LETTERS TO SOMEBODY

GUY·FLEETWOOD·WILSON

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Photo : Russell

Guy Fleetwood Wilson

Letters to Somebody

A Retrospect

By The Right Hon.
Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson
G.C.I.E., K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

With Eight Full-page Illustrations

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Gratefully Dedicated to the Readers who accorded to my first literary Baby a welcome as gracious as it was unexpected.

Preface

I HAVE addressed these letters to Somebody in the hope that Somebody will read them.

I make no pretence of having written a book. All I have attempted to do has been to put on paper some recollections of a rather hard life and of a somewhat strenuous career.

The desire to write "Recollections" may be a form of mental malady, but after all there is no reason why a swan should hold the monopoly of chirruping his memoirs when his dissolution becomes imminent.

Il est un âge dans la vie
Où chaque rêve doit finir,
Un âge où l'âme recueillie
A besoin de se souvenir.

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LETTER I

1850-1860

GENESIS—CHILDHOOD—ABOUT SOME PEOPLE—TUTORS

I WOULD have you know that my very earliest recollection is of being whipped at the Hôtel du Rhin in Paris in 1854.

My dear father, on that occasion, must have discharged his duty in a very perfunctory fashion, for I have no recollection of any sense of pain. I did, however, receive a strong impression of deep humiliation which I have retained up to the present time. The treatment proved successful, and I changed from a peevish, ill-tempered little pig into, I have been assured, quite an attractive little boy.

Possibly for that reason I have been a profound and consistent believer in corporal punishment for naughty children as well as for adult ruffians of both sexes. In the case of the first it is effective and soon over. In the second case it is equally effective and very much less costly to the State than other methods.

My parents were then on their way back to Italy from England, and I did not revisit my country till my eighteenth year.

I was born in Florence on the 21st of October in

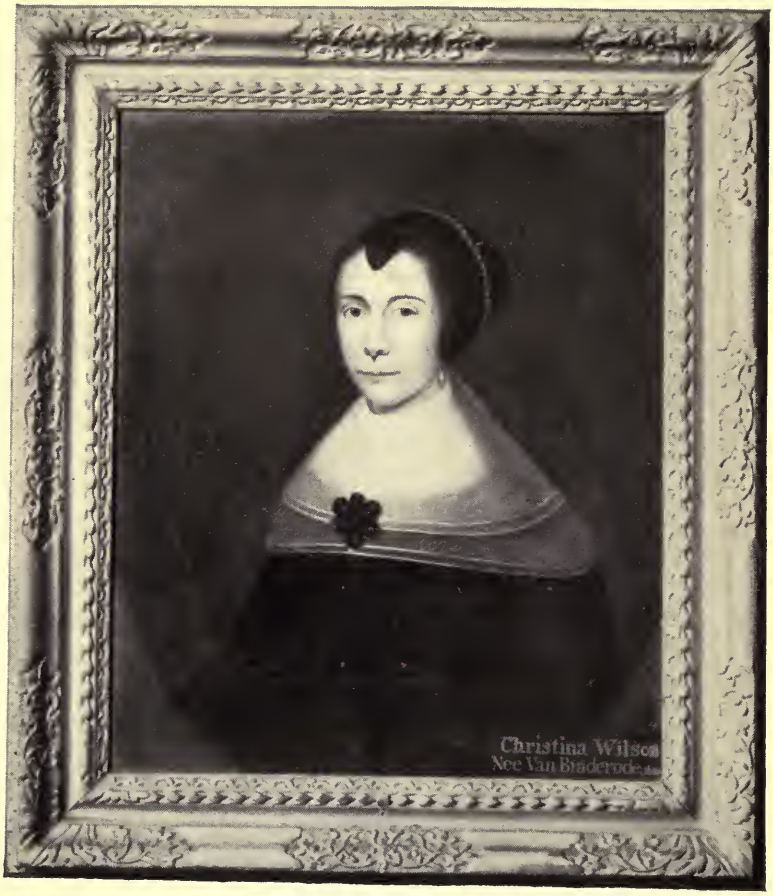
the year of grace 1850 in a Palazzo belonging to the Balzani.

Our landlords, Count Ugo and his brother Count Ulisse Balzani, displayed great heroism under Garibaldi during the defence of Rome in 1849.

It is probably because I passed so many of the early years of my life on the Continent that I have so frequently been called a "demned foreigner." In point of fact, but for a slight admixture of Dutch blood in 1625, I have not a drop of any but English blood in my veins. The only foreign elements they may contain are taints of alcohol and tobacco.

We come of an old Yorkshire stock, and my ancestors appear to have been a fairly well conducted set of soldiers who served their country for a time and subsequently subsided into typical hunting squires. There are two Books of Chronicles, and I feel hardly justified in producing a third, much as I should enjoy "begatting" all my people. No self-respecting person ever reads an Appendix, so I have tucked away in one such records as I possess and there they may rest in dignified oblivion.

My father and mother first met at Windsor, where my mother and my aunt (who had married Captain McDouall, 12th Lancers) happened to be the guests of Colonel McDouall, of Logan, then commanding the 2nd Lifeguards, who, parenthetically it may be mentioned, was one of the finest horsemen of his day. When a captain he won—I think in 1830—the St. Albans Steeplechase from Arlington Church to the obelisk in Wrest Park on Little Wonder, beating



Christina van Brederode, 1640

a field of sixteen; Lord Clanricarde finishing second.

My parents were married on the 20th of December, 1849, and went to Italy for their honeymoon, remaining there a year.

It was while they were in Florence that news reached my father that his brother, well known in the Shires as "Gumley Wilson,"[1] was utterly "broke"; that the estates would have to be sold, and that the realization of everything the family possessed would barely suffice to meet the claims of the mortgagees. My father, who was quite comfortably off, was devoted to his elder brother, his senior by many years, and had blind confidence in him. Yielding to very plausible requests, he had placed his fortune in his brother's hands. When the wholly unexpected crash came, he found himself ruined, with a newly married wife and a very young child, to be followed not long after by a second, dependent on him.

It was this overwhelming catastrophe which led to our settling in Florence, then, perhaps, the cheapest town to live in on the Continent. Florence offered other advantages to impecunious English people. Good education was available and cheap, and it was constantly visited by what used to be called in those days "the best English," and this enabled the exiles to keep in touch with English life and English Society. Our home became a sort of rendezvous for many of my father's army and hunting friends travelling, as well as for relatives and connexions of my mother who visited Italy.

[1] He resided at Gumley Hall, Market Harborough, whilst M.F.H.

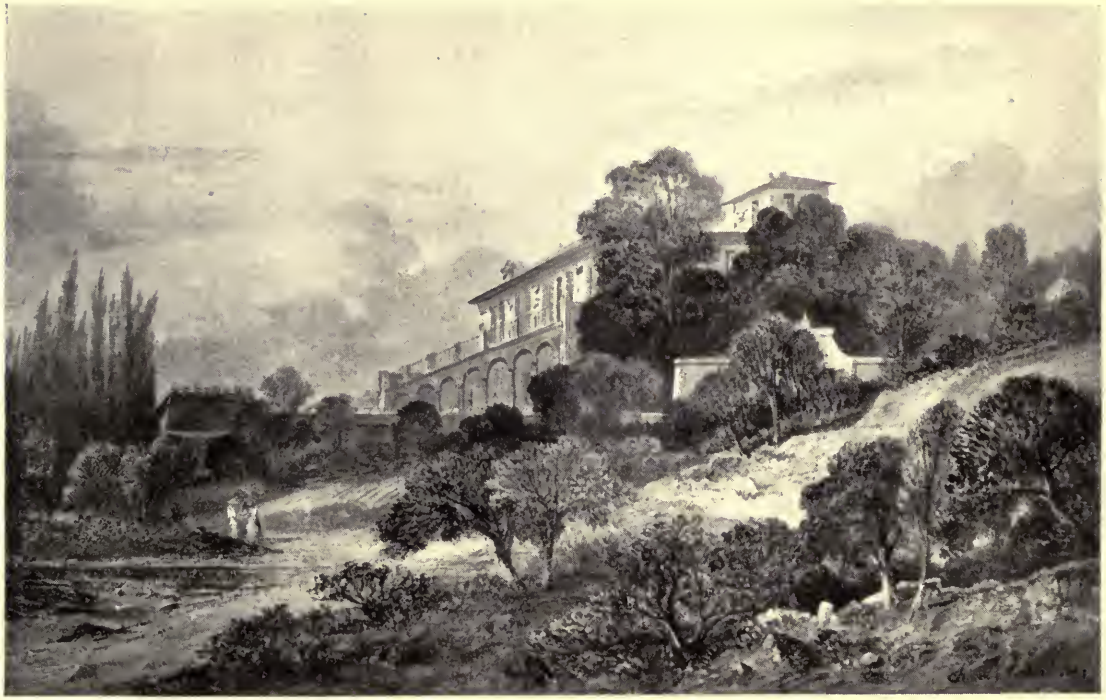
In 1851 we moved into the Villa Strozzino, long after inhabited by Queen Victoria when she visited Florence. I mentioned to Sir Henry Ponsonby that I possessed a very good water colour painting of the villa, and next day received a request to send it to Buckingham Palace as the Queen wished to look at it. I did so, and received it back with a gracious message to the effect that Her Majesty preferred it as it was in our time to what it was in hers. It belonged for three centuries to the Strozzi family, hence the name. Subsequently it was bought and practically rebuilt by Count Fabbricotti and the old name Strozzino was dropped.

In 1852 we removed to the Villa Ombrellino at Bellosguardo, where, in May, 1853, my dear sister was born. In 1854 we went to the Palazzo Cerretani in Florence, and thence in 1857 to the Villa Morelli in which we resided till my father's death in 1862.

In view of the oft-repeated assurance that I was born to be hanged, these details may yet become of interest.

One of the drawbacks to the bringing up of children in Italy in my day was the great objection to leaving them much in association with servants. The alternative was for them to be incessantly with their parents. The inevitable result was that children became very grown up at a tender age and generally developed a tendency to priggishness.

Another result was that children got acquainted with distinguished, eccentric and sometimes somewhat undesirable people whose idiosyncrasies impressed themselves on the plastic mind and were remembered through life. It is probably for this reason that I can so well



Watercolour by Ch. Lefevre

Villa Strozzino, Florence, 1852 (inhabited by Queen Victoria, 1893–94)

remember some remarkable men of the 'fifties and 'sixties.

Two well-known characters in Florence during my early childhood were a Major Gregory and Charles Lever. The former was a Waterloo dragoon who honestly believed that frogs formed the staple food in France, and never opened his mouth without damning all Frenchmen. Lever, on the other hand, was somewhat in advance of his time, a cheery Irishman and a charming companion.

Gregory bred bull terriers, Lever Persian cats. It was notorious that there was as little love lost between the dragoon and the author as there was between the dogs and the cats. When Gregory died, Lever, who was a kind-hearted man, attended the funeral. The Parson, a bit of an ass, went up to him and said: "I cannot but express surprise at your being here." Lever snapped back at him, "Why the devil shouldn't I be here? He would have been precious glad to have come to mine."

On one occasion I was riding on my pony between my father and Lever when the latter's horse shied at some linen hanging up to dry. Lever broke off his conversation, looked at his horse and said, "What! been all these years in Italy and shy at a dirty shirt. Have you shying at a thief next!" My father used to say that he never met Lever (and he saw him constantly) without hearing a "good story," and that he never heard Lever tell the same story twice.

A strange mortal who lived in Florence at that time was St. John, who was what the "Penny Dreadfuls"

term the scion of a noble house. He never had a shilling and was *criblé de dettes*. On one occasion, when he was at his last financial gasp, he made a wager for a big sum with a smart Austrian cavalry officer that the latter would fail to follow him wherever he went on horseback at a canter for half an hour. St. John had a native, unshod pony accustomed to the slippery flags of Florence streets, and he counted on the Austrian's shod charger slipping up. The officer was a fine rider and managed to keep his horse on his legs. When time was all but up St. John rammed his pony at the then dilapidated parapet and jumped into the River Arno, at the time almost dry. It was a big drop and a hard landing and I think the pony was killed, but St. John was unhurt and won his bet.

The Brownings were a distinct feature of Florence life during my childhood. Mrs. Browning used to hold a species of literary state reception once a week when she, her husband and her small son used to receive the worship and the adulation of their admirers, largely composed of American and English birds of passage. It was Lady Normanby who, on learning that little Browning had written a poem, exclaimed, with mock solemnity, "Then there will no longer be two incomprehensibles but three incomprehensibles!" I used sometimes to accompany my parents when they called, and well remember the trio.

The literary character most closely associated with my boyhood was Walter Savage Landor, whom I saw very frequently. He looked like a satyr and was possessed of the most vitriolic tongue and pen. Also he

had the vilest of tempers. On one occasion I was sitting with him when his dinner was brought in. Something about it displeased him, and he took up the table cloth by its four corners and threw the whole bag of tricks out of the window into the street, utterly regardless of the risk to those below; and he lived on the fourth floor in the Via San Gallo, a crowded thoroughfare.

He had quarrelled with every soul he owned or knew, and appeared to have no affection for any living thing except my Aunt Gertrude and Giallo, his yellow pomeranian, a brute who bit everyone without distinction. I cannot conceive why, but Landor took a fancy to me and determined to teach me Greek; but that was a signal failure. He, however, taught me more Latin than all my tutors put together. He was utterly unlike anyone else and attracted me.

I suppose to some extent Robert Lytton, afterwards Viceroy of India, may be looked upon as a literary man. He was most assuredly exceptionally cultured and especially charming. He came to Florence as an attaché to our Legation and became a most intimate and devoted friend. When he arrived and was presented, the old Grand Duke having heard that his father was the great author, and wishing to say the right thing, remarked: "I hear your father once wrote a book."

When Brinsley Norton married a Capri peasant girl his mother, Diana of the Crossways, came over to Florence "to see what could be done." As Lytton described it, "she left London like a hurricane and arrived in Florence like a tornado." I knew Mrs.

Brinsley Norton, afterwards Lady Grantley, very well. She was quite illiterate and not at all good-looking, nor had she a good figure, but she had excellent qualities and possessed much of that quiet dignity which characterizes all the Italian agriculturists. She made a faithful, patient wife and an excellent mother. In point of fact, Mrs. Norton might well have fared worse in regard to a daughter-in-law, for her son Brinsley was somewhat abnormal.

My mother showed the young couple great kindness and did much to appease the wrath of their mother. As time went on Brinsley Norton was incessantly getting into trouble with men, women and police and as incessantly getting out of it, entirely owing to my father's and mother's efforts. Mrs. Norton never forgot their kindness to her son, and was, up to the last, a devoted, helpful friend, not only to them, but later on to me. When I came to London I was very constantly at her house in Chesterfield Street, and certainly she was a most interesting and attractive woman. Up to within a very few years of her death she retained her beauty, which was quite out of the common. She had an ungovernable temper, which she made little effort to control and which was at times almost terrifying; but the outbursts were of short duration, and she was the warmest-hearted of women. In that "short duration," however, she sometimes dispatched some cruelly bitter letters, and as several are extant and give a false impression of her, I quote the following one addressed to my father, which shows her at her best:

The Hon. Mrs. (Caroline) Norton (Diana of the Crossways)

London, March 6, 1855(?).

DEAR CAPTAIN WILSON,[1]

All the Peelites refused to join Lord Derby! I do assure you that it is not from forgetfulness, but from ill success, that you do not hear of something done for you. Your paper, given me at Florence, with the list of what you could hold, lies on my writing-table, and often and often I pick out some one thing that I hear is going and attempt to snap at it. Some day I may be lucky, but hitherto I have always been told the thing was "already given away" or "long promised in the event of a vacancy."

I do not forget your sweet wife, with her grave, starlike eyes, or the lovely children, in the morning light at Florence —but what would be the use of writing only to say I had just failed. If ever Sidney Herbert comes in, I will ask him long beforehand for something.

I have been in Germany and Scotland—hardly ever in London—and with legal disputes still pending that cripple all free action. Fletcher has got his step as first attaché, but Brin is still idle, and ill and exiled, and I am still unhappy about him.

Pray believe if ever I can write you good news, I will.

With love to Harriet,—

I am, yours ever sincerely,

CAROLINE NORTON.

All through her life she was at war with somebody, and she positively revelled in lawsuits. None the less she retained some devoted friends, one of them being the late Lord Wemyss. He called on her one day, and as he entered the room he greeted her with, "And how is the wreck of the old *Téméraire?*" Her eyes flashed and for a moment I feared an outburst of temper, but

[1] My father was trying to get restored to the active list.

the cloud passed and she seemed much amused by what she termed his "impudent wit." It was a singularly apposite description of her.

I will conclude with information priceless to the charming semi-nudes. (Yes, you are all of you that now, my dears.) The most striking feature of Mrs. Norton's great beauty was her wonderful skin, which remained almost perfect to the last. I once asked her how she had managed it, and she told me that ever since her girlhood she had, after washing her face well, passed over it a sponge dipped in quite fresh milk into which she had squeezed a perfectly fresh lemon. She did this just before she got into bed, and she assured me that she had never applied anything else to her face and neck throughout her life. In her case, at any rate, the result was marvellous.

The method will be a bit costly in these days, owing to the expanse of surface which will call for treatment.

Our greatest friends at Florence in the 'fifties were the Normanbys. Lord Normanby was our Minister to the Court of Tuscany, and Lady Normanby was a veritable fairy godmother to us children. We were constantly at their villa, and the beautiful gardens were our habitual playground. Every Christmas she sent us a large box of the newest toys specially ordered from England for her "Florence grandchildren," as she called us.

It was to her that I owed in after days the unvarying kindness of her sister, Lady Barrington, at whose house I first met my greatly loved friends Charles and Theresa Earle. He, alas! is dead, but she lives, and

her warm and unchanging affection is one of the few great joys which remain to me.

One present from England led to dire consequences. Lady Falmouth, my godmother and kinswoman, sent me as a present on my seventh birthday a complete Highland "get up." How any man with a grain of sense can deck himself out in that ridiculous costume is beyond my comprehension. When the garments were taken out of their uniform case, I viewed them with marked disfavour, as did my father, but my mother decided that I should "look a duck" in the beastly clothes, and her opinion on all points was as a law unto us both.

After I had been a highlander a short time I began to fancy myself and strolled into the village to show off. Such clothes had never before been seen in Italy, and the village lads at first mistook me for a girl. As soon as they realized my identity, like the Amalekites, they rose as one man, and I had to gat me naked and wounded. By the time I reached home I looked more like a half-plucked green woodpecker than anything else. What became of the detestable suit I do not know, for I never saw it again.

Notwithstanding the many friends of all nationalities who rallied round my parents, I know that their exile was a terrible trial to them, and their anxiety as to the future made my child life a somewhat grey one.

In regard to tutors I was singularly fortunate. My first, Professor Attilio Corsi, of the Accademia della Crusca, taught me to write—great importance is attached

to caligraphy in Italy—and grounded me thoroughly in Italian language and literature. Professor Cailhabet, of the College Rollin in Paris, did the same in regard to French. My two English tutors were first Mr. Price, who had had a distinguished Oxford career, and secondly the Reverend John McNab, who had been a fellow-student with Wilberforce, the Archbishop of Canterbury, under the celebrated Sir Daniel Sandford at Glasgow. All my tutors are dead, so I am unable to express to them the very genuine gratitude I feel for their devoted efforts in my behalf, and my equally genuine regret that I did so little justice to them.

It was George Price who made me a first-class swimmer. His method was drastic, but entirely successful. It consisted in throwing me into deep water and letting me half drown, and repeating the dose till I could swim. But he was exceedingly kind to me none the less. I owe him my life, for I have been twice wrecked.

My French professor was an ardent Republican, and I suspect a freethinker. I remember two of his remarks which shocked me greatly at the time. One was: "*Croyez moi, mon enfant, les Rois et les Reines et les Prêtres et tout ça, c'est une plaisanterie qui a duré assez longtemps.*" At the end of a discussion on martyrdom, he exclaimed: "*Quant à moi, je voudrais bien voir le dogme pour lequel je me ferais brûler!*"

From the reports which I have recently been reading I appear to have been an attentive and good little chap, and it is only in after life that the objectionable features of my character appear to have developed.

My father, one of the best horsemen in the Army, taught me to ride. On my fourth birthday he put me on a pony: I took to riding like a duck to water, and from that day to this I have lived as much in a saddle as out of it. It was in my blood. I have seen a letter from George Payne, in which he alluded to my father's and my two uncles' excellence as horsemen. He wrote: "'Gumley Wilson' has the best hands, Fleetwood the best seat, and Jack Wilson the most pluck of any men I ever met. If you could roll the three into one, you would get an absolutely perfect horseman."

I had something else in my blood, although I do not know how it got there. I was a born poacher.

And that is about all I ever did inherit except some hatchments. In days gone by when the head of a family of any standing died, a hatchment was placed on the front of his house. In point of fact, in early days hatchments were not displayed as emblems of mourning for the head of the family only, but for any member, even a woman or a child, of an armigerous family. At one time I found myself in possession of a goodly number, which had, I suppose, been put away in a cellar and forgotten. Practically they represented my only inheritance. My first idea was to warehouse them and leave instructions in my will that they were *all* of them to be affixed to the front of my house, after my death, just to give the newspapers something to write about. My second idea was to try to sell them. I was surprised to find, without much difficulty, a purchaser, and I think I got a pound a piece for them. I asked him what use he meant to make of them. He

replied that when they were in good condition and made of first-class seasoned oak as mine were they made excellent signboards for public-houses.

Such of my forebears as were three-bottle men will no doubt have turned in their graves with a feeling of satisfaction at the bibulous connexion between their hatchments and the Trust House signboards of to-day.

LETTER II

THE RISORGIMENTO

CAVOUR—SOLFERINO CAMPAIGN—REVOLUTION IN FLORENCE —DEPARTURE OF GRAND DUKE—VICTOR EMANUEL

EVEN now one hears a good deal about the Italian Risorgimento, but the political origin of the word—which means resurrection—is not very generally known.

It is attributable to a newspaper founded by Count Camillo Cavour in 1847, which he named the "Risorgimento," and which was devoted to the advocacy of the independence of Italy. The paper was the genesis of Cavour's notable career. His first great coup was sending a Piedmontese contingent to the Crimea.

The rejoicings over their victory (somewhat unduly magnified perhaps) at the Tchernaya is my first recollection of Italian politics.

The next was the public anxiety when it became known that the Austrians had crossed the Ticino in 1859. It dominated all else.

Then followed the equally absorbing entry of the French army into Savoy. The excitement became intense and greatly impressed me, although I could hardly realize what it all meant.

After this came the successes of Montebello and Turbigo, to be followed by that of Magenta and the

consequent retreat of the Austrian army. Happy days for us all, even for me.

Later came the news that McMahon had entered Milan, and in due time that the Austrian centre had been smashed at Solferino, a great victory gained, and that the Austrians had recrossed the Mincio. How well I remember it all. After Solferino came the peace of Villa-franca, and the Austrian domination in Lombardy ended.

Then Tuscany began to boil, and in April, 1859, there was a revolution in Florence. The troops hoisted the tricolor and fraternized with the civil population, and the Grand Duke announced that he would leave Florence. Subsequently Parma and Modena followed suit. The hurried departure of the Grand Duke is well impressed on my memory, for he passed our gates; indeed, I think he went through our carriage drive, and I was struck by the fact that he wore blue carpet slippers.

Evidence was forthcoming after the Grand Duke's departure that written orders had been given to the artillery officers at the Belvedere fortress to bombard Florence, an order which they ignored.

I can well believe that such an order was given by his Austrian entourage, but I do not for one moment believe that it had Grand-ducal sanction, for the Grand Duke was fond of "his Florence" and was a kindly old man. It was not his fault he was born an Austrian and a noodle.

Our villa was almost under the walls of the Fortezza Belvedere to which the Grand Duke and his very small

Photo: By permission of Constable & Co.

Ferdinand II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, 1850

following repaired on leaving Florence. From the Pitti Palace it could be reached by a subterranean passage which was said to run under the houses of the Ponte Vecchio, the Jewellers' Bridge.

On April 27, 1859, the Grand Duke and Duchess left the fortress by a small postern gate and took the road for Bologna in an ordinary carriage with but two equerries. The secretary to the French Legation accompanied them. I think they went straight to Munich.

The first intimation which we received of the outbreak of the revolution in Florence was the firing of guns and the shouts of the populace which reached us at our villa although we were some distance from the town. My father walked down to Florence to ascertain what was happening. As soon as he had passed through the gates he, to his fury, found himself hoisted on the shoulders of a madly cheering crowd and carried to our Legation.

The English in Florence had been officially requested to maintain a strictly neutral attitude, a request which my father had punctiliously observed. But he happened to have put a red rose in his buttonhole, which with its green leaves and a bit of white handkerchief showing out of his breast pocket created the beloved tricolour.

This was interpreted by the imaginative Florentines as an ingenious expression of sympathy, and they went wild with delight.

Before the revolution anyone found in possession of even a tricolor ribbon was arrested and at once made an O.B.E. or something equally dreadful.

In due course Garibaldi, the idol of Italy and of

the little English boy, came to the forefront, and the expedition of the Mille di Marsala and the engagements which led to the conquest of Sicily were as so many birthdays to me, as was the clearing out of King Ferdinand II and all his unholy gang from Naples.

