and I fetched Ida at the Louvre. Went to a large ball at the Tuileries, great crush, and then to Mme. Tourgenieff's. Danced till 3."

30th : " Mme. Mohl and Ida called for us to take us to M. Ary Scheffer's studio. Saw portraits of Villemain, Arago, Charles Dickens, etc., and his great picture of *Francesca and Paolo* and the *Temptation*. Ida and we then went to the Collège de France and heard M. de Lomenie lecture on Marguerite de Valois. Ida dined with us."

31st : " Mamma and I to Mme. de Bury and the Embassy."

Feb. 1 : " Went with Ida through the modern and mediæval sculpture at the Louvre, then to the old picture shop in the Rue de Seine and to Mme. Mohl's for the evening. M. Tachard, Mme. Von Hügel, etc., there."

5th : " We went to Mme. Mohl's to go with her, Ida and Mrs. Charles Dickens to the Conciergerie. Saw the cell of Marie Antoinette, etc. Mme. Mohl chaperoned us to Mme. Tourgenieff's ball where we danced till 3 A.M."

7th : " Started at 1—reached Boulogne 8½ and

started at 11—reached London at 6½. Papa at the House.”

Thus ended the winter in Paris. The Peace negotiations were soon to begin in earnest.

The various Plenipotentiaries arrived in Paris in the middle of February. First the Chancellor Count Buol from Vienna; second, Lord Clarendon from England, Lord Cowley acting with him; then Baron Brunnow and Prince Orloff from Russia,—from Turin Count Cavour, and from Constantinople Ali Pasha. The Chairman of the Congress was Walewski, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs; French Ministers at the Courts of the various Powers also took part.

Sir George Lewis and my father were engaged in settling the finances of the Treaty as regarded English interests in connexion with those of our Allies—consequently my father had more interviews and much correspondence with M. Fould during the days of the Peace Congress. In the middle of March all business was temporarily suspended in Paris on account of the celebrations in honour of the birth of the Prince Imperial. The Treaty of Paris was signed by England, France, Austria, Prussia, Turkey and Sardinia.

From a financial point of view the treaty was not satisfactory to the English Exchequer and Treasury. My father's constant intercourse with Lord Cowley and M. Fould during the winter of 1855-6 had the result that Lord Cowley was not at all satisfied that the conditions of the treaty were fair towards England; Lord Palmerston and Louis Napoleon, however, meant to have peace, and doubtless would have overridden Lord Clarendon had he stuck out for better terms.<sup>1</sup>

The Treaty of Peace with Russia had in fact made no provision to indemnify England and France for the expenses of the war, notwithstanding that they were the conquerors.

<sup>1</sup> *Punch's* cartoon of April 12, 1856, "Swindling the Clarendon by a distinguished Russian," represents John Bull between Lord Clarendon and Louis Napoleon. "Mr. Bull (Landlord of the British Lion): 'What! Quite the Gentleman! Why, he has left nothing but a portmanteau full of bricks and stones, and gone off without paying his bill!'"

## CHAPTER XVI

### CLAVERTON—CRUSADE AGAINST BOMBA

To revert to the diaries.

Diary E. Feb. 11 : " Julia began her work reviewing Ruskin's 3rd vol. of 'Modern Painters' for the *Economist*." (This appeared in the *Economist* of March 3.)

We were told that Mr. Ruskin gave as his opinion that the review of his "Modern Painters" in the *Economist* was the most understanding and truly appreciative of any that appeared.

13th : " Papa, Mamma, Julia and I to a large party at Lady Granville's."

18th : " Mr. Greg at breakfast and dinner. The Armistice signed at Paris to last till March 31, and all fighting ceased."

20th : " The children's answer about coming home arrived. Emy wishes to come home in September for good. Zeno and Sophie undecided. Mamma, Julia, Papa and I to a large party at Lady Mary Wood's—Admiralty."

21st : " Papa brought Mr. Moffatt to dine, and they returned to the House to vote, Papa against, Mr. M. for, Sir J. Walmsley's motion to open the Museums and Crystal Palace on Sundays. Lost by 36-376."

23rd : " Papa dined with the Duke of Argyll, and he, Mamma and Matilda to Lady Palmerston's."

27th : " Papa went to Exeter to meet six members of the Devonport Liberal Committee, which has chosen him for their Candidate next election, to explain his views. Mamma, Julia and I to Lady Wodehouse."

March 4 : Mr. Cadby's motion on Papa's supposed betrayal of finance secrets to Mr. Moffatt last year came on but negatived without a division."



8th : " Julia and Matilda arranged with Julien to publish their songs."

11th : " Left Papa working at home and Mamma, J., M., Mr. Greg and I went to Jenny Lind's concert at Exeter Hall in aid of the Nightingale Fund."

12th : " Papa and I to dinner at Mr. Edward Bouverie's."

(From Claverton).

30th : " Peace signed at the Tuileries."

31st : " Papa went to town. Bells rung and flags hoisted for peace."

April 1 : " Came to town. Found Papa returned from the House, where Roebuck had attacked him upon the salary of his brother-in-law, a County Court Judge, ascribing political motives to Papa."

Diary J. : " Papa attacked by Roebuck ; but successfully defended himself."

10th : " Papa, Mr. Greg and Percy came from the House in the middle of Lord John's educational debate and returned after dinner."

June 4 : " Mamma, Tilly and I to the City to see Rosa Bonheur's ' Horse Fair. '

6th : " Wrote to Rosa Bonheur inviting her to Claverton."

15th : " Dinner party—Lady Eastlake, Dr. Waagen, Lord E. Bruce, Mr. Liddell, Mr. Greg, Mr. Fonblanque, Mr. C. Villiers, Sir E. Bulwer Lytton." (Weekly parties at Lady Palmerston's, others at Lady Mary Wood's and Lady Fremantle's. Dinner and party at Lady Mary Labouchere.)

Diary E. : April 20 : " Mr. Greg dined here and he and Papa discussed the propriety of Papa accepting the Governorship of Melbourne should Lord Clarendon and others decline it. Mr. Greg opposes it extremely."

23rd : " Papa, Mamma and Matilda went to the Naval Review at Spithead."

27th : " Lord Clarendon declined the Governorship of Victoria. Mr. C. Villiers to be asked."

29th : Mamma and Matilda to the Drawing-room."

May 2 : "Mamma and Julia to the private view of the Academy."

3rd : "Mr. Greg accepted the Commissionership of Customs, Miss Andrews and Lord Radnor called. Papa dined at the Academy."

6th : "Worked on the *Economist* accounts, Palmerston's great speech on the Peace."

7th : "Lady Augusta Bruce and Mr. Greg breakfasted with us and we all went to the Exhibition at the Academy. Took Lady Augusta afterwards to the Duchess of Kent. Papa and Mamma dined at the Mansion House and to a party at Mrs. Gladstone's. Mr. Greg, Julia and I to the Literary Fund dinner at Freemason's Hall, Duke of Cambridge in Chair."

8th : "Papa, Mamma, Julia and I to the first Queen's Ball in new Ball room. Princess Royal's first ball."

10th : "Papa went to Düsseldorf where he will meet the children. In case Sir Henry Bulwer declines Victoria, Mr. Labouchere definitely offered it to Papa." My father, however, retained his office in England.

The Musical Festival at Düsseldorf I remember as a notable event. It was arranged that a governess at the Spielmanns', Fräulein Scholtz, was to take my two sisters and myself to Düsseldorf to meet my father. My sister Sophie had not been well and was to return with him to England after the Festival. My sister Zoë, who mothered me in the dearest way while I was at Cologne, and I were to return to school till the autumn. That Festival showed Germany in its most attractive aspect. It was all sunshine. The music was momentous. Titiens, in the zenith of her power—though as yet unknown to England,—sang superbly, and Stockhausen no less so. Well do I remember his rich vibrating voice when singing that king of songs, Beethoven's "*An die ferne Geliebte*"—it might be called a cycle of songs—as we sat round a table with my father, under the shade of large trees enjoying the refreshing *Maitrank*—the typical Rhenish beverage.

May 25 : " We all went at 11 o'clock to the British Museum to see the new building, the dome of which they want to build. M. Panizzi and Sir R. Murchison went over it with us."

26th : " Papa dined with Mr. Monckton Milnes to meet the American Minister. Went to the singing-class at Signor Ferrari's and brought Evelina de Rothschild home."

28th : " Dinner-party. Hanseatic Minister, the Thomas Hankeys and their niece, Miss Alexander, Mrs. Lane-Fox, Lady Bethell, Mr. Moffatt, Mr. Percy Doyle, Mr. George Russell, Mr. Dundas, and Sir E. and Lady J. Perry. Sixty at evening party afterwards and Miss Corelli sang."

30th : " Read Papa's speech of Monday aloud."

31st : " Papa dined at Kent House for the Chancellor of the Exchequer's party for the Queen's birthday."

June 1 : " Papa dined at Edward Bulwer-Lytton's."

9th : " Mamma, Matilda and I to the Lyceum to see Ristori in Medea. Wonderful !"

10th : " Julia, Matilda and I went to Mrs. Bonamy Price's ball, stayed till 3. No chaperons."

15th : " Dinner-party. Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Lady Eastlake, Dr. Waagen,<sup>1</sup> Lord Ernest Bruce, Mr. Liddell, Mr. Greg, Mr. Fonblanque and Mr. Charles Villiers. Julia sang her song to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who wrote the words and was much pleased with the music. Mme. Mohl and Ida called."

17th : " Mamma, Matilda and I to the Queen's Ball. The King of Prussia and the Regent of Baden present."

18th : " Ida lunched with us and went to the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Gustave Friedrich Waagen, born 1794, died 1868, was Director of the Royal Gallery at Berlin. He visited England in 1835 and made notes on the private collections during the years up to 1853, when they were issued in three volumes by John Murray, entitled, *Treasuries of Art in Great Britain*. A fourth volume was added in 1857. This was the first work of its kind and has been used as book of reference ever since, now, alas ! chiefly as a record of what was once part of the country's wealth. The first three volumes are fairly common, the fourth rather scarce.

American Flower Show. Mme. Mohl and Mr. Greg to dinner."

28th : "Mamma, Julia and I went to hear Mrs. Jameson's Lecture on the 'Social Duties of Women.'"

July 1 : "Mamma, Matilda and I to a large party at Mr. Milner Gibson's to meet Ristori. Very handsome."

2nd : "Ida came to tea. Discussion on Ruskin's 'Modern Painters.'"

3rd : "Ida came at 5, and we walked with her and Mr. Greg in Kensington Gardens. Discussion on her religious views. Very liberal and quite pantheistic."

5th : "Papa went to Claverton. Mamma and I to Lady Clarendon's."

6th : "Mme. Mohl and Ida paid us their farewell visit."

7th : "Edith Greg [Mr. Greg's daughter] spent the day. Mamma, J. and I to Lady Stratheden's ball. Papa returned."

"8th : "Mamma, M. and I went to a party at Mrs. Hall's. Jenny Lind there."

9th : "The entry of the Guards and their review in the Park by the Queen. Mamma and I to the Treasury to see them."

12th : "Mamma laid up, so Papa, M., Sophie, Susan and I went at 4 P.M. to Basingstoke. Sir Richard Bethell travelled with us and we went together to Hackwood."

13th : "Called on Mrs. Slingsby Bethell in her wing of Hackwood House."

14th : "Papa, Mr. Roche and Sir Richard Bethell to town early. Mamma and Julia came at 5 P.M."

16th : "Mamma and I arrived at Claverton at 1.15 A.M., in brilliant moonlight."

18th : "Began to review de Toqueville's 'Ancien Régime.'"

19th : "Papa and Mr. Phipps [Lord Normanby's brother] came."

22nd : "Parliament prorogued."

August 2 : "Sent my review of De Toqueville to the *Economist*."

18th : " Mr. Arbuthnot came."

20th : " Mr. Anderson (Treasury) came."

My father started on August 27 for Cologne.

28th : " Papa, Zeno and Emy went from Cologne to Mayence."

During that journey an incident occurred which I can visualise very distinctly. As the boat started from Cologne a tall gentleman joined my father and walked up and down the deck conversing very seriously with him. My sister and I became very curious to know who this fellow-traveller was, who seemed to have so much of interest to discuss with my father, but who was a perfect stranger to us. He had a massive head, broad and slightly slouching shoulders, carried a black bag and was anything but a dandy as regarded his attire. On my father parting with him we eagerly asked who he was. " Lord Robert Cecil," was my father's answer—no less a person than the future Lord Salisbury, the great Conservative leader.

Sept. 1 : " Papa, Zeno and Emy arrived home."

The new country home was very attractive to us. From the hill whereon the house stood lovely views can be seen of the valley of the Avon, winding away towards Freshford and Bradford-on-Avon, and from the river bank below wooded hills ascended, which were coloured with autumn tints when first we saw them. There were downs too, reached through an avenue of beautiful beech trees, not like our lonely, wild Wiltshire downs, but studded with rocks and clusters of bushes which had formed, they told us, studies for Gainsborough's pencil when he lived at Bath. On the morning of September 2 we took our first walk on these downs. I remember the landscape softened by autumn mists, and at our feet sunlit beads of dew threaded on gossamer webs swinging from blade to blade.

Sept. 15 : " Mamma, Emy and I drove to the station. We walked back and Mamma waited for Sir William, Lady and Fanny Ouseley."

This family lived in a house in Hertford Street, nearly

opposite our own, and Fanny Ouseley was one of my most intimate girl-cronies. Sir William was a diplomat, married to an American beauty. He was a cousin of the noted Sir William Gore Ouseley, the musician, and was himself a good amateur artist and played the flute. He illustrated very amusingly a diary of the days he spent at Claverton—all the various activities which were carried on so continuously—the riding, the walking, the climbing, the boating, the music-making in the evening—all were recorded by pictures in the diary.

Sept. 16 : " Sir William sketched the house. We all rowed on the river with Papa to Stoke bridge."

20th : " Emy and Fanny fished. Sir Henry Berkeley, the new Governor of Melbourne, and Mr. Fred Peel arrived."

24th : " Mr. Peel left. Mr. Brett and Mr. Pindar came on a deputation to Papa about the electric telegraph in the Mediterranean."

25th : " Emy caught three fish in the Avon. The Ouseleys left."

30th : " Mr. Greg and Papa went to town. Lady Elphinstone came to stay."

October 1 : " Mamma took Matilda, Zeno, Sophie and Emy to Bath for their first lesson with Mr. Morris on English literature and composition."

3rd : " Mr. Frederick Locker came on a visit."

4th : " Papa and Mr. Shelley came."

8th : " Mr. Locker and Mr. Shelley left."