But there were also events which saddened us. The cession of Nice and Savoy, "the cradle of her kings," to France, the retirement of Garibaldi to Caprera, and in 1862, sadder still, his disaster at Aspromonte, when he was laid low by an Italian bullet, but, joy or sorrow, it is not history to me—it is part and parcel of my own early life, of which the year 1860 seemed to close the first stage.

The only two political events which made much impression on me in 1861 were the death of Cavour, succeeded by Ricasoli, an intimate friend of my family, and the advent of Victor Emanuel, who entered Florence in September as King of Italy.

My recollection is that his reception was warm, but not enthusiastic. The fact is that the Tuscans cordially disliked the Piedmontese, who to them represented our "unspeakable Scot." Both northerners are dour, and one has to know them well before one can like them. Victor Emanuel had many good qualities, but entirely lacked a pleasant expression and a gracious manner, and Florentines are very susceptible to both.

Not many realize that Victor Emanuel was, *au fond,* an intensely devout Catholic. He was convinced that his attitude towards the temporal power of the Holy See must result in the damnation of his soul, but he believed it to be his duty to sacrifice his soul

just as readily as his body for the good of Italy. He was one of the greatest patriots that ever lived.

I was once brought into contact with him under somewhat unusual circumstances. To be frank, I was tucked away in the bushes of the Boboli Gardens (the grounds of the Pitti Palace), watching for a sporting chance of poaching a carp in one of the Fontainebleau-like fountains. The king came strolling along accompanied only by Colonel Onofrio Baldelli, his favourite equerry, whose brother had married my aunt. Baldelli caught sight of me and called to me to come out of the bushes. The King, on learning my name and who I was, said: "Well, Guido" (the Italian equivalent for Guy), "and what may you want?" Unabashed, I replied that I wanted to catch a carp. "All right," he said, "you shall," and next day I got a permit "to catch one carp."

Just before being detected in the bushes I had commenced my frugal luncheon of bread and a raw onion. As the King moved on he stretched out his hand, took a slice of my onion, and munched it with seeming satisfaction.

Naturally I revere his memory, and so would you if a crowned head had ever addressed you by your Christian name and shared a raw onion with you. Why, you would expect to be asked to a Garden Party on the strength of it!

LETTER III

1861

THE GOMBO—MY FATHER AND MOTHER

THE year 1861 was the happiest of my life, for I was old for my eleven years and well able to appreciate and benefit by the close intimacy with my father, the most high-principled and attractive man I have ever known, and I had with me my mother and sister.

We passed the whole summer together at the Gombo, a small but exquisite little seaside village on the coast, about twelve miles from Pisa, between the rivers Arno and Serchio, and in the middle of glorious woods of gigantic stone pines growing almost to the water's edge. The woods were full of wild boar, fallow deer and game of all kinds. They held also several herds of semi-wild camels. So far as I know it is, or was, the only place in Europe where camels bred in a quasi-wild state. They were rounded up just as are the New Forest ponies once a year, branded, and a certain number held and trained as pack camels. It was then quite a common sight to see a string of them coming into Pisa laden with wood.

Their origin is said to have been a camel in foal captured on a Turkish ship in the days when the Republic of Pisa was a maritime nation. At one time

the sea washed the walls of Pisa, and on them in my time might be seen the rings to which ships were moored. At the time under review the sea was receding at the rate of some fifty feet a year. I fancy the recession was attributable to the alluvial deposit brought down by the two rivers.

For the first time in my life I had three English companions—two lads, a good bit older than myself, named Torin. I met the elder in after-life when he commanded a Hussar regiment. The second became a Ceylon planter, but I never saw him again. The third lad was a Bevan; he went into the gunners, and I saw him several times when I was at the War Office. I was singularly fortunate in having them as companions, for they were all three exceptionally good specimens of English schoolboys, gentlemen by birth, in feelings and in conduct, and association with them was of inestimable value to me.

Besides my pony, I owned a small gig which had broken loose from an Italian man-of-war and driven on shore, and which my father bought for me. We rigged up a mast and sail, and I used to sail her alone and incessantly try to drown myself.

But it was the close fellowship, for it was that, with my father which constituted my chief happiness. I literally worshipped him, and his affection, his advice and his teaching remain as vivid as though he had lived the allotted span of life and been with me till the end of it. He had a horror of punishing me, and tried to mend matters by precept and example, with, usually, satisfactory results, but on one occasion the method

failed. I have been an inveterate smoker all my life and I do not know that I am the worse for it. I began smoking when I was twelve and have smoked more or less ever since. When my father realized that I smoked, he determined to cure me of the habit, and to that end bought two Italian cigars known as Quattrini (farthings), that being their cost, and gave me one. We both began to smoke, and in about two minutes my poor father was incontinently sick, whilst I finished my cigar and enjoyed it. He had never smoked any but Havana cigars, whilst I was quite accustomed to the Florentine horror.

In India, partly owing to the acoustic faults of the Council Chamber and partly owing to the climate affecting my throat, I found it difficult, when introducing my Budget, to speak for an hour and a half sufficiently clearly and loudly to enable the Indian members, some of whom were not very conversant with English, to appreciate my arguments and follow my calculations. The Budget debate usually took place during the last days of March. For one solid month in each year I abstained entirely from tobacco. No one knows what it cost me, but I ceased smoking at midnight on the last day of February and only began again in the early morning of the first day of April. I did this for five years. I get very impatient when I hear young men declare that they "cannot possibly give up fags," as they elegantly term cigarettes, even when they realize that they are ruining their constitution.

My father (born in 1817) was educated at Rugby, was meant for the Church and eventually for the family

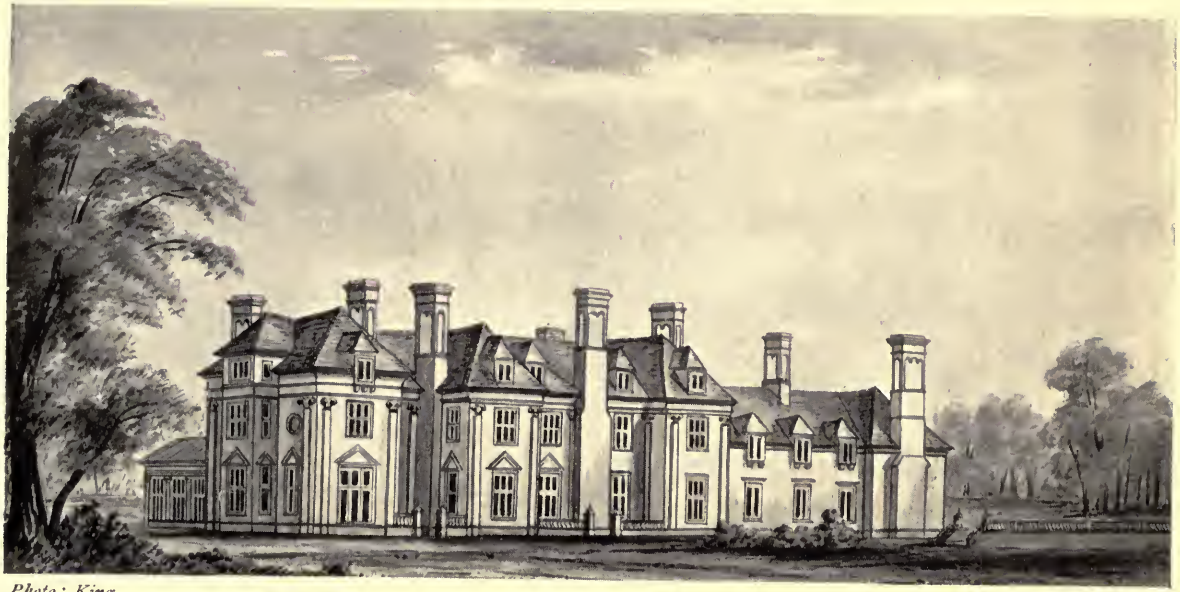


Photo : King

Knowle Hall, Warwickshire, 1820

E. Blore, pinxit

living at Knowle; but his heart was with the army, and after studying at Dresden he joined the 8th Hussars. When he got his troop he sold out and travelled throughout Europe, including Russia and in the East.

Early in 1855, during the Crimean war, he was appointed one of the three agents-general for raising the Italian Legion, and the reports of his work would in these days undoubtedly have brought him honours.

In April, 1858, he accepted the post of private secretary to our ambassador at Constantinople, a post which he held for only one year owing to Sir Henry Bulwer's domestic and financial difficulties. I have found this entry in his account book made on his return home: "Buy for my loved wife some little articles of jewellery, which I beg her to accept as a token of my approbation and gratitude for her treatment of my dear children during my absence." The prim and precise style of seventy years ago reads oddly now. To-day the analogous entry would probably read: "Back to Blighty. Must say Toots has done the kids top-hole. Stood her a new carburetter for her old 'bus."

In the autumn of 1861 my father was offered the Colonial Secretaryship of St. Vincent, which he gladly accepted, as the salary was of great importance to us. Subsequently the appointment was changed for the Auditor Generalship of Barbados, and a sad change it was, for it cost him his life. St. Vincent was spared a visitation of yellow fever, which deprived Barbados of half its people. My father died of it in 1862, just as we were about to join him.

He was a perfect specimen of a cultured, high-

minded English gentleman, which is perhaps the most perfect product of our Western civilization. He was also strikingly handsome, was one of the best riders on the flat as well as in the hunting-field, won several steeplechases, and was a fine shot. He had but one fault, and that was a sympathetic one. The very soul of honour himself, he believed implicitly in the integrity of all men, a weakness which was destined to cost him dear.

Physically and intellectually I owe much to my father, although I lost him when I was but twelve years old, but any moral strength which I may possess is, I think, chiefly derived from my mother, who outlived him by nearly half a century.

She died in March, 1907, and with hers, in many respects, my own life ended. For nearly sixty years we had slept under the same roof, sixty years during which she lavished on me tender care, advice, encouragement and limitless affection. The predominant feature of her character, a very strong one, was her extraordinary capacity for sympathy. It was that especially which led to her never losing a friend.

The devotion between a widowed mother and an only son is, in some cases, so profound as to be almost sacred, and a grief may be too crushing to admit of reference. Some may understand me when I say that at her death it hurt me to hear the birds singing.

The Times published a very kindly notice of my dear mother at the time of her death.

Mrs. Fleetwood Wilson, who died in London on Wednesday at the advanced age of 81, will be greatly

missed in Italy, she having lived just half her life in that country, in the history of whose regeneration she played a part more pronounced than is generally known. Endowed with great beauty and charm, she was a favourite alike with the Italians who were struggling for freedom and the Austrians who occupied the country, and it is believed, and not without reason, that to her tactful intercession more than one prominent Italian owed his freedom, if not his life. The daughter of one of Nelson's captains and a niece of General Sir Townshend Walker, of Badajos fame, she lived to see thirty of her near relations serve in the Army. She married the late Captain Fleetwood Wilson, 8th Hussars, formerly of Knowle Hall, Warwickshire, and leaves one son.

LETTER IV

1862-1868

LIFE IN FLORENCE—FLORENCE FRIENDS—DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND

AFTER my father's death we took up our abode on the second floor of a house in Florence belonging to William Rumbold, a brother of Sir Horace Rumbold, our ambassador in Vienna.

My mother most sensibly set her face against anything in the nature of morbidity in even the greatest sorrow, and sent me off on a shooting expedition in the Maremma with my uncle (by marriage), Count Baldelli, and a mutual friend, Count Bossi Pucci. It is his daughter, Countess Eva Bossi Pucci, who served with such distinction in the Italian Red Cross during the Great War.

In those days the Maremma was an ideal sporting country. Wild boar abounded, and every kind of wild fowl, as well as snipe and woodcock, swarmed. It offered also a spice of danger, for some of its wildest districts sheltered human wild beasts as well, who not infrequently yielded to the temptation of killing a sportsman, not for pelf, but for his gun. Besides, a Maremma wild boar is an ugly customer at times. One of our beaters got in the way of an old tusker on one

occasion and the boar gave him just one cut with his "tush," severing the femoral artery. The blood gushed out like water from a burst main, and the man was dead before we could get to him. It was in the Maremma that I learnt tracking. In Piedmont, when a guest of the Alfieri di Sostegno, I once shot a flamingo. Two were killed. They were supposed to have been blown over from the African coast in a hurricane.

I used to pass much of my spare time at the pistol gallery at the Cascine, and, "although I says it as shouldn't," I became very expert with a pistol. In after years I won a good many pistol pools at Monte Carlo.

I think I must allude to just one accomplishment because it is somewhat out of the common. Mrs. Rumbold, née Princess Labanoff de Rostoff, was an exceptionally gifted woman. She had a fine voice and sang well, she spoke and wrote six languages to perfection, she was an accomplished actress, and a painter of some merit. She was nice-looking, but had a deformity. Her legs were as short as those of a dwarf. She was always trying to prove that they did not prevent her from doing all that longer-legged people did. Ciniselli's circus was then in Florence, and she insisted on taking lessons in circus-riding. Her husband would have nothing to say to it, so she asked me to be her escort. Accordingly I went daily to the circus and participated in the lessons. It is comparatively easy merely to ride bare-backed, to kneel and to stand and to jump through a paper hoop. By stooping and lean-

ing well forward you create the impression of jumping through the hoop, but there is really little jumping about it. The man holds the hoop at an angle and bangs it over you, and all you have to do is just to step over the wooden hoop. We both of us became quite proficient in about three weeks.

I came back from India on two months' sick leave when I was sixty-two, and found a circus at Marseilles. I induced the ring-master to let me try, and I found I could even then stand on a horse and canter round the ring. It is fair to say that the old grey had quarters as broad as a tea-table and was as smooth-running as a silent Knight Daimler.

The Rumbolds used to entertain a great deal, and I thus "came out" at an abnormally early age. It did not matter much at first, but when Florence became the capital the fun grew fast and furious, and nothing but my mother's watchfulness and my preference for the country and for sport kept me out of serious mischief. In the 'sixties Florence was a regular forcing-house and a shockingly bad school for a very young man.

Our greatest friends were Sir Augustus (our minister) and Lady Paget and the Marchese and Marchesa Alfieri, but we were very intimate with and received much kindness from all the leading Italian families. Lady Paget (Walburga) is my very own dear friend at this moment, and I am never so happy as when I am listening to her brilliant conversation. The Marchesa Alfieri was Cavour's niece and had inherited his

remarkable talents. She was a power in Italy in her day.

Of the many Italians of note whom I used to meet constantly at the Alfieris, the two I got to know best were Magliani, the Finance Minister who pulled Italy out of bankruptcy, and the celebrated Poerio. Magliani was very kind to me and invited me to sit in his room and study national finance under his guidance. This I did for several months, and learnt a good deal more than I ever did in my early days in the Government service. Poerio was a most charming personality. In appearance he reminded one of a well-bred, refined, Anglican country parson of the old school. A singularly gentle manner, a very pleasing voice and the sweetest of tempers made him very attractive. That is the man whom King Bomba cast into prison and tortured. King Bomba, the existence of whose government Mr. Gladstone declared to be the negation of God upon earth. Campbell the poet called a similar gang of ruffians Autochthones of Hell. Owing to a cannon ball having been chained to his ankle for many years, Poerio dragged one leg so much that the toe of his boot scraped the carpet. Yet King Ferdinand was allowed to die a natural death in his bed.

We must assume that the recording angel was away on a Bank Holiday just then.

On my eighteenth birthday my mother and I discussed the three courses open to me. It had been suggested by the Foreign Minister that I should become naturalized an Italian and go into the Italian Diplomatic Service. They were very keen on getting a

few good English scholars into their service. I had been offered a remarkably good opening in commerce at Genoa. There remained the third course of my coming to England and passing into our Civil Service.

It did not take us long to decide, and shortly afterwards I left for London.

LETTER V

ITALY IN THE 'FORTIES AND 'FIFTIES

AUSTRIAN OCCUPATION—RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

ITALY has been to me very much what Greece was to Byron, an obsession if you will, but with a difference, for Greece was a land of adoption whilst Italy is a land of birth.

Her sufferings and her joys; her death-agony and her resurrection form part of myself. The very names of her battlefields, of her soldiers and of her statesmen, which are to most but landmarks in history, are to me pages of a very real human document. I cannot but feel bitterly towards those who have caused her pain.

Few of this generation remember the condition of Italy in the 'forties and 'fifties, and none can realize how profoundly impressed were the witnesses thereof by the nefarious tyranny of the Priesthood of Rome, encouraged and supported by the Austrian Grand-ducal rulers of that unfortunate country. Nor can they appreciate the utter detestation of the Hapsburgs and all their works engendered by the revolting brutality of the Austrian army of occupation. Both iniquities have remained indelibly impressed on my mind. I was too young in the early 'fifties to remember the occurrences, but for years after they were the subject of discussion,

not only in my own family but in all Italian circles, and my memory of them is very vivid.

I joyfully recognize that a more liberal spirit now governs the policy of the Church of Rome (some of whose priests are among my valued friends), but no redeeming feature can I find in Austrian government. It was up to quite recently a huge, unlovely, tyrannical Government office, an absolutely unscrupulous bureaucracy which misgoverned a congeries of races, headed by an effete Royal Family, the combination calling itself the Austrian Empire. The Imperial Family have been relegated to ignominious obscurity, from which, it is to be hoped, they will never emerge, and with gratitude I for one say: "Thank God the Hapsburgs are no more."

With frankness and courage *The Times* has throughout justly appraised their true value, and there is advantage in keeping the character of that value in mind.

> . . . We associate the House of Hapsburg with the ultimatum to Serbia, the act which directly brought the war in its train; we associate it with earlier events which might have led to war, such as the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina; we associate it closely with a long series of German attempts in the Balkans and the Near East. We look on it as the catspaw of German Kaiserism. Nor are we favourably impressed by the private records of many individual Hapsburgs. We think of them, in our homely idiom, as a bad family.[1]

For centuries they have represented absolute power and divine right in Europe.

[1] *The Times*, October 29, 1921.

Austria can boast of a fine record of historical forgeries.

Forgeries by lay rulers were also not uncommon. In the 14th century the Austrian Archduke Rudolph forged a document to bolster up Austrian claims, known as the *Privilegium Austriacum,* and fraudulently dated 1156. The Austrian record in this matter was always bad. In the 18th century Maria Theresa was forced by her son, the Emperor Joseph II, to seize a third of Bavaria (1778) on the ground that Archduke Albert had been invested with it in 1413. So he had, but he had made an Act of Renunciation in 1429, which the Austrians destroyed in 1778. When its existence until very recent times was proved, the Austrian diplomats asserted (falsely) that it was a forgery. Austrian diplomacy seems, therefore, often to have played with forgery, and her later record is quite consistent with her earlier. In 1909 the notorious Professor Friedjung accused certain Yugo-Slavs of being in league with the Serbs to overthrow Austria-Hungary. In the trial that followed it was proved by an Austrian judge in an Austrian court that Professor Friedjung had been taken in by a series of clumsy forgeries, which emanated from Count Forgach, the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade, and were probably not unknown to the Foreign Minister, Count Aehrenthal. Count Forgach afterwards, as Under-Foreign Secretary, helped to draft the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia in 1914. Its chief point was that the Serbian Government was implicated in the murder of Franz Ferdinand, and this was based on the testimony of a convicted forger. Who wonders at the fate of Austria? [1]

Well may that question be asked!

My father had passed some time in Vienna after he

[1] *The Times,* January 4, 1922.

left the army and went much into society there, thus making the acquaintance of most of the leading senior officers of the Austrian army. When he settled in Florence he renewed acquaintance with many of his old friends who were attached to the army of occupation, and at first his sympathies were distinctly Austrian, but as time went on he became thoroughly disgusted with the conduct of the officers and men of the Austrian army, and his letters and copious notes give evidence of his indignation at the instances of their brutality which came within his personal cognizance. In a letter dated July 14, 1851, he writes:

. . . Two officers of the Austrian Kaiser Regiment drink tea with us. I must own the outrages recently perpetrated by Austrians on Italians have somewhat cooled my admiration of the former. The last victim who was beaten by them died a day or two since.

The cases are many which my father noted, but a few samples will suffice to give some idea of what the unfortunate Italians had to undergo at the hands of the alien army:

June 20, 1851: . . . Feel intensely disgusted by an outrage committed by an Austrian officer on an Italian. It appears and is acknowledged by the Austrians themselves that an Italian, a clerk to some banker, was passing at the same time as an Austrian guard commanded by an officer. The clerk was reading some papers, and he spat on the ground, a habit but too prevalent among his countrymen. The Austrian chose to consider this an insult to him, and he made his men halt, seized the unfortunate Italian—utterly

unconscious of having offended him—and, causing two of his men to hold him against the wall, made all the others spit in his face. So great an outrage I never heard of.

June 28, 1851 : . . . Another gross outrage was committed on Thursday last. A great crowd being in the Piazza del Duomo, a flask of wine carried by an Austrian soldier was accidentally broken; the man who broke it offered to make it good, as did some of the bystanders. However, the offer was refused. The man, by the order of one of the officers who was passing, was seized, and received twenty-five blows.

June 30, 1851 : . . . An Italian having been flogged by command of the Austrians, his offence having allowed a piece of mortar to fall on an Austrian from the scaffold on which he was working as a mason; the man is said to be dying in consequence. He was most inoffensive—indeed, regarded as half silly, and had not sense enough to be wilfully impertinent. These outrages on justice must work out their own punishment.

November 13, 1852 : . . . Our butler, Antonio, a man of the highest respectability and not in any sense a politician, having been seized by Austrian soldiers and handed to the police, I proceed to the house of the delegato on my way to church, obtain an order to see Antonio. After church walk to the Bargello, where Antonio is confined, and see him. The poor fellow was much cut up. I hope I may be enabled to release him, but much fear I shall fail, the system here being to wear people out by lengthened imprisonment without any trial.

December 29, 1853 : . . . A great outrage is committed, as usual by an Austrian officer, he cutting down with his sword an Englishman who happened to press against him in the crowd. The man is considerably injured. The man is a Mr. Mather, of Shields. In reply to a friendly unofficial note from Scarlett, our Minister, Prince Lichten-

stein answers by saying that—"the officer's only fault was in not killing the man, a deed he was commanded to do, by the standing orders." Can anything be more brutal or more uncivilized than such a code of military laws? The feeling amongst the English is very strong.

Cavendish, in his "Society, Politics and Diplomacy," deals with Baron Haynau, known as the Hyena of Brescia from his barbarities there in 1849. In Hungary, Haynau flogged to death a wounded Honved lieutenant. He dragged a woman into the market-place, had her stripped by soldiers and flogged.

His butcheries aroused the indignation of all Europe. In 1850 Haynau and two of his companions were unmercifully thrashed by the workmen of Barclay's Brewery, which they were inspecting when on a visit to this country, the crowd shouting, "Down with the Austrian butcher."

Quite truly does Mr. Richards in his "Mazzini's Letters" state that: "To the student of the Italian Risorgimento there is nothing unfamiliar in the atrocities of the German troops and the brutality of their officers. He is familiar with them, and he cannot fail to conclude that they were hatched in the foul vulture nests of the armies of the Hapsburgs."

To my father and mother the Bible was not only the inspired Word of God, it was also the chief guide to daily conduct. It is easy, therefore, to realize what opinion they formed of a priesthood which, under the ægis of Austria, caused it to be a crime not only to possess but even to read a lent Bible.

During the Grand Ducal rule an active Protestant propaganda was undoubtedly carried on by English men and women, and Bibles were surreptitiously and constantly introduced into Tuscany and secretly distributed.

It is a fact that two of my relatives actively participated in both smuggling and distribution, but my parents neither approved of nor took part in these breaches of the law of a country whose hospitality they were enjoying. None the less, they literally burned with indignation at the outrages which went on daily, and of which they frequently had ocular demonstration.

Again I have recourse to my father's notes:

May 8, 1851: . . . Go to the Bargello, where Guicciardini is confined, and through the civility of the governor am allowed to see him. He was much gratified at my visiting him, and was quite gentle and tranquil. What gross injustice to confine a man for simply reading the Scriptures.

May 9, 1851: . . . Visit Guicciardini in his prison—shame be to the Government which compels me to write the word. He was in pretty good spirits, and had been visited by his brother and cousin. I much fear, however, that he will be detained some time in prison. I attended a prayer meeting, where sincere prayers for our friend's speedy deliverance were offered up—all is in the hands of Him Who never errs.

May 10, 1851: . . . In the afternoon I pay a visit to Guicciardini in the Bargello. It really makes one's blood boil to think that even the abuse of justice should enable any Government, however despotic, to incarcerate a man merely for reading the Bible and making free use of his conscience.

January 4, 1853: . . . Massingi, a young doctor and a Protestant, has been arrested in consequence of his attending the death-bed of one of his friends who had embraced Protestantism.

August 31, 1853: . . . The preceding day three Florentines in humble life were arrested and thrown into prison for having in their possession copies of the Bible and an Italian translation of "The Pilgrim's Progress."

June 22, 1855: . . . Stanhope writes me a very kind note requesting me to take for the use of poor Cecchetti a sum of between 30 and 40 dollars sent by his mother. C is a Protestant imprisoned for reading his Bible, what we all too much neglect who can always enjoy the privilege.

The English memory is apt to fail in regard to facts which are either uninteresting or unpalatable, and it is well, in certain cases, to jog that memory.

The spirit which animated the patriotic revolutionaries of the Italian Risorgimento is exemplified in the *Programma* issued by the Triumvirate of the Republic of Rome on April 5, 1849, one article of which reads: "No war of classes, no hostility to existing wealth, no wanton or unjust violation of the rights of property; but a constant disposition to ameliorate the material condition of the classes least favoured by fortune." Yet the Pope, in his Allocution of April 20, was made mendaciously to allude to the Roman Patriots as "leaders of Socialism and Communism." [1]

It may not be altogether out of place to quote from a letter communicated, by my father I think, to either the *Daily News* or the *Morning Post* some time in the very

[1] *See* Trevelyan's "Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic."

early 'sixties, for a good deal of misconception exists as to the continuity and completeness of the Papal domination in Rome:

Judging from the utterances of the priesthood in regard to the establishment of the capital of Italy in Rome, it might be supposed that the Papal rule has always been paramount in that city. In point of fact history shows that the Popes, in resisting the domination of the Emperors, have often seen their authority overthrown in Rome. Sometimes the Imperial troops, sometimes powerful native families, sometimes demagogues, have expelled them or compelled them to fly. Henry IV—he who was deposed by the Diet of Mayence in 1106—after three sieges, in 1081, 1082 and 1083, took it, and drove out Gregory VII. During the quarrels of Innocent II and Anacht II, 1140, Arnold of Brescia established at Rome a republic and a senate, and the city only submitted to the Pope 1149. Gregory IX fled before Frederick II, marching on Rome in 1241. In 1281 the nobles, masters of Rome, refused to receive the Pope, Martin II. In 1347 the famous Rienzi, taking advantage of the absence of the Popes, who since 1309 had resided at Avignon, re-established a Republic, which had but a brief existence, though the Popes could not immediately make themselves masters of Rome. On their return in 1377, which Albournoz had been preparing since 1364, the great families, especially the Colonnas and Orsini, had more influence than the Holy Fathers up to the sixteenth century. The re-establishment of their power was, however, consolidated by Alexander VI, Julius II, and the two Medicis, Leo X and Clement VII, from 1492 to 1534. In the interval Rome narrowly escaped capture by Charles VIII, on his way to the conquest of Naples, and was stormed by the Constable of Bourbon in 1527. The domination of the Spaniards in Italy established order and brought palmy days

to Rome, whose tranquillity was not again disturbed until the French Revolution. Berthier took it in 1798, sent Pius VI to France, and proclaimed the Republic; and although it was restored to the Papacy in 1801 by the Peace of Luneville, in 1808 Napoleon united it to the French Empire, of which it remained the second city until the events of 1814 restored the power of the Popes, which remained undisturbed until 1848, when the flight of Pius IX made way for the Republic, which was terminated by the intervention of France.

Papal authority, papal freedom and papal security have probably never flourished to a greater extent than at the present time, when Rome is the capital of Italy.

The priesthood in Italy in days gone by was probably influenced more by Vienna than by Rome. Their policy was not only immoral, it was uncalled for.

Protestantism will never make much headway with Latin races; they are imaginative and impressionable, and the picturesque ceremonial of Rome will always hold them.

We live in happier times, and it must be evident to all that the spirit of greater tolerance and goodwill which now characterizes the Catholic Church has increased its influence as well as added to its spiritual strength.

LETTER VI

1868-1883

EARLY LIFE IN LONDON—EXAMINATION—FIRST APPOINTMENT—RELIGIOUS BELIEF—EGYPT—TRANSFER TO WAR OFFICE

ON November 8, 1868, I left my Florence home for the first time to start in life in London, where I arrived on November 12. The journey was notable only because the Mont Cénis Tunnel was under construction and the Fell Railway had just replaced the old diligences. Midway across the mountain we killed a priest on a mule—I bore the loss with exemplary resignation.

In accordance with my mother's wish I at once started a diary.

I will give but the first and last entry of the first year. January 1, 1869: "In this benighted country diaries have no Sundays." December 31, 1869: "Most successfully mended, lengthened and hemmed my brown trousers myself."

For several years I kept the diary on most methodical lines. I recorded all political events of importance, such social ones as were out of the common, the weather, the winners of all the classic races, to a very limited extent my official work and my journeys, and rather fully my religious feelings as well as my opinion of the

sermons I heard delivered. I was for many years an inveterate churchgoer. When I became a private secretary I gave up keeping a diary on principle.

When I arrived in England I hardly knew a living soul and certainly hardly anyone knew me, but I had relatives, none of whom I had ever seen, and a host of old friends of my parents, who vied with one another in helping me to overcome the terrible feeling of loneliness which threatened to overwhelm me, and who, thanks to their position, were able to start me in a *couche sociale* which attracted me and which has rendered doubtful society intolerable to me. To this and to the deep religious convictions which had been instilled into me, I attribute my having kept my head above water during the somewhat miserable first years of my sojourn in London.

There can be, I hope, no harm in naming some of those who, during a somewhat sombre life, showed me great and continuous kindness, a kindness which went far to counteract the Ishmael-like feeling which every man must experience who has very limited means and who, never having been to an English public school or University and having passed his young days in a foreign land, is compelled to make his friends as he goes along.

One great merit in being poor is that the kindness one receives is perforce absolutely untainted by any expectation of a *quid pro quo*.

The first of those who took me by the hand were my cousins Sir Edward and Lady Juliana Walker, Mrs. (Caroline) Norton (Diana of the Crossways), the Villiers

Listers, my cousin Lady Manningham Buller, Quintus Vivian, who had been my father's major in the 8th Hussars, Fred Cockerell and his brilliant wife, Lady Dillon, a connexion, Sir John and Lady Harington, Lady Normanby and her sister Lady Barrington, and especially Sir Edward and Lady Dering.

Through them I soon made many other friends, and looking back I cannot but marvel at the full and constant measure of kindness which they and many others accorded to a lonely boy, for I was little more, stranded in England.

Shortly after my arrival in England I began attending the classes of the Rev. John Surridge, of Berners Street, who shared with Mr. Wren the first place in the world of crammers. I soon realized that the education received on the Continent, although in many respects superior to that bestowed by English public schools, was detrimental rather than advantageous as a training for competitive examinations in this country. I had to sit me down and begin all over again; for that is what it came to.

My days at Surridge's were not happy days.

Most of his pupils had been to Eton or Harrow, and many had taken their degrees at the best Oxford or Cambridge colleges. As I had not had these advantages, and as I spoke French and Italian quite as well as English, they considered me "a damned foreigner" and my Italian-bred courtesy "damned monkey tricks."

The first day I entered the classroom I bowed respectfully to my tutor and a little ceremoniously to the assembled pupils. I was ignored by the first and at

once ostracized by the rest. It was only after weeks of sackcloth and ashes that I could get any of them to speak to me. But it "all came right on the night," and I took it out of some of them when it came to examinations.

Wren used to coach most of the men who "went up" for the Diplomatic and Indian Civil Services and the Foreign Office, whilst Surridge had the cream of the rest. A large proportion of the distinguished home civil servants of the last fifty years were my fellow-pupils at Surridge's.

Next to the army the trade which appealed to me most was surgery. One of my few chums at Surridge's was the son of an eminent surgeon who was on the staff of Middlesex Hospital, and under his kind auspices I was for some six months allowed to attend lectures there and occasionally operations. I became obsessed with a longing to become a surgeon, a longing which has lasted my life; but I had to give it up because it would have entailed my drawing on my mother's slender resources.

A "beautiful operation" is a fascinating sight. I have been "on the slab" myself, chiefly owing to smashes, no less than seven times, and what I disliked most about it was my inability to "look on."

There was nothing for it but to grind on at my crammers, and a terrible ordeal it became. Except for events and faces I have always been cursed with an exceptionally bad memory, and incessant, cruelly hard work can alone make up for the lack of a good one. For upwards of a year I used to study from twelve to four-

teen hours out of the twenty-four, and the only relaxation I allowed myself was a walk round the Serpentine.

I generally dined at a small and excellent *bœuf-à-la-mode* sort of eating-house called the Albany in Piccadilly, and my dinner rarely cost me more than a shilling and a penny. The penny went to the waiter, and the shilling procured me an excellent *plat du jour* and a glass of mighty light ale.

I denied myself all sport except a very occasional ride on some "real brute" which required breaking, belonging to a riding-master who often sat next to me at dinner. It was the head waiter at the Albany (he was an ex-pugilist and had no nose and only one eye) who gave me my taste for boxing and some priceless lessons as well. I became quite a good feather-weight boxer in after years, and always loved the noble art.

When I was about thirty I had a three-round fight with a railway van driver who was maltreating a horse. I cut the man's face to ribbons, which seemed to affect him but little, but he broke my nose badly, which annoyed me very considerably and spoilt my beauty for good and all. We fought in Portland Place about tea-time in the very height of the season, and only left off owing to police interference.

In 1869 I went up for my competitive examination. Besides others, several men from Surridge's went up with me, every one of whom could give and had for months in the classroom given me a stone and a beating in all subjects except foreign languages.

I told Surridge I thought it utter folly to compete

with them, but he quietly replied: "Nerve sometimes counts for a lot of marks," and persuaded me to go up. I did, and came out second of a considerable number of candidates for two vacancies.

I had one stroke of good and one of bad luck. I was quite hopeless at mathematics and felt sure I should fail to qualify. I had overheard my mathematical coach say of me: "He has got the brains of a pigeon," and I had felt sorry for the pigeon. Failure to qualify in any one subject meant being thrown out altogether.

I was given a paper of eighteen mathematical questions, no less than ten of which I had repeatedly worked up with my coach. I rattled off the answers and had the nous not to touch the remaining eight. I left it to be inferred that I was a slow worker and had not had time to complete the paper.

The stroke of bad luck was over my Italian paper. In those days people were presumably honourable, and a candidate was instructed to write his name at the head of the paper bearing his answers. In after years this was sternly forbidden and a number was substituted for a name "to prevent collusion."

In the *viva voce* when my Italian examiner heard my name he got terribly excited, and asked if I were any relation of the Capitano Fleetwood Wilson who used to live in Florence. I replied that I was his son. He burst into tears, threw his arms round my neck, kissed me repeatedly, and then informed me that my father had saved him from being shot by the Austrians. In due course he gave me 291 marks out of a possible 300. He doubtless left out the nine "for the look of the thing."

In any case I must have scored heavily in Italian, and if the good man had been my examiner in one of my weak subjects I should have come out first.

In those days the civil service examinations were held in what had been the Board of Ordnance in Cannon Row where New Scotland Yard now stands. A time limit was set to all papers, and none except those who have had the experience can realize the agony caused by the quarter chimes of Big Ben. They frequently either maddened a candidate or broke him down. I had heard about it from unsuccessful candidates and rather chuckled, for I have never been much troubled with nerves. But I determined to take no risks, and during the horrible three examination days I put plugs of cotton-wool in my ears and derived much advantage therefrom. I never heard of anyone else doing it.

In Offenbach's *Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* Fritz, after being kicked out of the army, asks as a last favour to be appointed schoolmaster in his native village. When asked if he could read and write, he replied: "*Mon Dieu, non, c'est pour apprendre.*"

On like principle, later in life, I became an examiner for Woolwich, Sandhurst, the Staff College and the Home and Indian Civil Service. I thus acquired the rudiments of an education.

I was appointed to H.M. Paymaster-General's Office, an appanage of the Treasury, in May, 1870, after a period of probation.

As time went on I received offers of appointments in England and abroad, but I decided to carve my way

in the service I had entered, and on the whole I do not regret my decision. In 1874, owing to a bad accident when schooling a pony over hurdles, I had to undergo a somewhat severe operation, which obliged me to lead an invalid life for several months. The skill and attention of Sir James Paget and the devoted care of my mother and sister, who came over to nurse me, followed by a visit to Sweden, brought about a perfect recovery. In Sweden I was the guest of Henry (afterwards Sir Henry) Dering. Of his and his dear wife's devoted care, hospitality and affection I retain the most grateful recollection. Throughout most of my life they have been as a brother and a sister to me.

Those weary months of pain and anxiety enabled me to realize what devoted friends I possessed. No day passed without my being the recipient of many touching little attentions. My constant visitors were the Derings, the Villiers Listers, Lady Bloomfield, Lady Barrington and Lady Stanley of Alderley.[1] The last unconsciously exercised a marked influence on my life, for she lent me Strauss' "Life of Jesus," which opened up a train of thought that entirely changed many of my views and atrophied some of my convictions. The perusal of Strauss, and I read it three times, did not destroy all religious belief, but it modified it and taught me not to take anything for granted. It certainly affected my whole life, but if I have shed much that used to be precious to me, I retain an abhorrence of blatant and uncalled-for professions of unbelief.

It is quite possible for a man to establish a code of

[1] Wife of second Baron.

ethics unto himself and live up to it with scrupulous exactitude, to be in the best sense a good man and a good citizen and to lead a life of self-denial and of advantage to others, but it requires an extraordinary virility of mind and a natural moral tendency to enable a man to do without religion. There are such, but they are few and far between. In the case of the vast majority, unbelief merely leads to the creation of an individual ethical code, carefully constructed so as to admit of the maximum of self-indulgence and the minimum of self-denial.

For a nation the disciplinary element in religion is an absolute essential. Nothing seems able to replace it.

At present ill-considered scepticism has taken hold of humanity, and this has in part been brought about by the horrible "fear of hell fire" teaching adopted by the Christian Churches, a creed revolting in itself and inevitably destined to eventual rejection by reasoning human beings.

Perhaps also, in part, by the object lessons presented by their priesthood whose life is not altogether in accord with the principles they endeavour to inculcate. In point of fact, the ridiculous High-Church curate who goes about in sackcloth and sandals has greater justification for ecclesiastical existence than the bishop who drives about in a motor-car with a bear-skin rug over his knees.

The great strength of our country during the early Victorian period, when it stood as high as at any time of its history, lay in its middle-class dissenters. Their steadying effect being apparently no longer available,

a wave of puritanism seems essential to clean out the sewers before the new pavement of sobriety in word and deed can be laid.

I have faith in the future of my country, but I believe its welfare to be largely dependent on the advent of a wave of puritanism. I should despair did I not believe that it will come. Even if the effect be transitory it will have accomplished the salvation of the English people, and I believe with Keats that

> . . . Other spirits there are standing apart
> Upon the forehead of the age to come;
> These will give the world another heart,
> And other pulses.

The year 1875 was one of the three saddest years I have known, for it was in that year, in June, that I lost my only and tenderly loved sister.

There were but two of us, and the isolation of our early life in Italy led to the knitting together of our two natures to an extent which is unusual, and I doubt whether any brother and sister were ever quite so wrapped up in each other as we were.

My mother had returned to Florence to pack up, intending to leave Italy for good and to make a home for me in London.

It was in Florence that my dear sister, when only twenty-two, died of diphtheria after but three days' illness. Beautiful and unusually intelligent, she captured the affection of young and old; her great charm lay in the purity and unselfishness of a sweet nature, and her death cast a pall of darkness over my mother's life and a deep and lasting shadow over mine.

In February, 1876, I received a note from Rivers Wilson asking me to call on him. We were in no way related nor was I at all intimate with him. I found him in a state of some excitement, and he told me that he had just been asked to proceed to Cairo to reorganize the Ministry of Finance and to place the finances of the country on a sound footing. He said he must have someone to help him.

Not having a notion of what he was driving at, I said nothing. He then added almost timidly: "Will you go with me?"

As I was at that time gnawing my heart out in the office I first joined and longing to get out of the slough of despond in which I found myself, the offer came as water to a thirsty man. I closed with it at once, and we started for Egypt soon after.

Rivers Wilson was perhaps the ablest official I have met. He was a man of brilliant capacity, of unlimited resourcefulness, and of very quick perception. He very rarely made a mistake, but when he did he was quicker in and out of it than almost any man.

I believe he did very well at Balliol, but he was the only Balliol man I ever met who might be supposed not to have been there.

A good French and German scholar, a man of charm of manner with a sense of humour, he was bound to go far. On the other hand, officially, his first consideration was himself.

We put up at Shepheards Hotel in Cairo, paid a five minutes' ceremonial visit the day after our arrival, and at four in the afternoon of the same day were hard

at it with Ismail Pasha, the celebrated Khedive of Egypt. Four of us were present. The Khedive and the Mouffetish, his Finance Minister, Rivers Wilson and myself.

The meeting lasted four hours and was decidedly tempestuous. The Khedive, a very clever rascal, with one or two others had elaborated a financial scheme which, to put it plainly, was an absolute swindle. Rivers Wilson combated it point by point, and ended by refusing to have anything to do with it.

The Khedive was furious and closed the wrangle by saying: "Very well, if you won't have my scheme, produce a better, but I must have it by midday to-morrow or I shall publish mine."

We drove back to the hotel in silence and very depressed. When we got there Rivers Wilson was for throwing the whole thing up and resigning there and then.

I had never worked with him before and I did not know how he would take it, but I appealed to his pride and urged him not to be beaten. I also urged him not to fall into the trap set for him, and suggested that instead of elaborating a scheme at such short notice he should limit himself to showing up the dishonesty of the Khedival plan. He said somewhat angrily: "My good man, I've been doing nothing else for four solid hours." "Yes," I replied, "but only *viva voce*. If you put it all down in black and white and hand it to the Khedive and hint that you are going home, he will be in abject terror of your publishing your memorandum and will climb down at once." Rivers

Wilson then performed a veritable *tour de force*. We neither of us went to bed at all that night, and by eight o'clock next morning he had ready the most powerful indictment.

Events turned out exactly as I anticipated, and we stopped on, endeavouring to introduce some order into chaos.

I was told off to overhaul the Ministry of Finance, and many a weary day did I pass there. All the accounts were admirably kept, the ledgers were a picture and the balance-sheets apparently unassailable. But after a thorough investigation I came to the conclusion that there was not a figure in the building which was not faked, and so I reported. Curiously enough, I thereby won the heart of the Mouffetish, and we remained fast friends all the time I was in Cairo. It was hopeless to reform the place, and Rivers Wilson found it equally impossible to introduce honest financial administration. There is no doubt that the Khedive had counted on being able to bribe him.

Rivers Wilson consulted me and I strongly urged his return to England, and I have never regretted having done so. He left with an unblemished reputation, to return later to a position of power and usefulness.

The Khedive and a good many officials gambled freely in Egyptian stocks, and when Rivers Wilson tendered his resignation the gang were anxious to get out before the inevitable slump which would follow the public announcement.

They adopted a procedure which was certainly very ingenious. Sami Bey, the court chamberlain, came to

me and urged me to take a drive with him in an open carriage placed, he said, at my disposal by the Khedive. He suggested my making some purchases in the bazaar, and offered to act as my interpreter. He pressed me with much insistence to buy a tarboush (which was the official Egyptian head-dress), and I did so. He then asked me as a favour to put it on. To please him I did, and wore it for a minute as we drove back to the hotel.

The moment we parted the old rascal rushed all over Cairo saying that Rivers Wilson had decided to stop and that I had accepted office under the Egyptian Government, and pointed to the fact that I was already wearing the Khedival uniform.

The stocks went up several points, and Ismail and company got out at a profit.

If for no other reason, I am glad I went to Egypt because it procured me the close friendship of Lord Goschen. I hardly like to allude to it, but he formed a very favourable opinion of my report on the Moukhabala law then governing land taxation, and asked me to go and talk it over with him. From that day till his death we were friends, and many a happy week-end have I passed at Seacox.

On the occasion of my first visit I took a copy of his "Theory of Foreign Exchanges," then the classic on the subject. I suppose I ought to confess that I did so to create a favourable impression. He found me reading it in the garden and took it out of my hand. When he saw what the book was, he burst out laughing and said: "No, no, that won't do, my

young friend; it's too thin." He then said seriously: "Understandest thou that that thou readest?" and discussed the subject with me for the whole afternoon, to my immense advantage.

I was staying at Aden in Aberdeenshire in June, 1883, when I received a telegram from Hobart asking me to go to the War Office to help him, as Hal Lascelles, Lord Hartington's assistant private secretary, had met with an accident. I found the telegram awaiting me when I returned from riding. I turned the horse round and raced to Mintlaw Station, and just caught the night mail at Aberdeen.

I went to the War Office next morning and acted as assistant private secretary till the middle of September. Between then and November Hobart endeavoured to get me transferred to the War Office. Lord Hartington and Sir Ralph Thompson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, were much in favour of the transfer, but transfers in those days were practically unknown, and the Treasury were as obstructive as only the Treasury can be. But Hobart's kind efforts in my behalf bore fruit. To him and to his wife I owe a faithful friendship extending over years, and in November, 1883, I was "permanently posted" to the War Office.

LETTER VII

PREDILECTIONS

SHOOTING—HUNTING—INTERIOR ECONOMY—CLUBS

I NEVER was any good at games, indeed I never saw cricket or football till I was eighteen; I never took to billiards or tennis, although I had a turn for both, and golf I had to give up owing to my buffalo knee. I am, I suppose, almost the only Englishman to whom a ball means nothing. But I have always been very keen on hunting, shooting of all kinds and fishing.

When a small boy I shot my first hare and, marvellous to relate, a partridge on the wing with a "property" gun, the barrel of which was fastened to the stock with twine. I loaded it with black powder, made for me by an Italian village chemist, and with carefully sifted gravel. I believe I have been a good game shot, so at least Walsingham said, and it was that past-master who taught me how to shoot high pheasants. I can still shoot, but I do very little of it owing to my somewhat crippled condition.

For some years I shot regularly at Merton, and excellent shooting it was. My co-guns were generally the late Lord Ormathwaite, the Hon. Henry Tollemache, the Hon. John de Grey and our host. On many a night after a heavy day's shooting I have gone moth hunting with Lord Walsingham, the most charming of men, and a kind and close friend of mine till his death.

His first wife, a beautiful and most attractive woman, I had known very well when I was a lad in Italy. She was then Marchesa St. Arpino.

Excellent sport have I enjoyed at Logan, in Wigtownshire, the beautiful home of James McDouall. He and his wife treated me as a brother and their children I almost consider my own. The shooting was very good and quite exceptionally varied. It was there that I got to know and, if he will allow me to say so, got attached to Sir Herbert Maxwell, a first-class sportsman and a distinguished naturalist. I remember he once poisoned us all by sitting down to luncheon with a putrid chough in his pocket.

I am tempted to tell my cousin Jim McDouall's favourite story. Years ago in one of those spasmodic efforts which we were always making to "benefit" Ireland and for which she has invariably returned ridicule and abuse, Portpatrick was created and a line of steamers was run between that harbour and Donaghadee. To set an example, the Viceroys were requested to travel by that route. On the occasion in question the Lord Lieutenant, who was a bad sailor, bolted into his state-room and remained there.

It was blowing a perfect hurricane and the sea ran mountains high outside. In the port, however, so far as the sea went, there reigned a holy calm. Time went by, no attempt at a start was made and the Viceroy got fractious. A bumptious young equerry was sent to order the boat to start immediately. He conveyed his message as offensively as young Court officials occasionally do, and the captain explained that the storm

was too severe to admit of a start. The equerry angrily said that the Lord Lieutenant's order must be immediately obeyed, and the captain started. When they got outside the storm was at its worst and the boat pitched and rolled like the deuce. Up dashed the unfortunate equerry, made his way on to the bridge, and shouted out that His Excellency insisted on an immediate return to harbour. The skipper, a dour old Scotchman, roared back: "Nay, mon, nay, mon, it's hell or Donaghadee this nicht!"

I remember murmuring the last six words when I lay in the mud in the Sunderbunds after being tossed by the buffalo.

My dear friends the Phelips gave me many a delightful day's sport at Montacute, and a very good time have I had at Somerhill when Sir Julian Goldsmid was its owner, also with the Russells at Aden, in Aberdeenshire, and with the Crawshays at Caversham and in Scotland. During many long years every place rented by Charles Lawrence was a second home to me, and I may say the same of Hatchford, Moresby Chinnery's beautiful home.

And there are many, many others of whose hospitality I shall ever retain a grateful recollection.

I shot constantly at Puckridge, near Luton, with George Herring, described in obituary notices as "Financier and Philanthropist."

From the time when as a boy on Epsom racecourse, where he held horses for those who had ridden down from London, he earned the name of "Honest George" till the day of his death the epithet well became him.

He shot every Saturday from September 1 till February 1. His pheasants cost him £6,000 a year, and the shooting was excellent. I used almost invariably to meet the same guns, Howard Morley, Charles Lawrence, Sir Reginald Gipps and Lord Sandhurst. As a rule, most of them left after shooting, but I frequently stayed over Sunday expressly to listen to the story of his life which he once asked me to write. I am very sorry I did not agree to do so, but the weight of my official work did not admit of it.

Herring was the best mental-arithmetician I ever met; he was literally a lightning calculator. Most men when so engaged look up at the ceiling with a strained expression, but he never gave himself the time even to tilt up his head. I look up at the ceiling when trying to calculate because it induces in me a look of rapture worthy of a pre-Raphaelite saint, and I cling to this, my only saintly attribute.

I used to shoot a good deal in Dorsetshire, at Kingston Lacy and with the Digbys at Studland. In those days the coast line between Poole and Bournemouth, the latter hardly more than a village, swarmed with wild fowl of every kind, from wild swans downwards, and many a night have I been out in a punt all around Littlesea. There were a few black-cock left not far from Corfe Castle.

I shot constantly at Revesby in Lincolnshire. The property had belonged to Jimmy Banks Stanhope, who during his own lifetime handed it over lock, stock and barrel to Mr. Edward Stanhope, who was only a very distant cousin.

Extraordinary stories were told of Banks Stanhope, and two seemed to be firmly believed in the county. It was said that having filled the house with guests of both sexes he got tired of them and decided to make them leave. He took all his clothes off, went into the hall a few minutes before dinner-time and began a furious drumming on the gong.