My vanity has retained the memory of two incidents which took place during these visits paid by Mr. Frederick Peel and Mr. Shelley of the Civil Service, who was a good musician. His instrument was the 'cello, which he brought with him to Claverton. I played the piano, and though not yet out of the schoolroom, was always expected to perform in the evening. What a shadow this expectancy threw over all the day, for I inherited my father's shyness. However, I played Mozart's Fantasia in C Minor to Mr. Shelley, which I conclude satisfied him, for in his *lettre de digestion*, thanking my mother for

his visit, he wrote, "It will be long before I forget that lovely Mozart." This praise pleased me enormously, for I was enamoured of the Fantasia. The other incident that fanned my vanity was beating Mr. Peel in a game of billiards, because he was noted as a specially good player.

Sept. 15 : "Papa, Julia and I went to Wells, where Papa was sworn in as magistrate for Somerset. Mamma, Zeno, Sophie and Emy to the opera at Bath to hear Grisi in Norma."

21st : "Lord Dufferin arrived, very agreeable and pleasing. Gave us a description of Iceland, where he has just been with his yacht while Prince Napoleon was there."

With his letter thanking for his visit Lord Dufferin sent a copy of his book, "In High Latitudes."

25th : "Mr. Edward Bouverie came at 5. Had been at the wedding of Lord Barrington's daughter with Alfred Sartoris."

30th : "Mr. Bouverie left. Did *Economist* accounts."

Nov 1 : "Mr. Field, an American, came to arrange the submarine telegraph to and from Newfoundland to Ireland, and Mr. Robert Lowe."

3rd : "The Attorney-General arrived [Sir Alexander Cockburn]. Shot a cock-pheasant, and left by the last train with the others."

7th : "Matilda and Emy's first harp lesson from Miss Windsor. Papa left."

It was during the year 1856 that the Crusade was attempted—it could not be carried through—against the Bourbon Ferdinand II—by common parlance Bomba—King of Naples. Mr. Gladstone had previously visited Naples and called the attention of Europe to the horrible cruelties perpetrated by Bomba on any subject who dared to raise his voice against his abominable tyranny. An intellectual politician, Poerio, who had served as Prime Minister in the Neapolitan Government, had enunciated some Liberal doctrine. Bomba had him put into gaol, chained to a murderer, and manacled so tightly that he could not lift his hand to his mouth to

feed himself. That was the story, with many others of a like nature, that raised the indignation of all right-thinking and right-feeling people throughout Europe.

Lord Palmerston was especially indignant at the cruelties perpetrated by Bomba. Louis Napoleon took the same line, why, it is difficult to say, as he himself had not been slack in inflicting tyrannous cruelty on his opponents in order to obtain the objects of his ambition. He it was, however, who took the initiative in endeavouring to make Bomba mend his ways. Urged by Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, as our Foreign Minister, joined Louis Napoleon in despatching a strong note to Bomba from England and France, demanding in the name of civilised humanity a cessation of his brutal policy. Lord Granville (see Greville) said that Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon acted under the delusion that this strong censure from the two great Powers would have the desired effect—far from it. Lord Clarendon said that Bomba's answer to the Note amounted to "Mind your own business." The situation was somewhat embarrassing to our Government. The Neapolitan Minister in Paris declared that his King would not submit to the dictation of the allied Powers. Greville writes, October 10: "Even Granville who never says much said to me yesterday that it was a very foolish affair." The fact was that Bomba himself was in daily terror of a revolution breaking out in his own Kingdom, and having long lost the affection or devotion of his subjects, he had only the reign of terror to rely on to save his throne. Sir George Cornewall Lewis writes to my father the following letter, dated October 21, on the situation, a letter which showed, like all he wrote, a sober wisdom, analogous to that possessed by my father—a wisdom which proves the safest steerage in all troubled waters :

"DEAR WILSON,

"I have no exact knowledge of the extent to which our dictation to Naples has been carried. For



the present, I apprehend, no intention of a naval demonstration is entertained. This is what I most fear, as a patent act of this sort engages the national honour, and commits us in the face of Europe. It necessarily entails ulterior consequences, whereas angry diplomatic notes may be got over. I have a strong belief that the country at large is indifferent about the internal Government of Naples, and will never urge the Government to foolish measures of interference. If we have gone too far in doctrine, we have at least hitherto not gone too far in action. I should be for 'making a loss' of our untenable demands, and taking a fresh departure from a point which would not saddle us with the responsibility of the Government of Naples. In politics, as in trade, it is a great matter to see when you have made a false step; to recede in time, and not to make other false steps in the same direction because you have made one. Hope you think this good doctrine.

" Ever yours sincerely,

" G. C. LEWIS.

" P.S. Spearman is using his dividends for buying up Exchequer Bills, and this money, together with a portion of the repayment for the bonds, will, he thinks, sustain the market sufficiently to enable us to get over the June Exchange. An increase of a halfpenny on the whole amount is equal to £150,000 a year.

" I am glad to hear that you are mending. The weather is desperately cold."

" HARPTON,

" October 5.

" MY DEAR WILSON,

" . . . I am very apprehensive of the effect of this Neapolitan demonstration. We are almost sure to excite expectations which we shall disappoint, and to induce people to expose themselves to hazard, whom we cannot protect effectually, and whom we shall have to

leave in the lurch. We shall end in being accused of being traitors to liberty, or of seeking our own aggrandizement. . . .

“ Believe me,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ G. C. LEWIS.

“ I have written to Trevelyan about his Minute, suggesting some further omissions and amendments.”

On October 26, 1856, my father wrote to Sir George Lewis :

“ I wish we had never got into this Naples business ; but now that we are in, I shall be glad to get out as decently and as soon as we can. No sooner do we tack round the shorter distance than we have to run to get back into a right course. The motives were good ; but we undertook what was out of our sphere and had no means of accomplishing.”

The wise course was not the one taken by our Government or by Louis Napoleon. The Neapolitan Ministers were given their *congé* in London and Paris, and on October 28 the fleets of both countries arrived off Naples to effect a pacific blockade. Probably Palmerston had in mind his successful procedure on these lines when requiring restitution for Don Pacifico's loss of imaginary furniture which he declared had been destroyed by the Greeks, who, infuriated at not being allowed to burn Judas Iscariot one Easter time as had been their custom, had nearly demolished the Jew's house. But there was an essential difference between the two cases. Unreasonably aggressive as might have been the pacific blockade in the Piræus, it was no futile folly. The Greek soil not being sufficiently productive to feed her own population, Greece depended much on her imports for the necessaries of life. Therefore, by preventing ships going in and out of her harbour, the pacific blockade effected its object, and the Greek Government yielded to Palmerston's demands. The case was very different

at Naples. With the fertile plains of Southern Italy on which to depend, Bomba could scornfully deride the menace of the Great Powers, and view with insolent indifference the presence of their fleets in his waters. Nothing but a bombardment of Naples, tantamount to a declaration of war, would have affected the tyrant materially, and no one knew better than Bomba that neither the English nor French nations would consent to embark on a war in order to release his prisoners and punish him for his iniquities.