The guests came running downstairs and found Jimmy stark naked waving the gong stick. They all left next morning.

On another occasion he is said to have gone up to an unfortunate guest, for whom he suddenly developed an intense dislike, with a loaded gun and announced that he was going to shoot him. The man remarked that it would be a pity to waste a brass cartridge and offered to go and fetch a cheap brown paper one, and his host consented.

I knew Jimmy very well and got on with him. He was "on the borderland" and quite irresponsible at times, but he was a shrewd man of business, and could be, when he so wished, a pleasant and interesting companion.

Mr. W. H. Smith constantly asked me to shoot at Greenlands; his kindly nature came well in evidence on one occasion.

He owned a pair of very rare, blue-black pheasants which had been given to him by the Emperor of China. As ill-luck would have it, the beastly birds escaped from the aviary just as we were beginning to shoot. The head keeper gave us all a serious admonition. We were to be most careful, as Mr. Smith was "that proud of the

birds," but he comforted us by adding that anyone could distinguish them as they were much larger than the others and black. The beaters had barely started when the two huge black birds came sailing over us. A timid, poor-looking creature made a gallery right and left shot and killed them both. His distress was pitiable. Mr. Smith went straight up to him and begged him not to worry about it as "the birds were really a nuisance and he was glad to get rid of them." In point of fact he treasured them.

I have mentioned a few of the houses where I was treated as one of the family, but many, many other friends and acquaintances have shown me much sporting hospitality. There is no doubt that nowhere in the world is so much disinterested hospitality bestowed as in Great Britain.

My first experience of stalking was at Kinlochewe. I had no rifle, but that prince of rifle-makers, Henry, kindly lent me a .500 single rifle with which I killed three stags as fast as I could load and shoot, at one, two and three hundred yards. My success in my first attempt gave me great confidence and proved invaluable to me for that reason.

My next stalk was at Kingairloch. My third was at Invercauld, and then I was fairly started. The late Lord Portsmouth was very generous to me with his stags at Guisachan, but my real stalking home was at Craignish Castle—which I loved above all other places in the north. The friendship of the Gascoignes was of the truest and without limit. They used to spoil me from the moment I arrived till the moment I left, and

I have had many a stag on Scarba, their beautiful island forest. I have also shot there some of the "prehistoric" wild goats to be found only on Jura and Scarba.

As to fishing, all I have to say is that I always fished whenever chance offered; a practice which I continue. Trout always appealed to me more than salmon, although I admit that a big salmon is hard to beat, in both senses.

I do not propose to emulate my uncle, who left a good-sized volume in which he had recorded every incident which had occurred in every run in which he had participated.

I hope, however, that I shall not make too heavy a call on your patience if I allude to two days' hunting of which I retain a vivid recollection.

One was when I sent a very wealthy, very popular and very stout master of foxhounds flying into the next county. I was staying at a country house for a lawn meet and a ball. A friend in the 7th Hussars most kindly offered to mount me. He lent me a restless, queer-tempered chestnut mare who behaved like a catherine wheel as soon as she saw hounds. She had been raced over hurdles half her life and had a mouth like iron. I soon realized that I could not hold her and to avoid a mess I kept out of sight, turned her head away from everybody and "let her go," which she did for all she was worth. As ill-luck would have it, the master, whose one fault, a very bad one, was that he was generally in the wrong place in the field, came "galumphing" round the corner of a covert. I caught him on the port bow and sent him and his four-hundred-

guinea hunter heels over head. I never hesitated. I rode a bee-line, hell for leather, to the town in which the 7th were quartered, stabled the mare and rushed back to the house I was staying at as fast as a country fly could carry me. I felt very guilty sitting silently through dinner listening to the abuse hurled at the head of the unknown stranger who had upset the apple cart.

The second day's hunting was also on the occasion of a lawn meet and a ball at a large house in the north of England. We found a fox most suspiciously near the lawn, and having allowed him time to get away, we proceeded to a river which ran across the park not far from the house. Among the guests were two of the greatest *partis* in England. Two young men, nice-looking, of good birth, very rich and owners of large landed estates. They quite rightly fancied themselves a bit and turned out splendidly mounted and immaculately dressed. I wore a black coat and rode a three-legged hireling, so I felt a pariah and an outcast and kept in the background. The river was not jumpable, but there was a shallow narrow ford and all made for it. The two "beauties" were mortally afraid of getting splashed on account of their boots, so they both made for the shallowest part of the ford. They kept knee to knee and went along very gingerly. Just as they got to the middle the bits of the two horses for some unknown reason got hooked on to each other, and there followed a high old splashing and floundering in fairly deep water. All this occurred in full view of a lawn crowded with women.

The poor lads had to go back and change, and the

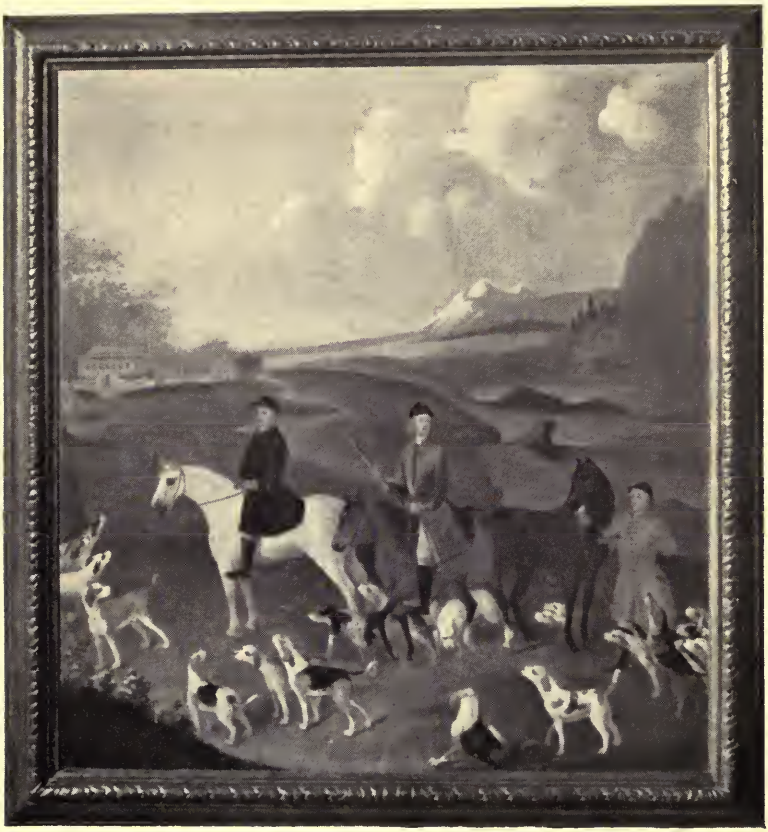
road being left clear I raced over the ford and had a clinking good day's hunting. We know that the poor do *not* inherit the land, but they sometimes get the best of the fun of the fair.

One of the most beautiful women, the best figure on and off a horse, and one of the best riders to hounds I have had the honour of meeting in the hunting-field, was Princess Hélène d'Orléans. On one occasion with the Bicester I saw her pound the whole field over water.

The most absent-minded man I ever heard of in the hunting-field was Sir Charles Isham, a connexion of mine. He had two hunters, one very good and one very bad at timber. On one occasion, in the middle of a run when hounds were going like mad, he got off before jumping a gate to see which horse he was on.

I hope that I have not created the impression that I hunted regularly and was a devil of a dog in the shires. I certainly have not meant to do so, and the very opposite is the case. With a very, very slender income and uncommonly little leave my treasured hunting days were few and far between.

I have ridden a good many horses belonging to friends, and was so fortunate as to have but two bad accidents with them. They were both valuable hunters, but I am glad to say neither was permanently injured or blemished. One belonged to Woolly Gordon of the Grenadiers, the other to Arthur Dugdale, the gunner, and one of the oldest and best-loved friends I have left. Both behaved like angels over it, and were more concerned about my distress than about their own horses. But I usually had to be satisfied with a cheap



J. Wootton, pinxit

Olton Hall, Warwickshire, and Family Pack of Hounds, 1720

hireling, and I have had more than my share of smashes in consequence. Hunting in my case generally involved a night journey down and a night journey back so as not to waste leave, and as I always travelled third-class it took a good bit out of me.

You will have noticed, if you have perused them with care, a very definite feature in most memoirs and recollections.

The writer almost invariably apologizes for what he terms a "brief allusion" to his idiosyncrasies, and then proceeds to deal with them at inordinate length. In doing so he sternly represses all allusion to what is objectionable in his moral and material composition, lightly dwells on such slight, somewhat attractive weaknesses as he may possess, and then indulges in an exhaustive and exhausting disquisition on his manifold virtues. In some cases the whole treatise may be described as introspection run mad.

If I presume to allude to my own component parts you may be willing to forgive me in view of the brevity with which I deal therewith.

In these days, when heirs to earldoms trade in Brittany butter, it is difficult to realize what a prejudice, even in the 'fifties, the "county families" felt against any profession other than the "three services"—the Army, the Navy and the Church. I was destined for the army, but mine were the days of purchase and the army was out of the question, so I joined the civil service.

Had I considered my happiness rather than a desire

to "get on" I should have married some canary-coloured breeder of babies, grown roses at Putney, and acquired the chance of producing a great Englishman. In short, I should have enjoyed a placid, happy life—always assuming that de Boots of the Blues had not stepped in and blasted my domestic happiness. As it is, I have been a restless Government clerk all my life, but have tried to be a good one.

I have certainly never been ashamed of my calling, and I remember after we had wasted an hour discussing some absurd question of precedence, profoundly distressing my fellow-members on the Supreme Council of India, by exclaiming: "After all, we are none of us much more than glorified clerks." (I had forgotten the Viceroy, and the plaster fell from the ceiling.)

Which particular "brass hat" case we were considering I cannot remember, but I had suggested that he might rank immediately after the eldest sons of quartermasters of the militia, a flippant suggestion which had not met with acceptance.

I suppose, to be honest, I should admit that one of my diversions is the occasional use of language above 212 degrees Fahrenheit. What has saved me from much trouble through a course of years has been an unconscious tendency, when I lose my temper, to swear in Italian. May I be forgiven for terms in which I have, with a smile on my face, consigned to perdition colleagues and others innocent of all knowledge of the expressions I was using. I drift into Italian when I am angry partly because the language of my childhood still comes spontaneously to my lips, but also because

Italian swear-words are so lovely. They possess a force and character which the English ones lack.

I inherited a horror of excessive drinking, and I do not deserve the ills which my flesh has been heir to; but no good purpose is served by indulging in idle regrets over moderation and lost opportunities.

Music halls and their like I have always ahhorred, nor have I ever cared for the theatre. In Paris I used to go to the Français and as a tonic to the Palais Royal, but in England I very rarely go to the play.

I have loved but one actress, and she was a French girl. Unclothed in a girdle of marine grasses, she represented the birth of Venus. She was exceptionally beautiful, very intelligent, and fairly well conducted, and in my youth I loved her very dearly. But my devotion was innocent enough, and the marine grasses were symbolical of the purity of my affection.

All through the 'eighties and 'nineties I "went out," as we used to say in those days, as much as anyone, and led the regular and irregular London life of a young man at a time when people thought less about money than now. I was a frequent visitor at York House, where the Grant Duffs dispensed much hospitality, and at Holland House; Lady Holland was an old friend of my mother's, and she loved to talk Italian, which she spoke perfectly, and this led to my often being her guest.

Thanks to the kindness of friends who had horses to spare, I rode regularly in the Row, and my leave was entirely given up to shooting or hunting, but I

think it was generally conceded that I was all the time one of the hardest workers in the public service. I take no credit for it, for hard work has always been a pleasure to me.

In regard to clubs I have been singularly fortunate. I came up for several of the best almost at the same time when I was relatively young and was elected to them all—with one exception. Being wishful to spare it from obloquy, I leave that club unnamed.

In the very early 'seventies a few of us started the Eclectic Club. It met in the Cosmopolitan Club room in Charles Street, Mayfair, on every Saturday evening, and was for a time an interesting as well as an entertaining institution. We usually sat up to the most unholy hour, and I suppose we were a bit noisy.

The first committee consisted of the Earl of St. Germans, Sir Bruce Seton, Sir Baldwyn Leighton, Hon. Edward Douglas, Hon. R. Dutton, Crawford Grove, Albert Bankes and myself. Most of the best known of the younger men of the day, including a good many Guardsmen, belonged, and for a time it was a brilliant success, but as is usually the case under such conditions black-balling became fast and furious, new men were kept out, and we found ourselves in the early 'eighties with plenty of funds but hardly any members. It was decided to wind up the club, and we were able to make a handsome donation to two London hospitals.

Possibly the decision to close the club was somewhat influenced by the fact that one of Lord St. Germans'

relations expressed his disapproval of him by pouring half a coal-scuttle of coals over him as he went downstairs.

The best club chairman I ever knew was Colonel Baring, well known as Bob. At the Travellers we once had a case of suicide. One of our members had passed most of his life in Japan, and had acquired that indifference to life which is supposed to be a characteristic of its inhabitants. To add to the amenities of life he deliberately lived on his capital, and blew out his brains in the top-floor billiard-room of the club when his capital came to an end. Baring and I happened to be the only members in the club at the time, and he expressed the greatest indignation at what he called "an outrage." He concluded a furious outburst by saying to me, "I'll take damned good care he never gets into any other club I've anything to do with."

LETTER VIII

SPECIAL DUTIES AT THE WAR OFFICE

COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES—ROYAL ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT—PARIS EXHIBITION

I CLAIM that great merit attaches to treating the subject matter of this volume as a collection of letters rather than as an aggregation of chapters, for I am thereby enabled to tender well-intentioned advice to the Somebodies who may be disposed to read what I have written.

This letter, for instance, covers a number of references to some of the multitudinous special duties outside the normal ones which I have had to undertake during my War Office career.

When I am asked to read about a subject which bores me, I invariably say that I am afraid I am not sufficiently conversant with the subject to be able to take an intelligent interest in it. My advice to Somebody is to follow that example in regard to this letter.

My first special duty at the War Office was to act as secretary of the Special Commission on Army Reorganization of 1887. I am afraid I have quite forgotten what especial benefits we conferred on the army, but I well remember a heated discussion as to whether or not Irish hemp should be used instead of palliasse straw for soldiers' bedding. I well remember it because in a flip-

pantly worded report adverse to Irish hemp, I remarked that, "In view of the special use to which hemp could be put no one could wish to discourage its production in Ireland." My effusion came under the Prime Minister's notice, and he requested the Secretary of State to express to me "his grave displeasure."

In 1887 Mr. Stanhope appointed a committee on War Office reorganization mainly because of the adverse reports of Lord Randolph Churchill's House of Commons' Committee on Army and Navy Establishments. To the former committee I was appointed secretary.

The result was the reorganization known as that of 1887, its salient features being permanent financial control over the departments of the Inspector-General of Fortifications, the Quartermaster-General and of the manufacturing departments, as well as a clear line of demarcation between military and civil powers and responsibility; another feature, it may be added, being the diurnal resignation of most of the H.Q. Staff. This reorganization, which became operative by Order-in-Council of February 21, 1888, may be considered as the genesis of the War Office organization of the present day.

The War Office was ever a conservative institution where all changes were viewed with disfavour. Colonel Deedes, a dear and courteous old gentleman, was for many years Assistant Under-Secretary, and he met all suggestions for "improvement" by one of two remarks: "I dread innovations," or, "It is dangerous to open a door——"

He would then feign complete deafness, and it became a case of

> With tired hearts and toil-worn empty hands
> We journey home.

The labour involved in taking down evidence and recording proceedings before shorthand and typewriting were introduced was very arduous, especially when normal work had to be done concurrently.

In 1888 I undertook, at the request of Sir Charles Ryan, the then Controller and Auditor-General, the translation of the Italian Acts of Parliament creating the Corte dei Conti (Audit Court and Office) of the Kingdom of Italy, passed in 1862.

The mixture of Italian legal and financial jargon was certainly not easy to render into English, but the translation met with approval, because no one read it.

It seems almost inconceivable that only twenty-one years ago the whole preparation for an even small military operation was for a time entrusted to a civilian. It stands recorded that, owing to the extreme secrecy considered necessary when the early steps were taken to form the Rhodesian Field Force, and in consequence of the inability of others (who had better be nameless) to take any part in the provision of arms and stores, the preparation of the force for the defence of Rhodesia had to be dealt with in an entirely exceptional manner. I practically had "entire charge of the composition, the maintenance and the dispatch of a field force of six thousand men." After a time I asked the Secretary of

State to approve of my handing over the future control of the force to the proper departments concerned.

At a later date I was "liaison officer" between the War Office and the celebrated Yeomanry Committee which organized the Imperial Yeomanry sent to South Africa, and that put curious burdens of novel work and responsibility on my bent shoulders, but it was child's play compared with the amazing task entrusted to me in regard to the Rhodesian Field Force.

In 1893 Campbell-Bannerman gave me my first Staff appointment, selecting me for the post of Director of the Royal Army Clothing Department, which office I held for five years, during the whole of which time the labour establishment, male and female, rendered the most efficient, honest and loyal service; always answering to any call which it might be necessary to make on them. My relations with the hundreds of men of the Inspection and Store branches and the women of the factory were more than cordial, they could fairly be described as affectionate. When leaving Pimlico on promotion I felt that I was parting with a large number of faithful friends. One man, and one only, gave trouble. He was a Hyde Park orator and a most unreliable worker, constantly absenting himself without permission, and always trying to foment trouble in the department, and his dismissal became essential.

He went to the House of Commons and got the Labour members to take up his case. C.-B. sent for me and asked me to reinstate the man. I pointed out that this would be destructive of all discipline, and asked him to allow me to ' revert ' to the War Office if

the reinstatement were decided upon. "We cannot have a whole day's debate about it, and the whips say we may even be beaten," said C.-B. "Can you suggest any way out?" We talked it over, and it was decided to tell the House that Mr. John Burns would be asked to look into the case and report upon it.

John Burns, whom I hardly knew, came to Pimlico next day. I gave him up my room, stood him the luncheon he preferred—two buns and a glass of milk—and placed all the papers bearing on the case before him, and told him to send for and examine the man and anyone else he liked. He sat there all day and interviewed half the establishment. As he was leaving he said to me, "Would you like to know what I have said to the man? I told him you had let him off too easily, and that if I had been his boss he would have been fired out long ago." When it is realized that nearly all the men employed were Burns' Battersea constituents, I think it will be conceded that he well deserved the name of "Honest John." Courage and honesty are above all his characteristics.

The Labour members of my day never "had a down on me," and I am proud of the very cordial relations which existed between us. By far the most competent and the fairest member of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee was Barnes. I got on very well with the committee, but they dearly loved to try to upset me. Barnes never did. If the present leading Labour members are like the ones I used to come in contact with, far from fearing a Labour Government, I am disposed to welcome it.

The end of my dismissed employee was rather tragic. He was a total abstainer, but his reception at the House of Commons upset him, and he accepted a stiff glass of whisky and water which drove him clean mad. When he got on to the Embankment he rushed up to an unfortunate street preacher and knocked him down, with the inevitable result.

In 1900, presumably because I had once been the Director of the Royal Army Clothing Department, I was asked by the Royal Commission for the Paris International Exhibition held that year to adjudicate on the merits of military and civil tailoring and clothing and dressmaking and clothing for women and children.

I went over to Paris in June, and in due course embarked on one of the most amusing duties I have ever undertaken.

We got through the comparatively trivial work of adjudicating on all that appertained to males with fair rapidity, but when it came to judging ladies' dresses and lingerie the duty became onerous indeed. I have always had an inclination towards petticoats, and I was really attracted by the extraordinary beauty of some of the dresses, those of Doucet in particular. Some were more like snowflakes than articles of apparel, and as the President, Mr. Worth, of Paris fame, initiated me into their relative merits and demerits I became absorbed in my very novel functions. In regard to prizes we did uncommonly well for the English exhibitors, who only numbered about a dozen and who did not compete in the ladies' dress section. They were awarded five gold medals and five silver medals.

When it was all over Mr. Worth gave us a dinner at the Cascade which has made me fastidious in regard to food ever since.

I was the only Englishman on the jury, and received throughout the most marked civility and kindness from my colleagues of many nationalities.

It was a curious experience for a bachelor, and it has enabled me ever since to assume an air of marked superiority over women young and old when toilettes are discussed.

At the next exhibition it will be, I suppose, the relative merits of naked women which will come under review.

I question whether, outside the Cabinet of the day, anyone has ever heard of the committee, of which I was chairman, called into being by Mr. Arnold-Forster in 1904. It was a small and somewhat unpretentious committee, but it is a question whether any army committee has produced better work or as good. The members were Colonels Lake, Altham and Granet. We were called upon to consider and advise as to what organization, composition and distribution of the army would produce garrisons, drafts and reinforcements for India and the Colonies; a force capable of being used for expeditions and a force sufficient to provide garrisons in the United Kingdom, in addition to a force capable of both resisting invading raids and furnishing a striking force for service abroad. The subject was dealt with in a masterly manner by the three military members, and the report proved invaluable as a basis for future and more far-reaching reforms. Arnold-Forster took it to the Cabinet, but—

"All talking with each other thus along their way they passed."

As it possessed merit, none of them took any notice of it.

I sing of Arms and the Man—I mean of Esher and the War Office. Lord Esher has much in common with Charles the Great—"Emperor of the Romans, French, Germans and other nations, who after prodigious toils in Saxony, France, Germany, Lorraine, Burgundy, Italy, Brittany and other countries; after visiting innumerable cities from sea to sea which he won by his invincible arm through divine favour and after subjugating them with great fatigue of mind and body resolved not to rest but to conquer Gallicia." All that is required is to change "arm" into "charm," "divine" into "Royal" and "Gallicia" into "War Office" and the similarity becomes apparent.

Satiated with Kings and Courts and Constitutions, he sauntered into shady Pall Mall and, *pour passer le temps,* destroyed a Commander-in-Chief.

"A glorious model to the wondering earth—
A faithful balsam to thy Country's wounds."

Lord Esher's War Office Reconstitution Committee, which reported in March, 1904, consisted of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer—Esher, Clarke, Fisher.

One result was my appointment as Director-General of Finance, and on him devolved the heavy task of recasting the War Office financial administration and

personnel, so as to bring it into harmony with the recommendations of the committee.

By December the whole change had been effected and the new system was in full working order. The main results of the recommendations, so far as they affected the personnel of the financial side of the War Office, were the abolition of the posts of accountant-general, of deputy accountant-general and of four assistant accountants-general. The posts of director and assistant director of contracts also were abolished. On the other hand, the posts of director-general of finance, with two assistants, one for finance and one for accounts, were created. For the financial service of the army in the field, as well as in peace, an entirely new department had to be constituted by the amalgamation of the existing Military Pay Department with the Civil Headquarters Finance branches.

A system of decentralization run mad was established, carrying with it the redistribution and decentralization of work and staff to military districts throughout the Empire. Most of the Army Votes had to be entirely remodelled in a form acceptable alike to the Treasury and to Parliament. In all these changes the financial supremacy of Parliament had to be retained intact, whilst the freedom from financial restraint as regards the military members and district commanders-in-chief had to be largely increased.

The Order-in-Council investing the Director-General of Army Finance with authority to act was promulgated in August, 1904, and the last of the changes above alluded to received Treasury sanction before the

end of that year. In other words, the whole of the reforms required of us were effected in six months, without extraneous aid of any sort, without friction and without any interruption of current work.

"With the sound of their sweet playing, the lady falls asleep."

From the time when he first came to the War Office till I left it to take up the appointment of Finance Minister in India I was in daily close association with Lord (then Mr.) Haldane. Almost immediately he took me into his confidence and unfolded the scheme of his great reforms, which were at first greeted with anything but enthusiasm by the military members of council. One of them, afterwards his enthusiastic supporter, went so far as to say that whilst Arnold-Forster was mad, Haldane was bad. But eventually they all came round to him. I think I was the last convert, for I greatly regretted the abolition of the Militia and saw no possibility of keeping the cost of the Territorial Force within bounds. Eventually I managed to accomplish the latter. The financing of the force at its inception and the permanent scheme of finance applicable to it was the heaviest and most difficult task ever cast on my department.

Our scheme proved entirely satisfactory, and was laid before Parliament in three documents bearing my signature, dated 1907. So far as I am aware our scheme underwent no alteration, and I believe it was working admirably up to the outbreak of the war.

Its marked success was attributable to the quite ex-

ceptional efficiency of the Finance Department, manned by an extraordinarily able and devoted staff of which I then had the honour to be the head. But the success was rendered possible by the incessant attention, by the phenomenal patience and wonderful capacity for hard work of Lord Haldane.

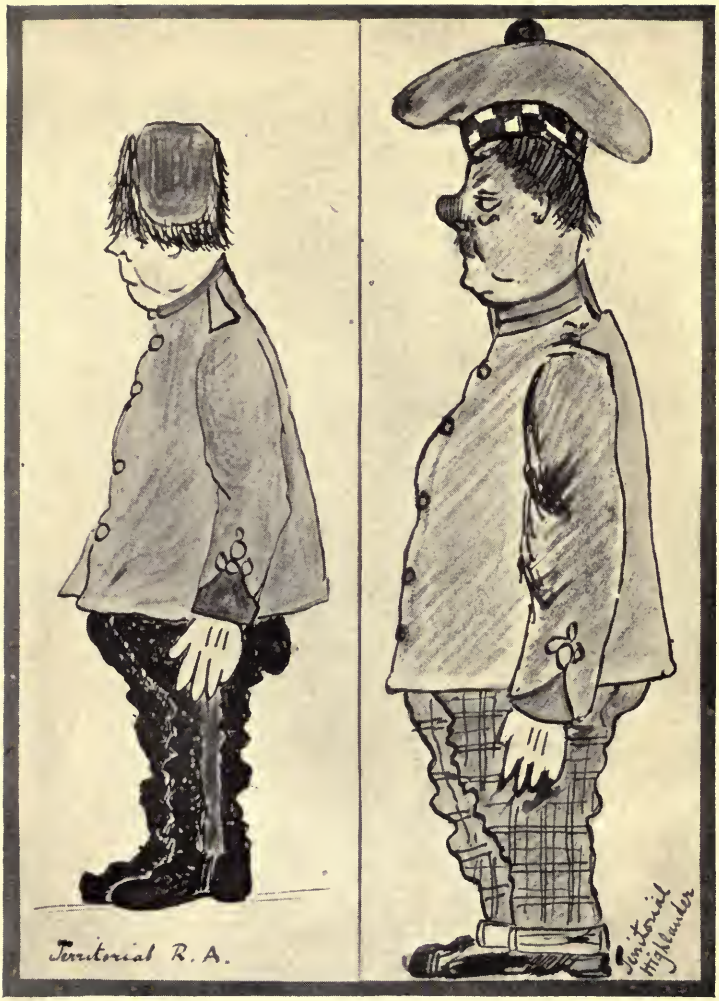
He nearly killed the lot of us, but to him twelve hours of incessant work was but the prelude to a post-midnight orgy of Hegelian Philosophy.

In the year 1907 I was casting about to find some means of adding to the money available for the valuable but costly reforms at that time operating. I was moved to listen to my assistant Mr. (now Sir Charles) Harris, the ablest and the most fearless civil servant of his day, who in season and out of season urged me to claim a larger contribution from India towards the cost of the army which we supplied to that country.

I had long been of opinion that we were not getting a full quota from India, but I looked upon it as practically hopeless to try to get more, especially so long as a statesman of Lord Morley's calibre was Secretary of State for India.

But Harris furnished me with such strong, such ably framed arguments and such meticulously accurate calculations that I took up the question with some confidence and laid our united views before Lord Haldane.

The Secretary of State for War devoted a good deal of "clear thinking" to the question, cross-examined me as no witness in court was ever cross-examined, turned



Drawn by recalcitrant Member of Army Council whilst Lord Haldane unfolded his Territorial Army Scheme, 1908

our calculations inside out and our arguments outside in, and then expressed himself satisfied.

Once we had Haldane on our side I felt sure of success. The outcome was the appointment by the Cabinet of an exceptionally strong commission, presided over by a judge de première force, Sir Robert Romer. The members were Mr. Gerald Balfour, Lord Welby, General Sir Beauchamp Duff and Sir John Edge for the India Office, and for the War Office General Sir William (afterwards Lord) Nicholson and myself.

The commission was appointed: "To consider and report upon (1) the apportionment of charges for the maintenance of the British Army in India," and (2) "whether any, and if so what, proportion of the cost of the Army Reserve should be borne by India." Beauchamp Duff and Nicholson were both Indian Army men and only too anxious to fly at each other's throats. Edge devoted himself mainly to judicial utterances, and I limited myself strictly to proving my case. I had burnt the midnight oil and knew my brief. I do not think the others knew theirs.

Mr. Gerald Balfour and Lord Welby devoted the closest attention to the arguments and very careful examination of the figures produced in support of them.

In 1908, with the exception of the two India Office members, the whole committee decided that India should pay for the cost of raising, training, equipping and transporting the annual drafts and reliefs, but excused her from paying part of the cost of the reserve.

It was rumoured that Romer on meeting John Morley that afternoon remarked: "Agree with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way." The result was a compromise arrived at between the two Secretaries of State at a "Symposium" at the House of Commons which Nicholson and I attended.

We got from India no less than £300,000 per annum in addition to the sum due under the capitation rate then in force.

It was, I believe, my service on this commission which led Lord Morley to ask me to take up the appointment of Finance Minister in India where, on my arrival, I found myself faced by a deficit of three-quarters of a million pounds, of which this accursed £300,000 was a prominent feature. At the end of my term of office I left India a surplus, all told, of eleven million pounds.

When Lord Morley did me the honour to ask me to go to India, I told him quite frankly that I was a tired man and far too old to undertake new and very arduous duties in the East. He most kindly refused to let me decide at once and gave me a week to think the matter over.

Lord Wolseley and my dear friend General Kelly Kenny used every argument they could think of to dissuade me from going.

They said I should find myself in a maëlstrom of intrigue, that I should quite naturally be considered as taking the bread out of the mouths of the I.C.S., and that if I did my duty without fear or favour I was bound to be cordially detested. That if I succeeded I should

die as soon as I got home, and that if I failed, whatever credit I had earned during my long service at home would count for nothing. On the other hand, "Tom" Buchanan, one of the most faithful and devoted friends I ever had, and Coleridge Grove, one of my dearest, urged me very strongly to go.

I had almost decided to refuse the appointment when Grove asked me to dine with him at the Oxford and Cambridge. He gave me an excellent dinner, and pointed his arguments with 1875 Perrier Jouet, but I still held out. At last he slapped the table and said: "Why, damn it! you might shoot a tiger——"

The tiger did it.

LETTER IX

INVESTITURE

ON May 30, 1891, I received a command to attend an investiture at Osborne.

I shall ever remember that journey to Osborne. The party was a large one and everyone was in full dress uniform. By the time we got to Southampton a veritable hurricane was blowing, and the crossing to the Isle of Wight was about as bad a crossing as I have ever experienced anywhere. Nearly everyone was right royally sick. I was one of the few exceptions. I am never ill at sea. It was a sorry crew which landed off that boat, and for some time after several of the great ones had to remain hidden.

We had a very indifferent luncheon, and the investiture began almost immediately afterwards. I was the very last, and by that time Her Majesty was evidently tired and distinctly cross. When I knelt at her feet I could not for the life of me avoid being completely absorbed by the pattern on the footstool. It was covered by a fearful and terrible presentment in worsted work of a King Charles spaniel, with a blindingly blue ribbon round its neck and the most scarlet tongue ever seen in life or death. I cannot account for it, but that spaniel made me forget my drill. Instead of putting out my forearm at right angles to the Queen so that she

might lay her hand on it for me to kiss, I tried to take her fingers between mine to enable me to kiss the back of her hand. The Queen instantly withdrew her hand and gave mine a little smack, not a pat, but a genuine angry little smack. I wonder if anyone else, other than the Royal children, ever got smacked by beloved Queen Victoria; God bless her!

Owing to mistakes at the investitures I have been through the process of knighthood no less than four times, which is, I understand, quite irregular. Once a knight always a knight, I believe, and the dubbing with a sword (I think that is the correct term) should only occur once. I never felt quite comfortable during the ceremony, and have on each occasion experienced an almost irresistible inclination to cry out: "Mind my ear!"

There is, perhaps, distinction in being the sole Finance member of the Supreme Council of India, living or dead, who has not received the K.C.S.I.; but there are only two orders I really covet, the Order of Chastity and the Order of the Striped Tiger. I have qualified for both.

LETTER X

SOUTH AFRICA

HAVING been instructed by His Majesty's Government to proceed to South Africa to take up temporarily the duties of Financial Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief in that country, I embarked on February 23, 1901, reaching Cape Town on March 12 and Pretoria on March 19. Although my headquarters were at Pretoria it became necessary for me to travel under circumstances of much discomfort, and occasionally at some risk, over the greater portion of the country. I travelled from first to last a total distance of 17,000 miles.

The army in South Africa possessed no financial staff other than the Pay Department, and I had therefore not only to establish an office and obtain a staff locally, but I had to gather together from all parts the material for investigation.

When the size of the country is considered, as well as the fact that guerilla warfare prevailed, it will be evident that the labour involved was great. My only assistant was Mr. Flynn of the War Office, but he was a host in himself.

The report which I submitted to the Government on my return dealt fully with the whole of my investigations and the control machinery which was established

and which, as time proved, worked well. The subjects *inter alia* to which I devoted my attention were commandeering and compensation, Imperial and military railways, Natal railway rates, provision of specie, supply accounting and ordnance expenditure.

Kitchener was very appreciative of what I was able to do for him, and when I left he was good enough to inform the Home Government that I "had been of much assistance to him," and that I "had exercised skill, judgment and energy——"

As a rule we found ourselves in entire agreement, but now and again we disagreed. On one such occasion he and I had a serious altercation. We both lost our tempers. He stalked up and down the room on one side of his work-table railing at me in loud angry tones and I did the same on the other side of the table.

Whilst we were "hard at it" Milner entered the room in that pussy-cat fashion characteristic of him and stared at us in amazement. Kitchener spun round and said, "Milner, here we are; three clever men! Am I right or is Fleetwood Wilson right? You shall decide."

Milner hesitated for a moment and then said he thought my plan would work best.

In a moment the cloud left Kitchener's face, and in a cheery and kindly tone he said, "All right, Fleetwood Wilson, go ahead. Do it your own way."

All said and done, Kitchener was a large-minded man. He was also a kind-hearted one.

One of his favourites got a bit of a hammering from the Boers and lost two cow-guns, a very serious loss, as it might have led to the destruction of all our block-

houses. I was present when Kitchener received the news. He looked excessively serious, but all he very quietly said was, "Poor fellow, I am very, very sorry for him."

None the less his staff were mortally afraid of his displeasure. I shall never forget the appearance of the H.Q.S. when Kitchener's favourite bird escaped. He was out riding when it happened, and whilst they awaited his return they walked disconsolately in and out of the house looking like men under sentence of court-martial.

The British public have insisted on endowing Kitchener with many attributes to which he would have been the last to lay claim. He was supposed to be the stern, unbending, hard man of war. In point of fact he was shy, he was rather soft-hearted, and I have known him distinctly emotional.

One night I got a telephone message from him asking me to go round to him. I found him in a state of real distress and great perturbation. Almost invariably the Boers were clean fighters, but on one or two occasions they fired on our men from a farmhouse after they had surrendered as unarmed men. Five were caught red-handed, were tried by court-martial and sentenced to be shot. The sentence had just reached Kitchener for confirmation. The moment we were alone he said, "Fleetwood Wilson, it's too horrible to shoot five men in cold blood. I can't do it. I asked you to come to talk it over with me as I want an outside opinion and you always blurt out what you really think."

I replied that so far as I was concerned, if the trial

was an absolutely fair one, if the evidence was altogether reliable and the sentence unanimous, I should shoot every man jack of them whether it were a case of five or five hundred and think no more about it.

"It's a horrible thing to have to do, horrible, horrible," he kept saying, and in that frame of mind I left him. If my memory serves me he shot two out of the five.

When I fell ill he was incessantly asking after me and expressed great concern, and I am sure felt it, until he suddenly required to send me on one of my eternal long journeys, and then he entirely changed and said he had no use for sick men.

Possibly owing to his being a sapper Kitchener never seemed to me to attach importance to regimental *esprit de corps*. He said to me more than once, "One man with a gun is as good as another." Later on General Kelly very greatly improved matters, but when I first began to travel all over the country the arrangements were amazing. One railway station guard would be composed of Highlanders, the next of dismounted cavalry, another of Guards, and then again rifles or gunners, and so on for hundreds of miles. How connexion could be maintained between detachments and their units I cannot say. I can only repeat that the whole thing was amazing.

Nor did Kitchener seem to attach much importance to the distinction between soldiers and civilians. On one occasion he asked me to go to an outlying camp and parade a regiment of irregulars and count them, as he felt sure the C.O. was drawing pay for men who did not exist. He seemed quite surprised when I demurred at

parading troops. Some of the irregular units were first-rate but some were very bad, and I asked Kitchener why he kept and paid the latter. "I know what they are, but, you see, they bolt directly the Boers get near them and then I know where the Boers are." An all-sufficient answer.

I write of Kitchener as I knew him (and well) in South Africa and in India. I saw but little of him in England, but he seemed to me to have undergone just the change indicated in Lord Esher's iconoclastic book.

London was his Capua, as it had been Buller's.

No doubt he had faults; possibly great ones. Who has not? Even so, I defy anyone who had much experience of Kitchener not to generate a hero-worship for him.

As I have on more than one occasion in my "Letters to Nobody" written with considerable frankness of him, I venture to quote the following words from a letter from Pretoria which I addressed to Lord Knollys in May, 1901, in regard to Lord Kitchener.

I knew Lord Kitchener only very slightly before I came out, and I confess to having felt some anxiety as to how we should hit it off. From the first moment I have received from him nothing but kindness and consideration, and I have found it a real pleasure to work with a man of his great capacity, administrative ability and devotion to the public interest. His capacity for work is quite extraordinary, and, as he possesses an iron constitution, he is no doubt a little apt to be impatient with men incapable of grappling rapidly and successfully with heavy work or constitutionally unable to stand a prolonged strain.

It is, perhaps, attributable to this that he has the reputation of being a hard task-master.

My own experience has been the opposite.

Neither in South Africa nor in India did I ever have reason to modify my opinion of him.

It had always been well rubbed into me that the Army Regulations, being drafted by civilians, possessed every sort of objectionable feature and were couched in language which conveyed no meaning to soldiers. I quite looked forward to the vast improvement I expected to find in the field, where I was the solitary civilian. The first military regulation I came across related to the watering of horses. It began: "The equine stomach is small and requires frequent filling," and then went on to say in ornate but quasi-unintelligible language what has been said more briefly: that you can take a horse to water but you cannot make him drink.

I had a gruesome experience near De Aar junction on my way to Johannesburg, to which place Kitchener had sent me to look for rolling stock! I had telegraphed to the Railway Staff Officer to hold up the train till I arrived. No one but myself was travelling and only a weekly train just then went to Johannesburg. When I reached the junction I found the train had started. I was furious and asked the sergeant of the picket where the Railway Staff Officer was, meaning to give the latter a piece of my mind. The sergeant pointed to a squad of men in the distance and said, "There he is, they are bringing him in. He's in two bits," and he was. A Boer mine had exploded under his carriage and literally

cut him in two. Had the train waited for me I should have been seated beside him.

In Pretoria I fell dangerously ill of dysentery, and I was later on shown the spot where they meant to bed me out; but I got over it, thanks to a Boer who considered himself under an obligation to me. He came to me and said, "You are going to die."

I said, "I know it."

"Do you wish to die?" he said.

"I am too ill to care either way," I replied.

"If you will promise not to let any English doctor come near you again I will save your life."

I agreed, and he gave me the white of a raw egg every hour for thirty-six hours, during which he would not allow me to swallow anything else, not even a drop of water. I suffered agonies of thirst, but the result was a complete cure and I have never had the least return of the malady, not even in India, although the medical board told me when I was going out that I was sure to have a recurrence and might possibly die of it. I refer to my illness solely to place on record a remedy which, in my case at any rate, proved entirely successful.

I was much taken with Natal and the Natalians, but the Transvaal and Cape Colony did not appeal to me.

I made no secret of my entire disbelief in Mr. Chamberlain's anticipation that the Transvaal would prove a suitable and successful Colony for young English farmers. He heard that I was expressing my disbelief somewhat freely and was very angry. He asked me to call on him at the Colonial Office, and when I did so he attempted to sweep the carpet with me. I at

once reminded him that I owed him no allegiance, and that if he had fault to find he should communicate with my chief. He was very angry, and in due course visited on me a personal animosity unworthy of him. I received the impression that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had, at any rate, one fault—he was *rancunier*.

It was on board ship when returning from South Africa that I first met Cecil Rhodes. I received the impression that he was a brilliant man of immeasurable ambition and absolutely unscrupulous as to the methods he adopted to give effect to it. I saw something of him afterwards in London, and in the above connexion he seemed to me absolutely devoid of moral sense. The last time I met him was when I dined with him alone at the Burlington Hotel in Cork Street. He kept me up till very late talking the whole time about himself. As I was leaving he said, "Now you know all about me, what do you think of me?" I answered him in very much the words I have written above. He seemed to like my answer and chuckled over it.

LETTER XI

GIBRALTAR

HERE again the admirable working of the epistolary construction which I have adopted becomes apparent.

This letter introduces to you a subject which I warn you is nauseous and not usually dealt with except in medical works or those dealing with sociology.

If Somebody wears a petticoat my warning will immediately induce a desire to read what follows, and that is just what I wish; but my conscience will be clear of having left you unwarned.

In 1897 the Grenadier Guards were sent to Gibraltar and constituted part of its garrison. This led to the condition of the Rock coming into the limelight, and criticism in Parliament and the Press became fast and furious. To pacify both, the Government appointed a mixed Military, Naval and Colonial Committee, of which I was appointed chairman, to consider what measures should be adopted to improve the general condition of "the City, Garrison and Territory of Gibraltar."

This involved a laborious investigation *in situ,* as we were instructed to consider and advise as to diversions of thoroughfares, improvement of barracks, provision of accommodation for married officers, the sale of liquor,

regaining Government property in native hands, and last, but in no sense least, what regulations should be made for the diminution of venereal disease.

Our recommendations in regard to the last item need not be dwelt upon, but I may say that they were adopted and somewhat ameliorated the state of affairs prevailing.

The evidence before the committee clearly proved that venereal disease was so prevalent at Gibraltar and was of so virulent a form as seriously to impair the efficiency of the naval and military forces there stationed. It constituted a grave danger to the army and was a source of great suffering not only to young soldiers and sailors, to whom the State stands almost *in loco parentis,* but also to the unfortunate women concerned. Evidence was given that over fifty per cent. of the soldiers in hospital were under treatment for venereal, and that batteries were unworkable, ships undermanned and regiments decimated owing to the number of men suffering from such disease or its after-effects. The evidence showed also that venereal was very prevalent amongst the natives and that many of the "unfortunates" were in a terrible state of suffering.

I was told that just before our arrival a woman so horribly diseased that she was not expected to live had, on hearing that the fleet had arrived, got out of her bed in the hospital, dressed and left "because the sailor lads had arrived," and to the tender care of this foul mass of corruption our young sailors were handed.

It was in the hope of preventing such cases as this that the War Office tried, and failed, to induce the

Government to pass the Detention in Hospitals Bill.

The Contagious Diseases Acts were, thanks to the active and sustained efforts of a section of the clergy and what was irreverently termed the "shrieking sisterhood," repealed in April, 1886.

I concede that the Acts were not satisfactory either in their provisions or their application and that they needed amendment. I must admit, also, that the medical authorities, in their desire to maintain them, dealt most injudiciously with the statistics relating to venereal disease.

But neither conditions can be held to justify the decision of the Government to wash their hands of the whole question, and to thus turn over the military, naval and civil youth of the country to prostitutes reeking with disease.

In 1883 Lord Hartington had introduced the Detention in Hospitals Bill, a mild measure empowering Certified Hospitals Authorities to detain, till cured, patients found to be suffering from venereal; but the Cabinet, fearing a not improbable defeat in the House of Commons, decided not to move in the matter, and the Bill was withdrawn.

Hobart (now Sir Robert) was overwhelmed with Parliamentary work—work in regard to which he was a past-master—and thus it came to pass that I was sidetracked on to the venereal diseases rails. I became absorbed in the work and it had an excellent effect on me. I was very hard-working but inclined, none the less, to "go the pace," and the horrors I waded in up

to my neck steadied me, and led me to give a prolonged study abroad and at home to the question of sexual intercourse and the State regulation of vice.

But a few years ago I should not have ventured to write freely on this subject, but a great change has operated since the war, and men, and, thank God, women, are now willing to consider and discuss a scourge which has undermined and is undermining our race and which places upon the innocent the burden of the sin of the guilty. Fanatics assure us that their God in His wrath will visit the sins of the fathers and mothers on their children up to the third and fourth generation of those that hate Him. I make them a present of their God of hatred and vengeance and I will cling to my God of mercy and of love.

Possibly it was my connexion with this question which led to my being designated to examine the situation in Gibraltar.

I determined to study the working of the Police des Mœurs in France and devoted my leave to doing so. The difficulty lay in the fact that no one but the French officers concerned with the administration was allowed to enter St. Lazare prison-hospital, and only high police officials had ever been accorded permission to study therein the operation of the laws based on State recognition of vice.

I anticipated insuperable difficulty, but I met with little, thanks to the method I adopted. I studiously avoided asking aid of either our Foreign Office or our Paris Embassy. Experience had taught me that in all circumstances that is the way "how not to do it." I

went straight to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs in Paris and appealed to him as a colleague, with the result that I was permitted an experience certainly up to that time unknown to any Englishman.

I was allowed to devote twenty-four hours to watching the operation of the law as carried out by the Police des Mœurs and the authorities of St. Lazare. I went the whole round, and a painful experience it was. I watched the pouncing upon and interning of soliciting prostitutes, the collection of diseased women in *maisons de tolérance* and the arrest of similar women in private apartments. I followed the van which took them to St. Lazare and passed the whole day there. St. Lazare is divided (I write of it as it then was) into two sections —the prison and the hospital. To the first are relegated women convicted of "offences against morality," to the second women found to be suffering from venereal disease but innocent of any breach of the law.

The police officers, considering the somewhat degrading nature of their duties, discharge them humanely and both sections of St. Lazare are administered quite admirably. Two things struck me especially: the internal beauty of the building, which contains a magnificent court with plants and, I think, one or two trees, about which the inmates are allowed to take exercise, and the kindly and efficient nursing by the Sisters of Mercy attached to the institution. I was struck also by the absence of severe cases.

Much the same system obtains in all Latin countries, but in none that I have visited is it carried out to such

perfection as in Paris. No inmate of a *maison de tolérance* is allowed to go out of it, but one pathetic exception is made. All who wish to do so are allowed to visit their relatives' graves on the days of All Saints and All Souls.

All that I have written applies to what I saw many long years ago. Much may be changed since then.

I do not know what law obtains in Germany at the present time, but I can well conceive that to the orderly and disciplined character of the Germans such a system might appeal. To the Latin races it certainly does. They look to the Government to protect them from most things, and I do not think that State regulation of vice in the least degree shocks their moral sense.

To the English the State recognition of vice is undoubtedly abhorrent, and I do not regret it. Any attempt to introduce it would fail; there can be no two opinions on that point. But if the State recognition of vice is unacceptable there is no reason why the State recognition of disease should be, and that is all some of us ask for.

It is rather to point a moral than to adorn a tale that I have rendered an account of the appalling result of a combination of the action of fanatics, the inaction of a Government and the deadweight of public indifference.

In the hope that it may tend to awaken where it has hitherto slumbered an interest in this question, of vital importance to our people, I have presumed to dwell on a subject unsavoury and repellent, I admit, but one which no right-minded man or woman is justified in ignoring.

After we had completed our inquiry in Gibraltar I first ran over to Tangier in a torpedo-boat, and afterwards travelled to Paris, visiting *en route* all the principal towns of Spain and putting up at the Embassy in Madrid.

I found Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who was not in good health, very fussy and much exercised because, he said, the Spanish Ministry were convinced that I had been sent by the War Office to Gibraltar with "ulterior motives," whatever that might mean. He added that he had asked most of the Ministers to dinner next night so that I might reassure them. I tried to get out of it, but I had to attend, and I at once realized that one or two of the eminent guests were distinctly suspicious and somewhat unfriendly. I had no desire to be mixed up in a wrangle with our Foreign Office, so I at once rushed into a long and emotional exposition of my indignation at the horrible traffic in young peasant girls which I had discovered and uncovered at Gibraltar. I kept it up all the evening and pushed aside all attempts at discussing anything else. I could see that they put me down for an hysterical idiot, and so far as I know nothing more was heard of the "ulterior motives."

Sir Henry Wolff was for over twenty years an intimate and kind friend, and I treasure two of his sayings, both of which appeal to me. One was, "Life would be bearable but for its music" (Lady Wolff was overwhelmingly musical); the other was, "I don't mind an ass, and I can put up with a damned ass; but what I cannot stand is a gloomy ass."

At one time I used to see a good deal of two of the

members of the Fourth Party. Randolph Churchill and Drummond Wolff. The first appeared to me to be the real thorn in the side of the Government, the second was the arch intriguer of the party. So far as I could make out Mr. Balfour was the power before the Speaker's throne, and Gorst the family solicitor of the quartette.

It used to afford me infinite amusement to sit and listen to the discussions which took place between Drummond Wolff and Churchill. The two seemed to me to be quite as likely to upset the Fourth Party as to embarrass the Government. But then I am not a politician. If I were I should doubtless do the recognized thing, devote all my energies to upsetting the other side and damn the consequences.

LETTER XII

MAYONNAISE

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETINGS—SIR HENRY BRACKENBURY—LORD FISHER—OFFICIAL MINUTES—RESIGNATIONS—POLICE MUTINY—THE LABOUR MEMBERS—THE PRESS—MY MILITARY COLLEAGUES

IN the days when commanders-in-chief flourished, the equivalent of an "Army Council" was "A Secretary of State's meeting," which was attended by all the great military heads of departments, in addition to the Secretary of State, who presided, and the Commander-in-Chief who faced him as vice-president.

The Under-Secretaries of State and the principal private secretary of the Secretary of State were, as a rule, the only civilians present. The last-named individual sat apart at a small table and was "in attendance." He was used as a sort of "runner" when any papers or individuals had to be obtained at short notice, and was the chiel taking notes in behalf of the Minister.