It was undoubtedly a very puzzling position in which the English Government had placed itself. Greville writes : " I asked him [Clarendon] about Naples, of which he could give but an unsatisfactory account and a lame story. He said France had acted with us very steadily, but that it was she who had started this hare and he had engaged in it in the belief that the Emperor would never have mooted the question unless he had been assured that the King of Naples would yield to the remonstrances of the two Courts, and, but for that conviction, he would never have meddled in it, which he now very much regretted. . . . Clarendon talked of the various atrocities of the King of Naples, but with an evident consciousness that the facts, even if they be true, and not, as is probable, exaggerated, afford no excuse for our policy in the matter. As the subject could not be agreeable I refrained from telling him how general the opinion is that he has committed a great blunder." A few months later Greville writes : " I saw Clarendon yesterday morning, and found him low, worn and out-of-sorts ; said he wished to Heaven he could be delivered from office ; everything went wrong, the labour, anxiety and responsibility were overwhelming, and the difficult state of our relations with France more than could be endured. Clarendon stated that it was impossible such a state of things should not produce first coolness and then quarrels, and then God knows what consequences, and he was obliged to pick his way through the embarrassments which spring up around

him with the utmost care and circumspection. Palmerston who never saw difficulties took it in his usual way and said we were not tied to France like Siamese Twins ; and why should we care so much what she did, and why might she not take her way and we ours ; but Clarendon feels that it is impossible for him, on whom the responsibility is more immediately thrown, to take a matter fraught with such consequences in so easy a style ; that if any serious dispute arose France and Russia would become allied against us and that America would join them."

Still, though this futile display of our impotence was at the time considered a blunder and a failure, it had the effect of inspiring very friendly feeling towards England in the hearts of the Young Italy which was struggling for life—the Young Italy of which we heard so much from Mme. Mohl and Mrs. Schwabe.

In the late autumn of 1856 my father found that he had important business to transact with Fould, and my sister Eliza, who was a special favourite of Mme. Mohl's, accompanied him to Paris to pay a visit to 120 Rue du Bac.

Diary E. Dec. 1 : "Papa and I left for Paris."

Dec. 2 : "Reached Paris at 11.30 P.M. Met Mme. Mohl at her door just returned from the Tourgenieffs, and found M. Mohl and Ida upstairs. Had tea, and then Papa went to the Hôtel des Missions opposite."

4th : "Papa and I went to M. Fould, a long interview, and to Mme. de Bruntière's and Lady Elgin's."

5th : "Papa and I called on M. Villemain at the Institut. Saw him and his daughters and invited him to Mme. Mohl's for that evening. Went to Rosa Bonheur's studio and saw her Scotch studies. Papa dined with the Political Economy Club. M. Michel Chevalier took him and came here afterwards."

6th : "Papa, Ida and I joined the Storeys at the Louvre [Mr. Storey was the distinguished American sculptor whose statues created a great sensation when exhibited in London]. We called on the Tourgenieffs

and the de Rémusat. Papa dined with the Girandins and went with them to the Opera."

7th : "Papa started for London at 8 A.M. and reached London at 10 P.M. Ida and I called to see Mme. Ernest de Bunsen's children."

19th : "Col. Bruce brought Mr. Thomson, a Jamaica judge, who offered to escort me to England, which I accepted."

21st : "Lady Augusta and Mrs. Robert Bruce called. Mme. Mohl and Ida told me the history of Prof. Ranke's marriage with Miss Graves."

22nd : "Ida went with me to the station where Mr. Thomson joined us. We slept at Boulogne."

23rd : "Up at 4.30. Went to the boat in the dark. Left Folkestone at 9. Reached Claverton at 7.30."

The Christmas of 1856 was the last my father, mother, and their six daughters spent all together.

## CHAPTER XVII

### CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SIR G. CORNEWALL LEWIS AND MY FATHER—BANKING

MORE than fifty letters from Sir George Lewis to my father, and thirty from my father, many of great length, have been preserved. Every subject that came within his province as Chancellor of the Exchequer, beside those of more general interest, were discussed very fully between them in this correspondence. In September 1856 he writes from Harpton :

“ We must try to prepare our questions well for next Session to do the business in a workmanlike way. What you say about the Bill for the sale of spirits is quite satisfactory. . . . I have been following your example, and been riding several hours of every day since the weather changed. Murchison has been here, and I have been geologising with him. I hope to have a good balance of health at my bankers by November. Ever yours sincerely, G. C. LEWIS.”

My father disapproved, as did Sir George Lewis, of the war, but the war was a *fait accompli* when Sir George Lewis entered the Cabinet, and though he had had no voice in England joining in, he had to provide the means for paying for it. My father worked with him sedulously in framing his Budget from the time Parliament met in February till April 20, 1856, when it was produced. There was a deficiency of no less than twenty-three millions. This was to be met by a loan of sixteen millions and the rest by increased taxation. The spirit of the country was still warlike, and neither in the House nor in the country was any serious opposition raised against the heavier taxation.

It was in October 1856 that my father was asked whether he would care to succeed John Wood as Chairman of the Inland Revenue, a permanent office of considerable value. My father hesitated, and wrote from London to my mother and sisters, who were at Claverton, to ask their advice on the matter.

Diary E. Oct. 8: "Papa wrote to Mamma, Julia and me to give separately our candid opinion and feeling about accepting the Chairmanship of the Inland Revenue."

Sir G. C. Lewis wrote :

"HARPTON,

"Oct. 21, 1856.

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"There is no immediate hurry about filling up John Wood's vacancy, as he has not in fact acted as chairman for more than a year, and the Board can go on very well for a few weeks as it has gone on for a longer period. But it will be necessary before long to come to a decision on the matter, and before I have any conversation with Lord Palmerston on the subject, I should be glad if you would tell me whether you have any views yourself with respect to the office. I do not remember that you ever expressed to me any wish on the subject, nor do I know whether you contemplate such an arrangement. There is no doubt of the importance of the position, which involves the charge of about forty millions a year. On the other hand, I doubt the policy of a suggestion which I see in the *Daily News*, that the Customs should be incorporated with the Inland Revenue: one of the reasons assigned being that the great excise duties operate extensively as *export duties* !

"I need scarcely add that I make this enquiry merely for the purpose of ascertaining your wishes, and certainly with no desire that you should give up the Treasury."

"HARPTON,

"Oct. 30, 1856.

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"It is natural that you should take time to deliberate upon so important a matter as that of the

Chairmanship of the Inland Revenue Board—and I have written to Lord Palmerston to request that the matter may stand over till we meet in town. I intend to be in Downing Street on the morning of the 10th, and have promised to dine at the Guildhall on that day.”

Diary E. Nov. 14 : “ Papa saw Lord Palmerston, and with his advice and Sir G. Lewis’s, determined to remain at the Treasury instead of accepting the Chairmanship of the Board of Inland Revenue.”

Walter Bagehot wrote : “ He declined because he did not consider the income necessary [the post would considerably have increased my father’s income] and because (what some people would think odd) it did not afford sufficient occupation. It was a ‘ good pillow,’ he said, ‘ but he did not wish to lie down.’ ”

Sir Charles Trevelyan held the permanent position at that time of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. He evidently, as shown by his career, did not understand what the position of a subordinate official involved. This failure was felt by his superiors in the Treasury, and in a measure prepared my father for his subsequent disastrous action in India. Sir G. C. Lewis writes :

“ HARPTON,

“ Sept. 12, 1856.”

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ Trevelyan has sent me a printed copy of a Minute which he proposes for adoption, containing regulations for the business of the office. Would you have the kindness to let me know whether you approve of it ?

“ I know nothing of C. Villiers’ appointment [President of the Poor Law Board] beyond public rumour. It would certainly be a good appointment, and I should think that it would give satisfaction.