The decisions were recorded by the Permanent Under-Secretary of State who, in Sir Ralph Thompson's and Lord Haliburton's time, also acted as peacemaker. During his short tenure of that office Sir Ralph Knox, a brilliantly clever man but quite unable to bear fools gladly, acted as a firebrand when things were going smoothly.

When I became private secretary I attended these meetings, and very interesting was the experience. It was also very illuminating as regards the character and capacity or otherwise of those present. Also it was at times, to anyone endowed with a sense of humour, intensely amusing.

On one occasion a meeting was in progress when an excited ordnance officer dashed into the room and handed the Director-General a lurid report about an explosion in the Hales Rockets' store at Woolwich. According to the grossly exaggerated account Woolwich was in flames and the dead numbered hundreds if not thousands. Everyone was aghast, and at that very moment a huge trophy composed of helmets, cuirasses, rifles, swords and lances got detached from the wall and crashed on to the floor. Except the Secretary of State and the Duke, every soul jumped up and made a bolt for the door.—Kindly note that all this did actually occur.

The meetings were very solemn affairs, and I have known a man almost unable to utter a sentence until accustomed to the solemnity. On one occasion, a memorable one, when the decision to be taken was whether the Nile or the Suakim Berber route to Khartoum should be adopted, the recently appointed Quartermaster-General, a gallant and distinguished officer, was so awed that, on being asked in his turn what he had to say, merely murmured in an undertone, "Camels' saddles should not be made of green wood."

A battle royal raged over the selection of the Staff

Officers who were to accompany Lord Wolseley to Egypt during the Nile campaign. Constitutionally the right of selection was vested in the Duke of Cambridge as the Commander-in-Chief. Actually the selection, it was recognized by the Cabinet, should rest with the man who was to command the expeditionary force. Be that as it may, the man who meant to make the selection was Wolseley, and the fat was in the fire.

Time pressed and the "rows" were incessant. At last Wolseley presented a list, like a pistol at the head of the Government, and said, "That, or I don't go."

The eventual solution savoured of sharp practice, but I suppose it was justified. The dear old Duke was encouraged to go to Newmarket, and as soon as he was safely started a summons to attend the Secretary of State's meeting was issued and the list was "passed." I remember the Secretary of State racing off to obtain the Queen's approval before the Duke could get back to London.

One of my cronies at the War Office was Sir Henry Brackenbury. I never remember a shadow coming between us. Indeed, we were not only fast friends but we played up to each other officially. He was head of the Intelligence, and equally excellent in verbal as in written exposition of military policy.

I have known but three soldiers who were first-class administrators. He was one. The other two were Buller and "Jack" Cowans. I have known, also, a great number of thundering bad ones.

Whenever I went abroad Brackenbury generally

asked me to what he called "Search the Intelligence Gospel."

For some unknown reason he held me to be a judge of character, and on one occasion asked me to obtain an interview with Boulanger, whom he had never met and who was at that time a "dark horse," and to report my opinion of him. Boulanger in those days used to hold a quasi-regal reception daily. That and my official connexion with the War Office readily obtained for me the desired meeting. As I entered the room he did what is indicative of a feeble intelligence. He took a chair, put it against and with its back to the window and sat on it. He placed another exactly opposite the first for me. It is an eighteenth-century diplomatic trick as foolish as it is futile. If you attach any importance to an interview get your man to sit at right angles to the light and do the same yourself.

Boulanger began at once trying to get out of me exactly what troops we then had in Egypt. As full details were to be found in the Army List, price half-a-crown, I answered him in detail. His manner indicated that he set me down for a poor fool, and he answered very frankly one or two questions I wanted to be enlightened upon.

I came to three conclusions during my three days' stay in Paris. First, that Boulanger was a charlatan. Second, that the French Cabinet were mortally afraid of him. Third, that, apart from a noisy street crowd, the French people never took him seriously. Subsequent events may be held to have justified the conclusions. His appearance was distinctly attractive, but he inces-

santly played to the gallery and was a great *poseur*. I think that the French army as a whole viewed him with suspicion.

Many generals were curious specimens in my youthful days. I well remember a French cavalry general pointing to a compass which was appended to my watch-chain and remarking, "*Comment vous croyez a ces bétises la!*" But the race is not quite extinct. I recently met a young brigadier who talked rather wildly about Government by the bullet. I suggested that he might do well to read Machiavelli. "Makky who?" he asked. "Machiavelli," I repeated. "Never heard of him," said my brigadier. "Was he one of the crowd with Plumer in Italy?"

I was, of course, brought into contact with most of the members of the Board of Admiralty during a long series of years, and I can claim kind and valued friends amongst them; but the one I have been most intimate with was Fisher, and this was owing to our appointment to a committee, of which we alone were the component parts, to speed up the manufacture of big guns for the navy.

It seems to be my fate and doubtless my fault generally to cement a friendship by means of a right royal row. On one occasion we agreed to make a certain recommendation. Mine went to the War Office and Fisher sent his to the Admiralty. His was the exact opposite of what we had agreed upon and threw quite unmerited blame on Woolwich. I went to Fisher and expressed my opinion of him in what poor Buller used to term good Saxon-English. He ended by admitting

that he had not run straight. From that day till he died he was absolutely straight with me and a loyal friend as well.

Frequently on my birthday Fisher sent me a few lines of good wishes. I came across one such letter from him quite recently when tearing up papers—a melancholy occupation preparatory to a final exit. The letter ran: "God bless you and to hell with everyone else." He had a mania for using bad language, but I am sure he meant nothing by it.

He was, I think, quite unaware of the pain he sometimes caused. On one occasion I travelled up from Southampton with Fisher. The only other occupant of the carriage was an Anglican bishop. Without the smallest provocation Fisher began to dilate on the entire lack of discipline in the Church of England, and to dwell with enthusiasm on the creed of the Unitarians. When we stopped at Basingstoke the poor bishop, although booked for London, could stand it no longer and got out. I asked Fisher what on earth he meant by being so gratuitously offensive, and the reply I got was: "Didn't you see what beastly legs he had got?"

When Fisher began plunging about in the Press with letters full of meaningless bad language I tried to train him off it, realizing that it was doing him harm. Knowing my man, I wrote jestingly suggesting that he should strengthen his style. I added: "Cannot you find some more suitable word than damn, of which everyone is getting weary?" In reply I received a telegram containing the single word, "Assouan." It took me a

minute or two to realize that Assouan is the biggest dam in the world.

He was a bad enemy but a very true friend.

I will spare you the reams I could cover in regard to the queer official minutes which have come before me, but there are one or two which are worthy of record.

I saw one at the War Office which closed a voluminous dissertation to which all the military authorities had contributed. It was by Lord Palmerston: "What damned nonsense.—P."

Lord Hartington thus closed a collection of drivelling and very lengthy minutes as to what cheese should be issued to the troops: "I don't like cheese.—H."

The most delightful "note" I came across in India was one by Lord Curzon. The Viceroy had addressed a tart rebuke to a member of his council who was as lazy as they make them. The unfortunate man wrote pages of apology and explanation, ending: "I wish His Excellency could see my study crowded almost to the ceiling with official papers."

Curzon was on him like a stoat on a rabbit. "It would give His Excellency infinitely greater pleasure to see the honourable member in his study dealing with his papers."

I have known of but two official documents which produced a really lightening effect, and in each case they were the literary effort of a recently joined subordinate.

One commenced a précis of a big bundle of papers. "This case was simple enough till the congenital idiot

who wrote the last minute and whose signature is illegible . . ." The "congenital idiot" was a Permanent Under-Secretary of State and one of the ablest and most powerful officials of his day.

The other was a letter addressed to a firm who had given incessant trouble and who would retain documents which they had incessantly been called upon to return. It ran :

"GENTLEMEN,—If you do not send me immediately the documents in question I shall do something which will astonish you." *Voilá tout.*

The official English in my early days was often appalling. My own immediate chief in the first office I served in wrote a letter to the Treasury commencing : "I think the *itch* is with the Treasury, not the less notwithstanding I will again look at it."

The Treasury sent him an assurance that all the officers of that department were in perfect health.

Few can realize the appalling length and futility which characterized the minutes written during the long period of peace after the Crimean War. I have perused a fair-sized volume of correspondence between the Admiralty and the War Office which dealt with an unseemly squabble between the officer commanding troops in a West India island and the captain of a man-of-war stationed there as to whose wife should take precedence at the communion table!

In India, on the other hand, quite a different style prevails. Minutes are termed Notes, and the writers of them devote their energies to dancing minuets on paper. The longer, the more ornate and, above all, the more

abject the phraseology the better. No one thinks. They only "venture to think," an expression which used to lash Mr. Speaker Brand into fury. "If you venture to think, you think," he used to say.

Again, no one ever writes "it rained," but "there had been humidity in the air and the precipitation took the form of rain." One of the most delicious of notes began :

"I most respectfully submit these views, not in the belief that they are of any value nor with the conviction that they will prove acceptable, but rather in the hope that they may produce the exactly opposite resultant."

I commend the formula to the League of Nations.

Whether a public servant of the Crown when at the head of a department should resign if he differs altogether from the member of the Government who is his chief is a point so often and so hotly discussed that I presume to indicate the rule laid down for myself. In such circumstances, in my opinion, it would clearly be my duty to represent with the utmost insistence, consistent with respect, the gravity of the danger involved in my Secretary of State's proposed action and even to return to the charge if a legitimate opportunity offered. When, however, the Government decision has become final it would be equally my clear duty to carry it out, not only to the very best of my ability but with the utmost loyalty, and especially with *cordiality*.

Only one of two reasons justifies resignation. Inability to discharge satisfactorily, owing to ill-health or other cause, the duties entrusted to one or on a point

involving one's honour. I have resigned twice in my life. Once when I was ordered to take action which I was unable to reconcile with honesty, and once when I had earned my pension and retired.

I am glad to say that in the first case the full purport of the effect of the order had not been realized, and its withdrawal synchronized with my resignation—the donkey lay down with the mule.

Accidents will take place even in the best regulated families, and trouble will occur even in the best, the most reliable and the most respected of forces.

One evening in July, 1890, I was sent for in hot haste to meet my Secretary of State at the Horse Guards, of all places. On arrival I was taken in charge by a colossal Lifeguardsman and conducted to the officers' room. They dined at St. James's, so it could hardly be called a mess-room. In it I found seated disconsolately at a table and almost in the dark Mr. Stanhope and the Home Secretary. The Chief Commissioner of Police walked out as I walked in. They looked, and I am quite sure were, frightened out of their wits. They informed me that the Bow Street Division of the Metropolitan Police had mutinied, that great trouble was anticipated, and instructed me to "find someone and tell him to send a battalion of Guards at once to Bow Street." I looked from one to the other and nearly burst out laughing. I could not conceive that they were in earnest. But they were, and in very deadly earnest, so off I went.

I happened to know that Colonel Maitland Crighton

was Field Officer in Brigade Waiting, and I knew also that he was not very well, so I counted on finding him at home. I duly found him, told him what had happened, and asked him to move a battalion to Bow Street. He flatly and quite rightly declined to do anything of the kind without a written order. I stepped up to his writing-table and wrote on a sheet of notepaper: "I am authorized by the Secretary of State for War to request you at once to send a battalion of foot-guards to Bow Street to maintain order there," and I appended my signature. To my great surprise he was quite satisfied, and in an incredibly short time the Chelsea battalion was on its way to Bow Street at the double. When it got there things had quieted down and the Guards went home to roost.

Next day Wolseley not only approved my action but expressed his approval officially, so all was well which ended well, but I have often wondered what would have happened to me if it had ended badly. No doubt I was to blame in acting thus "on my own," but I think it will be conceded that equal blame attached to the Cabinet Ministers who deliberately allowed the full responsibility to rest on a young official occupying the subordinate position of private secretary.

My relations with the Press have always been perfectly cordial, but I was brought up in the school which held that all public servants should keep pressmen at arm's length—and I have always avoided any approach to intimacy with pressmen as a rule. I have no desire to lay down laws for others, but the present-day rela-

tions between Cabinet Ministers and their private secretaries and the Press fill me with amazement, and I must add shock me.

I have, of course, often had to communicate by order confidential information to the newspapers with conditions as to time and terms of publication, and I have never known one single instance in which such conditions were not scrupulously and honourably observed.

A newspaper of a sort once alluded to me as a "blood-sucking vampire," but I gratefully acknowledge the often far too generous terms in which they have dealt with me.

I remember a notable instance of the upright attitude of an editor of great distinction. Wolseley had deliberately sent to the newspapers a communiqué stating what his movements would be in regard to the Egyptian campaign, with the intention of deceiving the enemy. The information was important and had all the appearance of being genuine. Mr. Mudford, the editor of the *Standard,* came to my house at midnight with the communiqué, which he returned to me, saying that he felt sure it must have been issued by mistake and that he would not think of publishing it as it would be giving away Lord Wolseley's plans.

In India as well as in England I have never once had to deal with a pressman who did not prove to be absolutely honourable in his relations with public departments. I write this certainly not patronizingly but very gratefully.

The greatest compliment ever paid me came from a

pressman of standing. He said: "We none of us like you but we all respect you."

In two, especially, of the several positions which I have occupied at the War Office it was often difficult for me to avoid running counter to the military views and feelings of the moment. As Director-General of Army Finance it was clearly my duty to insist on a shilling being sufficient when it could be made to produce the same result as half-a-crown. Also I had to come down heavily on lack of candour or carelessness in accounting for military expenditure. All this, in the nature of things, could not conduce to popularity, but the baseless charge which has once or twice been brought against me of deliberately "starving the army" is as ridiculous as it is unfounded. In point of fact Chancellors of the Exchequer and, what matters more, the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons twice rebuked me for framing the Army Votes at a higher figure than was necessary.

I come of a long line of soldiers and have always felt a genuine reverence for the army, and that influenced my financial work at the War Office if anything did. But I was trained in the Gladstonian school of Imperial finance and have always loathed extravagance and any maladministration of public funds, and no doubt this tended to make my minutes somewhat pungent at times.

When private secretary I was constantly employed in pricking bubbles and pointing out the weak spots in military "adventures," from the parliamentary point of

view. It was my duty towards the Secretary of State to do so, but the result could not but be distasteful to those who blew the bubbles or who advocated the adventures.

I went out a great deal in London, and no doubt the fact that I met the Headquarters Staff incessantly at dinner and at clubs to which we both belonged helped me a great deal, but the personal equation counts for much and I am very sensible of great faults of temper and temperament; besides this, it would be affectation on my part to ignore that for many years my position at the War Office was an unusually strong one.

I may be living in a fool's paradise, but I do not believe that I am. I believe that the highest officers of the army now living and with whom I was for so many years in daily association owe me no grudge—certainly I have received from every one of them the greatest kindness and consideration. From their dead predecessors I was the recipient of warm friendship, long outlasting our official relations. To me it all appears as an outstanding tribute to the goodness of heart, to the spirit of good-fellowship and, above all, to that conspicuous sense of justice which have always characterized British officers.

LETTER XIII

THREE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

THE DUKE—LORD WOLSELEY—LORD ROBERTS

I HAVE been associated at the War Office with the three last commanders-in-chief. I became, if it be proper to use the term, an intimate of the Duke of Cambridge.

The room of the private secretary to the Secretary of State was situate between those of the War Minister and the commander-in-chief, and this no doubt led to my getting to know the Duke so well, for he came through my room more than once on almost every working day of the year. As he was kindly, chatty and freer from "starch" than anyone living, I became very intimate with him. I think he liked me. For him I entertained the warmest affection and felt his death acutely. He asked me to dine at Gloucester House very shortly before his death; it was, alas! to wish me "good-bye." Only his devoted son Augustus, General Dillon and myself were present. He was nearly blind and suffering, if not pain, excessive discomfort, both of which infirmities he bore with exemplary patience.

The "dear old Duke," as we always called him, was at times a little tempestuous, but his disposition was a singularly lovable one, and all those who enjoyed his intimacy were absolutely devoted to him. It really was

impossible not to love him. He did everything thoroughly, swearing included, but I never heard him use a really foul word. The three best outbursts I had the privilege of listening to were once when Sir Reginald Gipps, his military secretary, announced his engagement. The Duke furiously resented any of his staff getting married. After Gipps, who was well on in middle age, had broken the news to him there was an ominous silence. Then the Duke roared at him, with trimmings, "Paralysis, my dear Gipps, paralysis! That is what you will come to." (He lived to an advanced age and had two fine children.)

The second occasion on which the atmosphere became super-heated was when I was showing the Duke a new pattern magazine rifle. The ejector was new and powerful, and the dummy cartridge struck the Duke, who was leaning over me, on the cheek.

I am afraid he got a black eye. I certainly got both mine thoroughly well damned.

The third time we were treated to fireworks was when an attic of the War Office caught fire. Some fool, instead of letting the wretched old place burn down, raised an alarm, and a retired sergeant of the Guards, who rejoiced in the high-sounding name of "firemaster," turned on the water-hose. As soon as he heard of the fire the Duke, who was corpulent and gouty but who was the personification of pluck, insisted on climbing up a breakneck corkscrew staircase (known as Nell Gwynn's staircase, because it led to rooms supposed to have been occupied by her) to assist in extinguishing the fire. The sergeant was so astonished

at finding himself *nez-à-nez* with His Royal Highness that he turned the hose full on to the royal waistcoat. There were two fires burning for a while. But the Duke's tempers were very short-lived, and he always tried to make one forget them and always succeeded.

The Duke's greatest charm lay in the fact that he was, above all things, such a thorough gentleman. Sometimes, when after long resistance the Duke had acquiesced in some hated reform, I have known a War Minister apprehensive lest the reform should be intentionally spoilt by those who had opposed it. I always said, "Have no fear; the Duke never goes back on his word, and he will carry out the reform with absolute loyalty." And he always did.

I do not myself think that full justice has ever been done to the service rendered by the Duke of Cambridge to the army of his day. His high sense of honour, his punctilious regard for the truth (I, at any rate, never knew him swerve from it), his devotion to his duties, his hatred of anything mean or underhand, his quite evident sincerity and his readiness to forgive, gave a priceless tone to the army which loved him, and which for many, many years looked to him for example and guidance. He dearly loved a little job, but, like the over-quoted baby, it was always a very little one.

He has been charged with harshness, but the exact opposite is the case. He was too lenient, and it was difficult to induce him to break a rascal who richly deserved it. He hated the scandal involved.

When leaving the War Office, on taking up my first staff appointment, his farewell to me might have been

that of a father. I asked him if he wished me to do anything for him, and he replied, "Yes, always oppose what they propose." "They" meant the Liberal Government.

Of Wolseley it is difficult for me to write, as he was for years a close and affectionate friend, whose death caused me profound grief. Both at Greenwich and at Glynde I was often his guest, and at all times he was a true and constant friend.

I was greatly attached also to Lady Wolseley, and I know nothing more touching than their affection for each other. It was all-absorbing.

He was really indifferent to his own advancement and single-minded in his intense devotion to the army, which he served so unflinchingly and so successfully. All he really cared for in life was to turn it into an absolutely efficient machine.

He was a fighter, not only as a soldier but as a reformer and as an administrator. He was very impatient of purely obstructive tactics and peppery at times, but I never once heard him swear. In character he was more like a clever, inquiring, lovable child than anything else.

One of my most delightful experiences was going over Flodden field with Lord Wolseley. He reconstructed the whole of the fighting so perfectly that I seemed to see the battle progressing, and his eager, schoolboy-like enthusiasm over it all was a very joy. Curiously enough the late Duke of Norfolk, who drew a perpetual pension for the good service rendered by his

ancestor during the battle of Flodden, accompanied us, as did, I think, Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate, and the Hon. Charles Lawrence, whose guests we all were.

Wolseley was very hospitable and very open-handed. On one occasion when I dined with him at the Ranger's House I remarked on the excellence of his cigars. I was driven to the station, and was distressed when I got there at being handed a box of one hundred by the footman. The box bore written on it, "With W.'s love." It was quite dangerous to admire anything in their house, for either he or Lady Wolseley would at once say, "Would you like to have it?" or "You shall have one like it." After that I had better add that I never carried away anything beyond the box of cigars and a copy of the "Story of a Soldier's Life." Another delightful day I had with him was in the museum in Dublin when I was his guest at the hospital. He was a true Irishman, and got very excited over the Irish treasures as he pointed them out.

As has been stated by Gosse in his exquisite little sketch, Wolseley was a voracious reader, but he bolted his reading just as Napoleon bolted his food. If Napoleon had eaten slowly he might have escaped a premature death from cancer of the stomach. If Wolseley had read slowly he might have become one of the cultured men of his day.

The fact is, no man who has to fight his way up in life *unaided* can spare the time to do anything slowly. Perhaps that is why I have decayed so quickly.

Incidentally I may mention that I devilled for Brackenbury, although it was not in any way part of my duty to do so, when he and Wolseley (for whom

Coleridge Grove devilled) prepared for the Cabinet their famous memorandum which completely knocked out the Channel tunnel scheme.

It was as astounding as it was exasperating to hear Wolseley year in year out virulently abused by men of his own cloth, and to hear attributed to him, without the smallest justification, articles in newspapers and reviews with which he had no sort of connexion. Had he been young and at his best in 1914 things might have gone very differently.

When Lord Roberts came to the War Office as commander-in-chief I had migrated from my old room to that of the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, that being the appointment I then held. On this account I saw little of him. He viewed me with considerable suspicion, knowing me to have been a Wolseleyite, and I rather resented his attitude, which was that of one specially selected by Providence to clean out an extra foul Augean stable. Later on, when we got to know each other well, we got on famously, and he most courteously went out of his way on my return from India to call on me, and expressed great pleasure at my attitude towards Indians during my tenure of office as Finance Minister.

We once fell foul of each other at the War Office, and it was over a tabby cat.

The housekeeper at the War Office possessed a very fine and most attractive tabby cat. I loved cats as much as Roberts abhorred them. The cat was as usual coming up to my room at tea-time to get his saucer of milk, when unfortunately Bobs nearly fell over him on

the stairs. He issued orders for the immediate execution of the cat. The first I heard of it was from the keeper, who burst into my room in hysterics. It so happened that all that appertained to the building and to the minor establishment came under my control, and I immediately cancelled Lord Roberts' orders, and told one of his staff that the order should not have been issued. In a few moments I got a polite message from Bobs asking me to "look in upon him." We were frigidly polite to each other and it ended in a compromise. He was not to interfere with what came within my jurisdiction, and I undertook that the cat should never come up from the basement.

When Roberts, after the celebrated blue envelope incident, left the War Office for ever I made a point of accompanying him to the door of his carriage. I happened to look up when I got to the bottom of the stairs, and there I saw the cat looking down between the banisters with the most "Cheshire cat" grin on his face I ever saw.

It fell to my lot *motu proprio* to escort to the front door the three commanders-in-chief when they left the War Office for the last time. In each case they were accompanied by one only of their staff; in each case they were treated with very scant courtesy by those who took over. Roberts was angry, Wolseley was depressed, and the dear Duke greatly upset.

There was something intensely pathetic in the manner in which the three men, who had up to the day of their departure wielded so much power and authority in that building, left it never to return.

LETTER XIV

THE BIG THREE

MR. GLADSTONE—LORD SALISBURY—LORD BEACONSFIELD

LET me tell you how I once met three great statesmen under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

I have, of course, often met them at official and social gatherings, and I have even had the honour of watching them eat their dinner, but only once have I met Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury with but one other person present. On one occasion the episode lasted three minutes; on the other it extended to three hours.

Madame de Novikoff once asked me to meet Mr. Gladstone at luncheon; a kindly act towards a very young official. She was staying at an hotel in Grosvenor Street, and we lunched in a sitting-room on the ground floor. It was a dark November day, and the gas was on all the time.

I was the first to arrive, and I confess that when Madame de Novikoff told me that no one but Mr. Gladstone was coming I was frightened out of my life. I was quite young. In due course in came the Prime Minister. On introducing me our hostess remarked that I had lived most of my life in Italy and that I spoke Italian quite as well as English.

Mr. Gladstone was cordiality itself and said, "I

anticipate a treat; after luncheon you shall talk Italian to me, and I shall listen to you with genuine satisfaction." The prospect ruined my luncheon, and when that, for me, miserable meal was ended he said, "Sit in that chair, and now for Italian." This must have been about half-past two. When Mr. Gladstone left it was just five. As soon as I sat down he began to walk round and round the room quoting the Italian classics and discussing (occasionally in Italian, correct but somewhat Dantesque) every conceivable subject from olive groves to the Pope. He waved his arms, his tie got under his ear, his feet kicked footstools out of his way, his hands pushed aside the furniture, and round and round the great man strode, his torrential discourse never ceasing and his enthusiasm never abating. I was given no chance of uttering one single word from first to last.

It was an experience as remarkable as it was exhausting, but for me it is a very precious recollection.

I used occasionally to take a short holiday at Monte Carlo. I was standing by the entrance to the Casino talking to the janitor, who was rather a friend of mine, when to my amazement Lord Salisbury walked up the steps and advanced to the door meaning, obviously, to enter the Casino. In those days discipline was rigorously enforced at the home of gambling and certain rules had to be observed. One rule was that no one was allowed to enter with his trousers turned up. There was a sound reason for this. Rascals made a practice of pushing a Napoleon to the edge of the table and letting

it slide down their leg into the pocket made by the turned-up trouser. Incessant practice made them perfect performers. Brown shoes or boots were not allowed, and generally the "get up" had to be pretty much what used to be described as "dressy."

No matter how enthusiastically one might admire him, one could not accuse Lord Salisbury of being otherwise than horribly untidy. On this occasion he had on an appalling pair of very baggy flannel trousers, a frock coat, no waistcoat and no tie.

The doorkeeper somewhat rudely held up Lord Salisbury and refused him admittance. "*May poor-quaw,*" asked his lordship quite meekly. "*Parcequ'il faut être décemment mis,*" indignantly replied the man. Lord Salisbury probably did not fully realize what the man meant, for he showed no annoyance and quietly retreated, thus saving the "cart wheel" (five-franc piece) with which possibly he had meant to plunge.

Very different was the attitude of Randolph Churchill, who, on another occasion, was refused admittance because he was wearing ducks. He returned to his hotel in a fury and wrote a letter to the Administration, stating that if he did not at once get a suitable apology he would "have the place shut up before the week was out." And he got the apology.

Lord Beaconsfield I met privately once or twice only, and that was at luncheon at Lady Barrington's. On one occasion a party of Buckinghamshire agriculturists were asked to meet the great man, who quite evidently wished to create a good impression on his

former constituents. The food at 20 Cavendish Square was always superlatively good, but Disraeli refused everything. In positive anguish Lady Barrington asked him if nothing would tempt him. He raised his voice, which of course attracted everyone's attention, and replied: "Thank you, miladi, I will have some bif, the roast bif of old England for me," at which, needless to say, the bucolic mind rejoiced exceedingly.

But he did not always play to the gallery, and he was capable of a very generous impulse at times. Colonel Haig, of Bemersyde, who was at the time in waiting, told me that on one occasion when Mr. Disraeli was summoned to Windsor he arrived late, and, feeling very tired, asked to be allowed to dine with the Household. Only a very few of the Household were present and there could be no question of playing to the gallery.

Lord Alfred Paget asked him to tell them whom he considered the most eloquent man he had ever heard in the House of Commons. The answer came without any hesitation: "Daniel O'Connell was the most eloquent and he was also a perfect gentleman."

Those present appeared to have felt no doubt whatever as to the sincerity of the reply. And it was Dan O'Connell who had called him the lineal descendant of the impenitent thief on the Cross.

LETTER XV

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

LORD HARTINGTON—MR. W. H. SMITH—MR. STANHOPE—SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN—LORD LANSDOWNE—MR. BRODRICK—MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER—LORD HALDANE

WHEN photographic portraiture first became fashionable the favourite size, known as carte de visite, was not larger than a visiting card.

Perhaps you may care to have a "carte de visite" of the several Secretaries of State under whom I have served during nearly half a century of paid service under the Crown. Subsequently I have, off and on, served the Government "free gratis for nothing" up to the present time.

It seemed as though Lord Hartington were fated always to do heavy and unostentatious collar work, uphill. He never seemed to be allowed an easy political trot along a level road, and he was rarely given the chance, no matter how good his work, of coming into the limelight. He seemed destined to bear the burden but never to receive the full reward which was his due. As to his work, I can only speak of what I saw of it at the War Office. It was wholly admirable, but he had a thankless enough task with little glory attaching to it. The policy which he was obliged to lay down for himself was that of filling the ranks of the army which

Mr. Childers had allowed to become depleted by the Tel-el-Kebir campaign. During the Tel-el-Kebir campaign all service was extended, and when the war ended half the army claimed its discharge, and there was precious little army left.

For weary years recruiting was the burning question of the day, and we used to watch the weekly returns as airmen watch the weather reports. Hartington, with great patience and constant application, laid himself out to rebuild the army, and rebuilt it was during his tenure of office, and that was practically the chief feature, not an inspiring one, of his administration.

He was an excellent official outside punctuality and custody of papers. His minutes were admirable as to tone, temper and substance, and they were also very judicial. He wrote good English, and was as courteous on paper as he was rough-mannered off it. He never admitted of arrears, and managed to avoid them himself by working a great deal in the train, but as soon as he had appended his minute he looked to Providence to take charge of the papers.

In that respect he was our despair, for not infrequently they were left in the railway carriage, no matter how confidential. In that connexion an extraordinary coincidence occurred.

He dealt with a very bad case of a "mistake" on the part of a young officer in respect of a signature on a cheque. The boy was bound to be broke. Hartington left the papers in the carriage, and they were found by the very man whom they concerned and who entered the carriage as Hartington left it. All the man had to

do was to destroy the file which contained the incriminating documents and he would thereby have made it almost impossible to carry the matter any farther. Instead of which he brought the papers to the War Office and handed them to Sir Ralph Thompson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War. Hartington insisted on the young man being forgiven, and he turned out a capable and gallant officer. He died a few years afterwards.

In one respect Lord Hartington got the better of the Queen. He insisted against the sternest orders on taking his collie with him when in waiting.

It was Sir Redvers Buller's opinion that Mr. Edward Stanhope was the best War Minister since the days of General Peel. I have often heard Buller express that opinion and attach value to it, because he was no mean judge. I must confess, however, that I know uncommon little about General Peel.

My own opinion, I give it with diffidence and for what it is worth, is that Edward Stanhope's administration ranks with those of Mr. Cardwell and Lord Haldane. Stanhope was the real link between the two. All three rendered service to the army and to the country, not only of excellence but of lasting advantage to the army and of increased security to the Empire. And yet Mr. Stanhope was unpopular as a War Minister with both the House of Commons and the country.

Many reasons conduced to this result. He was a Tory, and a Tory who treads on the toes of prejudice

and long-established convictions is looked upon as more than an iconoclast. He is considered a traitor. It used to be said that Cardwell was baited to death in the House of Commons by the colonels. It may be said that Stanhope was hounded into unpopularity by the military men in the House, and it hit him hard, for the was a very sensitive man. Mr. Stanhope did not look the part. He was of very poor physique, with one shoulder higher than the other. Although a good debater he had a poor delivery and a somewhat unconvincing manner. Until he had mastered his subject he was entirely out of his element in dealing with the army. It took me a solid year to cure him of speaking of batteries of infantry and battalions of artillery.

The War Office was never very congenial to him, and he hated leaving the Colonial Office where he had done first-class work of a character which suited him and which he liked above any other. His was a thoughtful and judicial mind and it took him time to make it up. It was his misfortune to deal with the army at a time when the desire for reform had died out and a distinctly reactionary feeling had set in. None the less Mr. Stanhope never hesitated and never gave in. He conceived it to be his duty first to study his subject, then to formulate his policy, and after that to carry out that policy without fear or favour. He succeeded, but it killed him, for the strain of arduous and incessant work and of a subsequent general election, in which his loyalty to his party induced him to participate, was more than his delicate constitution could withstand.

Gentle, considerate, cultured and affectionate, his

was a charming personality. Mr. Fowler, when Secretary of State for India, told me that if Mr. Stanhope had stuck to the bar he would almost certainly have reached the Woolsack, and as Mr. Fowler was a solicitor he was likely to know.

Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman played a game of puss-in-the-corner at the War Office. Mr. Smith came to us in June, 1885, and was ousted by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman in February, 1886. In August, 1886, Mr. W. H. Smith retaliated by replacing Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who, however, re-occupied the nest in August, 1892, to be replaced by Lord Lansdowne in 1895. When holidays and parliamentary recesses are taken into consideration, it will be realized that neither Mr. Smith nor Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (as he became) had time to make much impression on army administration.

In one respect the two men were the antithesis of each other. Mr. Smith was perhaps the hardest and most conscientious worker I ever knew, whilst Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was distinctly lazy and it was difficult at times to get him to learn his lesson. It was this very indolence which, after I had left him, caused his defeat in the House of Commons on the occasion of the cordite debate. He was very badly served on that occasion by his personal entourage, but he was himself to blame as he had had a warning of what might happen. The fact is he hated detail, and some knowledge of detail is essential even in the House of Commons. On one occasion when I knew he was

going to be attacked in debate by a dangerous opponent I bored him very much by giving him a long lecture on the subject to be debated. He professed to have all the information at his finger ends and went down to the House. I felt some doubts and followed him there, taking with me the general officer in charge of the department concerned, who was a pundit on the subject. Poor Sir Henry gave a deep sigh and settled down in a chair in an attitude of profound attention. The general went into the case ably, clearly and at some length, and when he was three-parts through his statement we were both startled by a loud snore. Campbell-Bannerman was very nearly beaten that evening, and it was chiefly his great personal popularity which saved him.

It is doubtful whether Mr. Smith ever quite recovered the shock he received when I broke to him the news of the tragic death of his greatest friend, Lord Iddesleigh.

Both Ministers were immensely liked by both soldiers and civilians. Even in the relatively short time that he was at the War Office Mr. Smith introduced sound business methods, of which the department stood greatly in need, and Sir Henry did an immense deal of good in improving the relations between the heads of the army and the House of Commons.

I think it was in 1885 that I first came into contact with Lord St. Aldwyn. There had been some "difficulty" over army expenditure, and Mr. Smith, who detested a wrangle, asked me to go and see the Chancellor of the Exchequer and explain to him the War Office view of the case. I mildly protested that it would be altogether improper for me to do so. Ministers dealt with

Ministers, but private secretaries should not go beyond private secretaries. Mr. Smith said: "I shall give you a note to Sir Michael and that will make it all right." There was no help for it, so to the House of Commons I proceeded. When I got into the private secretary's room I found it full of Members of Parliament asking for an interview. They all had "most important and very urgent business," but all, none the less, seemed disinclined to be the first to go in. I explained to the private secretary the difficulty I was in, and as he was "a clerk and a gentleman" he did not stand on his dignity. He pointed to the door of the Chancellor's room and said: "Go in, by all means, but don't ask me to go in with you."

I hope I have always treated all who were entitled to it with due respect, but I have never known anyone who inspired me with the slightest awe. As I entered the room the Chancellor looked up, stamped his foot and growled "Damn." I told him that I was obeying an order, that I regretted taking up his time, and added that it afforded me no sort of pleasure to be standing before him. He smiled, told me to sit down, listened patiently to all I had to say, and was as kind and as courteous as possible. He said: "All right, you can have your money"; after a pause he added, "and tell that blank man of yours that if he had sent you sooner he would have had his money sooner."

As I went through the next room Colonel Saunderson, M.P., said, "Well, did he curse you blind?" I replied that I had not been cursed blind or otherwise. "Ah!" he remarked. "Black Michael is to see so and

so presently," naming a particular antipathy of the Chancellor's, "he was not going to waste it on *you*."

Saunderson once did me a good turn. I met him at dinner and happened to express my regret at having to pass the night at the House of Commons because I wanted to meet my best girl at a ball. "All right, my boy," said Saunderson, "you can go. I'll get up an Irish row for you," and he did. I was able to leave the House at eleven as it was perfectly evident that the row would last till the adjournment. During the time of Irish obstruction I frequently, when Army Estimates were on, had to sit under the gallery till breakfast time, when my attendance had begun at three p.m. of the previous afternoon. We earned our salaries in those days.

I was not closely associated, at any time, with Mr. Brodrick (now Lord Midleton) when he was at the War Office, and during part of that time I was serving on Lord Kitchener's staff in South Africa.

It is elsewhere than at the War Office that Lord Lansdowne will leave his mark in history. I cannot think that the War Ministry was a sphere of action especially congenial to him, but no one could do otherwise than feel admiration for the patience, the confidence and the ceaseless devotion to duty which characterized his tenure of office during the South African war.

To his kindness I owe my selection for the post of Assistant Under-Secretary of State for War.

Poor Mr. Arnold-Forster came to the War Office with

terribly impaired health and was with us for a relatively short period. The two men who got on with him best were Field-Marshal Lord Plumer and myself. For that reason possibly we understood his policy and valued his opinion to a greater extent than some others. In feeble health and in frequent pain he never flinched. His devotion to his work and his dogged determination, notwithstanding his disability, commanded respect and admiration.

His affectionate nature and his outspoken appreciation of any help rendered to him made him a lovable man, and I believe that if he had taken over the War Office in good health and had been given time, his administration would have been a remarkable one. His ill health and his somewhat short tenure of office precluded his even initiating the reforms which he had so much at heart.

The favourable verdict of history is of far greater value than contemporary plaudits, and it is history which will render full and just tribute to Lord Haldane's service to the army. To Lord Wolseley belongs the credit of the creation of our modern army, but to Lord Haldane appertains all credit for the correlation of its component parts, the well-thought-out plans for its co-ordination and the scheme for its expansion, which even Lord Kitchener's folly, when he scrapped a sound organization in successful operation, failed to destroy.

The courage, patience and even temper with which he met somewhat bitter hostility and his eventual success

will be recognized and appraised at greater value in the future than in the past.

I wish it were permissible to dwell on his personal charm and kindly disposition. In one respect he closely resembles the late Mr. W. H. Smith. Haldane never ignores good service and never forgets the man who has rendered it.

LETTER XVI

WAR WORK

DUBLIN REBELLION—AIR BOARD COMMITTEE—NAVAL PRIZE TRIBUNAL

WHEN the war broke out I was sixty-four and suffering severely from the effects of fever, huge doses of quinine and the injury to my knee. I was in exceedingly bad health. In common with so many other old men I felt my inability to go to the front acutely. It fairly broke my heart. I tried day after day to get taken, I cared not in what capacity, and wrote an imploring letter to Kitchener appealing to him for the sake of old days to do his best to send me out. His reply was neither courteous nor considerate. "We have no use for grandfathers." Besides, I am not a grandfather.

I all but succeeded in getting out surreptitiously as an officer's servant, but a severe attack of phlebitis put an end for ever to all my hopes, and I had to be satisfied to give such poor service as it lay in my power to render at home.

May conscientious objectors, shirkers and soft-billet-holders suffer to the end of their days even half of the anguish we old men experienced who were by age or infirmity precluded from going to the front. Their punishment will not be a light one. To set an

example I joined the City of London Volunteers as a private and slaved at trench-digging in the Essex clay. I took night guards at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, I route-marched till I dropped. I acted as pot-boy in the battalion canteen, I fought in the battle of Richmond Park and had to go home in a taxi-cab as a casualty, I turned out for raids—in fact, in many ways I made a supreme idiot of myself.

I also at the request of the Government undertook three somewhat unusual and unpaid war duties. Just after the Dublin revolution of 1916 I proceeded to Dublin to "investigate the conduct" of all servants of the Crown other than soldiers and sailors who had or were suspected of having participated in the rebellion.

I asked to have associated with me a civil servant of standing who should be an Irishman, if possible, learned in the law. The selection made was an excellent one, and I shall never forget the assistance, the loyalty, and the ability of Sir William Byrne who became my colleague. No shadow of difficulty or difference of opinion ever arose, we were in entire accord over our judgments and we have remained friends ever since.

A combination of tragedy and comedy seems inseparable from any Irish episode, and the rebellion (for it was one) of 1916 was no exception. When we got to Dublin all there was to show for a criminal, purposeless and asinine proceeding was the ruin of some very handsome buildings and the destruction of a singularly fine street. Behind the scenes there was a good deal more. There was a Government in London who did not know their own mind, there was one in

Dublin who had no mind to know, and there was "a kind of" martial law administered in quite the most imbecile fashion conceivable.

The cat-and-mouse policy in regard to executions was as wicked and as senseless as the burning of houses at a more recent date. All it did was to disgust the moderates, shock the loyal and exasperate the irreconcilables.

But even so, the vast majority of Irishmen of all political complexions disapproved very strongly of the rebellion, and might have been brought over to the side of law and order if the punishment meted out by the military had been sharp but very short. If the Irish and Catholic battalion which took it had been allowed to rush the Post Office and bayonet the blackguards who (I think for three days and nights) had been shooting at them and everyone else from the windows and roofs and thereby put an end to a collection of rascals, and if the subsequent executions had been limited to two or three leaders and carried out within a very few days, Ireland would have been spared much misery and England some disgrace. But we seem fated never to do either the wise or the right thing by that unfortunate island.

We found on arrival that steps had been taken to provide us with a "court" in Dublin Castle. I promptly declined to sit in it, and Byrne supported me. We represented that if we were to be credited with a desire and intention to mete out absolute justice to those whose cases we were to adjudicate upon, there must be no sort of connexion between us and Dublin

Castle. We asked to be given a house far away from it, and we declined to allow a single policeman to be seen near our habitation.

We were at length given the use of an empty house off St. Stephen's Green, and the authorities paid us out by putting us into a foully insanitary building wherein I contracted illness approximating blood-poisoning. Fortunately it developed after our task was completed.

Our inquiry extended over a considerable period and presented some exceptional features. All sorts and conditions of men from every part of Ireland came before us, from postmen and porters to men who had taken their degrees and, I think, even honours at Trinity College, men who filled fairly high and well-paid appointments. Some of the men were absolutely innocent and were the victims of malevolence on the part of people who disliked them or their religion, or of the jealousy of rivals in a little innocent trading. One man was arrested and imprisoned because he kept a cow and sold his surplus milk to his right and left neighbours. His accuser was a milkman who traded in the neighbourhood. It was he, I think, who was imprisoned in Lewes jail and who said he forgave the Government because it had enabled him "to see such a lovely bit of country."

John McNeill's sister, a teacher, came before us charged with uttering seditious language in a "cloistered" convent. We asked how on earth anyone could know what she said to nuns who by their vows were denied all intercourse with the outer world.

Of course she was cleared at once of the charge,

although I longed to "condemn" her for insisting on treating us to a dramatically declaimed oration which lasted three-quarters of an hour. One or two, I am satisfied, quite truthfully assured us that they thought they were helping the Government against the Orangemen. I verily believe that the rebellion was to a great extent the outcome of the outrageous policy of tolerating "Carson's Army," but it may be left to history to apportion the measure of blame which attaches to a Government which deliberately shut their eyes to the creation and maintenance of a private army admittedly raised to resist the operation of an Act of Parliament. I have not met Sir Edward Carson for some time, but I used to know him, and I have the greatest respect for his many virtues, his courage and his great ability; but if I had had my way he would have got six months' hard.

Sad as was the whole business, it was impossible to ignore the humorous side of some of the evidence given.

We drew the attention of an implicated postmaster to the fact that he had been taking part in a rebellion when he was wearing the King's uniform and drawing Government pay, and asked him to account for his proceedings on the day under review. I cannot render justice to the conversation which ensued as I cannot speak Sinn Fein English, much less express the accent.

"Tell me what you did on the Tuesday."

"I received a message from——" (a notorious disloyal town).

"What was it?"

"It was to tell the boys to rise because the boys from the town were coming over in motors."

"Did you give the message?"

"Indeed I did, a postmaster must deliver a message."

"Did you tell anyone else?"

"It's the policeman I told."

"What did you do next?"

"I locked up the post office."

"And after?"

"I went for a long walk in the country."

"Alone?"

"Not at all. I went with the policeman."

"Did the boys come from the town?"

"Sure they did."

"Did your boys rise?"

"Devil a bit."

"When did you return from your walk?"

"When the town boys had left."

One man, a highly educated man, a M.A., I think, and in a responsible position in a Government department, who had been taken in the Post Office, explained his presence there by saying that "he was in the Post Office because he had so many friends in the building."

I asked another man caught red-handed with a gun in his hand whether he was not surprised at having escaped being shot, and he replied: "Oh, not at all, it was a shot-gun and would not carry far." "None the less, you were using ball cartridge," I said. "Yes," he replied, "but it's hard to hit with a shot-gun."

What struck me very much was the utterly irresponsible mentality of most of the suspects who came before

us. To every young man we said: "Why do you not get out of all this and go over the water and help the Irish lads who are fighting the Germans?"

In most instances, after a pause and with a shame-faced look, each one replied:

"In point of fact I wanted to go."

"Why did you not go?"

"Mother wouldn't let me go"; or "Father Murphy wouldn't let me go."

Many of the National Volunteers were anxious *to be made* to go, and I am quite certain that half Ireland at that time would have actually welcomed conscription. Many middle-aged men and the *old* priests whom I talked to advocated it. I urged it as strongly as I could on the Government when I returned, but I might just as well have urged it on a brick wall. Another golden opportunity lost through want of prescience and courage.

The prevalent report that Mr. Asquith shook hands with all the convicted criminals and stood them a supper of ortolans and champagne must be exaggerated, for ortolans were not in season.

By your leave, I will permit myself a digression, as I should be sorry if my remarks in connexion with the Dublin rebellion led to any misconception as to my feelings towards Ireland and her people. I love Ireland, and to probably few Englishmen are the Irish so sympathetic as to myself.

In the first place they are "she-hes." They have as many of the attractive attributes of women as of the qualities of men. To me they are a source of perennial joy. They are not possessed of nearly so acute a sense

of humour as is a Scotsman (the average Englishman has hardly any), but they are, although for the most part quite unconsciously, delightfully funny. Their desire is to please, and that makes for pleasant intercourse. They possess a quick mentality and great imagination which makes for animated and engaging conversation. They are intensely sensible to sympathy, which makes for friendship, if friendship is sought. Above all, an Irishman is essentially what a groom calls "a light 'arted 'oss," and I like "light 'arted 'osses." But such a horse requires the combination of a good seat and light hands. The absence of that combination may lead to the 'oss coming home in a lather, not infrequently alone, and the rider coming home with a broken collar-bone.

Unfortunately when it comes to riding Ireland, England has never managed to accomplish this combination. The rider, if he has had a firm seat, has lacked light hands, and if possessed of the latter he has lacked the former. The good colonizer does not necessarily make a good governor, and the Englishman has never yet successfully governed anything approximating a subject race which has outgrown tutelage, and never will. Indeed, the English appear to be rapidly losing the capacity to govern even themselves, and our democracy seems to be devoting decades to disintegrating an Empire which it has taken us centuries to build up.

The genuine Irishman has actually a great regard for life and property, and outside of politics a marked disinclination to crime. I firmly believe, if it be possible to establish stable Irish government in Ireland and to

eliminate mongrel Irishmen with Cuban or any other alien blood in them, that Ireland will rapidly develop into the safest and pleasantest habitation in the Empire. Give them a fair chance and the Irish people will rid themselves of the accursed mongrel rabble and will become a happy, a prosperous and a contented people.

I confess, however, to having no sympathy with provincialism of any sort. All this nonsense about Scotland a kingdom and Ireland a nation and gallant little Wales, and the rest of it, seems to me to be beneath contempt. If anyone is not satisfied with being a member of the Great British kingdom, he, she or it can get out and a good riddance of poor rubbish if they elect to go.

I was subsequently requested to take the chairmanship of a large and important financial committee on the Air Board which then occupied the Hotel Cecil, and I thus made, for the first time, the acquaintance of the Air Force Ministry and of Lord Rothermere, the head of it.

When I called I found it difficult to get in, although the most unholy crowd of men and women were going in and out of the building in a constant and torrential stream. I was held up, looked at, criticized and treated with downright insolence by a succession of red-nosed, dissipated old messengers who created a distinct impression that no one came into that building without paying his footing. I was much amused, having had for so many years the power of life and death over just such.

A bunch of them crowded round me, and I then picked one out, pretended to recognize him, and asked him how he had been getting on since I had dismissed him. He waved aside the others, and exclaimed: "I pray silence! Make way for Sir Guy!" I was by him handed over to a tiny mite of twelve who was a girl scout, or something of the sort.

She was the most patronizing, solemn and intelligent little creature I ever had to do with.

She led me along innumerable long passages filled with positively countless "young ladies" strolling slowly arm in arm and eating chocolates. This at what should have been the busiest work-time of the day.

Very few men were in evidence.

My little guide at last landed me in front of Lord Rothermere's door. Thanking her for her help, I remarked that the lady clerks did not seem to work very hard. "If you ask me," she replied, "I believe I am the only woman in the place who does any work at all." I was inclined to agree with her.

What struck me very greatly was the amazing beauty of most of the girls in the building.

I do not remember ever seeing such a galaxy of beauty, to use an old-world expression. I could not help asking one singularly beautiful girl whom I met in the lift where on earth all the beautiful girls came from and who they were. "Oh! everywhere; and we are all clergymen's daughters," was the cryptic reply.

I wonder why it is the peculiar privilege of parsons to produce pearls.

I have not often met a man who impressed me so

much as did Lord Rothermere. He seemed to me marked out as a pillar of strength at a time of much crumbling of edifices. I saw him several times during my service as chairman, and was struck by his capacity, his grasp and his determination. I have never met him since he left the Air Ministry. I felt sure he would not stay there long. He wanted things done the right way! He wanted efficient and economical administration!

I had only lately returned from India, having been out of the home service for over five years. A good many changes had operated during my absence, but with the war, of course, came a veritable upheaval. I dare say it was all quite right and all quite natural, but the condition of some of the public departments filled me with amazement, anger and dismay.

I was highly gratified, if somewhat surprised, to receive a letter from Mr. Bonar Law dated June 13, 1918, asking me to serve as one of two members of a tribunal appointed to adjudicate on Naval Prize. Of course, I at once placed myself at the disposal of His Majesty's Government, with the result that I appear by name in 8 and 9 Geo. 5, which means an Act of Parliament, as endowed with all such "powers, rights and privileges as are vested in the High Court or any judge thereof." I can "enforce," also "compel," and, oh! joy, "punish" persons guilty of contempt.

You may have noticed that especial care seems invariably to have been exercised to avoid utilizing such knowledge as I may be supposed to possess of the control of public expenditure and the elaboration of

Indian reforms. My services have always been utilized in regard to matters with which I was not conversant.

I might almost be a member of the Cabinet!

For four years I have been adjudicating on the rival claims of the Admiralty and the Crown to "droits," and intensely interested have I been in my task, which has involved much hard work and some pecuniary loss. The work appears to be unending, and the gentle hand of death alone seems likely to put a term to my service.