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ G. C. L.”



“ HARPTON,

“ Sept. 30, 1856.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ Your alterations of the printed Minute are undoubted improvements. The last paragraph is quite inadmissible—but, to say the truth, I am not very fond of the Minute at all, and should be glad if the whole of it could be dispensed with. I dislike this mode of legislating for office business—such regulations are almost sure, after a time, either to become inconvenient, or to be disregarded. I wish you would try when you see Trevelyan to reduce it to what is strictly necessary—if *any* part of it is necessary. I wish it also to be distinctly understood that no Minute on any important subject is to be passed without the knowledge and consent of one of the political heads of the office. Trevelyan has a most dangerous love of the Press. He is unmindful of Mr. Canning’s dictum, that *whoever prints, publishes. . . .*

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ G. CORNEWALL LEWIS.

“ P.S. One of the difficulties which I see about this Minute is the mention, or omission, of the first Lord of the Treasury. He cannot be treated as non-existent and yet he rarely interferes with the office business. This is one of those things which are well if left alone, but create difficulty when you come to precise rules and definitions.”

“ HARPTON—RADNOR.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ . . . I am quite against the second mail round the Cape. The objections, which you make to it seem to me unanswerable. Nor can I see how we can undertake to pay for inland mails in South America. We do, undertake, more or less, to manage the whole world, but I don’t suppose that anybody, at present, proposes that we should carry the letters of the whole world. . . .”

“ Lord Palmerston’s notions and Trevelyan’s about

public offices seem to me wild and extravagant in the extreme.

"I felt sure that you would be pleased with Toqueville's book. The only fault I have to find with it is that I should have preferred that the process of elaboration which you describe the reader as performing for himself had been to a greater degree performed by the author. His views are at once so new and so just as to deserve further development.

"Yours ever sincerely,  
"G. C. LEWIS."

"HARPTON,  
"Sept. 8th, 1856.

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"When the Cabinet meets in November, it will be necessary to decide upon the course to be taken with respect to the Bank Act and the Currency question. I should be glad if you would give me your views on the subject. What do you consider to be the definition of *money*, which seems to me much more difficult than the definition of pound notes. Is a Bank Note payable to bearer, not a *legal tender*, money?

"Ever yours sincerely,  
"G. C. LEWIS."

In answer to this letter my father writes one twenty-eight octavo pages long.

"CLAVERTON MANOR,  
"Oct. 10th/56.

"MY DEAR LEWIS,

"In one of your recent letters you asked for my views upon the subject of the Bank and Currency question prior to their discussion in the Cabinet, as to the best course to be taken when Parliament meets. If we had a clear field, and no prejudices to contend against, it would not be difficult to make up one's mind. I for one would have no difficulty in adopting the law of 1819, and repealing everything that has been passed since. That law merely enacted that whoever made a

promise should fulfil it ; that if a man issued a document undertaking to pay £5 on demand, that, when demanded, he should do so. All the rest of it left as free as any other trade." This commenced the twenty-eight octavo pages, entering very subtly into the most intricate questions of finance, and ending by : " Having inflicted this long yarn upon you I can only ask you in addition to '*read my book*' as all doctors say" ["*Essays on Capital, Currency & Banking*," published in 1847]. " I have been looking at it lately, after nine years, and I find more in it than I expected. Some of the elementary points are pretty well explained. So ready as you are, you will get through it very quickly and easily, and pick out what is worth noting.

" My dear Lewis,  
 " Yours truly,  
 " JAMES WILSON."

In answer Sir George Lewis writes :

" HARPTON,  
 " Oct. 14th/56.

" MY DEAR WILSON,

" I am much obliged to you for writing to me so fully upon this Bank question. With regard to the practical course I coincide with you, and this, in our position, is the main point. With regard to the theory my opinions very much accord with yours. I consider that the presumption lies strongly against regulation and government interference, and that those who propose a restriction must show a conclusive case in its favour.

" I read the whole of your book last year, when you had the kindness to give me a copy of it, and was much struck with the remarkable clearness with which obscure and even abstruse elementary, or rather fundamental, doctrines were handled in it. I will, however, read it again before the Session. I confess to you that when I read a book of this sort, I look with perfect despair upon the manner in which so difficult a subject, requiring such refined processes of reasoning and so much knowledge,

will be treated in debates in Parliament and by the mob of newspaper writers. We will talk further on this subject when we meet. So far as I can see, the public have no idea that such views are entertained.

“ Ever yours truly,  
“ G. C. LEWIS.”

The following shows that to the unreasonable demands of the Irish my father could turn a deaf ear, notwithstanding his sympathies with the promotion of all Art interests.

“ Aug. 23, 1856.

“ MY DEAR LEWIS,

“ 1. I send you the papers abt the Irish National Gallery about which Lord Carlisle writes. This is a sample of the cool way in which the Irish do things. They want to build a Gallery, they get together £5,000 and ask for a public grant of £6,000 to complete that, which is given. Now, they ask for an annual grant to buy pictures. This is quite a new request and such as has never been conceded to any place. In Edinburgh we made a grant in aid of their funds to build, but not to furnish. There appear to me to be two objections, either of which should be conclusive against this request. (1.) If we make a grant for buying pictures for Dublin we must be prepared to do the same for Edinburgh, Glasgow and other large cities, which have now self-supporting Galleries. (2.) I think in a National point of view that it is better to devote our money to the perfecting of our great National Collection, to which all who visit London (from whatever quarter) may resort, than to dissipate our means upon local collections. London may be regarded for such purposes National, all other places as only local. On these grounds I would propose a civil refusal.

“ 3. The recent pressure in the money market I suppose to have reference only to the demand abroad, and particularly in Paris. The large import of silver from the East from France, leads to a constant drain of

gold from here to replace it, and the extensive speculations both there and here are absorbing much capital. Exchequer Bills follow the daily demand for money and the rate of discount. The money market has been much easier the last few days, and everything has rather improved and would have done so more but for the rain. The weather is now better and I hope will remain so.

"To-morrow, I cross to Antwerp and will return on Sunday the 31st, but my letters and papers will follow daily.

" My dear Lewis,  
 " Yours always truly,  
 " JAMES WILSON."

Sir George C. Lewis answers, " I returned the papers about the Dublin National Gallery to the Treasury, and wrote to Lord Carlisle to prepare him for a refusal."

Disturbances in the banking world which seem to have been the warning signal of the crisis in 1857 occurred in the autumn of 1856, and the following correspondence refers to them :

" MY DEAR WILSON,

" . . . The Royal British has been a bad business, and it is well if the public do not take alarm at some of the other Joint Stock Banks. I have little doubt that your remark about their unlimited liability is a just one—it may tend to create a feeling of confidence in the resources of a bank which will save it from a run, and thus be beneficial to shareholders as well as depositors.

" As consolidation is the order of the day, it has occurred to me as a possible course to prepare a Bill consolidating all the acts relating to the Bank of England, and to private banks in the 3 kingdoms. This would give an opportunity for revising the present law, and amending any parts of it which were defective. I think we shall hear a good deal about Joint Stock Banks. Pray give me your opinion on this idea.

" Ever yours sincerely,  
 " G. C. LEWIS."

"MY DEAR WILSON,

"I enclose a letter from Booth about Joint Stock Banks. It is in answer to some enquiries which I sent through Arbuthnot. You will collect from his letter the tenor of my remarks.

"Booth is in favour of a Government audit, to which I decidedly object. Notwithstanding his answer, I cannot think that the Board of Trade ought to go on issuing charters in a form which professes to impose restrictions, when they know that those restrictions can be disregarded with perfect ease and safety at the very moment when they begin to be useful: *i.e.* when they begin to set bounds on the knavery or rashness of the Directors.

"Ever yours sincerely,

"G. C. LEWIS."

"CLAVERTON MANOR.

"Oct. 10th/56.

"MY DEAR LEWIS,

"I always think that one of the most dangerous courses which a Government can pursue is to legislate in a panic and for exceptional circumstances. If this be true in any case it is so with regard to Banking, with respect to which so many prejudices prevail and so little real knowledge exists. It was in the midst of a panic of 1825/6 that the Government of the day went to Parliament with a measure, the effect of which was not understood. And it was in relation to the panic produced by the failure of numerous Joint Stock Banks from 1838 to 1842 that Peel concocted his Act for their future regulation in 1844. The best comment upon that Act, which was so much praised at the time as containing all the checks and safeguards that statesmanlike sagacity could suggest, is that the only Bank (except those recently started) that came into existence under it, was the *Royal British* ! The only Joint Stock Bank in London which to all appearance has not done well. The London and Westminster, London Joint Stock, the Union, and the others which have prospered so well and have been

conducted so safely, were all established before and are not subject to any of the checks and safeguards of that Act. The same is the case with I believe *all* the Joint Stock Banks in the Country. The truth is that statesmen have too much faith in their own craft, and far too little in the effects of personal responsibility tutored by bitter experience. The Joint Stock Bank system was first introduced into England about the year 1830, or a little earlier, but it first acquired an extensive development in the speculative *furor* of 1835/36, when the heads of people were as much intoxicated with them as subsequently (ten years after) with Railways. The same thing arrived about then that does about all such speculations. For one person that went into them for the honest *bonâ fide* purpose of carrying on a Bank, hundreds went in for the mere profit of the shares. There were moreover plenty of McGregors and Browns as Directors and Camerons as Managers. Such was the frenzy that a Scotch parliamentary agent in Parliament Street established more than thirty Joint Stock Banks in a month or six weeks. His plan was to travel from town to town and when he could not frighten the private Bankers of the place into an arrangement, which generally succeeded, he got some clever attorney to open a subscription list which was eagerly filled up in a day or two. To such an extent did facilities exist at the moment, that I heard this man say, that he established a Joint Stock Bank at Northampton (I think it was) while the coach changed horses : or, while the passengers dined. From establishments thus formed proceeded every description of fraud and mismanagement. As in the case of Railways the only object for a long time which the Directors had in view was premiums upon the shares. To obtain this they resorted to every artifice : And among others they induced tradespeople, their own customers, to buy largely, advancing to them the full amount of the shares, premium and all, on their security. When the Norwich Bank failed it was found that every penny of the capital was advanced to the Shareholders upon their shares only :

That is, that there was no capital whatever. Again when the Newcastle Bank (the first one) failed, it was found that all the Capital and more had been advanced to the principal Directors. Numbers of those Banks failed as was to be expected : And the Shareholders, consisting chiefly of persons who had but small capitals, such as widows, old maids and others tempted by the large dividends paid for a time, being called upon to make good the liabilities in full, great distress for a time prevailed. All this was a tempting opportunity for statesmancraft : And Peel availed himself of it. In the meantime the great bulk of the old Banks, that is those established prior to 1844, warned by experience, and adopting an improved management dictated only by the interest of the Bank, have succeeded admirably, while John McGregor & Co. have proved to us how futile are the checks which Acts of Parliament can impose, by showing that all the abuses which existed prior to the Act of 1844, have been as easily practised under it. But it would even be something if these restrictions were *only* useless and inoperative. I believe them to be absolutely mischievous and deceptive—by holding out the form of a security which has no reality. The people attach much importance to an Act of Parliament, and those who have watched the career of the Royal British must have seen how much use has been made of the supposed security which the *Charter under the Act of 1844* gave. Upon one occasion I remember they actually resorted to a public dinner at the London Coffee House, Mc.Gregor, M.P., in the Chair and Cameron as Vice-Chairman, at which long speeches were made and duly reported in the papers the next day, like a charity or scientific dinner in which they dilated upon the new and secure system of Banking introduced by them : And then they established Branches in all the out of the way parts of London where no Banks had ever existed. Was it a wonder then that they got 6000 customers and £800,000 of money into their possession with all this parade and profession backed by an Act of Parliament ?



“ Mr. Booth’s letter which you have sent is another excellent comment upon that Act and the Charter System. What does it amount to? We impose restrictions and regulations on parchment, it is true, but we have no means to enforce the one or of knowing when the others are disregarded, and when we do find it out, it is too late either to prevent or punish the neglect. But then, says Mr. Booth, it does not follow that these rules may not be useful to Shareholders who look after their own interests. But if the Act has any effect it is to induce Shareholders to believe that all is done for them and that they need not trouble themselves about the matter. What does the whole argument amount to? In cases where Shareholders are neglectful and Directors dishonest, the restrictions are not worth the paper upon which they are written : in cases where Shareholders look after their business, and therefore keep their Directors straight and when therefore no restrictions are needful, they may nevertheless be useful. But to show how entirely devoid of utility these restrictions are, let us suppose that the Board of Trade had attempted to enquire into the state of the Royal British Bank, with a view of putting in force the condition that when one fourth of the capital was lost, the concern should be wound up (a proceeding which by the by might be most ruinous and undesirable under certain circumstances). Lord Stanley, let us suppose, sends an accountant into the Bank to inspect it upon the suspicion that one fourth of the capital is lost. The Books are thrown open. There are 6000 creditors, perhaps as many debtors. There is a large portfolio full of securities. On the face of the Balance Sheet the Bank is prosperous. How is the Accountant to prove the reverse? Must he judge of the value of every account, and of every security? Is he to determine that the advances made in working an Iron Mine in Wales are a dead loss? Is he to say that Brown, M.P. for Tewkesbury, is insolvent, and that £7000 lent to McGregor, M.P. for Glasgow, is a bad debt? Is he to value 5000 or 6000 accounts, and Bills running and overdue? Is

he to say what debtor, who has stopped payment and is therefore known to be insolvent, will pay 10/- in the pound and what debtor will pay 2/- ? But all this and more must be done and by a stranger, to fulfil Lord Stanley's order.

“ But of all mischievous notions ever proposed, of all snares and delusions ever invented in the case of Banks, that of a Government Auditor is the worst. The duties of such an office would involve the whole of what I have just described and more. I remember a Bank that failed in Liverpool in 1847 (I think it was called the Royal Bank). A few weeks before, it had declared a dividend of (I think) 10 per cent. ; and this upon audited accounts. The Auditors if called upon for an explanation were able to give a perfect one. Upon the face of the Books the Bank was solvent and prosperous and the business of the year showed a profit which warranted the dividend. But immediately after, Higginson and others to whom the Bank had made directly and indirectly large advances upon securities which proved bad, failed : And a great many debts which stood as good in the Books, and securities which were taken at their full value, proved worthless, while a great many Bills endorsed by the Bank and discounted with Brokers in London were returned unpaid and became charges upon the Bank ; which at last turned out very bad indeed. How could any auditor know all these elements of liability to pronounce upon their value ? Bank debts, Bills and Securities in hand, and Bills to the amount of millions in circulation bearing the endorsement of the Bank ? Well, suppose these had been Government Auditors, would the public not have gone to the Board of Trade with their complaints ? Would the executive not have had to bear the brunt of the disappointment and suffering caused by such a failure ? Interferences with trade of this kind are mischievous not only inasmuch as they give to the community a false security and induce them to carelessness and laziness, but also inasmuch as they impose upon Governments responsibilities for which it is impossible they can do justice, but for which, in the event of failure, they will

be called to account, and will become objects of popular discontent. They add one more and most difficult and odious element to the task of governing. Let us suppose that the Government had made itself directly responsible for the Railway enterprises. The calamities which occurred would all have been brought to its door : And no Ministry would have withstood the shock. We see the evil of such a system in France at this moment. Workmen, merchants, stock-jobbers, and Bankers are all less or more looking up to the Emperor, imputing blame in one breath and craving relief with the next. They are all alike, sickly children and cripples asking for props ; for cheaper bread and higher wages ; for lower rates of discount and larger advances upon securities.