It would not be proper for me to dwell on the personal charm, the erudition and the wonderful patience of my President (Lord Phillimore), but I may be permitted to say that my association with him causes me very genuine satisfaction.

Those who know me will hardly be surprised to learn that I have twice delivered a dissenting judgment in open court.

Quite naturally you will inquiringly remark: But what is it all about?

There is much I could tell you, but I will leave it untold for you would neither read nor understand. Perhaps, however, you already appreciate that "droits" means "rights." In law anything which can be described by a simple English word is promptly clothed in terms especially calculated to obscure its meaning. As I have already observed, we are concerned with the rights of the Admiralty and of the Crown respectively to moneys which are the outcome of prize taken in war. In the first place we have to decide whether the droit is a droit of the Admiralty or of the Crown. In the

second place the nature of the droit having been established, we have to decide who is to get it.

You will at once say that is plain enough, the droits of the Admiralty go to the navy and those of the Crown to the Exchequer. That only goes to show that you jump at conclusions—a bad habit—and that you speak without thinking—another bad habit. For if you thought for a while you would realize that if it were all so simple there would be no occasion to ask three very wise men to decide the point.

Now it so happens that the droits of Admiralty do not go to the Admiralty, and the droits of the Crown do not go to the Crown. It is just the other way round. Why? I shall tell you why.

In the old, old days there was a great personage called a Lord High Admiral, and part of his "perks" was prize taken in ports, creeks or roads.

One fine day Cromwell came along, bashed the Lord High Admiral's ridiculous cocked hat off his head and sent him about his business.

The evidence that he became Rouge Dragon is not reliable.

Then that austere man who reaps where he has not sown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, came along and seized the prize which had belonged to the Lord High Admiral so that his successors might have more of your money and mine to squander. And so it comes about that Admiralty droits go to the Exchequer.[1]

[1] After the Restoration James, Duke of York, was appointed L.H. Admiral. (Order-in-Council of 1665-1666.) The last L.H.A. was George, husband of Queen Anne, but he was allowed no droits. The Act under which these droits at present pass to the Exchequer is the Civil List Act, 1910.

Again, in old days all prize captured on high seas by commissioned captors belonged to the Crown, and the Crown benevolently handed it over to the officers and men of the fleet to avoid paying them a living wage. Thus Crown droits go to the navy.

You may care to know that in the reign of Charles II the sailors were allowed to loot everything on or above gun-deck, whilst the captain, cunning fellow, claimed as his "perks" what was below to the extent, at any rate, of the best pieces of brass ordnance.

On a memorable occasion good Queen Bess heard that a captain had come into Tilbury possessed of countless precious stones of great value, part of the loot taken from a Spanish galleon.

The Queen mounted her palfrey, and escorted by her knights, rode down to Tilbury and paid the ship's captain a visit in his cabin.

"Sir Captain," said the Queen, "we should much like to view the precious stones which you have taken from the Spaniard." When the gems were laid out on the cabin table the Queen took a couple of handfuls of them and slipped them into her reticule. Then she remounted her palfrey and returned to London.

Sir Captain complained to the Lord High Admiral, who wrote a dutiful protest to his sovereign. He signed himself, Her Majesty's "humble and loyal subject and Lord," unfortunately omitting "High Admiral." Old Queen Bess saw her chance and took it.

"Odds Bodkins," she replied, "if ever again you dare describe yourself as my Lord I shall have your

head off," and the poor Lord High Admiral thought it prudent to drop the subject.

My learned President declares the story to be apocryphal, but then he always discourages any attempt on my part at originality.

You should by now be seized with all that appertains to our tribunal, and if you are still in darkness it is your fault, not mine, and if any lawyer presumes to say that my exposition presents inaccuracies, I shall call him, in the words of Canning, a sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded, spiritless outcast.

LETTER XVII

IMPENDING DISSOLUTION

I RECOGNIZE that the garrulity of old age committed to paper cannot be of general interest. The only defence I have to offer, and it is a feeble one, is that I did my best in the preface to warn you of what was coming.

The kindness and tolerance of my colleagues on my Boards keep me going. Perhaps I should say prevent me from going, but I have passed the three-score and ten, which is all we are theoretically entitled to, and it is a cracked pitcher which dips in the City well.

I have not much faith in old-age conversions, still less in deathbed repentance.

Surely the creed which will count will be that professed when a man is in full vigour of mind and body. It is easy enough to repent when the body is racked with pain and the mind has travelled three-quarters of the road to imbecility.

When I was a wee baby my Italian balia used to cry her eyes out at the thought that I must eventually burn in the flames of hell because I was a heretic, and took advantage of our being on a visit to Rome to endeavour to save my poor little soul. She threw herself on her knees in the middle of the road in front of the papal carriage, thereby creating some

little commotion. On learning the cause, Pius IX, a gentle, kind-hearted man, beckoned my nurse up to the side of the carriage, put his hand on my head and blessed me. He also gave her for me one of the tiny silver crucifixes which he used to distribute. I meant to wear it till my death and after, but it seemed a pity to let it melt, so it now reposes in the Convent of St. Margaret, at East Grinstead.

I suppose my having been blessed by the Pope will count for something.

I do not know what is in store for me on the other side of the grave, but I pray God it may be hard work. I should be of no use at all singing hymns.

Following the lead of Castruccio Castracani, I formulate but one request in regard to the disposal of my remains. I ask to be buried face downwards, as I am convinced that my unfortunate country is about to be turned upside down.

APPENDIX I

WITH a solitary exception, I am the first civilian of my family since the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

I am quite satisfied with my name as it is, and experience no desire to add distinction to it with an additional L or to give it a bassoon tone with a terminal E.

Ours is a junior branch of the Wilsons of Etton (not to be confused with Eshton), who were well established in Yorkshire in 1230. We are directly descended from John, 1300, and there are records of members of the family dated 1320, 1380 and 1410.

In all humility I admit that these dates are not B.C.

The records bring to light no special crimes and are of no special interest.

Then we come to John Wilson, born in 1565. When, in 1585, Queen Elizabeth appointed the Earl of Essex a general of horse, and sent him to fight the Spaniards in the Low Countries, John Wilson joined the army as a captain of horse, and fought with credit under Essex till 1587. History records that the cavalry commanded by Essex was the best turned out mounted force of that period.[1] In 1595 he rejoined Essex, and took part in the expedition to Spain, "assisting at the capture and sacking of Cadiz." I hope he did his duty during the

[1] Chamberlin's "Character of Queen Elizabeth."

capture, but, as he was one of my progenitors, I am quite sure he was well to the fore during the sacking.

He appears to have accompanied Essex to Ireland when the latter was made "Commander," there "formed a matrimonial connexion," after remaining some years in the country, with a lady of good family and some fortune, and there died, leaving one son, John—born 1593. He also followed his father's profession of arms, and entered the army of James I, being attached to that portion of it which was sent to Ireland in 1612. He there married Margaret Fitzgerald, a lady of very ancient family in that country. He afterwards served as captain of Dragoons under Charles I, and remained firmly attached to his cause "till the murder of that unfortunate monarch by the usurper Cromwell." The words are not mine; I merely quote them. He died in the north of Ireland, leaving three children—John, William Richard, and Margaret, who died in her infancy. I do not suppose that the members of my family in old days knew much about birth control, but you will see, as my story progresses, that the younger members of their families seem to have possessed a suspicious faculty for dying young, especially if of the feminine gender. Both sons entered the army. John, born 1625, entered the service of Charles II, attained the rank of major of cavalry, and fought incessantly. After the disastrous battle of Worcester he fled to Holland, where he married Christina, daughter of Van Brederode, "a Syndic of high degree," with whom he obtained considerable property. It is doubtless to her that I owe my Dutch square jaw. In 1600 the Van

Brederodes showed a descent of five centuries in unbroken male succession from the original sovereigns of Holland. On the King's restoration, 1660, he returned in his service, and went with the troops to Ireland, in the northern part of which he settled, and there died, leaving an only son, John, born 1663, who also entered the army, narrowly escaping the persecution of the Protestants in Londonderry during the reign of James II. He was aide-de-camp to General Mackay when he fell at Killiecrankie, June 27, 1689, and his whole army was routed by Graham, Viscount Dundee. I possess his silver camp-cup, with the following inscription on it:

JOHN WILSON. KILIECRANKIE. JUNE 27, 1689.

He remained many years in the service, and was in every campaign under the Duke of Marlborough. He possessed considerable property, and owned and resided at Neesdon House, Middlesex, after he retired from the army. He married, 1693, Catherine, daughter of Thomas Newsham, of Chadshunt, Co. Warwick, of an old family in that county. (General Sabine and Colonel Peers married the two other sisters, and General Sabine's daughter married Sir Charles Sheffield, of Normanby Hall, Lincolnshire.) He died at Neesdon House, 1743, and was buried in Willesden churchyard. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of April, 1743, the following appears:

On March 30, 1743, died Captain John Wilson, of Willesden Green. He served with great reputation under

the late Duke of Marlborough and was possessed of a large fortune.

He left a large family, all of whom seem to have died young, except William Richard and John. William Richard was betrothed to a daughter of Lord Ferrers, but "at a dinner at his lordship's house previous to the marriage ceremony, he was struck on the side by a servant when removing a dish, of which blow he died, an abscess having formed." Which of the two was sober is not stated. His brother John, born 1703, then became eldest son, and, shortly after, only child. He entered young into the army, and served in Germany as captain in the 23rd Welch Fusiliers (then commanded by his uncle, General Sabine), under William, Duke of Cumberland. He afterwards became major in the 4th Infantry (then Barrell's), in which he served at the battle of Culloden, 1746. This gallant swashbuckler was a real credit to the family. In Scotland he managed to "acquire some silver plate." One cup which is in my possession he "captured" at Culloden, and engraved that fact and his name upon it. Of him the following is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of January, 1743:

On Thursday, January 20, at one in the morning, Captain John Wilson and Captain Skerret, of Ffoulkes' Regiment, having quarrelled in the street at Whitehall, were separated by the sentinels, Captain Wilson having received a wound in the cheek. On their coming into the Tilt-yard Coffee House they drew again and Captain Wilson received another wound in the shoulder, but ran Captain Skerret through the body who died instantly and the other made his escape. The

coroner's inquest brought in their verdict Manslaughter, it appearing that the deceased had been the aggressor.

He married, 1733, Elizabeth, only daughter of Christopher Williams, of Harvodwen, Co. Carmarthen, with whom he had a considerable fortune. Being greatly patronized by and living much with the Duke of Cumberland, he was led into great expense, which eventually ended in his ruin, being compelled to sell most of his property, including Neesdon House, to pay his debts, which were chiefly contracted in gambling. In an old magazine are the following lines, of which (to his credit or otherwise) Colonel John Wilson was the hero:

> A gentleman was riding out one day,
> And met the Post, who called aloud, "Give way—
> Quickly give way, or I shall make you skip!"
> And a smart jerk he gave him with his whip.
> At this—without exchanging of one word—
> Forth from the scabbard flew the glittering sword.
> "Thou dog," said he, "that lash thy life shall cost—
> A gentleman can't be made a Whipping Post."

This occurred near Hyde Park Corner, and led to my impulsive ancestor retiring into private life for a brief period. Fortunately, the "King's post" recovered. The incident is not alluded to in his epitaph in Twickenham churchyard:

"Here lies interred

Lieut.-Col. John Wilson, who departed this life January 21, 1757, in the 54th year of his age. He was a loyal

Officer to his King—a zealous Advocate for his country. He led his men on with courage and bravery worthy so good a man—in memory of which this tomb is erected."

He died a brevet-colonel in the army and lieut.-colonel of the 48th Regiment, leaving several children, all of whom died young, excepting William Richard (born 1737, died 1808, buried at Lincoln), who entered the army at sixteen years of age, having received a commission in the 56th Regiment by desire of the Duke of Cumberland. He afterwards exchanged into the 112th Regiment, and from thence into the 3rd Dragoon Guards, in which regiment he served several years as senior captain. He retired after twenty-five years' service, and resided at Normanby Hall, Co. Lincoln. He married, December, 1762, Jane Anne Eleanor, daughter of the Rev. W. Harries, of Bryn Hyfied, Co. Pembroke, by Elizabeth, only child of William Sheppard, of Great Rollwright, Co. Oxford, by Anne, only daughter of Thomas Doley, of Olton End, Co. Warwick, by Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Henry Palmer, of Olton Hall, by whom (eventually the heiress of the major part of the estates of her ancestor, Henry Palmer, of Olton Hall) he had three children, one son and two daughters. The daughters died in infancy. The son, William, born 1774, at Solihull, Co. Warwick, was educated at Uppingham and Christ Church, Oxford, took orders, and was presented to the living of Pettaugh, in Suffolk, by his cousin Lionel, Lord Dysart, from which he removed to Harrington, Co. Northampton, presented by Wilbraham, Lord Dysart. He married Martha, third daughter

and co-heiress of Barrett Bowen Jordan, of Waterston House, Co. Pembroke. On the demise of his mother, at Lincoln in 1827, he became heir to three-fourths of the property of Benjamin Palmer, of Olton Hall (enjoyed during her life conjointly with Henry Greswolde Lewis, of Malvern Hall, Co. Warwick). He died at Harrington, 1831, leaving seven children. The eldest, my uncle, William Henry Bowen Jordan, entered the 3rd Dragoon Guards, from which he retired when he married Louisa Editha, third daughter and co-heiress of Richard Le Hunte, of Artramont, Co. Wexford, and St. Botolph's, Co. Pembroke, and died in London, 1887. He was High Sheriff for Carmarthenshire (1837), Deputy-Lieutenant for Pembrokeshire, Justice of the Peace for Warwickshire, and some time master of the Atherstone and also of the North Warwickshire foxhounds. The other two sons were John Richard Sheppard and Fleetwood Thomas Hugh, my father.

I have never been able to ascertain why my grandfather spoilt the record by going into the Church. He was meant for the army, and was a first-class sportsman, a hard rider and a fine shot. He had a mania for driving four-in-hand, and passed so much of his time tooling his coach about the country that his infuriated bishop at last extracted a promise from him "never to drive four horses again." He kept his promise, but immediately started a "unicorn" (one leader and two wheelers), and was known till his death as the "unicorn parson."

He accidentally shot himself when pushing his way through a hedge on September 9, 1831, and was buried at Harrington, in Northamptonshire.

It has been asserted that the (to me unknown) *Chronica Judicialia* clearly proves that the "Chancellor and Chaplain" of William the Conqueror was the founder of the Wilson family settled at Etton, in Yorkshire; but I hotly repudiate the chaplain and all his works. I cannot stand two parsons in the family.

With the exception of my uncle and myself, we have been a fairly respectable lot.

The commissions and the swords of many of the foregoing soldiers remain with me.

My uncle, John Richard Sheppard, who entered the army as ensign in the 27th Regiment, was born in 1812, and died in 1871. He married, in 1846, Philippa, daughter of Philip Laycock Storey, and sister of Lydia, Viscountess Dillon, who gave me my first gold watch for my first letter written in English when I was six years old. Hence the connexion with the Lady Stanley of Alderley (a Dillon), who was so kind to me when I came to England.

My father, Fleetwood Thomas Hugh, born in 1817, entered the army as a cornet in the 8th Hussars in 1837, and died, as Auditor-General of Barbados, in 1862. He married, on December 20, 1849, Harriet Horatia, daughter of Captain Montagu Walker, R.N., who served under Nelson (hence my mother's second name), and who married Anna Maria Riddel, of Glenriddel. My father had two children—myself, born 1850, and my sister, born 1853, and died 1875.

One of my father's nephews, and his godson, was Colonel the Right Hon. Sir Fleetwood Isham Edwards,

G.C.B., who was Private Secretary and Privy Purse to Queen Victoria, and afterwards Black Rod.

The names Fleetwood and Isham came into our family through the Sheppards. The first from Sir Fleetwood Dormer, in 1632; the second from Sir Eusebius Isham, in 1610.

Commissions of John Wilson

Ensign—Colonel Wills' Regiment (afterwards 3rd Foot): July 5, 1716.

Captain—1st Foot Guards: April 16, 1717.

Captain—Welch Fusiliers: April 11, 1718.

Lieutenant (*ranking as Captain of Foot*)—1st Foot Guards: November 24, 1730.

Major (*and Captain of a Company*)—Wm. Barrell's Regiment (afterwards 4th Foot): April 17, 1743.

Lieut.-Colonel—H. S. Conway's Regiment (afterwards 48th Foot): March 26, 1748.

Major—Horse Grenadier Guards, 2nd Troop (this regiment was one of the Household Troops, and was disbanded in 1788): October 15, 1754.

Retired from the Army—July 5, 1755.

The 4th Foot (Barrell's Regiment) saw service in Flanders in 1744, and was at the battle of Falkirk in 1746, and the battle of Culloden Moor in the same year.

My mother's family is said to have originally borne the name of Forestier. Be that as it may, the first one of any note was Sir Walter Walker, advocate to Queen

Catherine, wife of Charles II. A great number served in the army, one of them being a very distinguished and most gallant soldier, General Sir George Townshend Walker, Bart., G.C.B., K.H. He commanded "the dirty half-hundred," as the distinguished 50th Regiment used irreverently to be termed, in the Peninsular, and led the forlorn hope at Badajoz, for which exploit he received at the hands of the king a special gold medal bearing Badajoz upon it. Subsequently he became Commander-in-Chief in Madras.

More recently the family produced two Guardsmen of note—General Sir Edward Walker, who commanded the Scots Guards in the Crimea, and General Sir Frederick Forestier Walker, his son, also a Scots Guardsman, and Governor of Gibraltar.

The most interesting member of the family was my great grandmother, Maria Riddel, of Glenriddel, the friend and protectress of Robert Burns. The *Dumfries and Galloway Standard,* in April, 1897, published an interesting article on the Riddel family, part of which, by the courtesy of the editor, I am able to give :

"The Riddels of Glenriddel

"We recently had the privilege of inspecting some interesting family documents, which furnish more reliable data than had been available to the late Dr. Rogers when he compiled his ' Book of Robert Burns,' regarding the history of the Riddels whose memory is so intimately associated with that of the poet. Walter Riddel, styled of Glenriddel, Carse, and Lincluden, was the only son and heir of Simon Riddel, of Tynron, and

was descended from the Riddels, owners of the barony of that name in Roxburghshire. His elder son was Captain Robert Riddel, who lived at Friars' Carse, where he was the neighbour of Burns. The younger, Walter, was proprietor of Goldielea, the name of which was during his brief ownership changed in compliment to his wife to Woodley Park, and there Burns was a frequent guest. Captain Robert Riddel died in 1794. The well-known lines written by Burns to his memory begin, 'No more, ye warblers of the wood.' It is interesting to note that at the time when he took part in the bacchanalian contest for the 'Whistle' Captain Riddel would be only thirty-four years of age. The Dunscore property of Glenriddel had been sold in 1792. Under his will his brother Walter was given the option of taking Friars' Carse or realizing the property; it was sold in 1795. Walter was born in 1764, and died in 1802—singularly enough, just at his brother's age of thirty-eight. He married first a Miss Doig, who died childless. He subsequently lived for some time in the West Indies, where he had acquired an estate, and there he married, in September, 1790, Maria Woodley, a young lady then in her eighteenth year, daughter of Sir William Woodley, Governor of St. Kitts and the Leeward Islands. The second Mrs. Riddel was a singularly beautiful and highly cultured lady, and perhaps the most helpful member of the fashionable feminine circle who influenced the life and work of Burns. She survived her husband, and contracted a second alliance in March, 1808, with a Flintshire landowner, Mr. Philipps Lloyd Fletcher, but she died just at the close of that

year. Of her marriage with Mr. Riddel there were two daughters. The younger, Sophia, lived only for five years. The elder, Anna Maria Riddel, married in 1811 Captain Charles Montagu Walker, R.N. Both died at a villa which they had near Florence—the husband in 1833; his widow in 1859. They had a family of eight sons and daughters. The eldest daughter, Gertrude, married first John McDouall, a son of the laird of Logan, and secondly a Tuscan nobleman, Count Antonio Baldelli. The youngest sister, Harriet Horatia, was the wife of Captain Fleetwood Wilson."

The Countess Baldelli above alluded to is the "Aunt Gertrude" to whom I have referred more than once in the text. She was a really remarkable woman, who inherited the very exceptional beauty of her grandmother, Mrs. Riddel, as well as her literary culture. She lived to be ninety, and *The Times*[1] thus alluded to her at the time of her death :

"The death at an advanced age is announced at Florence of the Contessa Baldelli, daughter of Captain Walker, R.N., and niece of Sir George Townshend Walker, who was created a baronet for his services in the Peninsular. She married first Captain McDouall, 12th Lancers, and secondly Count Baldelli. Her remarkable beauty is alluded to in Sir Horace Rumbold's recently published memoirs. Countess Baldelli was closely associated with all the philanthropic and other agencies for the moral and material improvement of her

[1] November 27, 1903.

adopted country, and was, with Lady Paget and Miss Power Cobbe, one of the originators of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Italy, of which she was an energetic supporter. An accomplished linguist, she maintained correspondence throughout her life with many of the great thinkers and writers of her generation, and was one of Walter Savage Landor's few intimate friends."

APPENDIX II

I publish the following because the marble presentment will be the only record of my services in India which will survive me. It is a little act of vanity for which I frankly ask forgiveness.

UNVEILING OF THE BUST OF SIR GUY FLEETWOOD WILSON AT DELHI ON MARCH 24, 1916.

Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis: Your Excellency, it is a matter of genuine satisfaction to us non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council that the bust has been completed while Your Excellency is still in India and that Your Excellency has been pleased to accede to our request to unveil it before laying down the reins of your high office. Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson was associated with the Government of India mostly during Your Excellency's Viceroyalty, and Your Excellency had ample opportunities of judging for yourself the services rendered to the State by him. Your Excellency could not have failed to observe also with approval the cordial relations Sir Guy maintained throughout his Indian career with the non-official members of the Legislative Council. I do not analyse his public acts, but it may be broadly stated that Sir Guy's administration of the finances of India was marked by a breadth of outlook and sympathy and an

earnest desire to help on the cause of Indian progress which made a deep and lasting impression upon the people. We have also reasons to believe that Sir Guy exerted a wholesome influence upon the general administration of the day, ennobled as it was by Your Excellency's high statesmanship and enlightened policy of trust and advancement. Sir Guy deserved well of the country for all that and will always be remembered by the people. We non-official members of the Legislative Council share the warm feelings of appreciation of the general body of our countrymen, but we had special reasons for our admiration. Sir Guy's personal relations with us were uniformly pleasant. Be it as Finance Minister or as Vice-President, he was always a genial force in the Council, and by his personal magnetism even more than by his intellectual force he made friends of all of us. And when Sir Guy retired from office we, the non-official members, started this movement for a permanent memorial to mark our appreciation of his Indian career. I would have been happy if all the non-official members of both the present Council and the previous Council who have contributed to the cost of the bust could be present here to-day, but I regret their engagements elsewhere have prevented them from enjoying the pleasure, while one, the most prominent and the greatest of Sir Guy's friends, Mr. Gokhale, has been taken away from us by the cruel hand of death. But it is idle to indulge in vain regrets. We who are present must proceed to our pleasant duty, and I, on behalf of the non-official members of Your Excellency's Council, beg now to request Your Excel-

lency to unveil this bust of our good friend Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson. Your Excellency and the assembly will soon have the opportunity of judging how faithfully the lineaments of Sir Guy's genial face have been reproduced in marble by the skilful sculptor Mr. Herbert Hampton. We are thankful, my Lord, Your Excellency has allowed the bust to be provisionally placed here and for the promise that it will be removed to new Delhi and will occupy a similar prominent position in the ante-chamber of the Legislative Council there when it is built. I now request Your Excellency to unveil the bust.

His Excellency the Viceroy: Gentlemen, I readily accede to the request that you have made that I should unveil the bust of Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson. The kindly remarks that Sir Gangadhar has made bear eloquent testimony to the strong hold that Sir Guy was able to establish upon the affection and respect of the members of my Council by his friendly and genial attitude towards them; and that attitude was no mere make-believe, for I think I am justified in saying that he was sincerely animated by the most liberal and friendly feelings towards India and Indian aspirations. I have never had any doubt in my mind that his feelings towards India were heartily reciprocated by India, and India did not hesitate to give full expression to the warmth of her sentiments when he took his departure from these shores.

Speaking for myself, I always found Sir Guy a helpful colleague. As finance member he certainly had not quite the same heavy burden of anxiety and re-

sponsibility to bear as the war has brought upon the shoulders of the present holder of that high and honourable office, but he guarded our money-bags with a keen sense of duty and brought to the solution of the knotty problems with which the finance member is so constantly beset an acute and versatile intellect. In the public eye a finance member must be largely judged by his budgets, and the budgets of Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson were a series of personal triumphs.

Finally, let me not forget to mention that during the two months when I was incapacitated by illness a far greater portion of anxiety and responsibility than usual fell to the lot of my Council. As senior member of my Council and vice-president of my Legislative Council, Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson's share of the burden was not only the heaviest, but came at a time when the preparation of the budget is a sufficient task to engross the energies of any ordinary man; but he rose to the occasion, and with the loyal co-operation and assistance of his colleagues he faced the additional labour with a courage and endurance beyond all praise.

It will bring a glow of pleasure to the heart of Sir Guy to know that his friends out here have taken these means to keep his memory green, and equally will it be a source of happiness to his friends out here to be able to refresh old memories by gazing at his friendly and familiar lineaments.

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