“ Both theory and practice point to the delusion and danger of interference by the Govt. in Banks and other such institutions. In 1853 there was an enormous clamour in the Press and the country about Life Insurance Offices and I got a Committee of which I was Chairman. We took a mass of most valuable evidence, but with all our powers we failed to elicit what we were told would be proved. I duly reported, and we intended to legislate. But I own that although I proposed a very modest extent of interference and security and entirely repudiated the direct action of Govt. I have up to this moment been rather glad of excuses for not proceeding.

“ With regard therefore to Banks : I should be for retracing our steps as far as discretion will permit. If we had to begin again now, there would be no doubt what we should do. I would leave Banking as free as any other trade. But that is not our position and we have prejudice and opinions which have been raised by past legislation, which cannot be disregarded. If I legislated at all I would be for removing restrictions and getting back to a wholesome state of self reliance and individual responsibility : But it would not do to introduce a Bill with such provisions just at the moment when people are smarting from losses as they think caused by too great a laxity in the law : And when they rather expect the Govt. to step

in and save them for the future. Practically then I think the only course open to us is to have a Committee : By this we satisfy the demand for doing something. We gain time till the smart has worn off : And we get discussion and sounder notions ventilated and prepare the way for a return to wiser legislation.

“ So far as regards the Joint Stock Bank question arising out of the failure of the Royal British, and the questions it has raised. Upon the other question of the Bank of England and the Currency I will reply in a separate letter to your queries.

“ My dear Lewis,

“ Always yours truly,

“ JAMES WILSON.”

“ Oct. 12, 1856.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ I am very much obliged to you for your excellent letter on Joint Stock Banks, to every word of which I assent. Nothing would induce me to agree to a Government audit of banks. I consider it a thoroughly unsound measure. My difficulty rather is with the extent to which tutelary legislation has already gone on the subject. I have a great objection to laws which profess to protect shareholders and to prevent fraud—which are utterly disregarded by managers and directors, and which, when the mischief has occurred, are found to be devoid of all sanction. It seems to me that such laws ought either to be repealed or strengthened, but I should prefer the former course to the latter.

“ A shareholder of a Joint Stock Bank who suspects fraud or mismanagement, but is not certain, is placed in an embarrassing situation. If he applies privately for information, he is probably refused or deceived. If he asks questions publicly at a meeting of the shareholders, he may be compelling disclosures, which may hasten or produce the downfall of a tottering concern.

“ I cannot help thinking that every deed of partnership of a Joint Stock Bank should contain a prohibition

of advances to directors, managers and shareholders, but whether such a regulation should be made law is another matter.

“ The last account of the Bank of France is unpleasant.

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ G. C. LEWIS.”

“ Oct. 26, 1856.

“ MY DEAR LEWIS,

“ I was in town most of last week and the week before and very busy or I would sooner have replied to your letters of the 12th and 14th, not that I have much to say, but that when a subject is under consideration with a view to acting it is sometimes useful to continue a discussion which would otherwise have no interest and be allowed to drop.

“ 1. With regard to Joint Stock Banks we are well agreed. You justly say in reference to the attempt to regulate them by Act of Parliament that such laws should either be repealed or strengthened. As however practically speaking the latter is next to impossible, the former seems the only alternative. No matter how strict the law may be, such regulations will be no better than a snare. The only one to which I would attach the slightest importance would be, that no advance of money should on any pretence be made to a manager or director, and that the breach of such a rule should in the eyes of the law be a breach of trust and punishable as such. The effect of this would be that great trading firms would not seek to be in the Direction for the sake of the facilities which they enjoy, but that a much smaller number of respectable Directors would be appointed, and who would probably be better paid; and being so, would be expected to give more personal attention to the business and would be held more directly responsible for it.

“ With regard to the question how far any form of paper credit is entitled to the name of Money, I own that whatever name we may give to notes, the receipt of which for the discharge of a debt has been by the legislato

made compulsory, a duty may fairly be inferred on the part of the Govt. in consequence of that condition of their circulation that some security should be taken for their payment. The notes which I think approach nearest to the title to be called money, are those which are issued by Government, have a forced circulation, are a legal tender when and for any purpose, and are not convertible ; such are the Austrian Notes. The Notes of the Bank of England, prior to the Act of 1844 (I think) were issued under the same conditions as those of all other banks ; it was I think by that Act that they were first made a legal tender everywhere in England, except at the Bank of Engl<sup>d</sup>—but their quality of '*legal tender*' does not extend to Scotland or Ireland. The whole effect of the enactment is, that any person or body except the B<sup>k</sup> of England owing a debt *in England*, may discharge it by transferring to his creditors a claim to receive from the Bank of England so much coin. It will hardly, however, be said that the Bank of England Notes have had a fair circulation since they were thus made in a limited scale, and more a '*legal tender*' than they were before, or, that the public have one whit more confidence in them than they had. Indeed it may safely be said that not one person in ten thousand is aware of the difference which in this respect has been made in respect to Bank of England notes. Still I agree with you that if the law imposed the necessity of accepting Bank of England notes it was only consistent that it should propose some security to the public for their payment. This it professed to do by prescribing that the Bank should hold Public Securities and Bullion to the full amount of the circulation ; but I think it erred in defining by a rule, which was to be observed under all circumstances however difficult they might be, the precise proportions of the one and the other. But then it is important to observe when we look at the provisions of the Bank Act in this light, that this security so far as regards the *notes* is a fiction. The division of the Bank's operation into two kinds of accounts has no

effect in point of law upon its liabilities. No doubt we see every week an account of the department in which the amount of Public Securities and of Bullion exactly balance the whole amount of notes out. But in law those Securities and Bullion are not set aside to secure the notes ; in the event of a Bankruptcy (and that is the only way to test the security) the assets in the issues department would be available equally for the claims of the Depositors as for those of the note holders. The Securities and Bullion therefore which it is professed are set aside in the issues Department to ensure the payment of the Notes are equally liable for the payment of the Deposits or any other debts of the Corporation, if things come to the worst.

“ For universality of circulation I know of no notes equal to the Scotch. There are some ten or twelve Chief Banks, the notes of all of which pass as currency in every corner of Scotland as does a shilling coin, more so, a great deal than a sovereign. One or other of these Banks has an agency in every town, and all the Banks freely take each other's notes, and effect an exchange at headquarters twice a week among themselves, paying the balances to each other by orders upon their London Bankers, or by Exchequer Bills. Thus the same notes are current from the Border to the Shetlands, and an English traveller collecting his accounts from shop to shop and village to village taking all these notes indiscriminately finds the first Bank he enters ready to take all alike, and to give him an order on London for them. Indeed Banker A, will rather take the notes of Banker B, than his own, because he is thus furnished with the means of *set off* against the claims of Banker B, at the clearing ; and because for the balance he gets an order on London, by which he keeps up his balances there ; while also his own notes are got into circulation just in proportion as he can get those of his neighbour out. There is no circulating medium that I ever knew so perfect as that of the Scotch Banks notes. They contain all the advantages of security, universal applicability, and economy ;

and the system has also the advantage which can be derived from competition. But all this is the result of credit based upon experience and not of legal provisions or securities.

“As to the old proposal for vesting the issues of Bank notes in a Govt. Board or rather a Parliamentary Board, it has much in its favour to recommend it. It is very simple and squares neatly with a theory. But no writer that I am aware of as yet has done more than skimmed the mere surface of the question ; and I own I have not thought it out sufficiently to see what all its effects would be as a thing in practice ; for there is nothing more true than the difficulty of foreseeing the various ways in which a change of this kind will act which had never been anticipated. But at least a very strong case would have to be made out to justify the Govt. taking this branch of business, for it is nothing more, into its own hands. And although it is certain that a small portion of the actual effects would be foreseen, yet one effect may safely be predicted ; that whenever a pressure arose there would be a great outcry against the monopoly as it would be called of the Govt. in the issues of notes. One of the worst consequences of the Act of 1844, has been that to the interference of the law has been attributed consequences far greater than it has had and it had thus diverted people’s attention from the true cause of the mischief. A Govt. Bd. of Commisns. would be open to this objection to a much greater extent. It is a notion based upon the exploded idea of regulating the exchanges by raising or lowering prices by an expansion or contraction of the circulation. However I propose to try to work out the possible effect of such a plan upon our present system of business, though I feel very strongly that the public conscience is best consulted by *continuing the issues of notes with other Banking business* more than it would be in any other way.

“By the way, if you have not read *Vallorton’s* work you ought to do so. It is ten years since I read it, but from my recollections it is one of the most lucid and



practical works upon these subjects that I have ever read.

“ When mentioning the Hops duty in one of my letters, I forgot to say that I thought there would be a great objection to the gradual reduction of the differential duty ; at least by so many at 5/- a year. These small reductions year by year keep trade in an unsettled state and are annoying. In the case of Tea it was resorted to in consideration of the large loss of revenue and in the hope that in the meantime the increased consumption would make good part of the loss. When I was in town lately I had a talk with Rupley upon an old favourite notion of mine, but I fear not a very practicable one, of getting rid of all duties upon Hops and Malt and charging a duty upon Beer, as upon spirits. It is obviously the sound plan in principle, not to charge the raw material, which means the charge is aggravated by interest, but rather to charge the manufactured article. But private brewing seems fatal to the system or at least is the great difficulty. When there was a Beer duty formerly, private Brewing was exempted and it then existed to a much greater extent than now ; but that duty was in addition to and not in line of the others. However Rupley thought it was not so hopeless a case. It is, however, a large duty to tamper with, or I should be for making the experiment.

“ I saw Glyn two days ago at the Treasury about that difficult subject, the Irish Mails. He told me he had seen Graham, who said that the Exchequer question, in his opinion, could never be settled by a committee and that a commission only could do it, unless the Govt. would legislate at once on the evidence of last Session. But the same difficulty always arises that Baring has put the Treasury on its defence ; and unless we could produce a scheme, which upon its face gave a real and substantial Parliamentary control, it would be difficult to carry it, and if we can do that the question is whether it may not be better propounded to a committee than to the whole House. Anderson tells me that Spearman

either has written, or intends to write to Monteagle to advise him to propose a plan of his own. If he will do so it will be a great advantage.

“With regard to the Superannuation Comm<sup>m</sup> what do you think of Price as the fifth? He has worked the Scotch Fishery question well; and I think could be relied upon to give both pains, time and attention to this other question. He has a sound logical head and plenty of energy to get to the bottom of a subject and he has the advantage of being known to be a competent man and quite unbiassed. I don't think that either Mitchell or Laing would give the time, or if they did, would do it so well. Lord Chandos would be a good man as connected with a great body of men on the North W<sup>a</sup> but he has many antecedents and would, I fear, not be able to spare the time. Greg would do it well, but the Service is already fully represented. With the four you name I think Price would complete the variety.

“Always yours truly,  
“JAMES WILSON.”

On October 30, 1856, Sir George Lewis writes :

“The enactment about the legal tender of the notes of the Bank of England was introduced in 1833 by Lord Althorp, and not by Peel in connexion with the change of 1844. You will find it in S. 6 of 3A H. Com. 4C. 98. There is nothing in the words of the section to limit it to England, and I should conceive that it extends to the entire United Kingdom. It is quite true, as you say, that this enactment did not make any practical change. The notes of the Bank of England had a universal currency before 1833. This was, I conceive, owing to the Bank of England being considered a national bank, and being supposed to be backed by a Government guarantee. Nevertheless it cannot be disputed that, in law and in theory, the difference between bank paper which is a legal tender, and bank paper which is not, is very wide. It *may* also be wide in practice. Certainly

it would make a great difference to a Manchester or Liverpool bank if its notes were rendered a legal tender. Nobody in England will take a county bank note except in the immediate neighbourhood of the bank, and I was not aware that the notes of the Scotch banks had so wide a circulation as you state. The *amount* of the bank note has long been limited by law. None under £1 have been issuable for a long time, which is a recognition of the principle that banknotes are not to be regarded as ordinary paper.

“ There is no doubt that a prohibition to make advances to Directors or Managers of Joint Stock Banks would be wholesome, but I feel a difficulty about any legislation on the subject. The examples of Government contractors excluded from Parliament and poor law Guardians not taking contracts do not seem to me in point—because these are *public* rights and duties. In the case of the British Bank, the remittance of protection to the shareholders, afforded by Act of Parliament, has been purely mischievous. It has produced a false security, it has been used as a lure, and it has utterly failed as a safeguard.

“ Yours very sincerely,  
“ G. C. LEWIS.

“ MY DEAR WILSON,

“ I forgot to remark in my other letter that the champions of the Act of 1844 feel that there is no answer to the argument that the division of Deposits and Issues is worthless in law, and that in the event of a bankruptcy the bullion could not be appropriated exclusively to the Notes. Hence their proposition to vest the Issues in a Government board. This is undoubtedly a complete answer to the objection. But then it raises a host of new difficulties, to none of which have I yet heard any attempt at an answer.

“ If the expansion and contraction of the currency is so regulated by law as to be made merely mechanical, there is no advantage in vesting it in a Government

Board. If there is a discretion (which there must be) and the Government has been contracting the currency during a commercial crisis, with the certain prospect of ruin to many and loss to nearly all, what will be the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is told that the fate of the Government on the next division depends upon his increasing his issues or not, what would be the management of the currency if it depended upon the decisions of a weak Government, threatened by its supporters in the House of Commons?

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ G. C. LEWIS.

“ What you say about the Exchequer audit is quite true. It is an absurdity to talk of auditing mere figures, where no money is received or paid. However, even if the plan had more to recommend it, we could not *now* entertain it. We must move the previous question on all such propositions.”

END OF VOL. I.

**CHECKED**  

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**2003-04**